

PRESERVING  
OUR PAST  
SINCE 1988

# SEARCHERS

NO. 63

SUMMER

2013, ISSUE 2

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Staff Sergeant Marcelli Koralewski (aka Mike Korlawski/Karlawski)  
25th Battery of the Field Regiment of Artillery  
Enlisted 11/9/1901 in Batavia, NY to serve three years. Honorably Discharged  
from the Army of the United States by reason of Expiration of Term of Service,  
at Fort Riley, Kansas 11/8/1904

# PGSNYS - FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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**PRESERVING  
OUR PAST  
SINCE 1988**

**25th  
ANNIVERSARY  
SEPTEMBER, 2013**

**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 \$20 (\$25 Canada, \$30 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: [membership@pgsnys.org](mailto:membership@pgsnys.org)**

**If you are a member, but not receiving E-mail from the PGSNYS mailing list, please  
send an E-mail to [membership@pgsnys.org](mailto:membership@pgsnys.org)**

\*Exceptions: July - picnic and December - Member Christmas party

## 2013 PGSNYS OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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### PGSNYS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President:** Denise Oliansky  
**Vice President:** Ted Smardz  
**Secretary:** Nicole Pohancsek  
**Treasurer:** Chuck Pyrak

### PGSNYS TRUSTEES

Walter Kloc  
Pierre LaJoie  
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### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

**Searchers** Denise Oliansky  
**Library** Laurel Keough  
**Media** Maureen Gleason  
**Membership** Chuck Pyrak  
**Refreshments** Rita Hider & Don &  
Barbara Golibersuch

**Webmaster:**

**Historian:**

**Roadshow**

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## THE SEARCHERS NEWSLETTER

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*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* (articles as MS Word doc; photos as .jpg)  
should be sent via e-mail to:

**[editor@pgsnys.org](mailto:editor@pgsnys.org) or [denise.oliansky@gmail.com](mailto:denise.oliansky@gmail.com)**

# PGSNYS PRESIDENT'S FINAL MESSAGE

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Dear Members,

At the June 2013 General Meeting, I announced my resignation as PGSNYS President. Most of our local members have known that my wife Agnieszka's brain cancer came back with a vengeance in August 2012. I must step down after a 16 year run as president and focus my energies on my wife's health.

I'd like to thank everyone for their help all these years. I couldn't do my job without your support. All these years I considered myself just doing my part by keeping the Society together. As a team we made some real accomplishments with our computer databases, traveling road-shows, meeting programs, and just doing our best to help members research their Polish ancestors.

Thank you for your patronage.

Bóg Zapłać

Sincerely, David Newman



**David Newman**

## POTPOURRI

### WITAMY! TO NEW PGSNYS MEMBERS

RICHARD A. ZOTARA, CHEEKTOWAGA, NY  
EDMUND KOSIOREK, BATAVIA, NY  
CLIFFORD W. PENKE, MATTHEWS, NC

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ⇒ Due to Dave Newman's resignation as president of PGSNYS, a special election was held during the August 8, 2013 membership meeting to elect a new president. Denise Oliansky was elected president, leaving a vacancy for PGSNYS secretary. Nicole Pohancsek has agreed to serve in that capacity until the November elections.
- ⇒ September, 2013 marks the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the PGSNYS! We will celebrate at the September 12th meeting with cake and an oral history of the Society presented by Vice President, Ted Smardz.
- ⇒ The Annual PGSNYS Genealogy Fair at St. Gabriel's Church on Clinton Street in Elma, NY, will be held on Saturday, September 14, 2013 from 11-3. This year's guest speaker is Greg Kinal, and his presentation from 12-1:30 will be, '*How to Spice Up Your Family History.*'
- ⇒ The dates for upcoming 2013 PGSNYS monthly membership meetings in the Villa Maria College cafeteria, 7 PM, are Thursday, September 12, October 10, and November 14. There is no regular meeting in December, as we celebrate the annual PGSNYS Christmas Party for members and their guests (not open to the general public).

# Solving a Military Service Mystery

by Denise M. Oliansky

“...oh the pain of  
having a favorite  
family saga  
shattered in the  
face of facts!”

When I was growing up, two proudly proclaimed stories about my maternal grandfather, Marcelli Koralewski, were: ① he lied about his age to enlist in the army, because he was too young; and ② he served in the Spanish-American War, during which he was stationed in Cuba. The story never went so far as to state *definitively* that he was one of Teddy Roosevelt’s famed Rough Riders, but I remember believing it was certainly a possibility. There is a marker on Grandpa Marcelli’s gravestone attesting to his service in the Spanish-American War, and the family stories include the one about his occasional nip of whiskey in later years to quiet the intestinal tapeworm he brought home as a result of wading through Cuban swamps! I kid you not.

In light of these firmly held family truisms, a close examination a few years ago of Grandpa Marcelli’s military discharge document caused me some befuddlement. As I recalled, the Spanish-American War was very short-lived; nicknamed by Teddy Roosevelt “a splendid little war,” because it only lasted 100 days and resulted in relatively few casualties; specifically (I looked it up), 3549, including 332 killed in battle, 2,957 deaths from disease, and 260 deaths when the U.S.S. Maine exploded (which actually occurred before the war). The war began in April and ended on December 10, 1898, resolved with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. Knowing this, my *second* thought was, how did Grandpa Marcelli serve in the Spanish-American War when this discharge document indicates he did not enlist until November, 1901? The Spanish-American War was over for nearly three years by then.

My *third* thought was, since he was born on December 24, 1882, Marcelli was one month shy of 19 years of age and, therefore, *not* underage when he enlisted. At the time of the Spanish-American War, Congress had declared that all males between 18 and 45 were subject to military duty. His Army discharge document indicated he was 21 when he enlisted, so while he *did* lie about his age, stating himself to be older than he was, there was no apparent reason for him to do so.

Do you want to know what my *first* thought was? *That is not his name.* The name on the document is *Michael Korlawski*. Huh?? Now where did that come from? This last mystery is still to be resolved, hopefully by acquiring his enlistment papers at some point.

But, oh the pain of having a favorite family saga shattered in the face of facts! Okay, okay. So he lied about his age (but wasn’t underage

# ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES



To all whom it may concern

Know Ye, That Mike Korlawski  
a 1st Sergeant of 25th Battery of the Field Regiment  
of Artillery who was enlisted on the Ninth day of  
November one thousand nine hundred and one  
to serve three years is hereby Honorably Discharged from the  
Army of the United States by reason of Expiration of term  
of service

The said Mike Korlawski was born in  
Eastern in the State of Maryland  
and when enlisted was 21 years of age, 5 feet 7  
inches high, Light Ruddy complexion, Blue eyes, Brown hair  
and by occupation a Baker

Given under my hand at Artillery Subpost Fort Riley Kansas  
this Ninth day of November, in the year of our Lord  
one thousand nine hundred one

W. Douglas  
1st Colonel Artillery Corps Commanding Subpost

### CHARACTER

No objection to his reenlistment is known to exist.

"Excellent."

Wm. H. Hain

Captain Artillery Corps  
Commanding 25th Battery 3rd Art.

(A. G. O. No. 79 June, 1902.)

Marceli Koralewski (aka Mike Korlawski)  
U.S. Army Discharge document (front)

## MILITARY RECORD

Continuous Service at date of discharge: 3 years ~~xxx~~ months ~~xxx~~ days

Previous Service: None

Non-commissioned officer. App'd. 1st Dec 12-03 per S.O. No. 101 Subpost Ft. Riley, Kansas.  
App'd. 2nd per S.O. No. 101 Subpost July 23-04 App'd. 1st per S.O. No. 101 July 24-04 Ft. Riley, Kansas.

Marksmanship: 1st Class Summer per S.O. No. 101 Headquarters Northern Division Saint Louis Missouri dated June 7-04

Battles, engagements, skirmishes, expeditions: Engagements at Butig,

Davao and Bangabas Sept 15-19-02. Soir Sept 22-02. Main October 1-02. Bagayan February 19-02

Battle of Bacolod April 15th and 16th 1903. Engagement at Calahui April 24th 1903.

Marceli Koralewski (aka Michael Korlawski)  
 U.S. Army discharge document (partial back view)  
 Military Record

when he enlisted), and he wasn't in the Spanish-American War – with or without Teddy Roosevelt. He also claimed to be born in Maryland, and I know he was born in Poland. But wait! There was even more bafflement to be had! On the back of the discharge document was his military record and a list of battles in which Grandpa Marceli participated. Well, that made no sense. If the Spanish-American War was over before he even joined up, why were there battles listed? Hmmm...*another* mystery!

It was time to do some digging. Off-hand, I did not recognize the battle locations as being Cuban or anything else, so I did a Google search of the first place on the list, *Butig*. Well, this was interesting. That's in the Philippines. What was Grandpa Marceli doing in the Philippines? Did the Spanish-American War involve the Philippines? At the time, I simply didn't remember enough about it, so that led to more research, which determined that, yes, the Spanish-American War was all about getting Spain to relinquish control of its long-held colonies --Cuba and the Philippines. So why were military battles still being waged in the Philippines three years after the war ended?

Well, as it turns out, Grandpa Marcelli served in a war that is rarely acknowledged, but known by several names when mentioned at all: ‘The Forgotten War;’ ‘The Philippine Insurrection;’ ‘The Philippine-American War;’ ‘The Filipino War for Independence.’ That last one might give you a hint that the U.S. might not have worn the white hat in this one. I personally had never heard of it. It was never mentioned in any American History class I ever took. So, for the benefit of others who may not know about this conflict either, here is a very brief recap of what I learned.

The Spanish-American War was fought in Cuba, the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico between the U.S. and Spain (obviously). The causes of the conflict were many, but the immediate ones were America's support of Cuba's ongoing struggle against Spanish rule and the mysterious explosion of the U.S.S. Maine in Havana Harbor. The Filipinos had been fighting for their independence from Spain since 1896, but without success. Throughout the Spanish-American War, the Filipinos and the Americans worked as allies. There were various communications between Filipino insurgents, led by Emilio Aguinaldo, and American leaders, which led Aguinaldo to believe (naively, as it happens) that if the U.S. won the war against Spain, the Philippines would be granted independence.

In May, 1898, Commodore George Dewey defeated the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, Philippines. Not aware of this victory, President McKinley authorized the assembling of troops in order to mount a campaign against the Spanish in the capital of Manila. From May-June 1898, U.S. forces continued to maintain possession of the city of Manila. On June 12<sup>th</sup>, Emilio Aguinaldo and his forces established the Malolos Republic, making the Philippine Islands an independent nation. On December 10<sup>th</sup>, the Treaty of Paris ended the Spanish-American War.

Unfortunately for the Filipinos, at the Treaty meeting the U.S. purchased the Philippine Islands from Spain for \$20 million, and President McKinley published the “Benevolent Assimilation” Proclamation which stated that the purpose of the U.S. presence in the Islands was to “assert its sovereignty.”

Because the Filipinos still wanted the Philippines to be an independent nation, armed hostilities began in February, 1899, when



**Dates and Locations of Marcelli Koralewski's  
Battles, Engagements, Skirmishes, and Expeditions**

Engagements at Butig, Ganoa, and Bayabas, September 18, 1902

Sour, September 29, 1902

Maciu, October 1, 1902

Ragayan, February 19, 1903

Battle of Bacolad, April 6, 7, 8, 1903

Engagement at Calahui, April 9, 1903

*“Although the Philippine-American War was a separate conflict from the Spanish-American War, those Americans who fought in the Philippine-American War were considered Spanish-American War veterans.”*

Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed war on U.S. forces on the archipelago.

The fighting over the next three years was bloody and vicious, fraught with horrendous atrocities on both sides and resulting in 20,000 Filipino soldiers killed in action and 200,000 civilian Filipino casualties. Of the U.S. forces, there were 4,390 casualties --1,053 killed in action and 3,337 other deaths, primarily from disease.

On July 4, 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt declared that the war in the Philippines was over; however, guerrilla warfare between the insurgents and the Americans continued on and off for several more years -- which explains why Grandpa Marcelli’s discharge document lists battles into 1903. He was discharged on November 8, 1904, after exactly three years of military service.

There were many in the U.S. who opposed the U.S. authority over the Philippines. Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) was one who avidly maintained an isolationist stance, believing that the U.S. had no business colonizing another country when it had fought so steadfastly for its own independence from England. Opposition to the war inspired the founding of the Anti-Imperialist League. The war and occupation by the U.S. forever changed the cultural landscape of the Philippines, particularly with the introduction of the English language as the primary language of government, education, and business. In 1916, the U.S. promised some self-government, a limited form of which came in 1935. In 1946, following World War II and more than 40 years after the Philippine-American War, the U.S. gave the territory independence through the Treaty of Manila.

Thus explains at least some of the discrepancies between the Koralewski family story and the Army discharge document detailing Grandpa Marcelli’s actual military service. As a final note, the explanation for the Spanish-American War/Cuba marker on his gravestone is interesting. Although the Philippine-American War was a separate conflict from the Spanish-American War, those Americans who fought in the Philippine-American War were considered Spanish-American War veterans. The reason for this was because a new Philippine-American War Pension Fund was never created. So, men who fought in the Philippine-American War collected Spanish-American War pensions. Of course, to collect a pension, the paperwork had to be filed correctly, and since the pensions were paid out of the Spanish-American War Pension Fund, the pension records had to read ‘Spanish American War.’ In fact, all related government documents – including veteran grave markers – followed suit. The differentiation between the two wars was basically lost, thus creating confusion among genealogists (myself included) who may not realize the difference.



NAME OF SOLDIER: <i>Koralewski, Marcel</i> <i>Karlawski, Mike</i>				
NAME OF DEPENDENT: <i>Widow,</i> <i>Minor,</i>				
SERVICE: <i>M 9 U.S. Inf. 25 U.S. Inf.</i> <i>25 Batty U.S. Fld Art.</i>				
DATE OF FILING	CLASS	APPLICATION NO.	CERTIFICATE NO.	STATE FROM WHICH FILED
<i>1912-June 29</i>	<i>Soldier,</i> <i>Widow,</i> <i>Minor,</i>	<i>1404, 790</i>	<i>12 33 562</i>	<i>N. Y.</i>
ATTORNEY:				
<i>62 392 609</i>				

Marceli (Marcel) Koralewski (aka Mike Karlawski)

**Pension File Record**

He served in the 25th Battery U.S. Field Artillery, which participated in the Philippine-American War from 1902 – 1903, equipped with 3.2 inch guns, Vickers-Maxim Gatling guns, and mule-borne 3.6 inch mortars.

Marceli was a 1<sup>st</sup> Class Gunner, per Headquarters, Northern Division, St. Louis, Missouri, dated June, 1904, on his military record.



Marcel Koralewski's Spanish-American War Gravestone Marker

(Note: My grandparents' gravestone had sunk at least five inches! I had to dig this out to see the PI (Philippine Islands) and PR (Puerto Rico). Only 'Cuba' had been showing for many years; perhaps that is why the family assumed he served there?)

*“As a young boy, Prabucki paid close attention to his father’s stories about the past.”*

## *Am-Pol Eagle*

# 2012 Heritage - Citizen of the Year: Edward Prabucki

*Editor’s Note: Edward Prabucki is a long-time member of the PGSNYS, and the Society’s Board and membership heartily congratulate Ed on this prestigious award. It is a well-deserved and honorable testament to Ed’s many contributions to both the Am-Pol Eagle and the PGSNYS Searchers newsletter, as well as to his unfailing love of history, genealogy, and all things Polonia. The following article was published in the Vol. 54, No. 30, April 25, 2013 issue of the Am-Pol Eagle and is reproduced here verbatim.*

### Heritage – Edward Prabucki by Matt Kushner

There might not be a person more interested in history than Edward Prabucki. For many years Edward Prabucki has been interested in his Polish heritage and his past. He always wanted to know where his relatives came from, who they were, and what they did. Since his retirement in 1990, he has spent his time at libraries and on computers, researching his Polish heritage.

For many years Prabucki has been involved in the Polish Genealogical Society of NY State. He has written numerous articles for the *Am-Pol Eagle* about his family and their roots.

Prabucki has been interested in his Polish heritage ever since he was a young boy.

“I remember when I was a youngster, my father would have his cousin come over to his house and they would reminisce over their life in Poland and I thought that was very interesting. That started to get me interested,” Prabucki said.

As a young boy, Prabucki paid close attention to his father’s stories about the past. While history was his favorite subject in school, he was unable to pursue his interest fully until his retirement.

“I was always interested, but it wasn’t until my retirement that I was able to research it,” Prabucki said.

Prabucki had worked a couple of jobs over the years, and from 1965 until he retired in 1990, he worked for the U.S. Postal Service. It was in 1990 that he read in the newspaper that there was going to be a meeting of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State and decided to attend

and get involved.

Since then, he has spent his time researching his family history by visiting libraries and doing research. He used the microfilm that was available. He started with finding out more about his father, then he moved on to his grandfather, and then his great-grandfather. He eventually was able to find research all the way back to the early 1600s.

“It was so interesting, and every time I was able to trace back one generation to another generation, my adrenaline was so built up that I couldn’t stop until I reached the late 1500s, and I couldn’t get any further. I couldn’t find anymore.”

As a young boy, Prabucki enjoyed being an altar boy, as well as running

track and cross-country, which is something he continued to do in high school. He has been active in Polonia for 55 years. He was a parishioner of Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church and now is a member of St. Gabriel Church and its Holy Name Society. He is a trustee of the West Seneca Senior Center. He attended Transfiguration Parochial School, School No. 24, East High School, and Burgard High School. He is a member of Polish National Alliance, Polish American Congress, the Kosciuszko Foundation, and Polish Falcons Nest 6.

Even today, at the age of 91, Prabucki still does research on the computer for at least an hour every day and still gets excited every time he is able to learn something new

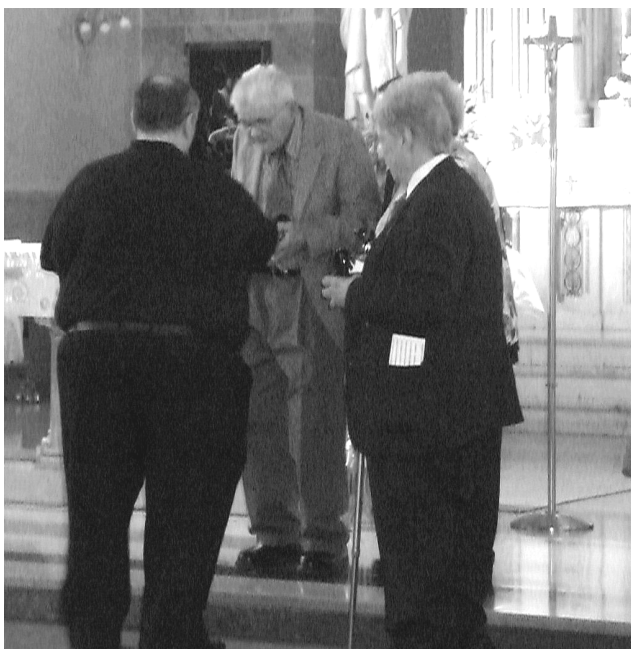
about his family. He admits that he is a novice with a computer, but that doesn’t stop him from trying to learn as much history as he can.

“I never stopped, and I still don’t stop,” he said.

Prabucki has learned so much about his family and their past, but one thing he wishes is that his ancestors kept even more extensive records.

“I would have loved it if they had kept daily records from the late 1500s to the 1900s,” Prabucki admits.

Prabucki is also not just a fan of Polish history and his family history, but any kind of history. He has numerous books, papers, and binders full of research and findings.



Edward Prabucki (center) receiving the 2012 Heritage Citizen of the Year Award at St. Adalbert Basilica on April 27, 2013

*“Even today, at the age of 91, Prabucki still does research on the computer for at least an hour every day and still gets excited every time he is able to learn something new about his family.”*

## Submitting Articles to the Searchers

by Denise M. Oliansky

Everyone in the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State is encouraged to contribute articles to the *Searchers* newsletter. The 'Member Moments' column, in particular, has become the lifeblood of the newsletter and has added greatly to its readability. We are always interested in receiving honest, smart, quality pieces that will prove useful and entertaining to PGSNYS members and other readers. To that end, it may be helpful to provide some guidelines about what is appropriate with regard to topic and presentation.

It is necessary to keep in mind when deciding to write a piece, that the readers of the *Searchers* are genealogists, of varying levels of expertise to be sure, but genealogists all the same. To that end, it is important to write about things that are of interest to researchers of family history. So, the first criterion is simple -- write about something having to do with genealogical research or personal family history. The following are some ideas for articles, but this is not an inclusive list by any means:

- Helpful location- or surname-specific research information;
- Tips for conducting, compiling, and presenting research;
- Information about helpful resources, online and off;
- Personal stories of genealogical discovery;
- Bits of information from your family's history: photos, recipes, and inspiring events or people;
- Unsolved research questions or brick walls you would like to share;
- Review of a genealogical product you have tried or book you have read;
- Announcements or reviews (after the fact) of local genealogical events or projects.

As researchers of family history, we benefit greatly from the work of earlier and concurrent researchers. Often several members are interested in the same ancestors. We rely heavily on the findings of others, whether from an online source or from speaking to other members at a meeting. Sharing your research experiences and your own family information is the way to return the favor. Sharing is also a great way to find ancestors. Sharing leads to collaboration among PGSNYS members and even among your own family members. When you share with your family, cousins will begin to contact you asking for more information. Sometimes the questions they ask

*“As researchers of family history, we benefit greatly from the work of earlier and concurrent researchers.”*

will result in work that leads to new information. Or they may have that missing bit of information you have been looking for forever.

Therefore, when it comes to sharing your research, keep in mind that the ancestors you are writing about need to be identified by more than a proper noun (father, sister, grandmother) or pronoun (he/she/they). You must provide at least a surname and, if they are deceased, their given name. If they are still living, and you do not want to include a living person's given name, introduce them in the article as, for example, 'my maternal grandfather SURNAME.' A reader of the *Searchers* who recognizes a surname is then able to follow up with you by email or at a meeting if they want to determine if there is a common link between your families. And who knows – they, too, may be able to provide information you have been seeking, but unable to find. Because identifying surnames is so important from a genealogical perspective, articles which do not include surnames will not be considered as appropriate for the *Searchers*.

Although not necessary for inclusion in the *Searchers*, whenever possible complement your article with some digital photos of the places, people, or objects you are writing about. We all know how much more enjoyable an article becomes when there are pictures. I guess, even as we get older, we never really get over our love of picture books. Pictures add a whole new dimension to the story... and, as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. A picture makes what you are writing about more 'real' to the reader. If you are going to submit pictures, then *digital* pictures are necessary for a couple reasons. First of all, you can easily email them to the editor along with your article. Secondly, scans of hard photos usually lose a lot of clarity, and when the *Searchers* newsletter is put into a PDF format for publication, the pictures often become distorted, making them unusable. Therefore, submitted pictures should be digital and of *at least* 300 x 300 resolution for sufficient clarity.

We are not looking for or expecting exceptionally scholarly and exhaustively referenced articles; although those will, of course, be welcomed and considered. Ours is a much more relaxed, enjoyable newsletter, but it does have some standards. Naturally, as with any publication, the editor may find it necessary to correct grammar or spelling or even re-write a sentence or two – but every effort is made to not change the writing to the extent that it diminishes *your* voice in the article. We greatly respect and appreciate every effort made by our members to share their stories. Following these very simple, but necessary, guidelines will ensure we will be able to share your article with the rest of the Society through the *Searchers* newsletter.



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## The Crooked Trees of Poland



In a corner of western Poland, near Gryfino (not far from Szczecin) is a forest of about 400 pine trees that grow with a 90 degree bend at the base of their trunks – all bent northward. It is estimated they were planted around 1930, and most speculate their odd shape is of human design, such as furniture or ship makers training them like this for the beautiful curved line. Others think this was caused by a heavy and sustained snowfall that bent them and they never recovered. Still others believe they were run over by tanks in WWII. There is no definitive answer, but they are certainly weird and wonderful.

# Member Moments

## In Memory of Arthur Brodnick (Brodnicki): A Buffalo, NY Success Story

From information provided by Audrey Scott

*“Many people cannot imagine the hardships and poverty endured by an orphaned child in the early part of this century when social programs for helping the needy were rare.”*

*Editor’s Note: In the Winter, 2010 Searchers (Issue 55, No. 3), PGSNYS member Audrey Scott contributed an article titled, ‘How I Found Gold at the Cheektowaga Polish Festival.’ In that article, Audrey mentioned Arthur Brodnick (formerly Brodnicki), grandfather to the young man she met at the festival when she heard him asking Daniel Kij how to pronounce ‘Brodnicki’ (Audrey’s maiden name) in Polish. Audrey had the opportunity to meet Arthur and exchange some family history. Arthur passed away September 5, 2010, at the age of 97. Audrey gave me an article about Arthur Brodnick, written by Kathy Musick, Branch Manager of the Hayters Gap Library in Virginia and published in Library Friends (Winter/Spring 2003, Vol. 6, Issue 2). Arthur was a regular patron of Hayters Gap Library, and ‘Everything a Library Could Want in a Patron,’ which was the title of Ms. Musick’s article. The following includes excerpts from her article and also from an article about Mr. Brodnick published in the Buffalo News after his death.*

Mr. Arthur Brodnick was born in 1913 in Buffalo, N.Y. Many people cannot imagine the hardships and poverty endured by an orphaned child in the early part of this century when social programs for helping the needy were rare. He remembers being separated from his siblings and shuttled between relatives and orphan homes in and around the Buffalo, N.Y. area. His education was broken up with frequent moves and periods of no schooling, depending upon which relative he was living with or in which part of the state he was living. When living in Buffalo, a large city even at that time, things were not much better, because young boys ‘old enough to wear pants’ were put to work in the city. While in school, he worked for Western Union, bicycling around the city to deliver telegrams.

Ironically, while the years he spent in an orphanage were difficult and frightening, they were also the years when he was first able to attend school regularly and was recognized by his teachers as being smart. (*Editor's note: According to Audrey, it was when Arthur left the orphanage that his name was changed from Brodnicki to Brodnick*). Even with all the hardships and disruptions, his intelligence and initiative made it possible for him to graduate from Emerson Vocational High School, where he received the Jesse Ketchum medal for academic achievement and was named class valedictorian.

After school, Arthur enlisted in the Civilian Conservation Corps and worked on the Hoover Dam. Being in the Corps enabled him to travel the country. During this time he began to make plans to somehow attend college, but before he could do that, he had to earn a living. His first 'real' job as an adult was as a drill press operator, which paid 35 cents an hour. This job made him more determined than ever to find a way to obtain an education and a career in which he could advance and make a better life.

He took a job at Curtiss Aircraft and attended night school, eventually obtaining his degree from New York State College. It was during his time at Curtiss that he came up with a process for manufacturing landing gear that only took two hours – as opposed to the 15 hours needed previously. It was this innovative accomplishment, at least in part, that eventually led him to the position of Superintendent at Bell Aircraft Corporation in Buffalo, where he supervised the building of the first jet airplane at what is now the Tri-Main Center. The extreme secrecy of the project prevented Bell from using the normal manufacturing and testing processes, making the undertaking a real challenge to manage. The plane was started in 1941 and completed in 1942, and now hangs in the atrium of the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

In time, Arthur left Bell and went to work for Westinghouse Corporation, first in Buffalo and later in Abingdon, Virginia. While at Westinghouse, he was involved in another 'first' in the design of engines. Westinghouse was the first to build atomic-powered engines for submarines, a project with which Arthur was involved during the Cold War. Westinghouse relocated Arthur to Abingdon, where he met and married Joanne, his wife of 30 years. They lived on the north fork of the Holston River, near Hayters Gap.

*Additional information from a Buffalo News article published on September 9, 2010:*

Arthur J. Brodnick died Sunday in the Riverwood senior care facility on Grand Island. Mr. Brodnick, who retired in 1976 in Virginia, enjoyed golf. In the 1990s, he lived several years in Florida and returned to the Buffalo area more than a year ago. Survivors include a son, Greg; a daughter, D.A. Aldridge; and a stepdaughter, Candace Workman. His first wife, Genevieve Kubicki Brodnick, died in 1972, and his second wife, Joanne Jones Workman Brodnick, died in 2007.

## Still Hoping...Stephania's Story

by Nicole Lodyga Pohancsek

Some 30 year olds love to read books, watch movies, or some other hobby. I happen to love genealogy! I love helping others with their genealogy to repay all of the people who have helped me along the way. Even if you have a small army helping you, sometimes you still do not find what you are looking for.

Growing up, my mother spent a lot of time with her Great-Aunt Victoria Krawczyk and her paternal grandmother, Stephania Skryznski, Victoria's sister. Stephania and Victoria lived together in the Skrzyznski family home at 21 Cook Street in Lackawanna, NY. The ladies used to enjoy telling stories to my mother of their younger days in the 1920s, when Victoria was a flapper. Victoria never married or had any children and doted on my mother and her other nieces and nephews.

One story my mother heard quite often was how her grandmother, Stephania, was born in Brocton, NY on June 5, 1899. Since there was no Catholic Church in Brocton at the time, they had to take a train to Dunkirk, NY to have Stephania baptized at St. Hyacinth Church. This was a big deal at the time, because the Krawczyk family had very little money, but wanted to ensure that Stephania was properly baptized into the Catholic Church.

Fast forward to 2011, when I was doing some research at the LDS Family History Center in Williamsville, NY and noticed they had some microfilms of some local churches. I asked if they had the microfilm for St. Hyacinth Church. The volunteer said that they did not have a copy, but the Orchard Park FHC might. She called them, and to my surprise they did have a copy, and it included the baptismal records for 1899. The following week, my mom and I went to the Orchard Park FHC and found the record of Stephania's baptism. We gladly paid the 25 cents for the copy.

We were on such a high that I went home and read the document a hundred times. Although it gave me no additional information, it did confirm the story my mother had heard growing up. And as I expected, it listed Stephania's birthplace as Brocton, NY. I went online and researched Brocton. I was planning on going to Bemus Point the following week and thought I would stop in Brocton to do some additional research. I emailed the town librarian to see if they had any city directories for 1899. The librarian emailed me back the following day and said that she could not find any information on the Krawczyk family in her records, but carbon

*"The ladies used to enjoy telling stories to my mother of their younger days in the 1920s, when Victoria was a flapper."*



copied the town historian and three other people to see if they could find any information.

Unfortunately, everyone came up empty-handed. The Krawczyk family must have lived in Brocton for a brief amount of time and left no trace. Stephania's father worked for the railroad, and they might have lived in a home owned by the railroad company.

My next move is to contact Queen of Angels (which took possession of the church records when St. Barbara in Lackawanna, NY was demolished) to see if they have any first communion or confirmation records for Stephania's older siblings. I would like to find out where the Krawczyk family lived from 1892, when they landed at Castle Garden, NY, to 1899, when Stephania was born in Brocton.

Although I have had a lot of help along the way, I have been unable to find additional information on the Krawczyk family. My great-grandmother, Stephania, was the only sibling to have children, and we are not related to any other Krawczyk family in the Buffalo area. I am determined to find more information on the Krawczyk family so their history is not lost.



Stephania and Stanley Skryznski  
and children

## Searching

by Pat Rooney

As always, there are many ways to collect genealogical information, add the Internet, and there is an abundance!

But, not so fast. Not one place fits all your needs. The real trick is learning how to decipher what you find and/or hear. For that, you need people.

Allow me to share my adventures.

As my younger years floated by, being a nosy kid, I kept a notebook with bits and pieces of information I was able to learn from my many relatives. Little did I realize then how inaccurate a memory could be!

Taking notes while people took a stroll down a winding road called Memory Lane, made me dizzy. They zigzagged all over the place! They used pronouns instead of proper names! They forgot which generational John or George they were sharing about!

So, don't be afraid to take a deep breath and holler, "STOP!" Force them to use proper names, and remind them that "Grampa" is not a proper name. Then duck and cover. No, seriously. Be prepared to ask for first names often and to steer them back onto the path you need them to tread.

For my notes, I usually use unlined paper and start in the center of the paper. Sometimes I have to draw a box around the information as if it were being corralled.

Dates, dates, dates! Keep writing them down next to names. This will help with the generational names. You know...those multiple Johannes, Georges, and Stellas.

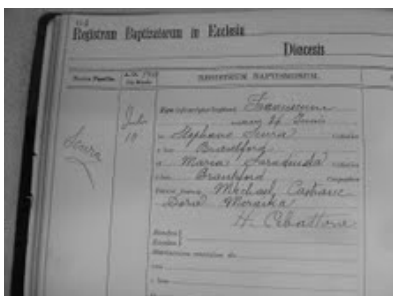
Also, being a genealogist means questioning everything!! Yes, even Mom's memory. The golden rule is to validate, validate, and validate. Oh, and did I mention, cross-reference? There is no gospel of genealogy records. Nothing has an "Imprimatur." That is why it is necessary to use at least three sources. Civil records included.

The Latter Day Saints (LDS) Library has fabulous records, found at FamilySearch.org, but you'd better know how those records were written and why. Do not assume. Keep in mind they are concerned about religious matters. Most records will tell you if the baby was legitimate or not, when the baby was baptized, who the parents were (or unknown), who the godparents were, and the location of the baptismal records. Some will record the location of the birth with even the house number, but

*"The golden rule is to validate, validate, and validate. Oh, and did I mention, cross-reference?"*

don't assume the name of the town listed is where this birth occurred. The location listed could be of a nearby larger town.

Research how records were taken in the country and the year before you write the information in ink. You might have to reach for white out later. Old church records are often written in Latin. Some postcards are written in two languages, like German and Polish, as are some records.



It might come as a shock, but even those church records have errors. Some of them are serious. After personally reviewing those books before the

rectory doors closed to family genealogists, I saw why churches became more cautious about opening their basement vaults and books to the public. I found many errors in my family records I located in America and Canada. After all, those who recorded the events were human. They made innocent mistakes. My husband's baptism was not recorded, because the priest suffered a heart attack before he could enter it.

Digging through dusty papers found in libraries, boxes stored in attics, and those arriving in the mailbox, can make your eyes water and nose twitch. The journey is often a solitary one, but not one without excitement. A cup of coffee or tea can help keep you alert, but I find a short break is best, as well as hardest to do. NEVER start with the idea that it will only take a few minutes. How silly can you get? Ha ha ha! You will burn dinner and never smell the smoke!

For me, it is all about the hunt and history. The process usually gets very messy as I make copies of charts, ship manifests, census reports, and find 'almost' relatives or 'maybe' relatives or 'real' relatives. I learned the hard way that sometimes you can't re-find a document, so you'd better copy it right away. Sadly, after three hours of searching on the Internet, with one misguided

click, I sent a long lost relative back into the bowels of deep Internet space!!! No...checking the History button did not help.

Trust me, even though it was four in the morning, and I was suffering from exhaustion, I couldn't sleep! That was a lesson learned: Always save right away...AND often.

This dusty journey has also taught me to take a cleansing shower after each trip, even one taken on the Internet. Not just to wash away the dust of years, but to clear the brain and allow it to make the connections as the facts find a way to pave new paths into the past.

The collecting of data is part one. The other is collecting pictures.

Be prepared to work hard to get those precious pictures. In preparation, I took my sister's advise and bought a portable scanner. Not only is it allowed in a library, when a camera may not be, it is great for capturing pictures on the spot from a reluctant relative's gripping hands. Or use the digital camera. It is a wonderful tool too! Just remember to add names and dates as soon as possible!

Records. Where to locate the records after the family names and dates are verified?

My personal favorites, after relatives, are LDS library microfilms, Census records, church documents, city and town halls, and Internet sites. Ancestry.com gives great seminars online to hone your skills. The Ellis Island website has educational articles as well. I'm sure there are many others.

But, what I find most helpful are the people who attend the Polish Genealogical Society meetings, as well as people who 'come into my life' seeking and giving information and clues on how to understand documents I find. It is as if my ancestors lead me all the time, if I am careful to listen. And, if I am willing to share and reach out to other searchers, I am always given some clue or insight into something I am seeking. You are never alone in your search!



## To Honor Those Who Served

by Dolores Konopa

There were (are) many in our family tree who served in the armed forces, as well as those who wanted to, but were not selected for various reasons. I don't know the circumstances for why some did not. We thank them for their service, as well as the many who worked on the homefront. This list of veterans encompasses my ancestors (Szalasnny and others) and my husband's (Konopa and others).

Frank Konopa, US Army, Bronze Star, POW in Germany during WWII

Stanley W Konopa, US Navy, WWI

Leonard C Konopa, US Army

Richard S Konopa, US Navy Reserves

Stanley Nasiolowski, US Army, WWII

Edmund Fuks aka Fuchs, US Army, WWII

Alfred Jarmusz, 1952-1954, National Guard

Edward R Jarmusz, US Army, WWII

Leslie Boudreau, US Army, WWII

Richard J Garrett, US Army, WWII

Walter Stawicki, US Army, WWII MIA France, died in Germany 1945

Frank Joseph Konopa aka Konope, 1917 - NY 74th Infantry National Guard, later USMC, WWI

Frank Joseph Konope aka Muller, US Army, Korea, Vietnam

Stanley Glinski, US Army

Frank Glinski, US Army



Andrew F Piotrowski, US Army, WWII  
Richard T Myszewski, US Army, WWII

Chester Kania, US Navy, WWII  
Jerome J Janik, US Army, WWII

Joseph Valentine Duch, US Army, WWII  
Eugene P Janik, US Army, WWII

Jozef Kuzara aka Sikorski, US Army, WWI  
Frank R Grzywa, US Army, WWII

Henry L Kuzara, US Navy  
Edwin F Grzywa, US Army Air Force, Bronze Star, POW in Germany during WWII

Philip S Favata, NY 174th Infantry National Guard, WWII, Bronze Star  
Walter Bernard Sadowski, US Army, WWII

Raymond Daniel Kuzara, USMC, Korea  
Harry John Grzywa, US Army, WWII

Raymond Frank Zielinski, US Army, WWII, Bronze Star  
Chester P Sadowski, US Navy, WWII

Richard F Kuklewicz, US Navy  
Anthony Alexander Janik, US Army, WWI

Thomas J Kuzara, aka Sikorski, US Army, Vietnam  
Richard Anthony Janik, US Army, WWII

Frank M Stejbach, USMC, WWII  
Louis V Mierzwa, US Army, WWII

Eugene H Stejbach, US Army, WWII  
Edward Walter Pieniadz, US Army Air Force, WWII

Chester M Bielinski, US Army, WWII  
Joseph Dragone, US Army

Robert Thomas Becht, US Navy, WWII  
John B Janik, US Air Force

Henry Kuzara, US Army, WWII  
Albert S Janis, US Army, WWII

Chester Joseph Sajdak, US Army, WWII  
John Joseph Szalasny, US Army, WWII

Frank E Klaja, US Army  
Benedict J Szalasny, US Army, WWII

Walter S Mazurek, US Army, WWII, POW in Germany  
Frank J Szymendera, US Navy, WWII

Stanley R Brzezinski, US Army, WWII  
Waclaw J Szalasny, US Army

Steve Placta, US Army, WWII  
Joseph Francis Wozniak, USMC, WWII, Korea, Vietnam

Francis J Janik, US Army, WWII  
James Stephen Salasny, US Navy, Vietnam



Victor J Salasny, USMC	Ferdinand B Przybysz, Merchant Marine, WWII
Richard F Szalasny, US Army, WWII	Emil Przybysz, US Army, WWII
Stanley George Dylong, USMC	Frank Presby, US Army
Austin J Bzibziak, US Army, WWII	Frank Edwin Presby, US Navy, Retired
John Lisiewski, US Army, WWI	Michael Presby aka Richard Allen, US Army & USMC
Barney Lisiewski, US Army, WWI	William Arthur Retzlaff, US Navy
Piotr Lisiewski, US Army, WWI	James Lawrence Retzlaff, US Air Force
Stanley Lisiewski, US Army, WWII	Tadeusz Stanley Wackowski, Coast Guard, WWII
Norbert A Lisiewski, USMC, WWII & US Army, Korea	John R Skrzeczkowski, US Army
Joseph A Militello, US Army, WWII	John Losin, US Army, WWI
Theodore Frank Polanowski, US Navy, WWII, KIA, Purple Heart Medal	Theodore F Losin, US Army, WWII
Richard F Sulzbach, US Army, Korea	Edward L Kozlowski, US Navy, WWII
Robert J Sulzbach, US Army, Korea	Edward D Prabucki, USMC, Vietnam
Bernard A Surman, US Navy, WWII	Patrick Michael Bukolt, US Army, Vietnam
Alexander S Piskorowski, US Army, WWII	Bernard D Prabucki, US Army Air Force, WWII, KIA, Purple Heart & Air Medal
Edward L Krzyzanowski, aka Cross, US Navy, WWII	
Leonard J Bakowski, US Army	



# Point & Click

## Laurel Keough presents ideas & links for Web research

### BASIA Database of Vital Records from the Poznan Region

[www.basia.famula.pl/en/](http://www.basia.famula.pl/en/)

This is exciting! Did you ever think you could look at records in the Polish Archives, and even have a copy of the documents, without actually traveling to Poland or hiring a Polish researcher to obtain the documents for you?

Thanks to an article written by Edward David Luft in the April, 2013, issue of *Gen Dobry!*, I learned about a website holding indexed birth, marriage, and death records in the State Archives of Poland. If you've had success using the *Poznan Marriage Project*, you may now find vital records that also include a **SCAN** of the records for your ancestors in the Poznan region. This site has over 940,000 records, with many more to come.

You also can directly link to the site from the search page of the *Poznan Marriage Project*. In the upper left corner you can click on **BASIA, new data base of vital records from the Poznan region**. You can choose **English** and enter your surname in the search box. This will return a map with all the locations where the name is found, along with a list of the place names of the villages. Click on your choice of place and then move down the page to see the records. When you find a record of interest, you can see the name of the indexer and directly above is the scan number; click on it and the record will appear. Use <Ctrl>+ to enlarge the scan. You can save the image as a JPEG to your computer.

If you are getting too many results by entering only the surname, use the **extended search feature** right below the search box. You will have the choice to enter first names, locations, and time frames for the periods searched.

Here are some other features. From the main page click the **Contents** button; a map appears with the names of the indexers and the number of records they have completed.

Next to the map, click on **full list in alphabetical order** and the name of each village appears showing which record years have been completed and if the records are from either Catholic or Protestant parishes or the Civil Registry Office.

Return to the Main Page and under Resources for indexers click on **more**. The page shows the blank record forms for births, marriages, and deaths and is shown in the Old German Script, modern German, and Polish. For example, on the birth record, it shows you the line where the name and occupation of the person reporting the incident appears. There is also a template of numerals showing how they appear in the Old German Script so you can read the date of birth in the Prussian civil marriage record collection.

We can thank the generosity of the volunteer indexers at the Wielkopolska Genealogical Society (WTG 'Gniazdo') for posting these church and state vital records on their website. They are always looking for volunteer indexers, and you can read about that on the site.

If you don't find your family records on the first try, be sure to check back often, since this is a work in progress and many more records will be added in the future.

Good luck with your ancestor hunt!



# St. Stanislaus Old Cemetery Tombstone

Contributed by Ed Kornowski



**Stanislaw ZWIERZCHACZEWSKI, 1884-1958**

**St. Stanislaus Old Cemetery, Pine Ridge Road  
Cheektowaga, NY Section N, near Pine Ridge Road.**

**Thought to be the longest Polish name in Buffalo, containing 16 letters.**

The only record found on Ancestry.com for Stanley Zwiierzchaczewski is the 1930 census. That year he was 45 years old, lived on Olmstead in Lancaster, NY, was a widower, immigrated to the U.S. in 1904 from Poland, was a naturalized citizen, worked as a machinist for a steam railroad, and had two daughters, a son, and a son-in-law living with him.

## **SEARCHERS NEWSLETTER**

**POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE  
C/O 12 GRANT ROAD  
SNYDER, NY 14226**

**PLEASE CHECK YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE**

**PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS**