

# SEARCHERS

NO. 72

SUMMER

2016, ISSUE 2

**PRESERVING  
OUR PAST  
SINCE 1988**

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## **St. Hedwig Church in Houseville, NY**

**One of only three Polish parishes  
established in the Diocese of Ogdensburg**

**See the full story on Page 4**

# PGSNYS - FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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**FOUNDED BY  
MICHAEL  
DRABIK**

**In May 2015, the  
PGSNYS became a  
not-for-profit  
corporation in New  
York State and also  
received Federal  
501(c)(3) tax status**

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

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 (\$30 Canada, \$35 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* and  
coincides with the anniversary date of when you joined the Society.

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

PGSNYS  
c/o Membership Chair  
P.O. Box 984  
Cheektowaga, NY 14225

**Please send any changes to your postal or E-mail address to PGSNYS at the above  
address or E-mail: [membership@pgsnys.org](mailto:membership@pgsnys.org)**

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

\*Exceptions: July (annual picnic) and December (Christmas party for members & guests)

## 2016 PGSNYS OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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### PGSNYS EXECUTIVE BOARD

**President:** Denise Oliansky  
**Vice President:** Sherry Sojka  
**Secretary:** Dolores Ferguson  
**Treasurer:** Chuck Pyrak

**Webmaster:** Chuck Pyrak

### PGSNYS TRUSTEES

Maureen Gleason  
Maria Slomczewski  
Charles Penasack  
Hank Kozlowski  
Jim Ciulis

**Historian:**

### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

**Searchers** Denise Oliansky  
**Library** Laurel Keough  
**Media** Maureen Gleason  
**Membership** Donna Ciulis  
**Hospitality** Rita Hider & Barb  
and Don Golibersuch  
**Special Events** Dolores Ferguson  
& Patricia Rooney

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## THE *SEARCHERS* NEWSLETTER

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

**1st issue (Spring)** - due March 1st for April mailing

**2nd issue (Summer)** - due July 1st for August mailing

**3rd issue (Winter)** - due November 1st 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](mailto:denise.oliansky@gmail.com)

# PGSNYS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

When Saturday, September 10th rolls around, we are holding our 8th annual Genealogy Fair at St. Gabriel's Church in Elma. After that, and new for us this year, is a Polish Dinner on Sunday, October 23rd at Potts Deli in honor of Polish Heritage Month and to raise money to complete our ongoing *Dziennik* digitization project. Both of these events present opportunities for PGSNYS members to get involved.

Also coming up, at the October membership meeting, are nominations for officers and trustees to serve on the PGSNYS Board of Directors. Term limits require that this be the final year for myself as president and for Dolores Ferguson as secretary, so those two officer positions will need members in good standing to step up and get their names on the ballot. If any of the existing Board members decide to run for either of those positions, there may be trustee or other officer positions that open up as well. I think all of your current Board members would tell you that it is not an onerous task to be on the Board. Its sole purpose is to guide the growth and direction of the Society. It does require one extra meeting a month, but not every month at that. It is an opportunity to share your strengths and talents to help the PGSNYS grow and prosper in its efforts to bring Polish genealogical research to our members and the community.

~ Sincerely, Denise Oliansky

## POTPOURRI

### WITAMY! NEW PGSNYS MEMBERS

Candace Bachara  
Buffalo, NY

William P. Ciesla  
Millersville, MD

Joan Ciszak  
Alden, NY

Joan Peck  
West Seneca, NY

Rosemarie Kud  
Grand Island, NY

Allyn Gemerek  
West Point, VA

Christopher Swiatek  
Erie, PA

Fran Kotowski  
Cheektowaga, NY

Linda Lake  
Port Crane, NY

Mary Jane Masiulionis  
Cheektowaga, NY

Donald J. Bartus  
Buffalo, NY

Samantha Szafranek  
Honolulu, HI

Barbara Uhl  
Cheektowaga, NY

Scott Maciejewski  
Falls Church, VA

Sarah Maciejewski  
Falls Church, VA

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The dates for upcoming 2016 PGSNYS monthly membership meetings at 7 PM in the Villa Maria College cafeteria are Thursday, September 8, October 13, and November 10. (No meeting in December)

Remember, you may now renew your membership online through our website ([pgsnys.org](http://pgsnys.org)) using PayPal. If you are unsure about when your membership expires, check the mailing label on your *Searchers*.

Please see the flyers on pages 6 & 7 regarding our upcoming events: the September 10th Genealogy Fair and the October 23rd Polish Dinner.

The PGSNYS database of *Dziennik dla Wszystkich* Death Notices is now searchable by surname on our website! If you would like to obtain copies of notices, please submit the search results as instructed with \$3 or \$5 per notice for members and nonmembers, respectively. Happy searching!

## St. Hedwig Church in Houseville, NY by Greg Witul

Diocese of  
Ogdensburg in  
northeast NY



Every Roman Catholic Diocese in New York State is home to a Polish parish. In its heyday Buffalo had nearly three dozen, New York had a score, and Albany, Brooklyn, Rochester, Rockville Centre, and Syracuse had more than a few. But, even with a plethora of Poles in the area, the Diocese of Ogdensburg, measuring in at 12,036 square miles, has been home to only three Polish parishes, with Saint Hedwig in Houseville being the most recently established.

Poles began moving into the North Country of New York in the first quarter of the 20th century. Many of these early settlers moved north from the coal mines of Pennsylvania. By 1920, enough Poles had moved into Lewis County to warrant their own parish. Father Mauritius Sekiewicz was brought in to organize the families, including Jan Dalkiewicz, Vincent Dapkiewicz, Jan Gawlik, Jozef Lapkowski, Jozef Paczkowski, Andrzej Tarasek and Konstanty Zychowski, and to establish the church. Over two years, he completed the census, collected money, acquired a two-story frame building in Martinsburg, and opened the church in February of 1922. Originally named St. Martin, the Polish parish quickly grew. In 1924, Father Alexander Konus took over and began to collect money for a larger house of worship. In three years he had enough cash on hand to buy a plot of land and erect a new church. At the dedication on September 25, 1927, St. Martin parish was renamed St. Hedwig, the patron saint of Silesia, with a nod to the Queen of Poland.

The growth of the 1920s was halted by the Great Depression of the 1930s. Shortly after Konus left in 1935, it became clear to Bishop Conroy that St. Hedwig Church was in financial trouble. To clean up the mess, he contacted the Franciscans of St. Anthony Province and invited them to take over the parish. They agreed, and to set things straight placed Father Damian Wydro OFM in charge of the parish in the summer of 1936. Since there was no livable rectory for the priest, he began living with his parishioners in their homes. Because of this arrangement, the parish quickly raised enough cash for a new house for the priest, who moved in April of 1937.

A number of Franciscan priests would guide the parish through the rest of the Depression, but it would be under the pastorship of Father Lambert Sidor OFM that the church debt would be paid off, being completely cleared by 1948. Following the Second World War, St. Hedwig saw

good growth once again. In 1950 the church was remodeled, in 1951 stained glass was added and, in 1952, the pews and alters were refinished.

The Franciscans would oversee the parish until 1991, when St. Hedwig became a mission church of St. Peter Church in Lowville. Despite its status, St. Hedwig is still a lively parish, holding weekly Masses and a Polish Fest in October.

Genealogically speaking, St. Hedwig parish is an example of internal Polish migration from the coal fields of Pennsylvania into New York. What makes this example unique is how far north they traveled, as most of this migration settled in New York's Southern Tier – for example at St. Stanislaus in Bradford or St. Casimir in Elmira. So if you have a Pennsylvania ancestor who relocated to "New York," but have yet to find them, try St. Hedwig parish in Houseville, NY. You can call the church at (315) 376-6662, fax to (315) 376-6663, or snail mail requests to 5432 State Route 26, Turin, New York 13473. You could also pop in for a Mass at 11:00 AM on Sundays. ❧

*Editor's Note: The other two Polish Catholic Churches in the Diocese of Ogdensburg were Saint Stanislaus in Watertown, which was established in 1909, but only lasted a couple of years and Saint Michael in Mineville, which was established in 1911 and closed in 1996.*

*Church records from 1909-1911 for St. Stanislaus in Watertown are available from the Family History Library. Although the parish was established, a church was never built.*

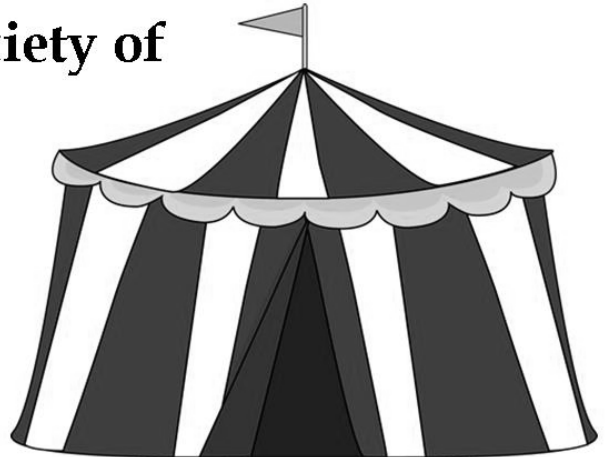
*Here is a picture of St. Michael Church in Mineville, NY:*



*St. Hedwig parish is an example of internal Polish migration from the coal fields of Pennsylvania into New York.*

Polish Genealogical Society of  
New York State

2016  
8th Annual



# GENEALOGY FAIR

Saturday, September 10, 11a–3p

Family tree displays, surname look-ups,  
research assistance, refreshments!

Presentation at 1:00 pm

GENEALOGY 101

by Julie Roberts Szczepankiewicz

Guest  
Genealogical Societies  
include:

Buffalo Irish (BIGS)  
Italian (IGSWNY)  
Western NY (WNYGS)  
and others

**FAIR LOCATION:**  
St. Gabriel's Church  
5271 Clinton St., Elma, NY  
(East of Transit Rd.)  
in the Church Hall



**In honor of Polish  
Heritage Month**

**Sponsored by the  
Polish Genealogical Society of New York State**

**October 23, 2016**

**At Potts Deli, 41 S Rossler Ave, Cheektowaga  
Tickets are \$15 presale, \$17 at the door  
Doors open at 12 Noon, Dinner served at 2 PM**

**Cash bar, Chinese Auction, 50-50 Split Club, Raffle**

**Menu:**

**Golabki, pierogi, fresh & smoked Polish sausage, mashed  
potatoes, sweet & sour cabbage, bread & butter,  
coffee & tea, desserts**

**Tickets may be purchased at the PGSNYS Genealogy Fair on  
Sept 10 at St. Gabriel's Church, at a PGSNYS monthly meeting,  
from a PGSNYS member, or reserved using PayPal at  
[www.pgsnys.org](http://www.pgsnys.org)**

**Visit the PGSNYS website ([www.pgsnys.org](http://www.pgsnys.org)) for all the details**

**(Bills/Dolphins game will be televised at the venue)**

# Member Moments

## Playing the ‘Name Game’: Reflections of a Serious Polish Genealogy Amateur and Lessons Learned

by Elizabeth L. Nowak

Never did I realize that it would be such an adventure or how fascinating, surprising, perplexing, energizing, and intellectually entertaining the challenge would be when it comes to learning, exploring, understanding, and respecting the importance of our names.

My family research experiences, existing for only six years now and still ongoing, leads me to say this -- approach your research like you are playing a game, be open to wild and crazy adventures with the names in your family, and have fun with it. We learn as we go, and the more resources and tools you learn to use, the better your talent will develop and improve.

### My Personal Challenge

Knowing only the four names of my grandparents, Michael Nowak, Josephine Wojciechowski, Stanislaus Agorzewski, and Elizabeth Przybysz, I began my research. The most obvious name hurdles were that *Michael* is the most popular male name on the planet, and *Nowak* is one of the most common surnames back in the homeland. My late father was the youngest of 11 children, and he didn't know anything about anyone – nothing about his ancestors, where they lived in Poland, or about their departure from Poland. And so I began with only their names.

These are the lessons I learned. I am a retired research librarian with a big challenge, but I believe these suggestions will be helpful for any set of family names.

### Expect more results than imagined with your family's names.

I assumed my family arrived at the port of New York, within sight of the Statue of Liberty. Using the Ellis Island search, I saw hundreds of Nowak names, but actually came up empty, because I started at the wrong place. I tried using these resources too early in my learning.

Two years later, after building basics with census data, it made more sense to return to these resources. I learned that my family's arrival in the 1880s predated Ellis Island records. I learned about Castle Garden, and it gave me success

*We learn as we go, and the more resources and tools you learn to use, the better your talent will develop and improve.*



for a few people, and it sure felt good. Searching for an arrival record reveals an order of magnitude, and gives insight to the degree of difficulty of your research, and all of the dreaded spelling errors.

### **Spelling and misspellings of surnames are intriguing! Roll with them.**

Am I using a search engine that's good, or am I broadly browsing through lists? Modern database technology is a bit better than early OCR (optical character recognition) technology that gave us the early 20<sup>th</sup> century information resources. Be mentally flexible. Realize that this early technology was trying to automate the transcription of human handwriting styles, not typewriting. Let your brain play the name game and anticipate the possible misspellings of your names.

The power of the search engine's features in any website or resource must be explored. They are not equally powerful. Experiment. Does the site accommodate variations in the spelling of a surname, or must you type in every potential variant spelling? Trial and error will tell you. If what you typed in is what you get, then you might be better off using a different tool as you begin to search a new name. The spelling options in Ancestry.com that range from 'broad' to 'exact' will yield names you never dreamed could exist.

The 1930 US federal census for my surname, *Nowak*, was indexed as *Lowah* due to the results of the OCR scan! My *Wojciechowski*/a surname has so many more misspellings than I could ever have imagined, but I learned from respecting them.

### **Given names are a personal story.**

The decade of immigration to the USA begins the personal story of acculturation and becoming an American. My families arrived in the 1880s, and the Polish spellings prevailed; for example, Michael was Michal and Josephine was Jozefa. Some names translated obviously, some do not. If someone knows how 'Leokadya' became 'Eleanor,' please tell me.

Nicknames appeared soon enough, mostly in 20<sup>th</sup> century census documents. To win that game required matching the nicknamed person with birth year in the prior census.

### **Reliability and quality.**

Always try to look for more than one piece of evidence. The first matching document will make you very happy. But it's time to be cautious. Once I did more research and succeeded in finding a second genuine document, the happiness grew -- I was winning the game. But, intellectually, you should feel just as good when you find a conflict. Even when a name that was found matched my relative's name, sadly, but confidently, I often had to admit the person could NOT be the relative I was seeking.

For example, a public family tree appeared in my fluttering Ancestry.com leaf, for my mother's name. I clicked into the tree and, much to my shock, she appeared in the other tree as someone else's wife. Yikes! Carelessness is shocking to see. Be careful about using undocumented data displayed in other trees!

### **Aliases!**

I wasn't expecting this, but it makes sense, our ancestors sometimes needed to

*Always try  
to look for  
more than  
one piece of  
evidence.*

use aliases to survive and thrive...elsewhere. For example, my mother's paternal family surname, Agorzewski, is totally made-up. Thanks to Lukasz Bielecki and the Poznan Project website for their extra sleuthing. According to Lukasz, in the mid-1800s names changed a lot. Mine went from Burczynski to Hogarzewski to Agorzewski. Who did this? Why did they do this? What happened? These are questions without answers, unfortunately. I have no family evidence, story, or documented item that explains it to me. Only Poland's 19th century history can help me appreciate it. Many peasant families from all of the partitions were suffering through the poverty and politics of the time and chose to escape forced conscription into oppressive military service. This was one of the most common reasons for using an alias.

### **Lessons learned about geographic place names.**

I will always remember the day I figured out that Posen = Poznan. Then I learned it was part of Prussia and why there were German and Polish versions of the names of places.

Of course, then I realized I needed to learn just as much geography as I was learning the history. Little tiny villages had to be found and then plotted on a map. Knowing my family came from Poznan wasn't enough. Poznan is the name of a province, a county, and a city. Then I needed to learn about the Polish levels of government and words like voivodeship, powiat and gmina. What's a voivodeship? It is a province, similar to a state. What is a powiat? It is a county. What's a gmina? It is an administrative district. What in a gmina? Lots of little villages. This is another challenge -- to learn what villages and municipalities are clustered together to become a gmina.

Now we must enter the multiple learning challenge of finding someone's place of birth (the humble peasant home), plus their Parafie, or parish church location, for their place of baptism and/or within which civil registry the records may be located. This is how we play the gmina game! The gmina name was important when I ordered my first LDS Family Search microfilm to continue the search for a great-grandmother. When I discovered a village name, I always used the Wikipedia geography section to learn the basics, and see a small map, and learn about my villages. Maps are our friends.

### **Lessons learned about handwriting and language used in the documents.**

The language of a civil or church record can be any of these languages: Polish, Latin, German, or Russian. The archived documents were sometimes displayed as a form, but if not, at least they followed a pattern while writing the facts of someone's birth, death, or marriage record. Something such as Google's Translate feature helped a little, that is, if I could discern the fuzzy handwriting enough to type in the words.

*Knowing my family came from Poznan wasn't enough. Poznan is the name of a province, a county, and a city.*

Variation in the styles of handwriting is another challenge. One of the most helpful resources I discovered is a book by Jonathan Shea, *Going Home: A Guide to Polish American Family History Research* published in 2008 (\$44, worth every penny). I strongly recommend it. I have high praise for his explanations of how the source documents came to be and the languages we need to appreciate for the information we seek about our ancestors.

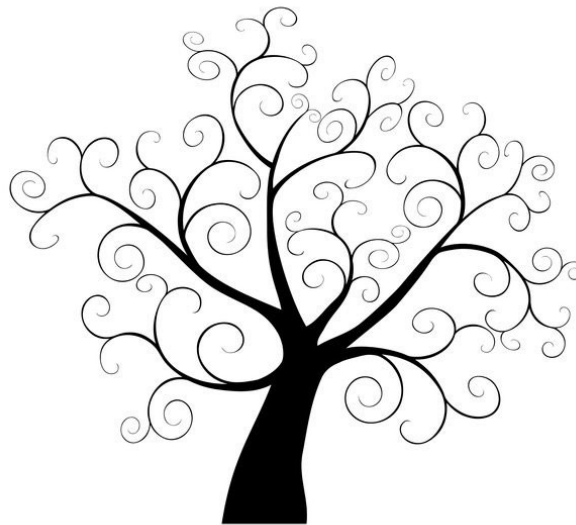
Without learning about these cultural, economic, historical, and language aspects of Polish genealogy, I couldn't have continued. Without observing all of the languages used in the church records and in the civil records of the Polish partitions, I wouldn't have learned how to play with all of the names in my family tree.

There were no extant personal historic records from my family, no treasure box to inherit. I wish I had photos, diaries, bibles, and birth, marriage, or death certificates. I didn't have anything!!

Sadly, I've never seen a photo of my grandfather Michael Nowak, but I knew his name. So I started looking based solely on that. Gratefully, with new tools and archival websites, we can find the evidence of our family names, and have the adventure of playing your own name games.

I built a family tree, and I only had a twig when I started. ❧

*One of the most helpful resources I discovered is a book by Jonathan Shea, Going Home: A Guide to Polish American Family History Research...*



## Buffalo's Phoenix Baseball Team

by Nicole Pohancsek

When I began researching my family, I started by visiting the central Buffalo & Erie County Public Library downtown. Specifically, the Grosvenor room, which is full of historical and genealogical information. When I looked up my maiden name, Lodyga, in the card catalog, I found a card for my great-grandfather, Ignatius Lodyga. It referenced his obituary and the specific Buffalo News Edition in which it was located. I then looked for other surnames in my family and found nothing. I wondered what made Ignatius so special that he would have his own card in the card catalog.

I was going through my grandfather's paperwork after he passed away, and I found an old photo album with pictures and articles all about my great-grandfather's boxing and baseball career. I also looked through my grandfather's file cabinet and found several death certificates, but none for his father. I decided to write to Buffalo City Hall and order his death certificate. They sent back a note saying they were unable to locate it. Since he passed away less than 50 years ago, I was unable to confirm his death place in the NYS Vital Records Index at the downtown library. I checked with the Erie County Medical Center, which is where he died, but they had no records going back to the 1970s. I checked with the funeral director, and he confirmed that Ignatius had passed away at ECMC. The funeral director had his name listed as Ignatius "Battling Blake" Lodyga. I went back to City Hall and presented them with this information and, believe it or not, they found his death certificate under his boxing name, "Battling Blake." Incidentally, they wanted to charge me another \$10 for their search, but I argued that I shouldn't have to pay, since I already paid for the initial search. The supervisor agreed.

So, why was a man, who said little about his boxing and baseball career in his later life, so connected with his career after his death?

I started searching for articles on fultonhistory.com under Battling Blake, Iggy Blake, and Ignatius Lodyga and found a ton of articles and scores from his boxing and baseball days. I was even more excited when I noticed *Dziennik dla Wszystkich* articles about Ignatius in the few editions that are included on fultonhistory.com. Before I found these articles I was already excited about the *Dziennik* project that the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State is doing (digitizing all the issues of the newspaper), but when I found articles on him, it made me even more excited to

Phoenix Baseball Team



Society of New York State is doing (digitizing all the issues of the newspaper), but when I found articles on him, it made me even more excited to

eventually be able to discover more about Great-Grandfather's boxing and baseball career when the newspaper is fully digitized and searchable.

Recently Dave Slowik got in touch with me through Ancestry.com when he saw my great-grandfather's name on my tree. He contacted me regarding the Phoenix baseball team, which was a minor league team in Buffalo that played from 1914-1932. Dave's grandfather and my great-grandfather both played for the Phoenix baseball team. Apparently, they had been best friends and played on several different teams together. I visited Dave's house with my father and shared many photos and news articles. The Phoenix baseball team was named after Buffalo's Phoenix Brewing Company. My great-grandfather was not deployed for WWI, so he was able to stay behind and entertain the residents of Buffalo. Dave has found thousands of articles about the Phoenix baseball players on fultonhistory.com. He even found an article about Lizzie, the team's mascot, a live bear from the wilderness of Canada.

Dave Slowik and I have been trying to connect with family members of the Phoenix baseball players. Below, I have listed the names of the players and their nicknames. Please contact me by email at [nikkii911@hotmail.com](mailto:nikkii911@hotmail.com) or 286 Haussauer Rd, Getzville, NY 14068, if you are a descendant of any of these players. I always say that sometimes it feels like my ancestors push me in the right direction to find information about their lives. Meeting Dave Slowik has proven this to be true once again! 🐾

#### The Phoenix Baseball Players

John Andrzejczak (aka Archie Andrack)	Frank Olekszak
Paul Birtch	Theodore Polik (aka Teddy Pollick)
Waclaw Borkowski (aka Walter Burke)	Frank "Frankie" Pytlak
Adam Brueckman	Peter Radwanski (aka Radwan)
Joseph Drozdzyński (aka Joe Dee)	Joseph Ritzel (aka Joe Red)
Joseph "Joe" Gastle	Bronislaus Rynkowski (aka Brownie Winkler)
Frank Gawronski	Max Sarnowski
Earl Jamison	William "Whitey" Sheffler
Charles Kaminski (aka Charles Cully)	Charles Schmidt
Charley Emory Ketchum	Joseph Schutz
Frank Klein	Neil Setter
Stephan Kolacki (aka Steve Stevens)	Francis "Frank" Shanahan
Frank Laabs (aka Lapp)	Vincent Skwieralski (aka Vince Hoffman)
Fred Lau	Anthony Skwieralski (aka Whitey Hoffman)
William Burton Lewis (aka Bert Lewis)	Stanley "Dolly" Slazak
Ignatius Lodyga (aka Iggy Blake)	Joey Stack
Joseph Majchrzak (aka "Poison" Joe Brown)	Edward "Eddie" Williams
William Mattingly (aka Matt ?)	John Zengierski (aka Jack Singer)
Joseph Mazur	
Clair McAlphine	
Charles McHugh	
John "Johnny" Mokań	
Phillip Mokań	
Steven Mokań	
John Moskal (aka Johnny Buck)	
Stanley Nowak	
Walter Nowakowski (aka Walter Newman)	

## Our Polish Brethren

by Edward Prabucki

My father's tireless efforts to perpetuate our forefathers' lives in Poland through four generations, over many leisured evenings, compounded my interest for more and intensified my research to eliminate the many questions I had of our Polish ancestors. It had a compelling effect on me, between their souls long gone and my own, to seek more. Needless to say, we are our forefathers' legacy – very spiritual, very intimate, very powerful – since my forefathers gave meaning to life. Others gave all, and I feel the need to give purpose to my existence as much as they did.

None of our Polish brethren should remain aloof, as uninterested citizens, but seek more on our forefathers' ancestry beyond mere facts and delve into their purposeful intent on this Earth. As I learned from my own research that my forefathers over the past 12 generations lived in proximity of the Vistula, I feel their borne existence millennia ago had its origins elsewhere.

Many of our ancestors lived a perilous, burdened, but dedicated life as farmers or villagers, as so revealed in many Church records that I was so privileged to see in my research. Unfortunately, after 12 generations, I faced a void. Nevertheless, my affinity to my ancestors never faltered for a moment. My impulsive desire to examine other avenues, such as other land areas, met with some skepticism and doubts, but I feel the written record can be correlated with the unwritten one through Ancient history, modern science, and modern technology. This input is not as difficult as it might appear to be.

Those with expertise in research offered me the advice to initiate my research with my father's birth and gradually follow it back through each generation. My project – my impulsive desire – was not so much to research only my surname after my success with 12 generations, but to include all the Polish brethren of Poland – their origins as well as my own. Every aspect of a researcher's being is to bring to light our forefathers' plight, of their tremendous burdens in a violent world.

First, one must be aware that the military campaigns of the Swedes, Cossacks, Tartars, and Turks weakened the resistance of our forefathers. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the monstrous, horrendous pillages and plundering of Poland was a repetition of identical cruelty that occurred in the Ancient and Middle Ages. The Partitions of the 18<sup>th</sup> century crippled Poland physically, mentally, and economically and, thus, compelled many Poles to migrate and seek tranquil lands – one of which was America. The infinite innocence of our Polish brethren in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, coupled with the simultaneous and voracious plundering of its neighbors, wasn't any

*Many of our  
ancestors lived  
a perilous,  
burdened, but  
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farmers or  
villagers...*

different from what our ancestors faced in past millennia. In the context of those times, I felt a need to seek more than what was offered me. Needless to say, I decided to research our ancestors prior to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In Ancient and Middle Ages, our forefathers dwelt in towns and villages with meticulous, regulated preparation of marriage and religious life within their clan to maintain control of their heritage. The result was a well-defined and close tribal society, but unfortunately and periodically, they were forced to migrate during many periods of turmoil and famine to unknown lands – one of which was Poland. Ancestral research takes one on different paths; nonetheless, the end result is the same – for it is certain our ancestors' beloved world crumbled under constant pillages and famine.

Ancient life was punctuated with endless thorns as barbarous rulers spread their vulgar superiority, compelling some of our ancestors to migrate from these uncertain and volatile lands, which likely included areas that are presently the Balkans and Caucasus. I am convinced that the intrusions of the Roman Legions, the Tartars, followed by the Mongols and Islamic hordes, forced the migrations from these lands to what is present day Poland. Peaceful humanity has no affinity for barbarians, and our ancestors were no different. Therefore, in my reflection, the Poland's citizens' affinity with the Croations, Ukrainians, and Causersians is very apparent through their common physical and racial origins.

Suffice it to say there has never been a life of tranquility for our Polish sons and daughters from the beginning of time, as there were people of violent mentality that applied their exploitive policies by thundering throughout the lands during the Ancient and Middle Ages. These plunderers caused the helpless to be either victims or migrators to much safer, tranquil lands.

These reflections of mine are not to be identified as status quo, but are meant to enlighten the existence of all Polish sons and daughters throughout the millennial past. Nor is it my intent to dramatize the ambiguities of this research. I am aware there are limitations to ancestral research; however, applying ancient history, modern science, facial features, and DNA evidence, there is proof of the similarity of the people from the Balkans and Caucasus to those of Poland. There is too much evidence to be ignored – to some it is a riddle, but the resemblance cannot be denied.

We must trace our Polish sons and daughters collectively, not just individually. These observations certainly will prove historically that we are created of the same fabric, of the same blood, through detailed and infallible findings. We are each other's legacy – a very intense, internal, and powerful connection – we coalesce as one. As I studied each other's history and the physical features of the Balkans, Ukrainians, Caucasian, and even the Middle East peoples, I feel they are so similar, so etched, so defined to the minute detail with our present Polish brethren, that I am sincerely convinced they are my unknown ancestors long forgotten to history.

*Suffice it to  
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from the  
beginning of  
time...*

# In Remembrance



**Alice Theresa (Górska) DRABIK (PGSNYS founder Michael Drabik's mother)**

**OBITUARY**

DRABIK - Alice Theresa (nee Gorski) May 7, 2016, of Florida, formerly of Buffalo, beloved wife of the late Joseph M. Drabik; devoted mother of Kathleen (late Dennis) Drabik-DiBona, late Michael A. (Bogusia) Drabik and the late Rosemary Cavanaugh-Turner; adopted daughter in heart of Eileen Krywczuk; loving grandmother of six grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and two step-great-grandchildren; dear sister of Ann Lehman, Anthony

Gorski and the late Irene Kornowicz, Tessie Snaitecki, Sister Mary Edwinnette (Emily Gorska) and Benjamin Gorski; also survived by nieces and nephews. Visitation at the BUSZKA FUNERAL HOME, INC., 2005 Clinton St. (corner S. Ogden) Friday from 6-9

PM. Family and friends are invited to attend a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Stanislaus Church at 10 AM. (Please assemble at church). Interment in St. Stanislaus Cemetery. Mrs. Drabik was owner and operator of Drabik's Deli on Clinton Street in Kaisertown and worked for Sheehan Emergency Hospital for 22 years. Memorials in Mrs. Drabik's

name may be made to 'The Children's Library' at Houghton Academy, Michael Drabik's Section at the Buffalo & Erie County Library downtown, and 'Heroes Grove.'



**Diane Margaret (Podlas) DUBIEL(sister-in-law to Ed Prabucki)**

**OBITUARY**

DUBIEL - Diane M. Dubiel (nee Podlas), age 70, of Grand Island, New York, died on Tuesday, March 8, 2016, at her seasonal residence in Spring Hill, Florida. Diane was born on May 15, 1945 to the late Adam and Regina (Milinski) Podlas, in Buffalo, NY. Diane retired after 37 years of service at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, in Buffalo, NY as a Patient Accounts Supervisor. Diane enjoyed her retired life and became an active member of the Grand Island Lions Club and held many officer positions including president. Diane was an avid reader, enjoyed traveling and spending quality time with her family. Roman Catholic by faith, Diane was a member of the St. Stephen Catholic Church, in Grand Island, NY. Diane was preceded in death by her parents; sisters Bernadette





Franklin & Rita Prabucki, and brother, David Podlas. Diane is survived by her loving husband of 51 years, Gerald (Jerry) J. Dubiel, Sr. of Grand Island, NY, son Gary (Gerald) Dubiel, Jr. and his wife Michele, of Cheektowaga, NY, Grandchildren John Dubiel, Anna Dubiel, and Amanda Dubiel, all of Cheektowaga, NY., and sister Lucille (Podlas) (Klinko) Ess and her husband Bill, of Clarence, NY, and by many nieces and nephews. Florida arrangements and cremation entrusted to the Turner Funeral Homes, 14360 Spring Hill Drive, Spring Hill, and FL. 34609. A memorial Mass will be held Saturday, May 14 at 1 PM at the Knights of Columbus Hall 1841 Whitehaven Rd., Grand Island. At Diane's family request, in lieu of flowers, please send memorial donations to either the Grand Island Lions Club, PO Box 71, Grand Island, NY, 14072 or the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, C/O the Roswell Park Alliance Foundation, Elm and Carlton Streets, Buffalo, NY 14263 1-716-845-8788.

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## PGSNYS's 25th Year at the Polish American Arts Festival in Cheektowaga, NY



**Doug King and Pat Rooney in Polish sartorial splendor**



**Dolores Ferguson, Maureen Gleason, and Hank Kozlowski prepare the PGSNYS table**

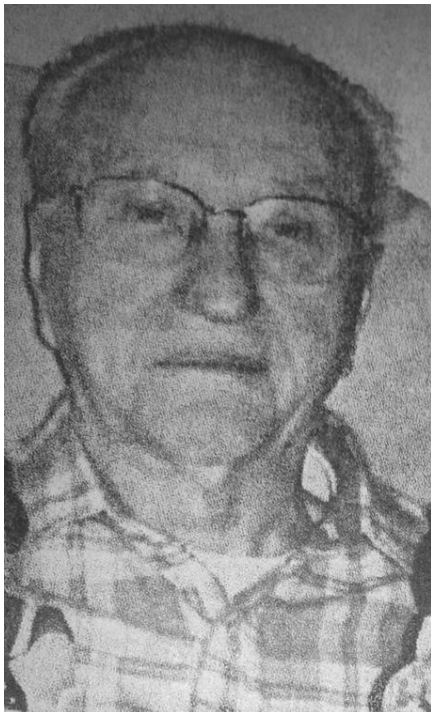


**...and the crowds arrive, searching for their ancestors**

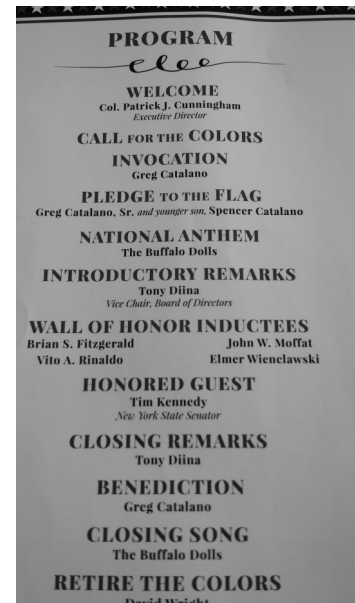
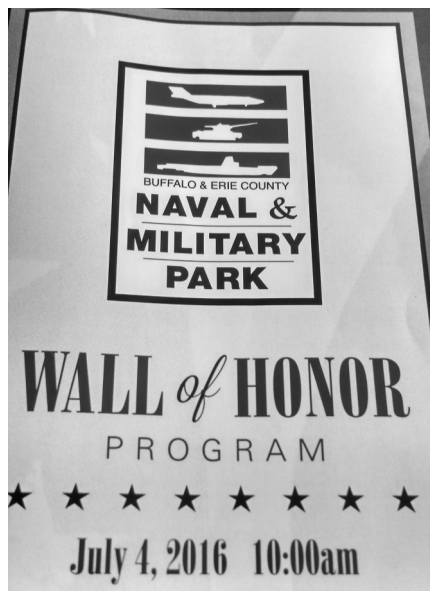


**Patricia Rooney representing the PGSNYS on the Polish American Congress WNY Division Polish Organizations Float in the Pulaski Parade**

## PGSNYS Member Honored



On July 4, 2016, PGSNYS member Elmer Wienclawski was one of four men inducted to the *Wall of Honor* at the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park for his military service. Congratulations, Elmer, for this great honor!!



# Happy Birthday, Walter!



Long-time PGSNYS member and geographer extraordinaire, Walter Kloc is the man to see when searching maps for your ancestral towns. Walter celebrates his 99th birthday on September 28th, and the PGSNYS wishes him a very Happy Birthday and many more to come!

**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**