

PRESERVING
OUR PAST
SINCE 1988

SEARCHERS

NO. 64

WINTER

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Wishing You All a
Merry Christmas and a Happy,
Healthy, and Blessed New Year
from the PGSNYS!



The 1916 Corpus Christi Baseball Team

Front Row (left to right): Feldt, Anowski, Ignaszak, **Lodyga**, and Manuszewski
Back Row: Zablonki, ?, Kasprzak, Michalek, Mach, Owiklinski, Gorski, Derenda

Read the story at, '*Searching the Lodyga Line*' - Pg. 12

PGSNYS - FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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.

**PRESERVING
OUR PAST
SINCE 1988**

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

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

Please send any changes to your postal or E-mail address to PGSNYS at the above address or E-mail: 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

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

2014 PGSNYS OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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

editor@pgsnys.org or denise.oliansky@gmail.com

PGSNYS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

As our Society's 25th year approaches its end, another new year extends before us, and I look forward to serving as the newly elected president of the PGSNYS. Following the November elections we also have a new, but well-known vice president, as former president, Dave Newman, has been elected to that position. I know I and the rest of the Board will benefit greatly from his experience and support. In addition, Dolores Ferguson has been elected our new secretary, while Chuck Pyrak continues as our Society's treasurer. There were six nominees for the five trustee positions and, after the vote, Patricia Rooney replaced long-time Board member Frank Martin as a trustee. I am very grateful that Frank will continue to provide his invaluable assistance on the *Searchers* committee. With several new committees and committee Chairs now in place, I hope many more members will volunteer to serve on those committees and take an active role in the functioning and direction of the Society. I trust 2014 will bring us many opportunities to learn more about genealogical research and Polonia, make exciting discoveries in our own research, and share our knowledge and experience with those in the community who are interested in pursuing their own family histories. In the meantime:

Wesołych Świąt, Bożego Narodzenia i Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku!
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you and your families.
Sincerely, Denise Oliansky

POTPOURRI

WITAMY! TO NEW PGSNYS MEMBERS

Mary Kate McKenna, New York, NY

Jerome M. Cichocko, Tonawanda, NY

Maryann Kazmierczak McKenna, Minneapolis, MN

Patricia M. Hamman, Cheektowaga, NY

Lorraine Marciniak, Cheektowaga, NY

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Romaine Lillis, Lackawanna, NY

Valencia Saczynski, Brooklyn, NY

Jean Vasiloff, Hamburg, NY

Darlene Napora, Hamburg, NY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please make note of the new PGSNYS MAILING ADDRESS:

PGSNYS
P.O. Box 984
Cheektowaga, NY 14225

The dates for upcoming 2014 PGSNYS monthly membership meetings at 7 PM are on Thursday, January 9, February 13, March 13, and April 10. **From January on we will be meeting in the Student Center/ Athletic Center on Villa's campus instead of the cafeteria. Directions and a map will be mailed and emailed to our local members in early January.**

The PGSNYS has beautiful Pennsylvania-Dutch style Family History Displays for sale for \$10.00. They are available from Chuck Pyrak at our monthly meetings and at events throughout the coming year.



Strategies for Resuscitating Your Genealogical Research

by Denise M. Oliansky

The Polish Genealogical Society of New York State has existed for 25 years, and many of our members have been a part of the Society for as long, or nearly as long, as that. So I wonder, how many folks decided years ago they had gone as far as they could with their genealogical research and haven't done any since? How many gave up because of brick walls they felt were insurmountable? How many stopped researching years ago and are not aware of the resources available now that did not exist even five or ten years ago?

If there is one thing I have learned from working on my own family research, there is always more information waiting to be found, whether it's going back in time for more ancestors, coming forward for more descendants, branching sideways into collateral family lines, or simply exploring the lives of those ancestors we have already found.

If your enthusiasm for family research has waned, perhaps an article titled '*5 Tips to Jumpstart Your Research*' from the October 2013 Ancestry.com Update, which I received by email, will inspire you to look carefully at the information you already have in order to gain new insights, as well as provide some new directions to explore. What better way to begin the new year!

What follows is my summary of, and comments about, the information provided in the article. To view the original article, and I encourage you to do so, go to (URL is one long line, no spaces): http://c.mfcreative.comemailnewslettersamu/2013/1013/5TipsJumpstartResearch.pdf?o_xid=57254&o_lid=57254&o_sch=Email

Tip 1: Take Your Records Out to Play!

I think this advice is invaluable. Throughout the course of our research we collect so many documents and records, sometimes tons of paperwork, but do we really take the time to examine every detail in those records? Do we pull them out once in a while and look at them with a fresh eye? The article focuses its example on census records -- a gold mine we all know and love for the details they provide. Think about it -- every census record offers a first-hand account, from the perspective of the ancestral informant who completed the census, of what their family situation was at that particular time and place. Yes, we know there can be transcription errors and faulty memories at play, and sometimes you have to read between the lines to figure out the facts or resolve inconsistencies,

*Tip 1: Take Your
Records Out to
Play!*

but oftentimes we simply overlook small, seemingly unimportant details that could take our research further.

The article's example goes through each section of a census record to point out the myriad of details and hints they may provide, assuming one takes the time to study them carefully and focus on the implications of the information provided therein. The example is a census record for John and Mary, their two children, and John's brother. Here are just three examples of the information the author(s) of the article were able to infer based on the census record:

John and Mary had been married six years (fact), so they married around 1904 (inference). Since their first son, Henry, was born in Pennsylvania in 1905 (fact), Pennsylvania would be a good starting place to search for their marriage record (inference).

Both John and Mary list 1899 as their year of immigration (fact). Use that year to check for passenger arrival records. John and Mary weren't married yet (fact based on the inference in #1), so Mary would be traveling under her maiden name or possibly her previous husband's surname (inference).

None of the adults in the household spoke English; they spoke Polish (fact). A third party may have had to help translate or provide details for the census (inference). This might explain discrepancies that may show up when you compare details from this particular census to those in other records.

The article provides 12 examples like those above that beautifully illustrate how paying attention to the details can clarify the facts, promote inferences, and suggest additional avenues for finding source materials. Immigration, naturalization, and vital records, among others, are equally rich in information, if we take them out once in a while to play with them and examine them from a new perspective.

Tip 2: Side-Stepping to Research a Sibling, Cousin, or In-Laws can be Helpful

We sometimes tend to focus our research efforts exclusively on the specific person we are interested in, often forgetting that using what we have learned about the people in their lives may give us the information we seek. I find this to be a particularly useful tip when trying to find a person's ship manifest or identify a country of origin. Finding out who their travel companions were, their siblings, neighbors, children, sponsors, or other extended family can often provide us the information outright, or at least help us narrow the search parameters.

For example, when I was trying to find my maternal great-grandparents' ship manifest without the benefit of knowing their first names (my mother didn't know her grandparents' first names...go figure), it was only by entering the names of their children into the search that was I able to find not only the manifest, but learn my grandparents' first names in the bargain. The article gives an example of how little pieces of evidence gleaned from various sources can point to associations that were likely formed in the person's homeland, helping to pinpoint their place of origin.

Tip 2: Side-Stepping to Research a Sibling, Cousin, or In-Laws can be Helpful

*Tip 3:**Connect with
Family***Tip 3: Connect with Family**

This may seem an obvious suggestion. I'm sure the majority of us have at some time or another asked relatives for information about family history, sometimes without success. But when was the last time you reached out? Have you shared your family tree with your family? If you share information, even those who weren't interested in the past might become more engaged and respond to those questions that have gone unanswered. We are in the midst of the holidays... a great time to share some of the interesting things we have found out about our ancestors. This may spark reminiscences and stories from other family members, which you can collect and document.

While there are arguments for and against having your family tree online, one of the biggest advantages is the possibility of connecting with other branches of your family for whom you have little or no information. Just today I emailed a woman who had posted her tree on Ancestry.com. I had never heard of her before, but I recognized her surname as I was searching for someone from my branch of the family. Her mother and mine were first cousins, and since we have great-grandparents in common, we are second cousins. I am hoping to share with her what I know about my mother's side of the family, because she had only minimal information about that branch on her tree. And, of course, I benefit from knowing more about her branch of the family from her online tree. Everyone wins when information is shared.

The article also mentions connecting with family through AncestryDNA testing and using that information to determine common ancestors and relationships from online trees.

Tip 4: Know What's Available*Tip 4:**Know What's
Available*

Nothing has changed the world of genealogical research more than technology. Many resources that in the past may have taken extensive planning and expense to use in person are now at our fingertips on the Internet. While information we find online should still be checked and verified through primary sources, we can certainly get our research off to a quicker and more satisfying start by perusing the myriad of resources available online or in collections at local archives or libraries. Knowing what collections are available locally and online will allow you to search them with a minimum of inconvenience and often an abundance of success.

The article specifically identifies collections on Ancestry.com (which is available at most local libraries these days if you don't want to buy a subscription) which will help you explore records available online

that may be relevant to your family’s story. These include the Card Catalog, which you can search using keywords, and Place Pages, which lets you view the databases available for a particular state or country.

Beyond that, simply doing an online search for genealogical resources in your area will provide you with valuable information about where to find the types of records and documentation you seek.

Tip 5: Dive Into Times and Places

As I have said before, genealogical research is more than just finding a lot of names and dates. Our ancestors lived in a time and place, and history unfolded around them. If your family research consists of only pedigree charts, try picking out an ancestor or two and find out what was going on during their time and place in history, how people lived, what events shaped their lives and decisions, and even what documents might be available that mention your ancestor specifically. There is so much out there! Not only will this add interest to your family’s story, it helps you understand how your family got to where it is today.

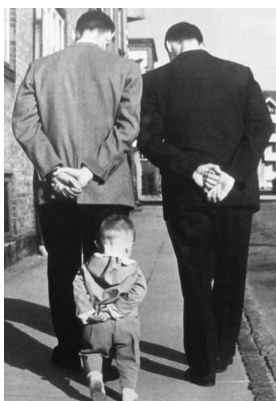
The article provides information on Ancestry.com’s large collection of local and family histories. These can be accessed by browsing ‘Stories, Memories, & Histories’ specific to the state where your ancestor lived. You can also do a surname search at that site to find ancestors who lived in the area...and, as **Tip 2** points out, even if you don’t find your specific ancestor, perhaps there will be information about cousins or siblings that provides details about your ancestor indirectly.

In addition, the article suggests using historical maps to find information about geographical characteristics, such as rivers, roads, railroads, and other features that may have impacted your ancestors’ lives or helped or impeded travel in their day. Other historical maps may provide landowner information that enables you to find your ancestor’s location in relation to neighbors and perhaps other members of the family. All of these types of information provide color and context to your family’s story.

Hopefully these tips will motivate us to pull out and dust off some of our family research files for a fresh look at the details in order to identify avenues of further inquiry, especially in light of the innumerable resources available to us today. Have fun breathing new life into your research!



*Tip 5:
Dive Into
Times and
Places*



Let’s face it, sometimes DNA testing won’t tell us anything we don’t already know. 😊

Spotlight on PGSNYS Member: Elmer Wienclawski

Editor's Note: This is an article by Richard Derwald titled, "Elmer Wienclawski: Tough Life—Tender Heart," published in the June, 2013 "Over 50," a community newspaper available in Buffalo, NY and surrounding areas. Elmer's story is one of hardship, perseverance, compassion, and success. The original article has been edited slightly, based on corrections provided by Elmer Wienclawski.

*"Whether or not
you liked the
food, you ate it
because you
were hungry."*

Charles Dickens' book *Oliver Twist*, about a young orphan who endures a miserable existence in a workhouse, was published in 1839. The book exposed the cruel treatment of many orphaned children in London and contributed to the passing of child labor and protection laws in England and the United States. According to Elmer Wienclawski who, with his two brothers and a sister, was placed in the German Roman Catholic Orphanage located on Dodge Street in Buffalo following their parents' death in 1924, things had not really changed much since the publication of *Oliver Twist* more than 100 years earlier.

Wienclawski recounts that the standard menu consisted of a gruel-like concoction and stale (sometimes moldy) bread. When the children complained that the bread was so hard they could hardly chew it, they were told, "It's good for your teeth." Wienclawski said, "Whether or not you liked the food, you ate it because you were hungry."

Wienclawski was in the orphanage for 10 years, from the age of five until he was 15, whereupon he was transferred from the orphanage to work on a farm in Gardenville, NY. During the planting and harvest seasons young Wienclawski labored, working from sunrise to sunset, for several years. Then one day, he was paid a visit by a "county agent" who informed him that he could no longer live on the farm because his money had run out. Completely baffled, Wienclawski contacted his older brother, who told him there was money from the sale of their parents' house that the county received and then used to pay for his room and board at the farm in Gardenville. Wienclawski had thought, "I worked for my keep here; my earnings covered my room and board," but he was told that the money from the sale of their parents' home was gone and that was that.

The dejected, penniless young orphan boy left the farm in Gardenville and set out to continue his life during the greatest financial depression

this country has ever known. Unable to find employment, Wienclawski joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and worked with them for two years, from July 1938 until July 1940. This was a program established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt that put thousands of Americans to work during the Great Depression on projects with environmental benefits. For the first time in his life, Wienclawski prospered, establishing new skills and gaining experience in a variety of duties. He saved his wages, every month sending his bank book and money to the Buffalo Savings Bank through the Banking by Mail program.

Then, like all young, able-bodied American men in the early 1940s, Wienclawski was drafted into military service. His experience in the CCC prepared him to the extent that he quickly rose to the rank of Master Sergeant. He was



Japanese POW artwork on a handkerchief. Photo courtesy of Elmer Wienclawski.

assigned to the island of Saipan, overseeing Japanese prisoners of war. Once, when he had purchased a new handkerchief, one of the Japanese prisoners saw it and pleaded (using frantic gestures) with Wienclawski to give it to him. Wienclawski said, "I just figured if it was that important to him, I would give it to him." A few days later, the same prisoner handed Wienclawski a beautiful work of Japanese art painted on the handkerchief, which today, more than 65 years later, is framed and displayed on a wall in Wienclawski's living room.

"I have been asked, why did I give anything to these Japanese prisoners after

the atrocities they committed during the war," he says. "The fact is that after any war the soldiers on all sides must begin a new battle, attempting to regain their civility and fit in and function in their society and culture. I figured my contribution would be a handkerchief, scraps of cloth and wood, and leftover paint. Honestly, I never regretted this decision, and today I have these works of art, created by former enemies, which I now consider a token of appreciation from one human being to another."

After the war, says Wienclawski, "I worked for American Brass for nearly 50 years. There were downtimes when I was laid off, which made it very tough supporting a family, but during those times I often worked three jobs. I never applied for public assistance."

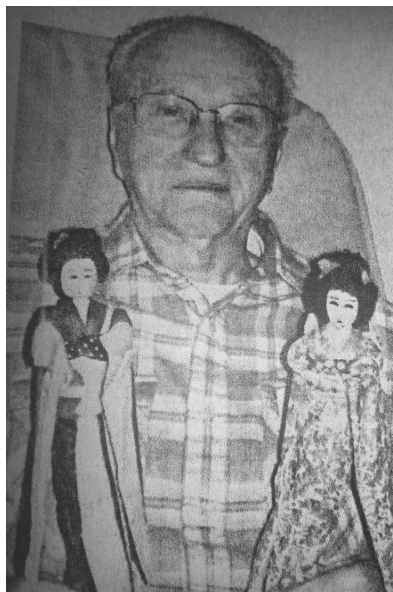
Wienclawski has now been married to his wife, Amelia, for more than 70 years. They have a son, John, and two daughters, Andrea and Ellyn. Another son, Paul, died in 1976 in a tragic boating accident. Elmer Wienclawski is definitely not a millionaire, but his story is truly one of a very successful life. In Wienclawski's words, "During my lifetime I guess I have done a lot of people a lot of favors, but somehow, in some way or another, I always felt that I was repaid with interest."

"I have these works of art, created by former enemies, which I now consider a token of appreciation from one human being to another."

Editor: I asked Elmer when he first got interested in genealogy and how far he has gotten with his research. This is what he told me (paraphrased):

Elmer went to the Pulaski Parade a couple years ago and met PGSNYS member, Daniel Domino, there. Dan did a surname search for him, and they started talking, and Dan told him about the Polish genealogy group, so he decided to go to a meeting. He enjoys the people there. He hasn't done much (research), but he's not worried about it. He's 94 now, and just too busy. Elmer reads the paper completely every day, helps out at the fire department, and goes to the senior center three times a week to exercise. Friends have been telling him for some 30 or 40 years that he should write a book about his life.

Elmer has been married 70 years this past October 2nd. That's also his wife, Amelia's, birthday. He figured he'd only have to remember one date that way (he laughed). Elmer said he can't die because the undertaker hasn't had a sale, and he's waiting for that.



**Wienclawski shows two Geisha dolls made for him from scraps of cloth he provided to Japanese POWs. "I gave them scraps from the trash; they returned me treasures."
Photo courtesy of Elmer Wienclawski.**



A Genealogist's Christmas Eve

(Author Unknown)

Contributed by Laurel Keough from:

<http://roquemore-ancestry.com/the-lighter-side/a-genealogists-christmas-eve/>

'Twas the night before Christmas and inside my house
Little was stirring, except my computer mouse.
Our descendants were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of ancestors danced in their heads.

So I at my laptop, near trusty old printer
Put the finishing touches to the project of winter,
The gift I had promised for under the tree
A product of love, the family genealogy.

My table with clutter galore was aspread
with pedigree charts of the living and dead;
old yellowed photos, letters of yore,
wills and diaries chronicling days from before.

While others bought gifts at Wall-Mart or Sears,
I'd spent my time searching birth dates and years.
No need for ribbons or fancy gift wrappings,
This gift had a way of transcending the trappings.

While surveying the charts with one final proof,
I must have missed the sound on the roof.
For what to my wondering eyes did appear,
But the jolly old elf, replete in his gear.

Searching my face, old Santa could sense
My Christmas spirit was extremely intense.
He spied my research on the table spread out,
"A genealogist!" he exclaimed, "that removes any
doubt."

As I climbed up the stairs feeling quite in the pink,
I looked back at Santa and shared a sly wink.
For he and I know that the gift of oneself,
Beats anything bought from a department store shelf.

Member Moments

Researching the Lodyga Line

by Nicole (Lodyga) Pohancsek

We all have that moment in our family history research when we run into a brick wall. How great would it be to be able to get into a time machine and go back and talk to our ancestors?! On my family tree, my biggest brick wall is my Lodyga ancestors (my maiden name).

Growing up I always had a sense of my Polish heritage. I have always been exposed to Polish holidays, language, and dances. So it was a little strange to find out that my great-grandfather, Ignatius Lodyga, did not share that same Polish Pride. Ignatz Lodyga was born February 1st, 1899, in Buffalo, NY, to Jan Lodyga and Maryanne Matuszak. He was a second generation Polish-American, but did not like being called Polish. In his words, "I am not a boat-er."

Right now you may be thinking, wow, how can Nicole say that this is her brick wall? She knows so much information about her family. On my mother's side of the family we are able to get back to the 1700's in Poland, but with the Lodyga family, I do not know any additional information past the fact that Iggy's father's name was Jan. The good news is, I have some great friends and some good genealogy luck on my side. Most of the information that I listed above was found in local resources (not ancestry.com). Like I mentioned, Iggy was a boxer and played baseball in Buffalo, so there are numerous local news articles about him. I even found a cartoon that was published in the News depicting him fighting another local boxer. Although he was not a very good boxer, he was a good baseball player.

Battling Blake	
Global ID	166238
sex	male
division	middleweight
residence	Buffalo, New York, USA
won 2 (KO 2) + lost 2 (KO 2) + drawn 1 = 5 rounds boxed 14	
Newspaper Decisions won 4 : lost 3 : drawn 2 rounds boxed 50	
Total Bouts 14 KO% 14.29	

**Battling Blake's
Boxing Statistics**

Family legend says that he wasn't sent to WWI because they kept him back to play baseball. I did find a WWI draft card, but he was never sent overseas. At the downtown library, we found an index card in the card catalog noting the date of his death and where to find his obituary.

Some of the baseball teams Iggy played for were Phoenix Beer, Buffalo Body, and Corpus Christi Church. A few years ago, my father was at Corpus Christi Church at the Dozynki Harvest Festival and was looking at the photos in the church hallway. He did a double-take when he noticed a picture of his grandfather in a Corpus Christi baseball uniform. He looked below the picture and it listed the names of the players. It was indeed a picture of his grandfather from 1916 (cover photo).

In the Buffalo downtown library we also found some Pierce Arrow newsletters. We scanned through the newsletters, but unfortunately found nothing about my great-grandfather or his father. So we decided to take a trip to the Pierce Arrow museum located on Seneca Street and Michigan Avenue in Buffalo (I would highly recommend going). We talked to the owners of the museum, and they agreed to look through the records they have. Unfortunately, they could not find any information on the Lodyga family (limited records were saved). But, the museum is a great treasure. It was amazing to look at the vehicles from the early 1900's and wonder if my great-grandfather or great-great-grandfather helped with the interior or trim of the vehicles.

Our next visit was to Holy Mother of the Rosary Church in Lancaster. This is the church at which my great-grandfather was baptized and his father, mother, step-mother, and brother were buried from. Unfortunately, Holy Mother of the Rosary Church was burned in 1903, when the church was on the East-side of Buffalo, and the records no longer exist. All they could do was tell me where the graves were located. Their list was missing one grave. It was for Jan Lodyga's first wife, Patricia. Once again luck prevailed, though, and Edward Kornowski, a member of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State (PGSNYS), found the grave site in Holy Mother of the Rosary Cemetery and emailed me the information. He also checked the city of Buffalo death records, but was unable to locate anything for Patricia. Another brick wall.

As I said, I am used to brick walls in my Lodyga family research. I am unable to find the immigration records for Jan, his first wife Patricia, and his son Adam. On census records it says they immigrated in 1887, and this was before Ellis island was built in 1892. So, I am assuming they arrived at Castle Garden, but there was a fire that destroyed some of the records, and I am unable to find them in any records online. Recently some immigration records were found in Germany and are slowly coming online. I am hoping one day to search these records, because they may hold the key to where the Lodyga family is from in Poland.

I was able to find a lot of brothers and sisters of Ignatius. At Holy Mother of the Rosary cemetery on Dale Road, I found Jan's grave. At the same grave marker there was a brother named Adam. I had never heard of a Adam Lodyga before. I was able to find his death record, a year off from what was printed on the grave stone. He worked on a Lake Erie ship and somehow contracted tuberculosis and died from it. Another member of the PGSNYS found a brother, Joseph, who passed away in 1900.

“It was amazing to look at the vehicles from the early 1900's and wonder if my great-grandfather or great-great-grandfather helped with the interior or trim of the vehicles.”

“Although his death record reads ‘Ignatius Lodyga, AKA Blake’ it was filed under Blake.”

It is always great to have people looking for records for your family, because there are so many records out there of which you might be unaware.

My final advice is to never give up. Ignatius died in 1975, only three years before I was born. You would think that since this is recent history, I would be able to find his death certificate with no problem. My grandfather had a number of death certificates for other people, but he did not have his father's death certificate. Since Ignatius died less than 50 years ago, I had to take my father to city hall to order the death certificate. He had to prove that he was the son of Eugene Lodyga and that Eugene was the son of Ignatius. I was very disappointed when I received a letter stating that they had no record of Ignatius' death. My father knew that his grandfather died in Buffalo at what is now ECMC hospital. I tried contacting ECMC to confirm that he died there, but they did not have records that went back that far. I then contacted the Orłowski funeral home, from which he was buried. They were very nice and found Ignatius' record. They confirmed that Ignatius died in Buffalo, NY. I then called back to the city of Buffalo vital records department. They refused to check again for Ignatius' information without me paying additional money. I was transferred a couple of times, and I finally landed with a manager there. I finally was able to convince her to look again. They found the record under Blake (remember this is the name under which boxed). Although his death record reads 'Ignatius Lodyga, AKA Blake' it was filed under Blake.

I have reviewed many microfilm records to look for the Lodyga family, with no luck. Lodyga is a popular name in Poland (it means twig), and there is even a Lake Lodyga in Russia. I continue to have hope that someday I will find some specific information about where in Poznan Poland Jan Lodyga came from. This has been a great journey, and I am not ready to give up yet. With millions of records going online daily, and great friends looking for records here in Buffalo, I am hoping to find the hometown where my relatives originated. I am sure Ignatius knew where his father was born but, unfortunately, he wanted nothing to do with his Polish roots. He would rather take an Irish name (which was also looked down upon at that time), than box under his given Polish name.

During this holiday season, take the opportunity to teach your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and nieces and nephews about your Polish heritage. Just because you have Polish ancestry doesn't mean you are born knowing your Polish traditions and customs. You have to be taught it through family traditions. I was lucky enough to have two parents and two sets of grandparents who helped me learn about these traditions and my family's Polish heritage.



What's in a Name?

by Rita Hider

My father, Vincent Joseph Mazurczyk, was born on Chicago Street in Buffalo, NY, on January 10, 1909.

In 1926, as a 17 year old teenager, he was goofing around with friends in Sloan. A railroad car of coal had spilled, and people were frantically picking up as much coal as they could. Those were hard times, and every little bit helped. Of course the police were called and they came running. The kids taking the coal all ran; my father and his friends did not run, as they had not been not stealing the coal.

They were arrested and taken to Cheektowaga Town Court to stand before a judge. When questioned, they stated they were innocent, and their clean hands were evidence. They were let go.

Move ahead to 1949; my parents had a grocery store and were applying for a liquor license. Of course, dad's arrest record came up. He had to get a lawyer and give his statement, and they got the license. He had saved documentation about all this, and I found it.

So here I am doing research on my dad's time in the Army National Guard from 1927 thru 1934. While in the Guard in 1928, he had a rib removed because of pleurisy and was in the hospital for five months. Last December, my brother had the same surgery and almost died, and I got to wondering how, back in 1928, with no antibiotics, my father had survived. So, of course, I decided to send for his military medical records.

The answer came back 'no record of Vincent.' I had his photo album with pages of pictures from his time at Camp Smith, and when I looked closely at the pictures, they were all labeled 'William Mazurczyk' or, like in the attached picture, 'Billy.' I wondered what that was about, so I went online to search pamphlets on the Army National Guard from about 1934, and there was my father listed as 'William J. Mazurczyk' and also his brother, Fred Mazurczyk.



'Billy' Mazurczyk

My intuition tells me my father, who was the type to pay every bill the day it came in, was afraid he would not get into the National Guard because of the incident in 1926, so he used the name William. He ended up being a lieutenant in the 174th infantry.

As an aside, I think he was obsessed with the name William, as there are pictures of him at age 13 that are labeled William, and others labeled with the name 'Bill.' But then, at times, they were labeled Vincent, as would be expected. It would be so nice to be able to talk to him now and ask, "HOW COME??"

I sent for the medical records in April and had not heard a thing, so I have since resubmitted the request.

My Ancestral Family Tree

by Edward Prabucki

In my research of my family ancestors, I recall the many father and son sessions I enjoyed relative to my father's youth in Poland. Periodically, as our free time allowed us — as I sat in the living room with father along side me — we enjoyed the music on WBNY radio. During the commercials, I asked father of his youthful life in Poland. Father was reluctant to reveal little, if anything. However, thanks to my mother, she prompted him to be proud to reveal all he was able to remember of his youth. Needless to say, father did so.

My father recalled the trips to Grandfather, Michael Prabucki's, home in Udrzyn, Poland, who incidentally had a son, Franciszek, who was of my father's age. I am certain he was the magnet that brought all the families together.

As time allowed, father reminisced of their trips to the fishing pond, proud of the fish they snagged, and also of the soccer games they played with the youngsters of that area. When there were religious processions at some religious holiday, they were advised not to participate, fearing Russian intrusion. This was very imprinted in family life. So father reminisced that in 1910 or so, when tensions among European nations increased and the war atmosphere was discussed, my father and cousins Franciszek and Alex began to plan to immigrate to the land of unknown America.

Life went on for decades in America, and little was known of my ancestors until my sister, Sophie, decided to correspond with Stanislaw Zawistowski, son of my father's sister, Anna, in Poland. The original correspondence was boring — their employment, life's burdens, and their opinions of their nation's foreign policy. They also, however, discussed our Grandfather, Michael Prabucki, father of the Franciszek who immigrated with my father in 1913 to America. They also wrote of Franciszek and his service with the Polish Blue Army in France and Poland.

More enlightening of this correspondence with Stanislaw was of our grandparents as they lived under the Partition of Poland. Later, more information was received of Stanislaw — knowledge of Poland's history and our ancestors, Roch and Jozef Prabucki, and struggles and hopes of freedom from the burden of Russian rule.

Needless to say, originally Franciszek was the magnet to my research, but it was my sister Sophie's correspondence with Stanislaw that opened the window for more research of my ancestors.



2014 Genealogy Cruise and Poland Tours

Editor's Note: Thinking of a genealogy cruise or Poland tour in 2014? There have been numerous groups advertising their planned tours for the coming year. This information is provided as a courtesy; the PGSNYS does not endorse any one specific tour or group.

The Road Home

Polish Genealogy Society of Connecticut and the Northeast trip to Poland, May 3, 2014 through May 15, 2014; leaving from New York City. The trip cost is \$2,795 per person, double occupancy. Add \$350 fee for single occupancy. ITINERARY includes Warsaw, Lomza, Bialystok, Kruszyńiany, Krakow, Zamosc, Przemysl, Zakopane, Wieliczka, Oswiecim, Czestochowa. Also a limited number of day trips available to travel to your ancestral village (added cost for this service). **Must sign up and provide a nonrefundable deposit by January 2, 2014. See www.pgscctne.org for more details. To sign up or more questions email: dorena726@yahoo.com.**

The Polish Mission "Return to Your Polish Roots Tour" to Krakow & Zakopane. The tour will be fully escorted by Ceil Wendt Jensen, Certified Genealogist and Director, Polonia Americana Research Institute (PARI), the Polish Mission's genealogy center; Carole Schaffer, Founder and CEO of the Global Alliance of Travelers Seeking European Ancestry (GATSEA); and local, English-speaking tour escort. Highlights include the Wieliczka Salt Mine, Warwal (the Royal Castle), Krakow Old Town, Auschwitz and Birkenau, Wadowice, the Museum-Schindler Factory, the Underground World of Krakow's Past, the former Jewish District—Kazimierz, and much more. **For further information, please contact Carole Schaffer at carole@gatsea.com. Deposits must be received by January 31, 2014.**

PolishOrigins.com Galicia Tours in 2014.

Dates of Tours in 2014:

May 11-21, 2014
June 22 - July 02, 2014
July 13-23, 2014
August 17-27, 2014
September 7-17, 2014
October 5-15, 2014

Total cost of the Galicia Tour is 6900 Polish zlotys (approximately \$2265 US) **not including** airfare to and from Rzeszow or Krakow, Poland **For complete information on the tour and to sign up go to:**
http://polishorigins.com/document/galicia_tour

Eastern Caribbean Genealogy Cruise on the Celebrity Silhouette from December 7 to 14, 2014. Features Genealogists Gary and Diana Smith, Jana Sloan Broglin, and Dick Eastman. This cruise leaves from Fort Lauderdale; the ports of call include: San Juan, Puerto Rico; Basseterre, St. Kitts; St. Maarten; plus three days at sea (with genealogy presentations all three days), returning to Fort Lauderdale on December 14.

Cruise Package Rates:

Cruise rates listed are per person and based on double occupancy. Government taxes and fees of \$101.54 are additional to the rates listed.
Cruise For Seven Nights From Only \$939.00 for Interior Stateroom
Ocean-view Staterooms From Only \$1,069.00
Private Balcony Staterooms From Only \$1,104.00

For information see the announcement at <http://www.cccruisegroups.com/genealogy-cruise-2014.html>

PGSNYS Year in Review: 2013

2013 was a milestone year as the PGSNYS celebrated its 25th anniversary in September. It was a productive year as the Society participated in numerous festivals and events and welcomed many new members to our ranks. It was also a year of challenges for some of our members, and a year of changes within the Society's Board as well. We can look back at 2013 with pride, and also with promise as we move on to 2014. Here are some of the events of this past year:

- * Feb 14th -Presentation by Nancy Ganoe on 'Writing Your Family History.'
- * PGSNYS in the Dyngus Day Parade on April 1st—special thanks to Nicole Pohanscek for creating and driving the float!
- * PGSNYS table at the Polish Heritage Festival June 7th and 8th at the Hamburg Fairgrounds. Thanks to all who organized and worked.
- * June 13th—Dave Newman resigned as PGSNYS president due to his wife, Agnieszka's, illness.
- * PGSNYS table at the Cheektowaga Polish Festival July 18th - 21st. Thanks to all who organized and worked.
- * PGSNYS Annual Picnic—special thanks to Rita Hider and Barbara Golibersuch for organizing our July 13th picnic at Elma Meadows.
- * Special election for a new president on August 8th. Denise Oliansky newly elected president.
- * PGSNYS 25th Anniversary and Walter Kloc's 96th birthday were celebrated on September 12th.
- * Special thanks to Pierre LaJoie for organizing another successful Annual PGSNYS Genealogy Fair at St. Gabriel's Church, September 14th. Greg Kinal presented on 'Spicing Up Your Family History,' members had displays of their research, and attendees received research help.
- * Dave Newman presented on 'Polish Genealogy' at the Family History Seminar at the FHC on Maple Rd. on October 19th. Thanks to Dave and all who assisted with surname searches.
- * PGSNYS information table at the November 2nd All Souls Commemoration and Polish Ancestors Day at St. Stanislaus Cemetery sponsored by the Polish Legacy Project.
- * PGSNYS elections on November 14th.
- * PGSNYS Christmas Wigilia on December 12th at Villa Maria.



Maureen Gleason helping visitors to the PGSNYS table at the Cheektowaga Polish Festival



PGSNYS Float in the Dyngus Day Parade

PGSNYS 25th Anniversary and Walter Kloc's 96th Birthday



Candles for sale at the All Souls Commemoration and Polish Ancestors Day at St. Stanislaus Cemetery

Greg Kinal, presenter at the PGSNYS Genealogy Fair



PGSNYS celebrates Wigilia

∞ 2014 PGSNYS Board of Directors ∞



- President:** Denise Oliansky (new)
Vice President: David Newman (new)
Secretary: Dolores Ferguson (new)
Treasurer: Chuck Pyrak
Trustees: Patricia Neuland
Maureen Gleason
Patricia Rooney (new)
Walter Kloc
Pierre LaJoie

Left to Right: Denise Oliansky, Maureen Gleason, Dolores Ferguson, Chuck Pyrak, Walter Kloc, and Pierre LaJoie; Absent from picture: Patricia Neuland, Patricia Rooney, and David Newman

**SEARCHERS NEWSLETTER
POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE
P.O. Box 984
Cheektowaga, NY 14225**

PLEASE CHECK YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE

PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS