



Our Polish ANCESTORS



THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE POLISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER CLEVELAND

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Good Joe Sawicki

By Trina Goss Galauner

In March of 1967 there was an honorary banquet held by the Cleveland Society of Poles. It was to honor the annual recipient of the organization's "Good Joe" award. According to the fraternal organization, a "Good Joe" was "the individual member who best exemplified our tradition of service to the community and brotherhood to our members and our city." The "Good Joe" for 1967 would be Judge Joseph F. Sawicki who was a founding member of the Cleveland Lodge of the Polish National Alliance, later to be known as the Cleveland Society of Poles. Judge Sawicki would spend his lifetime serving his community and nurturing Polish pride and culture in Cleveland.



Joseph F. Sawicki ca. 1911
From "The Poles of Cleveland"

Joseph Sawicki was born in Górzno, Poland on March 18, 1881 and baptized at Św. Jana Chrzciciela (St. John the Baptist parish) in that same city. His father was Piotr Sawicki, the son of Walenty and Franciszka (nee Chorazy), of the small village of Sumin. The Sawickis had a long lineage in Sumin and Warpalice villages. Joseph Sawicki's mother was Teofila Bogumila Jurkowski of Górzno, the daughter of Feliks Jurkowski and Julianna Majewska. Feliks was a Polish legionary patriot who escaped from Russia and settled in Górzno. He was known to be a military man with great intelligence and lived to a ripe old age.

Piotr and Teofila were married in Górzno on October 15, 1878. Much like his father-in-law, Piotr was a Polish nationalist and was forced to flee Poland when his anti-German sentiment caught the attention of the German authorities. According to some sources, he traveled to the U.S. first in 1883 and again in 1885. In any event, it is confirmed that he arrived on the SS Rugia on March 4, 1886. His wife and son, Josef, would follow in April that same year, however, their passenger record cannot be found.

1881		1881		
№	Infantis		nomen et cognomen	
	locus nativitatis	nomen	patris (infantis legitimi)	matris
24	Górzno	Joseph	Petrus Sawicki est.	Theophila n. Jurkowska est.

Baptismal Record of Joseph Sawicki, Górzno, Poland 1881

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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

Spring has just about left us and summer is right around the corner which brings with it gardening, lawn mowing, lots of yard work and all of the other outdoor chores that have had to wait for the warm summer months. At this time of year our PGSGC club will halt our monthly meetings and resume them on the "SECOND TUESDAY IN SEPTEMBER". This should give everyone enough time to bring our homes and surroundings back into tip-top shape. BUT, this is not to say that our genealogical searches must also take a break. This is now a good time to schedule visits with the senior members of our families, inquiring about what ever happened to Uncle Bob and his wife Maggie, as well as, their parents and grandparents. Ask questions and you might be surprised by what you learn.

We hope to continue to provide you with entertaining and useful programs that will enhance your genealogical endeavors. It is important to note that our club has at least 7 current members traveling to Poland or shortly on their way. This is some kind of record for us and we hope that the Polish Genealogical Society of Greater Cleveland had something to do with inspiring their interest in making those trips.

Have happy and safe summer. Hope to see you all in September.

President Ron Kraine



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) 235-1218	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



Remember When: My First Holy Communion

by John A. Prokop

May 19, 1957 was the day that I made “My First Holy Communion.” In Catholicism, it is a milestone for a child, because it is when you really connect with the tenets of your faith and begin to practice what you believe in. It is also one of the important “Three Sacraments of Initiation.”

In 1957, I was in the third grade at Saint Casimir’s School and Sister Mary Purisima was my teacher and catechism instructor for this important event. There would be an entire school year of study and practice to learn what was expected of me. I had already reached the “age of reason” and knew the difference between right and wrong. My conscience was now developed to grow in the Catholic faith and my soul was ripe for spiritual nourishment. It was not an easy task and would take from September to May to accomplish this spiritual journey and preparation. This journey would prepare me to participate in two very important sacraments, Penance (Confession) and Holy Communion. Because you must be sin free to receive Holy Communion, it is important to receive the sacrament of Penance beforehand because you cannot do one without the other.

Catechism would require memorization on a level that would compete with arithmetic. It would have helped if they had flash cards for catechism lessons. Like arithmetic, catechism had so many numbers, so many facts, so many operations, so many rules (fasting and abstinence,) so many symbols, so many sacramentals (medals, rosaries, candles, scapulars, prayer books, etc.), so many commandments, so many sins (mortal, venial and actual,) so many consequences and no room for errors, except for Confession. It was okay to error and sin, because God knew we were human and we would seek his love in earnest, just as we would seek his forgiveness. We would always be able to start over again, no matter what we thought, said, or had done. Forgiveness would be available for the rest of my mortal life.

It was also during this time when we learned about the concepts of reward, punishment and guilt. There were spiritual places that existed in our faith, where these concepts became real, intermittent, or eternal. We became familiar with places like Limbo, Purgatory, Heaven and Hell and how they would influence our future decisions and behaviors. The Catholic Faith was very complicated and had many moving parts and the laws and rules were so numerous we used our memory to keep them all categorized and relevant.

The beauty of all this information was that it was presented to us in terms of our age and innocence so we could understand and easily remember it. We would also learn how our faith would be rewarded, bring us peace, happiness, bring us closer to God and make us feel like we were part of something bigger than ourselves. We were now part of our “community of faith,” which was worldwide and also included the heavenly “communion of saints.”

I couldn’t sleep the night before my First Holy Communion. I tossed and turned and kept getting up wondering how much longer until I could finally get to church. I had a brand new blue suit and new pair of shoes to wear for that special day. My mother had prepared a big feast of food for my communion party and everyone in my extended family would be at church and the party afterwards to celebrate my newly awakened spiritual life.

I remember the day perfectly. We had a procession (holy parade) from the school down Sowinski Avenue into the church. The weather was a beautiful, sunny and mild spring day. We marched like Christian soldiers in perfect synchronization. We carried our prayer books and communion candles and our families proudly looked on taking pictures. The Mass seemed to last so long, until the Communion part. I remember taking the host on my tongue and really feeling like something wonderful and important had just happened in my life. I remember thinking that getting to heaven would be so much easier and better now that I had Holy Communion and Confession to help me get there. Prayer time following communion also seemed to be more reverent and uplifting. It seemed like I now had God’s ear when I talked and prayed to him.



Everyone was so happy for me afterwards. I had presents and gifts and so many pictures taken that day, both at the church and at home. However, I couldn't wait to change clothes after Mass so I could enjoy roughhousing with my cousins and friends. Later that afternoon, I had to redress and attend church to receive our scapulars at the communion rail. Receiving your first rosary, prayer book, or bible were common and much revered First Communion presents.

The next day we attended Mass in our communion outfits, then posed for pictures (taken by the East 79th Street Studio) on the church altar and then had the day off from school. When I got back from church I heard the wonderful news that my mother had delivered a new baby brother earlier that morning. I guess my new brother, David, was a real special gift and remembrance of my First Holy Communion.



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 Jennifer.

Good Joe Sawicki continued from page 1

The Sawicki family settled in Cleveland where Piotr worked as a bricklayer. Josef was educated at St. Stanislaus school and then St. Ignatius College where he graduated with honors. He chose to study law at Baldwin University and then went on to obtain a law degree from Western Reserve University in 1904. He passed the bar exam that same year and immediately began a law practice in Cleveland.

Joseph Sawicki had a keen interest in politics and public affairs (especially concerning the Polish community). A Democrat, he was one of the leading members of the Kosciuszko Club, a Polish democratic club. He rose in popularity as a political figure and in 1905 his community elected him to the Ohio State Legislature. Sawicki was the first Pole to hold a seat on the Ohio Legislature and the youngest member of the Assembly at that time at the age of 24. While a state representative, he served as vice chairman of the committee on banks and banking and also was the author of the "Sawicki Law" which was the first automobile law in Ohio. The original bill required drivers to register and be licensed by the Secretary of State of Ohio in which they paid a registration fee annually and vehicles were required to have the letter "OH" and the number of the vehicle on a plate. The fees went to the State Highway Department where they were used for road improvements.

Coming from a family with strong Polish nationalism it is no surprise that Joseph Sawicki was very involved with Polish arts, business and benevolent groups in Cleveland. He was a member of the Polish Falcons, the Polish-American Chamber of Industry, the Polish National Alliance, the Alliance of Poles of Ohio, and the Polish Singing Society.

In 1907, the Polish Singers of America held their convention in Cleveland. Miss Elizabeth Veronika Sadowska was a delegate from Detroit who came to the event. Sawicki was part of the reception committee at the affair. The two became acquainted where they learned that she was born only a short distance away from Sawicki's birthplace of Górzno. Elizabeth had arrived in the U.S. with her parents a few years after Sawicki, in 1889. Her father was a Polish nobleman who had lost his status and was forced to find work to provide for his wife and six children. He came to the U.S., established himself as a baker, sent for his family and became a prominent Polish American citizen in Detroit. After a short courtship, Elizabeth Sadowska and Joseph Sawicki were married on June 24, 1908 at Sweetest Heart of St. Mary's Polish Catholic Church in Detroit. They made their home in Cleveland on Fleet Avenue where Sawicki had his law practice.

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The Importance of Siblings in Genealogical Research

by Trina Goss-Galauner

One of my 3rd great grandmothers on my mother's side of the family has eluded me for some time. After finding the marriage record of my 3rd great grandparents, Antoni Sobiech and Maryanna Skowroński, in 1872 in Suchy Grund (Skrwilno) written in Russian Cyrillic script, my case went cold. Fortunately for me, after I deciphered the Russian script to Russian lettering to Latin to English, the marriage record yielded the parents of both spouses which would be invaluable as I searched further back in the surrounding villages and parishes.

Maryanna's birth year according to the marriage record was about 1851/1852. I searched high and low for her in the Skrwilno records but could only find one sister, Franciszka, born in 1857 and one brother, Franciszek, born in 1865. Certainly, her parents had more children, right? But they weren't baptized in the parish at Skrwilno. At the time of this finding, I had been ordering microfilm from the LDS library and I wasn't about to go on a wild goose chase ordering and reading films from multiple parishes in the surrounding area.

There are a wealth of Polish resources on the internet today that only need to be discovered. For several years I've used Geneteka

(<http://www.geneteka.genealodzy.pl/>) for searching mostly in Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Wielkopolskie, Pomorskie Towarzystwo Genealogiczne

(<http://www.ptg.gda.pl>) for searches in Pomorskie, and the Poznan Marriage Indexing Project (<http://poznan-project.psn.pl/>) to find marriages in the Poznan and surrounding area. If your ancestors are from any of these areas, especially on the borders, it is advisable to search all three. All of these sources are updated and added to regularly so if you don't find something today you may find it in the future.

I utilized these sources in a search for the Skowroński name. Maryanna's parents were Walenty Skowroński and Maryanna Rydzeński as indicated in Antoni and Maryanna's marriage record. I zeroed in on the Geneteka website in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie region where the Skrwilno parish records had been indexed. I did a wide search of births in Kujawsko-Pomorskie by placing a star * after the first four letters of the surname Skowroński. There were many births for Marianna Skowroński but no parent names included. So I scanned for any other possible children and one lone child named Jan, born in 1853, listed his father as Walenty and his mother as Marianna Raszyńska. The child was from Kipichy belonging to the parish of Świedziebnia not far from Skrwilno. It was worth investigating!

Searching for Świedziebnia in the catalog at the Family Search website (www.familysearch.org), I found that the films were digitized and available to me online. First, I looked for Jan's baptismal record in 1853 and when I found it I was able to verify that the correct spelling of his mother's maiden name was Rydzeński. This had to be Maryanna's brother! Quickly, I was able to find a daughter to Walenty Skowroński and Maryanna Rydzeński named Maryanna, my 3rd great grandmother! She was born in December 1850 in Kypichy and baptized in Świedziebnia. I was also able to find another sibling, Marcin, born in 1847 but no other children baptized before 1847 or after 1853 in Świedziebnia parish. So I can assume the family switched parishes after 1853 which would make sense when they show up in Skrwilno in 1857.



Sobiech siblings in the 1930s
Grandchildren of Antoni Sobiech and Maryanna Skowroński



Unfortunately, marriage records in the 1840s date range at Świedziebnia parish are not available to me online. Civil records were available and a preliminary search for the marriage of Maryanna's parents turned up nothing. I will check back later as Family Search adds more digitized records for online research.

So, when you can't find the person, find a sibling, and it may just lead you to genealogical gold!

Good Joe Sawicki continued from page 4

Joseph Sawicki served two terms on the Ohio Legislature from 1906-1907 and 1911-1912 while building his family and building his reputation across the state. He used his influence to encourage Polish patriotism and independence during World War I and was director of the National Polish Committee of America and chairman of the Polish Relief Committee of Ohio. In 1919, he was appointed a judge of the Cleveland Municipal Court where he served for six years. During this time he was honored by the Polonia Pertituta (Order of Restoration of Poland) in a ceremony in New York City on December 21, 1923 for his activities on behalf of his native country.

Sawicki had business interests in real estate and was president of the Progressive Building Company of Cleveland. He also held memberships in the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, the City Club, the Civic League, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Automobile Club and the Protective Order of the Elks Lodge No. 18. As founder and president of the Polish American Chamber of Commerce, he is credited with "the building of the 65th Street bridge, the 79th Street railroad extension and the high level Brooklyn-Lorain bridge".

The stock market crash hit many residents of Cleveland hard and Sawicki was no exception. Failed real estate transactions forced him into involuntary bankruptcy in 1930. Unable to pay his taxes, he wrote checks and the County Treasury department held them awaiting his contact that the funds were available. Unfortunately, an audit in the County Treasury department uncovered this impropriety in which Sawicki and many others were involved. The scandal became very public. It was also uncovered that Sawicki had borrowed many thousands of dollars from fellow attorney friends and their clients for campaign expenses of which he still owed. The Cleveland Bar Association looked unfavorably upon his unethical behavior and, despite Sawicki's intentions to pay his debts as soon as he could, the association demanded his resignation in 1933.

Joseph Sawicki returned to private practice but continued to promote Polish heritage in Cleveland. As Vice President of the Cultural Garden Federation, he worked to help establish the Polish Cultural Garden which was dedicated in 1934. In an address on the Polish Garden in November 1953, Joseph Sawicki said: "The Cleveland Cultural Gardens, together with the Polish Garden are symbolic of hope, that the day may dawn when jealousy, suspicion, hatred, and strife may forever cease and be supplanted by universal peace and friendship among all the peoples of the world. They are the expression of the hope, that the culture of nations may never be ruthlessly destroyed, but instead, reverently preserved as a sacred heritage for all posterity." No wonder he was named a "Good Joe".

Joseph F. Sawicki died in 1969 having lived a long life advocating for Poland and its people just as his grandpa. Feliks Jurkowski, did. His middle initial "F" must have stood for "Feliks".

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Russian Handwriting - Months

by Trina Goss Galauner

English	Russian Print	Russian Script
January	январь	январь
February	февраль	февраль
March	март	март
April	апрель	апрель
May	май	май
June	июнь	июнь
July	июль	июль
August	август	август
September	сентябрь	сентябрь
October	октябрь	октябрь
November	ноябрь	ноябрь
December	декабрь	декабрь

**Welcome — New Member — Witamy**

Donna & Jerry Borowski	donnaborowski1986@gmail.com	Varju, Piegza, Borowski, Wendzicki
Bernard & Barbara Borowski	boro42@sbcglobal.net	Zawislowski, Gdaniec, Wisniewski, Peplinska, Przedziecka
Robert & Mary Hillick	hillickrh@gmail.com	Famera, Wrozek, Numrich, Marzec, Bijak, Wiesniak, Kuziminski
Debora & Robert Hollingsworth	dhollingsworth77.dh@gmail.com	Nowakowski, Pasuit, Poplowski
Kathy Krieger-Caja	echobase57@aol.com	Najlepszy, Bartnik, Suchecka
Arthur Lauterer	a.lauterer@sbcglobal.net	Ostry, Ostapowicz, Grad, Polkovski, Boncic, Janka, Ceranowski, Oranski, Wisniewska, Cernofska, Kowalecki, Baranski, Tatulinski
Frank & Jane Najlepszy	draco1953@sbcglobal.net	Bober, Kucharski
Edward & Christine Ostry	edostryjr@gmail.com	Prus, Rzeszut
JoAnn & John Pogacnik	janezpog@adelphia.net	Giza, Nadolski, Redczuk, Bachorz, Dziwiszek, Bortnik, Juzwa, Dowkopolyj, Calka, Kluziak, Bednarek, Gorzelanczyk, Rucinski
Michael Polichuk	polichuk@sbcglobal.net	Tober
Barbara & Joseph Praisler	jjpraisler@aol.com	Sokolowski, O'Donnell, Stadler, Kaiser
David Reed	gmdaver1@aol.com	Szafranski, Zabiegala, Czaplinski, Szplet, Bienkowski, Mulewski, Chmielewski, Gajdzinski, Chojnowski, Lelicka, Luke
Tom & Maria Simbeck	tomsimbeck11@yahoo.com	Motulewicz, Sowul, Witusik
Dan & Marylu Sokolowski	danildo@roadrunner.com	Kolasinski, Sobiesinski, Unieski, Radzowski, Dmonoski
Marlyn Sokolowski	NA	Rosiak, Marsyciak
Ralph & Margaret Tatulinski	polish13@sbcglobal.net	Wienczek
Michael Wasko	beaker58@yahoo.com	Adam, Pfeiffer, Koch, Hartel, Glabisch, Grossman
Elaine Weiss	eaweiss515@gmail.com	Potocki
Gloria Mitchell	polish_gem@yahoo.com	Golej, Swiatkowski, Broski, Jeromin
Karen & Dave Trout	kt trout@aol.com	Wisniewski, Rozanski, Dylewska
Holly & Jerry Phillips	hollyannphillips63@gmail.com	Gawell, Bryk, Szarlej, Nowakowski, Cudecki, Raypoldt
Michael Sabiers	msabiers@hotmail.com	Kaczmarek, Mietkiewicz, Staszak, Mikula, Janicki, Prokop, Propkopas, Ceplickiute, Chaplik, Kalasunas, Katkaueskas
Les Rachocki	ljrachocki@gmail.com	
Mary Sobczak	m0as@aol.com	
Tory Wagner & Robert Torok	torywagner75@gmail.com	
Donna Bryk Gawell	dgawell@wideopenwest.com	
John & Laura Prokop	jet@ij.net	
Louise Kilgore		
George & Frances Zeglen		
Katherine & Lawrence Corridoni	corridonil@yahoo.com	Ksiazek
Virginia (Skwarlo) Tomon	virginianne17@gmail.com	Tomon, Szafranic, Kocaj

Answers: Russian Cyrillic Handwriting - Part I - Months

1) December *декабрь* 2) January *январь* 3) September *сентябрь*



How to Search the Digitized Microfilm at FamilySearch.org

by Trina Goss Galauner

Family Search (<https://www.familysearch.org/>) which is supported by the LDS library has started to make their microfilmed records available in digitized format right at the website. Under “search” click on “catalog”. From there, click on “place” and type in the name of the village you are looking for. If the village is too small and didn’t have its own parish you will need to determine the parish.

The website Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich (http://dir.icm.edu.pl/pl/Sownik_geograficzny/) is a geographical dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland and other Slavic lands. The site is in Polish but you can type in the village name and click “szukaj”. It will take you to the dictionary page with an explanation of the powiat (county), gmina (district) and parish for that village. Occasionally, there may be several villages by that name so you will have to determine which one your ancestor is more likely from. If you know the general area of Poland they came from (German Poland, Russian Poland, Galicia, etc.) that may be enough to send you in the right direction.

Once you know the county (powiat), go back to the Family Search catalog online and search by place by typing in the name. Scroll down the list until you find the district (gmina). Click on the district and then click on the entry for that district and the index of microfilmed records available will appear. At that point you can click on the years you are interested in and see if they are searchable. Scroll down the list. If there is a camera icon  next to the film, the digital images are available to you online at home. A camera with a key above it  indicates it isn’t available online but can be viewed digitally at the Family History Library or at the Medina County Public Library. A microfilm reel icon  means that the film is available to read at the Family History Library but is not yet digitized.

Hopefully, you can view the digital images online from your home. Be sure to look at all the entries. In some cases, the same records have been filmed multiple times and only one set has been digitized. I have found that about 75% of the time the records I’m looking for are available to me digitally online. Once you find the correct film and start to search, you will see the small village name pop up within the records so you know you are searching in the right place. Good luck reading and deciphering the records!

PGSGC website in limbo

Back in November, Rootsweb took their site down until further notice in response to a breach of security. Rootsweb is the host of our organization’s website. We have been waiting patiently and hoping the website will be active again soon. We apologize for any inconvenience this has caused to our members. We will let you know as soon as it is up and running again.

Schedule of Presentations for Upcoming Meetings

Sep: ***Szukajwarchiwach.pl Tutorial***
Presentation showing how to navigate the szukajwarchiwach.pl website by Ben Kman

Oct: ***Best Polish Genealogical Strategies***
Join Jonathan Shea and Lisa A. Alzo on this hour-long journey to find your roots in Poland. We’ll explore both online and traditional methods for tracking down Polish record resources, translating records, and discuss how to contact Polish archives and repositories. Recorded video.

Nov: **TBD**

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.