



Our Polish ANCESTORS



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Krakowa, the daughter of Warszawa

By Trina Goss Galauner

The Polish neighborhood of Krakowa was first settled by Poles in the late 1870s. It encompassed the area south of Harvard Avenue along Marcelline Avenue (today, E. 71st Street) to Grant Avenue, the city limit. The early Polish settlers here farmed small plots of land or worked in the rolling and woolen mills. Many of the residents kept poultry and the area acquired the nickname “Goosetown” due to the large number of geese that would roam freely in the neighborhood. Some consider Goosetown to be, more specifically, the area south of the railroad tracks.

The formation of Sacred Heart of Jesus Roman Catholic parish in 1889 was an outgrowth of the increasing Polish population in southeast Cleveland. New Polish immigrants were settling further south down Marcelline and further from St.

Stanislaus making travel to and from church and school too difficult. In addition, parish of St. Stanislaus was overcrowded. For these reason, Sacred Heart was consid-

ered the “daughter of St. Stanislaus parish” since it was born from the needs of that congregation. Some of the Poles that contributed to the growth and prosperity of the neighborhood of Krakowa included the surnames Mrozinski, Swiderski, Szelminski, Gadomski, Kosicki, Krygier, Maciejewski, Polcyn, Wojciechowski, Zgrabik,



A home in Goosetown/Krakowa
6925 Clement Avenue, 1925
From the author's personal collection



Marcelline School (E. 71st and Rathbun) about 1913
Courtesy of Cleveland Memory Project

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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 Michael Speare at pgsgc@yahoo.com for more information.



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Letter from the President

Hello Friends:

Our summer break will soon be upon us. I think it is safe to say that we are all glad to be able to get out and about without too many constraints. My hope is that in September we will be back meeting together at St. Mary's Hall. Please follow us on our website, pgsgc@yahoo.com, and on Facebook for the most current information about our status.

It is with much sadness that I have to report the death of two current and loyal members, Thad Cooke and Len Pryer. They both might be considered today's champions lending a hand in their local Polish communities. At our meetings, I remember Thad always ready with a lengthy story and Len Pryer with a good joke or two. We relied on Len to inform us of the opportunities to get our pierogi and fresh kielbasa at St. Mary's Church events. Rest in peace, friends.

The Executive Committee has not been idle during the pandemic months. In addition to the updating of banking, By Laws and conducting ZOOM meetings, a beautiful brochure was created by our Secretary, Cori Messenger. It was something on the bucket list and is becoming a reality. That project and the creation of a better website brings us into the 21st century. Thirty years ago, genealogical research took a lot of footwork, requiring visits to churches, cemeteries, home visits with family elders and countless visits to the Family History Centers of the Church of Latter Saints who provided films from various areas of Poland. Since 2001, genealogical research has changed. The updating of our website is a long term, time-consuming project undertaken by our Vice-President, Michael Speare. Please take a look at how he has modernized our website. Thank you, Michael! The site looks sooo professional. A big thank you goes to our editor for being the original creator and moving us into the technical world way back when access to the world of genealogy was in its infancy. This improvement makes our organization more relevant and in line with other genealogical organizations. It doesn't matter whether potential members are beginners or advanced, they will find a revamped, easy to use, interesting website.

On that note, before I close, please continue to talk up your genealogical research to the friends and relatives. Feel free to "pass it on." It's a rewarding hobby...for others a career...and hopefully our membership will increase. We are an enjoyable group and always welcome new members.

'Til September, Anthonette Baciak, President

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Kesy (Kansy), Pelka, Zmudzinski, Zaworski, Pacholski and Surma. Jozef Krajewski's, C. T. Smyczek's, and John Wasiniak's groceries were just three of the many groceries in the neighborhood. Sadowski and Samosky bakeries also served the residents of Krakowa.

KRAKOWA

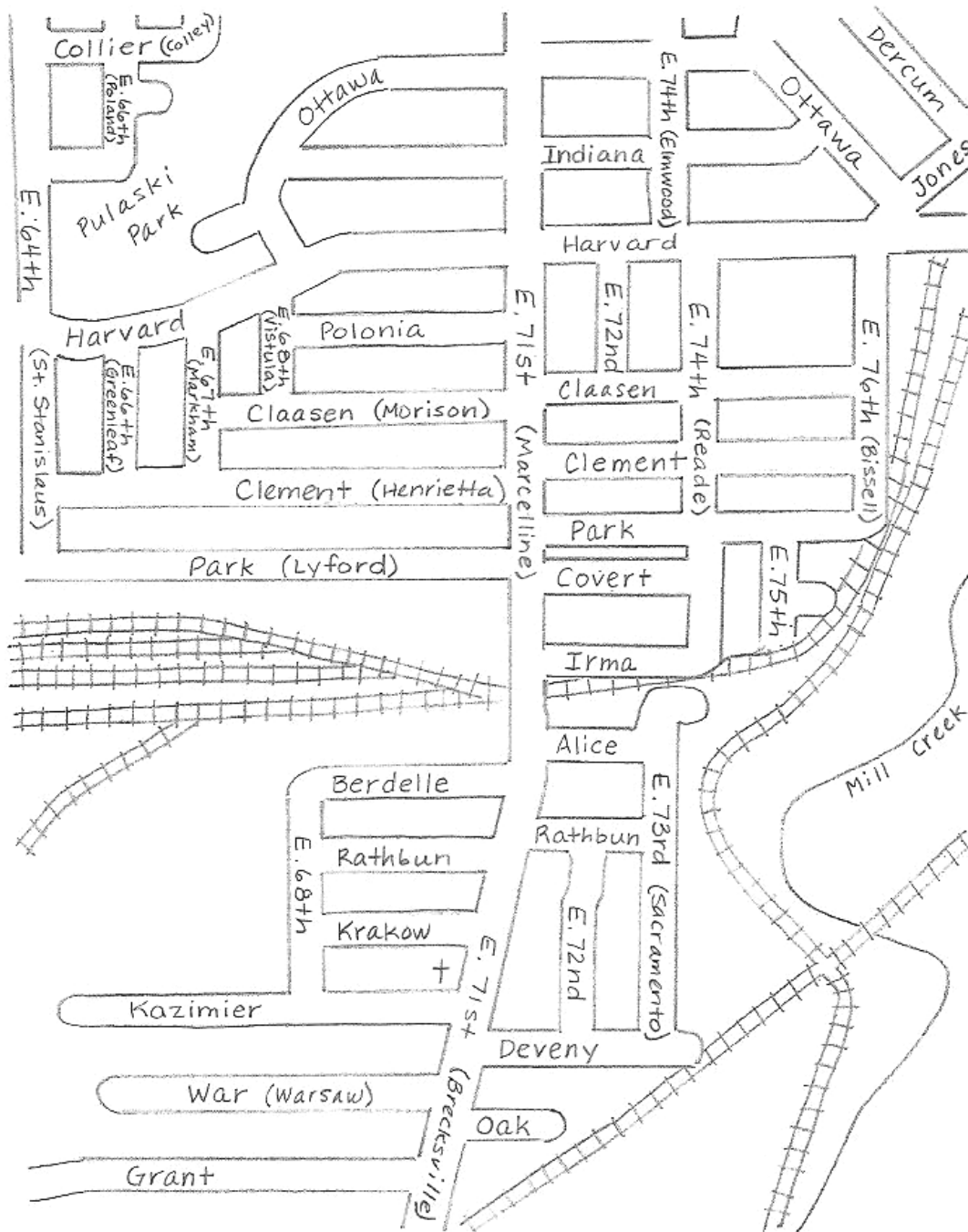
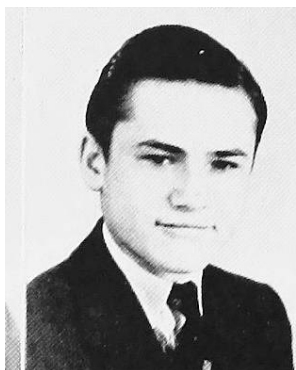


Illustration by Trina Goss Galauner



Thad Cooke, a Ceaseless Promoter of Polish American Causes

We sadly note the passing of Thad (Kucharski) Cooke, 95, a military veteran and ceaseless promoter of Polish American causes who died on March 22, 2021. Thad was the husband of Helen Kosiba for seventy-one years. He was born Thaddeus Francis Kucharski in Cleveland, Ohio on 8 September 1925 to Polish immigrants, Władysław (Walter) Kucharski and Paulina Demkowska, both born in Grudusk, Ciechanów, Poland.



Tad Kucharski
1944 Graduate of
South High School

Thad grew up in Cleveland on 3525 East 72nd Street and attended South High School where he served as Beacon, was part of the Victory Corps and played varsity Basketball. Upon his graduation in January 1944, he registered for the draft and legally changed his surname to Cooke. Thad served during World War II in the U.S. Army Air Corp and earned numerous European WWII theater ribbons. He was a proud member of the Polish American Cultural Center and the Cleveland Society of Poles and was recognized by the Polish American Congress (Ohio Division) for outstanding service to the Polish community and for his contribution in the observance of the 200th anniversary of the Polish Constitution Day (May 3, 1991).



The April edition of the Polish American Journal (p. 9) carries a fuller explanation of his many accomplishments. Thad's zealous pursuit to inform and motivate other Polish Americans to embrace their Polish heritage will not be forgotten. Until we meet again....

A Farewell to Leonard

We sadly say goodbye to our faithful PGSGC member and 50/50 raffle ticket grand marshal, Len Pryer. Leonard passed away on May 11, 2021. He was the husband of the late Hanna M. Pajzer who passed away in 2014 and father of Evonne.



Leonard Przyborowski
1948 Graduate of
East Tech High School

Len was born Leonard Przyborowski on 19 August 1930 in Cleveland, Ohio to Polish immigrants, Ignatius Przyborowski and Ewa Gulczynska. He grew up on 5503 Mound Avenue, attended St. Stanislaus Elementary School through 8th grade and then attended East Technical High School where he excelled on the Decathlon team and studied auto mechanics.



His career aspirations turned to teaching when he attended Kent State University and obtained his B.S. and Masters in Education. He taught English classes for a total of thirty-three years in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, at the U.S. Army base in Germany, and in the Brecksville-Broadview Heights School District. He enjoyed working with young adults and coached high school wrestling and track and taught driver's education class. Leonard stayed active by playing golf and handball and traveled all over the world during his lifetime. He was proud of his Polish heritage and supported several Polish organizations including being an active member of St. Mary's Polish National Catholic Church where he volunteered as a lector, parish board member, and tireless promoter of their Lenten Fish Fries.

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We will miss seeing Leonard at our monthly meetings where he would promote our 50/50 raffle while promising the grand prize of a Mercedes or Rolls Royce. Leonard is surely driving one of those around in heaven with a Polish pride bumper sticker.



What's Polish in the Historical Cleveland Plain Dealer?

“Patriotic Poles Recall Victory,” Cleveland Plain Dealer, 18 July 1910

“More than 20,000 Polish people thronged to Garfield Park yesterday morning to assist at solemn high mass celebrated on an outdoor altar and to revive the great battle of the fifteenth century when Poles and Lithuanians combined under King Vladislaus Jagiello to win their freedom from the Teutonic knights...No ceremony would be complete unless it were opened by a mass and Bishop Farrelly gave the Polish priests permission to carry the Holy Eucharist to Garfield Park...It is rarely that the Catholic church will sanction a solemn high mass out of doors in this country. It is said that yesterday's service was the second one of its kind ever held in the United States.”

“The great parade of fifteen divisions, in which more than 10,000 people figured, began at 9 o'clock in the morning, starting at Foreman-av., S.E. M.P. Kniola, 3692 E. 65th-st., was grand marshal and was assisted by twenty-four mounted deputies...All of the Polish uniformed societies of the city were in line. Then there were thousands of boys and girls dressed in quaint costumes and carrying flowers and flags, both American and Polish. There were several floats also, each depicting some phase in the Polish struggle for liberty...The great throng, after reaching the park went directly to the altar where mass was to be celebrated. Father Theobald Kalamaja of St. Stanislaus' church chanted the mass and the responses were made by a great choir, from all of Cleveland's Polish churches. At the elevation of the host 250 men fired a rifle salute.”

“It was on July 15, 1410, that the decisive battle between the combined forces of the Poles and Lithuanians and the Teutons met on the fields of Grunwald and Tannenberg...The battle is a historic one and the Slavs won easily, gaining their independence. Yesterday was the 500th anniversary.”



Galician units in the Battle of Grunwald between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Teutonic Knights
July 15, 1410.

Painting by Arthur Orlenov.

PATRIOTIC POLES RECALL VICTORY

Attend Outdoor Celebration
of Mass and Hold Big
Street Parade.

Children Attired in Native
Costumes Take
Part.

Cleveland played a big part in the celebration of the Polish day of freedom, which began at Cracow, the ancient capital of Poland, yesterday morning, and extended to every city and village in the world where a group of Polish people could be found.

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The Polish people, famed for their love of freedom, are staunch Roman Catholics. No ceremony would be complete unless it were opened by a mass and Bishop Farrelly gave the Polish priests permission to carry the Holy Eucharist to Garfield park and there celebrate mass, while thousands of men, women and children knelt on the grass under the trees. Thanks were given for the victory in the ancient battle which won freedom for the Polish nation, and prayers were given for the great land of the free—America—where so many of the Poles are again working out their destiny.

The solemn high mass was an impressive ceremony. All of the Polish clergy of the city took part in the service, which began at 10 o'clock. It is rarely that the Catholic church will sanction a solemn high mass out of doors in this country. It is said that yesterday's service was the second one of its kind ever held in the United States.

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It was on July 15, 1410, that the decisive battle between the combined forces of the Poles and Lithuanians and the Teutons met on the fields of Grunwald and Tannenberg. It was early in the thirteenth century that the Teutons gained admission to Poland, promising to guard the frontier of Poland against the Lithuanians. Then began a struggle by the Poles for national existence.

The Lithuanians and the Poles finally joined forces to safeguard the Slavic races against the Germans. The battle is a historic one and the Slavs won easily, gaining their independence. Yesterday was the 500th anniversary.

Among the speakers yesterday were Attorney Joseph F. Sawicki, Father Kalamaja, Father Victor Szyroeki, Father Plorowski, Father Dopko, Father Rebner, M. P. Kniola and P. Kurtyiel.



Getting Lost in Poland 2018....Part 8

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 10 Sunday May 6

Sunday is a "going to church" day. Attending mass in Poland is a faith booster for me. Being in a church with people who are devout, fervent and respectful kind of shames you into stepping up your game. We had breakfast and headed off to mass. We went to the new church in Gromnik. Stas and his daughter were there and Genia's son was there as well. We sat in the general vicinity of each other on the right hand side of the church. The first thing that catches your eye is the crucifix over the altar. It was horrific. Jesus was all out of proportion. His torso was emaciated but he had enormous, overly long, muscular arms and short muscular legs. I felt it was done in poor taste.

The pews were packed so close together (the church was full) that you couldn't kneel properly because your kneeler was so close to the pew in front of you that you would have to lean backwards just to kneel. So you knelt and sat on the edge of the pew. Kneelers were hardwood with no padding (still better than stone). When you go to mass, you are there for the duration and then some. Mass usually lasts the FULL hour then you stay after mass to say more prayers before you go and then when you leave church, you visit with friends, neighbors and family before going home. Oh, and you should arrive thirty minutes early to pray the rosary before mass.

As soon as mass started, I was already dreading going to communion. Back home, I always took the host in my hand., but not here. In Poland, everyone receives communion on their tongue. I hadn't done that in years and I always had a mini anxiety attack about receiving the host on my tongue. In theory, you could take the host in your hand, but once you see how sternly the priests look at you, that idea gets thrown out the window and out goes your tongue. When collection time came around, I dug out all of my change and started digging around for 3 zloty. I picked out a 2zł coin and started to look for a 1zł coin. Genia was watching me and put an elbow in my side and smiled at me to discourage me from putting more than 2 zloty the basket. I still threw in 3zł.

Mass was then over and we left. Outside, the church vendors set up tables selling bags of candy. From my understanding, your offering for the candy supposedly earned you an indulgence/forgiveness of sin. We went over to look at what was being offered and Genia wanted to buy some candy for me. I politely declined saying neither I nor my parents really ate candy. We left church and went touring. First, we drove through the valley leading towards Olszyny, the ancestral village of my great grandmother and Genia's mother. They were sisters. Genia pointed out all kinds of things and I was surprised to see how many new buildings had been built in the last four years.

We continued to Olpiny, to the cemetery, to visit the grave of my 2nd great grandparents, Genia's grandparents. I had been there before and always appreciated visiting their grave. This time, Genia took me to the graves of two other siblings of her mother. I already knew they were buried there because when I went to Poland in 1994, a relative, Edward Faracik, drove us through the countryside, brought us to this cemetery and showed us the same graves.

After paying our respects, we went to the cemetery in Gromnik. I had never been there before. It was situated on top of a hill and parking was at the bottom of the hill. After passing through the gate, the road went straight up the side of the hill. It was quite a hike but the views from the top were nice. You could see the old, wooden church in Gromnik and the new church as well. Fortunately, the old church was now a preserved monument.



Unfortunately, it was not really used anymore. I would have much preferred to have gone to church there this morning.

In this cemetery we visited Genia's husband's grave and his family's graves. After this, we went to one more cemetery to visit the graves of relatives of Genia's father. I don't recall where the cemetery was but it was newly built. I'll have to ask Genia's sister in Chicago the next time I talk to her.

We returned home after our cemetery visits and Genia wanted to take me on her Sunday walk around the property. First, we walked up the "road" to the top of the hill and took in the 360 degree panorama view of the area. Genia showed me her favorite view. We worked our way around the fields and back down the hill. Genia was pointing out good places to pick mushrooms as we walked along. Halfway down, we veered off the road and made our way past a neighbor's house which was abandoned. It was an old style wooden house with an underground root cellar. We did a little exploring on the property and Genia told me that the couple that lived in the house absolutely hated each another. One Sunday morning, Genia and her family went to meet the wife to go to church and found her bleeding profusely. They called a doctor but it was too late. She was already dead. They took her body to prepare it for the funeral and when they returned that evening, they found the husband dead. Unbelievable! The house has been vacant ever since.



From there, we followed the treeline around toward Genia's nephew's, Pawel's, house. We came across a little pathway that led into the woods and Genia pointed out an old WWI cemetery buried in the woods. I definitely wanted to check it out so we took a walk back to it. It wasn't big but it was really interesting. There was a short stone/concrete wall around it with a rusting iron fence on top of the wall. All the graves were from around 1917. You could tell it was being periodically maintained because it wasn't overgrown. While we were there, Genia told me that there was another WWI cemetery on top of the hill where we just were and that someone came a few

years earlier to find a grave there.

After looking around a bit more, we continued on our walk to Pawel's property. Pawel had a day job and he also farmed his property. I'm not sure how these people find the time. We passed by a small pond and Genia pointed and said "kianki". When I looked at the pond, there were a bunch of tadpoles swimming around, another word added to my vocabulary. We circled around some fields and I was looking at how they planted tomatoes, potatoes, cabbage, etc. Everything was planted on two-foot wide raised beds but the raised beds were created with a special attachment for a tractor. We also passed by her son-in-law's greenhouse. Genia explained he was growing 175 tomato plants inside. I had no idea what anyone would do with all of the tomatoes from 175 tomato plants. This ended our walk and we went back to Genia's house to rest for a bit.

At 4pm, we went over to Stas' house to celebrate his name day. If you buy a Polish calendar, every day will have the names that are celebrated that day. Like many things in Poland, a name day is another reason to drink vodka. True to form, a 1.75 liter bottle of a blend of spiritus and something else showed up on the table. Sixteen people



were packed, side by side, around a dining room table. It was a hot day and it was stifling in the room. The food started coming out as soon as we sat down. By the way, we had just eaten lunch at Genia's thirty minutes prior to the party. Then the shot glasses were passed around and filled and that started an afternoon and evening of eating, drinking and telling stories.

In one discussion, someone mentioned "osy miód" which literally meant wasp's honey. That confused me because wasps don't make honey so I asked what they were talking about. As it turned out, osy miód was slang for bimer, or moonshine.

Genia and Stas' sister from Chicago called because she wanted to wish Stas a happy name day and because she knew I was there. We spoke for a bit then I passed the phone around so she could have a chance to talk to everyone. After the last shot was finished and the bottle was empty, the party broke up and Genia and I headed back across the road. There we watched a cooking show that had children competing to cook the best dishes as demonstrated by a chef. Then it was time for bed.

Day 11 Monday May 7

I got up today with just a slight hangover. There was something to be said for the Polish style of drinking. A good belly full of food really helped the drink go down and minimized the pain the next day.

I sat down to breakfast with Genia and the girls. In most Polish homes and restaurants you have two choices of coffee, rozpuszczalna (instant) or fusiata (dregs). Instant coffee in Poland is quite good. I really don't like instant but don't mind drinking it in Poland at all. Fusiata, my favorite, is literally a heaping spoonful of finely ground coffee in a cup with boiling water poured on top. You let it sit for 5 minutes, stir it, and enjoy. Four years ago, I intently watched how this was made and have been making it at home ever since. This trip, I watched to see if I could find any refinements to how I was making it, like finer grind, quantity of coffee, etc. We had a salad that was quite tasty for breakfast but it was loaded with small cocktail onions. I like onions but this was over the top. We had this same salad for obiad (dinner) the day before so I knew to scale back my helping while trying to be polite.

It was obvious that I put Genia's son, Daniel, and his wife out of their bedroom by staying with them. They slept on the fold out couch in the living room while I used their bedroom during my visit. I felt bad. If I would have known, I would have fought to sleep on the couch.

It was Monday, so Genia had to get the girls ready for school. This was like a cat herding rodeo. One girl wanted to wear the other girl's jacket but the other girl didn't want to share. The younger girl wanted her hair in a pony tail because her sister had a pony tail. There was a lot of drama. I'm not sure how much of that I caused by being there but dealing with that everyday would have put my patience at its limits. Eventually, everything was situated and out the door they went with their backpacks in tow. Now that it was calm, I had an opportunity to give Genia her gifts and to say my goodbyes.



As I was packing the car, Genia came running out of the basement with something in her hands. She had three beautiful handmade Christmas ornaments to give me as a gift. I was shocked by how nicely made they were. I put them in a safe place in the car already wondering how I was going to pack them and get them home. I said my final goodbyes and saw Stas and his family out on their patio enjoying coffee. I ran over to their house to say goodbye to everyone there as well and sadly made my way back to my car. It was always hard leaving family there. But, after 1-2 days with relatives and their overwhelming hospitality, it just felt like it was time to move on.



After programming my GPS for the address of the blok for my next family visit with the Olbrych's, I set off down the hill to the main road for an uneventful, half-hour drive to Gorlice. My *Tom Tom* got me to the complex of bloks then I started to look for a parking place from which I could try to locate the correct building. I was supposed to call Gosia when I arrived but I didn't have cell service so I went old school again. Once I parked, I got out and began looking for the building number that matched Gosia's address. When I found the building, I started walking past the various entrances to the building. By the entrance they typically listed the flat numbers that you could access from that door. I found the right door but it was locked. As I was looking for a buzzer, a man walked up to me and asked what I wanted. I told him who I was looking for and the address. He said he would let me in and show me how to get to the flat. Amazing!

I found the flat and rang the doorbell. Gosia answered the door and looked at me weird so I said "Ben jestem." She just smiled and started shaking her head in disbelief. I was invited in and the whirl wind began. I had no idea what I was in store for that day. First, we needed to move my car to a parking spot that wouldn't obstruct anyone and get my roller bag. With that situated, we went back to her flat and she showed me my room. Then, we went to the kitchen.

I had just finished eating breakfast an hour earlier and here I was sitting down at the kitchen table being served coffee and cakes. Today was going to test my fortitude with gluttony. This woman was a dynamo. She told me she was 60 years old and was planning to retire next year. I had a hard time believing she was sixty. Once she figured out that my Polish was decent, it was "Katie bar the door," non-stop, rapid-fire conversation. Who am I? What am I all about? Here are our plans for the day. This is my background and the extended Olbrych family. My head was already spinning and I just met her thirty minutes earlier. As I was eating cakes and drinking coffee, she was preparing lunch for us at noon. She was prepping potatoes, putting a pork roast in the oven, etc. This got stored away in the back of my mind.

Once obiad (dinner) was cooking, she cleaned up and we headed out on a short walking tour of Gorlice. It was a much nicer town than I remembered. I didn't recall the last time I was in Gorlice. It was maybe in the year 2001. But I did remember visiting some Kmon relatives that lived there. This time I had a chance to see the rynek, walk around some of the pedestrianized streets, visit the main church which was also Gosia's church and check out some historical buildings. Of course, we had to stop for lody (ice cream) during our tour. The upcoming noon lunch was still fresh in my memory. So we sat in a café and each had a bowl of ice cream. There was no point in even trying to pay. My relationship with Gosia wasn't at a place where I could even consider getting away with paying. After our lody, we slowly walked back to the flat. Gorlice was built on a cliff overlooking a valley. On our way into town, we took the high road. On our way home, we took the low road at the base of the cliff. These were two interesting perspectives.



When we got back to the flat we returned to the kitchen and Gosia started to set the table. Then she poured us some black currant juice made from homemade black currant concentrate. She explained that her husband was responsible for making the concentrate. I made a mental note to get the recipe. It was time for obiad! Yea! We got to eat again! Gosia served me a big piece of pork roast with a pile of roasted potatoes. I somehow managed to eat this but I was at a point of discomfort. While we were eating, Gosia called her Uncle Andrzej Olbrych to ask if we could stop by for a visit. I overheard directions that included, "next to the green building." I started to wonder if she ever visited this guy before. With that arranged, we cleaned up the kitchen. She left the leftovers out so her husband could eat when he arrived home. It was time to go to her uncle's house.



Gosia was going to drive so we walked to her garage which, as was very typical of people who lived in bloks, was one of many of a long row of tin buildings much like rentable storage facilities in the U.S. The trip was short and we found the complex of bloks in which her uncle lived. Neither of us saw a green building but, as we drove further into the complex, we finally found it after rounding a corner. Her uncle's blok was right next to the green one. Once we parked, I asked "Is this the first time you are visiting your uncle?" She said it was the first time she had ever been to his flat and started laughing. We went to the door and he buzzed us in. He and his wife met us at the door of their flat and welcomed us. Andrzej was looking at me intently and tentatively. After entering, we sat on a couch and Andrzej silently stared at me. It was like I was a martian that dropped out of the sky into his living room. When I started talking to him in Polish, he finally relaxed. He told Gosia and I that he was unsure and afraid of how he was going to communicate with me. Gosia told him that I spoke Polish well and understood almost everything. (Sometimes, I don't catch everything but it's easy enough to work around.) The whole mood lightened.

We moved over to the dining room table and the obligatory cookies and coffee came out. It was less than a half-hour since I last ate so I had a snack. God knows I may not have had dinner for another whole hour and I didn't want to starve. We started chatting about ourselves and getting acquainted. The conversation turned to our common Olbrych ancestry and Andrzej brought out a document which was basically a loan statement drawn up between my 3rd great grandfather, his daughter (my 2nd great grandmother) and her husband. It appeared the loan was starter money after their wedding. I immediately photographed the document. Then, Andrzej brought out four rectangles of thin cardboard. After he set them down on the table, you could see that they each comprised a section of a hand-drawn family tree (literally a tree) for the Olbrych family. It was dated 1945. Again, I immediately photographed this documentation. The third document was a land purchase agreement between the Olbrych and Wszolek families. I was rather blown away after seeing these documents. Andrzej gathered up these documents and went off. I assumed he was putting them away. Andrzej's wife, Gosia and I continued to talk and a short while later Andrzej came back with photo copies of the documents for me. What a nice present! As I realized later, this tree helped me tie together our relatives from Youngstown, Ohio to our family.

Gosia and I now prepared to go to her mother's house. It turned out Gosia talked her uncle and his wife into coming along. It was a short drive to the village of Raclawice and we found ourselves at the same house I visited with my parents for the first time four years earlier. At that time, we had no idea where to go or even who we were going to meet other than it was an extended relative. Anna from Znin told us to stop at the small store at the border between Roznowice and Raclawice to ask where Helen Dutka's house was. That initial visit led to a renewed relationship between our families and this subsequent visit.

Helen was waiting for us with a huge grin on her face. She was so happy to see us. We went straight to the dining room and sat down around a large table. At first we spent some time getting caught up. Helen sat next to me and kept rubbing my back with her hand and smiling at me. She was physically deteriorating and walked with a cane. Her short term memory was also fading but she could remember sixty years ago like it just happened. She talked the entire time telling stories about so many different family members. It was making my head spin.

Back home, I had an old picture of a husband, a wife and a young boy. There was a small piece of paper on which I wrote "FIRSZT." My grandmother knew the family's name but could not place the relationship when I asked her about it many years ago. I had found it in a pile of "unknown" pictures in a pile on my floor and had it setting on my portable dishwasher while I was debating what to do with it. While talking with Helen, she mentioned the name "Firszt" and my ears perked up. I started asking questions and jotted down some notes. It turned out the husband in the photo was Jan Firszt and the wife was Ludwika Olbrych. Woo hoo! It was another lead to follow up on when I got home.

As we were chatting, plates appeared on the table followed by cakes and coffee. Ugh, I just had coffee and cookies 45 minutes ago. Not long after the cake, there came a full meal. I think I turned a light shade of green when more food showed up. I really tried to, discretely, not take any food. My stomach wanted nothing to do with it. Now, I



was seriously concerned that I might be ill. Gosia leaned over and told me that I had to eat otherwise people would be upset. Somehow, somehow, I found my culinary fortitude and some hidden room in my hollow leg and consumed a full plate of food.



By the grace of God, after we finished eating, Gosia said to me that we should go to the cemetery while it was still light. We stopped at the old wooden church in Roznowice to check on the progress of the restoration. From the outside, it didn't look like it had changed much in the last four years. Everything was locked up so we couldn't see the interior but Gosia said it wasn't complete. This church, much like the one in Gromnik, wasn't used anymore since a new church was built. However, it was being preserved as a historical monument. The cemetery was just down the street and we walked around a bit before finding Helena's father's grave. He was buried between his first and second wives. In 1994, I visited this area looking for Olbrych family and was told to visit a house which was situated

way back in a field far from the road with only a walking path leading to it. I took a picture, at that time, of the old woman who lived there. When I showed Helena the picture, she lit up and said that was her father's second wife. Finally, I knew who that lady was from so many years ago.

Dusk was settling in and we headed back to Helena's house. We visited just a bit longer then said our goodbyes with hugs and kisses. Helena was still smiling from ear to ear making it hard to be sad when we left. I wondered if I would ever see her again. We dropped Andrzej and his wife off at their blok and went back to Gosia's. Her husband was home from work. We sat down and had a beer (and snacks!) and talked. Her husband, Zygmunt, designed boring equipment for the mining and oil industries. He showed me some of the blueprints of the types of equipment he designed. I gave them my gifts that evening. While we continued to talk, Zygmunt recommended that I visit a WWI cemetery nearby. He gave me the name of it and the town it was in so I could find it. Based on his description and the pictures he showed me, it looked like an interesting short stop. Tomorrow was going to be a light day so I thought I'd try to fit it in. That's when I got the speech that one day was not an adequate visit and the next time I came, I needed to plan for 2-3 days with them. I wasn't sure I could handle three days like today. This absolute whirlwind of a day finally came to an end. I showered and went to bed exhausted.



Schedule of Presentations for Upcoming Meetings

Sep: ***Navigating Autosomal DNA Results and Contacting Matches***

Robert Sliwinski discusses ways to navigate match results for three companies and methods to contact matches.

Oct: ***TBD***

Nov: ***TBD***

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