



ROOTDIGGER

4th Quarter: October - December 2012

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Genealogist's Christmas Eve

Author Unknown

'Twas the night before Christmas
When all through the house
Not a creature was stirring,
Not even my spouse.

The dining room table with clutter was spread
With pedigree charts and with letters which said...
"Too bad about the data for which you wrote;
Sank in a storm on an ill-fated boat."

Stacks of old copies of wills and such
Were proof that my work had become too much.
Our children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugarplums danced in their heads.

And I at my table was ready to drop
From work on my album with photos to crop.
Christmas was here, and such was my lot
That presents and goodies and toys I'd forgot.

Had I not been busy with grandparents' wills,
I'd not have forgotten to shop for such thrills,
While others bought gifts to bring Christmas cheers,
I'd spent time researching those birth dates and years.

While I was thus musing about my sad plight,
A strange noise on the lawn gave me such a great fright.
Away to the window I flew in a flash,
Tore open the drapes and yanked up the sash.

When what with my wondering eyes should appear,
But an overstuffed sleigh and eight small reindeer.
Up to the house top the reindeer they flew,
With a sleigh full of toys and 'ole Santa Claus, too.

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- *Polish Christmas Memories*
- *Erie Canal and Family Research*
- *Upcoming Events and Programs*



Genealogist's Christmas Eve

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And then in a twinkle, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of thirty-two hoofs.
As I drew in my head, and bumped it on the sash,
Down the cold chimney fell Santa--KER-RASH!

"Dear" Santa had come from the roof in a wreck,
And tracked soot on the carpet, (I could wring his short neck!)
Spotting my face, good 'ole Santa could see
I had no Christmas spirit you'd have to agree.

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work
And filled all the stockings, (I felt like a jerk).
Here was Santa, who'd brought us such gladness and joy:
When I'd been too busy for even one toy.

He spied my research on the table all spread
"A genealogist!" He cried! (My face was all red!)
"Tonight I've met many like you," Santa grinned,
As he pulled from his sack a large book he had penned.

I gazed with amusement--the cover it read
Genealogy Lines for Which You Have Plead.
"I know what it's like as a genealogy bug."
He said as he gave me a great Santa hug.

"While the elves make the sleighful of toys I now carry,
I do some research in the North Pole Library!
A special treat I am thus able to bring,
To genealogy folk who can't find a thing."

"Now off you go to your bed for a rest,
I'll clean up the house from this genealogy mess."
As I climbed up the stairs full of gladness and glee,
I looked back at Santa who'd brought much to me.

While settling in bed, I heard Santa's clear whistle,
To his team, which then rose like the down of a thistle.
And I heard him exclaim as he flew out of sight,
"Family history is Fun! Merry Christmas! Goodnight!"



Genealogical Insurance - Are You Ready For Disaster?

By Betty Jo Stockton

Florida has recently had hurricanes, tornadoes and wildfires; the Midwest had floods; the West Coast is always expecting earthquakes -- the potential for disaster is there no matter where you live. Think -- just how safe are your genealogical and family records? Listening to the news reports of evacuation with little notice made me think "what would I take?" if I had to leave with only what I could fit in the car and with little advance notice. After grabbing the insurance and other important papers, the laptop computer with my genealogy files, financial records and home inventory - what else would I take? And before anything does happen - what can I do to safeguard my genealogical records?

* **Make Backups and Store Them Safely**

Photocopy, scan or photograph all your "one of a kind" records and store the copies in your safety deposit box, a relative's home, with a genealogical friend, or in a water/fireproof box on a high shelf in your home. These include family Bibles, priceless photographs, birth, death and marriage certificates, family letters, diaries and scrapbooks. A copy is never as good as the original but it certainly beats nothing. A color photocopy of old photographs turns out well; the Kodak© PictureMaker found in many discount, drug, and office supply stores gives a near-perfect copy (but both may shorten the life of your original.) A digital camera will make a good copy too. Save the digital files to a floppy, recordable CD or DVD and store it away from your computer. Make extras of the paper copies to share. Consider submitting your Bible records, diaries and scrapbooks to the DAR for their collection.

Make more than one backup copy of your genealogical computer files - and store at least one far from your computer.

Be sure that someone else (preferably in a different location) has copies of your Family Group Sheets and supporting documentation.

* **Share Your Research**

Write letters to friends and relatives about what you've found, send copies of your research to interested family and researchers, submit your data to the Ancestral File, World Family Tree, Ancestry's World Tree, RootsWeb World Connect project, FamilySearch or other databases.

* **Publish Your Research**

If you're ready (or even close), write that book on your family and get it published. Several of our members have done this with beautiful results. Send a copy to the Family History Library, our library and the local library where your ancestors lived.

Compile your information and publish it yourself. Many of the ge-

And before anything does happen - what can I do to safeguard my genealogical records?

Make more than one backup copy of your genealogical computer files - and store at least one far from your computer.

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Genealogical Insurance - Are You Ready For Disaster?

My latest project is self-publishing a 12-30 page booklet on each of my family lines. These contain the family history and genealogy, sources, and scanned photos; they are distributed throughout the family.

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nealogy programs will produce a "book" from your data. Make a few copies of this to have printed and bound to give to interested folks and the local library. Local print shops will print it fairly cheaply; Kinkos can add a Velobinding for \$2.95, which gives a nice finish. My latest project (since I still have large "holes" in each of my family lines) is self-publishing a 12-30 page booklet on each of my family lines. These contain the family history and genealogy, sources, and scanned photos; they are distributed throughout the family. While far from professional, they insure that the information won't be lost.

Organize your Family Group Sheets and supporting documentation and bind them in a folder or looseleaf notebook. Give a copy to the Family History Library and to the local library.

*** Plan Ahead**

Plan ahead as to what you would protect first in your home or take if evacuated. If you've planned, you'll know which notebooks, files, etc. to grab.

*** Decide What Will Happen**

Decide what will happen to your materials when you no longer need them - too many records are lost when family members do not know what to do with papers after a death and simply throw them out. Arrange with a genealogical friend or instruct your family as to who is to get your work. If you do not have a specific person in mind, check with the local library, the Family History Library or local history/genealogy society as to what they would like - and in what form.

**** Whatever you do - insure that your family records and hard work are not lost forever when disaster strikes.***

[Written by Betty Jo Stockton for *Treasure Chest News*, the newsletter of the Central Florida Genealogical Society, August, 1998. Permission is granted for use in any genealogical or family history newsletter, provided this credit is attached]

A Polish Christmas

By Andrea Hereda Jenkins

I was doing research on cemetery addresses in my home town in Pennsylvania and in nearby Pittsburgh. I began on yellowpages.com and ended up on Google maps. I began to check out my husband's family home and mine. Then I ended up at the church where I grew up, went to school, and got married. It was St. Mary of Czestochowa Roman Catholic Church on Kenneth Avenue in New Kensington, Pennsylvania. It is a beautiful church with hand painted life sized murals of various Biblical scenes on the curved area between the side walls and the ceiling. The spires and various size statues cover the center altar and the two side altars. The bass relief Stations of the Cross are works of art along the walls of the church.

I'm no longer of that faith, but I have fond memories of the celebrations in that church for every holiday! My favorite celebration is still Christmas. The Polish Christmas celebration in America is different from that in Poland. The emphasis of both celebrations is the birth of the Christ child, beginning with the appearance of the first star on Christmas Eve. In Poland, families, especially the children, build elaborate crèches called szopka (meaning crib). Most are wooden, but overlaid with gold and bright colors. They are not like the humble stables found in many American homes. They have towers with the bulbous or as my children called them "green onion topped churches" of the Greek Orthodox faith, which is strange as most Poles are Roman Catholic.

The crèches are carried about from home to home and in some cities the poorer children carry them into the town square and put on a Nativity play with wooden stick puppets. They are rewarded with zloty.

Both in Poland and America, the Christmas Eve celebration surrounds the Christmas Eve dinner called Wigilia. Straw is placed under the table cloth and/or on the floor to remind all of the humble birth of the Christ child. Wigilia always begins with the sharing of the Oplatek or blessed wafer. It is made with the same thing used to make the Holy Communion wafers. However the Oplatek are sheets that are embossed with scenes of the Nativity. It is passed around the table and everyone breaks off a piece. Blessings are spoken to everyone and then the wafer is eaten.

In Poland, the Wigilia meal is served in twelve courses or foods. Every dish is meatless, ending Advent, a four week period of fasting. Even the Gawomky (cabbage rolls) are made with dried imported mushrooms and wild long grain rice, instead of the meatloaf mix. Borch, a soup made from



A Polish Creche

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A Polish Christmas

During the meal, Paszka, a sweet bread, with raisins and cherries in the dough is served. It is a reminder of the darkness of sin (raisins), the baby who came to die on the cross (cherries), and the sweetness of the dough is a reminder of the scripture Psalm 34:3 "O taste and see that the Lord is good!"

Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve is an elaborate, high celebration with processions, incense, and much singing of the Polish Christmas Carols (Koledy).

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beets is served. Pierogies are small dough pockets, similar to Italian ravioli, filled with potatoes and cheddar cheese; or luquar which is a sweet prune filling, sweet cabbage, or cottage cheese. They are boiled, then covered with butter and onions. Halushki is another potato dish. My dad's family made this. My mom's family didn't. Cabbage is sauted with butter and onions. Home made potato dumplings are boiled and added to the cabbage and onions. There are also many seafood dishes. During the meal, Paszka, a sweet bread, with raisins and cherries in the dough is served. It is a reminder of the darkness of sin (raisins), the baby who came to die on the cross (cherries), and the sweetness of the dough is a reminder of the scripture Psalm 34:3 "O taste and see that the Lord is good!"

At the end of the meal is a huge bounty of pasties and cookies. The Babkas (older women) and Chotzas (aunts) have been baking for weeks! A yeast dough filled with apricot, crushed nut mixture, poppy seed or Luquar with an open braided top is bountiful with each family having its own special recipe handed down from mother to daughter. All this food is wonderful, but my personal favorite is Kruschki, a tissue paper thin pastry made with sour cream in the dough. They are cut into elongated diamond shapes, a slit cut in the center, then one end gently pulled through the slit to make it twisted. Then it is fried and sprinkled with powdered sugar.

After dinner gifts are exchanged. In Poland the families then travel from house to house singing Polish Christmas Carols called Koledy. Everyone then goes to the Pasterka (midnight mass), which begins at 11 pm.

Pasterka/Midnight Mass

In my church, growing up, the entire side altar was covered with a mottled cloth of browns, greens and black. The Felician Sisters who taught in the school did all the decorating in the church sanctuary. With the spires on multi levels and shelves for the statues, the life size Fontanini Nativity characters were able to be tucked into place on varying levels. The bottom was shaped like a carved out cave and Mary and Joseph were placed in there with the sheep and some other animals. This was usually in place for the four weeks of Advent.

Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve is an elaborate, high celebration with processions, incense, and much singing of the Polish Christmas Carols (Koledy). After the procession of the many priests, the altar boys in long bright red cassocks covered with pure white short cassocks and large red bows beneath their chins followed. Next came the girls in their white angel gowns with wings and shiny silver tinsel haloes. After several trips up and

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A Polish Christmas

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down the wide aisles, across the front and through the back three joining rooms Narthaxes, everyone sat in the pews. The mass began. When I was growing up the mass was said in Latin.

All the above mentioned people got up and began to process around the sanctuary again, ribboning up and down the three large aisles and behind in the cavernous three connecting Narthaxes. The organ had been playing Polish Christmas carols and the congregation sang with gusto! Then there was that “pregnant pause“, silence as the large white candles flickered on the end of the pews held in the wrinkled hands of the babkas (older women), guardians of the pews who had already spent several hours praying on their knees. With a crescendo the organ began a triumphant carol and the procession came down the center aisle with a priest carrying the Fontanini Christ child, his arms raised in symbol of reaching out to the world, gently cradled on a dazzling white linen cloth. The priests did not go up to the altar when they reached the end of the center aisle. Instead, they turned right and processed to the cave of the Nativity scene and lovingly placed the Christ child in the manger. Christmas had come once again to our world in that church! Everyone knew it! Everyone, from the smallest child who didn’t know the Polish words they sang, to the *Babbkas* on the end of the pews! So we continued the celebration to rejoice and remember the gift of God sent on that first Christmas night!

After sitting in the pews again, the priest continued the mass, stopping only for the reading of the Gospel and the sermon preached from the high and ornate pulpit to the left of the center altar. He preached first in Polish and then in English. This is when some of the smaller children gently fell asleep. After Holy Communion and the ending of the mass, the organ began once again with the Polish Christmas carols and the church family greeted each other with “Wesolych Swiat Boze’ Naredzenie“, which is literally translated, “Happiness to you on the night God was born!”

St. Mary's is the **POLISH** Catholic Church. Named after the famous St. Mary of Czestochowa Roman Catholic Church near Krakow, Poland.



Christmas at St. Mary of Czestochowa Church in New Kensington, Pennsylvania



Fifteen Miles on the Erie Canal

By Michael J. Leclerc

Reprinted with permission from the November 2012 *Mocavo Genealogy Newsletter*

When European settlement of North America started pushing inland from the coast, transportation problems repeatedly occurred. The biggest problem was the Appalachian Mountains, 400 miles from the coast. This made it difficult to transport goods as well as passengers. As early as 1768 proposals were put forth to establish a cheap and safe way to overcome this obstacle.

A proposal for a waterway in New York was first put forth in 1807, but construction did not start until 1817. After eight long years of construction, the Erie Canal was finally opened October 26, 1825. From 1834 to 1862 it was enlarged to handle growing traffic.

The Erie Canal had a major effect, not just on the development of New York, but of the entire United States. The canal starts on the Hudson River in Albany and runs through upstate New York to Buffalo, where it opens onto Lake Erie (from which it gets its name). The Atlantic Ocean was now connected to inland America by a safe water route.

The canal stimulated immigration to New York. It took massive crews to clear the land and build the canal. Carpenters, stonemasons, and other construction workers were needed to build. Teamsters were needed to haul building supplies, as well as to haul the detritus away from the construction site. These people brought their families with them to upstate New York. As construction on the canal was completed, many followed to continue construction of the canal. Others stayed behind and settled the area permanently.

Once the canal was completed, immigration to the interior became much easier. It also became much cheaper. Transportation costs dropped by as much as 95%, putting migration within reach of many families who could not have previously afforded to move.

When tracing your ancestors back in time (and geography), keep in mind that they may have migrated through the Erie Canal. This is especially true for families who migrated prior to the Civil War. By that time, the railroads were becoming widely developed, and many families chose that method of travelling.

If you have ancestors in the interior of the country, and are having

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Portrait of the Erie Canal at Lockport, New York

Fifteen Miles on the Erie Canal

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difficulty determining where they came from, start by looking at nearby waterways. Follow the waterways back to a major river and from there back to the Great Lakes. Check the histories of major settlements along those routes, looking for evidence that your ancestors may have lived in one of these towns. Eventually, you may be able to fill in the missing pieces of your ancestors' lives.

The Erie Canal was in use for almost a century. Over the years, many songs were created about the canal, including the popular *Low Bridge* (also known as *Fifteen Miles on the Erie Canal*). In 1918 it was replaced by the much larger New York State Barge Canal. Today it is part of the New York State Canal System. In 2000 the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor was created by Congress, in commemoration of the significant part the canal played in the history of the United States.

The Importance of a Name

By Amanda Triepke

In each of the past five generations someone in my husband's family has carried the name Anton, or more recently Anthony. The last one was my husband's uncle whose middle name was Anthony and had gone his whole life being called Tony. There is no one in my husband's generation that carries the name. Unfortunately Tony died about ten years ago and never had children. It did not seem that the name was going to be continued through the generations. When I realized this I asked my husband if he wanted to name our son Anthony. It became important to me to keep the name in the family. My husband didn't like the idea of naming our son Anthony. According to him the name sounded too Italian. We eventually agreed on the name Logan Anthony, the name Logan just being a name we could agree on, and the name Anthony continuing to be passed down in the family.

I found it interesting that I was the one insisting we use the name Anthony when the name was not passed down in my family. My husband didn't seem to care one way or the other. I began to wonder if I was making this more important than it was. If I had not been researching my husband's family I would not have known that there was a name passed down at all. It is quite possible our son would have had a very different name because I would not have insisted on including Anthony. In the end I decided it didn't matter why or how we decided to use the name but that the name got passed down. Maintaining family traditions, even if it is not important to the one with the tradition, is just one of the many benefits to all the work that goes into genealogy research.

Agreeing on a name for our son was a challenge for my husband and I. I thought using a family name would have made it easier to agree on something.



**Marion County
Genealogical Society**

4th Quarter: October –
December 2012

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Mission Statement
The Marion County Genealogical Society is dedicated to creating and promoting an interest in genealogy, focusing on research in Marion County, Florida and in supporting members in their research.

The Rootdigger
MCGS
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Ocala, FL 34478-1206

Place mailing address label here

We're on the web:
Mariongenealogy.tripod.com

Upcoming Events and Programs

January 17, February 21, March 21, 2013

Special Interest Group

1:00 p.m. Marion County Public Library, 2720 E. Silver Springs Blvd.,
Ocala, FL

Speaker: Judy Wright

Topic: Family Tree Maker 2012 Training

January 17, 2013 Marion County Genealogical Society Meeting

2:00 p.m. Marion County Public Library, 2720 E. Silver Springs Blvd.,
Ocala, FL

Speaker: Donna Moughty

Topic: Irish Genealogy