



# Our Polish ANCESTORS

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND  
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## Corrections and Additions—

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Please let me know of any corrections or additions you'd like to make on the surname list in this issue.

## Rest In Peace—

Our sympathies go out to the family of member Ben S. Stefanski II whose mother, Gerome R. Stefanski, passed away recently. She was the wife of Ben S. Stefanski and helped him found *The Third Federal Savings & Loan Assn.* She played an active role in the bank's operations and in its expansion and growth. Ms. Stefanski (nee Rutkowski) will be missed by all of Polonia.

## Family History Center Moving—

The building housing the *Family History Center* at 25000 Westwood Rd. in Westlake is scheduled to undergo renovations. The work begins March 5th and will continue until October of this year. In the meantime, the library will be moved to their Seven Hills Chapel at 501 Rockside Rd.. They will begin operations there at 10 AM on March 6th. This should be very good news to many of our members who live in the southern suburbs. The hours for the library are: Tuesday thru Saturday 10 AM—2 PM, Tuesday thru Thursday 6 PM—9 PM. The library is open to the public, there is no admission charge and there is ample parking. For those who haven't been to the library before, now is a good time to visit and get acquainted with the resources available there.

## e-mail Addresses—

There are many members whose e-mail addresses we do not have. If you would like to have your e-mail address included with your street address, please let me know. Either send a note to our group address or let me know by e-mail, edjmendyka@aol.com.

## Get Well Wishes—

We hear that Walter Fortuna has recently undergone a surgery. Hurry up and get well Walter, so that you can come to our meetings. We miss you when you're not there.

## Speakers for Upcoming Meeting—

For our April meeting, April 3, 2001, we have as a speaker Mary Kay Wisnieski who will address the group on the topic of *Ellis Island*. For our May meeting, May 1, 2001, we have asked Father Jan to address the group on the topic of *Letter Writing to Poland*. Father Jan has graciously consented; so, be there to pick his brain on how to best write a letter to the old country. For the June meeting, June 5, 2001, we have a real treat in store for us. Carol Williams will speak about *Newspaper Research* and what it reveals about the Polish community. Hope to see you all there. After the June meeting we will break for the summer and be back in September.

## Active Members Research Surname List

### Researching

ADAMCZAK HUDSON, DOROTHY  
 ADAMSKI HUDSON, DOROTHY  
 BAJOR HACHOLSKI, WAYNE  
 BAK FORTUNA, WALTER & JUANITA  
 BAK WARDELL, KEN & GARLAND  
 BAKER BAKER, JOSEPHINE  
 BALCERZAK JESS, ROBERT & ROSEMARIE  
 BALOGH KUNTZ, ALLAN & CYNDI  
 BANAS VENINSHEK, CARL & CAROLINE  
 BANNASCH BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 BARAN KMAN, BEN  
 BARDZKOWSKI BAKER, JOSEPHINE  
 BARDY BAKER, JOSEPHINE  
 BARNA GILLIHAN, HOWARD & ALICE  
 BARTYZEL FORTUNA, WALTER & JUANITA  
 BARYCKA PETERS, STEVEN & DEBRA  
 BASARA HACHOLSKI, WAYNE  
 BASSETT HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 BEDUHN ZEHMS, DONALD & MARYSUE  
 BEJGER KOLOJEK, CHESTER & LOIS  
 BEJGIER KOLOJEK, CHESTER & LOIS  
 BELILL BELILL, RICHARD & LUCY  
 BELTER HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 BENDZIULLA BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 BERGMAN BERGMAN, ROLF & MARTHA  
 BEZCPINSKI BELILL, RICHARD & LUCY  
 BIALKOWSKI DOBBINS, JAMES & KAREN  
 BIDLENCHIK KMAN, BEN  
 BIEL SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 BIELAMOWICZ SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 BIELATT MOLDENHAUER, GARY & ROSE  
 BIELECKI(A) KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA  
 BILSKI MENDYKA, EDWARD  
 BILSKI SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA  
 BINKOWSKI DOBBINS, JAMES & KAREN  
 BIVENS BIVENS, JOYCE A.  
 BLOW HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 BODE BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 BODZIONY FATHER RALPH  
 BOJANOWSKI GILLIHAN, HOWARD & ALICE  
 BOJKO PETERS, STEVEN & DEBRA  
 BOLEK MENDYKA, EDWARD  
 BOLEK SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA  
 BOMBA MADURA, WALTER & WLADYSLAWA  
 BONCELA KAWCZYNSKI-LANG, DARRYL & CHERYL  
 BOROWSKI BAKER, JOSEPHINE  
 BOSTOSKY BOSTOSKY, FRANCIS  
 BRAUN BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 BREEDLOVE GILLIHAN, HOWARD & ALICE  
 BROCKI ZEHMS, DONALD & MARYSUE  
 BROTSKI ZEHMS, DONALD & MARYSUE  
 BRYK ZELEK, EDWIN & CONNIE  
 BRYTA LYNCH, ROBERT A.  
 BRZEZUISKI MOLDENHAUER, GARY & ROSE  
 BRZOZOWSKI CHOJNICKI, GERALDINE  
 BUCZAKOWSKI MENDYKA, EDWARD

### Researching

BUCZAKOWSKI  
 BUKOWSKI  
 BUNKOWSKI  
 BYCZEK  
 CARMAN  
 CELEK  
 CHABINKA  
 CHABOWSKI  
 CHACHALEK  
 CHAPNICK  
 CHLOPEK  
 CHOCHALEK  
 CHOJNACKI  
 CHOJNACKI  
 CHOJNACKI  
 CHOJNICKI  
 CHRZASZCZ  
 CHRZASZCZ  
 CHWOJNICKI  
 CIASTON  
 CICHOCKI  
 CIEPLINSKI  
 CIGAN  
 CIOSEK  
 CLAZA  
 COLEMAN  
 COLLINS  
 CURTISS  
 CWIKLINSKI  
 CYGAN  
 CYGAN  
 CZACHEREW  
 CZACHOR  
 CZAJKA  
 CZAPLICKI  
 CZARNIAK  
 CZARNOTA  
 CZUBA  
 DALLERT  
 DARDZINSKI  
 DEAS  
 DEMBSKI  
 DENDA  
 DIBISH  
 DISTERHOEF  
 DOBROWOLSKI  
 DOLEGA  
 DOMBROWSKI  
 DOMROWSKI  
 DORENKUTT  
 DRACHENBERG  
 DRAKE  
 DREWS  
 DROZEN  
 DUBOWICZ  
 DURECKI

### Researcher

SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA  
 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 KMAN, BEN  
 OLLIE, THOMAS & SUSAN  
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 JAMBROZY, ED & RICHARDA  
 MARSZAL, ELEANOR  
 HACHOLSKI, WAYNE  
 CHAPNICK, RONALD & SONIA  
 BENDER, LAWRENCE & MARY  
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 KOWALCZYK, DAVID  
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 EWAZEN  
 FERENC  
 FERNITZ  
 FERNITZ  
 FIGORSKI  
 FIGURSKI  
 FILARSKI  
 FILIPOWICZ  
 FISCHER  
 FISCHER  
 FLORKOSKI  
 FORTNER  
 FORTUNA  
 FRIGA  
 FRYC  
 FUGIEL  
 FURMANEK  
 GABB  
 GADOWSKI  
 GARGULA  
 GILLIHAN  
 GLOD  
 GLOD  
 GOCAL  
 GODULA  
 GOLEN  
 GORECKI  
 GORSKI  
 GORZKOWSKI  
 GOWINSKI  
 GRABIEC  
 GRABIEC  
 GRABIEC  
 GRACEL  
 GRAJEWSKI  
 GRANATOSKY  
 GRAPHNAIER  
 GREEN  
 GROCHOWSKI  
 GROCHOWSKI  
 GRONKOWSKI  
 GROTH  
 GRUNKOWSKI  
 GUD  
 GUTKOWSKI  
 HACHOLSKI  
 HACHOLSKI  
 HADBAVNY  
 HALUPOWSKI  
 HAPTAS

MOLDENHAUER, GARY & ROSE  
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 KMAN, BEN  
 MORLAN, RON & CHRISTINE  
 WAWRZYNIAK, DENNIS  
 KAMINSKI, FRANK & VERONICA  
 GILLIHAN, HOWARD & ALICE  
 FORTUNA, WALTER & JUANITA  
 KMAN, BEN  
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 ZAKAROWSKY, CLEMENTINE  
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 GABB, TIMOTHY & PATTI  
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 TALKOWSKI, JOHN & SOPHIA  
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 LYSYK, RALPH & JEAN  
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 BENDER, LAWRENCE & MARY  
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## Researcher

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 HARDWAY  
 HASKE  
 HAUCK  
 HEIER  
 HERKENRIDER  
 HILL  
 HOPCHAS  
 HOUSE  
 HUCK  
 HUDSON  
 HUDSON  
 ILESAK  
 JABLONOWSKI  
 JACKOWICZ  
 JACUKOWICZ  
 JADACH  
 JAMBROZY  
 JANOWICH  
 JANOWICZ  
 JANOWITZ  
 JASINSKI  
 JASTRZAB  
 JASTRZEMBSKI  
 JASTRZEMBSKI  
 JASTYCH  
 JAWORSKI  
 JELONEK  
 JEZ  
 JURCZAK  
 JUSTAT  
 KALIK  
 KAMINSKI  
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 KANIESKI  
 KANOSKI  
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 KARMISKI  
 KAROLEWSKI  
 KARPOWICZ  
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 KAWALCZEWSKI  
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 KAWCZYNSKI  
 KAZALSKI  
 KAZMIERCZAK  
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BELILL, RICHARD & LUCY  
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 KMAN, BEN  
 JABLONOWSKI, ANTHONY & ROSEMARIE  
 JACKOWICZ, STANLEY  
 JACKOWICZ, STANLEY  
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 JAMBROZY, ED & RICHARDA  
 ZEHMS, DONALD & MARYSUE  
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 JASINSKI, RICHARD & GEORGENE  
 KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA  
 JASTER, VIOLET  
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 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 KOWALCZYK, DAVID  
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 BARRY, JANE K.  
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 KUNTZ, ALLAN & CYNDI  
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 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
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 SWIFT, DONALD & JEANNETTE  
 JABLONOWSKI, ANTHONY & ROSEMARY  
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 CHERMELY, CHRISTIAN & JOAN  
 MORLAN, RON & CHRISTINE  
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## Researching

## Researcher

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 KLEINSCHMIDT  
 KLEJKA  
 KLIMEK  
 KLONOWSKI  
 KMAN  
 KMON  
 KNAUR  
 KOBIALKA  
 KOBIALKA  
 KOCIS  
 KOLODZIEJEK  
 KOLOJEK  
 KOMOROWSKI  
 KOMOROWSKI  
 KON  
 KONCZ  
 KONIECZNY  
 KONIEWSKI  
 KOPERA  
 KOPROWSKI  
 KOPROWSKI  
 KOSMERICK  
 KOSTECKI  
 KOSZEWSKI  
 KOVACS  
 KOWALCZYK  
 KOWALCZYK  
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 KOWALSKI  
 KOZA  
 KOZIELSKI  
 KOZLOWSKI  
 KRAUSE  
 KRUCZYK  
 KRUPA  
 KRUWKA  
 KRUYZKA  
 KSIAZEK  
 KUC  
 KUCHENY  
 KUCHNICKI  
 KUCZMARSKI  
 KUEHN  
 KUJAWKA  
 KUJAWKA  
 KUKLA  
 KULA  
 KULIG  
 KULIK  
 KUMOR  
 KUNTZ

HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 MADURA, WALTER & WLADYSLAWA  
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 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
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 LYNCH, ROBERT A.  
 JABLONOWSKI, ANTHONY & ROSEMARY  
 KMAN, BEN  
 KMAN, BEN  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 MENDYKA, EDWARD  
 SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA  
 PARISI, GARY & NANCY  
 KOLOJEK, CHESTER & LOIS  
 KOLOJEK, CHESTER & LOIS  
 GABB, TIMOTHY & PATTI  
 PARISI, GARY & NANCY  
 LYSYK, RALPH & JEAN  
 KUNTZ, ALLAN & CYNDI  
 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 LYSYK, RALPH & JEAN  
 KUNTZ, ALLAN & CYNDI  
 CHOJNICKI, GERALDINE  
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 BARRY, JANE K.  
 KOSTECKI, LEROY  
 KOSZEWSKI, MARION & MILDRED  
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 BIVENS, JOYCE A.  
 KOWALCZYK, DAVID  
 KOWALCZYK, EMIL  
 KOWALSKI JR., FRANK  
 HACHOLSKI, WAYNE  
 BAKER, JOSEPHINE  
 KOWALCZYK, DAVID  
 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 PALSHOOK, PETER & HELEN  
 BENDER, LAWRENCE & MARY  
 KOWALCZYK, DAVID  
 JABLONOWSKI, ANTHONY & ROSEMARY  
 JAMBROZY, ED & RICHARDA  
 DZURELLA, BARBARA  
 BAKER, JOSEPHINE  
 SWIFT, DONALD & JEANNETTE  
 KUCZMARSKI, PATRICIA  
 ZELEK, EDWIN & CONNIE  
 MORLAN, RON & CHRISTINE  
 WAWRZYNIAK, DENNIS  
 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 KUCZMARSKI, PATRICIA  
 KUNTZ, ALLAN & CYNDI

## Researching

## Researcher

KUSNYIR  
 KUSOWSKI  
 KUSSIN  
 KUZAS  
 KWASNIEWSKI  
 KWIATKOWSKI  
 LAMPISKA  
 LANGA  
 LANIECKI  
 LANNING  
 LASKOWSKI  
 LASOTA  
 LASOTA  
 LASSA  
 LEGUZINSKI  
 LEHENBAUER  
 LESNIAK  
 LESZKOWICZ  
 LEWANDOWSKI  
 LEWANDOWSKI  
 LIDZIANKA  
 LIESICKI  
 LIPOWSKI  
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 LIS  
 LISOWSKI  
 LITKA  
 LITKE  
 LITWINSKI  
 LUC  
 LUCAK  
 LUDKIEWICZ  
 LUDWICZAK  
 LUDWILCZAK  
 LUKASZK  
 LUTY  
 LYMAN  
 LYNCH  
 LYNN  
 LYSTK  
 LYSYK  
 MADURA  
 MAGIERA  
 MAJKA  
 MAKOWSKI  
 MALICKI  
 MALIK  
 MALONE  
 MAMEL  
 MARCIN  
 MARCINKIEWICZ  
 MARGANSKI  
 MARSZAL

KUNTZ, ALLAN & CYNDI  
 KOSTECKI, LEROY  
 HADBAVNY, JOSEPH & GLORIA  
 HADBAVNY, JOSEPH & GLORIA  
 MORASKI, MARY KAY  
 KWIATKOWSKI, DONALD & MARLENE  
 PIANKA, RAYMOND & KAREN  
 KWIATKOWSKI, DONALD & MARLENE  
 KAWCZYNSKI-LANG, DARRYL & CHERYL  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 LASKOWSKI, GILBERT & MAGDA  
 KAROLEWSKI, HENRY & CHARLOTTE  
 KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA  
 MAZUR, MELANIE  
 KOWALCZYK, DAVID  
 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 KUCZMARSKI, PATRICIA  
 MAZUR, MELANIE  
 KAWCZYNSKI-LANG, DARRYL & CHERYL  
 VENINSHEK, CARL & CAROLINE  
 BAKER, JOSEPHINE  
 BAKER, JOSEPHINE  
 BENDER, LAWRENCE & MARY  
 LIPOWSKI, EUGENIA A.  
 MENDYKA, EDWARD  
 SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA  
 ZAKAROWSKY, CLEMENTINE  
 FORTUNA, WALTER & JUANITA  
 COYNE, KAREN  
 DZURELLA, BARBARA  
 DZURELLA, BARBARA  
 JABLONOWSKI, ANTHONY & ROSEMARY  
 CELEK, BERNARD  
 KMAN, BEN  
 ZEHMS, DONALD & MARYSUE  
 BARRY, JANE K.  
 BARRY, JANE K.  
 ZEGLEN, GEORGE & FRANCE  
 LUTY, CHET & VIRGINIA  
 ZEHMS, DONALD & MARYSUE  
 LYNCH, ROBERT A.  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 LYSYK, RALPH & JEAN  
 LYSYK, RALPH & JEAN  
 MADURA, WALTER & WLADYSLAWA  
 KAROLEWSKI, HENRY & CHARLOTTE  
 OLLIE, THOMAS & SUSAN  
 SWIFT, DONALD & JEANNETTE  
 SZUCH, JOHN  
 KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA  
 GILLIHAN, HOWARD & ALICE  
 JABLONOWSKI, ANTHONY & ROSEMARY  
 KUNTZ, ALLAN & CYNDI  
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## Researching

## Researcher

## Researching

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 MELNICK  
 MENDYKA  
 MENDYKA  
 MENDYKA  
 MICHALIK  
 MICHNAL  
 MIECZKOWSKI  
 MIETELSKI  
 MIKITTA  
 MIKOLAJCZAK  
 MIKUS  
 MILL  
 MILLS  
 MINOR  
 MIPPS  
 MLIKZEK  
 MOORE  
 MORASKI  
 MORAWSKI  
 MORYTO  
 MIT  
 MROZ  
 MROZEK  
 NABAKOWSKI  
 NABOZNY  
 NABRING  
 NACHMAN  
 NADOLNY  
 NADOLSKI  
 NAGORSKI  
 NAROLEWSKI  
 NEDZA  
 NEDZA  
 NOSEK  
 NOVOTNY  
 NOWEK  
 NOWOGRODZKI  
 NYCZ  
 OCHOCKI  
 OLBRYCH  
 OLEJARCZYK  
 OLEJNICZAK  
 OLSTYN  
 ORBANSKI  
 ORLAMOWSKI  
 C ASZEWSKI  
 PjACZEK  
 PALIDER  
 PALKO  
 PALSHOOK

KMAN, BEN  
 KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA  
 VENINSHEK, CARL & CAROLINE  
 MAZUR, MELANIE  
 LUTY, CHET & VIRGINIA  
 PELCZAR, JAMES & CAROLYN  
 JASINSKI, RICHARD & GEORGENE  
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 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 BARRY, JANE K.  
 KAROLEWSKI, HENRY & CHARLOTTE  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 ZEHMS, DONALD & MARYSUE  
 KAMINSKI, FRANK & VERONICA  
 OLLIE, THOMAS & SUSAN  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 MORASKI, MARY KAY  
 COYNE, KAREN  
 WRUBLEWSKI, DOLORES  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 MORASKI, MARY KAY  
 PARISI, GARY & NANCY  
 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 PARISI, GARY & NANCY  
 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 KMAN, BEN  
 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 MARSZAL, ELEANOR  
 JABLONOWSKI, ANTHONY & ROSEMARY  
 HADBAVNY, JOSEPH & GLORIA  
 KAROLEWSKI, HENRY & CHARLOTTE  
 WRUBLEWSKI, DOLORES  
 LUTY, CHET & VIRGINIA  
 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 JESS, ROBERT & ROSEMARIE  
 CHAPNICK, RONALD & SONIA  
 STEFANSKI II, BEN S.  
 KMAN, BEN  
 OLLIE, THOMAS & SUSAN  
 JABLONOWSKI, ANTHONY & ROSEMARY  
 KAWCZYNSKI-LANG, DARRYL & CHERYL  
 BAKER, JOSEPHINE  
 SELLNAU, GEORGE & HARRIET  
 CLARK, BARBARA A.  
 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 OLLIE, THOMAS & SUSAN  
 KUNTZ, ALLAN & CYNDI  
 PALSHOOK, PETER & HELEN

PALUCH  
 PANEK  
 PANKOWSKI  
 PAPAZAK  
 PAPCIAK  
 PAPCZAK  
 PARISI  
 PARKER  
 PARTYKA  
 PASIUT  
 PASKOWICZ  
 PASZKOWICZ  
 PAULIASZAK  
 PAWLOWSKI  
 PAWLOWSKI  
 PELCZAR  
 PELESHOK  
 PENKALA  
 PEREK  
 PERELKA  
 PFEFFERLE  
 PIANKA  
 PIASCIK  
 PIATKIEWICZ  
 PIECHNIK  
 PIECHOWSKI  
 PIEKOS  
 PIENTKIEVICS  
 PIERGES  
 PIERGIES  
 PIERSON  
 PIKOS  
 PILATOWSKI  
 PINARCZYK  
 PIONTKOWSKI  
 PIWOWARSKI  
 PLATA  
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 PLONA  
 PNIEWSKI  
 PODWABINSKI  
 PODWAPINSKA(I)  
 POGACZOIK  
 POLANOWSKI  
 POLASKI  
 POLGAR  
 POULAIN  
 PROMA  
 PROMO  
 PRUSAK  
 PRZEDPELSKI  
 PRZINDA  
 PRZYBILSKI  
 PRZYBYLSKI

KUNTZ, ALLAN & CYNDI  
 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 BELILL, RICHARD & LUCY  
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 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 PARISI, GARY & NANCY  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 MOLDENHAUER, GARY & ROSE  
 KUCZMARSKI, PATRICIA  
 ZEHMS, DONALD & MARYSUE  
 ZEHMS, DONALD & MARYSUE  
 KMAN, BEN  
 SWIFT, DONALD & JEANNETTE  
 VENINSHEK, CARL & CAROLINE  
 PELCZAR, JAMES & CAROLYN  
 PALSHOOK, PETER & HELEN  
 SHAVER, BARBARA  
 JAMBROZY, ED & RICHARDA  
 SWIFT, DONALD & JEANNETTE  
 CELEK, BERNARD  
 PIANKA, RAYMOND & KAREN  
 PIANKA, RAYMOND & KAREN  
 HADBAVNY, JOSEPH & GLORIA  
 KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA  
 MAZUR, MELANIE  
 KOWALCZYK, EMIL  
 HADBAVNY, JOSEPH & GLORIA  
 FREELS, JUDITH  
 FREELS, JUDITH  
 BELILL, RICHARD & LUCY  
 HADBAVNY, JOSEPH & GLORIA  
 STEFANSKI II, BEN S.  
 KOWALCZYK, DAVID  
 MOLDENHAUER, GARY & ROSE  
 KUCZMARSKI, PATRICIA  
 KUCZMARSKI, PATRICIA  
 MARSZAL, ELEANOR  
 IVANCIC, THOMAS & ALEXANDRIA  
 MUZILLA, RAYMOND & CAROL  
 PIANKA, RAYMOND & KAREN  
 KWIATKOWSKI, DONALD & MARLENE  
 MUZILLA, RAYMOND & CAROL  
 IVANCIC, THOMAS & ALEXANDRIA  
 PELCZAR, JAMES & CAROLYN  
 JESS, ROBERT & ROSEMARIE  
 HUDSON, DOROTHY  
 SZUCH, JOHN  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 MOLDENHAUER, GARY & ROSE  
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 HADBAVNY, JOSEPH & GLORIA  
 JABLONOWSKI, ANTHONY & ROSEMARY  
 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
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## Researching

## Researcher

PTAK  
 PUC  
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 PYKOSZ  
 RACZYNSKI  
 RADZIEWICZ  
 RAMOS  
 RASH  
 RATAJCZAK  
 RATZ  
 RAUCHFLEISCH  
 REPINSKI  
 REVETOWSKI  
 ROAB  
 ROBERTS  
 RODUSZEWSKI  
 ROEDGER  
 ROGALSKI  
 ROGINSKI  
 ROMEL  
 ROMAL  
 ROMANEK  
 ROSPOTYNSKI  
 RUBINS  
 RUBLE  
 RUKCINSKI  
 RUTKA  
 RUTKOWSKI  
 RUTKOWSKI  
 RYBA  
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 RYCHLENSKI  
 RYCHLICKI  
 RYDZEWSKI  
 RYGWALSKI  
 RYNKOWSKI  
 RZONCA  
 RZYCHOWSKI  
 SAAS  
 SADLER  
 SAGANIEWICZ  
 SAJDAL  
 SAJETOWSKI  
 SALKOWSKI  
 SASS  
 SAVARA  
 SCHAFFRANEK  
 SCHARF  
 SCHEWE  
 SCHMIDT  
 SCHULTE  
 SCHULZE  
 SCZASTAK  
 SEDLAK  
 SELLNAU

KAROLEWSKI, HENRY & CHARLOTTE  
 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 HADBAVNY, JOSEPH & GLORIA  
 HADBAVNY, JOSEPH & GLORIA  
 KAMINSKI, FRANK & VERONICA  
 KMAN, BEN  
 GABB, TIMOTHY & PATTI  
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 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 CHOJNICKI, GERALDINE  
 JABLONOWSKI, ANTHONY & ROSEMARY  
 PELCZAR, JAMES & CAROLYN  
 ROBERTS, RICHARD & MARY ANN  
 MOLDENHAUER, GARY & ROSE  
 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 ZEHMS, DONALD & MARYSUE  
 JESS, ROBERT & ROSEMARIE  
 BELILL, RICHARD & LUCY  
 MOLDENHAUER, GARY & ROSE  
 BAKER, JOSEPHINE  
 SISTER ROSETTE  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 KOSTECKI, LEROY  
 GILLIHAN, HOWARD & ALICE  
 CHERMELY, CHRISTIAN & JOAN  
 BAKER, JOSEPHINE  
 STEFANSKI II, BEN S.  
 KAROLEWSKI, HENRY & CHARLOTTE  
 RYBA, JAMES  
 KMAN, BEN  
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 BIVENS, JOYCE A.  
 RYBA, JAMES  
 KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 KUNTZ, ALLAN & CYNDI  
 ROBERTS, RICHARD & MARY ANN  
 OLLIE, THOMAS & SUSAN  
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 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
 PELCZAR, JAMES & CAROLYN  
 SELLNAU, GEORGE & HARRIET  
 BELILL, RICHARD & LUCY  
 BELILL, RICHARD & LUCY  
 GROTH, REV. M. C. & BARBARA  
 TURSKI, DENNIS & CONSTANCE  
 RYBA, JAMES  
 SELLNAU, GEORGE & HARRIET

## Researching

## Researcher

SELNAU  
 SERYTA  
 SHEATZLEY  
 SHEPERSKY  
 SHERWOOD  
 SHUFLATA  
 SIEKIERSKI  
 SIOKORA  
 SIWIK  
 SKARZYCKI  
 SKINNER  
 SLIZ  
 SLUSARCZYK  
 SLUSARSKI  
 SLUSARSKI  
 SMIGIERA  
 SMITH  
 SOBIECH  
 SOBOLEWSKI  
 SOCHA  
 SOLEK  
 SOLINSKI  
 SOLON  
 SOMERFELD  
 SOMMERFELD  
 SOSKA  
 SOWA  
 SPERNOGA  
 STACHOWIAK  
 STANDLICK  
 STARON  
 STEFANSKI  
 STEVENS  
 STRONCER  
 STRUNK  
 STYPA  
 SUCHECKI  
 SURDEJ  
 SWIDER  
 SWIEDNICKI  
 SWIERCZYNSKI  
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 SYZDECK  
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 SZASZOWSKA(I)  
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 SZCZEPANIK  
 SZUCH  
 SZUCS  
 SZURGA  
 SZYDECK  
 SZYDEK

SELLNAU, GEORGE & HARRIET  
 BENDER, LAWRENCE & MARY  
 KOWALCZYK, EMIL & MARY  
 MOLDENHAUER, GARY & ROSE  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 TOMASIEWICZ, JOHN & PATRICIA  
 KUCZMARSKI, PATRICIA  
 KAROLEWSKI, HENRY & CHARLOTTE  
 KOWALCZYK, EMIL  
 CLARK, BARBARA A.  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 CHAPNICK, RONALD & SONIA  
 SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA  
 MENDYKA, EDWARD  
 SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA  
 JABLONOWSKI, ANTHONY & ROSEMARY  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
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 CHOJNICKI, GERALDINE  
 KMAN, BEN  
 SHAVER, BARBARA  
 MOLDENHAUER, GARY & ROSE  
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 BARRY, JANE K.  
 KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA  
 ROBERTS, RICHARD & MARY ANN  
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 WRUBLEWSKI, DOLORES  
 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
 DOBBINS, JAMES & KAREN  
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 HARDWAY, GERALDINE  
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 BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA  
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 MUZILLA, RAYMOND & CAROL  
 IVANCIC, THOMAS & ALEXANDRIA  
 MADURA, WALTER & WLADYSLAWA  
 ROBERTS, RICHARD & MARY ANN  
 SZUCH, JOHN  
 SZUCH, JOHN  
 KAROLEWSKI, HENRY & CHARLOTTE  
 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS  
 SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS

# Active Members Research Surname List

<b>Researching</b>	<b>Researcher</b>	<b>Researching</b>	<b>Researcher</b>
KOWNY	COYNE, KAREN	WOJCIECHOWSKI	SZUCH, JOHN
ALKOWSKI	TALKOWSKI, JOHN & SOPHIA	WOJCIK	ZAKAROWSKY, CLEMENTINE
TALLERDT	BRAUN, NORMAN & EDNA	WOJDA	MOLDENHAUER, GARY & ROSE
TANSKICH	SZUCH, JOHN	WOJDACZ	LIPOWSKI, EUGENIA A.
THIRY	BELILL, RICHARD & LUCY	WOJDACZ	MENDYKA, EDWARD
TISCHLER	PELCZAR, JAMES & CAROLYN	WOJDACZ	SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA
TOBIASZ	OLLIE, THOMAS & SUSAN	WOJNAR	ZEGLEN, GEORGE & FRANCE
TOKARZ	MADURA, WALTER & WLADYSLAWA	WOJNORAWSKI	SHAVER, BARBARA
TOLPA	CHAPNICK, RONALD & SONIA	WOJTASINSKI	KOWALCZYK, DAVID
TOMASIEWICZ	TOMASIEWICZ, JOHN & PATRICIA	WOLANCZYK	TALKOWSKI, JOHN & SOPHIA
TOMASKO	HADBAVNY, JOSEPH & GLORIA	WOLANIN	LIPOWSKI, EUGENIA A.
TOMAZEWSKI	PIANKA, RAYMOND & KAREN	WOLANIN	MENDYKA, EDWARD
TOMON	LYSYK, RALPH & JEAN	WOLANIN	SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA
TOPOLSKI	KOWALCZYK, DAVID	WOLINSKI	KOLOJEK, CHESTER & LOIS
TOTH	KUNTZ, ALLAN & CYNDI	WOODWORTH	HARDWAY, GERALDINE
TOTH	MENDYKA, EDWARD	WORWA	JAMBROZY, ED & RICHARDA
TOTH	SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA	WOZNIAK	MORASKI, MARY KAY
TRACZYK	JAMBROZY, ED & RICHARDA	WRIGHT	HARDWAY, GERALDINE
TRAJBULA	KOWALCZYK, DAVID	WROBEL	WRUBLEWSKI, DOLORES
TRESNICISKI	SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS	WROBLEWSKI	WRUBLEWSKI, DOLORES
TRUZESNIEWSKI	SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS	WRONA	SWIFT, DONALD & JEANNETTE
TRZESNICISKI	SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS	WROZEK	EWAZEN, PAUL & ROSEANNE
TRZNADEL	HACHOLSKI, WAYNE	WRUBLEWSKI	WRUBLEWSKI, DOLORES
TRZUZESNIEWSKI	SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS	WSZOLEK	KMAN, BEN
TURSKI	TURSKI, DENNIS & CONSTANCE	YANUSEWICZ	KUNTZ, ALLAN & CYNDI
TWARDZIK	LIPOWSKI, EUGENIA A.	YESH	BARRY, JANE K.
WARDZIK	MENDYKA, EDWARD	YUSKO	SWIFT, DONALD & JEANNETTE
TWARDZIK	OLLIE, THOMAS & SUSAN	ZABA	KAROLEWSKI, HENRY & CHARLOTTE
TWARDZIK	SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA	ZABAWA	SYZDEK, BRUNO & PHYLLIS
URBAN	SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA	ZAJAC	KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA
URBANSKI	BAKER, JOSEPHINE	ZAJAC	ROBERTS, RICHARD & MARY ANN
VONS	HARDWAY, GERALDINE	ZAKAROWSKY	ZAKAROWSKY, CLEMENTINE
WACHOWIAK	HUDSON, DOROTHY	ZALESKI	PIANKA, RAYMOND & KAREN
WACHOWIAK	WRUBLEWSKI, DOLORES	ZASTRAK	KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA
WACHOWSKI	HARDWAY, GERALDINE	ZEGLEN	ZEGLEN, GEORGE & FRANCE
WALDVOGEL	SELLNAU, GEORGE & HARRIET	ZEHMS	ZEHMS, DONALD & MARYSUE
WANIEWSKI	CHERMELY, CHRISTIAN & JOAN	ZEKOVSKI	KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA
WANTUCH	ROBERTS, RICHARD & MARY ANN	ZELEK	ZELEK, EDWIN & CONNIE
WASKIEWICZ	CHAPNICK, RONALD & SONIA	ZELEWSKI	SISTER LORETTA
WASKO	KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA	ZIELEWSKI	SISTER LORETTA
WAWRZYNIAK	MORLAN, RON & CHRISTINE	ZIELINSKI	ROBERTS, RICHARD & MARY ANN
WAWRZYNIAK	WAWRZYNIAK, DENNIS	ZIELKE	GROTH, REV. M. C. & BARBARA
WAGRZYNIAK	KOWALCZYK, EMIL	ZILKE	GROTH, REV. M. C. & BARBARA
WAGRZYNOWSKI	PARISI, GARY & NANCY	ZMUDA	CELEK, BERNARD
WELCH	GILLIHAN, HOWARD & ALICE	ZOMERFELD	BARRY, JANE K.
WHEELER	HARDWAY, GERALDINE	ZOMMERFELD	BARRY, JANE K.
WIDLAK	JAMBROZY, ED & RICHARDA	ZUROWSKI	KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA
WIENCZAK	WIENCZAK, EDMUND & DOROTHY	ZUROWSKI	SHAVER, BARBARA
WILCZYNSKI	JABLONOWSKI, ANTHONY & ROSEMARY	ZYCHOWSKI	KLASCH, DENNIS & STELLA
WILCZYNSKI	KOSZEWSKI, MARION & MILDRED	ZYSKO	LIPOWSKI, EUGENIA A.
WISNIEWSKI	JASINSKI, RICHARD & GEORGENE	ZYSKO	MENDYKA, EDWARD
WNIOWSKI	MENDYKA, EDWARD	ZYSKO	SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA
WNIOWSKI	SLUSARSKI, EUGENE & WANDA		
WLOCH	BAKER, JOSEPHINE		
WOJCIECHOWSKI	FORTUNA, WALTER & JUANITA		
WOJCIECHOWSKI	ROBERTS, RICHARD & MARY ANN		

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**Note—**

Any additions or corrections, please let me know either by US Postal Service or e-mail at [edjmendyka@aol.com](mailto:edjmendyka@aol.com).



## Stand by Your Man—The Joe Filkowski Story\*

You could call Joe Filkowski a lot of things. His contemporaries, both admiring and not, didn't stint on names for this memorable 1930s Tremont-area gangster. In his formative years as an incorrigible juvenile delinquent and neighborhood bully, his bad complexion earned him the sobriquet of "Pimples" Filkowski. He graduated from childish petty thefts to the more adult concerns of armed robbery, auto theft, and murder, and acquired nicknames befitting his eventual status as Cleveland's Depression-era Public Enemy No. 1. By 1930, surely his prime year, he was luridly known to newspaper readers as "The Phantom of the South Side," "The Jefferson Hill Tough," "The Sheik of Literary Avenue," "The Powder-Puff Bandit," and "Smiling Joe." True, some called him a "love thief" and "yellow," most especially Cleveland's Finest, whose standing orders regarding Joe were to "shoot first and then ask questions." Call him what you will: Any sober assessment of Joe Filkowski's improbable career must lead to the conclusion that he was the luckiest hoodlum who ever called Cleveland home.

For those soft-souled readers who believe people are depraved because deprived, Joseph Filkowski was a textbook paradigm. One of the 13 children born to an unstable, violent slum family (three sets of children born to various and ephemeral parents), Joe grew up in the Jefferson Avenue/West 5th area overlooking the Flats. His father was killed in a lumberyard accident while he was an infant; his first stepfather committed suicide. A wild, surly youth, Joe was weaned on the temptations of the grimy dance halls and poolrooms of his native turf and began his recorded criminal career in 1914, when he and his brother were arrested for stealing air rifles and BB ammo from a grocery store. Two years later, he was caught stealing six bicycles from a Flats boxcar; a subsequent theft of 2,000 pounds of copper from a B. & O. boxcar that same year earned him a stretch in the Mansfield Reformatory. Paroled in 1918, he robbed John Butler of \$41.50 on Fairfield Avenue on December 28. That charge was not billed by a sympathetic grand jury, but stealing Neal Anderson's automobile on January 26, 1919, brought him back to Mansfield. Paroled in 1921, he returned to Mansfield that same year on yet more boxcar and auto theft raps. Out in 1923, he whiled away the tedium of freedom with a couple of 30-day terms in the Cleveland workhouse (for auto theft and license plate alteration) before his arrest on August 20 for stealing H. W. Herriman's automobile.

The 24-year-old Joe was by now a hardened career felon, and it was inevitable that he would take things to a higher level. That came on January 12, 1924, while he was free on appeal of his sentence for stealing Mr. Herriman's car. Anthony Bublo, a bank security guard, was shot to death during an attempt to capture a gang robbing Walter Fedrick's butcher shop at 2515 West 10th. Before he died, the 25-year-old Bublo identified the triggerman as his childhood chum and schoolmate Joe Filkowski. When the grand jury refused to indict Filkowski for the murder, the irate county prosecutor, Edward C. Stanton, insisted that Joe serve the full six years of his impending theft sentence.

Joe publicly swore that he would "get" Stanton for such vindictiveness. But subsequent events proved that he had some reason to be grateful to the implacable lawman. While in the Ohio Penitentiary, Joe met a number of the experienced criminals with whom he would later work to spread a reign of terror among the merchants and payroll couriers of Greater Cleveland. More concretely, he used his labor stint in the penitentiary's license-plate plant to become an acknowledged expert in the illegal alteration of automobile plates.

Joe's public career really began in 1930, just after his April 15 release from prison. He got together with Charles Frisco, a hoodlum he had met in prison, and Joseph Stazek, a childhood friend from his Tremont days. The trio laid plans for a series of brutal, lucrative stickups. By the end of 1930 they were known as the "Flats Gang," and their criminal activities were the envy of their peers, a mocking reproach to the police, and a feast for sensation-addicted newspaper readers.

Joe began his reign as gangster chief, oddly enough, with a solo job. On the afternoon of June 6, 1930, contractor Anthony Veryk was distributing a \$1,500 payroll on the fourth floor of an apartment under construction at 10017 Lake Avenue. He was nearly finished when a gunman entered and demanded his satchel of money with the words, "Hands up!" Joe Filkowski gave no warning: when Veryk momentarily hesitated, Joe shot him fatally in the chest, grabbed the satchel, and fled west in his car in a hail of bricks thrown by Veryk's outraged laborers. That night, the cautious Joe burned the car in an isolated area of Broadview Heights to destroy any lingering fingerprints. But the senseless killing of Veryk would come back to haunt him.

On June 9, the Flats Gang launched their corporate work—and never looked back. That evening they broke into the John Meckes & Son department store at West 25th and Lorain, bound and gagged the watchman, and escaped after blowing the safe. Several minor street robberies and safe jobs followed, interrupted by Filkowski's involvement in the murder-robbery of a Buffalo garage owner. His return to Cleveland was announced by a stickup of the Piper Brothers Shoe Company on October 4; nine days later, the Filkowski trio robbed jeweler Einar Abrahamsen of his wares as he was leaving his West 25th store. On November 3, they robbed, bound, and gagged sewer contractor Sam Amata in his automobile in the Flats; 18 days later they slugged Dr. Louis C. Kintzler of \$40 at Broadview and Pearl.

The best was yet to come. On November 24, Filkowski, Stazek, and Frisco held up the Capitol Clothing Company at 6317 St. Clair. It was a routine job—but two nights later they committed the first of the crimes that would make them the rancorously hunted prey of the Cleveland police. About 6 p.m. on Thanksgiving eve, in the middle of a blinding snowstorm, the trio entered the Dixie Shoe Company. While ransacking the register, Charles Frisco, the lookout, saw patrolman Harry Keating outside. He alerted Joe, who hustled Keating inside with a gun to his ribs, stripped him of his uniform, badge, and gun, tied him up, and—no doubt laughing in his notoriously high-pitched, hoarse voice—put a wastebasket over Keating's head as they were leaving the store with their loot. The hapless Keating was exonerated of blame in the affair, but the wastebasket was the kind of thing the Cleveland cops would never forget.

Not that Joe and his friends were allowed to slip their minds for long: Two days later the threesome hit the Chandler & Price Company on payroll day to the tune of \$8,100. Rubbing it in even more, Joe's men hit the Commonwealth Oil Company at West 3rd and Jefferson Avenue—right in the middle of “Smiling Joe” Filkowski's well-known stomping grounds—on December 3.

Joe didn't know it, but his luck was about to take a downward swing. As if his blood feud with the police were not enough, he was about to create an additional enemy who would prove to be an even more deadly nemesis. George Kekic, of 2467 West 5th Street, an unemployed factory worker and sometime bootlegger, had grown up with Joe Filkowski on the rough streets of Tremont. Both had been smitten by the charms of a girl named Mary Stazeki, a schoolmate about five years younger than Joe and a half sister of fellow gangster Joseph Stazek. George had married Mary and fathered two children, eight and two years old. But the bloom was off their romance by December 1930, as George discovered when he came home on the afternoon of December 5 to find his childhood pal making love to his wife Mary.

George didn't take the news of his wife's defection well. Maybe the marriage had failed; maybe, as Joe later claimed, George beat Mary and made her life hell. But George felt bad about it, and just how bad he felt was revealed the next night, when Joe returned to his hideout home at 861 Jefferson. Acting on a tip by the disgruntled husband, the Cleveland police had a squad of heavily armed men waiting inside as Joe turned the handle on the side door at 11:45 p.m. As he pushed it open, Detective Edward Trsek jammed a .38 into his ribs and said, “Hands up!”

Joe Filkowski liked to boast that he could “draw a revolver faster than you could wink.” He proved it that moment, reaching for his gun even as his left hand obeyed Trsek's command. As the door opened up, Joe whipped around with the gun and fired it at the surprised Trsek. The detective pulled the trigger of his .38 as Joe started to run away, only to find that he had left the safety on. As Joe ran by the side windows of the house toward the back fence, Detective Walter Keary fired both barrels of his shotgun through the closed windows at the fleeing Filkowski. He missed Joe but managed to cut Trsek badly as the pursuing detective was showered by falling glass. Filkowski leapt for the back fence and ran to West 14th. There he commandeered a car at gunpoint and forced driver Anthony Abraham to “drive like hell” over the Central Viaduct to the East Side. At 657 Broadway, Joe jumped from the automobile and disappeared.

To say the least, the Filkowski fiasco on Jefferson Street was a major humiliation for the Cleveland police. Keary and Trsek were busted to West Side patrol beats, and the word came down from the top that Filkowski and his gunmen were to be shot on sight. That draconian policy paid off well, at least initially. The next afternoon police picked up Charles Frisco at a house on Tremont Avenue. A few hours later—on the night after Joe's Jefferson Street escape—the police, acting on a tip that may have been furnished by the angered Kekic, staked out the second-floor apartment of Edward Stazek, father of Filkowski henchman Joseph Stazek, at 2061 Monroe Court. Detectives Patrick McNeeley and William Dempsey were waiting for Stazek, and when he opened the door they blasted him with three slugs to the head, chest, and abdomen. His father, forcibly detained and thus a passive witness to his son's execution, just silently turned his face away as they loaded his son's corpse into the police ambulance. Two days later the police picked up Mary Kekic, who had fled to Detroit just about the time Joe disappeared over the back fence. She claimed she knew nothing about his whereabouts, but the police didn't believe her.

Cleveland chief of police George Matowitz's “shoot first” policy bore bitterer fruit on December 9. Thinking he had spotted the pockmarked fugitive at East 65th Street and Carnegie, Detective Patrick McNeeley, fresh from the killing of Joseph Stazek, followed a young male down to East 55th Street and Euclid Avenue. Although he later admitted the man did nothing suspicious, McNeeley peremptorily shot the man to death, under the impression that he was “Smiling Joe” himself. He was not: McNeeley's innocent victim was Joseph Fortini, a 22-year-old Plain Dealer circulation man who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. McNeeley was quickly found guiltless by his superiors in the awful mishap and returned with renewed hatred to the quest for Filkowski.

As if to imply that he wasn't impressed by the intense manhunt—all Cleveland detectives were working 12-hour shifts—or the loss of Frisco and Stazek, Joe returned to his wonted activities at his old pace. On Sunday, January 4, 1931, Cleveland patrolman John Maple noticed something amiss with the license plate of an automobile parked on Superior Avenue. A closer look revealed a 1930 plate that had been clumsily altered to resemble a 1931 tag. Dogged inquiries revealed that the car belonged to a recently arrived roomer at 10816 Superior, a young man named “Charlie” who only went out at night and intimated to his landlady that he was a Prohibition agent engaged in hush-hush investigations. “Charlie,” of course, was really Joseph Filkowski, and he was already on his way out the back door of the building when a shotgun-wielding squad of police showed up. No one was demoted this time—Chief Matowitz characterized the episode simply as an “unfortunate occurrence”—but once again the elusive “Smiling Joe” had made the police look like idiots.

They didn't feel any better about it, no doubt, when Joe and a companion hit the City Savings & Loan Company on Hayden Avenue for \$3,100 five days later, and the Belkin Neckwear Company at 710 Prospect Avenue for about \$5,000 worth of loot a few days after that. Not that Joe's life was unalloyed success and joy: at the end of January compatriot Charles Frisco was sentenced to a life term, thanks in part to the testimony of George Kekic. By now Kekic had also revealed to the police some of his erstwhile friend's indiscreet confidences about the Veryk killing, and the police had a desirable Murder One charge to add to their Filkowski file.

After the Belkin Neckwear job, Filkowski seemed to vanish from the streets of Cleveland. Or so the police thought. In fact, Filkowski, long concerned about the recognizability of his bumpy, misshapen nose had decided to do something about it. In late February of 1931, he entered the Cleveland Clinic for a nose job. Operated upon by an unsuspecting Dr. William V. Mullin, Joe stayed several weeks in the comfort of the hospital while the dragnet swirling outside it sought one of the most publicized faces in



Cleveland. He had a few close calls: He came out of the ether murmuring “Mary! Mary!”—the name of his illicit paramour—and he would later claim that he shared a room for 45 minutes with Prosecutor Ray T. Miller. Subsequently, his new beak was well publicized in the Cleveland newspapers, much to the chagrin of the humiliated police. But such exposure was not all to the good, for both the reporters and the police, unable to find him, took to publicly goading the sensitive Joe. Attacking his masculinity, they took to calling him “The Powder Puff Bandit” and accused him—retailing scurrilous stories provided by a vengeful George Kekic—of eluding the law by masquerading as a woman in powder, rouge, and dresses. As he told a credulous Press reporter:

“Two weeks ago I saw Filkowski in women’s clothes in a small coupe at Professor Avenue and Literary Road. He was hatless. He’d had his hair marcelled. Joe was wearing a dark dress. His face was powdered and roughed and his lips were painted bright red. . . . Joe is a powder puff bandit; he always carries a powder puff because of his strawberry nose. He’s yellow. I’d like to run across him.”

Maybe it was because of the taunts, maybe it was in retaliation for George’s treatment of Mary. (Joe would always maintain that George beat and mistreated Mary.) She had been hiding somewhere, probably Detroit, with Joe for most of the first nine months of 1931, and George filed child neglect charges against her when she returned to Cleveland in September. (Interestingly, Mary’s legal defense was handled by Edward C. Stanton, who had apparently forgiven Joe’s 1924 threat to “get” him and who didn’t inform the authorities of a little consulting visit Public Enemy No. 1 paid him in the fall of 1931).

Whatever his motivation, Joe surfaced with a vengeance on the night of October 17. In the wee hours he broke into George Kekic’s home at 2467 West 5th Street and made his way to the room where George was sleeping with his son and two-year-old daughter. The enraged “Smiling Joe” smashed a gun butt across George’s forehead and screamed, “Take that, you ——!” Apparently, George had been educated in the same tough school as Joe, for as he pushed the baby away from his pillow, he reached underneath and pulled out a pistol. Both men shot simultaneously, both missed in the darkness, and Joe fled out the door. George got off another round through the door, and he heard Joe scream “He got me!” as he ran out of the house.

No one knew it, but the Filkowski Reign of Terror in Cleveland was over. Even as Mary was put on probation, Joe healed from his back wound at a Webb Road speakeasy and then left for a new career in Chicago. Apparently he did pretty well there, especially after Mary joined him and provided her wonted comforts. Once again, though, his luck ran out, just as he and a crook named Morris Cohen were about to rob the Liberty Trust and Savings Bank. But the Chicago police yet had lessons to learn from their Cleveland peers. As Joe was accosted by Chicago detectives Harry Land and Harry Miller outside the bank, he got the drop on them, leveling no fewer than three guns at the surprised lawmen. He and Morris took them several miles away and turned them loose without their guns. Chicago had become too hot for Joe, and he and Mary decided to go for the big time in New York City.

Two months later, Joe Filkowski was captured by a large squad of Cleveland and New York detectives as he walked down West 47th Street in New York City in front of the Hotel America. Entrapped by a bogus correspondence with Cleveland detectives Patrick McNeeley and Bernard Wolf, who convinced him they were stolen jewelry “fences,” Joe had set up a meeting with them at the Hotel America, just a block from Times Square. They spotted him from their stakeout at the Hotel Somerset coffee shop, and they wrestled the desperate gangster to the pavement a minute later in front of hundreds of amazed spectators. Joe’s take on this downturn in his fortunes was typically insouciant and differed remarkably from that of his captors. He claimed he had been brutally beaten: “How the hell was I to know what them dicks were doing? They come up behind me and grabbed me. I thought it was a stickup. You never know about this town.”

A physician’s business card in Joe’s wallet soon led them to his Long Island gangster lair, where they found Mary Kekic, an “arsenal” of guns and ammo, and \$100,000 in stolen diamonds. As the newspapers happily reported, Mary stoutly insisted the guns and gems were her sole personal property. Joe, for his part, was dressed for his apprehension in a wardrobe even James Cagney could not have faulted: a new gray suit, a light gray fedora, and a blue double-breasted overcoat. Even in captivity, it was noted almost admiringly, he still had his widely publicized swagger and an angry insistence that the reports of his makeup and wardrobe of women’s clothes were widely exaggerated: “What do you think I am? A sissy? I never did anything like that. You got a lot of nerve asking me a thing like that. I’m no sissy. I never had to hide behind a woman’s skirts.”

He didn’t get a chance to hide behind Mary’s. She wasn’t kidding when she said, “I’m no squealer,” and she was packed off to a two-to-four-year term at New York’s Auburn State Prison on a charge of possessing stolen jewels the week before Joe’s murder trial opened on April 11. His lawyers, Maurice J. Meyer and Walter S. Plotrowicz, did their best, but they didn’t have much to work with. Two of the laborers who saw Anthony Veryk gunned down identified Joe as the triggerman, and a third, Oliver Raeder, although initially uncertain, exclaimed “Sho! That’s the man!” when County Prosecutor Frank T. Cullitan made the six-foot Filkowski stand up in the courtroom. Joe was visibly unhappy about having to identify himself, and his palpable resentment deepened as witness Louis Kelly described him as “looking like he just came from a beauty parlor” as he fled the Veryk murder scene.

Joe repeatedly took the Fifth Amendment regarding his numerous robberies, and the best counterwitness the defense could offer was Charles Silver, who swore Joe wasn’t the man he saw running from the Veryk murder scene. The jury was probably more impressed by anonymous threats made against two of the prosecution’s witnesses. They may also have noticed the unprecedented security measures taken with Joe, who was surrounded in court by seven burly deputies with more guarding the doors. As expected, Joe Kekic testified with special relish against his former friend.

Joe himself did not make a good impression, testifying on April 15 in what hostile reporters described as a “high-pitched,



hoarse voice . . . a little boy's voice coming from a six-foot muscular man." The climax came the next day, as Prosecutor Cullitan made his last, impassioned pitch to the six-man, six-woman jury: "This dirty dog despoiled the wife of his best friend. . . . Human life is a precious thing. Joseph Filkowski, when you put a gun against the body of poor Anthony Veryk and pulled the trigger hurling him into eternity unprepared and unshriven, you usurped the power of God with your dirty hands!"

The sensitive Joe couldn't take it anymore. Leaping to his feet, his face twitching and his eyes streaming with tears, he shouted at Cullitan, "You—you're guilty—more guilty than I am!" Maurice Meyer tried to repair the damage, noting that he had once prosecuted the state's chief witness—George Kekic—for rape and asserting that his client was simply paying the price for so long and so successfully humiliating the Cleveland police:

"A man can't go to the electric chair to satisfy the whims of the Cleveland police department. The police bungled the Veryk murder like they bungled so many other murders but they should not take their unsolved crimes from the mystery book and pin them on Joe Filkowski. The state is out for blood. They want their pound of flesh. The police got mad at Filkowski because he made fools of them, but death should not be the penalty for making fools of the police department."

The jury went out that afternoon and returned after two hours and 45 minutes with a verdict of guilty of first-degree murder—with a recommendation of mercy. Two days later Judge Frederick P. Walther sentenced Joe to life in the Ohio Penitentiary, with an additional condition that he spend every June 6—the day he killed Anthony Veryk—in solitary. Joe expressed amazement that he hadn't been found innocent and was packed off to Columbus under heavy guard.

A betting man might have wagered that this was the penultimate chapter of the Joe Filkowski story, and that he would soon end up on a slab like John Leonard Whitfield, the daring 1923 Cleveland cop killer whose abortive 1928 prison escape ended in a fatal blast of gunfire. If Joe didn't, it wasn't for lack of trying. An incorrigible prisoner, he participated in no fewer than three plots to break out of the Ohio Penitentiary. The first came in 1934, when Joe and Howard Beauman, another lifer, conspired to blast their way through the wall with seven or eight other cons. It was a harebrained, dangerous scheme involving lots of nitroglycerin, an underground tunnel, and the help of Howard's psychopathic brother, an escapee from Lima State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. It came to naught when a visitor to the prison found an elaborate cryptogram that, when decoded, gave away the plan. Shots fired by a prison guard on the night of February 28, 1936, halted an attempted breakout over the wall by Filkowski and two accomplices, armed with improvised knives and fake pistols made from machine-shop metal. A similar plan ended in fiasco in December of that same year, when an unsympathetic fellow prisoner alerted prison authorities by setting his bed on fire at the critical moment. The odds on Joe dying in prison or trying to get out of it just kept climbing.

But the years went by . . . and then something wonderful, something amazing and almost unbelievable began to happen. George Kekic had divorced his faithless wife Mary in the wake of Joe's trial, and when Mary got out of Auburn State in the mid-1930s she discovered she was still in love with "Smiling Joe" Filkowski. She wrote to him in prison and told him to go straight, and, after seven years, he began to change under her affectionate suasion. The years went by, and Joe left one parole hearing after another a disappointed man, but Mary never gave up. While he was learning a new trade as a first-class baker in the prison kitchen, she nagged each succeeding governor of Ohio on Joe's behalf. Warden Ralph Alvis was the first man of authority to believe in Joe's rehabilitation, and he made him a trusty, eventually allowing him to work on the construction of the new prison in Marion.

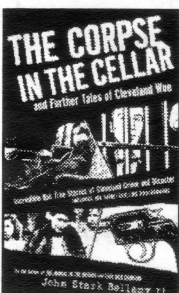
Astonishingly, Mary's perseverance and Joe's authentic regeneration paid off. On April 15, 1963, Joe was released from prison after serving 30 years, 11 months, and six days. Three months later, on July 6, 1963, Joe and Mary were married at St. John Cantius Catholic Church in Tremont, within sight of his childhood haunts and the scenes of his bloody deeds. The Phantom of the South Side had at last been tamed by something even stronger than his guns or the law: the enduring love of a good woman.

So—What does this story have to do with genealogy? Well, if your surname is Filkowski, it does mean something. But to most of us, it's just a story. It says a lot however, about the South Side in the 1930's, where and when some of us grew up.

The South Side was like an ethnic enclave in the city. And the rest of the citizens of Cleveland did not have a very favorable opinion of the residents who lived there. This is where the lower classes lived; the poor, the emigrants—where our mothers and fathers lived when they arrived here. During the depression, jobs were practically nonexistent, crime and delinquency rates were high and one good citizen of Cleveland advocated "sterilization" of some of the Tremont residents to cure some of the social ills. Life was not "just a bowl of cherries". And some of the children didn't become exactly model citizens.

But that's the way it was. So, was Joe Filkowski a victim of the times? Would he have turned out differently had he been born in another time? In another place? Or was this his destiny?

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