

# Our Polish ANCESTORS

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND

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## Cleveland's Polish Kielbasa Kings

By Trina Goss Galauner

When Polish immigrants came to Cleveland they brought with them the tastes of their home country. One of these savory foods was the kielbasa aka kielbasi (pronounced Keel-BAH-suh or Kehw-BAH-see). Many Polish Clevelanders stuffed their own and opened meat markets but only a few authentic Polish sausage makers remain in Cleveland today.

Kielbasa has been around for several centuries. It is believed that the Poles acquired the art of making sausage from trade merchants from Rome after Poland accepted Christianity in 966 A.D. It was originally a delicacy only enjoyed by royalty. Later, kielbasa would be enjoyed at the tables of noblemen and knights would carry along ropes of smoked kielbasa on their belts for long journeys. Eventually, peasants and country folk would copy the recipes for kielbasa to make in their own homes and for sale in markets.

In the U.S., kielbasa is served on Christmas, blessed at Easter, a staple at Polish American weddings and lately becoming a feature at neighborhood Oktoberfests. There are many different types of kielbasa. Traditional Polish kielbasa is made with pork meat but has also been made with beef, turkey, chicken, veal, lamb and even venison. It can be smoked, cured or fresh, can be seasoned with garlic, black pepper, salt, paprika, marjoram, allspice, and coriander and is generally stuffed into pig intestine. Of the raw or fresh variety, there is white "biala" kielbasa and black kielbasa (blood sausage) called kaszanka or kiszka.

Early Polish immigrants who owned meat markets or groceries may have made their own kielbasa for sale. One such butcher named John Schaplowsky made and sold kielbasa on the west side of Cleveland from about 1890 until his death in 1908.



Joseph Radecki and family ca. 1928  
www.rksausagecompany.com

But the oldest Polish Cleveland kielbasa making outfit that is still in business today is R&K Sausage. Joseph Radecki was born in 1883 in Straszewo in Prussian Poland. He arrived in the U.S. on the SS Batavia on October 5,

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### Welcome

If you are not already a member of the PGSGC and would like to become one and receive this quarterly newsletter (cost is \$24.00 per year), please contact Ron Kraine, at ronkraine@aol.com for more information.





## Letter from the President

Our PGSGC club has taken on a slightly new look for 2018 with a new president and vice president. John Szuch retired from his presidential post after 25 years of service to the club. We all thank him for his dedication and promoting of our Polish heritage. The NEW officers are President, Ron Kraine and V.P., Anthonette Baciak. Treasurer, Ben Kman and Secretary, Lucia Dominak remain in office to keep the new people on the right track.

With the new administration, a few things have changed.

**First**, meetings will begin at 7:00 PM SHARP! Remember, also, that we meet every month except July and August. **Second**, we will begin to send out MONTHLY e-mails that will inform members of things such as, club programs, new genealogical sources, Polish happenings around town, member research findings, etc. Since

many of our members live outside of the Cleveland area, this should keep them up-to-date on the happenings within our club. Of course, members will also still receive our quarterly newsletters. **Third**, we are seeking a Publicity Chairperson to promote our organization and a Hospitality Coordinator for our meetings. Please contact me if you can help! **Fourth**, we want to encourage members to seek our help in finding information about their ancestors and their ancestral homes. We have sources available to us that may help you in your research. To this end, please e-mail questions to me at [ronkraine@aol.com](mailto:ronkraine@aol.com) and I will get back to you in a timely manner.

Ron



2018 Officers

Ben Kman, Ron Kraine, Lucia Dominak and Anthonette Baciak



Just a reminder, if you haven't already paid your membership dues for 2018, you are overdue. This could be your last newsletter. If you aren't sure if your membership is current, please contact Ben Kman at (216) 469-9670 or [ben\\_kman@hotmail.com](mailto:ben_kman@hotmail.com).

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## Remember When: My First Kiss

by John A. Prokop

Spring sets a man's fancy in action and that must have been the reason when I kissed a girl for the first time. Her name was Sue and she lived just four houses away on my side of the street. I knew she was my age because we were in the same grade but at different schools.

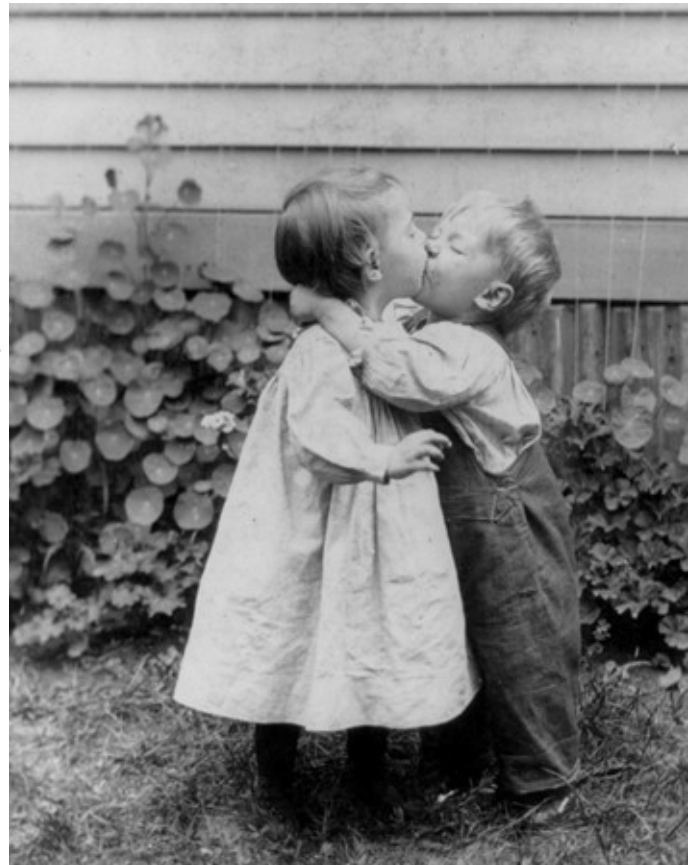
When I would walk by her house I would hope she would be on her front porch or outside in her yard playing, so my passing by would not be in vain. If I was lucky she would be outside, and as I came closer to seeing her it seemed like my heart would begin to pound so hard and loud I thought everyone in the neighborhood would be able to hear it. I was only 8 or 9 and could not understand why she was having this strange effect on me.

When I would see her, I tried not to look directly at her for fear I would have to talk to her, knowing my mouth was dry and I thought I wouldn't be able to say the words I wanted to say, or I wasn't sure what I even wanted to say least I said something stupid or dumb.

After a while, I got braver and I would finally walk by and utter the empty word "hi" and nothing more. She would respond back with a "hi" or "hello", which made me think she must have liked me too. Maybe that was enough and all I needed to feel like I was special to her and that she liked me.

One Saturday afternoon I decided it was the right time to take our relationship to the next step so I planned my next move wisely and deliberately. I washed and scrubbed my hands and face vigorously until they were spotless and really clean. I put on some of my Dad's underarm deodorant even though I didn't know why I was using it. I guess I used to watch my Dad use it, and think it had something to do with being a man and maybe something to do with feeling or being sexy, which I didn't know what that was all about back then. I then put on a brand new "Fruit of the Loom" white tee shirt and rubbed Brylcreem all over my hair and scalp then combed my hair like I was going to church. I finished myself off with a generous amount of my Dad's Old Spice After-Shave, because it smelled good and must have had something to do with smelling and being sexy, so I thought or imagined.

I was now groomed, prepped and ready. I then headed down to her house with a song in my heart and love on my mind. I arrived at her house, walked up the stairs to the porch and marched directly to meshed screen door and knocked. She suddenly arrived and looked me at eye level through the screen door. I could hardly breathe but I asked her if she could come outside. She came out and stood looking at me and suddenly as if Cupid's arrow of insanity and love pierced my heart, I leaned forward closed my eyes and ever so lightly kissed her on her lips. Before I could open my eyes to savor the moment I heard the awkward sound of "EW YOU" and felt her hand push me backwards. I lost my balance and fell off the porch backwards into the abyss of an 8 foot high Don Juan Climbing Red Rose bush! There I was held captive, stabbed and bleeding, by large thorns into my back, arms, backside, and legs.





I howled in agony and no one was anywhere in sight to help me. I couldn't get myself up or out of this prison of thorns and pains. Suddenly, there appeared Sue's mother who heard my cries for help and she rescued me by pulling me up and out of the rose bush. Before she could ask me what happened I was running down the street to my house out of fear she might have asked me what happened. I only remember when I got home I went into the bathroom and locked myself in there, took off my clothes and washed my wounds with Bactine. I threw the tee shirt in the garbage can to destroy the evidence and so no one at home would ask me what had happened.

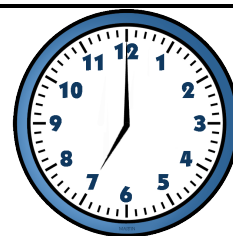
So that was the story of my first kiss and it is why I never forgot it. Now where is the surprise ending to this story? I will only say this was the same girl I took to my senior prom and that night's kiss ended entirely different than my first time. By the way, never kiss a girl for the first time with your eyes closed, or near a Don Juan Climbing Red Rose Bush!



John A. Prokop is a freelance writer and has published articles about growing up on Cleveland's East Side Polish neighborhood (Poznan) in the 1950s and 1960s. He attended St. Casimir Grade School (Class of 1962) and then Cathedral Latin High School (Class of 1966). He is also the Prokop Family Historian and Genealogist and has studied Genealogy for about 5 years. John tries to capture and record his feelings of the times, culture, food, religion, people and relationships, as he perceived and lived them. He also chronicles personal information about his family genealogy, which is often rarely recorded or documented. John currently is retired and lives in St. Petersburg, Florida with his wife, Laura, and their two married daughters, Holly and Jennifer.

### **IMPORTANT: Meeting Time Changed**

Our meetings will now start at **7:00 PM sharp**. We will begin with our business meeting and continue with our program wrapping everything up by 9:00 PM. Please plan accordingly.



## **Poland 2014: A Journey.....Part 9 conclusion**

by Ben Kman

**The following is the story (offered in quarterly installments) of member Ben Kman's 16 day journey to his ancestral villages in Poland in September 2014.**

### **Day 15 Friday September 19**

It was our normal rise and shine again today. This morning starts our last day in Poland. We sat down to a variety of Polish pastries that I picked up the night before for breakfast and some instant coffee. Our apartment hostess stocked coffee, sugar and teas for use during our stay. We have an early departure for our tour to the Wieliczka Salt Mines this morning so after we finished breakfast and cleaned up our dishes we headed back to the same pick up point since we are using the same tour company. On the way, I overfed the parking meter to allow for ample leeway in case of a late return from our day trip.

Our tour bus showed up a little late but we were the last stop today instead of the first like yesterday. The trip to Wieliczka is about 40 minutes compared to an hour and a half to Auschwitz. We are dropped off across the street from the main building entrance. As we approach the building, it is clear to see that this has been gussied up for tourists. There is landscaping, flowers, trimmed bushes, decorative benches and covered waiting areas. The building inside and out has been painted, cleaned and spit shined. This was another place that I hadn't visited since 1990. It was much more "mine-like" and industrial at that time.



We waited for our allotted timeslot and our Wieliczka guide met us to take us down into the mines. There is a new technology that I hadn't experienced before for group tours. We also used it at Auschwitz. Each person on the tour received a small receiver box, which hung around your neck, and a headset. The headset plugged into the receiver and you "tuned" it to the channel number given to you by your tour guide. The tour guide had a transmitter box and a microphone so that when she spoke everyone could hear her through their headphones. In general, these worked well but if you happened to fall behind in the mines they tended to cut out since you were in tunnels carved from solid rock.

The start of the tour consisted of descending 385-ish stairs. Each flight of stairs was marked with a number counting down to the bottom so you knew how close you were to hell, I mean, the end of the descent. Once we reached the bottom, we were given an overview of the mines, their history and tour protocol. I found it interesting that it wasn't mentioned that whistling in a mine was considered bad luck.

The tour guide led us through various tunnels and chambers. Some have historical displays showing the old mining processes and techniques. Some highlight "natural" features like underground lakes, salt stalactites and "cauliflower" formations. Others showcase manmade ingenuity like statuary, grottos, support structures, bridges, walkways, chapels and a cathedral. The highlight of the tour is the cathedral with hanging chandeliers with each individual crystal made from salt. One disappointment was that there used to be a massive chandelier hanging in the cathedral but it was being renovated. There are also a multitude of back lit statues made from salts of different colors as well as carved bas-reliefs of biblical scenes. Of course, St. Pope John Paul II is depicted in a full sized salt statue as well.



After leaving the cathedral but before exiting the mines, you are treated to a computerized show projected onto the wall of an auditorium. Through special effects, you see a rapid succession of salt mine scenes interspersed with explosions and vivid simulations of crumbling walls and collapsing mines. From there, it's time to shop for salt gifts. Anything from natural specimens to bath salts to tourist trinkets was available for purchase.

After we were given some time to browse the gift shop, we were lead to the queue for the elevators to the surface. As it turns out, our tour ended at a high congestion time, so they re-routed our group to another elevator A MILE AWAY. Our group hoofed it to the other elevator and waited. This elevator was brand new, high speed and high capacity. It held half of our tour group at a time. In 1990, we actually rode in the steel cages the miners used to come to the surface so this was an unexpected surprise. The consequence of walking a mile underground to the next elevator was that we had to walk another mile back to the main building where our bus was parked. We stopped at a café near the building and waited and waited. This would have been the only complaint I had about the tour (except for the mile walk out of our way) because there was no communication on where we should go or wait. Eventually we saw some people head to the main building so we followed and continued to wait there until our SeeKrakow guide directed us to the bus again. The ride back to Krakow was uneventful. We were



hoping that since we were the last people picked up we would be the first dropped off. We weren't that lucky.

Now that we were back at the flat, again later than expected, we needed to return the rental car and then head to the old town to meet a former co-worker, and now friend of mine, who was going to give us the "local's" tour of the city. We were supposed to meet him at 1PM but we just got back to the apartment at 12:30 so I let him know we would probably be running about an hour late. I looked up directions to the rental car place the night before and it was only 5 miles away so I figured it would take us 10 minutes to get there, 30 minutes to deal with paperwork and 10 minutes to get back. My dad and I set out and were immediately confronted with bumper to bumper traffic. It literally took us 45 minutes to get close to the rental car company. I can't even begin to explain how bad the traffic was. The next hurdle was finding the office. We found the street just fine but the address we had from the company's website was incomplete. I had an address of "20", unfortunately there were 11 buildings with the address "20" and lettered "A" through "K". I asked a shop keeper if she knew where the rental car place was and she provided absolutely no help. Another person couldn't help either. Dad and I decided to drive around and try to find some signs for the company and eventually came across a cab parked on the side of the road. Dad suggested that I stop and ask him. Keep in mind that my Poland cell phone plan ran out the day before, one day before the end of our trip. I tried to recharge it two days prior but something didn't work right so my service ended. I asked the cab driver if he could call the rental car company to find out which building they were in but he seemed more interested in his crossword puzzles. So I explained to him that we would need a ride back to the center after dropping off the car and he surprisingly became more attentive.

We found out that building 20F was the location so we went back and the cabbie followed us. Dad and I asked in a beauty shop where the rental car place was and they told us the third door on the left. Finally we found it. After paying for the extra day, we needed to inspect the car for damage. There was a dent documented on my original form but the guy tried to blame me for it. I clearly pointed out to him where it was marked that this was a pre-existing condition but he wasn't buying it. He called the office in Warsaw and after a conversation punctuated with plenty of "K" words (I'm not going to explain this but if you've been to Poland or hang around with recent immigrants, you'll know what I am referring to), he admitted he was incorrect and that somehow he misinterpreted the form. Then he asked me for the registration. That's when my heart sank. I had originally put it in my road atlas for safe keeping and when we cleaned out the car, I took the atlas to the apartment not even thinking or remembering that the registration was in it. I promised that I would have someone drop it off as soon as possible and gratefully they worked with me. Now we had to get back to the city. Fortunately, our cab driver knew the back roads and got us to the apartment in 15 minutes.

It was now about 3PM and we were 2 hours late for the meeting with my friend. I sent him a quick text using the wireless in the apartment, gathered up some gifts (and the registration) and we headed out. Five minutes later we were at the Barbican and eventually found my friend. Despite working together for years, we had never met but I had a general idea of what he looked like from our weekly Skype video conversations. We would try to talk every Friday in Polish for 30 minutes. It became more difficult now that he had changed jobs but we still connected at least twice a month.

Following profuse apologies, we started to take a slow walk around Stare Miasto (the Old Town). I could not fathom the number of tourists. The city was absolutely overrun with them. In addition there were many huts set up for vendors in the Rynek selling all sorts of foods and handmade goods. The entire time we were either getting jostled by tourists or nearly run over by people trying to bike through the crowds. We couldn't even hear the Hejnal (trumpet call from the tower of Mary's Church) because some street musician was playing an electric guitar with two massive speakers. Despite it all, we went into Kosciol Mariacki and saw the triptych by Wit Stwosz, walked through the cloth hall, visited the Collegium Major of the Uniwersytet Jagiellonski and a few other side sites before we had to head to the restaurant to meet my friend's wife for dinner. The restaurant of choice that day was Kogel Mogel. We opted to eat in an open air courtyard in the center of the restaurant. They had a nice selection of dishes that were reasonably priced and the quality of the food was very good as well. The best part was

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*Cleveland's Polish Kielbasa Kings continued from page 1*

1906, came to Cleveland and obtained work as a butcher. He married Pelagia Wisniewska shortly after arriving.

In 1917, Joseph partnered with another butcher named Anton Kruszewski (thus the "K" in R&K). Together they opened R&K Sausage at the corner of East 64<sup>th</sup> and Lansing Avenue. Sometime in the 1920s, Kruszewski left to open his own meat market on the west side of Cleveland but Radecki continued his kielbasa operation at the Lansing location, running the business out of two homes. When he died in 1958 his son, Casimir, took over the family business until he died of cancer in 1980. The Radecki grandchildren took over and then the great grandchildren. In 2002, after 85 years of operation at 6316 Lansing Avenue, the family moved the production to a warehouse at 7700 Harvard Avenue which allowed them more room so they could meet increasing customer demand.

R&K became locally famous for the T.V. Smokie but their fresh kielbasa is a favorite holiday dish. They cater weddings, christenings, graduations and funerals and have a small storefront open 6 days a week.

Just outside the Cleveland city boundary in Garfield Heights is Peter's Market established in 1934. It's founder, Peter Gazdecki, was born in Wolica in Galician Poland in 1895 and came to the U.S. on the SS Finland in 1911.

Initially, Peter worked as a laborer in a foundry. He married Wiktorya Wieczorek in 1918 and they had three children, Joseph P., Frances and Leonard. According to U.S. Census records, Gazdecki owned his own butcher shop in 1930 and lived on Harvard Avenue. The Gazdeckis moved to East 93<sup>rd</sup> St. in Garfield Heights in 1937 and, in 1944, Gazdecki and his wife purchased the Krusell building on the corner of Turney and Sladden and turned it into Peter's Meat Market & Deli. The building had a room that they called the "sausage room" where the fresh and smoked kielbasa was "ground, mixed, stuffed and smoked on premises". Cherry wood burning in the smoker was a familiar smell at the market.



Peter's Market at the corner of Turney and Sladden in Garfield Heights

Peter retired in 1955 and his sons, Joseph and Leonard, took over the family business calling it Peter's Square Deal Supermarket. The brothers continued in their father's same old world tradition for the next 29 years. The brothers were acclaimed by customers for their fresh kielbasa. It was even rumored that Peter's kielbasa was so good that Pope John Paul II would order it!

In 1982, Joseph, who had worked in the family business since the age of 14, was diagnosed with cancer. It was at this time that the Gazdecki brothers reluctantly decided to sell the market. In 1984, Peter's Square Deal Supermarket was sold to Chris Zebrowski and his wife, Sophie. Later that same year, Joseph passed away.

Chris Zebrowski was the perfect buyer for the Gazdecki family's business. Zebrowski was born in Ostrolenka, Poland but raised in Cleveland's old Warszawa neighborhood since he was a child. So he knew Polish kielbasa AND he knew Cleveland. He was excited to continue the Gazdecki legacy by making Peter's traditional recipe kielbasa. Every morning Zebrowski and his butchers are up at dawn working on the fresh kielbasa for the day back in the "sausage room". He has been nicknamed "The King of Kielbasa". The Zebrowskis also started a pierogi making operation called Sophie's Choice Pierogies. Today, Peter's Market continues perfecting its traditional recipe kielbasa in the "sausage room" at 4617 Turney Road in Garfield Heights, Ohio.

Fred Jaworski, nicknamed the "Kielbasa King", also established a Polish sausage making enterprise. The son of Polish immigrants, his father, Franciszek, was born in Komorowo in Russian Poland in 1886. He arrived in New York on August 24, 1905 and went to work in the coal mines of Pennsylvania. He married Ewa Cegelka in Wyoming, PA in 1910 and they had one child before moving to Newburgh, NY where Fred was born in 1915. The family then



moved to Cleveland where Franciszek worked for the American Steel and Wire Co.

At the age of nine, Fred began working for vendors at the Newburgh Market at Broadway and Canton Avenue. Shortly after his father unexpectedly died from complications of a fractured leg in 1935, Fred bought a meat stand at the Newburgh Market that he called "Freddie's Meats" and began his kielbasa business. His calling card playfully gave him the title of "Freddie the Freshman" for selling the "freshest meat in town".

After serving in the U.S. Army during World War 2, Fred came home and bought the entire Newburgh Market turning it into a grocery store. Fred's motto was "If it ain't good, I won't eat it. And if I won't eat it, I won't sell it. It's as simple as that." For 59 years he taste-tested the seasoned raw meat made of ground pork butts and loins before stuffing it in the casings.



Fred Jaworski at his meat stand at the Newburgh Market 1936  
Courtesy of Mark Jaworski

In the 1970s, Fred Jaworski moved his business to a storefront at E. 57<sup>th</sup> Street and Fleet Avenue. In 1986, Fred's son, Mark (nicknamed the Kielbasa Kid), moved the shop to 5324 Fleet Avenue and called it Jaworski's Kielbasa Country. Fred Jaworski died in 1996 but his family continued to run the business moving it to Middleburg Heights in 2005 where it still operates and thrives today.

You would think that Krusinski's Finest Meats had been in business way before 1953 but it's owner had only immigrated to the U.S. in 1948. John Krusinski (Kruszyński in Polish) was born in 1930 in Zieluń, Żuromin, Poland. After World War II, John, his parents, Stefan and Janina, and siblings immigrated to the U.S. and settled in Cleveland where they had Kruszyński cousins. John obtained work as a butcher at a Fleet Avenue market and learned the art of making kielbasa.

In 1953, John married Helen Lewanski and, in 1954, they bought a two family home with storefront on Heisley Avenue at the corner of E. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street. Here, the Krusinskis firmly rooted their business. Eventually, a 3-car garage in the back was converted over to a sausage making facility. Krusinski's became not only a retail food operation but also a wholesale provider of kielbasa and other homemade Polish foods for the entire state of Ohio. Even though his facility was a bit crowded, he ran a tight, spotless and efficient operation.



Krusinski's Finest Meats at the corner of E. 63rd and Heisley

John Krusinski passed away in 2012 but Krusinski's Finest Meats still operates at 6300 Heisley Avenue. They are also famous for their "Janka" pierogi, the perfect side dish for Krusinski's fresh kielbasa.

So if you are looking for some good old authentic Polish kielbasa for your Easter feast this year, you now know where to get it. Of course, an honorable mention goes to Raddell's Sausage Shop, R&D Sausage, State Meats, J&J Czuchraj Meats, Brookside Sausage, The Sausage Shoppe and Five Star Brand of the Storer Meat Company. While they all have served up some delectable sausage and produce their own forms of Polish kielbasa, they are missing one ingredient....genuine 100% Polish ancestry.





*Poland 2014: A Journey continued from page 6*

just sitting down, relaxing and having a good conversation.

After a leisurely meal, my friend's wife had to leave and she took our gifts with her (including the car registration). It was now dark but we were rejuvenated after our meal so we continued our tour. Walking down Grodzka, the road leading to Wawel Castle from the Rynek, we turned off onto ul. Kanonicza. This is probably one of the quietest and prettiest streets in Krakow. After the hustle and bustle of the Rynek, this was a welcome relief. At the end of Kanonicza we made our way back to Grodzka and walked to Wawel. Even though we didn't have time to tour the castle, we could see it on top of the hill. We continued on to get a view of the Wisla River at night then started to make our way back to the center. My friend, Wojtek, had to get to the train station to catch his train home and we needed to get back to the apartment to start packing for our trip home. Our apartment wasn't far from the train station so Wojtek walked with us most of the way. We finally got to a point where we needed to part ways and say our goodbyes. Mom, Dad and I took the short walk back to the apartment and sat down. I asked if anyone wanted anything to drink then headed to the Monopol (liquor store) around the corner to buy some Zubrowka to take home. On the way back to the flat, I stopped into the grocery store for one last time to pick up a couple of beers for Dad and me. While we were sipping on our beers and finishing the last of our Aronia cordial, we relaxed and relived the trip.

It was so hard to believe it was over already. It felt like we just arrived. Dreading the inevitable, we packed as much as we could that night and got ourselves ready for an early flight. (Wojtek called to have a cab pick us up at 4:30 in the morning.) Our flight left at 6:20AM, not very unusual for flights home from Europe. We all showered and went to bed knowing we were going to have a long day tomorrow.

#### Flat Review

I. AirBnB.com: ul. Ludwika Zamenhofa 3, Krakow; Host: Ela Maj

- a. This was a flat rented through AirBnB.com. It is located just outside of Krakow's old town about a 5 minute walk from the Barbican.
- b. This flat was on the ground floor (floor 0) and opened to a courtyard in the center of the building. Overall it was very well decorated, spacious and comfortable. It was fully furnished with coffee and tea available for use. The only real difference between this and a hotel was that you needed to leave it in the condition that you found it. So any cups or plates that you used needed to be washed and put away. Towels could be left dirty.
  - i. In Europe, the first floor is the one above the ground floor. In hotels it is odd because the ground floor is labeled floor 0 (first floor in the U.S.) but the room numbers start in the 100's. On the first floor (floor 1, second floor in the U.S.) the room numbers start in the 200's. Go figure.
- c. There was a washing machine available if you needed to clean some clothes.
- d. The private bathroom/toilet was large and modern with a huge shower.
- e. Price US\$138 per night which was originally for 4 people so US\$34.50 per person
- f. The hostess met us at a pre-arranged time and was very thorough explaining where everything was in the flat as well as the rules and check out procedures despite the fact that we were running late for a tour. She even took time to help us figure out the parking meter situation on the street near our flat.
- g. I would definitely recommend the AirBnB service. Just do your homework and find a place that suits your needs. You will find Ela's flat listed there if you ever want to stay there.

#### Tour Review

SeeKrakow offers nice tours to the main sites around Krakow. They were punctual and offered many pick up locations all around the city. The group leaders did a good job keeping us in order and taking care of our needs. I would recommend them if you are short on time or don't want to take an independent tour on your own. The



guide at Auschwitz, who was an official guide for the Auschwitz Memorial, seemed more interested in ending her day and going home than giving us a quality tour. My father had been to Auschwitz before and he was as disappointed with the tour as I was. Our guide at Wieliczka, who also was an official guide of Wieliczka, was superb.

### **Day 16 Saturday September 20**

We woke up at 3AM today to make the final preparations to go home. We finished packing, put the clean dishes away and took the garbage out. At exactly 4:30 our cab was outside. We dragged our luggage outside and I locked up the flat and dropped the key into the designated mailbox.

The cab driver loaded us and our overstuffed bags into his car and then set out for the airport. We took the back roads the whole way but at that time of the day it didn't matter because there was absolutely no traffic. We arrived in 20 minutes and I was blown away by the brand new airport. Previously, you had to wait in a big crowd in the main terminal then they would start checking everyone in at the last minute.

We walked in, went to the counter, waited in line, checked in, went through security and were at our gate in no time. Fortunately, there was a café on the other side of security so I bought a round of coffees while we waited. Our time to board came and we lined up, scanned our tickets then got on the plane. The flight to Munich is relatively short (2 hours) and when we took off, it was just starting to get light.

Once we arrived in Munich, we got shuffled around the airport. We eventually got to the gate and I wanted to check on my request to upgrade to first class. Before we left for Poland, I put in an upgrade request and paid with points and cash but was still put on a waitlist. The lady at the gate said she would check for me. She walked over after a while and explained that there were still 4 open spaces in first class and that, if nothing changed, we would be upgraded. A little later she came back and said that 2 of the spots were taken and two of the three of us would be upgraded. I told her to move my parents to first class. Mom and Dad were not happy. They thought that I should go to first class since I did all of the work to put the trip together and make it happen. I told them that I would have other opportunities. So the gate attendant took their tickets and re-issued them first class tickets. For my kindness, she bumped me to economy plus.

We finally boarded and took our seats. Just as I got settled in and the plane finished loading, the same lady from the gate came walking to the back of the plane. She stopped at my seat and said "Today is your lucky day. We had to leave 5 people behind and a place opened up in first class. Enjoy." She handed me my new boarding pass and I grabbed my stuff and made my way to the front of the plane. As I walked past my parents, I grabbed my Dad on the shoulder and said "I knew it was going to work out." They were both ecstatic. This was my first time in first class on an international flight. Furthermore, I was supposed to have the first seat in the middle section which was the best seat on the plane. Another lady inadvertently took that seat so I just sat behind her. It really made no difference since we each had a pod with a fully reclineable seat. All I can say is "that is the way to fly". The food and service was fantastic. The attendant and I hit it off and she kept my wine glass full. When I accused her of trying to get me in trouble, she asked if I was driving and I answered "no". So she said "then you can have the whole bottle if you would like." I spent the flight in the ultimate of comfort reading magazines I brought along and watching movies.

Before I realized it, we were descending into Newark. After we got off the plane we made our way to customs and then passport security. They now have self service stations where you scan your passport and then photograph yourself. Fortunately, I figured out what I was supposed to do which helped because I had to help my parents figure it out. With that behind us we proceeded to our next flight. We were also upgraded to first class on that flight from Newark to Cleveland and two gin and tonics made it seem very short. Finally back in Cleveland, my brother picked us up at the airport and we were home sweet home after a fantastic trip.

**THE END**



## President Emeritus John F. Szuch

By Trina Goss Galauner

After 25 years of service as president of the Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland, John F. Szuch has decided to retire from this post after many years of uncontested runs for this elected office. John is an original founding member of our organization and became our president in 1993. During his time in office we have added new members and said some sad farewells to many of our original group formed in 1991. The organization has bestowed upon him the title of President Emeritus with a gift of lifetime membership to our group. Many thanks to John for his years of service to the PGSGC!

Our newly elected president, Ron Kraine, having been our Vice President/Membership Chairman for the past few years, is excited to continue to build our group, offer insightful programs to its members and continue to provide a solid foundation for our continued success based on our original mission statement. We welcome Ron as our new president and wish him the best!



Outgoing President John F. Szuch with incoming President Ron Kraine



The PGSGC is seeking volunteers for the following positions in our organization.

**Publicity Chairperson:** Responsibilities include acting as an ambassador and promoting our organization to other groups, libraries and societies and designing promotional materials including a monthly one-page flyer for our meetings

**Hospitality Coordinator:** Responsible for greeting members at our meetings and coordinating volunteers to provide refreshments

Come visit and LIKE our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). Search for "Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland" and ask to become a member. This is a closed Polish Cleveland genealogy discussion group that currently has over 250 members! Here, these members have shared old photos, posted updates on new Polish genealogy sources and shared information about their Polish Cleveland families in the hope to find another person researching the same.



## Schedule of Presentations for Upcoming Meetings

Apr: **Source Citations: They're Not As Hard As You Think**

Come watch a recorded video presentation by Amy Johnson Crow of Archives.com which takes the fear and mystery out of citing the sources of your genealogy research.

May: **Introduction to PGSGC's Social Media**

Come learn more about our organization's presence on the internet and how you can access and utilize it to further your research.

Jun: **Guidelines To Finding Polish Records**

Live presentation by Amy Wachs.

The Polish Genealogical  
Society of Greater Cleveland  
c/o St. Mary's PNC Church  
1901 Wexford Ave.  
Parma, Ohio 44134



**Polish Genealogical Society of  
Greater Cleveland**

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Visit us on the web at:  
[www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ohpgsgc/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ohpgsgc/)

**Please submit all correspondence to:  
PGSGC Newsletter  
c/o the return address above**

### About Us

Meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month (except July and August) at St. Mary's PNC Church parish hall, 5375 Broadview Rd., Parma, Ohio. We have summer break in July and August. St. Mary's is located on the corner of Broadview Rd. and Wexford Ave. in Parma, Ohio. Meetings begin at 7:00 PM and are usually over by 9:00 PM. There is ample parking in the parish parking lot. The entrance is on Marietta Ave. Membership dues are \$24.00 per calendar year.

At many of our meetings, we have guest speakers who address the group on subjects in which we have an interest. The subjects may include genealogical matters, Polish history, heritage and traditions. When we do not have a guest speaker, we have "**Show and Tell**" nights when fellow members discuss their genealogical problems, ask for advice from anyone with a similar problem, tell us of their discoveries, or let us know what they've learned about their ancestors.

Our group maintains a library which is a popular resource our members enjoy. It contains various books, maps, pamphlets and newsletters from other genealogical groups. Materials can be borrowed from the library for a period of one month. We employ the honor system with regard to borrowing of books and other related materials.

We also keep a surname research list. This list includes the surnames of our ancestors which our active members are researching. In the past, members have discovered that they were investigating names that other members were also researching.

We publish a quarterly twelve page newsletter entitled, *Our Polish Ancestors*. Articles for the newsletter are selected that are of interest to our membership. Many are based on materials gathered from the many fine research facilities in and around the Greater Cleveland area, such as: The Cleveland Public Library, The Western Reserve Historical Society, The Cuyahoga County Archives, The Family History Centers and the many Polish-American churches in this part of northern Ohio. Articles written by our membership are always welcome.