

THE POLES IN BOSTON
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Boston Town Historian
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The Poles in Boston, Erie County, New York represent an ethnic community not unlike the others who settled in town. Like those who came before them, they had to earn their way by hard work and perseverance. They also had to overcome the language barrier. Today they are fully integrated into American society and are well represented in the professional classes. It is my duty to accurately document their history. Extensive annotation isn't necessary, for I am intimately familiar with the facts and have already written extensively on the subject. A special thank you goes to Supervisor Martin Ballowe for giving his blessing to proceed with this research project.

Head to the hills. The Boston Hills' Polish community has traditionally been located on the West Hill between the hamlets of North Boston, East Eden, Patchin and Boston, with a significant group extending east of the hamlet of Boston onto the East Hill. Naturally, the settlement spilled over into the surrounding townships of Eden (especially), Concord and Colden.

Stories suggest that there were advertisements in Polish parish bulletins in Buffalo for settling in the Boston Hills. It is documented that Fr. John Pitass (1844-1913) --who arrived in the United States in 1873 and is considered the founding Father of Buffalo's Polonia!-- was instrumental in helping to found some of the city's outlying Polish settlements.

The Boston Hills' Polish community was a secondary settlement comprised of migrants from other established communities. Few, if any, came directly from Poland, and those who settled in town were not exclusively from any specific region of Poland either (they were, however, very likely from the countryside back home, as most Polish immigrants were). Those who migrated from Buffalo and Lackawanna moved out of the city as soon as they were able to do so, having saved enough money for a better life in the country. Some, you might say, simply passed through the city to live in the country again, gladly resuming their cherished agrarian lifestyle.

It is very likely that the first Poles in Boston were seasonal farm workers, who eventually bought property of their own. The very attractive countryside of the Boston Hills must have been quite appealing to them, but I'm sure that hard work kept many of them far too busy to enjoy it. It certainly wasn't like today, where you often find people with too much time on their hands, and nothing to do but cause trouble. An old farmer never really quits working, he just works less.

In 1966, Boston's outstanding historian, Charles Bradley, in his publication, *A Brief History of the Town of Boston*, wrote the following: "As the hill farms were cultivated, the top soil washed away and they became unproductive. Many of these farms on the west hill were bought by Polish emigrants [*sic*], who by hard work and long hours have succeeded in making a living in spite of the poor soil." And, in a parish timeline for St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church in the hamlet of Boston, for the year 1900: "Many people of Polish descent move to the Boston area."

The move to Boston, Hills that is. Although no Poles are found recorded in Boston on the 1892 New York State Census, enumerated in February of that year, old assessment records reveal that the first resident property owner was Peter Pomarzyński, documented in August 1892.²

Peter Pomarzyński was born on June 23, 1845 in Jabłówko near Żnin south of Bydgoszcz in the Prussian partition of Poland.³ His parents, Thomas Pomarzyński and Marianna *née* Zdrojewska,⁴ were members of the parish of Chomętowo, where Peter was baptized.

On February 23, 1873 Peter took a young bride from his home parish named Josepha Odziemczewska (born 1853), a daughter of Joseph Odziemczewski and Marianna *née* Górecka. The couple started a family, but children came only sporadically. A son Joseph was born in 1874.

Probably due to poverty and a government policy of forced Germanization, the family left their native land for the United States in circa 1880. Along with other family, they settled in Buffalo and became members of St. Stanislaus Parish. A daughter Helen was born on January 2, 1884.⁵

On September 6, 1884 Peter filed a declaration of intent with Erie County in order to become a naturalized citizen. He was literate and signed his name as "Piotr Pomarzyński,"⁶ forever renouncing any former allegiance to the Emperor of Germany.⁷

In 1892 Peter and his family migrated south of the city to the Boston Hills and purchased property on the West Hill. To be precise, his property was part of Lot #25, located southwest of the point where the present Polish Hill Road meets Zimmerman Road. This is the point in space and time where the Polish community began to coalesce. Others followed, and in 1893 came Frankowski, Nowak and Żuławski.⁸ The settlement grew rapidly in the late 1890s.

Peter's life as a hard-working farmer in the Boston Hills was relatively short. He died on November 14, 1901 at the age of 56. His funeral was from St. John's, followed by burial in the parish cemetery. His gravestone (with a Polish language inscription) still survives to this day.

Peter's wife Josepha moved back to the city, but remained a nonresident property owner in Boston for a time. She died from a cerebral hemorrhage on April 12, 1925. She was waked from her last residence at 1197 Broadway in Buffalo, followed by her funeral from Corpus Christi Church. She was laid to rest next to her husband at St. John's.

The Polish Hill Road less travelled. It's hard to say precisely when Polish Hill Road was named. In 1930 the Poles living there were enumerated on the census as being located on nearby Zimmerman Road, even though they weren't. Polish Hill Road itself existed long before 1930, however, and was once located in the Town of Eden. The road now known as Polish Hill Road is so old; it existed before the Town of Boston was formed from Eden in 1817.

In 1939, while the Nazis were waging war destroying Poland, at home Polish Hill Road had

become firmly established. It was in that year that the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of New York State published a book entitled *Legal Width of Roads Town of Boston Erie Co. N. Y.*, which includes Polish Hill Road and the former Zientowski Road a little farther south.

At its greatest extent, Polish Hill Road began at Zimmerman Road and ran due east, down into the Boston Valley, where it crossed the Eighteen Mile Creek and terminated at Boston State Road.

Polish Hill Road was first reduced in size at a town board meeting held on April 3, 1968. The minutes record the following: "A motion was made by Justice [Robert] Tills and seconded by Councilman [Clayton] Schunk to change the name of Polish Hill Road, from Route 219 to Back Creek Road, to Hillcroft Drive." The motion carried. Unfortunately, no official reason was provided for the change. However, a petition had been circulated by a new property owner on the road, who shall remain nameless in order to avoid any pointless controversy after the fact.

The construction of the 219 Expressway in the early 1980s further reduced the length of Polish Hill Road. It was split into two parts, east and west of the expressway, each equipped with a culdesac. On March 3, 1999, amidst some unfounded public outcry, but actually in order to avoid confusion for emergency responders, the eastern portion of Polish Hill Road below the expressway was officially renamed by the town board to Hillcroft Drive (Resolution No. 1999-7). Today Polish Hill Road survives beginning at Zimmerman Road and running east to the expressway.

Other road names of Polish origin include: Allen Drive (named after Allen Smoliński), Fairlane Drive (a project of developers Joseph J. May & Sons), George Drive (named after George Wróbleski), Gołabek Road (apparently, at one time, an unofficial name for a portion of Brown Hill Road, where Gołabek lived), James Drive (named after James Smoliński), John's Terrace (named after John Smoliński), Maple Grove Drive (a subdivision laid out by Michael Kaszubowski in the late 1950s, wrongfully amalgamated to "Maplegrove Drive"), May Drive (named after the May family, which still resides there), Ravine Drive (like George Drive, part of the Panoramic Heights subdivision developed by Wróbleski), Sherwood Lane (another project of Joseph J. May & Sons), Smoliński Drive (near St. John's, named after another Smoliński family and accepted by the town in 1960) and Zientowski Road (renamed West Hill Road in 1962).

The "corners" of Zimmerman Road, Keller Road and the Kaszubowski driveway were jokingly nicknamed "Crazy Fords Cross Roads" by one of the Mazur boys, no doubt due to the old field cars the Kaszubowskis used to roam about in. The dip in Zimmerman Road near Eiss Hill Road is referred to by the old-timers (in Polish) as *piekło*, "hell" (*i.e.*, a deep formidable pit). The small brook running just east of Maple Grove Drive, which eventually runs into the Eighteen Mile Creek, is unofficially known today as Kaszubik's Creek.⁹ Slightly downstream is the so-called Jabłoński's Crossing in roughly the same spot today where an ancient road was once located.¹⁰

Sophisticated Hillwilliams. Most of the humble hard-working farmers had a cow and a few chickens and were basically self-sufficient. Although quite independent they still helped out their neighbors in time of need. Everyone knew one another and people tried to get along. There

were no modern conveniences like telephones, electricity or natural gas. As a bonus their source of heat warmed them twice; once when they made the firewood, and again when they burned it. Winters were much more severe than they are now, but people didn't travel for frivolous reasons. It was nothing to see people walking, not for exercise, but as a mode of transportation. The lone exception was our famous walker, Ted Nowak, referred to as the "Walking Wonder of the World."

Common cents. Logic generally prevailed: If you didn't work, you didn't eat. If you didn't have the money, you didn't buy it (*i.e.*, anything worth having was worth earning). They didn't spend money they didn't have, on things they didn't need (no credit cards!). The money had silver and gold in it and was actually worth something (and there were things worth buying). Bankruptcy and divorce were practically unheard of. Some may have been poor, but not poor in spirit.

Just plane chestnuts. Upon their arrival in the Boston Hills the Poles would have found farmland with woods, and those woods containing the massive American Chestnut trees. By the 1930s these proud trees were almost completely killed off by a blight that swept over the country. Mrs. Ella Kaszubowski (*née* Parysek) --whose family farm was located at the end of Tanglewood Drive in the early 20th century-- would often relate stories to her children of how, when she was a little girl, she picked chestnuts by the bushel for the famous Broadway Market in Buffalo. Still-standing dead chestnut trees dotted the landscape as recently as the early 1970s. Today the old stumps survive and young sprouts are occasionally found growing from them, but then the blight usually kills them off again. The durable wood was ideal for rail fences.

Pickin' and a grinnin'. Upon arrival the Poles also would have found wild blackberries, red and black raspberries, elderberries (also found in Poland and great for pies and wine), grapes, strawberries, thimbleberries (found with atypical lavender flowers on the West Hill), currants and may apples (sometimes erroneously referred to as the mandrake), which the 'coons usually get to first.

Sap the life out of me. A few tapped the Maple trees for sap to make syrup with. Maple Grove Drive near Zimmerman Road, in the heart of the settlement, was so named due to the abundance of maple trees found there. Some folks like the taste of sap right from the tree, especially on a cold morning. It takes about forty gallons to produce one gallon of syrup (it's a lot of work).

The inside scoop. In more recent times, berries and maple syrup have frequently found themselves over ice cream from Charłap's in North Boston. The family patriarch, Nicholas Charłap, who was born in 1895 in the Russian partition of Poland, settled in the Black Rock section of Buffalo in 1914. In 1926 he established a dairy at 21 Greeley Street, initially named Family Dairy. Old milk bottles have survived from Charłap's and are highly sought out by collectors.

In 1961, Henry Charłap, along with his father Nicholas, uncle Leo Mrugała, and brother-in-law Louis Fronczak, purchased Duggan's Dairy in North Boston, later renamed Charłap's Dairy Farms in the mid 1960s. The business is now owned by Henry's son Nicholas, a namesake of his grandfather. A stop for ice cream in the summertime at Charłap's has always been a special treat.

Fungus among us. Wild mushrooms have always been a delicacy although you should trust an expert to determine what's safe to eat. One particular variety that's not too hard to identify is what old-timers refer to (in Polish) as *podpieńki* (derived from the preposition *pod*, "under, near" + *pieńka*, "tree stump" [precisely where they tend to grow]). The easiest fungus to identify is puffballs, which make their appearance the morning after a cool autumn rain (conditions need to be just right). A Polish farmer selling mushrooms was once asked, "How do I know these mushrooms aren't poisonous?" To which he replied, "Nobody have ever come back and complained."

Still on the level. To wash down all these goodies, but a bit harsher than the usual cow's milk, was the moonshine liquor manufactured by a few Poles, whose names shall remain strictly confidential. The stories of who is said to have been the fastest ridgerunner in the hills will likely die with those who are old and fortunate enough to remember hearing about such events.

During Prohibition some desired a substitute to help lift their spirits, so to speak, and the home brew was good for what ails you, especially with Anthony Schreiber's famous Polish-brewed beer from Buffalo no longer being available for consumption (he temporarily went into the coffee business). A story goes that on one particular occasion a flashy big city photographer came out to the hills to take some still photos. He was figured for a revenuer and run out of town.

The impact of Prohibition and the subsequent Roaring Twenties were nothing compared to the red-hot flames of Boston's worst fire ever. In the early morning hours of August 20, 1920, fire consumed a local watering hole, the Boston Hotel owned by Jacob Micherdziński (1874-1949). It was rebuilt in 1921 as was indicated by an engraved flat stone at the front corner entrance of the former building.¹¹

In God we trust. Rather than drinking distilled spirits most Poles preferred to have the Holy Spirit dwell in them. What would life be like if proper thanks and praise were not given to their Lord and creator. A tenacious Pole in the Boston Hills would often have a familiar plaque in his humble home, *Boże błogostaw nasz dom* [God Bless Our Home].

The Poles on the West Hill, along with those in Eden and the general vicinity, gravitated towards St. Mary's Church (established in 1835) in the hamlet of East Eden. It became an oratory in 2008. Miss Sue Wierzbic last served as Directress of Religious Education. Dr. Edward Nowak was a Parish Trustee. Those in the hamlet of Boston and on the East Hill gravitated towards St. John's (established by Germans in 1869). Some attended both St. Mary's *and* St. John's.

Look through any window. Of special note is the Weiss family, who have the proud distinction of having their surname on the only Polish-language stained-glass window at St. Mary's. Among the surnames on the windows at St. John's are Kopacz, May and Zawistowski.

Blessed by a priest. Here follows a brief summary of the Polish priests who have served.

The first Polish pastor at St. Mary's was Fr. Charles Wensierski, C.S.S.R. (died 1894), who briefly

served for a few months in 1864. During that short time he raised the balance due to pay off the church organ. He also served at St. Mary's Church in New Oregon from 1869 to 1870.

The second Polish pastor (actually of mixed Polish and German ancestry) was Fr. William Ryszewski (1833-1894). He was born in the Diocese of Wrocław, Poland and arrived in the United States in December 1870. Almost immediately, he was ordained in Buffalo and began his pastorship at St. Mary's in 1871, serving until 1876. He died in Buffalo.

The third (purely) Polish pastor was Fr. Alexander Jankowski (1894-1973), a native of Poland, who served from 1945 to 1953. He had distinguished looks and a quiet reserved manner.

The fourth Polish pastor was Fr. Stanislaus Kulpiński (1909-1985), who served from 1953 to 1955. While at St. Mary's he was bestowed the title of Monsignor.

The fifth (and also seventh) Polish pastor was Fr. Thaddeus J. Zablotny (1910-1989), who served from 1955 to 1967, and again from 1970 to 1983. "Father Ted," as he was affectionately known, was born in Buffalo. He was ordained in 1936. He chose to have his final resting place among his devoted flock, which he was so sincerely dedicated to. He is buried in St. Mary's churchyard cemetery, which is quite similar to those found in Poland.

Fr. Ted was highly respected and has attained a somewhat legendary status, especially regarding his ability at managing parish funds. He was famous for his short, sweet sermons in which he often referred to the children as "the little darlings." He would sing "Immaculate Mary" with genuine feeling at the conclusion of every mass.

The sixth Polish pastor was Fr. Stanislaus Sypniewski (1906-1974), a native of Dunkirk, New York, who served from 1967 to 1970, until Fr. Ted returned.

The eighth and final Polish pastor was Fr. James T. Bartnik, who served from 2005 to 2008.

Still a blessing. Unfortunately, St. John's in Boston has never known the benefit of an extremely dedicated servant of the Lord in the form of a genuine Polish pastor. Notwithstanding, those who have served have performed their duties with honor.

The old assessment records for the Town of Boston reveal a Fr. Francis Krześniak as a resident property owner beginning in 1894. Apparently, he resided in Boston for a number of years. What role, if any, he played in the foundation of the community is unknown. What is known is that in the 1890s he served as pastor at St. Casimir's in Buffalo and at Holy Cross in Salamanca. He will be mentioned once more in this report.

Of special note is Fr. George Sellinger (1866-1932), who served as pastor at St. John's from 1898 to 1908. Out of sincere dedication to his Polish parishioners; he had one of the boys attending the parish school teach him the language so that he could properly minister to their spiritual needs

(cf. Acts Chapter 2). He treated the Poles with the dignity and respect they so rightly deserve. He rests in peace at United German & French Cemetery in Cheektowaga, New York.

One Polish priest is briefly found at St. John's in 1911, that being Fr. John Szmytkowski (1886-1957), who presided over a funeral for a Stromecki. He was born in Toruń, Poland (also the birthplace of Nicholas Copernicus) a son of Francis Szmytkowski and Veronica *née* Dzikowska.

Another very distinguished Polish priest, Msgr. Matthew Kopacz of Boston, is descended from parishioners of St. John's, where his family is documented in 1919. Fr. Robert J. Hora, who is partially Polish, now serves as pastor at St. John's. His mother was a Lewandowski from home.

For God and country. For military service we had only two Polish boys serve in WWI, according to the officially published service roster for Boston, but there are claims of many others.

One is Anthony Trzebiatowski (1891-1923), son of Anthony Trzebiatowski and Rosalia *née* Kiedrowska (which later became *Kader*). He appears on an official roster as "Anthony Schibertowski." I found his gravestone --with the spelling *Scheber*-- in Section 8C at United German & French Cemetery in Cheektowaga. The other is Joseph May, who was wounded in action while serving in France and received the Purple Heart. He would later do civil service.

The War Honor Roll plaque (mounted on a 12 ton boulder and dedicated on Memorial Day, 1939) at the Boston Commons includes the names: Frank Lutomski, John Lutomski, Joseph May, Stephen J. Wojtkwiak [*sic*] and Michael Zappla (originally *Czapla*). Also, indicated to have located in town after the war were John Domiński, Konstanty Rachwał and Stephen Wróblewski.

Compiled lists vary considerably, but among those who served in WWII were: Dubisz, Dylong, Głowiński, Głuszek, Gołabek, Kaczor, Kader, Kasperek, Kobiołka, Korabek, Koza, Krencik, Mazur, Mentlewski, Nowak, Nowicki, Paciorek, Polonkiewicz, Rychlik, Sitarek, Smoliński, Stelmach, Suja, Wierzbic, Zientowski and Żelaski. I apologize for any unintentional omissions.

The killing field. The following paragraph is extracted from *A Brief History of the Town of Boston* (page 28): "History repeats itself, and in 1944 murder again occurred in our town. In a summer cottage on the Back Creek Road between North Boston and Patchin, Walter Nowicki of Blasdell, shot and killed Jacob Schmidt and his son, Lawrence Schmidt. He also wounded Miss Edna Halliday. The victims were all from Kenmore. Nowicki then turned the gun on himself with fatal result. A love triangle seems to have been the cause of the tragedy."¹²

Out standing in their field. In my opinion, the most important and most honorable profession of all is farming. There are numerous Polish families in town which have engaged in the business. It would be impossible to think of Boston without them. The same goes for our volunteer firemen and emergency responders. Unfortunately, it's not possible to mention all of them here.

The political field. The Polish pursuit of liberty and justice naturally led them on the road to

politics.

John Jabłoński (1908-1974), also known as "Johnny Job," was a native of Buffalo whose parents died early on. As an orphan he was raised by Frank Weber in Boston and went on to become our first Polish supervisor (R) in 1944. He resigned in 1957 to help develop the Erie County Park at Elma Meadows. He had formerly served as Town Clerk since 1942. He is buried at St. John's.

Joseph May (1895-1982) served with great distinction as our second Polish supervisor (D) from 1960 to 1967. He was instrumental in establishing the first volunteer emergency squad and assisted in purchasing land for the present location of the town hall.

He was born in Buffalo, a son of Dominic May (originally *Maj*) and Mary *née* Lamowska from the region of Galicia (the Austrian partition of Poland). Joseph was baptized at St. Stanislaus Church by none other than the aforementioned Fr. Francis Krześniak. He is buried at St. John's.

Leo Stromecki (1934-1983) served as our third Polish supervisor (R) from 1976 to 1977. He also served as coordinator of the Erie County Office of Disaster Preparedness. Interestingly enough, he married Charlotte May, a niece of the aforementioned Joseph. He is buried at St. John's.

Stromecki had previously served on the town board, beginning in 1968, when it was comprised of four Justice of the Peace with councilmen-like responsibilities and duties. He resigned in 1975 to make the run for supervisor.

Following Stromecki's tenure was Councilmen James Smoliński (1976-1979), Alfred Samulski (1980-1981), Frank ("Butch") Lisowski (1988-1991), Damian Wiktor (1996-2003), James Pluta (2008-2011) and Eugene Więckowski (2011). The latter was appointed to fill a vacancy. All of these men have contributed something positive to our town.

Stephen J. Wojtkowiak (1895-1945) is perhaps our most notable Polish American politician so far, although his connection is somewhat tenuous. Born in Buffalo, when he was ten his family migrated to the Boston Hills. They purchased a farm off of Feddick Road north of Keller Road.

In 1917 Stephen joined the United States Marine Corps from Buffalo and settled in the city after WWI ended. He was elected to the New York State Senate for service beginning in 1929. He reportedly served nine terms before he died on April 6, 1945.

Michael Kaszubowski (also known as "Tractor Mike"¹³) was elected to serve as assessor and worked as an enumerator of the 1950 Federal Census.¹⁴ Theodore Dąbkowski was President of the Boston Town Democratic Club in 1967. Phil Smoliński served as a Commissioner of the Erie County Board of Elections for twelve years (his father owned the tavern). Eugene Ruchalski served as Highway Superintendent from 1989 to 1999. No doubt there have been many others.

More distant political connections include Erie County Court Judge Michael Pietruszka, whose

maternal Lutomski family were members of St. John's already in 1903. Also, the maternal grandmother of former four-term Erie County Legislator Greg Olma was Virginia Olma (*née* Kajdasz), who was born on a farm in Boston in 1907.

Among the former appointed town officials and workers: Court Officer John Politowski, Highway Department Foreman Eugene Rola, Deputy Code Enforcement Officer David Juda, Deputy Town Attorney Anna Kobiółka (of no relation to Michael) and Webmaster Paula Litwin. Richard Waszak (died 2011) was an excellent Dog Control Officer. There have been many others.

No time like the present. As of this writing there are the following (through consanguinity and/or affinity) Polish American civic leaders, officials and workers in our town: Town Justice Debra Bender (with maternal Polish roots), Boston Free Library Board President Mrs. Suzanne Borowicz, Highway Department MEO¹⁵ William Dzierzanowski, Town Outdoor Soccer Coordinator Jon Gruchala, Town Historian Keith Kaszubik, Town Attorney Michael Kobiółka, Highway Department MEO Jerome Krencik, Young at Heart President Carolyn Latosiński, Assessment Board of Review member Frank Lisowski, Boston Seniors President Mrs. Lois Lizak, Boston Conservative Party Chairman James Pluta, Boston Historical Society Museum Curator Mrs. Sherrie Pluta, Boston Historical Society President Mrs. Katharine Praczkajło (also on the Zoning Board of Appeals), Boston Historical Society Vice President Mrs. Jennifer Robinson (*née* Praczkajło), Young At Heart (Sunshine) Jean Ruchalski, Town Hall Cleaner William Sojda, Conservation Advisory Council member Jeffery Szudzik, Office of Emergency Management Director Eugene Więckowski, Recreation Director / Planning Board member Anthony Zeniuk, and Planning Board member Dr. Paul Ziarnowski. I apologize for any mistakes or unintentional omissions.

Minding our own business. Among the Polish American businesses (past and present) in town are the following: Attorney Brunon Boroszewski on Chestnut Ridge Road, Nick Charlap's Ice Cream, Boston Valley Chiropractic (Dr. Brendan Ciura), Ski's Pizzeria / Countryside Inn (Charles Czechowski), Ed's Auto Service / Ed's Industrial Truck Service (Dzierzanowski) on Mill Street, Górecki's Barber Shop (Stanley Górecki) near the dip on Zimmerman Road, Grajek's Café (Edwin Grajek) in North Boston, John Jabłoński's Service Station in North Boston, Jaskuła's Sharpening Service, John Kader - Fine Clock Repair, Kay's Collision (Kaszubowski), Master Gardener Anthony Kempa, Attorney Michael Kobiółka, Expressway Automotive (Dave May), May Construction Co. (Harold May), Joseph J. May & Sons developers, Boston Hotel (Micherdziński), Veterinarian Dr. Edward J. Nowak in Boston, Theodore Nowak (Ed's father) Sandblasting & Painting on Feddick Road, Phil Smoliński's tavern and restaurant in Boston, Robert J. Smoliński Trucking & Excavating on Zimmerman Road, Leo Stromecki Music Studio on Feddick Road, S & E Welding (Peter Suja and Ray Enser) on Trevett Road, Warmus Pharmacy (Gerald Warmus), Back Barn Antiques and Collectibles (Arlene & Vince Weiss) in North Boston, Alloy Welding & Fabricating (Stanley Wierzba), Wierzbic Lawnmower Sales & Service (Joseph Wierzbic), Gunsmith Eugene Wójcik on Cole Road and Żebrowski Construction on Boston State Road. I apologize for any mistakes or unintentional omissions. An honorable mention is Michael Bigosiński (died 1928), who established the Fillmore Bottling Works in Buffalo. He later resided on a farm in Boston in his golden years, long after he had sold his business to a man named John Wargin.

Being smart with you. The Poles established the oldest central European university, at Kraków, in 1364, some twenty years before the Germans. Miss Hedwig Frances Foryciarz (1912-2002), a graduate of East High School in Buffalo, served as a teacher at Boston's School District No. 6 Schoolhouse, located at the intersection of Keller and Feddick Roads (now a private residence owned by a member of the Preischel family). The Boston Free Library building is also a former schoolhouse (District No. 1). The most intriguing evidence of this is graffiti found on a beam in the building's attic, which states: "We the boys of Boston were the first to find this hiding place. Signed: Kenneth Bower, Frank Kaczor and Harold Faulring." Mrs. Karen Krajewski is a retired teacher who has coordinated Polish dinners at St. John's. Mary Domiński was also a teacher.

Books are bound to please. The Poles have supported the Boston Free Library since its beginning in 1947. Included among the members of the Founder's Society are: Bieroń, Czerniak, Dzikowski, Gliwa, Kamiński, Kobiołka, Kowalski, Laskowski, Lisowski, Wachowiak, Weiss, Żelasko and Żyliński. Lifetime members include: Kamiński, Kaszubik, Kaszubowski, Koza, Krencik, Rachwał and Smoliński.

Pool your resources. Another library in town, specifically for the Poles, was attempted in 2007. The Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph's Polish Resource Center was formerly located at the Immaculate Conception Convent on South Park Avenue in Hamburg, New York.

The collection originated with Sr. M. Edwina Bogel (1907-1990), founder and first president of Hilbert College, who collected books and memorabilia. It began as a Polish Room at the McGrath Library at Hilbert. The late Dr. Włodzimierz Drzewieniecki was instrumental in having Cardinal Karol Wojtyła (later Pope John Paul II) bless the collection in 1969.

In 1994, due to an expanded program at Hilbert, the collection was transferred back to its original source, the Immaculate Conception Convent. Five years later a new Polish Resource Center was officially opened for business. Archivist and curator, Sr. M. Marvina Kupiszewska, with an advisory committee including Keith Kaszubik of North Boston, turned the dream into a reality.

For over eight years the PRC served the community with distinction. In 2007, however, it was decided to close the facility. It had grown to full capacity, but was hardly being utilized anymore. Keith Kaszubik volunteered to provide the necessary storage space for the collection. He then single-handedly moved it into his home with the hope of opening the library again in the future.

In 2009, however, he donated the collection, the shelving he purchased, and ten boxes of his own books, to the Polonia Museum Project. The decision was made due to a former town board's failure to resolve a snow plowing issue, which ultimately prevented the library from being used, since appointments could not be guaranteed. The collection was moved again into storage at the Adam Mickiewicz Library on Buffalo's East Side.

Polish your Polish. A good education often leads to a need for literary expression. Farm imple-

ments are turned in for the tools of communication (*i.e.*, words). Years ago, in the then remote Boston Hills, the Poles supported their culture and heritage by subscribing to the Polish *Dziennik dla Wszystkich* [Everybody's Daily] newspaper from Buffalo, until it went out of business in 1957, after fifty years of service. The late John Bucieur (1913-1990), who resided on Zimmerman Road, worked as a journalist for the *Dziennik* when he was a young man.

In your own words. To help fill the void when the *Dziennik* went under, the *Am-Pol Eagle* newspaper began publication in 1960. It is the voice of Western New York's Polonia. In 2004 Keith Kaszubik began writing a column entitled *Origins & meanings of surnames in Buffalo's Polonia*. He also does occasional reporting and contributes articles on history and genealogy.

Paul Pietrak published a book about the railroad entitled *The History Of The BUFFALO & SUSQUEHANNA*. In 1983 Mrs. Irene Pijanowski (*née* Jaźwiecka) had her poem entitled *The beautiful BOSTON HILLS* published in the (now defunct) *Boston Signal* newsletter. Not too many years ago the official mailing address for the national *Polish American Journal* newspaper became Box 328, Boston, New York.

In 2006 Keith Kaszubik completed his *Boston Hills' Polonia* project. A sixty-six page printed and bound form of the computer database project, numbering 853 entries, was donated to the Boston Historical Society Museum collection in 2013. The work is a complete extraction transcription of all Poles found documented in the available microfilmed parish records (up to circa 1920) for the Boston Hills and vicinity including (among others) St. Mary's and St. John's.

Paint me a picture. Even better than writing are those very talented individuals who have pursued the fine arts. Formerly displayed on a wall in the town clerk's office was a painting of an old, former town hall by Mrs. Josephine Krencik (*née* Polonkiewicz) (1919-2012), who grew up on a farm on Polish Hill Road. Her artwork also depicts the Broadway Market and life on the farm.

The hills are alive with the sound of music. Leo Stromecki ran a music studio at his home on Feddick Road and Stomecki's Orchestra played for hire. Danny Bucieur (1951-1976), son of the aforementioned John Bucieur and Hedwig (*née* Jaźwiecka), performed with the popular local group, the Modernaires, who released a couple albums. John Bucieur had played drums in his younger days, but Danny's younger days were tragically cut short. He died in a car accident while returning home from a gig. Danny's cousin, Ricky Pijanowski, is also a noted local musician. In 2008 Nicole Pawlik, who was raised in the Boston Hills, made her debut as an actress and singer in Moniuszko's opera *Flis* [Raftsmen] performed at the Montante Cultural Center in Buffalo.

I'll race you to the finish. In the 1960s, the Kay-Smoker (Kaszubowski-Smoliński) Racing Team from the Boston Hills ran cars at Johnny's Speedway in North Collins. Richard Kaszubowski and Jim Smoliński were among the top drivers. Jim also drove at Lancaster Speedway.

And that's all he wrote. In conclusion; the Poles in Boston have been an integral part of the community. Their contributions to our town's history, culture and heritage are enormous.

This report would not have been possible without the help of Mr. & Mrs. John Buciur, Mr. Henry Charlap, Assessment Clerk Suzanna Fitzner, Councilman Jeffrey Genzel, Mr. Daniel Kaszubowski, Sr., Mr. Edward Kaszubowski, Mr. Edmund Kiedrowski, Mr. Herbert Klein, Mrs. Karen Krajewski, Deputy Town Clerk Elizabeth Martin, Mr. Arthur May, Town Clerk Jennifer Mulé, Mrs. Katharine Praczkajło, Deputy Town Clerk Sandra Quinlan and Highway Superintendent Robert Telaak.

ENDNOTES

¹ Polonia is the Latin name for Poland and the name for a Polish community outside of Poland.

² A certain Michael Grandusky was a nonresident property owner in 1891, but he is never mentioned again thereafter. His surname was perhaps originally *Krentowski* (or *Krętowski*).

³ Poland was partitioned by Prussia, Russia and Austria in three phases in 1772, 1793 and 1795.

⁴ The suffix *-ska* (versus *-ski*) represents the feminine adjectival form in Polish surnames. The same goes for *-cka* (vs. *-cki*). The distinction has generally been lost in the United States today.

⁵ The 1900 Federal Census indicates that Josepha had two children total, both living at that time.

⁶ The Polish masculine given name *Piotr* is cognate with English *Peter*.

⁷ Not that he had any allegiance to begin with.

⁸ They were the first Polish family documented (1894) in the parish records of St. John's.

⁹ Whether pronounced correctly, or incorrectly, the name still rhymes. It should be noted that it was so named by someone other than the author of this report.

¹⁰ I haven't found any information concerning this road in any recorded sources. Knowledge of its existence has been passed down to me verbally and there is some slight physical evidence.

¹¹ Sadly, the building was demolished in 2010 after having been declared unsafe following another fire in 2009. The engraved stone no longer remains on the premises.

¹² What is meant by "murder again" is in reference to the famous John Love murder in 1824.

¹³ Apparently, Michael Kaszubowski was the first farmer in town to own a tractor.

¹⁴ The job of assessor in the Town of Boston is now an appointed position.

¹⁵ MEO = Machine Equipment Operator.