

Our Polish ANCESTORS

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The Roots of the Forest City Family

By Trina Goss Galauner

Nearly a century ago, the Ratowczer family said goodbye to their Polish homeland seeking refuge from revolution and Jewish persecution. Had they not left Poland when they did, a bit of Cleveland would not be what it is today and the Ratowczer family tree could be quite different. Their story begins in Białystok, Grodno, Poland during the time of Russian occupation.



Leiser, Chaja, Meyer, Osher and Dobe in 1908 from "The Ratner House"

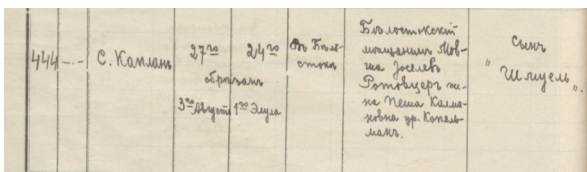
The village of Białystok was established in the early 1400s. Jewish families started to settle around the area in the mid 1600s.

When the city of Białystok was chartered in 1691, the growing Jewish population around the region was encouraged to move into the town where they were provided housing, shops and a synagogue. By the late 1800s, Białystok was a thriving industrial city of textile mills, food processing plants and other mid-size factories with a predominantly Jewish population.

Mowsza (Moishe) Joselewicz Ratowczer married eighteen year old Pesa (Pesha) Abramowna Kopelman in Białystok on July 7, 1891. Moishe had a young daughter named Frieda from his first wife, Szejna (Sheyna) Gringauz, who had died during childbirth. Moishe and Pesha's first son, Kalman, was born in 1893. Then followed Leiser in 1896, Dobe in 1898, Szmujel (called Osher) in 1901 and Chaja in 1904. Moishe owned a small textile mill in Białystok and the family lived comfortably in their home at 4 Czysta at the corner of Polna Street.

With the growing industrialization of Białystok, Jewish workers organized a labor group called the Białystok Bund in 1897 and it became a political force in the mostly Jewish community. But Czarist rule did not approve of the Bund's labor activities and initiated a series of pogroms against the Jewish population. The worst of these was in June of 1906 which resulted in around 100 deaths in the Jewish community of Białystok.

At that point, Moishe decided to send his oldest daughter, Frieda, who had turned 18, to the United States. She arrived on August 25, 1906 and went to stay with her uncle, David Levin in New York.



1901 birth record for Szmujel Ratowczer who goes by the name, Osher Ratowczer, later Harry Ratner

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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 Anthonette Baciak at arbaciak@aol.com for more information.



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Letter from the President

Welcome to 2019 and a new year of Polish genealogical research! The PGSGC had their yearly election of officers and I'm proud to say I am returning as president for a 2nd term. By my side, also returning, are Anthonette Baciak (vice president), Lucia Dominak (secretary) and Ben Kman (treasurer). I thank the many other volunteers that also help us run the PGSGC.

Just a reminder, if you haven't already paid your membership dues for 2019, you are overdue. This could be your last newsletter. If you aren't sure if your membership is current, please contact Anthonette at 440-236-1218 or arbaciak@aol.com. Dues are still \$24 annually.



Many of us may have reached the point where we feel that we can go no further in our genealogical efforts to trace our Polish ancestors. We call this the "brick wall". Patience and time will win out in this battle if we simply stand back a bit and review what we have. We may notice some facts that were originally passed over thinking them irrelevant. This is "collateral" data which sometimes hides facts within plain view.

When I started my Krajczynski family search, I was happy to find out about my grandparents who I had never met. After 5-6 years, I am now trying to pinpoint the birth, marriage and deaths of my 4th great grandparents, Antoni and Wiktorya Krajczynski. They lived and died in the villages around Sochocin, Poland. After diligent searching of the internet and writing to Poland, I now have the actual documents relating to their children's lives. The records, dating back to about 1750, are very washed out due to age and storage conditions but, with continued effort, I feel that I will someday succeed in completing my story about Antoni and Wiktorya. Who would have thought?

When you go to your genealogy meetings, take written notes, ask questions and discuss your "brick wall" with your fellow researchers. They may have stumbled through some of the very same problems you are now experiencing. For our distant members, please let us know what we can do to help you find your ancestors and to help you climb over your "brick wall". Don't give up the ship!

Ron

Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland

c/o St. Mary's PNC Church

1901 Wexford Ave.

Parma, Ohio 44134

www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ohpgsgc/



Officers:

President:	Ron Kraine	9810 Greenhaven Pkwy., Brecksville, Ohio 44141	(440) 838-5743	ronkraine@aol.com
V. President:	Anthonette Baciak	27380 Cook Rd. #115, Olmsted Falls, OH 44138	(440) 236-1218	arbaciak@aol.com
Treasurer:	Ben Kman	170 Bellus Rd., Hinckley, Ohio 44233	(216) 469-9670	ben_kman@hotmail.com
Secretary:	Lucia Dominak	6624 Rockledge Drive, Brecksville, Ohio 44141	(440) 655-6585	gkneeolog@aol.com



Polish by Heart - My Father's Stories Refugees to America

By *Walter Urbanek*

So Monika Urbanek, sixteen, married just two or three months prior, had to sell the horse and the few cows the couple owned in order to reunite with her husband in far-away America. She brought Jan's clothes in a suitcase because he had left without them. She was sea sick the entire voyage. It seems she was pregnant with their first child. Monika traveled with her sister Marya Ras, who had previously been in America.

In Antwerp, Belgium, the two women boarded the steamship *Zeeland* on April 24, 1909. The manifest shows that they arrived in New York City on May 4, 1909. Their identities are confirmed since they both listed Wojciech Pelczarski as their father. Their intended destination is given as with Jan Urbanek and Ludwika Pelczarska, husband and sister respectively, in Newmarket, NH.

Ludwika Pelczarska immigrated, according to the 1910 U.S. Census, in 1906. Marya (Pelczarska) Ras, according to the same source, originally came in 1896. Their two other siblings to immigrate were Franciszek Piotr Pelczarski of Providence, RI and Jan Michal Pelczarski of Chicago, IL.

Monika and Jan Urbanek were reunited in Newmarket, New Hampshire. They first lived on Nichols Avenue as boarders in a nearby building to Monika's sisters, Ludwika and Marya (Pelczarska) Ras.

It is not clear where Marya Ras's husband, Joseph Ras resided during this period. Joseph Ras was one of the many Poles who had earlier fled their homeland looking for a better future. He appears to have immigrated from Austrian-Poland as a single man in 1893 at the age of 22.

Newmarket, NH was one of many mill towns along the fall-line between the highlands and coastal plain where water power was convenient and abundant. The main street had a city hall, a library and only a few stores. Delivery wagons were still horse drawn. There was an influx of immigrants to operate the machinery. The Newmarket Manufacturing Company dominated the town's waterfront and economy with seven textile mills harnessing water power at the falls. The company operated both cotton and silk looms. It built numerous support structures, including multi-family housing for workers. The company built dams upriver and, during drought, the company could

release a regulated flow of water from the dams into the Lamprey River to run the works. (The company would close and move to Massachusetts in 1929 following a labor dispute.) The main weaving room was advertised as the "single largest room in the world".



Main Weaving Room at the Newmarket Manufacturing Company ca. 1912

Ludwika Pelczarska, Marya (Pelczarska) Ras, Jan, and perhaps, for a short time, Monika, found work as cotton and silk weavers in the Newmarket Manufacturing Company's factory. Weaving had been well known at home in Poland. Dad suspects that the silk was needed for the war to make containers for gun powder used in artillery shells.

It was here in Newmarket that all Monika and Jan's American children were born: Mary (Prajzner) (b.1909), Frank (b.1911), Joseph (b.1913), and my father, Stanley (b.1915). The children were registered



with the American spellings of their first names, except for “Stanley” who was registered with the Polish spelling of “Stanisław”.

With this growing family, the Urbanek’s became boarders in an eight-unit factory-provided housing unit on Spring Street in Newmarket. Next door to them lived Julia (the Ras’s 21 year-old daughter) and her new husband, Andrew Pelczar, both also weavers in the mill. Monika and Jan, along with three of their children were photographed in Julia and Andrew Pelczar’s group wedding photo on February 3, 1919. Stanley was too little, so he was left at home.



Mill workers like Jan worked a six-day week, although they were given off Saturday afternoons. The family used this time to get every-

thing in order for Sunday. As a boy of four or five years, Stanley remembers going to church on Sundays in a big building, one so large that from the outside the windows were too high to look inside. He remembers being given a penny to put in the collection basket, putting his hand inside the basket, and then withdrawing it to hide the penny for later. (In adulthood, he returned to Newmarket with his brother, Joe, and still feeling guilty for that childish prank, Stanley emptied his pockets of all change in restitution.)

Marya and Joseph Ras owned a farm on the outskirts of town that Jan, Monika and the children would visit on Sunday afternoons. The property had high-bush blueberries. It seems that in America even the blueberry bushes were huge, not like back in Poland where you had to stoop to pick from blueberry bushes.

The family did not speak much English in Newmarket. There was no need to. In the factory where so many immigrants worked, one could do just fine with the language of the old country. Monika loved to go to English-speaking movies. The movies of Charlie Chaplin were among her favorites. Jan took to calling Frank, Joe and Stanley, “the boys” in English. But overall their use of the language was minimal, although Stanley remembers his father cutting his hair with the English admonition, “Keep still!” Stanley had no formal schooling in English at all.

In 1914, a conflict in Europe had opened with the Austro-Hungarian invasion of Serbia, followed by the German invasion of Belgium, Luxembourg and France, and a Russian attack against Germany. In the east, the Russian army successfully fought against the Austro-Hungarian forces but was forced back from East Prussia and (the former) Poland by the German army. During what was to be called the “Great War”, Krosno suffered major devastation. The inhabitants of the town, bombed and looted several times, suffered both from the Austrian and Russian troops. The Great War ended in an armistice on November 11, 1918. Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States at the war’s end, made as one of his Fourteen Points, a free and independent Poland, out of the ruins of the remnants of the defeated Austro-Hungarian Empire and Germany.

So in 1918, for the first time since 1795, Poland became an independent nation. Leadership of Poland fell to the military and Marshal Jozef Piłsudski. Czarist Russia was also one of the casualties of World War I. Following the Russian Revolution, the Communist Party pulled Russia out of the conflict against Germany and Austria. But in 1919, immediately after the armistice, Poland and the Soviet Union became locked in combat over the border between them. The Polish-Soviet Union War came to a crisis in August 1920. The war was nearly over by late



1920 when Poland beat back the Red Army into the Ukraine. The prospect of peace in Eastern Europe finally seemed to be at hand.

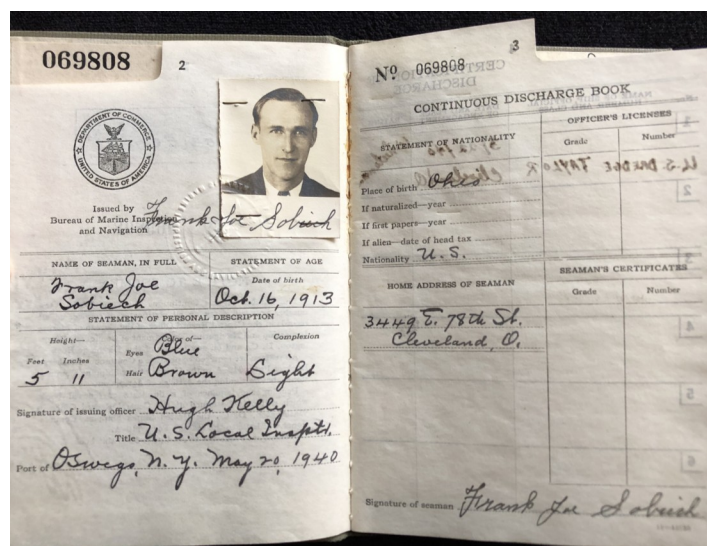
In 1919, Jan's father, Franciszek Urbanek, died at age 70. Both Franciszek's wives had predeceased him as did two of his remaining children, Ludwika, in a house fire and Emilia, of cancer. Jan inherited Franciszek's farm. There had been good money to earn in America and eventually the family was able to accumulate some savings. Jan, eager to return to farming as factory work did not suit him, decided that their future would be in the new Poland. Monika wanted to stay in America but agreed to the return to the old country.

In the 1920 census the entire family is listed as living at 210 Spring St. (The census worker misspelled our last name as "Urvanet".) That November, Jan Urbanek's family set out once again to cross an ocean for a new life. They travelled from New York City to Amsterdam on the steam ship *Susquehanna*, much-used during the recent war. It creaked and rattled a lot. When a large wave washed over Stanley, he remembers being very scared.

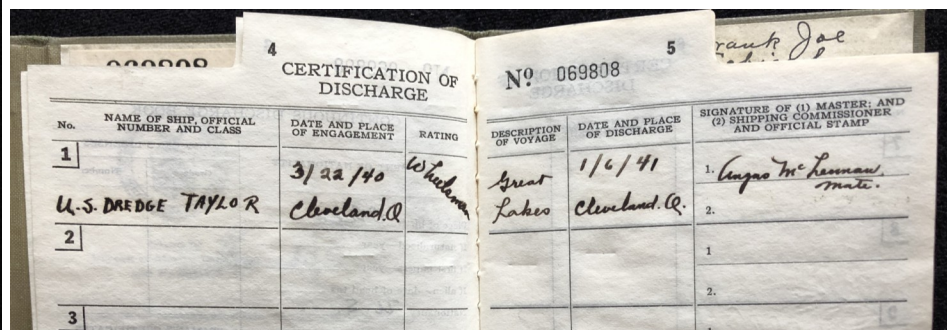
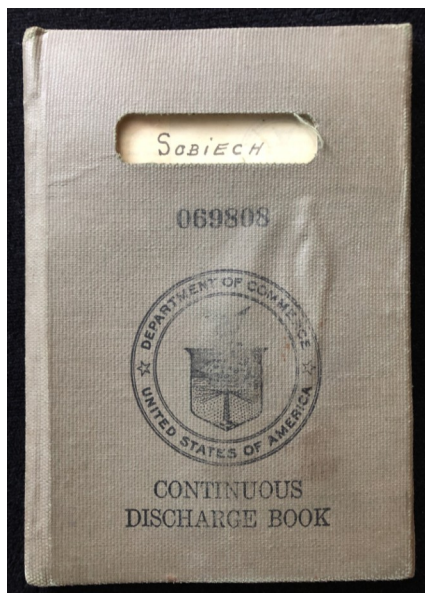
The preceding is an excerpt from "Polish by Heart - My Father's Stories" by Walter Urbanek reprinted with his permission. His full manuscript is available to read on the Polish Origins forum at <https://forum.polishorigins.com/viewtopic.php?p=18367>.

Polish Family Heirlooms

This Continuous Discharge Book is in the ancestral collection of Trina Goss Galauer. They belonged to her grandfather, Frank J. Sobiech, who served in the U.S. Navy from February 24, 1933 until he received honorable discharge on October 16, 1936. When he enlisted as an apprentice seaman, his intention was to make a career out of seafaring. While in the service, he traveled to the Far East and was promoted up to Signalmen 3rd Class. After he was discharged, he spent some time at home, got married and then in March of 1940 was accepted for an assignment aboard the U.S. Dredge Taylor. Every seaman upon a merchant vessel of the United States carried his



Continuous Discharge Book. Upon the discharge of the seaman and payment of his wages, the shipping commissioner entered into the book the name of the vessel, nature of the voyage, the class of the vessel, the date and place of the shipment and the date of discharge of the seaman. In Frank's case, he only served as a merchant seaman for a short time, being discharged on January 6, 1941. After his tour on the U.S. Dredge Taylor he decided to find a career that would keep him near home. Eight months later, he became a father.





The Roots of the Forest City Family continued from page 1.....

Kalman, the eldest son of Moische and Pesha, found himself caught up in the revolutionary movement. At the time, many employees at the Ratowczer mill were revolutionaries. Kalman, only 13 years old at the time, got himself in trouble with the Czarist police when they discovered he was transporting ammunition and anarchist propaganda between factories. To escape being deported to Siberia, Kalman was smuggled out of Poland and put on a ship to the United States arriving on the SS America at the port of New York on February 9, 1907. He had traveled under the guise that he was a 16 year old weaver by trade. He was detained at Ellis Island, possibly because of his age discrepancy, and later discharged under the



Pesha, Moische and Kalman in 1906 from "The Ratner House"

protection of his aunt, Shifran (Sophie) Levin, the wife of David Levin, who had taken in Frieda the previous year. A family story indicated that he spent three weeks sleeping in Hester Park on the Lower East Side in New York making money by singing Yiddish songs on the street. Whether or not that is true, eventually, Kalman was living with his uncle, Aaron Weiner, in Manhattan under the name Charles Weiner and working at a cloak shop. Sometime in late 1910 or 1911 Kalman made his way to Cleveland, Ohio where he probably stayed with his sister, Frieda, who by this time had married Charles Isenstadt.

RECORD OF DETAINED ALIENS									
S. S.		American		arrived		19		M.	
				from				No. 118	
No.	NAME OF CONTINENT	Age	Sex	Color of Hair	Color of Eyes	Complexion	Height	Weight	Remarks
81	Rehovek Tolman	34	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
82	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
83	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
84	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
85	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
86	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
87	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
88	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
89	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
90	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
91	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
92	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
93	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
94	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
95	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
96	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
97	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
98	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
99	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do
100	Do	35	M	1	Do	Do	5-10	150	Do

Kallman Ratowczer's passenger arrival record in 1907 Record of Detained Aliens on the SS America

Back in Bialystok, Meyer was born in 1907 and twins, Josel and Faiga were born in 1911. Conditions for the Jewish people continued to deteriorate in Bialystok. Labor disputes, political turmoil and civil unrest ruled the day. The Ratowczer's managed to avoid conflict during World War I but revolutionary fervor increased when the war ended and the Polish-Soviet War began.

When the Communists occupied Bialystok they seized the Ratowczer textile mill and the family was left with no means to survive. Fearing for the welfare of his family, Kalman applied for a 6 month passport to visit his family and arrange for their passage to the U.S. According to a Cleveland Plain Dealer report, "Kallman returned to Bialystok in military dress...decorated with stripes and service ribbons. His hand was enhanced by the poker winnings." But these were very dangerous times and Kalman would need to find a way to escape with his family.

The two older boys, Leiser and Osher, were of military conscription age so could not leave Poland legally. Kalman,



Leiser, Osher, Dobe and Chaja decided to try to escape Poland by disguising themselves as cattle herders so they could cross the border into Germany. They made it to Danzig where Leiser and Osher had fake German passports made but they were refused by the American consul. Kalman negotiated with the consul and they were given American visas. The Consul was a free mason and so was Kalman. The two brothers left Danzig, traveled to Southampton, England and arrived in New York on the SS Aquitania on October 30, 1920.

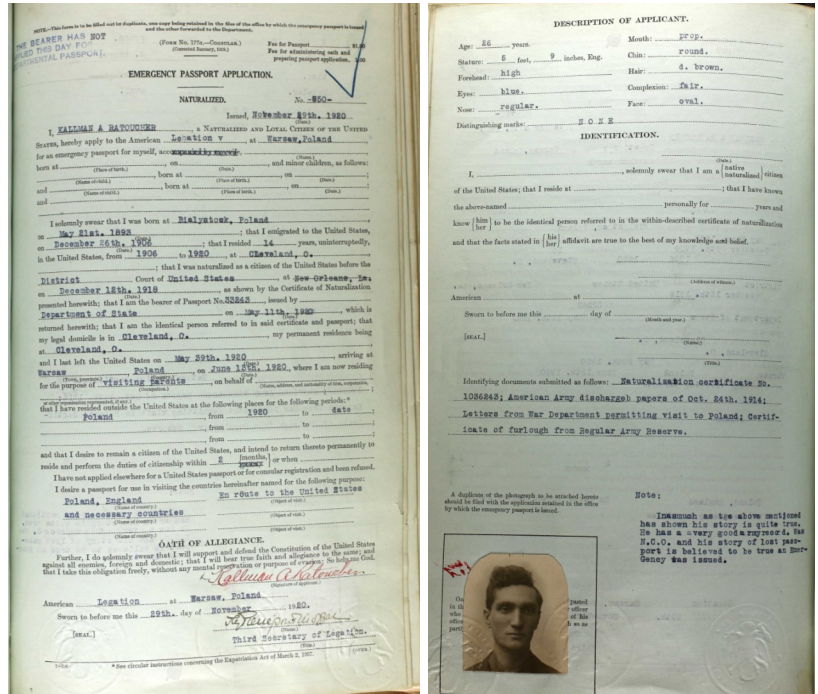
Soon after Leiser and Osher left, the Polish/Soviet War ended and Białystok was part of Poland again. While Kalman was making arrangements to transport the remainder of his family, he lost his passport and had to file for an emergency passport at the American Legation in Warsaw. Moishe sold the remainder of his weaving equipment to pay for his family's train and steamship tickets.

They traveled by train from Warsaw to Danzig, boarded a steamer to Hull, and traveled by train to Southampton where they would catch the SS Caronia for the long journey across the Atlantic. Throughout the journey, Pesha and Josel were very ill. Kalman, now able to wear his American soldier's uniform again, used his influence to get his mother and brother medical care onboard the ship. They had left Southampton on December 21, 1920 and arrived in New York on New Year's Eve. After arriving in New York, they traveled by train to Cleveland and settled in an apartment on Morison Avenue near East 105th Street. Sadly, Josel never recovered from his illness aboard the ship and died a few weeks later.

At first, the family members worked at odd jobs, drawing on their experience in the textile trade, while the parents retired. They Americanized their first names. Kalman became Charles, Leiser became Leonard, Dobe became Dora, Osher became Harry, Chaja became Irene, Meyer became Max and Feign became Fanny. Charles and Leonard started working for their cousin's husband, George Sogg (aka Soglovitz), in his lumberyard. In July 1921, Leonard purchased a creamery on East 105th Street which he operated with Irene and Harry. Later in November, Charles, with partner Max Harris, started a lumberyard which was named Forest City Material Company. The family legally changed their name to Ratner in December of 1921.

In 1923, Ratner Creamery purchased a second store on Parkwood Drive which Dora and Max managed. Using the family's proceeds from the creamery, Leonard opened Buckeye Lumberyard on St. Clair Avenue in 1924. Charles bought out his partner in 1925 and Forest City Material became a family business. Max worked at Forest City full time while attending law school in the evenings. The rest of the family continued with the creameries until 1926 when they were sold in order to concentrate on the lumber business. Harry started St. Clair Coal and Supply Company with Charles Bernstein, who was the brother of Charles' wife, Mathilda, and Leonard's wife, Lillian.

Charles sold his interest in Forest City Material to his brothers Leonard and Max in 1929 intending to retire in Arizona. Unfortunately, Charles' lost on his investments during the stock market crash of 1929. Afterward, he moved to Miami Beach, Florida where, with a partner, he started another lumber business, Miami Millwork & Lumber Company.



Kalman's Emergency Passport Application



When Max graduated from law school, Leonard turned over the lumberyard to him and established B. & F. Building Company. B. & F. specialized in constructing 3-bedroom homes on the eastside of Cleveland. In 1934, Leonard rejoined Forest City Material, with his newfound knowledge of the residential construction industry.

As Miami Beach expanded, Charles' lumber business did and in 1938 he had the Hotel Clevelander built in the budding resort town. But, Charles' success in Florida was short lived as he died unexpectedly in 1939 after an operation for a gastric ulcer. In 1940, both Moishe and Pesha passed away within months of each other.

The Ratners were key developers of some of the largest suburbs of Cleveland throughout the 1940s and 1950s. They expanded to commercial development and opened the Forest City Lumber retail store for the do-it-yourself market. By 1960, all the family's interests were consolidated into Forest City Enterprises, Inc. which grew into a multi-million dollar corporation.

Being in ill health for several years, Harry suffered a fatal heart attack and died in 1961 at the age of 56. In 1974, Leonard went to Florida to recuperate from a long illness where he died that December just ten days after the death of his sister, Irene. Dora, passed away in 1976.

The Forest City conglomerate eventually built, owned, and managed shopping malls, office and industrial buildings, hotels and apartment complexes all over the United States. Forest City acquired the Terminal Tower complex in 1980 and, over the next ten years, developed it into the Tower City Center which revitalized downtown Cleveland. By 1993, Forest City Enterprises had come to own over \$2 billion in real estate. The Ratners continued to make an indelible mark on Cleveland.

The last surviving brother of the Forest City Ratners, Max, served as Forest City's president from 1929 until 1975 and then as chairman of the board from 1975 until his death in 1995.

Forest City always maintained its headquarters in Cleveland, despite temptations to move elsewhere. Throughout their many years of business success, the Ratners always remained humble, and gave back to the community quietly supporting charities, human services and educational organizations and extending financial aid through scholarships. Leonard contributed enormously to the building of the Park Synagogue in Cleveland Heights. The Ratners gave substantial donations to Jewish causes, much of their charity anonymous.

Just recently, Forest City was acquired by Brookfield Asset Management. The Forest City family business had come to an end but not without leaving a legacy of entrepreneurial spirit, community leadership and philanthropy. As dean of Cleveland-Marshall College of Law at Cleveland State University, Lee Fisher, wrote recently, "They laid the foundation for Cleveland's continuing renaissance. Forest City's fingerprints on Greater Cleveland will never fade."

ADDITIONAL READING:

Campbell, W. Joseph, "The Ratner story: Refugees to riches," *The Plain Dealer*, June 8, 1980.

Bullard, Stan, "The Ratners: Family rooted in growth," *Crain's Cleveland Business*, May 16, 2005.

Ratner, Lizzy, "Nobody Wanted to Take Us In: The Story of Jared Kushner's Family, and Mine," *The Nation*, January 26, 2017.

Izchaki, Szmuel, "Max Ratner – A Bialystoker with a heart," *JewishGen*, <https://www.jewishgen.org/>

Tanzer, Shirley Blue and Jean Kendall Glazer, "The Ratner House," 1988.

Fisher, Lee, "An open thank-you letter to Forest City," *Cleveland Jewish News*, February 20, 2019.



Polish Cuisine on Milwaukee in Chicago

By Trina Goss Galauner

Thirty years ago my husband and I, then dating, visited Chicago in the late winter and I remember dining at a good old Polish restaurant on Milwaukee Avenue on a Sunday afternoon. As I recall, it had a Polish name and delicious, home-cooked Polish fare in the warmth of a family restaurant. My remembrance is that we drove south on Milwaukee Avenue, through the old Polish neighborhood, and found it there. Well, memories are not always accurate.

A few weeks ago we found ourselves visiting Chicago for our son's hockey tournament. Chicago was just as cold and snowy this trip as it was thirty years ago. We were staying at a hotel downtown and traveling up north to Loyola Academy for a team mass on Sunday. Realizing we could drive back from mass down Milwaukee Avenue, I decided to try to find the old restaurant we visited thirty years ago.

"Staropolska Restaurant, that name is familiar. That has to be it!", I thought. It was located at 3030 Milwaukee Avenue right in the heart of the Polish neighborhood, in an area near Logan Square. We decided to stop there for lunch.



Party room at Staropolska Restaurant, Chicago

The menu at Staropolska was filled with authentic Polish cuisine which included barszcz (red beetroot soup) and grzybowa (mushroom soup), as well as, gołąbki (stuffed cabbage), kielbasa z kapusta (Polish sausage and sauerkraut) and, of course, pierogi of several varieties including ruskie (potato and cheese), kapusta z grzybami (sauerkraut and mushroom) and mięsem (meat). There was also an appetizer, śliwka zawijana w boczek (plums rolled in bacon), which I wish I would have ordered.

I couldn't decide between the pierogi ruskie and the gołąbki so the

Upon arrival, we realized this was not the place we remembered. Staropolska Restaurant is decorated like a hunting lodge with painted murals of the old country, wrought iron fixtures, and iron pots and pans hanging off the beams. There is a party room with décor that gives the feeling of living among 18th century nobility. The VIP room, a small alcove for parties of 6 or 8, contains a fireplace.



VIP room at Staropolska Restaurant, Chicago



Gołąbki side dish and pierogi ruskie at Staropolska Restaurant

waitress, who had a heavily accented voice, was kind enough to find me a small stuffed cabbage to add as a side dish so I could get a taste of both. Imagine, a stuffed cabbage as a side dish!

I found the pierogi ruskie and the gołąbki a bit different from what I was expecting. I quickly realized, this was real Polish food not the Polish American version I grew up with. However, the food had a fresh, homemade taste and the ambiance was like I was sitting in a fine restaurant in Krakow. I would highly recommend it!

When we returned home, I kept thinking, "Why wasn't this restaurant what I remembered? I pulled out some old photographs from thirty years ago and found a picture of a building with an ad for Staropolska Restaurant. That's why the name seemed so familiar! Then it started to come back to me. The restaurant we visited on a Sunday afternoon many years ago had a Polish buffet and that is what lured me in. Doing some digging on the internet, I found that another restaurant called Staropolska, that was located at 5249 W. Belmont Avenue (not far off Milwaukee Avenue), once existed. Opened in 1973, it once offered a Polish smorgasbord daily at a price of \$4.95 per person. It appears, sometime after 2012, it closed down. Reviews indicated the prices went up and the value went down. It was not connected to Staropolska Restaurant on Milwaukee Avenue at all. But, this was probably the place we had visited. Though I'm still not totally sure. It seems there were once many Polish buffets around Chicago.

There are still many Polish restaurants in Chicago and a few that offer a Polish buffet. The Red Apple Buffet, just down the street from Staropolska Restaurant, is very highly rated. I hope to visit there next time I'm in Chicago.



Staropolska Restaurant on Milwaukee Avenue advertisement in 1989



Staropolska Smorgasbord Restaurant on Belmont Avenue date unknown



Jewish Records Indexing - Poland

By Trina Goss Galauner

Jewish Records Indexing - Poland is a website dedicated to helping Holocaust survivors and their families, as well as pre-war Jewish immigrants from Poland and their descendants, research their ancestry. Remarkably, many Jewish records of Poland have survived through the war years and Soviet occupation and JRI-Poland has extracted and indexed over 5 million Jewish birth, marriage and death records from past and present Poland.

Vital record indices and extractions that are more than 100 years old can be searched at the JRI-Poland online database at <http://jri-poland.org>. JRI-Poland can also direct researchers to detailed information on how to find records less than 100-years old from specific towns now in Poland and in the Lviv, Ternopil or Ivano Frankivsk districts of Ukraine.

In addition to vital records, the JRI-Poland online database includes other types of records such as Books of Residents, censuses, army draft lists, school records, cemetery burials, Polish passports, ghetto death records, birth, marriage and death announcements in Polish newspapers and post-war court and legal announcements in official newspapers (Monitor Polski). The data varies widely by town or region.

The indexing is ongoing and supported by donations but current sources include LDS (Mormon) Microfilm, Polish State Archives, Patronymic Records, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), Karta Archives, Cemetery Records, Books of Residents/Census, Monitor Polski-Government Gazette, Shanghai Polish Consulate Records, Polish Aliyah Passports, Warsaw Cemetery, Foundation for Documentation of Jewish Cemeteries in Poland, and JDC Emigration Service Index Cards (Warsaw Office, 1945-1949).

Searching the database requires registration for access and there are detailed instructions on search options and searching strategies in order to get the most out of what the database has to offer.

JRI Poland

Jewish Records Indexing - Poland

The Award-Winning Searchable Database of Indexes to Jewish Records of Poland

JRI-Poland is an independent non-profit tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. [Select Language](#) Powered by [Google Translate](#)

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jri-poland.org

Launched in early 1995, JRI - Poland is the largest fully searchable database of indexes to Jewish vital records accessible online.

5.4 million records from more than 550 Polish towns are now indexed or fully extracted. More are being added every few months.

Schedule of Presentations for Upcoming Meetings

Apr: **Cleveland's Polish Community: Part I Fleet Avenue**

A video recorded lecture by John Grabowski about Cleveland's Warszawa neighborhood.

May: **How To Plan a Trip To Poland**

Ben Kman will present his tips and techniques for planning a trip to Poland for tourism, genealogical research and family visits.

Jun: **Jason Kruski**

Beginning/Intermediate Polish-American genealogical research, and new technological advances in the field of genealogy. Live Webinar.

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**

PGSGC
c/o St. Mary's PNC Church
1901 Wexford Ave.
Parma, Ohio 44134

President: Ron Kraine
E-mail: ronkraine@aol.com

Newsletter Editor: Trina Galauner
E-mail: galauner@yahoo.com



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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.