

Our Polish ANCESTORS

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND

JUL/SEP 2022 VOL. 31 NO. 3

Researching My Polish American Assimilation Timeline: How an address provided a key piece to my genealogical puzzle

by Mary Louise Hill

According to Wikipedia, “an estimated 9.15 million self-identified Polish-Americans constitute around 2.83% of the United States population.” I suspect that number is a few million shy of being accurate. “Self-identified” is the key word here. If every American tested their DNA, thousands would find they are, like me, the child or grandchild of first- or second-generation Polish Americans who forfeited their parents’ culture in favor of their adopted culture. In 1927, my grandparents had plenty of reasons to try to “pass” into American society. They were burdened by negative stereotypes and tarnished by rumored family association with an assassin. Seemingly un-surmountable barriers blocked their road to success. Families choosing to erase their past could produce unhyphenated “Americans” with dim to little awareness of actual ethnic background in a mere generation.

I was not totally clueless about my Polish ancestry. Grandma’s cooking gave it away. Her strudel, homemade noodles, cucumber salad and pork chops were not American fare. I nagged her for two decades, until she finally broke down, a few years before she died, and conceded that her father came from Suwałki, Poland, and emphasized how difficult her childhood was. She refused any further conversation on the topic.

Despite her best efforts to erase it, I’ve been pursuing my Polish family tree ever since. My research into my father’s family provides a prototype for many early twentieth-century Americanization stories. This article focuses on houses, and how I owe a lot of my success, in piecing together my family’s assimilation timeline, to a specific address.

I. How to erase the “Polish” in “Polish-American.”

Surnames have always been a dead give-away for Poles, so successful assimilation requires a name change, preferably replacing the multi-syllabled “ski” name with a single, neat, Anglo syllable. Members of my paternal grandfather’s family took two different approaches to Americanizing my original family name, Górzyński.

- Shorten it to Gore.
- Translate part of it – góra - to Hill.

.....continued on page 8

Inside this issue:

Researching My Polish American Assimilation Timeline: How an address provided a key piece to my genealogical puzzle	1
Letter from the President	2
Genealogy 101: A Genealogist’s Guideline	3
Remember When: Hal- loween	4
Booshy’s Favorite Song	5
What’s Polish in the Historical Cleveland Plain Dealer?	7

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.

The Polish Genealogical Society





Letter from the President



Witam i zapraszam:

As you read this issue, Fall will be in the air. Those lovely leaf colors will be near, along with cooler temperatures. It is a lovely time of the year but all too short. Many of us have taken a holiday from serious genealogical work. Consider this time as a chance to still do some genealogical work. Have you considered visiting the cemetery plots of family members and perhaps refreshing the view of their gravestones that may have sunken a bit or could use a nice cleaning? It is a way of paying tribute to those ancestors. It might be a good time to attend some of the church festivals that are so popular this time of year. Refresh your cultural connections and visit the churches that were so much a part of our ancestors' life and, often, support the newer groups of immigrants as they did ours. Their beauty can be inspirational.

Regarding festivals, the PGSGC will be attending with a booth at the St. Stanislaus festival, October 7-9. St. Stanislaus is one among several early Cleveland area churches that served the Polish community in so many ways. At our booth, we look to make the Polish community aware of our existence and how we might serve their ancestry search and learn more about Polish history and culture.

Bernadette Berger continues to lead our publicity efforts at these ethnic festivals and other venues. We thank her. The efforts to promote the PGSGC have borne fruit with the adding of several new members this past summer.

PGSGC brings benefit to all its members and with our communal knowledge. I ask those of you who live locally to consider coming to our meetings. The programs are informative and while Zoom is convenient, it cannot replace the personal exchanging of methods and stories with fellow members.

This is your genealogical society and it is only as strong as our combined contributions. There remain many areas in need of volunteers or leaders. Please contact me, or any officers, to offer your help.

Michael E. Speare, President

Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland

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

<https://pgsgc.org>
www.facebook.com/groups/pgsgc



Officers:

President:	Michael Speare	(330) 634-6673	president@pgsgc.org
V. President:	Richard Szczepinski	(330) 274-2064	vicepresident@pgsgc.org
Treasurer:	Ben Kman	(216) 469-9670	treasurer@pgsgc.org
Secretary:	Don Demor	(330) 437-5937	secretary@pgsgc.org



Genealogy 101: A Genealogist's Guideline

by Michael Speare

I was listening to an author on the radio speak about the errors he made in starting his writing career and getting published. He did this with good humor because some of them seemed so self-evident, like trying, at first, to write a mystery set in the time of Henry VIII when he had no idea about court life in 1500. It got me thinking about what I would tell my younger self about getting started with genealogy. So here is my list. You probably know all of them but like good manners, you can never remind yourself too often.

1. **Talk to your other relatives.** Maybe they don't remember the town grandma said she was from but they may remember conversations with grandma. As an example, a cousin mentioned at a funeral, "Grandpa once told me he had to walk to town to buy a casket for his father when he was thirteen." At that time, I had no idea when his father died but piecing the information together helped me narrow my search to one of the many Jozef L's listed on Geneteka.com. It also added to my knowledge about my grandfather's childhood. Share these stories with the next generation.
2. **Believe and don't believe family legends.** Let me explain. Most family legends have an element of truth, but dates and details might lose some accuracy in retelling, memories fade or embellishments are added (meeting the President replaces shaking the mayor's hand). As an example, legend had it that my grandfather came alone to the United States at age sixteen. He did come alone on the ship, but he was eighteen and he came to a coal mining town where several men from his village were already there and several had last names that indicated they had some family connection to my grandfather. The message here is, be critical but don't toss the legend out entirely. Set them aside until they can be verified or adjusted based on real information.
3. **Organize.** Our research is often just somewhere in that box. How much time do we waste going through the same piles of paper repeatedly searching for that picture or document we now need? It is never too late to organize. Many books are written on organizing. Don't overly complicate it. Find something that works for you, but get some file folders and begin the next time you discover something new or handle an old bit of information.
4. **Invest in a good scanner.** You have many documents and pictures that can get lost or deteriorate with time. Scan their images and save them to your computer. Label them with meaningful names. Use grandma's name, 90th birthday month/date/year instead to just grandma. This will save you the problems outlined in "Organize" above. Also, in pictures, add a second copy with an added "A" to the file name and identify, by name, who is in the picture. Use full names and relationships in the description, not just "Fred". You may know who Fred is, but will your grandson know that he is Uncle Fred married to your Aunt Magda who is next to him in the picture?
5. **Pay a professional.** Facebook is filled with people asking for translations of important family documents. If it is really important, consider paying a professional translator. There are many online translators such as <https://genealogytranslations.com/>. They are fast, accurate and reasonable and some time offer additional information. One of my translators pointed me to a website that offered a video tour of the church that was in my grandfather's baptismal document. It was priceless. Similarly, if you are really stuck, think about hiring a professional genealogist to get you over that months-long roadblock.
6. **Get creative.** When searching, play with spellings on your searches. I was fortunate in having a great aunt who was naturalized and thus able to identify the ship she arrived on with my great grandmother and grandmother. Without that, I could never have located them as the person digitizing the records transcribed the very fancy "P" that began their surname as a "Q". I have written Ellis Island several times to correct their database, but the error is still there. Think about Smith as possibly being Smyth, Smit, or Schmidt.
7. **Get more creative.** Do you know the place where your ancestor came from? Have you thought of searching immigration records on Ancestry.com, or other databases, and only searching for immigrants from that location? I did that with my grandfather and found over four hundred people listed with many different

.....continued on page 11



Remember When: Halloween

by John Prokop

It was the night that every kid waited for. It required careful planning of what you would be for Halloween. What cartoon character, animal, or hero/heroine would you be? It seemed like it was forever for the school day to end. You tried to accumulate as much candy as your bag or pillowcase could hold.

You went to every house that had a porch light on or a jack-o-lantern lit up. You must have climbed up and down one thousand steps by the end of the night. The houses that gave you money or your favorite candy you visited more than once. Pennies were nice, nickels were better and dimes were gold mines! You recited short poems or memorized verses to say in addition to the traditional “trick or treat” greeting. I remember one that said, “Halloween is coming, the goose is getting fat. Please put a penny in the old man’s hat. If you have no penny, a dime will do, but if you have no dime, then God Bless you!” My favorite was “Trick or treat, smell my feet; give me something sweet to eat, because I haven’t washed them for a week!”



A lot of kids couldn’t afford fancy or expensive costumes so they or their parents made their own. It was easy to be a hobo/bum, a ghost, cowboy, or Indian. If you were lucky and were invited to a party or belonged to Scouts (I sure did) we always had a Halloween Party on the day of Den Meetings or the night of Scout Meetings. That almost always meant Halloween cupcakes would make an appearance and there was nothing like those chocolate cupcakes with orange frosting with sprinkles, candy corn, or candied pumpkins on top.

I remember having a bar of soap (Ivory of course because it was cheap and large) although we only got a small piece of it. We would soap the windows of businesses on East 79th Street. We would draw pictures, write our names, or just make wild marks. We never did any true acts of vandalism though. The merchants easily washed off their windows with plain water the next morning.

How about “Beggar’s Night”? We would have a few callers, but my mother never budged. She always told them to come back the next night. We never could find out where she hid the candy, and you would see it until right before dusk.

Your worst nightmare was rain on Halloween Night. What a mean curse to have your fun night shortened or curtailed because of rain. The cold nights were bad enough, but you could always wear your winter coat over your costume and keep on trucking. The rain however, made leaves on the street, sidewalks and steps slick.

How old could you be and still get away with trick or treating? I think for me it was thirteen years old. It seemed like once puberty hit you had other things on your mind, or people would ask “Aren’t you too old to be trick or treating?” You would trick or treat from dusk until maybe 8:00pm.

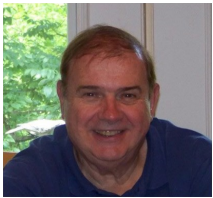
Blessed were the days when Halloween fell on a Friday or Saturday, which meant no school the next day. You could keep on enjoying that candy the very next morning and all day long. Trading candy with your brothers or



sisters was fun and quite the bonus if your favorite wasn't theirs and vice versa. You bartered like a Wall Street trader!

No one tried to poison us, molest us, or put us in harms way. We knew just about everyone in the neighborhood by name and face. If someone's porch light was off, it merely meant "stay away and don't bother us." There were no gangs, drugs or danger lurking on our special night. Parents accompanied their smaller children. We were safe and innocent, and so were those times.

This article is reprinted from St Casimir Alumni Newsletter of East 82nd & Sowinski Ave Cleveland, Ohio, with their permission.



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

Booshy's Favorite Song

by Trina Goss Galauner

This musical piece "The Shepherdess" was in a piano songbook that I was practicing when I was 9 years old. My great grandmother, Agatha Mliczek, who we affectionately called Booshy, recognized the tune immediately when I played it and joyfully sang along in Polish. I was told she was singing about the days of the week. I will never forget the smile on her face. Booshy was born in the small village of Samokleski near the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains in southeastern Poland. She immigrated to the United States in 1911.

Thirty-five years later, I found the music with the Polish lyrics in a Polish haying song called "W Poniedziałek Ra-no." See the lyrics and full musical piece on page 6 of this publication.



ON A MONDAY MORNING

W Poniedziałek Rano
Polish Haying Song

*English version by Edmund Lukaszewski

Folk melody
Arr. by Edmund Lukaszewski

1 On a Mon - day morn - ing, sun - ny Mon - day morn - ing,
1. *W po - nie - dnia - tek ra - no, ko - sił - oj - cieć sia - no,*

Sowed our seed, *ta - tuś** and I, Sowed it when the sun was high.
Ko - sił - oj - cieć, ko - sił - ja, Ko - si - liś - my o - by - dwa.

Sowed our seed, *ta - tuś* and I, Sowed it when the sun was high.
Ko - sił - oj - cieć, ko - sił - ja, Ko - si - liś - my o - by - dwa.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2. On a Tuesday morning, sunny Tuesday morning,
 : Mowed our hay, <i>tatuś</i> and I,
Mowed it when the sun was high : | 2. <i>A we wtorek rano, grabił ojciec siano,</i>
 : <i>Grabił ojciec, grabił ja,</i>
<i>Grabiliśmy obydwu. : </i> |
| 3. On a Wednesday morning, sunny Wednesday morning,
 : Dried our hay, <i>tatuś</i> and I,
Dried it when the sun was high : | 3. <i>A we środę rano, suszył ojciec siano,</i>
 : <i>Suszył ojciec, suszył ja,</i>
<i>Suszyliśmy obydwu. : </i> |
| 4. On a Thursday morning, sunny Thursday morning,
 : Raked our hay, <i>tatuś</i> and I,
Raked it when the sun was high : | 4. <i>A we czwartek rano, zwoził ojciec siano,</i>
 : <i>Zwoził ojciec, zwoził ja,</i>
<i>Zwoziliśmy obydwu. : </i> |
| 5. On a Friday morning, sunny Friday morning,
 : Hauled our hay, <i>tatuś</i> and I,
Hauled it till the dusk was nigh : | 5. <i>A zaś w piątek rano, sprzedał ojciec siano,</i>
 : <i>Sprzedał ojciec, sprzedał ja,</i>
<i>Sprzedaliśmy obydwu. : </i> |
| 6. On a Saturday morning, sunny noon and evening,
 : Sold our hay, <i>tatuś</i> and I,
Sold it when the night was nigh : | 6. <i>A w sobotę rano, przepił ojciec siano,</i>
 : <i>Przepił ojciec, przepił ja,</i>
<i>Przepiliśmy obydwu. : </i> |
| 7. On a Sunday morning, bright and sunny morning,
 : Bowed our heads, <i>tatuś</i> and I,
Thanked the Lord who dwelled on high. : | 7. <i>A w niedzielę z rana, już nie było siana,</i>
 : <i>Płakał ojciec, płakał ja,</i>
<i>Płakaliśmy obydwu. : </i> |

*By permission of
Lynn Rohrbough Cooperative Recreation Service, Delaware, Ohio* *Tatuś* (tá-'toosh) diminutive of father



What's Polish in the Historical Cleveland Plain Dealer?

“Sowinski Was A Patriot”

Cleveland Plain Dealer, 14 June 1901

Polish citizens of Cleveland came out to a school council meeting set to discuss changing the name of Sowinski School. The school was named for General Sowinski, a Polish patriot. The argument for the change was brought through a petition signed by residents of the neighborhood and brought forward by school council member, Mrs. Taylor. The reason for the proposal was that students were ashamed of the name and often lied about their attendance there. Several opposing petitions were signed by Polish citizens claiming a name change would be an insult to the Polish community.



Józef Sowiński (1777–1831) was a Polish artillery general. After graduating from military school, he joined the Polish Army and was lieutenant during the Kościuszko Uprising in 1794. Pressed into service by the Prussian army, he fought for and received military honors under Prussia. Under Napoleon, Sowinski fought for the Poles against Russia and lost a leg during battle. After the Congress of Vienna, Sowinski commanded the Kingdom of Poland Army. During the November Uprising in 1830, Sowinski heroically defended the city of Warsaw against the Russians. After surrender negotiations, Sowinski was killed by the Russians.



SOWINSKI WAS A PATRIOT.

Polish Citizens Angry Over Proposal to Change Title of School Bearing His Name.

A great deal of indignation has been aroused among the Polish citizens of Cleveland by the proposition to change the name of Sowinski school. It has been interpreted as a direct slap at their nationality, and as an insult as gratuitous as useless and uncalled for. Several petitions have been circulated in opposition to the proposed action, and they are receiving the approval of nearly every Pole who sees them.

The excitement is really running very high over the matter, and Mrs. Taylor, the member of the school council who introduced the measure, is made the recipient of the bitterest denunciation. The principal of the school also comes in for her share of condemnation, although her friends declare she has had absolutely nothing to do with the matter under discussion. A local Polish newspaper, the *Polonia w Ameryce*, has in this week's issue a leading article in English, in which the feelings of the Polish people on this question are made public. It is said that they are a unit in opposition to the measure.

The statement that Gen. Sowinski, for whom the street was named, was an obscure personage whose name is not even found in the encyclopedias, is particularly distasteful. Sowinski was a Polish patriot, who fought on the side of Napoleon, and who, later, in 1831, although a cripple, led a Polish army against the Russians, and died fighting for freedom. The school council is petitioned, in no uncertain terms, to kill the proposed change.

IT'S STILL SOWINSKI.

School Council Decides Not to Change the Name of East End School.

The name of Sowinski school will not be changed. There was a delegation of forty residents in the Polish district near Sowinski school at the meeting of the school council last evening. They were prepared to make a strong protest but Mrs. Taylor, who had introduced the petition asking that the name be changed, moved that the resolution authorizing the change be laid on the table indefinitely.

This carried and the name will remain as it is. There was a smile on the face of every man of the delegation as he passed out of the room.



continued from page 1.....

Email conversations with William F. Hoffman at the Polish Genealogical Society of America informed me that my family’s strategy was typical. In sharing my story with others, I’ve discovered I’m surrounded by “invisible” Polish Americans. My husband, whose surname is “Nicolai,” discovered it was once “Nikolaiski.” A friend whose surname is “Zeilin,” admitted she was born “Zeilinski.” “And I have uncles who translated it to Green,” she added.

Assimilation is most successful if accompanied by relocation. When my father was born, Grandma and Grandpa Hill began their move away from Cleveland’s Warszawa neighborhood. They ultimately found an unfinished foreclosed home in Fairview Park, seventeen miles west of Cleveland’s Polonia. Purchased during the depression, they paid it off within six months. Dad grew up there as an only child. My siblings and I came to know this house as “Grandma’s House.” We grew up one mile away.

Six months after my birth in 1958, Grandpa died, taking his family story with him. My father and grandmother said little about him. They insisted we were American, even though we all knew they were hiding something.

During the conversation that revealed her father’s origin, Grandma let it slip that she and Grandpa Hill lived on the East Side for a while. She added, rather wistfully, “It was a nice house. He helped his father build it. A huge house. Everyone lived in it.” Though awed by that house, she wouldn’t say where it was. She also never mentioned that her maiden name – Doskey – was originally Dzieziekowski, and even senility couldn’t loosen her lips about my own surname being anything but Hill.

2. How I restored my Polishness.

Finding my true family name, as well as the outline of my paternal grandfather’s life story, took several years and included a trip to Poland. With the help of a Polish researcher, my husband and I visited the location of great-grandfather Marian Górzyński’s home village, Czarny Bryńsk. Now the scarcely populated headquarters for the Górznieńsko-Lidzbarski Landscape Park, we only saw one mid-nineteenth century still standing. (For a while, this house was listed as an Air B&B; I’ve recently found one other antique house in Czarny Bryńsk advertised there.)



Grandma Hill’s House, on the left. From 1932 bill of sale.



Author’s photo of a 19th century house in Czarny Bryńsk, Poland.



I was interested in seeing worked wood because Polish documents confirmed family lore that Górzyński men were carpenters. Great-grandfather, Marian, was a wheelwright when his first two daughters were born to his wife, Franciszka. One child died within two weeks. Their young family immigrated in 1881-2, first to the coal mines in Glen Lyon, Pennsylvania, then to Buffalo, New York. They had kids at every stop, eight total, with the last three born in Cleveland. This was where Marian and sons, Ladislav (Walter), Jozef (Joe), and Jan (John), finally built a home at 6722 Chambers Street. When I found that address, so many pieces of my mysterious family history fell into place.



6722 Chambers Avenue, Courtesy of Google Maps, 2019

The first time I googled it, I was delighted to discover the Górzyński Cleveland house still stands. I've never seen the inside of this house but I don't need to. Its paper trail has helped me understand the family's Cleveland saga. The 1895 Buffalo, New York census has them residing on Peckham Street, in the center of Buffalo's Polonia. Some time before the 1900 Cleveland City Directory, they moved to 46 Forman Avenue. By 1906, "Maryan Gurzinski" and his family lived at 6722 (old 86) Chambers Ave SE, four years prior to the house's official 1910 completion date (available on real estate records). I wonder if the Górzyński men built the house a floor at a time, or the family lived in a smaller structure on the lot while the main house was completed. The 1910 census claims that Marian, now often known as Frank, wife Franciszka, now Frances, and five of their eight children lived with them. My grandfather, Jozef, lived nearby, with his first wife, Zofia, and their son, Frank.

I hoped Marian Górzyński completed his American home before he died. His first name was barely legible on his 1914 death certificate, so the address helped me verify it was him.

His and other Górzyński deaths mirror the fates of many working-class Polish immigrants. His daughter, Tekla, died of sepsis in 1910 two days after childbirth. Her baby died, too. Joe's wife, Zofia, was the first to succumb to tuberculosis in 1912, followed that same year by his 18-year-old brother, Alfons. After Zofia's death, Joe moved back to Chambers Street, probably so his mother could raise his boy. In 1917, he married my grandmother, and for ten years, they lived as Jozef and Jadwiga Górzyński in the Chambers Street house. In 1920, elder brother Walter, his wife, two daughters and sister-in-law lived there too, as did a younger brother, John.

STATE OF OHIO BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
PLACER OF DEATH County of <u>Cuyahoga</u>	Registration District No. <u>5115</u> File No. <u>59488</u>
Township of _____	Registered No. <u>7822</u>
Village of _____	Primary Registration District No. _____
City of <u>Cleveland</u> (No. <u>6722 Chambers St. 14</u> Ward)	
FULL NAME <u>Marian Górzyński</u>	
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS	
SEX <u>M</u> (MALE OR FEMALE)	DATE OF BIRTH <u>Nov 15 1861</u>
AGE <u>52</u> (Years, Months, Days)	PLACE OF BIRTH <u>Poland</u>
OCCUPATION <u>Carpenter</u>	RESIDENCE <u>6722 Chambers St. Cleveland</u>
RELIGION <u>Catholic</u>	EDUCATION <u>None</u>
US BIRTH <u>No</u>	US RESIDENCE <u>Yes</u>
PARENTS MOTHER'S NAME <u>Jadwiga Górzyńska</u> FATHER'S NAME <u>Jan Górzyński</u>	DEATH DATE OF DEATH <u>Nov 11 1914</u> PLACE OF DEATH <u>Cleveland</u>
I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from <u>Nov 20 1914</u> to <u>Nov 11 1914</u> and that I last saw <u>deceased</u> alive on <u>Nov 9 1914</u> and that death occurred on the date stated above, at <u>52</u> years.	
The CAUSE OF DEATH* was as follows: <u>Heart Failure</u>	
I, the undersigned, being a duly qualified physician, certify that the above is true to the best of my knowledge.	
Signature of Physician <u>Edward J. [unclear]</u> Address <u>6722 Chambers St. Cleveland</u> Date <u>NOV 13 1914</u>	

Death certificate for Marian Górzyński, Courtesy of FamilySearch



Between 1920 and 1930, the house experienced more tuberculosis deaths. Walter died in 1921, and John in 1925. My grandfather contracted tuberculosis but survived. In one of the few stories Grandma told about him, we learned he spent time in a sanitarium.

My father was born in 1927, the same year Joe and Harriet Hill appeared in the Cleveland City Directory for the first time, living in a Newburgh Heights flat. In 1929 and 1930, Harriet Hill and her baby lived in Lakewood with Pauline Doskey, her mother. This was likely the year Joe spent in the sanitarium. The move to Fairview followed. In many ways, moving to the other side of the Cuyahoga River was like another immigration. In this one, they were finally able to shed any association with Poland and became, simply, Americans, climbing the ladder to success.

The Chambers house remained in the family for thirteen more years. By 1930, Great-Grandma lived there with her daughter Helen's family and two other grandchildren. A funny detail of the 1930 census is that Great-Grandpa was reported as living. My guess was that Franciszka, then seventy-years-old, illiterate, and barely able to speak English, was the informant. Late 1930s city directories disclosed that she shared the house with boarders. She died at home on New Year's Day, 1939. City records reported the house was sold in 1940 by Eddie Gore, grandpa's only remaining brother. All evidence indicated my grandfather had abandoned the family house years before, having established his Hill Family Home in Fairview.

Though I feel grateful for everything my grandparents sacrificed for their only son and, by extension, for me, I also mourn abandoned traditions, stories, and family members. My great-grandmother's final years break my heart, almost as much as the fate of Frank, my dad's only sibling. Truly a victim trapped in assimilation's margins, he was raised as a young Polish American. At age 18, the family transformed overnight, and he was expected to act American. Grandma openly detested him. We were always told he ran away to join the circus. Only recently, I discovered that saying "circus" glamorized what truly happened. Frank became an itinerant carnival worker and died alone. Once again, an address helped me confirm the 1958 death certificate was his, this time the address was Grandma's House in Fairview.

Several years ago, I began writing fiction about the family and traditions I never knew. St. Stanislaus Parish's Centennial Anniversary Book has helped me imagine Warszawa in the 1920s, as have many photos posted on Facebook by the Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland, articles available through Cleveland Historical and the Western Reserve Historical Society, and the Cleveland State University photo archive. My greatest resource, though, turned out to be something Grandma Hill left behind.

For a woman who refused to speak about her past, my grandmother kept a lot of old photos, all now in my possession. Most were of her family, few were marked. Among them I found two images of a house I assumed was her own family's. According to censuses, after leaving Grandma's birthplace in Berea, her family lived in several houses. Once again, Google maps helped me find them. I compared each to the unmarked photos. When I found my match, it was undeniable. These photos featured the Chambers Street Górzyński house as it appeared in the



From Harriet Doskey-Hill's photo collection, now in the author's possession.



early to mid 1920's when Grandma lived there. An avid photographer, she probably took the photos herself.

The fact she didn't destroy these photos leads me to believe my grandmother couldn't bring herself to totally abandon her past. She left them where they could easily be found by her ancestry-starved granddaughter. (They were accompanied by a copy of Berea's St. Adalbert's centennial book, which revealed her true surname.). She knew how tenacious I can be. I like to believe she wanted me to restore the memories these mementos represent, by hiding them in plain sight.

Biographical Note: Mary Louise Hill is a recently retired college English professor now devoting my time to writing fiction. My first attempt to set a story in Cleveland's Warszawa, "Tekla's Child", is available online in the October 2018 Poydras Review. Another story set in Berea's Polonia Tansy Tea was published in the Fall 2020 issue of Zone 3. I'm currently completing Doubly Cursed, a magical realist family saga, based on the stages in my family's immigration.

Genealogy 101 continued from page 3.....

surnames. Some I recognized as being the family names of witnesses, or sibling's married names. This opened a new area of research that built on my grandfather's extended family in Poland and the United States. One here, you may actually have the name of the town where your relative's parish was located not the actual town and/or village where he/she was born. Also, your immigrant ancestor may have indicated their origin as the nearest big city, as we might say Cleveland when someone asks where we are from when we actually live in Independence. In short, think like a detective in a mystery story when searching. Look for clues everywhere and in many forms.

8. **Verify, verify, verify.** In our anxiousness to capture relatives, dates or other facts, don't just copy what someone else has posted on genealogical sites. It is better to be accurate than fill your tree with lots of fluff. We all know people whose sole goal is to fill their tree with names so they can brag that they have 9,385 members in their tree. When you look at their media entries you see few birth, marriage, or death certificates. As an example, a distant relative of mine posted a picture purported to be my wife's grandmother at an early age. My wife and several cousins knew her well and challenged that picture. They have contacted the poster of this picture asking her to verify its authenticity several times with no reply. We now see that at least ten other people have captured this picture and added it to their trees. It is a nice picture, but it is not grandma.
9. **Backup digitized computer files.** It is not a matter of if but when your computer will crash. Backup using Google, Amazon Prime, or other free or paid services. Don't lose years of work.
10. **Have a succession plan.** Let an interested family member know about where and how your genealogy data is stored and how they can get access when you are gone. Have a plan to share passwords that give access to your computer and genealogy accounts. If you feel uncomfortable doing that now, put them in your estate documents. Some sites have a form that allows next of kin access such as Family Tree Maker "Tree Vault Next of Kin Certificate".

Schedule of Presentations for Upcoming Meetings

Oct: **FAN Out! Using Cluster Research to Break Through Genealogical Brick Walls**
Julie Szczepankiewicz

Nov: **Annual Holiday Party**

Dec: **Old Family Photos and Heirlooms: Bring those old family pictures and memory filled items to reminisce and share with the group**
Member participation

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: Michael Speare
E-mail: pgsgc@yahoo.com

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



Visit us on the web at:
<https://pgsgc.org>

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

About Us

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

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

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

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

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