

PRESERVING  
OUR PAST  
SINCE 1988

# SEARCHERS

NO. 77

SPRING

2018, ISSUE 1

Much like we await robins to signal the arrival of Spring, in Poland they await the return of the storks!



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# 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)

## 2018 PGSNYS OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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**Webmaster:** Chuck Pyrak

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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

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Dear PGSNYS Members,

I don't know if it's because Spring is in the air, but I am very excited about all the new opportunities out there to celebrate our Polish History. Not only for genealogy, but to rediscover your heritage. Do you have children, grandchildren, or nieces or nephews? This is a great time of year to get them involved and interested in Buffalo's Polonia. Going to the Broadway Market is a great way to start, but there are plenty more opportunities. For example, I bought two children's books to read to my daughters. One is about Tadeusz Kościuszko and the other is about Kazimierz Pułaski. They were two great Polish men who helped shape our United States of America. You could bring the next generation to PGSNYS meetings, where we can help them get started on their own research. Or spend time as a family discovering the Polonia Trail, an online journey through important historic locations in Polonia neighborhoods of cities and towns in western New York ([www.poloniatrail.com](http://www.poloniatrail.com)). Subscribe to the *Am-Pol Eagle* newspaper to keep up with local Polish news and events and share the information with family members. So how will you help to educate the next generation about our Polish heritage?

~Sincerely, Nicole Pohancsek

## POTPOURRI

### WITAMY! NEW PGSNYS MEMBERS

Elizabeth Kemp  
Oak Harbor, OH

Christine Smyczynski  
Getzville, NY

John C. Oshei  
West Seneca, NY

Lynne M. Adamczyk  
Buffalo, NY

Leslie Kannus  
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John Boncek  
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Theresa Pardee  
Woodstock, GA

Diane Kilbourne  
Westmoreland, NY

Richard B. Choromanski  
Cheektowaga, NY

David Lasik  
Brooklyn, NY

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

The dates for upcoming 2018 PGSNYS monthly membership meetings at 7 PM are Thursday, May 10, June 14, August 9. PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

- THE MAY AND JUNE MEETINGS WILL BE HELD IN THE VILLA MARIA COLLEGE STUDENT CENTER. There is a link to the Villa Campus Map on our website ([www.pgsnys.org](http://www.pgsnys.org)); Building #6
- THERE IS NO REGULAR MEETING IN JULY.
- THE AUGUST MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE CAFETERIA.

## NEW! PGSNYS AWARDED GRANT

Thanks to the efforts of Nicole Pohancsek and Elizabeth Nowak, the PGSNYS is the recipient of a \$4000 grant from the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College. Nicole contacted William Nowakowski at Canisius College with a request for funding for our *Dziennik* Digitization Project, and then she and Elizabeth presented information about the project to the Board of Directors at their Board meeting on April 4, 2018. On April 6th, Mr. Nowakowski notified Nicole the Board had approved the grant award. The PGSNYS will use the money to digitize the remaining *Dziennik* microfilm rolls.

**The Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College** (from their website at <http://www.canisius.edu/polish-chair>)

In 1959, a committee of leading citizens of Western New York, in cooperation with Canisius College, established the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College to preserve and further Polish culture and heritage in Western New York. Funds for the initial endowment were donated by Polish American parishes in response to sermons given by Jesuits from Canisius College and also from direct appeals to members of the Polish-American community. The Board of Directors of the Polish Chair continues to raise funds to sustain the Polish Chair, to advise the President of the College on how best to spend the income of the endowment, and to advise and assist the College in sponsoring programs and projects that will preserve and further Polish culture and heritage.

## REMINDER: Electronic *Searchers* OPT-IN

This Spring 2018 issue of the *Searchers* is the first to include an electronic version for those members who opted-in to receive it. We encourage members to OPT-IN for the electronic version to help PGSNYS save on the costs of printing and postage associated with the paper version. The electronic version will always be sent out the same day the print version is mailed.

If you would like to OPT-IN for the electronic version in the future, **please follow these instructions exactly:**

- You may receive either the print or electronic version, not both. You must continue to pay your annual membership dues to receive either version. To continue to receive the print version, no further action is needed on your part.
- The deadline to OPT-IN for the electronic version of the *Searchers* will always be the 15th of the month preceding the next issue, so that would be March 15th for April, July 15th for August, and November 15th for December.
- To OPT-IN, send an email to [denise.oliansky@gmail.com](mailto:denise.oliansky@gmail.com). Type SEARCHERS OPT-IN in the subject line of the email. This is important so your email will not be missed. In the body of the email, type your full name and the email address you want us to use to send the electronic version. Then hit send. That's all you have to do. You will receive a confirmation email from the editor so you know your OPT-IN request for the electronic *Searchers* was received.

## Kasperczyk/Barus Story: from Brzezinka to Buffalo

by Julie Kasper Wash

My genealogy quest started when my dad, Stanley Kasper (shortened from Kasperczyk), orphaned as a toddler, could tell me close to nothing about his past. His earliest memory? Being picked up out of a crib by a nun at an orphanage. Other than a few pieces of information--basic names--he knew nothing of his past and was unaccustomed to asking questions.

This is the story of Antoni Kasperczyk and Anna Barus Kasperczyk, my father's parents. As an adult and as a librarian, the first record I found was Anna's arrival via the Ellis Island records when they were digitized and indexed—a treasure trove of a manifest that gave her age (21), her destination in Buffalo (Gibson St.), and her hometown of Brzezinka, Austrian-Occupied Poland (Galicia). Sadly, Ancestry.com offered no assistance for records digitized or microfilmed in that area, so I embarked on a many-year journey of reading genealogy books, taking Polish lessons, researching the Polish internet for parishes in the Brzezinka/Oświęcim area, and writing letters in Polish to the local Catholic Church. Months and months later, I was rewarded with baptismal certificates, in Polish, for BOTH grandparents that confirmed two prior generations. This was information that was never before known or passed along to State-side offspring. State and Federal Census information in Ancestry.com confirmed I had the right family, at least up until 1925, which was the last State Census in which my grandmother was listed. At the time, she was very pregnant with my father, but she would die one day after childbirth with the next child, born in 1927, and disappear from public records. My father's census entries would never record him with his birth parents.

My grandfather showed up in Ancestry.com with a WWI registration card verifying his address (Gibson St.), his employer-- the Donner Steel Company in Buffalo-- and his young family. After the loss of his wife in 1927, the Great Depression, the collapse of the steel industry, and the sale of Donner Steel in Buffalo, Antoni traveled to Detroit. In the 1930 Federal Census, Antoni is a boarder along with his brother-in-law, John Barus, working for a carbon (fertilizer) factory. He had left his seven motherless children with the Felician Sisters at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Orphanage in Buffalo when he went to find work.

I connected with my oldest cousin, my father's sister's first-born, to assist me. I received a typed oral history from her which was compiled by my dad's oldest brother, Fred, who remembered early houses and addresses and who also shared the orphanage (1930 Census) and foster child history (the Blakowski family) with my father. I searched the microfilms of the Buffalo Public Library and found the marriage license for my grandparents. I mailed away for and received my grandmother's NY death certificate from 1927. I used the Freedom of Information Act to obtain my grandfather's Social Security Application from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and for his three-pronged Naturalization documents, the Declaration, Petition, and Certificate. All provided more confirmation and information about Antoni and Anna and their journeys to America. They also confirmed that a one-letter misspelling in a database can thwart finding a record: Antoni's well-meaning Castle Garden entry as "Rasperczyk" not "Kasperczyk" kept that record undiscoverable until I was able to use the Naturalization papers to call up the record using the ship name and find the entry error. This is what makes genealogy work interesting and frustrating.

I joined the PGSNYS and learned about the *Dziennik* Project, which located my grandmother's

Polish obituary. I joined the Polish Genealogy Group on Facebook, and learned of a Polish tour service, GenealogyTour.com. I searched for my father's surname, Kasperczyk, with his ancestral hometown, Brzezinka, on Google.com and found an article in Polish that highlighted a Jan Kasperczyk. I sent this to Tomasz Szymkowiak with GenealogyTour.com, and he connected with this family (my father's first cousin) and confirmed genealogical research with Polish civil records.

My husband and I took a trip to Poland (his ancestral home as well) in May of 2017, and with Tomasz Szymkowiak as translator, were able to connect with relatives who knew of my grandparents, and who were second cousins and second cousins once removed. We toasted and shared photos and were able to find out more about how the Nazis displaced the Kasperczyk and Baruś families from their land in order to build Auschwitz (the German form for Oświęcim) and Birkenau concentration camps, and how they returned to their land after the camps were liberated in 1945. We visited the somber Unesco World Heritage Site that chronicles the inhumanity of the German WWII occupation in my grandparents' hometown.

My father, now 92, is the last surviving sibling of his parents' seven children. I was able to compile information into a photo book to present his personal family history to him as a gift at Christmas 2017. Each of his grandchildren also received this book, and I am gifting a copy to PGSNYS as well, as a thank-you for the assistance in helping me compile this Buffalo/Brzezinka family tree, transplanted here during the great migration one century ago.

Now on to the second book: the Piwniczna, Poland maternal side of the family tree (the Gardońs) who came to Buffalo around the same time. Much of the research is already done, thanks to the help of relatives we met in Poland in 2017. Look for that installment in an upcoming *Searchers*.



**Wedding of Anna Baruś  
and Antoni Kasperczyk,  
May 1, 1917, Buffalo, NY**

## The Other Szczepański Children

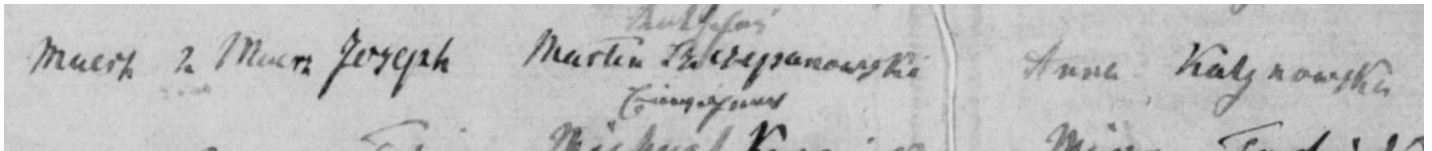
by Sandra Maciejewski Porter

When I first started documenting family history, I asked my parents, aunts, and uncles what they could tell me and what they remembered. My mother had a collection of funeral prayer cards, wedding invitations, and birth announcements, and these gave me a good start in documenting family relationships, dates, and places.

The stories were even more interesting, as different people remembered different things, sometimes even about the same people and events. It made for interesting discussions. People told me what they knew and what they had heard. For example, everyone agreed that Martin and Anna Szczepański had six children.

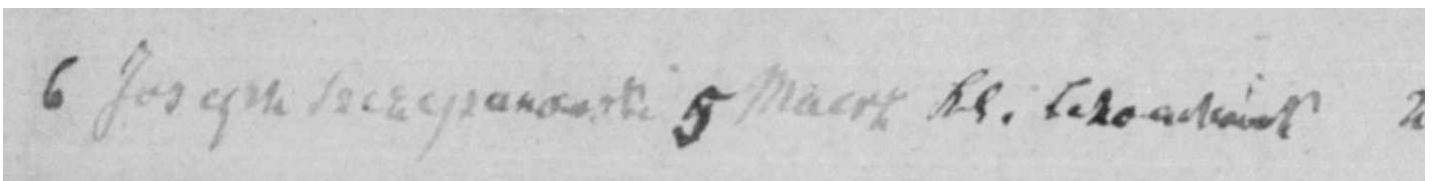
They had been married in Szembruk, West Prussia, in November 1878, and they had immigrated to Buffalo, New York, in 1881. Their oldest son, Franciszek, was born in Buffalo in September 1884. I began to think that something was missing from this story, and I was right.

In going through the 1880 church registers from Szembruk, I found an entry for the birth and baptism of their first son, Józef, on 2 März 1880.[1]



1880 church baptism register, Szembruk, Prussia

Sadly, the last page of the available Szembruk records also had an entry for his death on 5 März 1880.



1880 church death register, Szembruk, Prussia

I did not find any other entries for Szczepański children in the Szembruk records, but in the 1900 Bennington, New York census (pg 8), Anna reported that she was the mother of nine children, and that five of them were still living.

Agnes, their last child, would be born in Bennington, New York, on 2 August 1902.

Who were the three other children?

We know that after the death of their first child in March 1880, Marcin and Anna immigrated to the United States. Although I have not yet found record of their passage, Martin filed his first citizenship papers in Buffalo, New York, on 24 October 1881.

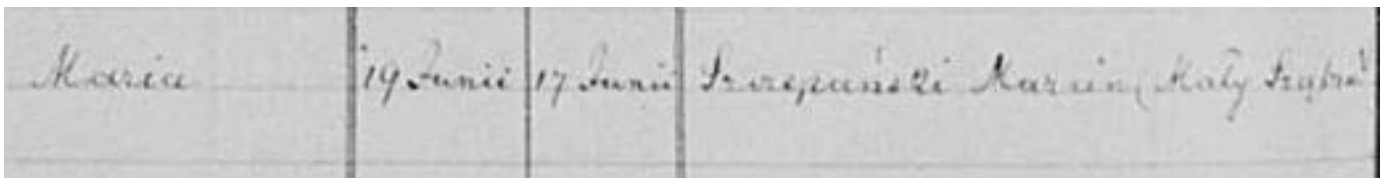
Since their other children were baptized at St. Stanislaus Roman Catholic parish in Buffalo, I

Szczepański Marcin	Husband	W	M	Nov	1835	44	M	22			(Poland)
Anna	Wife	W	F	Mar	1838	42	M	22	9	5	Germany
Frank	Son	W	M	Sept	1884	15	S				New York
Mary	Daughter	W	F	Feb	1887	13	S				New York
Bennie	Son	W	M	Aug	1892	7	S				New York
Martha	Daughter	W	F	Apr	1896	4	S				New York
Leo	Son	W	M	Jan	1898	2	S				New York

1900 Federal Census, Bennington, New York

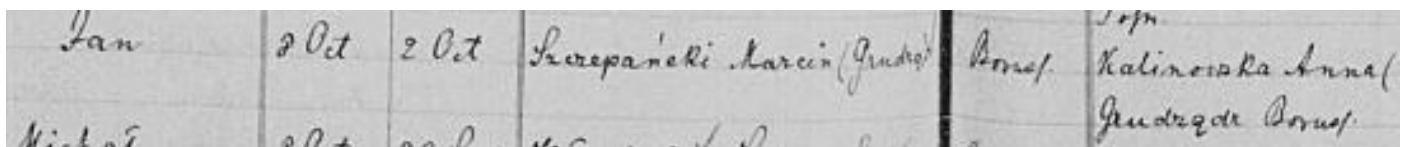
re-examined the baptism records. They are now online at FamilySearch, and the Church has an index. There were several listings for Szczepański infants, and three of them were other children of Marcin and Anna.

Maria Szczepańska was born 17 June 1881 and baptized 19 June 1881.



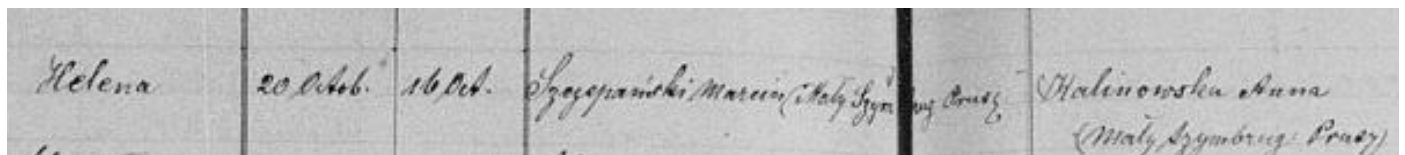
Maria Szczepańska, St. Stanislaus Church, Buffalo, New York, Baptism Register

On 2 October 1882, Marcin and Anna had Jan Szczepański, who was baptized 8 October 1882. I would have been surprised about the place listed as the parents' place of birth, had I not known that Grudziądz is the county name and the name of the city near Szembruczek.



Jan Szczepański, St. Stanislaus Church, Buffalo, New York, Baptism Register

After the births of Franciszek (1884) and Marya (1887), Helena Szczepańska was born 20 Oct 1889 and baptized at St. Stanislaus in Buffalo 20 Oct 1889.



Helena Szczepańska, St. Stanislaus Church, Buffalo, New York, Baptism Register



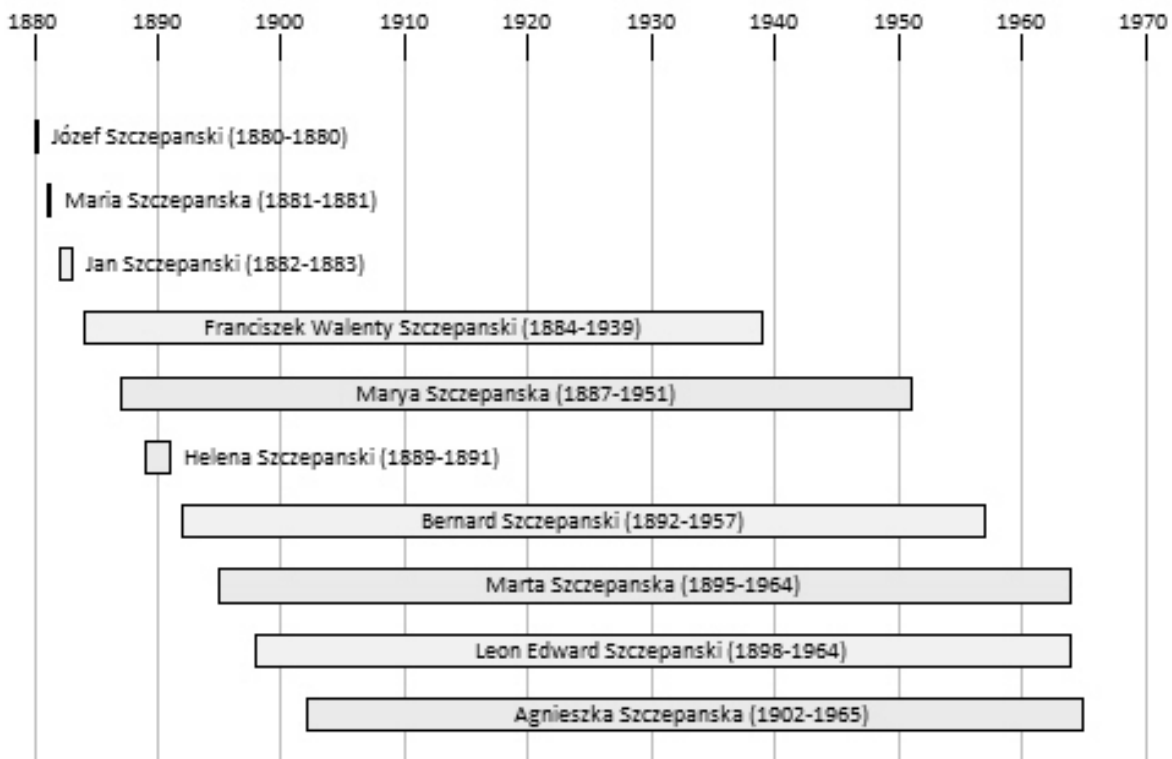
However, in the 1892 New York State census, only Frank and Mary were listed with their parents.

Szczepanski	Martin	m	37	Poland	l	Zabener
Szczepanska	Anna	f	34	11		
Szczepanski	Frank	m	7	U.S.		
Szczepanska	Mary	f	5	11	11	

1892 New York State census, Buffalo, New York

What happened to the other three little ones? Sadly, St. Stanislaus Church also had records of their deaths and burial at St. Stanislaus Cemetery in Cheektowaga, New York. Maria died 12 Jul 1881, after living just 25 days. Jan was 11 months old when he died 4 Sep 1883, and Helena was 1 year 5 months 15 days old when she died 31 Mar 1891.

Here is a timeline of the children Martin and Anna Szczepanski:



[1] Józef, pronounced YOO-zef, would have been his name in Polish, the language spoken by his parents. Because the Prussian government required even church records to be kept in German, his baptism record had the German name Joseph, pronounced YO-zef.

## Conversations with My Father

by Cathryn Chudy

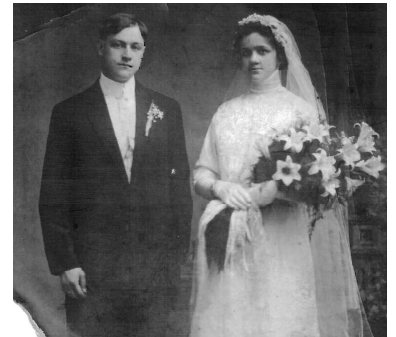
My father was born in Buffalo, NY on April 29, 1918, to Joseph and Sophia (Mikstacki) Chudy. Sophia came from a large family of brothers and sisters who arrived in Buffalo around 1885 from Poznan, Poland with their parents (Antonina and Jakob Mikstacki), who had sent a letter to Jakob's sister (Victoria Mikstacki Karalus) saying "we beg you" to help us come to America. Victoria had come to America with her husband, Sebastian, and their children in 1878, settling in Buffalo's growing Polish immigrant community. Sophia was one of the two Mikstacki daughters born to the family after their arrival in Buffalo.

My father, Stanley (Stanislau) Chudy, was not the first child born to Joseph and Sophia - a sister (Josephine Zofia) and brother (Chester) died in infancy before he was born. A second sister (Leonora) was born after him, but died also in infancy in 1920. Five more boys followed in succession (Joseph, Arthur, Raymond, Daniel and Edward), making six brothers (by 1928) for Sophia to care for in the family home on Bristol Avenue.

By 1930, the family was living at 78 Weaver Avenue, but maintained close ties with Sophia's Mikstacki sisters, Magdalene Hubert and Josephine Pinkowski, who opened and operated a restaurant at 334 Curtiss Street, serving the workers coming and going from the New York Central Railroad passenger terminal that opened adjacent to the family properties (330 and 334 Curtiss) in June of 1929.

Antonina, matriarch of the Mikstackis, kept close watch on the family from her home at 1 Newton Street, which had once been a family grocery store where Sophia had worked. Grandfather Jakob died in 1917, but Antonina remained an active member of the St. Stanislaus parish. She was described as "a stern lady with a heart of gold." When women got the right to vote, she went around knocking on doors in her neighborhood with the news and that they need to vote! Family folklore has it that she died on Easter Sunday morning in 1935, as the bells of St. Stanislaus were ringing joyously the 6 A.M. Resurrection procession.

My Dad remembers helping his mother care for his younger brothers (his father Joseph, a car inspector on the railroad, worked night shift and slept during the day) until her untimely death at the age of 43 on January 10, 1933, leaving behind fourteen year old Stanley and his five younger brothers. Rather than split the boys up to the homes of Sophia's sisters, his father sent them all to



**Sophia and Joseph**



**Chudy boys with Sophia and Antonina**

live at Immaculate Heart Orphanage.

Somehow my father survived profound grief at the loss of his mother and made it through two years in the orphanage (whenever he could, he would find a way to go back to spend time with his aunts). He spent a third year in a foster home while going to Burgard Vocational High School. He would walk and take a bus and streetcar after school to get to the restaurant, where he worked as a short order cook until midnight. Finally, Aunt Josephine took him in to live at 334 Curtiss, and Cousin Frankie gave him his bed and bought him a car when he turned 18, making his daily life much easier to manage. It was one of his profound regrets that he did not adequately express his appreciation to Frankie for looking after him during that time in his life.

Dad had been, in his younger life, a very active man. He spent three years in the army driving a crane with the 502nd Engineer Corps in WWII, returning to marry my mother (Carol Offhaus) and raise five daughters. He worked for 33 years as a rigging foreman at Union Carbide Corporation (Linde Division) in Tonawanda. He retired at 62 and turned his time and attention to occasional travel with my mother, as well as caring for grandchildren and the home he loved on Broadway in the town of Lancaster, New York.

This April 29th would have been my father's 100th birthday. Milestone birthdays were important to him in the last years of his life - he would mark the day by the litany of phone calls and visits he received from family members who lived in the area, along with three of his daughters (myself one of these) who had moved to another part of the country as adults. It was a sorrow he never quite overcame, those of us who lived so far away and whose visits home were never long enough to fully embrace the deep connection and love he felt for us in his mind and heart.

When his body slowed and began to progressively fail him (he had difficulty walking and gradually lost most of his sight), my father began to spend a great deal of time with his thoughts, turning to the early years of his childhood, the family he remembered as he grew up, people and places and events that were burned indelibly in his mind. With the help of Ancestry.com, a knowledgeable Mikstacki relative (David Mazur) and the amazingly clear mind that my father possessed, we embarked on a wonderful journey of mutual discovery, exploring together in countless conversations how his family came to Buffalo from Poland, establishing life in the city neighborhoods (which he could still picture in his mind), and how their lives intersected in the places and events that showed up in memories he shared vividly with me.

My Dad often said that by having these conversations, he was showing respect and honoring the family he came from, and he deeply regretted that he had never told them directly what they meant to him. He never tired of saying and hearing the names spoken out loud. He would say, "It's what I'm living on now... it's like food to me."

Those conversations are my father's enduring gift to me. He died in 2014, at the age of 96. If he was alive he would greatly appreciate that I am sharing some of this history with the readers of the Searchers. If anyone wants to contact me about this article, my email is chudyca@oreg.org.



**Stanley and Carol (Offhaus) Chudy,  
married 26 Feb 1949**

## **Schenectady and Perry: The Nowy Targ Connection**

**by Phyllis Zych Budka**

Visits to cousins in Perry, NY, from my home in Schenectady, traveling along Route 20 in the 1940s and 50s, are a fond part of my childhood memories. In later years, when I would describe these trips, I'd say, "Half of Perry was related to me." The extended family on my father's side owned small businesses, such as a dry goods store on Water Street, a harvesting business, and a car dealership. Many of these 3rd and 4th cousins were girls my age, which added to my vacation fun.

I was delighted when, as a young teenager, I was a bridesmaid in Rita Rychlik's wedding to Robert Gibbons. It impressed me that Rita, in her wedding gown, walked down the block to St. Stanislaus Polish Roman Catholic Church for the ceremony, bridesmaids following. The wedding reception at Dom Polski was literally across the street from Rita's home.

All my grandparents came to Schenectady before World War I and all were ethnic Poles. Both sets of grandparents married in Schenectady, where I was born and grew up. About 10 years ago, now retired, my curiosity and desire to learn about the other branches of my family grew, and I began my genealogy quest. Yes, the older generation was gone by that time.

I knew the story that Babcia Aleksandra Rozanska Zych's older brother, Jan Rozanski, was a recruiter for knitting mills in the Buffalo area, including Perry, where his wife and 10 children had lived. Jan traveled back and forth to Poland on recruiting trips and, at some point, did not return to Perry. No one is sure why, but his final residence was in his birthplace of Nowy Targ, in southern Poland. He died there in 1939.

I have visited Nowy Targ three times, and it feels like the Schenectady Polish community of my childhood. The story of my trips to Nowy Targ and my realization that nearly 50 individuals came directly from Nowy Targ to Schenectady before WWI is documented in my essay, "Nowy Targ, Poland: Do YOUR Roots Extend there, Too?" The essay is found in the newsletter friends and I founded 5 years ago, "The Project To Discover Schenectady County's Eastern European Roots," and is online at the Schenectady Digital History Archive link below (June 2014 issue):

<http://www.schenectadyhistory.org/resources/eer/index.html>

My reason for joining the PGSNYS is to ask its members with Buffalo area roots, Do YOUR roots extend to Nowy Targ, too? If so, please contact me by email at: [abudka@nycap.rr.com](mailto:abudka@nycap.rr.com)



## **My Beloved Ancestral Mothers, Part II: Paternal (Prabucki) Mothers**

**by Edward Prabucki**

I feel I must strive to put into print that our ancestral mothers were very cognizant of what our Lord dedicated for them to be, and that is to perpetuate their love and devotion to their descendants. Therefore, I made a commitment to myself, to honor those who are so much a part of me, my ancestral mothers. Though Church and civil records have their limitations, it is in reference to Polish history that a great measure of their past comes to light.

My father could hardly fail to inform me, without any effort on my part, of my second ancestral mother (after my own), Rozalia Skrzeczkowska, a very loving and sad mother, giving birth to seven children, of whom only three survived. Rozalia lived, or rather existed, under the harsh economic Russian domination of Poland and, needless to say, more often in want and adversity than in plenty. My beloved ancestral mother tempered by the loss of her sons, and with her one surviving son, my father, who decided to leave Poland for unknown lands of America in 1913, grieved. During WWI, with no contact with her only son and fearing he was serving in the U.S. Army, I was told she was in tears every day and on March 3, 1918, Rozalia died of grief.

In leaving this specter of tragedy and needing to be enlightened about my third ancestral mother, I decided to place my faith in the Church records in the Warsaw and Gdansk provinces, aware it was there that my ancestors were baptized and lived. My ecstasy reached supreme heights as I read on the microfilm reader that my ancestral father, Piotr Prabucki, husband of Rozalia, was born to Michal and Tekli Paczkowska (my 3rd ancestral mother). What I felt was impossible had become possible through these Church records. Tekli, a soul of dedication, tempered by a lack of daily needs under austere conditions due to the Polish partitions, was married on February 13, 1859. Living in an era in which Polish citizens were burdened by taxation, witnessed the Insurrection of 1863-64 since she lived in the proximity of Warsaw. In this period she gave birth to five children, three sons and two daughters. It was in this turbulent era that her brother-in-law, Jan Prabucki, was a death statistic in 1864, and it is my conjecture that he was part of the Insurrection. As I perused over these Church records, I felt faith in Poland was strong, but obedience to Russia was not. One of the many casualties from this failed Insurrection was the insertion of the Cyrillic language in civil records, and to the mortification of all Poles, was extended to cover all Church records in Poland under Russian occupation.

I continued earnestly and optimistically to search for the maiden name of my fourth ancestral mother. To discover that, I had to obtain the name of the father of Michal Prabucki from the same town in the same Church of our ancestral family. Michal was baptized on June 3, 1836, the son of Roch Prabucki and Mary Gocaton, my fourth ancestral mother. She also gave birth to two other sons. I base the life of Mary relative to Polish history, and became aware she lived, if barely survived, the Insurrection of 1830-32 during the prime of her life. Heavy casualties were evident in the Church records of the Warsaw province. Five Prabuckis died within a month, two on the same day (August 10, 1831), two prior to that date, and one on September 6, 1831. Aware from history that the Russian army marched through the town of my ancestors, I have to wonder if they died at the hand of this army bent on intentional destruction.

After that Polish cause failed, the revenge of Czar Nicholas fell on all Polish citizens. More Polish youths were deported to Siberia, and our ancestral mothers, with a shortage of sons to ease their daily existence, faced a depressingly dismal future. It is incredible that my beloved ancestral mother, Mary, survived, but that she did.

Once again, I left that period with diligence and a strong purpose, to identify the name of my fifth ancestral mother. That entailed finding the parents of Roch, and in this I succeeded, as Roch was born to Jozef Prabucki and Wiktoria Kwiatkowska on August 22, 1804. Theirs was the most tragic of all lives. Her teenage years were uncertain, turbulent times in Poland as she lived under the last King of Poland, Stanislaw Poniatowski. Due to a lack of strong independent government and army, a very odd treaty stipulated that Czarina Catherine of Russia would safeguard its independence. Poland had seen its last king. I believe Wiktoria, my ancestral mother, would have witnessed more looting than Russian protection. Her life as a teen had to be one of unendurable deprivations, witnessing the Russian invasion of 1792 and the Kosciuszko Insurrection of 1794, as the final battles of the war were in the proximity of Warsaw, her family's residence. Two years after the third Partition, Wiktoria married Jozef Prabucki, the sole surviving son of Kazimierz and Jadwiga on June 25, 1797. Her days of sorrow did not end after her marriage, as one teenage son and four other male relatives in their late teens and early 20s did not survive the Napoleonic Wars. Wiktoria's death was recorded as September 6, 1831, the very day the Russian army began to besiege the defenders of Warsaw. I have to ask myself, was Wiktoria a victim of this tragedy?

I returned to the Church records to seek the birth record of Jozef (husband of Wiktoria), and through my diligence found he was born on March 18, 1764. I was disappointed though that Jadwiga, my sixth ancestral mother, was lacking, for whatever reason, her maiden name in the Church records. She was married in 1760 and had two sons born during the reign of Saxon King Augustus the Third and two more under King Stanislaw Poniatowski. The Saxon king held court in Dresden, more interested in his personal gain than in Poland. It was during this period that devious talks of partitioning Poland were debated in the European courts. Jadwiga's four sons were raised in the ravages of these struggles until the first Partition, then tragically three of her sons were lost during the violence of 1792 and 1794.

I also came across the records of Kazimierz (Jadwiga's husband), born to Andrzej Prabucki and Maryanna on March 5, 1731. Maryanna, my seventh ancestral mother, gave birth to six sons, a very proud clan to carry on the surname. However, I failed to find Maryanna's maiden name as it was expunged from the Church records. Relative to Polish history, they lived during the reign of the elected Saxon King Augustus the Second, a very questionable ruler of Poland, who signed a treaty with Russia that guaranteed Polish independence, and also during the time the Muscovites inserted themselves into many Polish affairs due to the lack of a strong Polish army. Though Maryanna must have had to live in frustration and bitterness, she bravely carried on, and so I was able to continue my research.

Thankfully the family history was not expunged from Church records and my continuous good fortune revealed that Andrzej was born to Tomasz Prabucki and Maryanna on November 7, 1705. Maryanna, my 8th ancestral mother, was married on November 14, 1698, and she gave birth to two sons, Lukasz and Andrzej during the reign of King Stanislaw Leszczynski, who was forced out later by sinister, devious manipulators of Polish elections. Maryann, in her teen years lived under King Jan Sobieski the First who, in my opinion, was the last of the notable, patriotic

rulers of Poland as history records him as the successful defender of Europe from the Turkish invaders in September, 1683. Maryanna had three male relatives--Grzegosz, Warzyniec, and Ignacy-- of military age, however I do not think they served in a Polish army of the period.

Unable to obtain any more detailed information on Tomasz and Maryanna, I continued my research on my ancestral mothers, and my perseverance was rewarded as I found that Tomasz was born to Grzegosz Prabucki and Zofia. Zofia, my 9th ancestral mother, gave birth to Tomasz on December 9, 1674 in Poreba. It was in this period that King Jan Sobieski defended Poland repeatedly from the raids of the Cossacks, Tartars, Swedes, and the Ottoman Turks. In this brutal age of constant warfare, those who never experienced war were easily distracted from their faith, but my ancestral mothers never lost their faith. Zofia, I believe, measured life with a need for sanity (an end to wars) and an aversion to insanity (a constant circle of wars). Leaving this ancestral mother to her prayers and lamentations, I went on to further my research.

At this point my research became more trying and demanding, but I was able to find the Church records of Grzegosz in Poreba. He was born to Albertous Prabucki and Agnieszka on March 6, 1646. Agnieszka, my 10th ancestral mother, lived under three Kings -- King Wladislaw IV, King Casimer II, and King M. Wisniowiecki. The Thirty Years War was winding up, and the raids on Poland began. Charles X of Sweden and the Moscovites kept Poland in constant turmoil, and I can only surmise as to how Agnieszka lived in these never-ending turbulent years. My current problems are insignificant compared to those of my 10th ancestral mother. Again, I was frustrated in my attempt to obtain Agnieszka's maiden name.

Finally, in respect to my male ancestors, I need to comment that they, in their love of their land, served with the Polish forces from the inception of Poland. And from the first arrival of my family in America in 1905, many of my family's male youths served in every war from 1917 in which the United States was involved, and some did not survive these wars.

As all things must come to an end, so must this research. Not that I wished to let it alone, but for no other reason than the Church records came to a permanent end. So, in my final tribute, I can only offer sincere prayers to my ancestral mothers with the recorded maiden names and the five precious ones with unrecorded maiden names and to thank God for His beautiful gift to me.



**Polish Peasant Girl**  
**Painting by B. Mercese (Polish)**

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