

**PRESERVING
OUR PAST
SINCE 1988**

SEARCHERS

NO. 67

WINTER

2014, ISSUE 3

**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:**

For Your Information	2
President's Message and Potpourri	3
2014 PGSNYS Projects, Programs, and Participations	4
Yesterday's News: Buffalo's Oldest Couple	10
Finding Buffalo, NY Death Certificates	13
The Duszynski Building	14
Broadway-Fillmore Polish Mafia	16
Do You Know What You Have?	17
Surname Index for this Issue	19
2015 PGSNYS Board of Directors	20



Read the full story on Page 4

Thanks to the efforts of Edward Kornowski and contributions from the Polish Community, Michalina Buczkowska's beautiful wooden Cross, a replica of the old, rises like a beacon among the rows of transplanted graves at St. Adalbert's Cemetery in Cheektowaga, NY.

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*.

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

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

Please send any changes to your postal or E-mail address to PGSNYS at the above
address or E-mail: membership@pgsnys.org

Postal Mailing Address:
PGSNYS
P.O. Box 984
Cheektowaga, NY 14225

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, Christmas party for members & guests

2014 PGSNYS OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Vice President: David Newman
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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,

As 2014 rapidly draws to a close, my holiday wish is that every PGSNYS member learned something useful, made strides in their family history, enjoyed an article in the *Searchers*, experienced the comradery of a meeting, or in some other way benefited from the Society's efforts to better meet the expectations of its members during this year. I truly appreciate the work and time put in by the Board and every member who contributed in any way. Each member's efforts and involvement makes the Society that much stronger and provides momentum for activities and projects that will help us accomplish our mission.

The November elections brought some changes to the Board. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Patricia Neuland and Walter Kloc for their many years and contributions to the Board, and also to welcome Sherry Sojka and Jim Ciulis to their new roles as Trustees. I look forward to leading the Society for another year and, with the Board's help and support, will work to ensure that all members, local and distant, receive the research assistance they need and have the opportunity to then share their knowledge and experience with new members and those in the community who are just getting started on their family history research. It is this circle of learning and sharing that will keep the PGSNYS functioning, productive, and growing.

My heartfelt wishes to you all for a Merry Christmas and
a Blessed, Healthy, and very Happy New Year!

~ Sincerely, Denise Oliansky

POTPOURRI

WITAMY! NEW PGSNYS MEMBERS

Rebecca Kojm
Falls Church, VA

Kathleen Kasprzak
Lancaster, NY

Paula Wojtowicz
Niagara Falls, NY

Joseph A. Rajnisz
Clarence, NY

Jill M. Fedor
Perrysburg, NY

Mary Jane Masiulionis
Cheektowaga, NY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The dates for upcoming 2015 PGSNYS monthly membership meetings at 7 PM in the Villa Maria College cafeteria are Thursday, January 8, February 12, March 12, and April 9.

2015 Board Election results (photo on page 20): President, Denise Oliansky; Vice President, David Newman; Secretary, Dolores Ferguson; Treasurer, Chuck Pyrak; Trustees: Maureen Gleason, Patricia Rooney, Pierre LaJoie, Sherry Sojka, and Jim Ciulis.

Our speaker at the January 8, 2015 meeting will be Mary Jane Masiulionis, a PGSNYS member and faculty in the Theatre Department at Buffalo State College. In her presentation, entitled 'Polonia's Migrant Voices,' Mary Jane will discuss her research on local Polish history and ethnographic interviews with first and second generation Polish Americans in western New York, as well as her use of this research to create a new theatre piece.

2014 PGSNYS Projects, Programs, and Participations

Wooden Cross Restored at St. Adalbert's Old Cemetery

In the Spring 2013 issue of the *Searchers*, PGSNYS member Edward Kornowski first introduced us to Michalina Buczkowska (1898-1914) and also to the only remaining wooden Cross in St. Adalbert's old cemetery on Dale Road in Cheektowaga; a Cross which happened to mark Michalina's grave. In October, 2013, Ed discovered that the Cross had broken from its rotted base and was lying on the ground, and his aspiration to replicate and replace Michalina's marker intensified. As 2014 marked the 100th Anniversary of Michalina's death, it was Ed's objective to raise the funds, have the Cross recreated, and have it installed before the end of this year. With the official dedication of the new marker on November 1st (All Saints Day) at Michalina's grave, Ed's goals were abundantly realized.



**Father Ted blesses
the Cross**

The wooden Cross has been faithfully recreated through Ed's efforts and the generous support of the Polish community. While the new wooden Cross is an accurate reproduction of the original, there have been two additions.

A metal plaque has been affixed which provides an English translation of the Polish words carved into Michalina's Cross. Also, attached to the back are segments of the original wooden Cross, uniting the past and the present versions.

At the official dedication, Father Thaddeus Bocianowski, Pastor of St. Stanislaus Church, blessed the new Cross and offered a Prayer for the Dead, in Polish tradition of All Saints/All Souls Day. From the old wooden Cross, Ed had made small Crosses, which were blessed by Father Ted and distributed to those in attendance at the



**Blessing of the small
Crosses**

dedication ceremony. This event was a moving and touching remembrance of a young Polish girl who died a century ago. It was also a testament to one man’s resolute commitment to preserve an historic and beautiful artifact for generations to come.

Michalina Buczkowska was the daughter of Wladislaw Buczkowski (1867-1957) and Jadwiga Spiewak (1875-1959). When Wladislaw was 30 years old and Jadwiga was 23, they, with 11 month old Michalina, immigrated to America on the ship *Batavia*. They departed from Hamburg on 30 May 1900, and arrived in America through the Port of New York. At the time of Michalina’s death on June 28, 1914, they lived at 318 Sobieski Street in Buffalo, NY.

2014 Polish Ancestors’ Day and Mass for All Souls

The Polish Legacy Project of Buffalo and the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State joined together in the Resurrection Mausoleum and Chapel at St. Stanislaus Cemetery on November 1, 2014 to honor and remember our ancestors. In the Polish tradition of visiting graves of loved ones on All Saints and All Souls Days, beautiful memorial candles from Poland and potted chrysanthemums were available for purchase from the Polish Legacy Project to place on graves of relatives and friends who now rest at St. Stanislaus or other cemeteries.



**Polish Legacy Project
with candles and flowers for sale**

tory using records compiled independently by Barbara Ruppert and also the Find-A-Grave website.

Father Czesław Krysa, Rector of St. Casimir Church in Buffalo, celebrated a Mass for All Souls, during which the Corpus Christi Church choir sang bilingual versions of Polish hymns. Afterward, Father Krysa led attendees in a procession to the World War II Polish Veterans memorial, providing prayers and blessings for veterans along the way and at the memorial.

The Polish Genealogical Society of New York State assisted attendees who were interested in learning about their Polish ancestors, and also provided grave locations at St. Stanislaus Cemetery



**PGSNYS offers
research assistance**

**Mass
offered by
Father
Krysa**



**WWII
Polish
Veterans
Memorial**

Restoring to Memory: Locating Long-Lost Grave Markers in the Old St. Adalbert Cemetery

In another project spearheaded by Edward Kornowski, several PGSNYS members and others met at the old St. Adalbert Cemetery on Dale Road in Cheektowaga on September 6th and 7th to probe the ground for buried grave markers. There were about 10 to 12 volunteers who did four hours of probing for sunken markers each day. The search was conducted mostly in the oldest area, Section K, rows 1 to 15, with a burial date range between 1890 and 1903. In addition, in the family plot area, a grid search was conducted of the Mączyńska/Monczynski plot (see *Searchers* issue 66, 'Researching Great-Grandma Franciszka Mączyńska Górska' for more information about this plot). During the two days, approximately 60 potential markers were flagged. Six potential markers were staked in the Monczynski plot. There were also several potential finds in other sections as well. Some of the finds were readily verified as submerged flat markers.



Setting up grid lines

Due to cemetery and New York State regulations, the volunteers were not allowed to dig up any of the markers themselves. Within a month, the Cemetery personnel checked each of the flagged sites, but have not yet raised the markers that were found. There were ten markers with names. Two additional stones that possibly have names facing downward will need to be flipped over to see who they are. There were three more stones without any data whatsoever, identified only as Nasz Syn (Our Son), Our Mother, and Zóna (wife). The Monczynski plot had three markers unearthed, including two that were sunk down together. In total there were 15 markers and two small crosses located out of 60



Volunteers at work

marked areas (25%). As can be seen in the example pictures, some had sunk quite deep, while others were very close to the surface under the grass.

Found were:

Andrzej Wojciechowski d. 18 Dec 1899

K Section

Maryanna Kotlinska 2/13/1892

Mary Lewandowska d. 3/13/1895

Alexander Nowak d. 9/18/1903



Jozefa Dabrowska d. 1/3/1895

Michal Bilicki 1872-1905

L section

L-1-15 Maryanna Mozdziach 1874-1915

Monczynski Family Plot:

Stanislaw Monczynski 1874-1959 Father

Maryanna Monczynska 1875-1942

Cecylia Monczynska 1877-1947

Due to the efforts of Ed Kornowski and the volunteers who helped on this project, these grave markers will once again see the light of day, and the people interred at these sites will not be lost to memory.



Zupapalooza Polish Soup Festival

The first annual Zupapalooza, sponsored by the Polish American Congress Western New York, was held November 9th at the Leonard Post (2450 Walden Ave., Cheektowaga) and was a great success! The purpose of the event was to raise awareness of Polish food and visibility for the Western New York cultural organizations involved. The Polish Genealogical Society of New York State participated in the event and provided surname look-ups, handouts, and other research assistance, as well as a table loaded with luscious desserts for attendees.



PGSNYS tables

Eight soups for in-house sampling or take-out were provided by various other Polish community organizations. For \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door, attendees could choose four 4-ounce bowls of soup, rye bread and butter, a beverage, and homemade desserts. Entertainment included Polish music and Polish folk dancers.



Judges enjoying their task

The 'Best Polish Soup' contest judges were renowned chef and restaurant owner Mike Andrzejewski, John Zach of WBEN, Heather Ly of Channel 2, Autumn Lewandowski of WKBW, Roger Puchalski of the Am-Pol Eagle, Mike Pasierb of "Rockin' Polkas" Radio Shows, and Joseph Golombek, City of Buffalo Council Member.

The Golden Ladle (first prize) went to the Biały Barszcz/ White Barszcz made by Polish Saturday School. The Silver Ladle went to the Grzybowa/Mushroom made by the Professional and Business Women of Polonia. The Bronze Ladle went to Ziemniaczana z Porą/Potato Leek provided by the Polish American Congress. The People's Choice Award, based on voting by attendees, went to the Gołąbki soup made by the Polish Heritage Dancers.



Happy crowd at Zupapalooza!



Polish Independence Day Polish Happy Hour!

The PGSNYS was invited by Joseph Rej to host a table from 5 to 9 PM at the Polish Independence Day Polish Happy Hour held at The Polish Cadets on Grant Street in Buffalo on November 11th. There was a large crowd, tasty (and free!) Polish food, Polish beer, Polish music, Polish dancing, and a large Chinese auction. Many attendees stopped by the PGSNYS table for information on their family surnames and other research assistance. This was the first time PGSNYS had a table at one of the Polish Happy Hours, and it will not be the last. It was a fun crowd and a good time!



Dziennik Digitization Project Update

After about five years of consultations, negotiations, re-negotiations, demo reviews, discussion, alternative investigations, and multiple versions of contracts, the PGSNYS Board has approved the *Dziennik dla Wszystkich* digitization process to be performed by Biel's Document Management. A contract to proceed with the digitization of the first 40 rolls of microfilm was signed at the November 3rd Board meeting, and the rolls have been sent out for processing.

The *Dziennik Dla Wszystkich*, also known as the *Everybody's Daily*, was a Polish language newspaper published in Buffalo, New York from 1911 through 1957. The PGSNYS has committed to digitizing all pages of every issue of this historically significant newspaper. This project is being conducted with the permission of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society (BECHS), which owns the microfilmed copies of the newspaper from 1911-1943. The goal is to first completely digitize the BECHS collection of 83 rolls of microfilm. The remaining issues are available from the Library of Congress, which has already granted the PGSNYS future access.

This is a project of significant importance. Not only is the PGSNYS preserving this Polish newspaper for future generations, it will also be available as an invaluable genealogical resource. Once the digitized issues are available, anyone will be able to search for information about their ancestors using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, which will be built into the digitizing process.

This endeavor is not inexpensive, and it is with sincere gratitude that the PGSNYS Board thanks the following people for donations they made specifically to the *Dziennik* project, either independently or through the Adopt-a-Roll program: Ted Smardz, Daniel Domino, the late Dr. Leonard Amborski, Dolores Hausch, Mrs. Alice Drabik, James Borowczyk, Stanley H. Cieslar, Kathleen F. Cortes, and Arthur Thrun. The sale of Pennsylvania Dutch genealogy charts and 50/50 split club profits are also designated toward this project, so thank you to all who contribute to these fundraisers.

Yesterday's News

Buffalo's Oldest Couple

**This is an exact replication (in italics) of a news article published in the Buffalo, N.Y. Courier, Sunday, December 20, 1908, Page 31
Researched by Laurel Myszker Keough**

CENTENARIANS WHO HAVE BEEN WEDDED 77 YEARS

Andrew Joziakiewicz, Aged 107, and His Wife in 100th Year, Are Buffalo's Oldest Couple _____History of Their Lives

ASCribES LONG LIFE TO TEMPERATE HABITS

For Half a Century the Aged Pair Has Lived in Buffalo - Old Andrew Helped to Build Some of the City's Big Institutions.

The oldest couple in Buffalo, whose presence in the community was brought to light through a police item the other day, lives in a humble abode in rear of No. 187 Oneida Street, East Buffalo. Passing through a side alleyway to the rear of the frame cottage, a reporter yesterday found the aged couple occupying two rooms on the ground floor whose interior presented a strange if somewhat melancholy scene.

Andrew Joziakiewicz, who celebrated his 107th birthday last Saturday, was found seated by his spouse, Josephine, who before her marriage to Andrew 77 years ago had Posphyhala for a surname. She will be 100 years old on January 15th, 1909. They are both natives of the village of Wlecklin [Lechlin] in the County of Wongroricz [Wongrowitz-Ger., Wagrowiec-Pol.] in German Poland, where their marriage took place.

It was between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon when a reporter called on the aged couple and found them seated, almost side by side, in the silence and gloom of a kitchen which serves also as sitting room. The other occupant of the apartment was their only surviving child of a family of eleven---Victoria Wajder [Wojda], who will be 60 years old next birthday.



Bits of faded carpet on the floor and a stove were noticeable features of the slender furnishings which, though indicative of poverty, evinced a fair measure of cleanliness---tokens of Victoria's housekeeping ability. The aged couple are unable to speak English. Their daughter has some knowledge of the language of their adopted country, and with the aid of an interpreter an interview was obtained.

Andrew is a frail little man, small of feature, with a tuft of gray on his upper lip and more grey on and under his chin.

TELLS OF TIME LONG PAST

Seated in front of the warm stove, wearing a moleskin cap which came tightly down on his ears, Andrew listened to the questions addressed to him in Polish and made intelligent and ready replies, supplemented at times by a remark or two from his 60 year old daughter. His centenarian spouse nestled close by his side and contented herself with listening. The substance of Andrew's talk is given as follows:

“We came to America from German Poland a little over 50 years ago. We went to Texas first where we were both employed as farm hands for about a month. Then we came to Buffalo, where we have lived for 50 years. We located in Monroe Street. There were only one or two houses there at that time. After working for years as a farm laborer, I was employed as a laborer in the laying out of Buffalo Park. I helped lay the first stone of the new City and County Hall and worked as masons' helper at the building of the Buffalo State Hospital on Forest Ave. I was also employed as a laborer in the digging of Fillmore Avenue sewer. We have been married 77 years. Victoria is the only one now living of our family of 11 children. Victoria has also been married and has three children living of a family of seven. Three boys survive, the oldest of whom, employed as a butcher, is 28 years old. He has been living with us.”

Andrew's longevity is traceable to a sound physical constitution and a long spell of outdoor living and plenty of exercise. He smokes a pipe occasionally but never indulges in a cigar. “I never drank a glass of whisky in my life,” he said, “and I expect I never will. Water and weak tea are good enough for me.”

“He has never been sick in his life---at least not seriously. He began to cough a bit lately,” said his daughter, “Something he had never done before.”

It wasn't until about four years ago did Andrew quit working at odd jobs. He was last employed on a farm near Angola. Most of his life he says he rose before the lark, about 4 o'clock in the morning, but of late he has remained abed until seven or half past. Their modest two-room house is rented at \$5 a month and might be brightened by a visit from Santa Claus or some good fairy during the Christmastide.

Research Notes by Laurel Keough:

In the late 1860's and early 1870's when Polish immigrants established Buffalo's Polish community, their presence in the city was captured in church records documenting their births, marriages, deaths, Holy Communion, and Confirmations, in local newspaper articles, and various federal, state, and parish census records. The above article was found at fultonhistory.com. Usually the written profiles of these Poles told the stories of community leaders, politicians, prominent businessmen, and religious clergy. This article is unique and significant because it gives an insight into the life of the

“The age discrepancy from what was reported in the Buffalo Courier was 25 years!”

common man, a laborer and his family in Buffalo's early Polonia. Andrew and Josepha's claim to fame appears to be their longevity and apparently the reason why the *Buffalo Courier* reported this human interest tale.

Playing the history detective, I decided to see what other documentation I could find about this pioneer couple. There is a mention of the couple in the history of St. Stanislaus B.M. Parish in Buffalo, NY (1873-1923). Also, in 1963, Stephen Gredel, wrote about Andrew Joziakiewicz in *Early Polish Pioneers in Buffalo*. The Gredel article named the village of Andrew's birth as Raczkow. The noteworthy facts in that article and also in the parish history were taken directly from the *Buffalo Courier* story of 1908. Because the article gave the name of the town where Andrew and Josepha resided and also Josepha's maiden name, I decided to check the Poznan Project, <http://poznan-project.psn.c.pl/>. There it was; the marriage of Andreas Joziak (23 years old) and Josepha Pospychala (22 years old) entry #5, 1851 in the Catholic parish of Raczkowo-Jablkowo in Wielkopolskie. This meant that Andreas/Andrzej/Andrew was born around 1828, and he was just a one year older than his wife. The age discrepancy from what was reported in the *Buffalo Courier* was 25 years!

So now the dilemma-- what are the reasons for the huge difference in their reported ages? Let's remember, no one was walking around with proof of their birth date in those days. Certainly the author of the newspaper article had no way to check the authenticity of their ages. The family was enumerated in the 1892 New York State Census as Andrew and Josepha Jankowicz, ages 77 and 67, respectively, living with their daughter Victoria and her sons. Even at that early date, there was erroneous reporting of their ages. The 1908 article states the couple's daughter, Victoria Wojda, also needed an interpreter when she reported the details of her parents' story. The language barrier was huge.

This does not mean that the entire story was a fabrication. Andrew shows up in the Buffalo City Directory on Monroe St. in 1875, and his daughter Mary received the sacrament of Confirmation on May 7, 1874 at St. Stanislaus Parish. Andrew's work history seems plausible. Buffalo Park [Buffalo Driving Park] was located at Ferry St. & Humboldt Pkwy. and was constructed about 1869-1870. Erie County and City Hall was built 1871-1875, the Insane Asylum began in 1872 and opened in 1880, and Buffalo Common Council proceedings in 1880 say a large trunk sewer on Fillmore Ave. was built in 1879.

You decide...do you think the story was intentionally enhanced or is it possible these simple and courageous Polish pioneers were really just confused when asked about ages and dates? How much was lost in translation? The Joziakiewicz family did have more than their "15 minutes of

fame," as they are named in *Who's Who in Polish America* published in 1943, along with three articles in the *Buffalo Courier* and their inclusion in the St. Stanislaus Parish history. And although the story is flawed, it has survived. Now, more than a century later, it reminds us of the common man's role in the building of Buffalo's Eastside Polonia.

I would like to thank Edward Kornowski for his expertise in helping me find additional information on this family and Keith Kaszubik for sharing facts on the Joziakiewicz family from his Early Polonia Database .



Member Moments

Finding Buffalo, NY Death Certificates

by Edward W. Kornowski

Genealogy presents many challenges for beginners and experts alike. One issue we all seem to have a story about is locating a death certificate. One reason for not finding them can be as simple as early certificates were often misspelled. You remember your teacher saying, "This is going on your permanent record"? Well, that is true with misspelled death certificates-- the error gets copied into cemetery records, compounding the error. Families try correcting this information, but cemeteries are required to index the burial under the spelling recorded on the death certificate.

Researchers can try alternate spellings, or try pronouncing the names phonetically, as it sounds. Once I searched a surname MELANSON, whose burial I suspected was at a certain cemetery that had no record of it. Later I tried asking for MALANSON, and finally MILANSON, which paid off, because I found the burial location.

Here in Buffalo, NY, we are blessed with some great places for research, including Erie County Hall, City Hall, the Buffalo Inactive Records Center, and the Grosvenor Room at the Buffalo and Erie County Central Library-- the latter being my favorite. Recently opened is the Margaret Wendt Research facility located at Forest Lawn Cemetery, with records for burials that occurred there. I have not had the opportunity to visit there as yet.

My suggestion for researchers is to start at the Grosvenor Room using the New York State Vital Records microfiche. Each microfiche contains one year's death index for the entire state, so no matter where in New York they died, a person should be listed. This statewide index starts at 1914 and can be searched to 1964 for Buffalo deaths (note: the NYS Death Index for places other than Buffalo, Albany, and Yonkers starts in 1881; New York City is not included at all). This index will give you the correct date and location, and sometimes age at death. Once you learn the death location, you can contact that specific locality for a copy of the death certificate.

Sometimes a death occurred in Buffalo, New York, but the Clerk's office cannot locate the

certificate. The Buffalo Deaths Index can be tricky, sometimes when searching a particular spelling, the page is full and continues to another page --there are notes at the bottom of the page referring you to another page. These notes are often missed, resulting in not finding an entry.

There were two facilities within the city of Buffalo that issued the death certificates of their inmates, the first being Buffalo Veterans Hospital and the second being Buffalo Psychiatric Center. For many years you had to contact those facilities for copies, but lately those records are now part of the Buffalo City Clerk's collections. When asking for a search of their Buffalo records, you must specifically ask them to search these two indexes if you suspect your ancestor may have died there.

Location, location, location-- yes, you know the phrase-- but it's true in cases of drowning. If a person drowned in the Niagara River at the foot of Ferry Street in Buffalo, but the body was recovered in Fort Erie, Canada, then Fort Erie, Canada would issue the death certificate.

Finally, I just want to add that many elderly relatives lived out their days at the Erie County Home and Infirmary. Usually they were persons with no spouse or family and too poor to afford nursing home care. When they passed away, their death certificates were issued by the Town of Alden, NY, which is where the home was located. The Clerk's Office is located at 3311 Wende Road, Alden, NY 14004, (716) 937-6969.

“Jan was known for his craftsmanship in making shoes and, if anyone wanted an excellent pair of beautiful shoes, they would go to him.”

The Duszynski Building

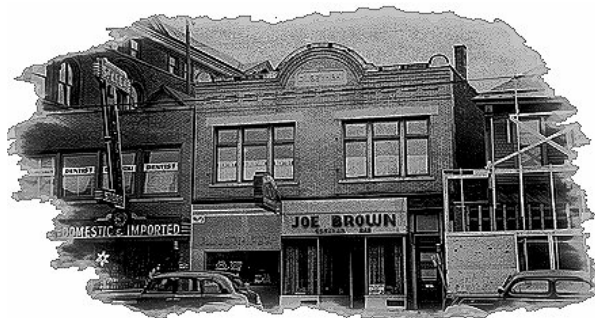
by Sue Cerri

My grandfather, Jan Duszynski, immigrated to Buffalo in 1882. The following year he married Antonina Drachowska. He was a shoe dealer – selling, making, and repairing shoes. Antonina was a midwife. They eventually had seven children. As the family grew, Jan moved to larger homes for the family.

In 1891, Jan bought an L-shaped lot located at 1073 Broadway and 230 Playter Street. Jan had a four-family apartment building constructed on Playter. The young family would live here while the larger business was being built on Broadway, the busier street. The Polish Community Center, Dom Polski, was next to them at 1081 Broadway. Dom Polski was a large building constructed in 1905 on the corner of Broadway and Playter Street. It was a place for clubs and societies to meet. There was a library in it geared toward the many Polish books it housed. There were lectures and classes teaching sewing, cooking, and other practical matters.¹

The Broadway building Jan had built was two stories tall. It had a stone basement for storage that was only seven and a half feet tall. The first floor was designated for the shoe business and the second floor was the living quarters. The façade was a tan colored brick with a raised arched frontage that had the family name engraved on it. A narrow stairway led up from the sidewalk to the living area. When Jan and Antonina moved in they had four children with another on the way. The building plans provided a room for Antonina's mother, Agatha, to live.

Life was good. Jan was known for his craftsmanship in making shoes and, if anyone wanted an excellent pair of beautiful shoes, they would go to him. He had an outstanding character – something that helped him build his clientele. This was truly the “Gay Nineties” for them.



The Duszynski Building

Everything changed in 1912. Jan fell from scaffolding as he and a fellow Pole were repairing an out-building. At first he was thought to be dead, but they rushed him to the hospital, and he survived for three days. His oldest sons, Frank and Michael, had always worked in the business with their father and now took over the business. As time went on, though, interests changed. Frank eventually went to work at the downtown library. Michael became an optician. Mother, Antonia, now ran the business. She eventually subdivided the shoe store into two shops. At different times there was the optician store, a beauty shop, a jewelry store, and a bar. Third son, Leonard, became a general practitioner. His practice was upstairs in the front. Antonina and two of the unmarried daughters lived in the back section. Over the years Leonard's two oldest sons, Leonard Richard and Arnold had their medical practices in the building.

Antonia died in the home her husband had built for them and their fledgling family. This building was the stronghold for the Duszynski family for over 60 years. It was eventually sold and then demolished in the early 1970s. There is an urban garden there today.

My father eventually moved his office out to Kenmore. We rarely went to the Duszynski Building. I only have the picture from the 1940s shown above and am hoping that someone out in the PGSNYS community might be able to help me by sending any picture they have of the building and any memory of it they might like to share with me. I look forward to future contacts (sue.cerri@gmail.com).

¹J.N. Larned. *The Progress of the Empire State, Vol. II: The History of Buffalo*. New York: Progress of the United States, Co., 1913. Available online at GoogleBooks.com

Broadway - Fillmore Polish Mafia

by Nicole Lodyga Pohancsek

Did you ever wonder if your family was in the mafia? My mother and I always joke around and say that our relatives were in the Polish Mafia, because they are hard to find on census records, birth records, death records, etc. They have always been very elusive. Never in a million years did I ever think there was a Polish Mafia right here in Buffalo, NY.

A few months ago my husband's Aunt Delores Lewandowski called me and told me that she was reading a book called *They Call Me Korney* by Michael Rizzo and that one of my husband's relatives was in the book. She knew how much I loved Buffalo history and genealogy and thought I would enjoy the book. I couldn't control my excitement, since I know very little about the Sipowicz part of my husband's family tree. I ordered the book on Amazon and read the entire book on a business flight to Atlanta. The book was very easy to read, with only 208 pages and short chapters.

The plot takes place around the 1920's in the Broadway-Fillmore area of Buffalo. Even if you don't have mobster characters in your family tree, I would still recommend reading the book, because they also mention politicians, neighbors, bar workers, and police officers. You never know what name you might recognize in this book. My husband's relative, Theodore Sipowicz, was not in the Korney gang, but was a witness that followed the gang after a robbery and testified against them.

I enjoyed reading the book because of familiar names of streets and buildings and the pictures. At one point in the book, the gang is planning to rob a house on Sweet Avenue. I wondered if they were talking about my great-grandfather's house. Did my great-grandfather know these thugs? He was about the same age as the gang members and lived in the same neighborhood as them.

The Korney gang, led by John 'Korney' Kwiatkowski, terrorized the Buffalo Broadway-Fillmore area during the 1920's. They made a lot of money during prohibition selling beer to local establishments. However, they were not the smartest criminals and eventually got caught.

In my research on the Korney gang, I also came across a website for Homicides in Buffalo between the years 1902-1936. This list included a lot of Polish names and can be found at <http://www.homicideresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/New-Buffalo-Chart-in-Word-2013.pdf>. I must warn you that the website is rather depressing and you should read it only if you are in a good frame of mind. This website mentions the Korney gang and my husband's relative, Theodore Sipowicz.

After reading the book, *They Call Me Korney*, and the Buffalo homi-

"...you get the feeling that Buffalo had a bit of a wild-west vibe back then."

cide website, you get the feeling that Buffalo had a bit of a wild-west vibe back then. Even the sentencing of criminals was not like today. An example of this is when you see that people were let off because the judge felt they were justified in killing someone because they were owed a couple dollars.

These two resources are invaluable, even if you don't have family members in them. They paint a not-so-pretty picture of the early 1900's in Buffalo. Our families lived through this every day of their lives. You might come away with a better understanding of why some of your family members turned out they way they did. Here are some of the Polish names in the Korney book:

Bartkowiak, Joseph	Michalski, Stella	Slowiak, Felix
Baszynski, Stephen	Nietopska, Irene	Tucholka, Edward
Brzostowicz, Jean	Pawlak, Lawrence	Winatowski
Chojnicki, Victor	Plocharski, Zygmund	Wojciechowski, Stephen
Czajkowski, John	Poizan, John	Wojtkowiak, Stephen
Gaiwski, William	Przbyl, Stanley	Wolowski, Anthony
Groblewski, William	Pyszczynski, Stanley	Ziolkowski, Charles
Kalkiewicz, Anthony	Pyzynski, 'Kaiser'	Ziolkowski, Joseph
Mackowiak, Clara	Sipowicz, Theodore	Ziolkowski, Louis
Mackowska, Stella	Slazyk, John	Ziolkowski, Stephen
Marusza, Joey		

Do You Know What You Have?

by Jim Ciulis

Someone once said to me, "You don't know what you have until you know what you have." I have learned that this is true.

Years ago I received a letter from Mr. John Ciulis who lived in the Slovenska Republika (The Slovak Republic). He wrote that we are family according to pedigree. He spoke of his grandfather, Konrad Ciulis, from Poland. He mentioned that Konrad's father was Marton Ciulis. He spoke of his kids, Oto and Dagmar Ciulis. He gave me some of his background and told of the searching he had done.

A side note--growing up I was always told that both my mother and father were Polish; however, when people looked at my father and our surname many assumed we were Greek.

Anyway, this letter from John Ciulis was our spark, and my wife, Donna, and I started researching my family. We tucked that letter away and off we went.

We set off for the Erie County Hall in hopes of finding my grandfather Bronislaus Ciulis' immigration papers. We were able to obtain his Declaration of Intent and Petition for Naturalization; although, on the Petition for Naturalization his name appeared as Joseph Bronislaus Ciulis. In that moment we held the paperwork that my grandfather had filled out to become an American citizen! We

"You don't know what you have until you know what you have."

learned where my grandfather was born, when he came to the United States, and what ship brought him here. Once we obtained a copy and read the paperwork, we put it into storage. Off we went to research for more information on my family.

Our searching was sporadic, working on it only during the winter months. We expanded our research to include my wife's side of the family, including her father, Joseph Kersten. We learned that our friends and neighbors Barbara and Don Golibersuch were also involved in genealogy. They told us all about the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State and also directed us to visit the Church of Latter Day Saints Family History Center (FHC).

Our first visit to the FHC at the Orchard park location paid off when we found they had microfilm containing U.S. Censuses, local church records, and cemetery records. Donna was searching for her father's family, and I was working on my father's family. It did not take long, though, before I hit my first brick wall. So I asked a woman at the FHC for help. She asked for my grandfather's Petition for Naturalization. After she reviewed it, I learned a very important lesson.

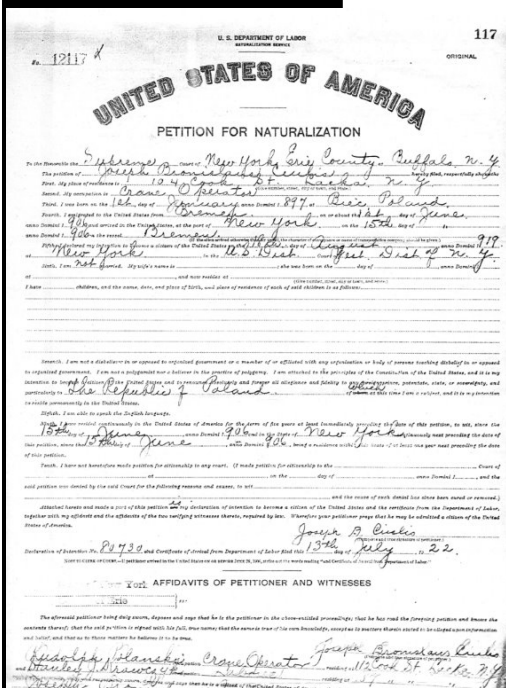
You don't know what you have until you know what you have.

You see, I had looked at the paperwork many times, reviewing where my grandfather was born, when he came to America, what ship he was on, the port they sailed from, and, oh yes, his date of birth. I had seen it all many times. But this wonderful woman did something I never had. She did the math! She opened my eyes and broke through that brick wall in seconds. You see, she told me that my grandfather was only nine years old when he arrived in the United States. She pointed out that he must have traveled here with his parents.

The light went on, and for the first time in months I had a new direction to go with my research. Yes, I found my great-grandparents Ludwik Ciulis and his wife, Amelia Bora Ciulis. Since the start of my search I had assumed my grandfather came to the U.S. as an adult. No one in our family had ever talked about my great-grandparents. I was so excited when I found my grandfather's Petition for Naturalization, I thought I read everything the paperwork had to offer, but I missed some details. I never did the math.

So years after we started our search, we went back to the letter that sparked our interest. Lo and behold, another clue and another path to follow.

You don't know what you have until you know what you have.



Bronislaus Ciulis
Petition for
Naturalization



Graves of Ludwik and Amelia Ciulis

Surname Index for this Issue

Surname	Page(s)	Surname	Page(s)	Surname	Page(s)	Surname	Page(s)
Amborski	9	Golombek	8	Larned	15	Rej	9
Andrezejewski	8	Górska	6	Lewandowski/a	6, 8, 16	Rizzo	16
Bilicki	7	Gredel	12	Ly	8	Rooney	2, 3, 20
Bocianowski	4	Hausch	9	Mączyński/a	6	Ruppert	5
Borowczyk	9	Hider	2	Masiulionis	3	Sipowicz	16, 17
Buczowski/a	1, 4, 5	Jankowicz	12	Melanson/		Smardz	9
Cerri	14	Joziak	12	Milanson	13	Sojka	3, 20
Cieslar	9	Joziakiewicz	10, 12	Monczynski	6, 7	Spiewak	5
Ciulis	3, 17-20	Kasprzak	3	Mozdziach	7	Thrun	9
Cortes	9	Kaszubik	13	Neuland	2	Wojciechowski	6
Dabrowska	7	Keough	2, 10	Newman	2, 3, 20	Wojda/Wajder	10
Domino	9	Kersten	18	Nowak	6	Wojtowicz	3
Drabik	9	Kloc	2	Oliansky	2, 3, 20	Zach	8
Drachowska	14	Kojm	3	Pasierb	8		
Duszynski	14, 15	Kollinska	6	Pohancsek	16	Note: This list does not repeat all the surnames listed on Page 17 from the Rizzo book.	
Fedor	3	Kornowski	1,4,6,7,13	Pospychala	12		
Ferguson	2, 3, 20	Krysa	5	Puchalski	8		
Gleason	2, 3, 20	Kwiatkowski	16, 17	Pyrak	2, 3, 20		
Golibersuch	2, 18	LaJoie	2, 3, 20	Rajnisz	3		

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