



Szopka, Christmas Creche

Merry Christmas Happy Hanukkah Happy New Year from PGSNYS!

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RELEASE OF 1940 FEDERAL CENSUS COMING IN 2012!!

As we celebrate the holidays and enter a new year, may you and your family enjoy health and happiness. 2012 is a BIG year for genealogists as we look forward to the release of the 1940 Federal census on April 2nd! Each census is released 72 years after its collection, the premise being that, considering an average lifespan, that amount of time will protect the privacy of the people in that census while they are alive. Of course, with people living longer these days, that doesn't necessarily hold true anymore. While understandable, it is torturous for diehard genealogists to have to wait 12 years between each census release! When the 1930 census was released in 2002, it allowed many of us to find ourselves or our parents or our grandparents in the Federal census for the first time. This coming year we can further track our family members' movements and document the births of another generation.

PGSNYS - FOR YOUR INFORMATION

**PRESERVING
OUR PAST
SINCE 1988**

**FOUNDED BY
MICHAEL
DRABIK
(1950-2001)**

The PGSNYS meets the second Thursday of each month* in the Villa Maria College cafeteria, 240 Pine Ridge Road, Cheektowaga, New York, at 7:00 p.m.

Annual dues are \$15 (\$18 Canada, \$25 other countries), and membership entitles you to three issues of the *Searchers* and participation in the PGSNYS Yahoo Group. As a new member you will receive an information packet to help you get started. The expiration date of your membership is on the mailing label of the *Searchers*.

Please remit your membership dues by check or money order to:

PGSNYS
c/o Chuck Pyrak
12 Grant Road
Snyder, NY 14226

Please send any changes to your postal or e-mail address to PGSNYS at the above address or E-mail: cpyrak@roadrunner.com

If you are a member, but not receiving e-mail from the PGSNYS mailing list, please send an E-mail to cpyrak@roadrunner.com

* Exceptions: July - picnic and December - Christmas party

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THE *SEARCHERS* NEWSLETTER

For submissions to the *Searchers* newsletter, deadlines are as follows:

1st issue (Spring) - due February 15th for April mailing

2nd issue (Summer) - due June 15th for August mailing

3rd issue (Winter) - due October 15th for December mailing

Submissions to the *Searchers* can be sent by postal mail (c/o *Searchers* Editor: 12645 Route 78, East Aurora, NY 14052) or via e-mail to: editor@pgsnys.org or denise.oliansky@gmail.com

PGSNYS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another year has passed. Our Society is very active in the community, as we continue to encourage others to start their ancestral research and then help them progress through their journey. We are working on several projects that, in the not too distant future, will be of great benefit to Polish genealogists. You can read about these projects in the 2011 PGSNYS Year in Review article at the end of this issue.

I am grateful many our new, as well as our continuing members, are stepping up and volunteering their time and knowledge with everyone. With contributions from so many hands, we can look forward to an even more successful year for our Society in 2012.



David Newman

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodnia!

~ Sincerely, Dave Newman

POTPOURRI

WITAMY! TO NEW PGSNYS MEMBERS

Patricia A. Halko
Sloan, NY

Patricia F. Harris
Hamburg, NY

Nancy Brzezinski
North Tonawanda, NY

William P. Ciesla
Millersville, MD

Sharon Malachowski
Sardinia, NY

Patricia Brzezinski
North Tonawanda, NY

Leonard M. Harris
Hamburg, NY

Douglas King
Blasdell, NY

Joan Frankowski
Depew, NY

The dates for upcoming PGSNYS monthly meetings in the Villa Maria College cafeteria are Thursday, January 12, February 9, March 8, and April 12. We hope to see you there!

A post on Megan Smolenyak's Roots World blog related a disturbing change to the Social Security Administration's policy on fulfilling requests for Social Security applications (called SS-5 forms). The SSA will block out the applicant's parents' names on the SS-5 if the applicant was born less than 100 years ago (born after 1912) and you don't provide proof that the applicant's parents are deceased. If you requested the SS-5 in order to learn those parents' names in the first place, of course you can't prove they are deceased. And you'll be out the nonrefundable \$27 fee you sent with your request. PGSNYS just wants its members to know about this change before you spend the money to try to track down names in this way. You can read Megan Smolenyak's full comments at: <http://megansmolenyak.posterous.com/social-security-administration-extends-foia-r>.

PREWODNIK HANDLOWY

TRANSLATION:

Ś.P. APOLINARY KWIATKOWSKI

Translation by Agnieszka and David Newman

The Przewodnik Handlowy (published 1906-1918) contains biographies of noted citizens of the Buffalo, New York Polonia community. In this issue we present another biography translated verbatim from the original Polish articles.

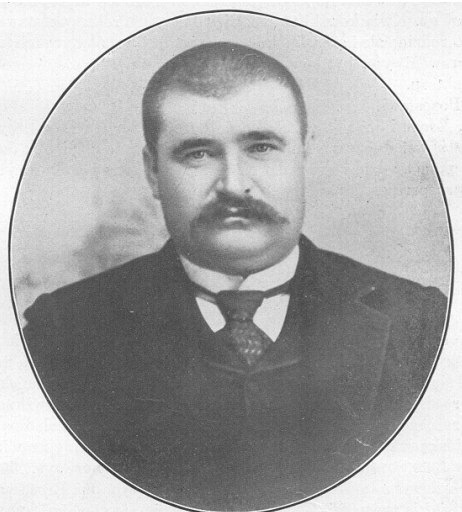
One of the most prominent Polish citizens in Buffalo, was the late Apolinary (Apollinaris) Kwiatkowski, who was born in Gniewkowo of the Greater Kingdom of Poznań. The late Kwiatkowski came to America in 1876, settling in Buffalo where he was then one of a small number of Poles who could almost be counted on your fingers. In Poland, Kwiatkowski worked for five years as a professional miller.

On February 15, 1881, he married Stanisława née Hojnacka. A few years later the Kwiatkowski family started a butcher business at 144 Detroit Street. Because Kwiatkowski was a very capable professional, he perfected a quality brand of products

that were sought after by the Polish Community (Polonia). His business was well known for integrity. His conscientious and untiring work won him permanent customers.

The right hand of the business of the late Kwiatkowski was his wife, Stanisława, who has managed not only to be a great housekeeper and exemplary mother, but also was able to replace her husband whenever the need occurred. Because of this Stanisława was able to create a large (Kwiatkowski) family estate.

The late Apolinary



Śp. Apolinary Kwiatkowski.

Kwiatkowski was not only a great businessman, but as a Pole he laid the foundation for the development of the Polish settlement in Buffalo. He was, in fact, one of the first settlers who helped build Polonia-- which in turn developed a deep admiration and respect for him.

One of the Polish organizations of which he was a member was the Polish National Alliance No 168. Because the late Apolinary dedicated his time to Polonia, this work eventually put a strain on his health.

The late Apolinary Kwiatkowski had such an outgoing personality no one suspected that he was sick for a long time. Although the late Kwiatkowski was a very large and stocky man, his sickness suddenly made him bedridden, from which he never left.

Apolinary Kwiatkowski died on October 29, 1905, leaving not only his family, but also a large circle of friends and Polonia. They are saddened from his death

because he was popular, successful, and possessed a noble character.

The late Kwiatkowski is survived by his wife Stanisława, four sons: Józef (Joseph), Franciczek (Francis), Leon (Leo), and Jan (John), and three daughters Weronika (Veronica), Wiktorja (Viktoria), and Ewa (Eve). After his death, Stanisława, with the help of her children, continues to manage the continuing success of the business.

Translator Notes:

NOTE 1: Ś.P. is an abbreviation for Świętej Pamięci which truly means “In holy remembrance of.” In Polish writing, if you see Ś.P. next to a surname, the person is deceased. The proper English translation is “The late...”

NOTE 2: According to First Names of the Polish Commonwealth: Origins & Meanings by William F. Hoffman and George W. Helon [ISBN 0-924207-06-X] the following is about the given name APOLINARY:

(♂ 1,617)	In 1990 there were 1,617 people with the given name Apolinary in Poland.
[M]	The source of the meaning of the given name Apolinary comes from the book <i>Imiona chrześcijańskie w Średniowiecznej Polsce</i> (Christian Names in Medieval Poland) written by M. Malec.

Let's Help Save Buffalo Polonia History

by Nicole Pohancsek

Recently some of our members have mentioned about genealogical gems they found set out as trash for garbage pick-up or for sale at local garage sales. People were selling their family's naturalization papers, marriage licenses, and old pictures for pennies, or simply tossing them out.

Inspired by these stories, I decided to make a flyer to advertise that the Polish Genealogy Society of New York State will collect these documents if someone no longer wants them.

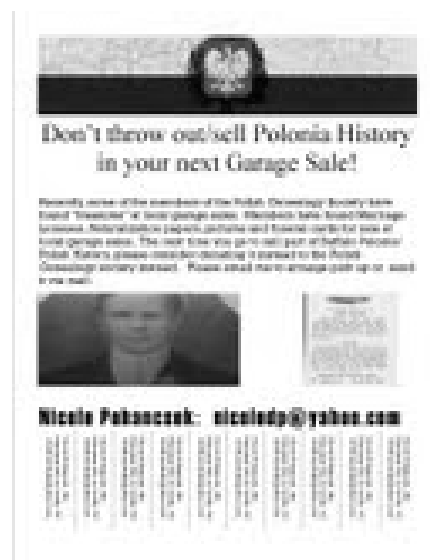
I have hung the flyer

up at a couple of local libraries and have already received some funeral cards. I could use some help getting the word out, so if you would like a copy of the flyer to post at your neighborhood supermarkets, libraries, churches, etc., or to e-mail to friends or family, please e-mail me at: nicoledp@yahoo.com or contact me at the following address:

Nicole Pohancsek
286 Haussauer Rd
Getzville, NY 14068

I will make sure the documents we receive get

archived and indexed, so they can be searched by our members. THANK YOU in advance!



Christmas on Woltz Avenue

December 1913

by Laurel Myszker Keough

One of my most cherished possessions is this vintage photograph of my father, Henry, and his sister, Adeline, taken at Christmas 1913 in their home on Woltz Avenue in Buffalo, New York. This image, frozen in time, is a loving reminder of that very special Christmas. My grandfather and grandmother, Maximilian and Stefania Kolipińska Myszker, celebrated the festive season that year with their seven children, ranging in age from 20 years to 23 months old.

In 1889, my grandfather, a bachelor, immigrated to Buffalo from Prussian Poland. He was a skilled carpenter and eventually found work as a cabinetmaker, crafting the interior of Pullman railroad cars with rare and exotic woods for one of the local railroads. After many years of sacrificing and saving, he purchased the Woltz Avenue home for his family in 1906 for \$1200, but sadly, his wife, Stanisława, died in No-

vember of that same year. Her family in Poland quickly arranged for a new marriage, and my grandmother, accompanied by her brother, Vitalis, traveled from the Poznań area to Buffalo in the Spring of 1907 to marry Max, a widower with four young children.



As I study the photo carefully, the interior of the home with lace curtains, the ornately framed religious picture on the wall, a beautifully decorated Christmas tree with lit candles burning brightly, and an upright piano (not visible in the photo), it seems that indeed this family was experiencing their small piece of the American dream. Notice the large gaslight ceiling fixture with a flame burning at the very top of the photo. The felt banners hanging on the door seem a nod to either college sports or maybe just local advertising.

While my father was too young to remember this particular Christmas, he did recall later years, when the family gathered around the piano,

his eldest sister Helen playing *Koledy* (Christmas carols), and his teenage brother, Jack, on duty with a bucket of water or sand in case the lit candles started the tree on fire. He also remembered the threat of a piece of coal in his stocking if he misbehaved, but instead the stocking would hold a special treat...a juicy and delicious fresh orange.

I try to imagine all the hustle and bustle that ensued in the household preparing for the celebration of Jesus' birth. Many old world Polish customs would be joyfully repeated. There would be several trips to the nearby Broadway market to buy the large fir tree and the provisions for the Christmas Eve dinner, which I am sure included loaves of wonderful crusty rye bread, cabbage for *kapusta*, mushrooms for the special Christmas soup, and various fillings for the pierogi.

The poultry of choice may have been carried home from the market in a sack, alive and squawking in protest all the way. The market also offered many sweet confections like *placek* and poppy seed cake, *pierniki* (gingerbread cookies), and ribbon candy. The baking and cooking would continue nonstop for days.

I have always wondered if the toys under the tree, the wooly lamb and porcelain faced doll, were purchased from a vendor at the market or perhaps at Eckhardt's Dry Goods Store on the corner of Broadway and Fillmore Avenue. I'm sure my grandfather handcrafted the little wooden fence around the Christmas tree.

On Christmas Eve, the three older girls, Helen, Lucy, and Elizabeth helped prepare the *Wigilia* table, laying at least a few wisps of straw under the tablecloth to remind everyone that Jesus was born in a stable.

One of Poland's most treasured traditions during the *Wigilia* is the sharing of

oplatek, an unconsecrated wafer similar to holy communion. A small piece of the wafer is broken off and shared first by the parents and their honored guests, and then by the children from the oldest to the youngest, along with a wish for good health, good luck, and great fortune. Sophie Hodorowicz-Knab tells us in her book, *The Polish Country Kitchen Cookbook*, "as families and friends migrated from Poland to countries throughout the world, a piece of *oplatek* was sent in a letter to say, 'I share this with you on Christmas Eve.'"

After everyone had shared the *oplatek*, the meal would begin and several courses of delicious traditional foods would be served and enjoyed. Later, the family worshiped at Midnight Mass at Transfiguration Church, a few blocks away on Sycamore Street. As bedtime approached on this frosty winter evening, the younger children, bundled up in their woolen long underwear, would sleep all together under a toasty warm featherbed known in Poland as a *pierzyna*. Santa would soon visit!

All of the holiday festivities, the old world customs mingled with the new, were shared with the Myszker's closest family. Stefania's sister and brother-in-law, Wladyslawa (Lottie) and Joseph Sniatecki, and their younger brothers, Leon and Edmund Kolipiński, who were teenagers at the time, and Stefania's aunt, Kathryn Suchocka (the family matchmaker who arranged both of Max's marriages) all lived close by in Buffalo's East Side Polonia and gathered together for this memorable Christmas celebration.

I am so thankful to my dear cousin, the late Jean Sniatecki MacKearnin, for gifting me with this cherished photo. It has a special place of honor in my family treasures.



MEMBER MOMENTS

How I Met my 4th Cousin, Once Removed

by Daniel A. Domino

My story begins on March 5, 2007. While I was on the Ancestry website, I saw that someone was searching for information on a name that I had previously researched. The name was Casimer Domino, with a birth date in 1914. The person posting the query was Lisa Reiswig.

I contacted Lisa by e-mail and told her that I had information to share with her concerning her relative Casimer. Lisa wrote back and told me that Casimer was her grandfather on her mother's side. Lisa said that her mother was planning a trip to Poland and wanted to visit her father's town, but did not know the town's name. Lisa said that her grandparents were very secretive and did not speak much about their early life.

My research indicated that Casimer was born in Cleveland, Ohio on June 11, 1914. Casimer's parents, John and Maryanna Domino, were born in Niwiska, Poland. Niwiska is also the town where my great grandfather was born. John and Maryanna both died during the influenza epidemic of 1918. As a result, Casimer, his brother, and three sisters were placed in an orphanage in Cleveland. Probably this was the reason why he never talked about his early life.

I continued to e-mail Lisa every so often, and we exchanged photos on line. Lisa was born in Cleveland but now lives in Florida. She is married and has two daughters and one son.

The story continues. In one of my e-mails to Lisa last year I invited her to come and visit us if she was ever up North. This summer she decided to visit her aunt who still lives in Cleveland. Since Buffalo is only about three hours away, she took me up on my invitation. Lisa traveled with her two daughters, since her husband and son had to work and could not get away. We now have two empty bedrooms in our house, so I invited Lisa and her girls to stay with us.

I called my daughter in Virginia and told her that we were expecting a visit from Lisa. She was slightly alarmed. She said for all we knew, Lisa could be a serial killer. When Lisa and her daughters arrived, I told her what my daughter Stefanie said. Lisa told me that her aunt in Cleveland told her the exact same thing!

Lisa and her girls stayed with us for three days.



My wife and I took Lisa and her girls to Niagara Falls, the Buffalo Zoo, the Buffalo Waterfront, and some nice restaurants, including the Polish Villa. But best of all, we exchanged documents and photos. I made copies of all the documents and old photos that Lisa brought with her. As a result of Lisa's visit, I have grown fond of her and her two daughters. I feel much closer to them than I do to many of my first cousins.

I used the kinship report on Family Tree Maker to determine that Lisa was my 4th cousin, once removed. Lisa's great grandfather and my great grandfather were 1st cousins, once removed.

My Memories of Yesteryear

by Edward Prabucki

(Also published Wednesday, Aug 10, 2011 in the *Am-Pol Eagle*)

As a youth in grammar school, my family and grandparents – Petyk – became ensnared in an insurmountable depression, that to this day I am certain has no equal. In our present era there are job postings. In the 1930s, only the WPA and CCC posted openings for the unemployed.

My father and grandfather felt the pain of being unemployed with meager savings void of unemployment insurance, much less Social Security, which resulted in a life of want. Burdened by a lack of daily necessities, my grandfather's sons, Leon and Edward Petyk, in their late teens, decided to seek other avenues to place sufficient edibles on the kitchen table of their home.

With determination and dedication, Uncles Leo and Edward obtained a newspaper route. This was in an era in Buffalo when four newspapers, the *Buffalo Times*, *Dziennik Dla Wszystkich*, *Buffalo Evening News*, and *Courier-Express* were printed and delivered. The *Dziennik* route was very difficult to obtain, as Buffalo's East Side citizens preferred and, I felt, were acclimated to *Dziennik* over the other three newspapers. My uncles were well down on the list to obtain the *Dziennik* route. Nevertheless they obtained and delivered the *Buffalo Evening News*. I recall my uncles' weekly earnings for delivering the *News* was \$2 at the maximum. Needless to say, my uncles utilized other means to supplement the daily needs of my grandparents.

One day that is engraved in the back pages of my mind, is the day when my Uncle Leo had me accompany him through the meat packing industry in proximity of William and Fillmore – down Metcalfe through Howard and up Lewis Street - to scrounge for soup bones, arriving afterwards on Mills Street. My dedicated Grandma Petyk prepared, with the skills of a chef, the soup which fed and erased the pitiful faces of hunger.

As I lived and survived my youth during the Great Depression of the 1930s, life had to be sustained at the basic physical level. Staying at my Grandma Petyk's home, not once did I overhear words of self pity. There weren't any conversations with animosity nor a dialogue of disgust towards anyone. Never did I overhear any sarcasm or finger pointing towards anyone for this dreadful and emotional Depression. As for me, barely nine years old and still attending the parochial school at Transfiguration, I felt I was living in a world of abstractions, perplexed as to why there was a void of financial means for our families to live on.

Cont'd on page 10

Another incident very much engraved in my mind from that era was when my parents and grandparents became aware that canned vegetable soups would be distributed from a vacant store at Sycamore and Howlett. My parents felt that the Moral Law placed an obligation on our government to assist the citizens in need. I stood in line with my uncles for endless hours to obtain a package of canned goods. Certainly I felt that our government was aware of Buffalo's East Side shortcomings and deprivations and decided to alleviate our need for edibles.

Most of that summer vacation, I stayed at my grandparents' home at 219 Mills Street. My grandparents at times attended daily Mass at Transfiguration Church, to pray, I assume, for my grandfather's and my father's continued employment.

As I discussed and reminisced about the Great Depression decades later with my compatriots, one or two would claim that Hitler's foreign policy put an end to the Depression of 1930s.

The Black Sheep in the Family

by Jacki Gray

My Babcia, Anna Jeziorska Tomaszewska, always had this photo of her family on her dresser. Well-dressed parents, 4 scrubbed little boys all decked out in what looked like uncomfortable clothes, and the new baby. I loved to look at these unknown people, proudly showing off their new American prosperity, knowing Babcia was the baby on her mother's lap, born the year after they'd arrived here in 1904. I searched those faces for traces of mine and my sisters'.

I knew that the mother, Zofia Sroda Jeziorska, had died within four years, leaving behind those children and another son born since the photo. I never met the older brothers, and I was always intrigued by the story that one, Edouard, had been deported back to Europe.

The story was always hazy. My mom said she heard he was a communist sympathizer and tire smuggler. Babcia said she didn't really know what he did, but said, "he got in some trouble, and Father would not speak up for him." She thought he was robbing boxcars or running liquor from Canada. They both said they got letters from him after his deportation asking for money and goods to be sent to Germany, where he was sent and where he apparently stayed. They lost contact after the War broke out, and they never heard what happened to him.

It was not easy to get Babcia to talk about him. And I always wondered. Years passed, as did Mom and Babcia. There was no one I could ask anymore.



Parents Antoni Jeziorski and Zofia Sroda. Baby on mother's lap is Anna Jeziorska, my Babcia. Boys are, from the left: Anthony, Edward, Casimer, and Fred. (Antoni not clearly visible due to poor quality of old picture)

So, in May 2010, I started digging. First phone call was to the Immigration/Customs National Customer Service Center. From there I was given one government number after another to call. Each one referred me to yet another, and we went round and round. I was told to request a Freedom of Information Act Form G-639 requesting the deportation records, which I did, and took it to the local Customs Office in Buffalo. They told me I was not entitled to get the information. More phone calls followed. I was repeatedly referred to a website address that didn't work. Frustrated, I gave up.

This year, in April, I tried again, making more calls, trying the website address again without the "/genealogy" part and it worked. On that I requested yet another Form G-639 which the directions said to send to US Citizenship and Immigration Services in Lee's Summit, MO. After a month, the form was returned with a letter saying that as of April 2008 they no longer processed this type of request and referred me alongyou would THINK that someone I spoke to would have known that two years after the fact! I sent \$20 to the USCIS Genealogy Program in Chicago, along with the form, as instructed. After six weeks, I got a letter saying there existed some records under the name, but they could not guarantee that it was MY relative or whether the records still existed or what condition they were in, but for another \$39, I could re-send the info to the National Archives in Washington DC and see what they had.

In another three weeks I got it! Fifty-nine pages of court transcripts, declarations, prison records, letters to congressman, and notes from Customs officials and lawyers.

And following, in a nutshell, is the story of a life perhaps not so well spent. Was he a thug, or merely a child who lost his mother too soon and received no love and support from his autocratic father? You decide.

Sometime in 1901 or 1902 (info varies a lot) - Edward Jeziorski, born in Lvov/Lemberg, Galicia, Austria/Poland

Sept 7, 1904 - arrives in Philadelphia with mother Zofia, brothers Antoni, Ferdinand, and Kazimierz. Father Anton had arrived before them.

July 27, 1905 - my Babcia Anna was born

July ?? 1907 - Uncle Matty (Mieczyslaw) is born

April ?? 1909 - mother Zofia dies

??within the year, prior to census in June 1910 - father Anton marries a widow, Marianna Ratajczak

1917 - Edziu is sent to a Truant School for a 3 month sentence

1918 - receives 2 years probation for robbing a boxcar

1918 - gets caught robbing boxcars - took a ton of coal valued at \$3 - and is sent for 18 months to the New York House of Refuge on Randall's Island

1919 - paroled from Randal's Island

1923 - fined \$10 for stealing a bicycle. Court record reports that he said he did not mean to steal it.

1925 - arrested and charged with 'unlawful entry,' sentenced to 2 years hard

Cont'd on page 12

labor at Elmira State Reformatory.

October 24, 1926 -deportation procedures started, on the grounds of "moral turpitude," citing his repeated offenses. Edward resists, stating (incorrectly) that he is a citizen by virtue of his father's naturalization when Edjziu was a minor. Subsequent testimony from his father refutes that, and Edward later says that he was mistaken about that info, although in his rather snarky responses to the interrogation, he refuses to do anything to provide a birth certificate, and says yet again, "How can you deport me when my father is a citizen?"

September 1928- his eldest brother Antoni posts a \$1000.00 bond to get him released from Elmira into the family's custody pending deportation.

October 1928 - Polish Consulate reports that they are attempting to get sufficient info to issue a Polish Passport for him.

November 1928 -Edward is released into his brother's custody under the terms of the bond.

July 1929- passport issued and deportation is scheduled for August.

August 20, 1929 - reported that "the alien" did not appear as instructed for deportation and the bond will be revoked.

September 6, 1929 -Chairman of the bond review board advises that Edward was not given the required 10 days to report, receiving only 3 days notice, therefore the bond should not be revoked and another sailing date should be set.


February 1930 -date for deportation set for March 2, 1930, from the port of New York, bound for Danzig.

March 2, 1930 -Edward leaves by rail for New York.

March 6, 1930 -letter from a local congressman inquiring if there was anything to be done to keep him in the country.

March 7, 1930 - response from Immigration to the congressman indicating that Edward was already conveyed to New York as part of a deportation party.

And here his story ends. We do not know what happened to him after that, and he did not marry there as far as we know. I was able to find an organization in Germany that traces victims of the Nazi regime, and if they can find any info on him at all, they will send it. I doubt that a Polish Catholic, deported, petty criminal fared well under the Reich. I suppose he reverted to doing what he knew -either robbing boxcars or his legal vocation of plasterer. He could have ended up in a labor camp. Perhaps we will be able to find closure.

As an addendum, his younger brother Casimir (Casey) was also arrested several times for robbing boxcars. The second time, one member of the gang was shot and killed by a railroad detective, and someone stabbed that detective who, against all odds, survived the attack. After this second arrest, Casey was sent to Elmira, and was released before he reached 21. He apparently kept his nose clean after that, or at least did not get caught! Casey got his citizenship in 1932, married, and raised a family. He died of TB in 1951. 

Serendipity and Genealogy

by Laurel Myszker Keough

If genealogy is your passion, you have undoubtedly heard of or experienced your own fortunate strokes of serendipity while searching for your ancestors. Is what we find just a happy accident? Or, as many of us believe, have our ancestors somehow helped us uncover this previously elusive information? To quote Megan Smolenyak from her book, *In Search of Our Ancestors*, "We do indeed honor our ancestors when we search for them, and it seems, they return the favor!"

This past June at the Polish Heritage Festival at the Hamburg Fairgrounds, I was entering names in the PGSNYS databases for our visitors, being extremely careful to spell the Polish names accurately. So, it was a surprise when the next inquiry came from a Mr. Bob Johnson, asking for a check on JOHNSON, a surname I could spell without any prompting. In that moment, I remembered doing research several years earlier for a *Searchers* article that featured the pioneer families of St. Stanislaus parish, including a Johnson family. "Was your family fairly prominent in Buffalo's east side Polonia?" I asked. Bob replied, "Well, yes, my grandfather was Jacob Johnson, one of the first teachers at St. Stanislaus School.

I found several entries for his Johnson family in our PGSNYS database, but the real treasure was that I remembered an article about his family from a 1934 Buffalo newspaper, *The Buffalo Times*, that I could share with him. The story included a remembrance from Bob's grandmother, Mrs. Eva Johnson, about her First Holy Communion Day. She was a member of the parish's very first communion class in 1875. Eva Stopińska recollected, "All of the rest of the class were boys, and they teamed up, leaving me alone," she said. "But Father John (Pitass) saw my predicament, and he walked with me to the communion rail. How proud I was, in my white dress and white shoes and stockings, with the wreath of white wax blossoms on my head."

Bob and I exchanged email information, and I quickly sent him a copy of the article. He was very excited and appreciative to have discovered these unknown family remembrances. Serendipity had certainly played a role here, because if Bob and I had not connected that day, he may never have known about that coveted newspaper story that gave him a glimpse into his grandmother's memories.

Cont'd on page 14

Dnia 29 czerwca 1875 następujące dzieci po raz pierwszy przystąpiły do Komunii św.

Sojka Józef	Karalus Tomasz	Stopiński Marcin	Owezarczak Jan
Pilarski Ignacy	Frydrychowicz Karol	Polcyn Marcin	Dąbrowski Ignacy
Grzechowiak Wawrzyn.	Borowiak Marcin	Rożan Hieronim	Stopińska Ewa

Scan from St. Stanislaus Parish, Buffalo, NY Jubilee book showing First Holy Communion Class June 29, 1875

As a result of our contact, Bob shared additional information about his family including that he had recently learned his great grandfather, Ambrose Johnson, (Jasiek in Poland) was one of the first Polish settlers in Dunkirk, New York, arriving in the mid 1850's. Bob had made a research trip to Dunkirk to look for Ambrose's grave, but was disappointed when he was unable to find the place of burial or any other record that could verify Ambrose's date of death.

Next, the power of networking came into play. In July at our annual PGSNYS picnic, I spoke to our longtime member, Jim Lyons, a resident of Dunkirk, NY, asking if he knew of any resources that could help with the Ambrose Johnson/Jasiek questions, and he graciously offered to check out a local Polish cemetery index he knew about. Jim found Ambrose Jasiek on the St. Hyacinth's Cemetery website, which listed the date of death and the fact he was buried in an unmarked grave. I passed this information on to Bob, and he headed down to Dunkirk to look for Ambrose's obituary in the Dunkirk Observer newspaper archives. Within a few weeks, Bob was holding a copy of his great grandfather's death certificate in his hands. In addition, Keith Kaszubik searched his Early Polonia database and found two entries for Johnson/Jasiek, which provided new information to Bob.

Finally, in September, I received an updated surname index from the WNY Genealogical Society that contained an entry for Johnson/Jasiek. Bob made that contact and soon had the name of the ship on which his family had immigrated to America and a copy of the ship manifest.

The saying "It takes a village" seems to fit this scenario very well. With a touch of serendipity and some genealogical networking, collectively, we removed a few more bricks from Bob Johnson's genealogy wall.



Jacob Johnson



Ewa Stopińska
Johnson

Marie Curie Google Doodle: Art Celebrates Birthday of Nobel Prize-winning Pioneer

by Michael Cavanaugh
(Blogger for the *Washington Post*)

To honor one of the most enduringly inspiring scientists ever to grace a lab, France and Poland declared 2011 to be the Year of Marie Curie.

Now Google joins the welcome pageant of prominent tributes. The California company's search-engine home page on Nov. 7 celebrates the 144th anniversary of Madame Curie's birth with a pastel-colored "Google Doodle" so evocative of her era.

Curie is the latest science figure to join Google's pantheon of "Doodled" researchers, including Thomas Edison and "father of genetics" Gregor Mendel and "Vitamin C" scientist Albert Szent-Györgyi.

The laurels accorded Curie are numerous and still accumulating a century after she won her second Nobel Prize -- the first of only two people ever to win the prize in multiple fields (the other being Linus Pauling). She was also the first woman ever to

win the Nobel, and the first researcher to win in multiple sciences (physics and chemistry). But the breadth and depth and influence of her career -- as well as the triumphs and tragedies of her life -- paint a much fuller picture of the groundbreaking figure who in a 2009 New Scientist poll was voted "the most inspirational woman in science."

Born in Warsaw in 1867 as Maria Skłodowska, Curie left her native Poland after she was deemed too poor to marry her would-be fiance, future esteemed mathematician Kazimierz Zorawski. So with her sister's help, she relocated to France in the 1890s, studying at the University of Paris (Sorbonne) and meeting her scientific "soulmate," Pierre Curie. As they both stud-

ied the science of magnetism, they discovered, too, their own personal magnetic attraction.

Together, Marie and Pierre Curie did pioneering work in "radioactivity" (a term she coined), working with uranium, isolating radioactive isotopes and discovering the elements radium and polonium -- the latter named for her native land.

The Curies shared in the 1903 Nobel for physics, bringing them fame as side by side, they grew their professional and personal lives. They had two daughters before Pierre's untimely death when he was struck by a horse-drawn vehicle on a rainy street in 1906.

Rendered "wretched"

Cont'd on page 16



and lonely by the tragedy, Marie Curie poured herself into her work, becoming the first woman to become a Sorbonne professor. In 1911, Curie received her second Nobel, this time for chemistry.

Several years later, during World War I, Curie helped set up mobile field hospitals that featured primitive X-ray equipment to help detect shrapnel in soldiers. She worked in the field with her teenage daughter Irene, who -- with her husband, Frederic Joliot-Curie -- would later win the 1935 chemistry Nobel for her work on arti-

cial radioactivity.

Exposed to so many radioactive materials throughout her career, Marie Curie died of aplastic anemia in 1934.

In addition to her many honors, she founded the Curie Institutes in France and Poland; co-founded the Warsaw Radium Institute; and headed the Pasteur Institute.

On screen, Curie's inspiring life has been portrayed by such actresses as Oscar-nominated Greer Garson and Isabelle Huppert. And last month, Lauren Redniss's

Radioactive: Marie & Pierre Curie: A Tale of Love and Fallout became the first non-fiction graphic narrative to be named a finalist for the National Book Award.

Curie's accomplishments in the lab led to her being interred (with her husband) at the Pantheon, Paris -- the first woman so honored based on her work. Curie helped forever change not only how science thought about radioactivity, but also how the world perceived women in science. Happy birthday, Madame Curie.



This article is printed verbatim from: http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/comic-riffs/post/marie-curie-google-doodle-art-celebrates-birthday-of-nobel-prize-winning-pioneer/2011/11/07/gIQAYsfHuM_blog.html accessed November 7, 2011. Google art from Google.com; pictures of Marie Curie and medallion from Wikipedia.



Marie Curie in 1911
Second Nobel Prize



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Medallion
Stained Glass by Jozef C. Mazur, 1955
(Located at University at Buffalo)

2011 PGSNYS Year in Review

It has been a busy year for PGSNYS and its members. The Board of Directors and Trustees wish to acknowledge and thank all of its members for their support and interest in Polish genealogy and history. We are especially grateful to those who have contributed so much of their time, expertise, and resources to continue the Society's community outreach and education efforts in the areas of genealogical research and Polish history in New York State. This year our members (and others) provided presentations in a variety of venues, offered genealogy research assistance at many community functions, and authored numerous articles for this *Searchers* newsletter and for local newspapers, such as the *Am-Pol Eagle*. Many members assisted at our monthly membership meetings by providing refreshments, organizing our annual picnic and Wigilia dinner, providing presentations or arranging for guest speakers, and helping new members and guests with their genealogical research. Others have worked tirelessly on the many PGSNYS projects which augment the PGSNYS rich collection of research databases. PGSNYS would be nothing without its members, and it is with sincere appreciation that we look back at this past year. This was a year that provided all of us opportunities to expand our own genealogical research, learn more about our Polonia history, and offer people in our local communities the impetus and assistance to undertake their own genealogical journeys. Following are some of the activities and events which made 2011 successful, interesting, and fun.

Monthly Membership Meeting Guest Speakers and Presentations:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Jan 13 | Open forum for questions and research |
| Feb 10 | Open forum for questions and research |
| Mar 10 | Peter Filim "Old Traditions and Customs of the Death Ritual of the Past" |
| Apr 14 | PGSNYS Databases presentation by David Newman |
| May 12 | Peter Jablonski "Buffalo Meatpacking Industry and NY Central Stockyards" |
| Jun 9 | Edward Prabucki's 90th birthday (see photo) and open forum for questions and research |
| July 9 | Annual PGSNYS Picnic at Dave Newman's house (see photo) |
| Aug 11 | Edward Zawadzki talked about his book, "The Poles in the New World" |
| Sept 8 | Open forum for questions and research |
| Oct 13 | Szymon Tomsia, Polish exchange student at Canisius College. Discussed his project documenting Polish Americans and their communities. |
| Nov 10 | Nicole and Gene Pohancsek presented lessons learned at the 2011 Polish Genealogy Conference sponsored by the Genealogical Society of Connecticut on October 14-15 |
| Dec 8 | Annual PGSNYS Wigilia Feast |

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Edward Prabucki's
90th Birthday!
June 9

2011 Annual PGSNYS Picnic
at Dave Newman's house
July 9



Community Presentations:

Feb 8 Dave Newman presented "Polish Influence in America" to Boy Scout Troop 583, at the Colden Senior Center, assisted by Maureen Gleason and Keith Kaszubik

Apr 30 NYS Council of Genealogical Organizations Rochester, NY - Dave Newman and Pat Neuland

August 16 and October 18 Genesee Area Genealogical Society, Batavia, NY – Dave Newman presented on Polish genealogy

Oct 22 Annual LDS Genealogy Seminar – Dave Newman presented, Maureen Gleason assisted

Traveling Road Show (PGSNYS at Community events):

April 25 Dyngus Day Party Corpus Christi Athletic Center - Maureen Gleason, Dolores Ferguson, Jackie Gray

June 10-11 9th Annual Polish Heritage Festival Hamburg Fairgrounds - Laurel Keough, Maureen Gleason, Pauline Gubera, Ted Smardz, Dolores Ferguson, Lyn Mycek, Keith Kaszubik, Ruth & Ed Madar, John Cyna, Denise Oliansky, and Daniel Kij

Jul 14-17 33rd Annual Cheektowaga Polish American Arts Festival- Maureen Gleason, Keith Kaszubik, Lyn Mycek, Dan Kij, Ted Smardz

August 19-21 Corpus Christi Dozynki Harvest Festival - Lyn Mycek, Mary and Greg Witul, David Newman

September 10 4th annual PGSNYS Genealogy Fair at St. Gabriel RC Church, Elma, NY - Pierre LaJoie (organizer), Ed Prabucki, Maureen Gleason, Dolores Ferguson, John Cyna, Laurel Keough, Denise Oliansky, Chuck Pyrak, Dave Newman, Ted Smardz, Dave Lodyga

September 25 Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral Annual Dozynki Harvest Festival - Maureen Gleason, Keith Kaszubik, David Newman



PGSNYS table at the
Polish Heritage Festival
June 10-11

PGSNYS Genealogy
Fair at St. Gabriel
Church on
September 10



We are grateful to everyone who has contributed in some way to our Society this past year. It is impossible to mention every member contribution in our limited space, but several people continue to provide invaluable service, and/or have taken on new projects for PGSNYS in the past year, and warrant recognition.

Maureen Gleason and Ed Kornowski have taken the lead on the Dziennik newspaper digitization project, handling the fee negotiations, meetings, and discussions with Biel's staff. Maureen also continues to retrieve all death notice requests from the Dziennik, serves as the PGSNYS media person, and documents PGSNYS activities and events for the Society.

Since April, Dolores Ferguson has taken on the job of digitizing and indexing for the Funeral Card project.

One of our newer members, Nicole Pohanczek, has spurred a new project to digitize and index all the records from three Polish churches in Buffalo, and another to collect unwanted family documents from the community to be digitized and indexed for the PGSNYS database collection.

Ed Prabucki, Keith Kaszubik, and Denise Oliansky have written numerous articles this year about Buffalo's Polonia, the PGSNYS databases, and Polish genealogy for the *Am-Pol Eagle*.

Dolores Konopa established the databases on the Yahoo group site and continues to update the marriage, baptismal, and other indexes.

Rita Hider and Barbara and Don Golibersuch never fail to bring wonderful refreshments to every monthly meeting and are also instrumental in planning, organizing, and providing supplies for our Wigilia feast every year.

THANK YOU ONE AND ALL FOR ALL YOU DO!

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FROM:

TO:

**POLISH GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY OF NEW YORK
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www.pgsnys.org**

