

PRESERVING
OUR PAST
SINCE 1988

SEARCHERS

NO. 66

SUMMER

2014, ISSUE 2

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**Joe and Pat Rooney (back row, center) with newly
found family in Stara Wies, Limanowa, Poland
May, 2014**

**Read the whole story at, 'Anna Kedron Skóra and
Our Genealogical Quest' - Pg. 4**



PGSNYS - FOR YOUR INFORMATION

**PRESERVING
OUR PAST
SINCE 1988**

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

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

Annual dues are \$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*.

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*Exceptions: July, picnic and December, Christmas party for members & guests

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Searchers is a publication
of the Polish Genealogical
Society of New York State,
ISSN #1528-672X
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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:

denise.oliansky@gmail.com

PGSNYS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

This year is flying by! I hope you are all enjoying your summer. I think the Society has accomplished a lot so far this year. Good speakers, research instruction and assistance, presentations at other venues, helping visitors to our tables at the Polish Festivals, improvements to the web site, welcoming many new members and a sizable crowd to our monthly meetings, enjoying a pleasant annual picnic...the list goes on. I hope that each and every member feels they have benefited in some way this year. That being said, I also hope that more of our members will start "paying it forward." It is always the same members who handle arrangements for various events, work the tables, plan the picnics. The Society is its members and we cannot accomplish the many things we would like to without all our members stepping up to contribute ideas, time, and effort. Think about the first time someone helped you find a piece of information about your family. Not only were you rewarded, but the person who helped you was as well. Even if you think you "don't know enough to help someone else," believe me, you know far more than you think you do, and even just relating your experiences can help someone else. Plus, there are many ways to help out that do not require research expertise. Commit to a committee for a year. Work an event. Write an article. Run for office. Make suggestions for projects or events and then work with others to make them a reality. There are plenty of experienced members around to mentor you. The PGSNYS, your fellow members, the local community, and you will benefit hugely from your efforts. ~ Sincerely, Denise Oliansky

POTPOURRI

WITAMY! NEW PGSNYS MEMBERS

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The dates for upcoming 2014 PGSNYS monthly membership meetings at 7 PM in the Villa Maria College cafeteria are Thursday, September 11, October 9, and November 13. There is no regular meeting in the month of December. This year our Christmas party will be held at a restaurant—details TBA at a later date.

The Annual PGSNYS Genealogy Fair is rapidly approaching! It is being held on Saturday, September 13th from 11 AM to 3 PM at St. Gabriel's Church on Clinton Street in Elma, NY, just east of Transit Rd. Consider bringing a family research poster to display, a laptop computer to assist with surname look-ups, or just bring yourself, family, and guests. Refreshments will be served. Our speaker this year is Sharon Umiker from the Family History Center on Maple Road. She will be talking about the history of the FHCs, how to do research at the Center, what resources are available to the public, and how to order microfilms of Polish church records. Sharon's presentation will begin promptly at 1 PM. Many thanks to PGSNYS member Pierre LaJoie for organizing and St. Gabriel's Pastor and Holy Name Society for supporting this event each year! Come one, come all!

Anna Kita Kedron (Kiendron) Skóra (Skura) and Our Genealogical Quest

by Patricia Skóra Filipiak Rooney

When it comes to a name, it has always bothered me that we are identified mostly by our father's family surname. It varies from time to time, but the father's ancestry takes the dominant place in a child's mind early on. Most of my children refer to themselves as Irish, even though I, their mother, am of Slavic descent: Polish, Austrian, and German.

Once upon a time, I believed my ancestry was 100% Polish. Ha! Well, that is what my grandparents had told me. However, they were always short with the details. Why did they do this? Was it a secret they were keeping?

For me, their past was silent treasure hidden in their memories, securely locked. I was a nosy kid and this secrecy taunted and dared me to unlock the stories. But who had the key?

Grandmother Anna Skóra kept most of her past guarded even from her own children! In her old age, as a widow and when she lived with my parents, she said almost nothing about the contents of frequent letters she had been receiving from relatives living in France and Poland.

My mother said it was none of our business, and we had better honor her mother's right to privacy. Well, that was fine for my mother, but my curiosity pushed me to research books and genealogical organizations. The clues to her past came in bits and pieces over the course of several years. Little did I realize my own treasure box was filling up.

Life in the late 1800's was not easy for anyone in Poland or Europe because of all the political unrest all over Europe. Unfortunately, Poland lost its sovereignty and identity at least three times, as its land was sliced and partitioned by foreign countries. Some friends of mine assured me that Poland never had its freedom.

It was during these turbulent times that Anna Elizabeth was born. She was the second child, and second daughter, of Franciszek and Anna (Kita) Kedron. She was born January 26, 1889, in Limanowa, Poland. Since I found this date on a baptismal record, I felt I could trust it.

Surname spelling was a different story. The surname Kiendron, as recorded on my grandmother's church marriage certificate, is actually spelled Kedron, as written on Anna's baptismal certificate found in church records from the Latter Day Saints library. I further learned that she didn't exactly live in Limanowa. She was born in house Number 69 in

“The clues to her past came in bits and pieces over the course of several years.”

Stara Wies, nestled in the hills south of Limanowa, a mere 30 minute walk.

Anna's family lived in the agricultural part of Limanowa. One day my sister and I caught her in a good mood, and she shared that she had lived a good life in Poland. She spoke of having animals and a garden to tend. She also spoke of having a maid, which was probably a peasant servant who helped with the housework. Her favorite room in the house was her bedroom, because it was above the kitchen and its heat kept her room warm during the cold winter months.

As for pictures, sadly, Anna had destroyed several photos when she was about eighty years old, thinking they had no value to anyone except herself. It was through my mother's quick action that any survived the flames. I inherited the saved pictures. Some were of her older sister, but no name was inscribed on the back. Three ladies, who were presumed to be Anna's nieces, and a postcard of a church, which she did label as 'the church where I was baptized in Limanowa,' became valued clues for my search.

Mother tried to encourage her mother to share, but often she answered our questions with, "The past is past. Live in the present."

My grandmother told me she learned Russian by living near the Russian border. My research further revealed that her father was a farmer, and they lived on an estate circled by houses for the workers.

When I asked her why she left Poland, she said, "I got tired of seeing dead soldiers in the fields." She told my sister that she never wanted to return, because it was depressing living there. Too much sadness. Immediately after sharing this, she went into her bedroom. We realized she had to deal with so much separation by coming to America, and we honored her privacy.

Anna was skilled in the art of dressmaking. Since Krakow was the center of cloth-making, she probably traveled there from time to time. It often amazed us how easily she could cut cloth to make a garment without the use of a pattern. She did not think this was a special talent as we did. I was told by my mother that she made all their clothes, even the children's clothing. I was aware at a young age that she was fashion conscious and loved modern clothes. Actually, she loved anything modern and wasn't afraid to embrace change.

Since she came to America at the age of 20, she had probably left a job in Poland. Young people had jobs that were usually arranged by their father by the time they were fifteen years old. From passing remarks, it was believed that Anna had contact with wealthy people, of whom she had a low opinion. She considered them snobs and users of people. With her educational background, it is possible that she tutored wealthy children or she resided with them in some capacity, maybe as a cook or cook's assistant or laundress. I was not surprised to find that this was true when I learned more about her background through research and talking with people who came from the Limanowa area. She was most likely employed in the Estate house; every town had one.

As for her immigration travel, Anna told her daughter Josephine, my mother, that she had come to America in February, via Baltimore, Maryland, because they felt it was the safest port of entry. Her father made the arrangements, which proba-

"As for pictures, sadly, Anna had destroyed several photos when she was about eighty years old, thinking they had no value to anyone except herself.."

bly involved a priest's help. Anna led us to believe that she and her sister were traveling together without a male escort, which I found out later was not true. Her sister actually came to America in 1905, five years before Anna. When Anna came in 1910, their younger brother, Frank, who was technically a man at the young age of nineteen, traveled with her.

It wasn't until I located the Kedron baptismal certificates using Latter Day Saints microfilm, that I learned Anna's older sister's name was Sophia and the surname was spelled Kedron, not Kiendron. In Anna's case, the immigration agent misspelled her surname.

According to the National Archives, the manifest record of this trip was destroyed by fire. However, I am not convinced. Only time will tell.

Her journey would have begun with a train ride to Bremen, Germany. She and Frank would have waited in Bremen in a hotel for up to a week for the ship's departure. The lodging was minimal, but meals were included.

Once in America, after being processed, they would have boarded the train for Baltimore City and later change trains in downtown Baltimore for Buffalo, New York. I walked the stairs of that very station one day when our son was attending an art college there. It was very emotional for me.

Rarely did relatives meet people at the station upon their arrival, since travel was often marred by delays. Once they arrived, the travelers would have to wait until someone came looking for them, or they took a trolley to their destination.

I checked Assumption Church of the Blessed Mother, 435 Amherst Street, Buffalo, NY records, but found no Kiendrons or Kedrons. It was the family story that Sophia, Anna, and Frank were welcomed by their Kita relatives who had come to America in the early 1880's. Listed in church records I learned there was a Franciszek Kita who married Agneti Juszczak in 1909 and a Jacob Gasiiecki and Marianna Kita gave birth to Aniela Carolina on January 29, 1898. When I saw these people were from Stara Wies, Limanowa, I knew they were relatives!

Gramma told me that she thought Buffalo was a thrilling place to live and she was excited to be there. After finding a church marriage record of her cousin, and because it was in the same time period, I surmised the siblings came to attend the wedding. I later received a photograph of Anna in a traditional wedding dress, but the gentleman next to her was cut from the photo. Only recently did I find the date of the photo to be 1912, the year she married, and from my mother learned that the person cut from the picture was my grandfather, Joseph Skóra.



Anna Skóra

In 1910, Anna turned 21 years of age and was a legal adult when she arrived in Buffalo. We were led to believe by Gramma that her sister Sophia decided to go back to Poland because she missed her mother too much. Since her name was not on Anna's marriage certificate as a witness, I had assumed she left before January 1912. What really happened was that Sophia lived here many years; she was married here and had three children before she returned to Poland with her children. When she finally did go back, with war imminent in Europe again, Sophia had to travel to France where her mother had gone in order to live in safety. I wondered, were there relatives there? My Uncle George Skóra, Anna's youngest son, told me that his mother said his aunt lived somewhere between Paris and Prague. He was given the address when he went to Paris as an American soldier, but was never able to make contact. He later lost the address.

Several years later, I was given pictures of relatives living in France. There were pictures of family without names and some with names of nieces and their spouses. One studio picture was taken at Michon, 46 rue Carnot, Montceau-les-Mines, France. Because of these pictures, I knew Sophia had three daughters, one of whom eventually moved back to Limanowa, Poland. With the help of the Internet, we at least had an understanding of the area. My hope was to learn their stories someday and travel there. With this in mind, I had studied French in school and acquired a young French penpal.

Anna had a job in the Black Rock area of Buffalo, cooking at a boarding house, which she loved. It is believed it was owned by her Kita relatives. Since these events occurred between census reports, I can't verify this, but it was very common in those days. The conditions were crowded, but safe.

Anna told us that one day during Christmas 1911, she met Josef Skóra at a church party. The story goes, he was a charming young man who swept Anna off her feet. They married two weeks later, January 9, 1912, in Assumption Church, Buffalo, NY. According to the marriage certificate, her younger brother, Franciszek (Frank) Kedron, was the best man.

We children had no idea how large our mother's extended family was. Like her mother, she rarely talked about anyone outside of her siblings. We assumed most of our grandparents' relatives either stayed in Poland or went to Chicago, another big city with a large Polish population.

Therefore, it came as a big shock when she told me one night, when I was a teenager, that she had lots of cousins living in the nearby town of East Eden. I mean a town about three miles from our house! Why, we were attending school with her cousins' children and didn't know it! What I further learned by asking more questions was that, to my mother's way of thinking, if you didn't interact on a regular basis, the people didn't exist. Boy, I had a big laugh over that one! What really brought it to light was when my brother brought home our mother's cousin's son! His grandfather was my mother's father's oldest brother, George. The rest of the surprise was that he knew about as much about the family as we did, because his family didn't talk much either.

Well, THAT really piqued my curiosity! Why all this secrecy? Or was it just the way things were done?

What I further learned by asking more questions was that, to my mother's way of thinking, if you didn't interact on a regular basis, the people didn't exist."

Then came the day when my dream was going to become real. Thanks to some bees!

The one requirement for my husband Joe to agree to this ancestral journey was that we would have an interpreter in Poland and someone who knew the Limanowa area. Since I believed in the power of prayer, it came as no shock, but rather, a revelation, that the beekeeper who came to rescue our bees from the backyard was born and raised in Limanowa, but more precisely, Stara Wies, the tiny town where my grandmother was born! *[Editor's note: Pat previously related the full story of the beekeeper in the Winter, 2012 issue of the Searchers (#61)].*

The beekeeper is Rev. Ryszard Biernot. He did some preliminary research of the family living at House #69, but found no Kedron's living there. But, at least I knew the house still was occupied, and Google Earth showed a car in the driveway, confirming it.

The Rest of The Story

With much joy, I made travel arrangements once Joe accepted the plan after talking to Father Ryszard! We planned very carefully to meet relatives in Germany and Poland. This was going to be a genealogical quest!

I contacted a 4th cousin whom I had met through Ancestry.com and took him up on his offer to introduce me to his relative living in Limanowa who spoke perfect English. We met his relative on the steps of Bazylika Matki Boskiej Bolesnej w Limanowej (Our Lady of Sorrows). I had no clue what Agata Kedron Kita looked like, but the minute I saw her, I knew her! After hugs, we entered the church as Mass had just begun.

This is when the Faith of these people surfaced and humbled Joe and me. The church was beautiful and full of people. It was Thursday afternoon and the church was filled! After we toured the church, I viewed the baptismal font where my grandmother was christened, as well as her siblings. Agata said, "I checked with the priest, and this is the font where she was baptized."

I almost cried as I took pictures, lit candles, and gazed in awe at all the beautiful artwork!



Agata Kedron Kita and Joe Rooney



Baptismal font

Agata said, "I am taking you to a restaurant that your grandmother could have gone to also." It was like walking into a cave with rustic walls. We had a traditional breakfast/lunch as Agata told many stories. Later, we drove up a very hilly road on our way to House #69 where my Gramma was born. Agata warned us that she doubted the people living there were relatives, but they were happy to talk to us and show us the house. Light rain dampened our hair, but not my spirits as we drove down the driveway. The view behind the house was spectacular!



**View behind House #69 in
Stara Wies**

Our host was a gentleman about our age. "Jan Rys" he said with a handshake. "Josefa," his wife said, as she guided us into the kitchen and motioned for us to usiąść - sit down. I did, as I gazed around, thinking, "This is where Gramma ate her meals."

More introductions included their son Arthur and his wife and two sons. I opened my computer and handed some papers I had bought to Jan.

He asked me, "Czy Loretta w swojej rodzinie?" (Is there a Loretta in the family?)

"Yes, there is," I answered. "Frank's daughter. Loretta's about my age." I handed him a picture that included Loretta, her twin brothers, and my grandmother, Anna.

"Who is Anna?" Jan asked. When I told him, he replied that he never heard of her. This surprised me, so I quickly shared the pictures I had on my computer and even a family chart I had on Ancestry. Arthur paid close attention as we maneuvered the Internet, exchanged email and snail mail addresses, and printed pictures in B&W. I placed one picture on the table that was of Sophia's family and of Jan's sister, Jadwiga, taken years before in the kitchen of House #69. Jan asked me, "How did you get this picture?" I told him that it that was sent by Sophia to Anna who then gave it to me.

Suddenly, Josefa yelled, "Family!" and covered her ears! Agata explained, "Sophia is Jan's grandmother and Julia, her daughter, is his mother. You are family!"

The excitement escalated as Jan answered my questions about Sophia and the children who lived in France. We shared lots of questions and answers. My biggest surprise was that Sophia had tried to return to America, but she was robbed and beaten when she was in Warsaw to buy tickets. It was the end of her dreams and, sadly, she lost her connection with her husband, Jan Lukasik, who stayed in America. Her in-laws helped her raise the three girls. Jan asked if I found out what happened to Sophia's husband, would I would let them know. I promised to search for him. Jan was so relieved. He said it always bothered the family that they did not know what happened to him. He offered Joe a drink, but Joe had to refuse because he was doing the driving.

A party broke out! Food was suddenly pulled from the cupboards and covered the table, more people arrived, and we



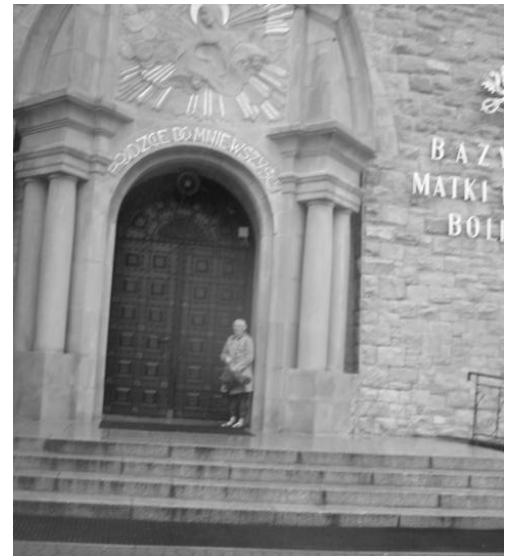
**The picture that proved kinship!
From left to right:
Genia Lukasik Zmorek; Stanislaw
Lukasik; Jadwiga Rys Kita (Jan's
sister); Stanislaw Zmorek**

took more pictures and shared hugs and kisses. All too quickly it was dark and it was time to say goodbye. I left with a heavy and happy heart as a light rain began to fall. Now my hope is to keep in touch!



**Welcome to
Limanowo!**

**Pat Rooney on the steps
of Bazylika Matki
Boskiej Bolesnej w
Limanowej (Our Lady
of Sorrows)**

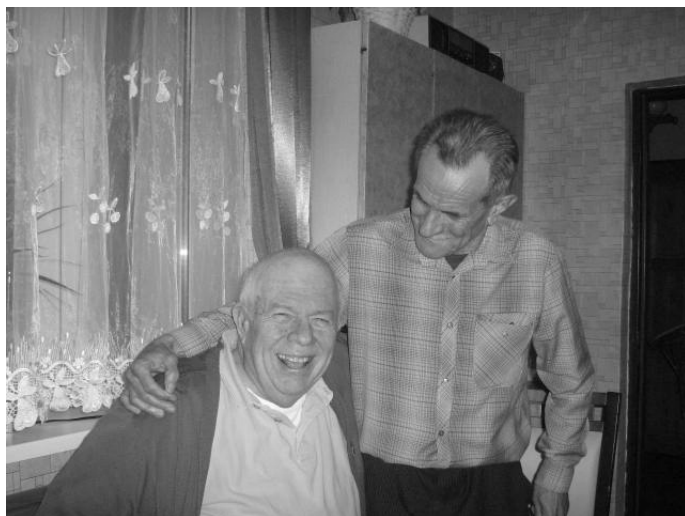


**House #69 in Stara
Wies
Anna Kedron Skóra's
childhood home!**



**Jan and Josepha Rys
Current owners of Anna
Skóra's old home and, as it
turned out, relatives!**

**Joe Rooney and Jan Rys
sharing a convivial moment**



**Pat Rooney sharing pictures,
documents, and the family
tree with the Rys relatives**

**Pat Rooney in front of Jozef
Skóra's childhood home
#124 in Pustkow, Poland**



Researching Great-Grandma Franciszka Mączyńska Górską

by Denise M. Oliansky

It's funny (or perhaps not so funny) how sometimes we search and search without success for a particular piece to our ancestral puzzle, and then one day the tide turns in our favor, and within a few hours we find more than we ever dreamed we could. That has happened to me so many times during this crazy journey into my family's past. This is the story of one such recent occurrence.

When I asked her years ago, my mom, the late Adeline (aka "Jim") Muczenski (nee Koralewski), did not know the given names of her maternal grandparents – the 'Górski side' of her family. I discovered, when I located their ship manifest (using the children's names), that their given names were Marcin and Franciszka, or Martin and Frances as they were known here in America. They arrived on March 1, 1882, along with their three children who had been born in Poland: Joseph (b. 1877), Catherine (my grandmother, b. 1878), and Anna (b. 1881). I then found out that Martin died in 1893, and was buried in the old St. Adalbert Cemetery on Dale Road. I know the location of his grave, but there is no headstone. By the time of Martin's death, their household had grown to include Mary (b. 1883), Frank (b. 1885), Michael (b. 1887), Cecelia (b. 1891), and Martin (b. 1893).

My mom remembered Frances, but not all that fondly. She told me she recalled a little old woman, dressed all in black with a little white cap tied tightly beneath her chin, who "was mean." Mom's reason for this characterization was that Frances, when she lived with them for a time at 234 Koons in Buffalo, NY, used to tattle on my mom and her siblings if they misbehaved. My mom recalled that Frances used to stay for brief periods of time in her various childrens' homes – of course, according to my mom that was because no one wanted her for too long! Mom also told me that Frances had married a second time, to an undertaker named Joseph Kazmierczak. Mom related to me how she and her siblings used to play among (and in) the caskets that were stored in the funeral parlor where Joseph and Frances lived at 159 Stanislaus Street. Good times!

That was the extent of what my mom remembered about her maternal grandmother. So, my research quest was to find out more about Great-

"Mom related to me how she and her siblings used to play among (and in) the caskets that were stored in the funeral parlor..."

Grandma Frances, about her marriage to Joseph, and also in what time period all of this all took place during my mom's childhood, because my mom was notorious for getting dates and timeframes wrong. I also wanted to find out where Frances was buried, and whether she was buried as a Górski or as a Kazmierczak. And, of course, at all times I was hopeful that somehow my research would lead me back to her and Great-Grandpa Martin's roots in Poland.

So my first line of attack was to find Frances in the Federal and New York State censuses. I located her in the 1900, 1905, and 1910 censuses, during which time she and her children lived at 42 Rother Street in Buffalo. In the 1905 and 1910 censuses, her married daughter, Mary, along with husband, Ignacy Owczarczak, and son Ignacy, were also part of the household. By the time of the 1915 New York State census, only Martin (age 22) remained with Frances, and they lived at 27 Kosciuszko Street. By 1920, Frances was alone, but I could not find her listed in the census. I looked up all her married children, but she was not listed as living with any of them in 1920 (which, of course, doesn't necessarily mean she wasn't). Her daughter Cecelia had become a Felician nun (Sister Vitalia), so I knew she was not with her. All of this research was done a few years ago, but when I hit this brick wall, I left things to stew and went on to other lines of research.

In the past few weeks my attention was drawn back to Great-Grandma Frances, as my goal this year has been to really focus on working my way back through the family history in a linear and orderly manner, filling in as much missing information as I can in my direct lines, instead of getting distracted and following various tangents and collateral families, as I am woefully inclined to do.

I decided to look for information on Joseph Kazmierczak, thinking that perhaps he and Frances had married by 1920, and I would find her in the census under the name Kazmierczak. However, in 1920, Joseph was still married to his first wife, Josephine, and living at 159 Stanislaus Street. I tried a couple different tactics at this point – Fultonhistory.com for newspaper articles about Frances and Find-a-Grave to determine when Josephine died. This was the beginning of my breakthrough! On Find-a-Grave I found Josephine (Jozefa) and Joseph's (Jozef) gravestone, which indicated that Josephine died February 23, 1921. Then, on Fultonhistory.com, I found a listing under 'Marriage Licenses' in the Friday, June 3, 1921 *Buffalo Courier* for a license issued to Joseph Kazmierczak at 159 Stanislaus and Franciska 'Sorska' (Górska) at 234 Koons Avenue. Finally I knew when they married. Even more remarkable to me, 234 Koons was the address where my mom grew up – where my Grandma Catherine (nee Górska) lived with Grandpa Marcelli Koralewski and their children. So even before my mom was born (July, 1921), Frances had lived at the 234 Koons address. She may not have been there in 1920, but she was in 1921. Or perhaps she was living there in 1920, and was simply not mentioned during the census interview. Who knows!

I ventured forward. In the 1925 New York State census, there they were, Joseph and Frances Kazmierczak living at 159 Stanislaus Street. I did not find a listing for them in the 1930 census, but from 1926 through 1931, I did locate them in

"I tried a couple different tactics at this point – Fultonhistory.com for newspaper articles... and Find-a-Grave to determine when Josephine died."

“Suddenly, within the blink of an astonished eye, my family history had zoomed back to my maternal great-great-great grandparents!!”

the Buffalo City Directories living at that same address. I knew from Find-a-Grave that Joseph died in 1932. So after Joseph’s death and prior to Frances’ death in 1939 (determined from the New York State death index at the downtown library), I figure it was during those seven years that she must have returned to live at 234 Koons for a time, as my mom would then have been a teenager and old enough to remember her. However, when Frances died in 1939, she was living at 104 Koons, which was the home of her daughter Anna and son-in-law Stanley, so obviously she had not remained at 234 Koons for the whole of those seven years. At least my mother’s recollection that Frances stayed in various of her childrens’ households was confirmed. So, one question was answered, but it is not the end of the story!

On Saturday, July 5, 2014, I spent the afternoon at the Grosvenor Room in the downtown library on a quest to find the marriage license for Joseph Kazmierczak and Frances Górska. This was easily accomplished using the microfilmed Buffalo marriage records, so I saved the document to a flashdrive and spent the rest of the afternoon looking up death records in the New York State index for other family research I was doing. That evening I printed out the marriage license and took some time to peruse the information therein. Well, wasn’t I just tickled pink to see Frances’s parents’ names listed on there! All of a sudden I was back another generation. I had already known from past research on the Poznan Marriage Project Database that Mączyńska was Frances’s maiden name when she married Marcin Górski in 1876, but now I knew her father’s given name was Albert and her mother’s name was Katherine, with a maiden name that was difficult to read on the marriage license, but looked something like ‘Begoski.’

I immediately turned to the Poznan Marriage Project Database once again and found a listing for the marriage of Adalbertus Mączyński and Catharina Bigorowska in 1840. And lo and behold -- miracle of miracles -- both sets of their parents’ names were listed!! Bingo!! Yatzee!! Suddenly, within the blink of an astonished eye, my family history had zoomed back to my maternal great-great-great grandparents!! What a splendid day of research it turned out to be! Adalbertus’s parents were listed as Casparus Mączyński (aka Meczyński) and Magdalena Oleynikowna, and Catharina’s parents were identified as Matthias Bigorowski and Catharina Gorecka. See what I mean about finding more than I ever dreamed I would?

Alas, looking up the ggg-grandparents’ names in the Poznan Marriage Project Database yielded no further generations, so I sent an email to Poland to the Marriage Project’s founder, Lukasz Bielecki, asking if he would attempt to trace back further generations from the church and civil

records for me as he has in the past. Since then Lukasz has sent me the following records from the Inowroclaw Archives: the death record of Matthias Bigorowski (1791-1836); the names and marriage record (September 1850) of Martin Górski's parents, Laurentius Górski and Catharina Kołodziejczak; Martin's baptismal record (October 1850); the marriage record of Martin and Frances (1876); and the birth records of Joseph, Catherine, and Anna. In addition, I located and downloaded a copy of the marriage record for Adalbertus Mączyński and Catherine Bigorowski from BaSIA, a Polish vital records database. I suddenly had a veritable treasure trove of records clenched in my greedy little hands!

Oh, and by the way, yes, you did read that correctly — Great-Grandpa Martin Górski's parents were eight months pregnant when they got married. Oops.

There still remained the question of Frances's final resting place. I had some years ago found a picture on Find-a-Grave of a gravestone for a 'Franciszka Górka' located in the old St. Adalbert's Cemetery on Dale Road in Cheektowaga. On it were the word 'Matka' and the dates 1858-1939. Since these dates were spot on for her birth and death, it seemed reasonable to assume that this is my Great-Grandma Frances. It may well be if her children, who were all Górskis, decided to memorialize her that way. However, she died a Kazmierczak, so I couldn't be sure. I knew only that Joseph was buried with his first wife, Josephine, in a lot at the old St. Adalbert's Cemetery. Perhaps Frances was buried in the same lot?

Time to investigate! I went to the cemetery office at the Broadway location and asked for information about the picture of the gravestone I found for Franciszka Górka and also for a burial location of Frances Kazmierczak. They were unable to tell me anything about the picture; however, on the burial card for Frances Kazmierczak it was noted that she was buried in the "Monczynski family plot." Well, it was apparent to me that Monczynski was meant to be Mączyński, because that is how the name is pronounced, and someone not knowing the diacritical marks might just spell it phonetically as Monczynski.

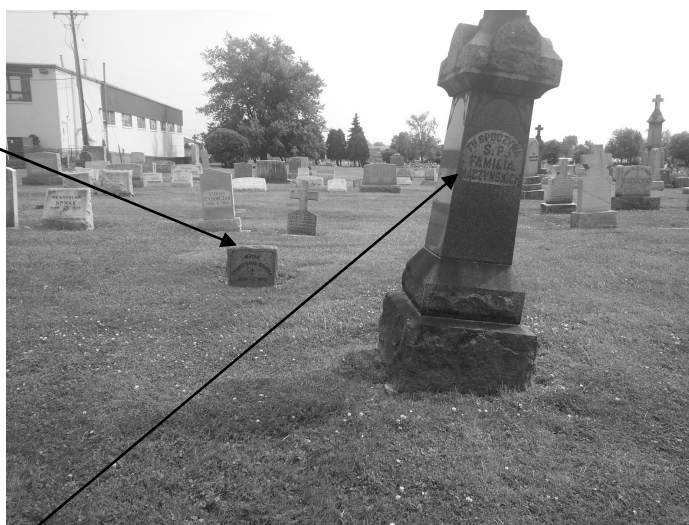
So, I went to the old cemetery on Dale Road to check it out. I found Joseph and Josephine's gravesite — no Frances there. Just across the road from them is a tall, dark monument with 'Familia Mączyńkich' carved on it, with no given names or dates. However, there is a lot of empty space around that monument, and my guess is there are small or flat gravestones underground. There was one stone there with the name 'Anastazyja Mączyńska (1893-1911)' haphazardly propped up against another stone. I don't know who that is, but the surname is certainly correct. Then, just to the left of the tall monument and a few steps further back, I saw the stone with 'Franciszka Górka' on it. Also, just to the right of the monument, nearer to the road, is a stone for 'Frank Górski,' who could very well be Frances and Martin's son, although the birth date is off by a couple years. Standing there, I had no reason to doubt that Great-Grandma Frances is resting comfortably among her Mączyński family members under her first married name, Franciszka Górka.

Since these discoveries, upon closer inspection of the manifest of the ship

“Standing there, I had no reason to doubt that Great-Grandma Frances is resting comfortably among her Mączyński family members...”

bearing Martin and Frances and their children to America, I noticed that immediately below their Górski entry, is listed a family named Mączyński, with the parents being John and Franciszka, along with several children. This could very well be a brother or cousin of Frances. That will take more research to figure out, but at this writing it certainly provides support that other members of the Mączyński family made their way to America and possibly to Buffalo, NY, where they may now rest in the Mączyński Family lot.

I am so grateful for the myriad of online databases, researchers in Poland, and other resources we have available to us now, as well as for the care that record repositories, such as cemeteries, churches, and civil institutions, have taken to ensure our ability to locate, many years later, the information we seek about our ancestors. So much research can be accomplished in so little time – well, at least once the tide has turned in our favor!



Franciszka Górka's gravestone on the Mączyński Family lot at the old St. Adalbert's Cemetery on Dale Road in Cheektowaga, NY

Summer 2014 Events for the PGSNYS



Walter Kloc in Polish regalia at the Annual Polish Heritage Festival in Hamburg, NY June 6 & 7
As always, Walter was there with his maps to assist visitors to the PGSNYS table



PGSNYS members and guests enjoy a feast, good company, and musical entertainment by Hank Kozlowski at the Annual PGSNYS Picnic at Elma Meadows on July 12



Walter Kloc, Maureen Gleason, Dolores Ferguson, and Sherry Sojka assist visitors to the PGSNYS table at the Annual Polish Arts Festival in Cheektowaga, NY July 19 & 20



Member Moments

Story of My Single Life

An Autobiographical Account by
Josephine Jankowska Penke,
as Written to Her Children

Submitted by her daughter, Geraldine Penke Kalkanis

Editor's Note: The original document is handwritten by the author. In order to keep this account as original as possible, only minor punctuation or rewording [] edits were made.

I was born March 2, 1897 in Buffalo, N.Y. Baptized in the Independent Church because St. Adalberts priest wasn't nice to my mother. So my parents join the independent church, which is now Polish National church. Made my first holy communion there when I was 12 yrs old - at that time a kid had to be 12 yr and not any sooner.

My mother died when I was 11 yrs old, she died on May 24, 1908.

Went to schools 58, 44, 57, back to 58 - as we moved to different places it was different schools.

When I was 14 yrs old, got my working papers, and my sister Helen took me to work in Burts Box factory where she worked. At that time we could buy a bowl of soup and crackers for 3¢ at lunch.

I worked 8 hours a day, 6 days a week, so that's 48 hrs a week for \$2.80. When a person turned 16 yrs it was 10 hrs a day.

I walked from Sobieski and Walden to Seneca and Hamburg morning and night. Got 5¢ on pay day. So I went to see a silent movie on Sunday to see my favorite Hop Along Cassidy. Sat there the whole afternoon.

The work was all done on Seneca and Hamburg, so they send us to a branch of the Burts Box factory on Main across from Summer St. Work there for some time and was piecework, but there wasn't any more work there, so we were sent to another branch on Niagara St. We were there a half day, couldn't make no money so my girlfriend and I quit at noon. We

walked out of the shop, but we didn't know where we were, and how to get home. The street car fare was 5¢ at that time. I didn't have a penny with me. My girlfriend had a nickel, but was afraid to go on the street car herself. So we followed the St. car rails and got home safe. My feet were so sore, I wore a 4 ½ shoe, and my feet needed a 8 ½ size.

Then we were out of work for a while. My friend turned 15 yrs.

They needed some girls at Duffy silk mill on Urban St., but [needed to be] 16 yrs old. Well I took my sister Lucy's baptizmal certificate and my friend and I were hired, so I was Lucy for the years I worked there. I think I work there for 5 yrs.

When I was 17 yrs old my sister Helen and I joined a church choir. I was a soprano soloist. We had some fellows in the choir that belong to mens singing club. That men's club made a play by the name *Quo Vadis*. It was played in one of the down town theaters. I was in it, but I wasn't the only one – there was a few girls from our choir, we were only peasants that were put to the lions. Frank Myszka was Nero. I had to quit the choir because we moved on St. Louis near Genessee. It was too far every Friday to go to singing practice, and I [kept] house at that time. My father was strict. The Sunday dinner had to be on the table on 12 noon. So I couldn't be in church and fix the dinner.

Then my father got married so I went to work. Helen Michalski got me a job at Erion Dept. Store, I worked there for 9 months and then got married.

I must tell you how I met my husband. I was 19 yrs old, my sister Helen and I went to a picnic. The picnic was on the grounds where Villa Maria convent is now. We took a Sycamore street car on our street corner and then the street car stop on Miller Ave. Four fellows got on – your father was one of them, Uncle Tony, Leo Oczkowski, and one of the Dommer boys. They were going to the same place we were, so pap brought me home. Uncle Tony came with Helen.

At that time the date nights were Sunday and Thursday. Well your father didn't ask if he can make a date for Thursday, as he was leaving he said I'll be over Thursday. I didn't know if he meant it or was full of ----.

The night before we got married, after the confession, Father Krzyzon baptized me again. So the next day we were married.

June 18, 1919

I became Mrs. Walter Penke

Amen.

Then my married life began but its to[o] much to write about 58 ½ yrs.

Mother.



Editor's Note: Josephine Jankowska and Walter Penke's wedding photo is featured in the Olde Photo Album, on Page 24.

The Legend of the Athletic Prabucki Family

by Edward Prabucki

“Both my Father and Grandfather were involved in soccer events and were awarded honors for their exceptional play in soccer games in Poland.”

It all began in my youth as my Father piously attended the sporting events in our neighborhood, often with his youngsters. It was not until later in my life that I became aware that my Father followed in the footsteps of his father. Both my Father and Grandfather were involved in soccer events and were awarded honors for their exceptional play in soccer games in Poland.

My Father's love for sports continued in me as I became involved while attending Transfiguration Parochial School in the 1930's. One day a call for youth to compete in track events was announced by Ted Ziolkewicz. I entered one event on their playground, and to my surprise I led all competition.

After graduation, on the advice of my Father, I enrolled and studied at Burgard Vocational High School. In 1939, my Gym Coach, Gabber Lynch, sought students to try their skills in Cross-Country competition. In October of 1939, I competed and was selected for the All-High Team; a very exalted honor.

Later, while attending school, all of my children competed in sports events and did very well. In particular, my youngest son, Bernard Prabucki, excelled in track events. In 1978, while in high school, he competed in Cross-Country and was selected for the All-High Team, as I was in 1939. Bernard continued to win in track events at Fredonia College and conferred as All-American in track in 1982.

Ronald Prabucki, my nephew, also entered and competed in track events and did exceptionally well, coming in first in his age group. Ronald, the father of three children, continues the proud legend of our family as his youngsters enter and compete in track and soccer events at their high school in Lockport, N.Y. The oldest, Andrew Prabucki, was selected to the U. S. Soccer Team and competed in many games in Europe.

Added to our incredible legend, my Grandson, Peter Dunn, also entered 5K and 10K races while on furlough and won awards in his group. My friends and neighbors have commented that our family's athletic ability must be inherited. Needless to say, my family's love for sporting events speaks for itself.

The Prabucki Family's achievement in athletics over many generations has become our family legend.



Editor's Note: A search through fultonhistory.com showed that the Prabucki family's athletic accomplishments were often highlighted in the newspaper:

The Buffalo Courier-Express, October 31, 1939 - in the Vocational Cross-County Run, Ed Prabucki of Burgard (far left in the picture) placed 5th in the run at Delaware Park.



The Polish Everybody's Daily (Dziennik dla Wszystkich) – in the late 1930's the newspaper covered the running of the Buffalo Turkey Trot, a foot race that has run continuously since Thanksgiving Day, 1896. In the story, including photos, Edward Prabucki and another member of the PGSNYS, the late Leonard Amborski, were featured among the other front runners in the race.

The Buffalo Courier - July 31, 1946: For the Muni Baseball Appreciation Night, two undefeated Class B teams, the *Als* and *Mroz*, will take the field. Lineup for *Mroz*- Edward Prabucki, left field.

The Buffalo Courier - April 28, 1940: "South Park Nine favored to win Cornell Cup; East, Emerson, Burgard Strong. Burgard has seven lettermen in the lineup and should be in the thick of things. The fielding positions will be capably filled by Ed Prabucki and Alex Stufaniak."

The Buffalo Courier - 1967: Ed's son, Edward Prabucki played baseball at Bishop Ryan High School.

Utica Daily Press - Bernard Prabucki, former Fredonia State All American, ran in the 1986 *Utica Boilermaker Road Race*, and the paper reported on July 14, 1986 that Bernard Prabucki ran in the Boston Marathon.

St. John's Protectory

by Barbara Golibersuch

As immigrants flocked into Buffalo in the 1850's it became a "boom-town" and within years, crime, disease, and poverty became dominant. In an area that was known as Limestone Hill NY, later to be known as Lackawanna, a home was built to handle boys who were inclined to truancy, disobedience, and willfulness. Originally a two-story orphanage was built by the Catholic Diocese to accommodate the wayward children. By 1864, the number of abandoned youth was so large that the orphanage was expanded and an impressive four-story building, St. John's Protectory, replaced the old structure. In 1882, Father Nelson Baker took over as superintendent of the debt-ridden organization. In his eyes, there were no bad boys, and thousands of youngsters benefited from his guidance and care over the years.

My great uncle, Frank Piontkowski, was listed as a student at the Protectory in the 1910 Federal census.

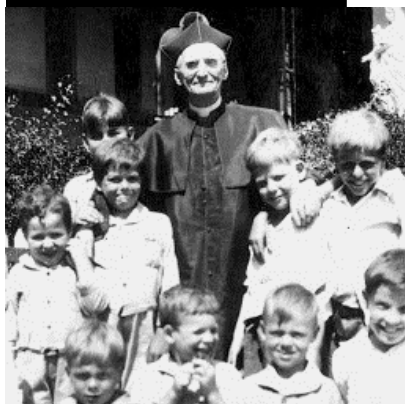
I was able to contact someone at the OLV Homes of Charity, 780 Ridge Rd. Lackawanna, NY 14218. The phone number is 716-828-9648. They have records from the 1890's to current. Unfortunately, they had no records relating to my great uncle.




Technology Review: The Flip-Pal Mobile Scanner

by Denise Oliansky

My parents glued most of our childhood pictures into albums, and it proved impossible to take them out to scan without tearing or otherwise damaging them. I really wanted to digitize them, though, because with age, they are starting to fade. Plus, having them on the computer is the easiest way to share them with other family members. I saw an ad for the Flip-Pal Mobile Scanner with USB adaptor and figured that just might solve my problem. The Flip-Pal is mobile — it can scan anywhere, anytime. It is compact (10.2 x 6.5 x 1/2"), lightweight (2.7 lbs), durable, and cordless. It is powered by four AA batteries. No computer is required to operate it. So, I purchased my Flip-Pal a few months ago through Amazon.com. What a handy little device it has turned out to be! Everything I needed in order to



Father Baker
and his boys

scan came in the box. The Flip-Pal can be used like a regular scanner for small prints— lift the lid, put a picture on the glass, close the lid, push the big green button, and it saves the image to a SD card that comes with the scanner. Alternatively, and more importantly for my needs, with its patented flip-and-scan technology, you can easily take the lid off, flip the scanner over, and use the see-through window to frame the original while leaving it in place in the album or picture frame or wherever. I can control scan quality with 600 or 300 dpi resolution. To load the photos onto my computer, I just remove the SC card from the scanner, put it into the USB adaptor and insert that into a computer USB port, and voilà, I can download the pictures to wherever I want on my computer. Another great feature is that I can scan small or very large pictures, maps, documents, etc. For large items, I just scan in sections and the handy-dandy stitching software, which is built into the SC card, puts the picture together. Amazing!! This scanner could not be easier to use. It requires basically no learning curve. I was scanning and downloading pictures in mere minutes. On the downside, it's not inexpensive. It cost \$149.99 on Amazon.com, plus tax and shipping. There are likely other scanners out there that cost less. But, for ease of use, mobility, and versatility, I find it hard to beat. The other thing — I'm going to invest in a battery recharger and use rechargeable batteries, so I can always have some charged and in reserve when I'm scanning. I can already tell, I'll go through a lot of batteries if I don't do that. Overall, I couldn't be happier with this scanner. It does what it is advertised to do and has made digitizing several albums worth of memories a snap. 



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❧ **Olde Photo Album** ❧



Walter J. Penke, Sr.
&
Josephine Jankowska

Married June 18, 1919
at the
Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church
Buffalo, NY

Submitted by Geraldine Penke Kalkanis

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

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