



# Our Polish ANCESTORS



THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND

JAN/MAR 2021 VOL. 30 NO. 1

## Warszawa: Cleveland's First Polish Neighborhood

By Trina Goss Galauner

Poles lived in the Cleveland area as early as 1848. At that time, Poland wasn't officially a country since it had been carved up with the dissolution of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795. Those people formerly of Poland were Prussian, Russian, or Austrian nationals. But they kept their heritage, language and beliefs.

The earliest Cleveland Poles were from Prussia and either settled here temporarily while in transit to the Midwest or assimilated into the German and Czech communities located around E.55<sup>th</sup> (Wilson) Street, between Central and Woodland Avenues. Not until the Civil War did Polish immigration begin to form the community of Warszawa. The Cleveland Rolling Mill company, established in 1863, needed workers due to the many Irish, Scotch and Welsh laborers being called to the war effort. Both Czech and Polish immigrants heeded the call and settled closer to the mills around E. 55<sup>th</sup> (S. Wilson) Street and Broadway Avenue.



E. 55th (Wilson) Street and Broadway Avenue looking south

### Inside this issue:

Warszawa: Cleveland's First Polish Neighborhood	1
Letter from the President	2
Genealogy 101: Sharing Family Stories	4
What's Polish in the Historical Cleveland Plain Dealer?	5
Getting Lost in Poland 2018...Part 7	6
Welcome New Members	11

### 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 Michael Speare at [pgsgc@yahoo.com](mailto:pgsgc@yahoo.com) for more information.



.....continued on page 3



## Letter from the President

The three months between the newsletters seems to fly by really fast. I wish the ugliness of the 2020 pandemic year would go away as quickly. Thank goodness there is a light at the end of the tunnel. The PGSGC continues to function monthly through the miracle of ZOOM until such time it will be safe for us to physically meet. Thanks to all who have joined the monthly meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm. The organization has been able to continue to educate by featuring guest speakers, continuing instruction online through with the knowledge of Ben Kman, conducting regular business and providing a forum for discussions to share hints and solutions for scaling that “brick wall.”

Trina Galauner has “retired” from managing our PGSGC website which she had been doing since 2008. Trina expanded our website into a multi-page internet tool for Polish Cleveland research and migrated it to the Rootsweb platform. Michael Speare has now taken the reins and made a few updates. Michael has also been investigating moving our website to a new platform with the possibility of having member passwords so more information can be shared with our paying members electronically.

Lucia Dominak has stepped down as our secretary after four years of service. Cori Mesenger has taken over her duties and also has become co-administrator of our PGSGC Facebook page.

Special thanks to Trina and Lucia for their years of hard work in helping to grow our club!

If you haven't visited our website or our Facebook page in awhile, give us a look!

[www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ohpgsgc/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ohpgsgc/)  
[www.facebook.com/groups/pgsgc](https://www.facebook.com/groups/pgsgc)

The PGSGC is working behind the scenes, despite the current pandemic, and focusing on our purpose to educate and help others to search out their roots.

Stay well, everyone. I look forward to when we will be able to get together again, even if only virtually.

Anthonette Baciak, President

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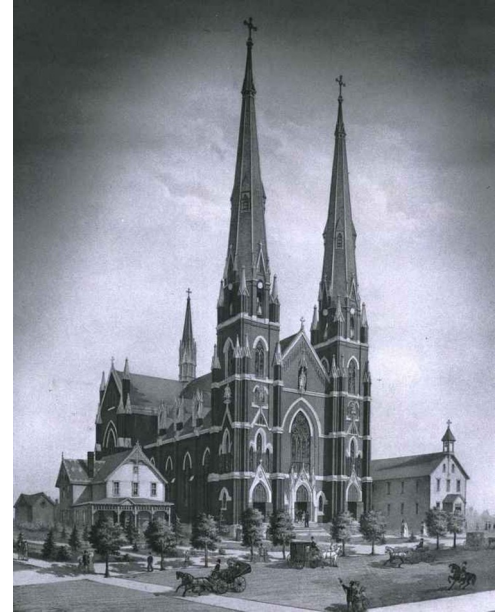
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continued from page 1.....

Mostly Roman Catholic, the Polish immigrants petitioned for their own Polish congregation and were granted St. Stanislaus parish in 1873. For eight years, the parishioners worshipped at either St. Mary's of the Flats or St. Joseph's German congregation on Woodland Avenue. As more and more Polish immigrants were drawn to work at the mills, the Polish population settled further south down Broadway Avenue. In 1881, a small church was built on the corner of E. 65<sup>th</sup> (Tod) Street and Forman Avenue for the booming Polish population. A larger and more magnificent church was completed in 1891 and St. Stanislaus parish became the heart of the Warszawa neighborhood.



# Warszawa

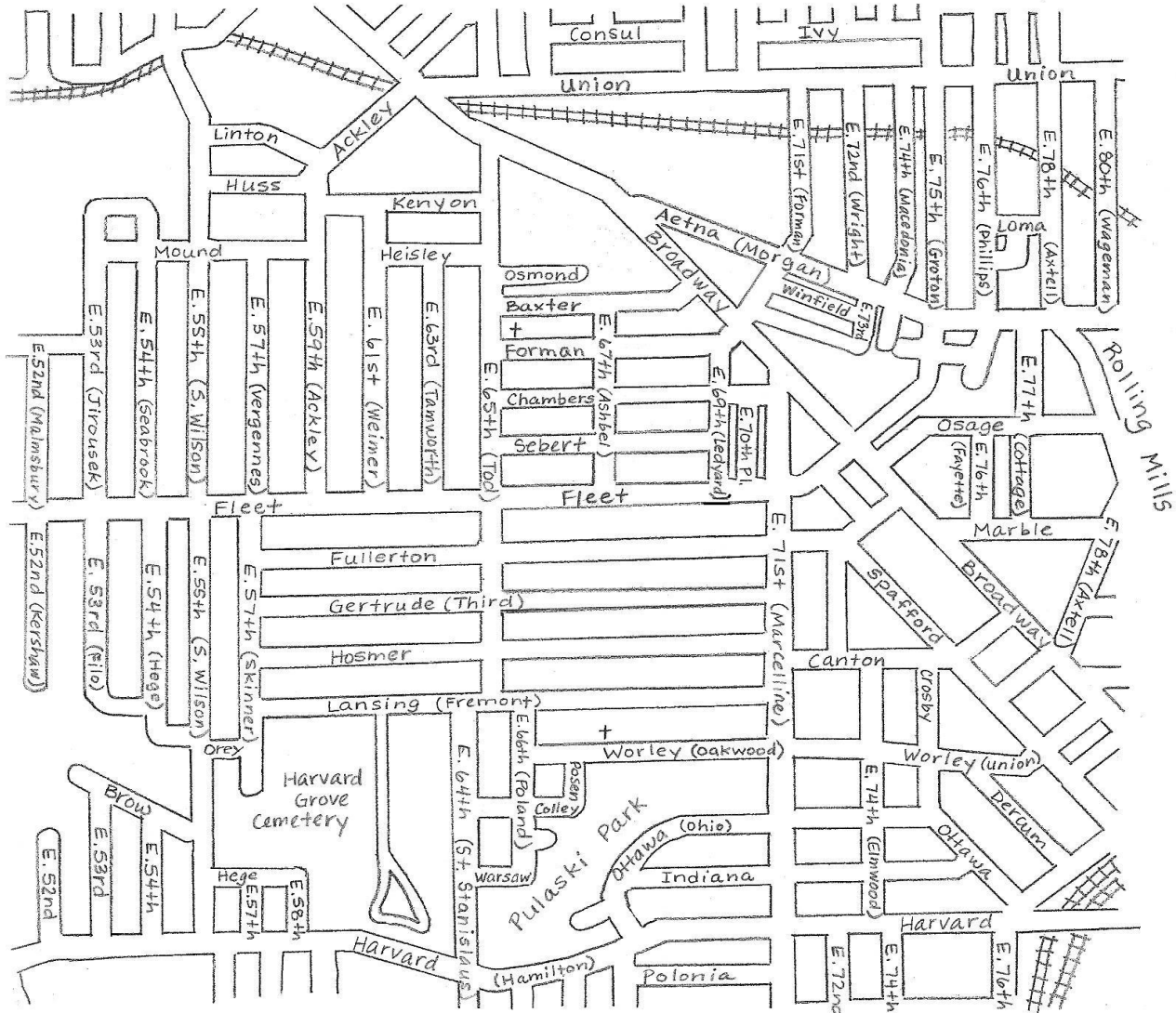


Illustration by Trina Goss Galauner





## Genealogy 101: Sharing Family Stories

By Michael Speare

A common complaint among genealogists is, “Why didn’t I ask my parents, grandparents, etc. about their life?” Their stories would have been so interesting if only we had thought to ask. Why did they leave the old country? What was it like there? News Flash... we are now the parents, grandparents and maybe great grandparents. If our children have not asked, we should start telling the story of “us” and what we know about our parents and grandparents. Many of us thought history in school was boring. In fact, we are living the history that our family will someday remi-



Family Picnic—July 4, 1952

nise about. The grandfather I knew best was born in 1892. I knew him well as he lived until 1981. I heard so many stories of his life working in the coal mines that I consider myself the link to 128 years of personal family history. There are so many stories I can share about them and my own 75 years of life.

One of our new members told me that what she craved most were the stories of her family. Much of the focus of the PGSGC is the discovery of and sharing of stories. At our website, there are stories about neighborhoods and churches. These stories give us an insight into the early days of Cleveland and the Poles and other ethnic groups that came here for a better life.

We sometimes complain that no one is interested in their family history. Who can blame them if it is a dry repetition of births, marriage, and deaths? Genealogy isn’t just about dates, it’s about the story that makes each of us unique. We should present our knowledge and memories in story form. We should think about our ancestors lives and what they experienced. Did some of our ancestors lose family members during the pandemic of 1918-19? My mother-in-law spoke of pacing the floor with a son who died in this period. Doesn’t that story resonate with today’s situation? There are many other potential stories. Did our grandmothers march for the right to vote? What did our ancestors share about surviving the Great Depression? While we would not want to have our parents spend time in jail, wouldn’t it be a little exciting to share the story of grandpa being a part-time bootlegger? The list is endless. These are some ideas of how to start compiling a family story.

We should share our own story. The secret is to start small and build from there. One old Chinese proverb states that “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” So, too, should be our efforts. Many may recall the story I wrote about Easter Sunday for the April/June 2020 PGSGC newsletter *Our Polish Ancestors*. I took my inspiration from a few pictures taken on that day. I elaborated about this visit, and many others, to my grandparents’ house and shared facts about my grandparents, my grandfather’s czarnina and kielbasa, and the omnipresent smell of garlic. I, initially, wrote the story for my own benefit as a way of recalling some fond memories of my

.....continued on page 11







## Getting Lost in Poland 2018....Part 7

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 the spring of 2018.

### Day 9 Saturday May 5

Jasna Gora is the spiritual center of Poland. It is a monastery that was built on top of a large hill (like a foothill of a mountain range) in 1382. Our Lady of Czestochowa, the Black Madonna, is located there and has been attributed to many miracles, for saving the monastery from destruction by the Swedes in the 1600s, and for inspiring the Poles to push the Swedes out of Poland. Jasna Gora is the most popular pilgrimage place in Poland and attracts millions of visitors every year.

I made my way downstairs and back to the restaurant that seemed closed last night. Today it was packed with people. Breakfast was served cafeteria style and I stood in line trying to figure out what I wanted to eat. As I approached the counter, I saw another person used the breakfast card from the hotel and he got a heaping plate of food back. So when my turn came, I did the same. I got coffee, bread, a roll, a sausage, cold cuts, cheese and jam!



Nice breakfast!!! I finished up and put my tray on the return cart then went back to my room to get my bag and backpack. After checking out and putting my stuff in the car, I wandered around Jasna Gora. First, I went over to the main church to see the "Black Madonna." Mass was in progress so I waited for it to end. I seemed to have developed a knack for arriving at the end of the homily whenever I visited a church with a mass in progress. Once mass finished, I jockeyed my way up front to the altar area. Fortunately, the Black Madonna was available for viewing. I don't recall this area being this small when I was on a group tour in 1990 and was being led through the viewing area just in front of the altar before going to the body of the church.

The walls of the church were covered in mementos from miracles granted by Our Lady of Czestochowa. Rosaries, crutches, prosthetics, medallions, etc. adorned the walls. Towards the back of the church was a hallway that lead to another room, in which I saw people standing, so I wandered over to see what was there. When I walked in, a huge cathedral like chapel, painted like the Sistine Chapel, opened up before me. It was light, bright and huge and a direct contrast to the small dim chapel for the Black Madonna. I was blown away by this. Mass was in progress so I discretely snapped some pictures and then made my way outside. While I was wandering and looking at the architecture, I passed by the base of the bell tower and saw that it was open so I decided to climb to the top. Halfway up there was a shop that sold all sorts of religious memorabilia and requested donations for the renovation of the tower. I "paid up" and continued on my way. You have to love the centuries-old stone steps that wind around the inside of a tower with a clear view of the bottom in the center! Due to the



renovation, some observation areas were closed but I was still able to get to one of the higher ones. It was a beautiful, clear day with fantastic views all around the area. After leaving the tower, I made my way back to my car. It was time to continue south.

Between Czestochowa and Krakow, there stood a line of castles called Szlach Orlich Gniazdz, the Trail of Eagles' Nests. There were about 30 castles in this relatively short distance that all sat on top of hills or mountains. The whole area around Czestochowa lay in the Jura Mountains and, technically, this was considered the Slask region of Poland. Originally, when I was planning my trip, I only wanted to visit Ogrodzieniec castle but learned about the Trail of Eagles' Nests in the process of laying out my itinerary. I picked out six castles with good reviews and planned my drive for the day around those. Fortunately, they took me in the direction I needed to go, south and east.

The first castle was in Olsztyn. My *TomTom* GPS got me to the town easily but I had to find the entrance to the castle. I initially found what looked like a parking area at a trail head but there was a sign posted that stated "Parking Prohibited." A hiker came along and I asked him where the entrance was but he couldn't tell me. I drove off and started circling clockwise around the hill the castle was perched on and eventually came to the official parking area and entrance. It seemed that there was some sort of Nordic Hiking fad going on. At every trail head there was a sign explaining what Nordic Hiking is and how to coordinate your walking with your arm movements and hiking poles. It was like cross country skiing without the skis. I think this was a gimmick to get people to buy hiking poles.

People looked ridiculous walking down a sidewalk using hiking poles.

I've done a lot of hiking all over the world and only once needed to use a hiking stick and that was literally a stick.

Up the trail I went and about halfway I encountered a woman with a cash box and a sign, "2 zl. for admission." I had no change but she could break a 100 zl note. This seemed like a shakedown to me but for 2 zl, I wasn't going to argue. I continued my way up to the ruins of the castle. There were no real improvements nor any safety devices for self protection. It was interesting to try and imagine what these castles would have been like back in their prime. After hiking around the ruins, I made my way back to the car down a much steeper path.



I was going to skip Mirow because it was basically ruins and just head to Bobolice. However, on the way to Bobolice, I passed Mirow so I stopped. I didn't climb up to the ruins but took some pictures and then continued on. Shortly after Mirow, just around the corner, I arrived at Bobolice. There was a large parking lot there but not





too many people yet. This castle was completely remodeled and perched in a very scenic location on top of a hill surrounded by forests. After parking, I walked up the trail to the castle but decided not to go in because I preferred to use the time to tour the next and last castle on my list, Ogrodeniec. I followed a different trail back to the car which gave me some different vantage points of the castle.



TomTom got me to Ogrodeniec without issue. Finding parking was a different story. I was trying to find the official parking lot but it was full. However, almost everyone in the area of the castle was offering parking in their



yards for 5 zł. This didn't bode well for a leisurely and quiet visit. I randomly picked a yard to park in, paid the lady, and walked to the castle. You needed to walk up a road to get to the entrance and the entire street was lined with people selling souvenirs, food, beverages, toys, clothes, you name it, including a plastic AK47! Obviously, this was a popular destination. As I was walking along, a guy turned around and yelled to his wife who was lag-

ging behind "What are you doing?!" She responded with "I was looking at some shoes!" At this point the guy lost it, started stammering in disbelief and rage and told her "You just bought a nice pair of shoes!" Then he turned and continued on.

The ticket office was intermingled with everything so I stopped to pay. Gone were the days of 50 cent admission to everything. Though not expensive by American standards, it was clear that prices in Poland were rising exponentially. After surviving the gauntlet of tourist junk, I arrived at the castle and went inside. There were groups of students and families touring the castle which clogged up access to just about every part of it. I skipped climbing to a viewing point because I probably would have had to wait 30 minutes just to get to the stairs. The castle itself was quite amazing and despite being partially ruined, it was in decent enough shape that you really got a sense of what the place was like long ago. Nothing was restored but stairs and walkways were built to give people access to all parts of the castle. The tourist trail through the castle was a never ending queue of people so I just trundled along like a cow being led to slaughter. By the time I got to the end of the tour, I just wanted to leave. So I did.





There were two more castles on my list but I wanted to leave myself time to visit the two other locations in my plan and get to my grandmother's cousin's house at a reasonable time. Additionally, the last two castles were close enough to Krakow that they could easily be visited from Krakow as a day trip. By the time I walked back to my car, the lady's yard I was parked in was almost filled with vehicles. I literally had to fight the traffic of people trying to park just to get back to the street. I slowly worked my way back to the main street and let *TomTom* lead the way to the manor house in Dolega. The ride was all back roads. About two-thirds of the way, the GPS lost its signal. Fortunately, there were already road signs providing direction to the town of Dolega so I kept following them. I started seeing signs for the manor house and followed those until I was headed down a small country road.



I drove right past it but, fortunately, saw a sign and recognized the manor from photos on the internet. There was no real place to park so after I turned around, I found an area where the roadway berm was wide enough to allow me to park completely off of the road. Despite being in no man's land, I went through my usual procedure of packing all electronics in the glove box and leaving nothing visible inside the car. It's always a good practice whether you are in a city or in the countryside in Poland. There is no need to tempt anyone to break in.

I walked back to the manor house and there was a small sign on a piece of paper stating that it would be closed until September for renovations. Ugh! All I could do was take some pictures from the gate. Everything was locked and there was no way to get in to even walk around the outside of the manor. On the hike back to the car, I walked past a pole namiotowe, a campsite for tent campers. It was somewhat primitive but had a building with bathrooms.

It was time to move on to Zalipie, the Painted Village. When I was planning the trip, I saw that there was a ferry across the Vistula river on the path suggested by *Google Maps*. There was a more roundabout way to get to Zalipie from Dolega that took the same amount of time but took the variable of waiting for a ferry out of the equation. If I was running early, I would have opted for the ferry. It was quite an interesting experience crossing a river on a ferry. But I chose the roundabout route.

There were no issues getting to Zalipie. Even without GPS, it was fairly easy to find on account of the ample signage. I parked at the cultural center and fortunately they were still open. I wandered around inside for a bit then asked a lady behind the desk if there was a list or map of the painted houses. She handed me a map and then the people around me asked for the same. She pointed out a few highlights and gave me a general driving tour to see some good examples of the painted houses. Every spring, the residents of Zalipie decorated their





houses, barns, wells and everyday objects with intricately painted designs. It had become a contest. Some were quite breath-taking and some were rather gaudy.

I came up with a short tour and set out by car. My first stop was at the church. There were several houses in the vicinity of the church that I could walk to so I figured this would be a good place to start. Fortunately, the church was unlocked. There wasn't a soul around. Inside, the church was elegantly decorated with tasteful floral paintings. They were a great contrast to the whitewashed walls, ceilings and pillars. Leaving the church, I turned to my left to look at two houses. Floral patterns seemed to be the theme. Some of the painted artwork accented homes and barns and some decorated wells, mail boxes, old farm implements, etc. After visiting the first two houses I walked back to the church and heard a lady calling to me from across the street. I walked over and she invited me to come look at her home. She seemed a bit over-friendly as she started following me around and pointing things out. Ninety percent of every available surface on any stationary object was decoratively painted. And stating "decorative" was being nice. This place was over the top and after spending more than 10 minutes with this lady, I realized that she was just a bit off her rocker. I complimented her accordingly on all the hard work that was done. She had a lame leg and walked with a cane so I figured that she wasn't the one climbing up on scaffolding and ladders to do all the painting. Then I tried to make my escape. I began walking toward the street with her in tow and she told me I had to see the inside of her house. With a begrudging smile on my face, I went inside. The entire interior of her house was painted wall to wall, ceiling to floor. If her dog ever stood still, it would probably have been painted too. I did a quick walk through. Then she called me over to a table she had set up and started showing me candles she had for sale. I was done and wanted out. With a grateful "no, thank you" I walked out of the house and profusely said "Thank you! Goodbye!" to her family sitting under a tent as I made a beeline back to my car at the church.

Glad to be out of that situation, I drove around the village looking for other interesting examples of this style of painting. I came across a barn with brown siding that had sepia-toned patterns painted on it. This was so simple yet so eye-catching that I had to stop for a picture. With that, it was time to head south to my next relative's house. I had always wanted to visit Zalipie and after finally getting there, I thought it was rather overhyped. If someone is in the area, I would recommend stopping but I wouldn't go out of my way to visit.

The last leg of the day was pretty much due south driving to Gromnik. The further south I got, the hillier it got and the more I relaxed. I love southern Poland and its forested hills, valleys and mountains. I drove right past my relative's driveway and ended up turning around in the same place I turned around four years ago. Actually, that's how I realized I went too far to begin with. On the way back, I spotted the drive as I was driving past it so I turned around again and finally arrived at Genia's house. Genia was my grandmother's cousin. Everyone was outside working when I rolled up. I parked the car and got out. Greetings, hugs and kisses were all around. We went inside and sat down. Genia was a nervous wreck. She couldn't sit still. Her granddaughters came over to me. Nadia, the older one, was quite shy and still cute beyond description. She was 100% girl. Her sister Lulu was hugging me, petting me and talking to me. She will be hell on wheels some day. You could see it in her eyes. She was trouble with a capital "T."

While we were sitting at the table talking, Genia's brother Stas came over and joined us. That was when Genia's daughter-in-law asked if we wanted a drink. Stas and I both said "yes" and told her to surprise us. Oh, she surprised us. Each glass could have held (and possibly did) a half a bottle of vodka and they were full to the top. I took a sip of mine and wondered how I was going to get to bed that night. I wasn't really sure what I was drinking but it had a very faint mint flavor and a kick to it. Oh well, I wasn't driving anywhere. Stas and I had a really nice conversation. I asked him if he knew his grandparents (my great great grandparents) and what he remembered of them. Then Genia's son came in and ask for my car keys so he could move my car. After a quick explanation, I realized what I thought was their driveway was actually a road. I, inadvertently, parked in the middle of the road and was going to block people from getting to church in the morning. Oops! We spent the rest of the evening talking before going to bed. Four years ago we stayed in Staszek's house because Genia's was under renovation. This trip, I was going to stay at Genia's.





*Genealogy 101 continued from page 4.....*

youth. I shared that story with some first cousins and thought that was the end of it. To my surprise, I received many nice comments and in return received more memories back about visits to our grandparents. One cousin, who lived around the corner from Dziadzia's house, wrote to me about how he had helped make that kielbasa and shared the steps involved. Others piped in with their memories. Best of all, those cousins' children loved the story as well. They did not care that he was born in 1892. They loved the insights into grandpa's life and learning about the grandma they never knew who was a seamstress and was crippled with Parkinson's. Since then, a picture, taken on July 4, 1952 at an annual family picnic that contained virtually everyone of my maternal relatives, became an inspiration for another story.

My wife has collected and shared recipes from her mother along with the stories of holiday gatherings. Whenever family members make these recipes it always stirs up memories of the people, birthdays and holidays that are now in the past. I had saved a baseball card of a player that provoked my mild manner father's ire and it has served as a basis for storytelling. These memories have brought tears and/or laughter and have encouraged more storytelling among my family. How about ours? What do we have in our photos, videos, recipes, and jewelry that could be the basis for such stories? We should begin now, share and do not stop.

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## Welcome — New Member — Witamy

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Laura Karendal		mascaralk@aol.com	Karendal

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## Schedule of Presentations for Upcoming Meetings

**Apr: Demystifying Documents in Cyrillic**

Ben Kman will explain how to determine how a surname would be written in script Cyrillic, how to use the surname to search metrical records and how to extract basic information from birth, marriage and death records written in Russian. ZOOM presentation.

**May: Cuyahoga County Archives**

Judith Cetina, the director of the archives, will discuss the new county archives' location, logistics and holdings of interest to the genealogist. ZOOM presentation.

**Jun: TBD**

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### 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.