

POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE

PRESERVING
OUR PAST
SINCE 1988

SEARCHERS

NO. 87

SUMMER

2021

ISSUE 2



59 Mills Street

Buffalo's Telescope Houses
See the story on Page 15

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PGSNYS - FOR YOUR INFORMATION

**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* at 7 PM at the Erie 1 BOCES, Bldg B, 355 Harlem Road, West Seneca, NY or by ZOOM.
Check the website for updates.

Annual dues are \$20 (\$30 Canada, \$35 other countries), and membership entitles you to three issues of the *Searchers* per year. New members 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 PayPal on our website
or mail a 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

If you are a member, but not receiving E-mail from the PGSNYS mailing list, please send an E-mail to membership@pgsnys.org

PGSNYS website: www.pgsnys.org

2021 PGSNYS OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Society of New York State,
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THE *SEARCHERS* NEWSLETTER

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 directly to: denise.oliansky@gmail.com

PGSNYS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With fingers crossed, the PGSNYS will begin a return to 'normal' operations on September 9th with our first in-person meeting in 18 months. Because of facility availability and calendar conflicts, the October and November meetings will only be via ZOOM, and regular in-person monthly member meetings will not commence until January 2022. All regular meetings will continue to be available via ZOOM. Our Genealogy Fair is being held on Saturday, September 11th, and planning has begun for our annual Christmas party in December.

These pandemic months have been a challenging and difficult time for all of us. I hope the personal impact has been minimal. Now we look forward to a bright and healthy future.

Your PGSNYS can only be effective if members share their knowledge and abilities for the benefit of all. Whether it is a display or presentation at a meeting; writing an article, of any length, for the *Searchers*, or joining the Board of Directors, everyone can make a contribution. Please take some time and consider how you can help.

John A. Nowak
president@pgsnys.org

POTPOURRI

New PGSNYS Members



Monica	Winter	Newtown	PA
Timothy	Hunger	Buffalo	NY
Linda	Loewer	Pittsburgh	PA
Arlene	Nowak	Buffalo	NY
Kristine	Wilhelm	Mussey	MI
David	Smaczniak	West Seneca	NY
Robert	Pacer	Rochester	NY

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Meeting schedule: The remaining meetings for 2021 are September 9th, which will be **IN PERSON** at Erie 1 BOCES, and October 14th and November 11th, both of which will be held by ZOOM. In December there will be a Christmas party instead of a regular meeting. In January we will begin meeting at BOCES regularly (assuming there are no new COVID restrictions).

PGSNYS Annual Genealogy Fair: will be held on Saturday, September 11th from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM in the church hall at St. Gabriel's Church. Please see the flyer on Page 9 for details. If you are displaying your research or helping attendees with their research questions, be sure to let Pierre LaJoie know you need a table, Lajoie802@msn.com or (716) 675-8632.

Searchers articles: contributions for the *Searchers* are always needed to fill the three issues published each year. Please email denise.oliansky@gmail.com with your submission or to discuss your idea for an article.

OPT-IN for Digital *Searchers*

Reminder: We encourage our members to OPT-IN for the electronic version of the *Searchers* 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. You can receive only one version. If you choose to OPT-IN for the electronic version, please send an email to denise.oliasky@gmail.com at least a couple weeks prior to the next month of issue (April, August, December). Type SEARCHERS OPT-IN in the subject line of the email. This is important to ensure 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 you the electronic version of the newsletter. 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. You only have to OPT-IN once, not before every issue. As long as you keep up your membership dues, you will continue to receive the newsletter. Thank you!



COUSINSHIP

IF YOUR
GRANDPARENTS ARE MY GRANDPARENTS
WE ARE FIRST COUSINS

IF YOUR
GRANDPARENTS ARE MY
GREAT GRANDPARENTS
WE ARE FIRST COUSINS ONCE REMOVED

IF YOUR GREAT GRANDPARENTS ARE MY
GREAT GRANDPARENTS
WE ARE SECOND COUSINS

IF YOUR GREAT GRANDPARENTS ARE MY
GREAT GREAT GRANDPARENTS
WE ARE SECOND COUSINS ONCE REMOVED

IF YOUR GREAT GREAT GRANDPARENTS
ARE MY GREAT GREAT GRANDPARENTS
WE ARE THIRD COUSINS

Genealogical Sleuthing

by Richard J Kraus

I thought I would do a 'genealogy' of our family history research. Henry Louis Gates has an excellent series on PBS called "Finding Your Roots." In it he and his team of researchers discover the family roots of various celebrities all the way back to Adam and Eve, all in an hour's time. Well, maybe not quite that far back or that quick, but it makes me envious of his staff of researchers and resources. We should be so fortunate in our quest to find out where and from whom we came. For us amateurs it can be a long, tedious, and fairly expensive undertaking.

For starters I can remember going through the marriage license books in the basement of Erie County Hall. Fortunately I found my grandparent's license in the books. Oddly enough, I discovered several other relatives' records as well just by going page by page. These were the days before digitization and the explosion of internet records and data. This was also the time of searching through the huge and uncommonly heavy mortgager/mortgagee lien books. Then you had to lug them over to a copier, hoping that the copier could accommodate them. Plus you had to have a supply of change to feed the ever hungry copy machine.

The Grosvenor Room at our downtown library was and still is a great repository of genealogical information. The many Buffalo City Directories and reels and reels of microfilm are a treasure trove of family data. Going frame by frame through a reel has a different feel of delight on finding an item you are looking for. Much different than plugging in a name on the computer and getting instant results (but not always). The Inactive Records Center in Black Rock is another source of information and also requires looking through books and microfilm before ordering the sought after record, if you were lucky enough to find it listed.

Typos and mislabeling are a frustration in our research. On my grandfather's death certificate obtained from the Alden Town Hall, the last name of his widow was written as Freidy. Her first name matched, but had he been married to someone else before he died? I puzzled over this a bit until the light in my head went off. The poor English translation of my grandmothers' maiden name, Piatek, which is Friday in Polish, led to this error.

Errors and omissions can also lead to frustration. My mother was never forthcoming as to my birth father's name. Later in life she finally gave up that information. So started that search. I knew his name was Art and he drove a city bus (#17 Central Terminal). This as well as photos of myself and my mother on his bus were helpful hints. Piecing this together with internet searches have uncovered a lot of information, but of course I keep searching for his Jurewicz family history.

This brings us to my wife Hope's family search. Her maternal side came from Red Creek, New York, which is east of Rochester near Lake Ontario. Naturally or unnaturally this brings us to a "close encounter of the strangest kind." Armed with a plat map of the area we were able to pinpoint the location of various family homesteads. One in particular was that of her great-grandfather. The



location was right and the tiny shape outlined on the map matched what we found. The house was a tumbled down remnant of its former self, but was worth a look-see. There weren't any no-trespassing signs so we decided to look around.

Much to our surprise and consternation a woman living in a mobile home nearby came running toward us telling us to leave. Try as we might, explaining the reason for looking, she would have no part of our visit. Even showing her the documentation we had could not convince her to relent, so we grudgingly left.

We returned home to Olean, New York where we were living at that time. Mind you this is one-hundred-fifty miles removed from Red Creek. Back at work the next day, I was surprised to find out that a New York State Trooper visited our house inquiring as to the reason for our visit the previous day. Hope explained the reason, even showing him the information we had. All he did was laugh and suggest not returning any time soon.

We have also found immigrant ancestors from England on Hope's paternal side. They immigrated to an area in Ontario, Canada northwest of Toronto. Her father and one uncle were born there. Family lore has it that her dad was born while on a family visit there. That did not seem too plausible as he was born in February and being farther north would not be conducive to a simple family visit in the winter.

It turns out we located a birth certificate and Canadian census records that confirmed his family was actually living there. It seems that the ancestors of her father may have been founders of a place called Mill Town, now Milton in Ontario. This after emigrating from England and receiving 100 acres of land from the Crown. This necessitates a trip to various archives in Canada, which has been put on hold due to the pandemic border closures, but we will eventually get there. From there they moved to Michigan, then to Western New York, back to Canada, and finally settling in Buffalo. Makes them sound bit like Gypsies, doesn't it?

Another interesting tale told in Hope's family was the birth of her paternal grandmother while in transit from Europe. Her Aunt Honey would tell of her mother being born at sea. This was finally proven out by various census documents that mentioned her place of birth as "at sea" or "on Atlantic Ocean." We now know the ship they traveled on was the S.S. Fulda, which accounts for her middle name being Fulda (Theresa Fulda Luksch).

No family search would be complete without a visit to our ancestor's village graveyard. I understand these are good places to go as people are dying to get in there. All kidding aside you may find your long deceased relatives among the faded weather beaten markers. While brushing off a toppled, broken gravestone you may see the faded name of a distant relative, such a discovery. Sure you may have found the same information on Find-A-Grave or Billion Graves, but there right in front of you lies the spirit of someone you may have never known sharing the same space with you.

I'm sure that the genealogy stories of everyone's families are just as interesting and sometimes as mysterious as these. The search can lead you to unknown places and events that make the genealogy of our people the great stories that they are. Just remember the search itself can be as rewarding as the results you find.



GPA- Grandma's Polish Airline

by Richard J Kraus

Time for the in-flight meal aboard Grandma's Polish Airline, better known as her kitchen table. We have a choice of pierogi and kielbasa served with a hot cup of kawa (coffee) or gołabki (golumpki) with kawa, and finally for dessert a helping of pierniki. For us younger folk the beverage of choice would be mleko (milk).

Of course I have to admit that the only real choice at Grandma's table was "take it or leave it." Whatever she cooked was what your choice was. I probably should explain what these various food items were.

Pierogi are Polish dumplings stuffed with cheese (farmers cheese), potato, (sometimes potato and cheese), and/or sauerkraut filling. My favorite was and still is the cheese filling. Kielbasa is the proverbial Polish sausage, either the smoked or fresh variety. The meat is generally a combination of beef and pork with marjoram spice added at holiday times.

Golompki were better known as 'pigs in the blanket.' These were beef and rice wrapped in cabbage leaves and cooked in tomato sauce. These might be served with pirki or kartofel, also known as potatoes. The sauce would serve as a gravy of sorts.

Kurcze Zupa (chicken soup) with kluski (noodles) was a perennial Sunday dinner. The chicken of course came from the Broadway Market, purchased the day before from the farmers manning outside stalls at the back of the market, where cars now park. She always went to the same vendor there. He had live chickens in wooden crates. A choice was made. No idea why one chicken was better than another, but that was the chicken going home with us. The farmer would bind its legs with string and place it in the hanging scale and quote a price. Yes, we will take that one. We were told to come back later to pick up our bird. From there the chicken would go across Gibson Street to a shed behind one of the houses there. This is where the chicken would be killed, dressed, and cut up. After our other shopping was complete, we would head to that house to pick up our chicken. Funny how that flapping, squawking chicken was reduced to a bundle wrapped in butcher paper.



My least favorite dinner meal was watroba (liver). I never did acquire a taste for liver no matter how it was prepared. But of course my choice as usual was "take it or leave it." Most dinner meals were accompanied by zyni chleb with maslem, rye bread and butter.

At the Christmas Holidays we always had indyk (turkey) for our main meal. Christmas Eve dinner was a traditional meatless meal that started with the sharing of the Oplatek or Christmas wafer very much the same consistency as a communion wafer. It was larger and meant to be passed around the dinner table. Each person would make a wish for the well-being of the person passing it to you. Then you would break off a piece and pass it on to the next guest at the table.

Another food tradition centers on Easter. On Holy Saturday (the day before Easter) a basket of food would be prepared to be taken to church for the 'blessing of the food.' Items such as kielbasa (polish sausage), szynka (ham), hard-boiled eggs, chrzan (horseradish), chleb (bread, usually with a cross on top) and, of course, the baranek or butter lamb. Spices such as salt and pepper as well as any items a family might wish to be included per their own traditions. Each of the food items had a special

significance (i.e. the sausage represented the body of Christ, the eggs rebirth, the bread signified the bread of life, and so on).

We've had our main course so far. Now it's time for dessert. I mentioned pierniki above. Those are simply any type of cookie. Maybe a slice of babka or sweet bread with butter, placek (coffee cake) may be more to your liking. My Grandmother made several types. One was a crumb covered loaf while another was a cheese-filled placek.

How can I forget paczki. These are fried donuts, big and puffy. You made your dough, then fried it in oil. When one side was done you turned it over to complete the frying. When done to a nice golden brown you would have a donut with a circle of lighter dough around the middle. This was their signature appearance.

Then of course we have chrusciki. There is even a bakery by that name in the Buffalo area. These were simply rolled dough cut in strips about one to two inches wide and four to five inches long. A slit was made in the middle and each end would be pushed through the slit to form a bow tie. Deep fried and the sprinkled with powdered sugar, they were delicious.

Okay, that's it. Enough talk about food. I'm hungry. Let's eat. Yummm!!



In Memorium



The PGSNYS mourns the death of long-time member, Donald Golibersuch, who passed away August 8, 2021. Don and his wife Barbara have been cherished members of the PGSNYS since 1999. For many years Don helped out in any way needed at membership meetings, the annual PGSNYS Genealogy Fair, and during annual elections. It is only in recent years that he stepped back from Society activities, while remaining a current member. The PGSNYS Board of Directors and members offer deepest condolences to Barbara and the Golibersuch family. Don will long be missed and remembered with great fondness.

Obituary for Donald J. Golibersuch

November 9, 1942 - August 8, 2021

Passed away on August 8, 2021. Beloved husband of Barbara (Kotecki) Golibersuch; dear father of Amy (Ronald) Jablonski, Jeffrey Golibersuch and David (Layana Perry) Golibersuch; loving grandfather of Justin, Ashley and Zachary Jablonski; son of the late Frank and Catherine (Hornung) Golibersuch; brother of Robert J. (Doris) Golibersuch, Lorraine (late Joseph) Pfohl, late Frank Golibersuch and late Norman (late Barbara) Golibersuch; brother-in-law of Arlene (late Leonard) Uzar and Leo (Julie) Kotecki; also survived by many nieces and nephews. Friends and family may call Wednesday from 4-7 PM at the JAMES W. CANNAN FUNERAL HOME, INC., 3155 Orchard Park, in Orchard Park, NY. A Funeral service will be held Thursday at the St. Adalbert's Cemetery Chapel, 6200 Broadway Street, Lancaster, NY, at 9:30 AM (please assemble at the cemetery). In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to The Summit Center, 150 Stahl Road, Getzville, NY 14068. Mr. Golibersuch was a member of the Polish Genealogy Society of New York.



**Polish Genealogical Society
of New York State**

**2021
12th Annual**



Genealogy Fair



Saturday, Sept. 11th, 10 AM to 3 PM

**Family tree displays, surname look-ups,
research assistance, guest historical and genealogical
societies, and refreshments! Observe Covid precautions.**

Guest Societies include:

**Buffalo Irish (BIGS)
Western NY (WNYGS)
Polly Gillet Hull DAR Chapter**

Fair Location:

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

Grouping DNA Matches by Color on Ancestry.com

by Cecilia Mikalac

At times I have felt overwhelmed by the number of DNA matches on my Grandmother Monica PLATEK's side of the tree. Her father was a PLATEK; her mother a WUJEK. The PLATEKS seem to have inherited a predisposition for doing genealogy, and there are dozens of PLATEK DNA matches on Ancestry.com, with new ones constantly popping up. Other branches are less represented, including the WUJEKS. Granted, her father Michael had more siblings, but it still seems unbalanced. And while most of the PLATEK matches could be easily linked to my tree, there were a disconcerting number of PLATEK matches that I could not link at all. The lack of WUJEK matches was quite troubling since the paper trail was poor, and I didn't have the name of their village in Poland.

Whenever a new DNA match showed up for my father, if I didn't instantly know who they were, I would click on "Shared matches" to figure out which side of the family the new match might be from. Inevitably a huge list would come up, but it was tedious to scroll through all the matches reading the GROUP NAME and notes, looking for the few who were *not* PLATEK connections, hoping to hit on more WUJEKS. Many people had no trees to look at, the tree was locked, or there were no shared surnames. It was frustrating. At this point, I decided to try grouping my DNA matches by color. You may ask, "How does this help?"

Ancestry.com gives users the ability to assign a color to each DNA group in addition to the usual Group Name and Note. For example, I assigned all my known PLATEK DNA matches a PINK dot and a PURPLE dot to all the known WUJEK relations. If I can't figure out a connection right away, but the shared matches have pink dots, I know the new match is connected to the PLATEKS and give them a pink dot too. If purple dots show up, I know they are connected to the woefully under-represented WUJEKS. I did this with all my family tree branches, giving each a different color.

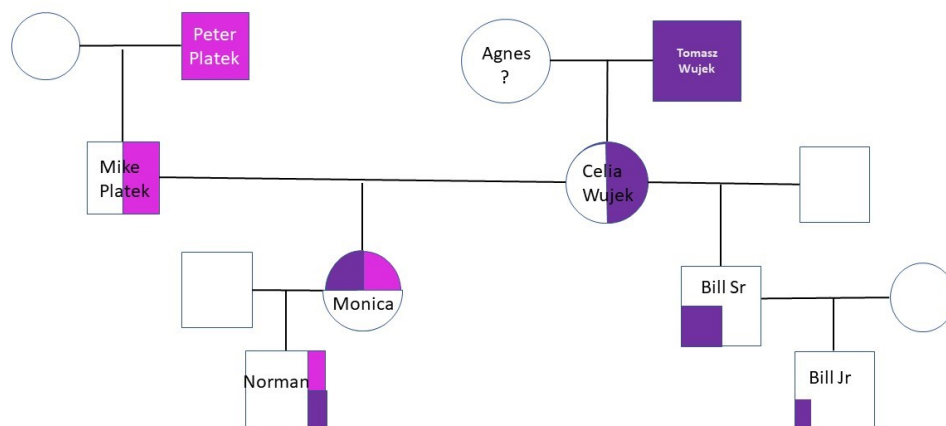
For example, 'GH' is a typical new DNA match to my father Norman. She has no family tree online and is linked to no other tree. Clicking on 'Shared Matches' with my father, many matches came up, more than 30. I see immediately that she is connected to him via the PLATEKS because all the shared matches have a pink dot. In fact, there are no dots of any other color, so it's very clear she is a PLATEK. At this point, I give GH a PINK dot, so in the future I know she is a PLATEK.

Color coding makes it easier to hunt for matches with purple WUJEK dots, but WUJEK dots remain scarce, and that's the fundamental problem. Quite unexpectedly, however, color coding ended up solving a longtime mystery about the surname of my father's maternal great-grandmother, Agnes. Here is how it happened.

Take a look at the figure below.

My father Norman, is in the mostly white box at the bottom left. White represents all non-PLATEK and non-WUJEK DNA (i.e., DNA from his father, and his two non-PLATEK non-WUJEK grandparents). His mother, Monica PLATEK, is 25% WUJEK from her mother's side, and 25% PLATEK from her father's side. Her father Mike's parents we know well.

Platek & Wujek



I don't mention his mother's surname because we are talking about PLATEK and WUJEK DNA here. I knew Monica's mother Cecelia's father was Thomas WUJEK, but did not have a last name for his wife, Agnes. In the Poznan Marriage project, there were two marriages of a Tomasz WUJEK within the right age bracket, 1873 to an Agnes PLATEK and 1881 to an Agnes MATUSEK, but I had no idea if the WUJEKs were from the Poznan area and PLATEK is not an uncommon surname there.

My Grandmother Monica's mother, Cecelia WUJEK, was married twice. From her first marriage she had three children, including Bill Dombrowski Sr., my Grandmother Monica's half-brother. Bill Sr. had a son, Bill Jr., who took a DNA test from Ancestry.com, which I hoped would give me information about Agnes's family. Looking at the figure again, you can see that while my father has a mix of PLATEK and WUJEK DNA, his cousin Bill Jr. has no pink PLATEK DNA. Therefore, Bill Jr. would likely have purple matches from the WUJEK side without the too-numerous PLATEK matches. Non-purple matches would indicate Agnes' family ties once the Dombrowskis were factored out. This wasn't hard because my father is only related to the later generations of Dombrowskis, whom we know well, and I was looking for matches Bill Jr. and my father shared.

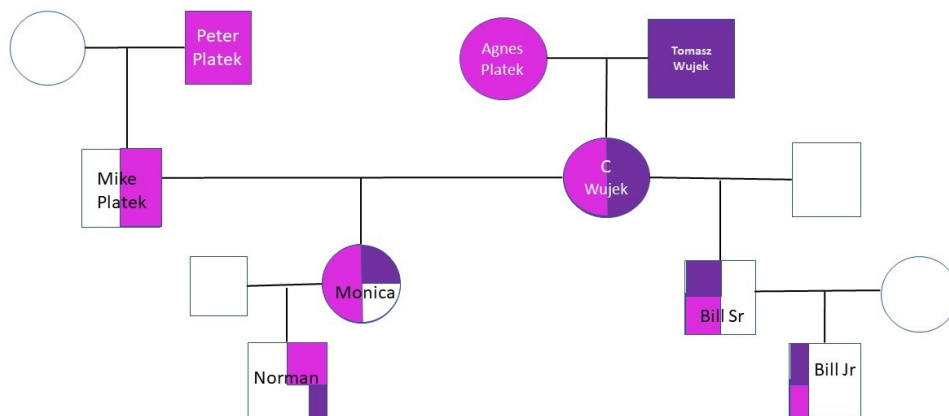
Imagine my surprise when the majority of Bill Jr.'s non-purple matches were pink PLATEKS! After the initial shock wore off, and I checked and rechecked that I hadn't pushed the wrong button, I realized this meant my father's cousin Bill Jr. was also a PLATEK, and not just any PLATEK; he was one of *our* PLATEKS.

In my original theory, as shown in the figure above, Bill Jr. should have had no PLATEK DNA because his father was a Dombrowski, not a PLATEK. But what we didn't know then was that our WUJEK grandmother, Cecilia, was also a PLATEK because her mother Agnes was a PLATEK. Bill Jr.'s pink PLATEK matches confirmed that Tomasz WUJEK's wife was the 1873 Kornik bride named Agnes PLATEK. It also meant that Agnes PLATEK was related to Peter PLATEK, the father of my Grandmother Monica.

Look at the figure on the next page for the changes this knowledge brings about.

You can see that now the pink is spread over both sides of the tree. My Grandmother Monica is now 50% PLATEK and only 25% WUJEK, and my father is now 25% PLATEK. This genetic PLATEK loading explains the relative dearth of WUJEK matches to my father and why we have so many PLATEK matches. It also explains why I haven't been able to connect many of those PLATEK

Platek & Wujek



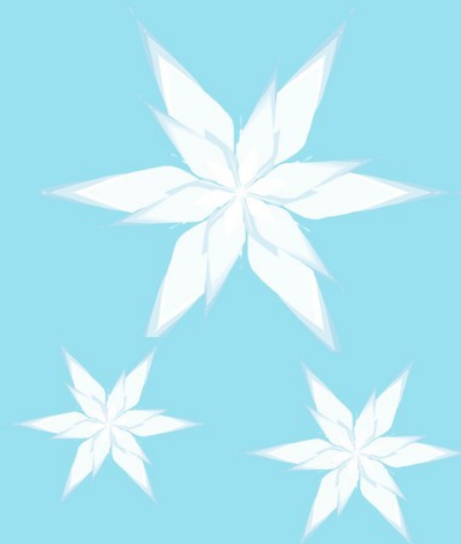
matches to my known tree. They are probably relatives of my 2nd great-grandmother, Agnes PLATEK. I had thought the WUJEKs just didn't like genealogy, but in fact they are simply underrepresented in my father's DNA. Comparing my father's DNA picture to that of his cousin Bill Jr., you can see that my father has twice as much PLATEK DNA as Bill Jr., because he is getting a load of it from both sides.

Whether my great-grandmother knew her second husband was a PLATEK cousin, I don't know. She gave me the names of her parents, without Agnes' maiden name, when I was only 13 and just starting the family tree. Marrying cousins became taboo in the early 20th century and my great-grandmother's Platek marriage would have occurred around 1915. Perhaps she did not feel comfortable revealing this information to me at that time. I am pretty sure that my Grandmother Monica had no idea that her half-siblings actually shared more than the usual complement of DNA with her, but the half-sibs were close psychologically anyway, so it wouldn't have mattered.

While color-sorting did help me solve this particular mystery, it also highlights one of the problems of establishing relationships with DNA matches. In the small villages around Poznan people probably did their best to avoid marrying close relatives, but with a limited pool of people it was inevitable that people might be related at marriage. The bottom line is that I have found more than one DNA match who appeared to be related to two separate parts of my family tree. This means that the 'triangulation' method of figuring out the nearest common ancestor to a DNA match might not be so simple. One bonus, however, is that descendants of consanguineous marriages like this give double doses of certain kinds of DNA. As a result, you can sometimes get DNA matches confirming relationships many more generations back than is typical. It's nice to get some DNA proof for the paper trail, after all.

While I do recommend sorting your matches by color if you happen to be on Ancestry.com, keep in mind this won't solve all problems. It may highlight some tangled knots if two branches of your tree are related. But I can say that with color coding, it is faster and easier to see how matches are related to each other, especially when no tree is posted for the match or there are no common surnames listed on the trees they do have.

BE MORE THAN A MEMBER-- BE A VOLUNTEER!



The strength of the PGSNYS comes from individual members each contributing their knowledge and ability to the benefit of all. This may only be for a one-time project or a longer time-frame involvement. The more people sharing their skills makes everyone's job that much easier.

At this time we are in need of:

- One or two members with an accounting/business background to assist with a short-term fiscal administration project.**
- Members with more than a layman's IT knowledge to serve on a technology committee.**

In addition, please consider serving on the PGSNYS Board of Directors. The nominating committee will shortly begin its work to fill vacancies in the 2022 Board.

These opportunities are open to local and distant members.

**To volunteer, or to just investigate further, reply to
*president@pgsnys.org***



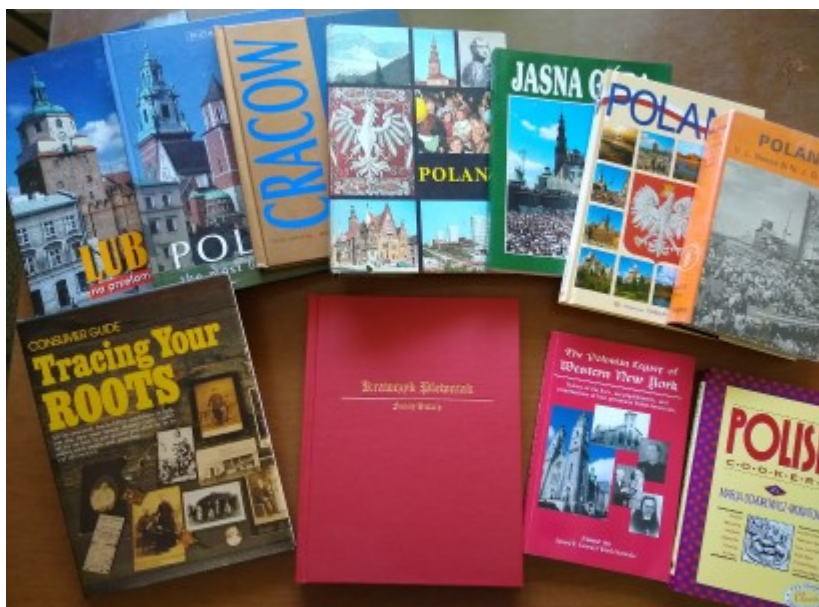
Donation to the PGSNYS Library Collection

by Denise M. Oliansky

In mid-June, I was cc'd on an email sent by my cousin, who is a librarian at Canisius College, to a gentleman who contacted Canisius wanting to donate his published family history. She explained to him that the Canisius library does not accept genealogical materials, but gave him my name since his book is about his Polish family in Buffalo. I immediately responded to let him know the PGSNYS would gladly accept his donation.

Gregory Krawczyk is formerly of Buffalo, now living in New Jersey. He recently had his research on the Krawczyk - Plewniak Family published. I was very excited to receive his donation because it is the first published family history book we will have in our library collection in the Grosvenor Room in the downtown library. I hope it will not be the last. While Greg is not a PGSNYS member (at least not yet), I hope his donation will serve as an example to those of our members who may be interested in publishing their family history research. Many of us wonder what we are going to do with all of our research; donating it to our collection is a generous way to share your family research with others. My hope is to one day see a whole section in our collection dedicated to members' family research. While Greg did a book, a three-ring binder can be just as effective for sharing one's family history and would be a welcome addition to our collection.

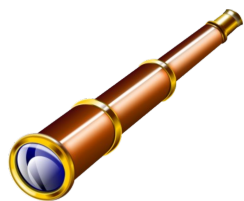
Greg and his wife, Sue, came to Buffalo for a visit in early July, and I met them in the Grosvenor Room to show them our collection and to receive his donation. Since then, he has mailed me two boxes of books to be considered for our collection. He included books about genealogy, Poland, Polish history books, a book about Buffalo's Polonia, a cookbook, Polish language books, and numerous others, some in Polish. I will be passing these books along to our librarian, William Borucki, to add to our library collection. Greg hopes our members and other visitors will find them useful.



Finding Buffalo's Telescope Houses

by Denise M. Oliansky

My maternal Great Uncle Wojciech Koralewski and his family rented at 93 Mills Street on Buffalo's Eastside. In 1902, a newspaper article reported the Health Department found that my great uncle's address housed more than 60 people! This was not an unusual situation for the time. Settled immigrants often sponsored or welcomed new immigrants and made room for them in their homes. Houses on the Eastside were typically very narrow, fairly nondescript cottages situated on lots only 30 feet wide. The lots, however, had deep backyards, sometimes over 100 feet. To house so many people, additions were built onto the back of the main house, often two, three, or four times, with each new 'room' being smaller than the one before.



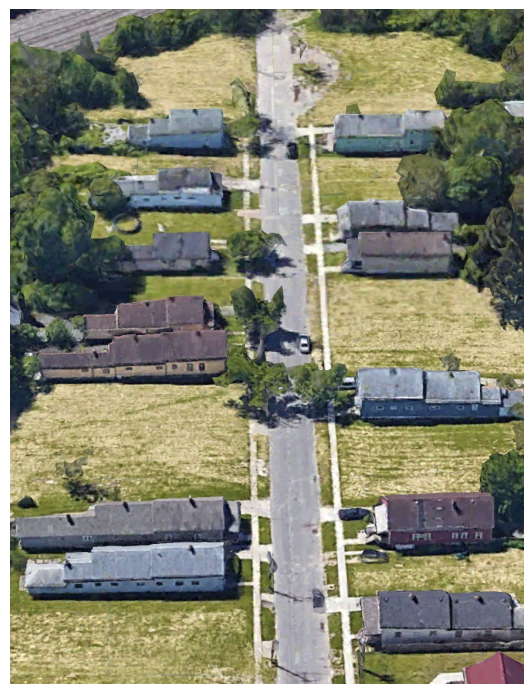
I recently learned these buildings are called Telescope Houses, and while Buffalo is not the only place to have them, on Buffalo's Eastside it is the predominant building type on many blocks. Personally, I think telescope house is a bit of a misnomer. Most telescopes I've seen are a single cylinder with an eyepiece. These houses are more like pirate spyglasses – think Errol Flynn or Douglas Fairbanks – which open up into many segments, each section smaller than the one before.

93 Mills Street, like so many other houses, has been demolished. The homes on either side of that lot are still there though, and both are telescope houses. The telescope house on this issue's cover is also on Mills Street. I became curious about the extent to which telescope houses are still represented on the Eastside. To investigate this, I decided to try a tool I hadn't really used before, the Google Earth app. I've used Google Maps many times to look at street views, but from what I had read about it, Google Earth provides so much more detail and allows you to interact with the views.

I was not disappointed! Google Earth is easy to use with a little practice. Just enter a place name or street address and the globe revolves and zeros in to that location. The detail is amazing! As I was trying it out, I looked at an aerial view of the village in Poland where I visited family in 2019, and I was able to pick out the family's house from the placement of buildings in their yard. When I zoomed in, it was like I was standing in front of their home.

I entered in Buffalo, NY and then, based on the aerial view of streets, focused in on the Eastside. It was pretty surprising...nearly every street on the Eastside has telescope houses. I found Oberlin Avenue, the street where my paternal grandfather had lived, right across from the former St. Luke's Church. Grandpa's old home at #85 is long gone, but I was able to capture an Earth postcard of the street. As you can see, nearly every house that remains is a telescope house.

This was an interesting exercise and it made me think about how supportive and generous established immigrants were to new immigrants arriving in this country. More family members or boarders arriving from Poland? Just add another room on the back of the house.



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