



# Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 15

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NUMBER 2

## A KETTLE OF KASZUBIANS

By Michael A. Derdowski

<mikederdowski@yahoo.com>

*“By Appointment of the King of Poland”*

It all began on March 10, 1767 when King Stanisław August PONIATOWSKI II (1732-1798), the last king of Poland (r. 1764-1795) appointed Łukasz DERDA and a Mr. WEROCHOWSKI to oversee the parish of Wiele. They would each oversee the surrounding community for three years and then would trade off for three years. (Perhaps this was to prevent corruption!)

The King gave Łukasz DERDA 50 hectares. It had a house, a barn, two storage buildings, two huts and three plots for buildings, and a hill named Chełmice. In 1806, the occupying Germans took the property from the family. The family went to court and in 1835 the family was confirmed as the legal owners and the property was returned.

Łukasz passed on his sovereign rights as landlord and land to his son Bartłomiy (b. 1754 in Wiele). Bartłomiy passed on 33 hectares to his son Paul (b. 1786 in Wiele). When Paul died, the property went to Paul's brother Joanne (b. 1783). Joanne passed the property on to his son Joanne (b. 1812). In 1845 (probably when Joanne became a priest and gave up worldly possessions), the property was passed on to Joanne's brother, Peter Paul (b. 1819).

After that, it is not clear who took possession of the family properties. There are stories of my great-grandfather Teofil DERDOWSKI returning to Poland in the early 1930's and selling the property out from under his family as oldest surviving son and heir. There are still several DERDOWSKI descendants living in Wiele today!

Łukasz married and had three boys - Bartłomiy (1754-1799), Mathew (c. 1755-?) and Joseph (c. 1756-?).

**Kaszubian Article..** *continued on page 11*

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### *Upcoming Fall Meetings*

**September 8 (10 -12 at MGS Library, Golden Valley)** - Iwona Srienc, a linguist and East-European language specialist, will provide a presentation on the Polish language. She will help answer questions about your Polish surnames and villages. Members are encouraged to bring their questions.

**September 29 (10-3 at Little Falls)** - This will be our annual outreach program with local co-sponsors. It will involve two speakers and a Q & A session. Details will be communicated later.

*Meetings...continued page 4*

### **Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota**

A Branch of the Minnesota Genealogical Society  
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<http://www.rootsweb.com/~mnpolgs/pgs-mn.html>

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The *Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota Newsletter* is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. Subscription to the *Newsletter* is included with membership. Dues are \$15.00 per year.

#### **Please use application form on advertising insert.**

Items submitted for publication are welcomed and encouraged. We require that feature-length articles be submitted exclusively to PGS-MN only. Articles, letters, book reviews, news items, queries, ad copy, etc. should be sent to: John Kowles, editor, *PGS-MN Newsletter*, 3429-45<sup>th</sup> Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406-2924, or to e-mail: <johnkow@att.net>

#### **Address changes or membership questions?**

Contact: Lisa Trembley, Membership Chair  
15800 Post Road, Wayzata MN 55391  
or e-mail: <ltrembley@comcast.net>

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### **President's Letter**

My vintage Funk & Wagnalls dictionary defines the word volunteer as “one who enters into any service of his/her own free will.” The board of the PGS-MN consists of 11 who fit this definition. The average tenure of our board is 7 years, ranging from 1 to 15 years. We have been able to add new board members slowly but surely, which benefits our organization, and those who volunteer. Each board position has a term of two years. Duties and time spent vary, but we ask that each board member have a “job.”

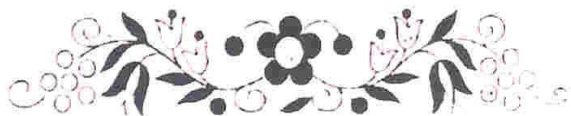
Our annual meeting, and the election of board members, is held in January of each year. In 2008 we will elect two new board members, with defined positions/jobs.

Lisa Trembley will have served as a director, responsible for our membership duties, for 7 years. Lisa will retire after this year, and will be replaced, by a volunteer. Lisa maintains our list of members, receiving this information from our treasurer, prepares mailing labels, sends program e-mails, and provides input at board meetings.

Audra Etzel continues to be our treasurer, until the end of 2007. She will retire at the end of 2007, and be replaced by another volunteer. Audra receives all dues payments, deposits these and other checks, passes this information on to others, pays the bills, provides quarterly balance sheets, and attends quarterly board meetings. Audra will have served for 7 years.

Both have served long and well, and will get a deserved rest. Please do not be timid if you wish to inquire about these positions, whether you contact myself, Lisa or Audra. You will not automatically be assigned to the board, if you merely ask about the duties, but it may mark you as a “future.” Ideally those who take over the positions will work with the incumbents for a period of time, to better acquaint themselves with the duties.

Our fall schedule of programs is set - see elsewhere in the newsletter for more details. Further information will be provided via e-mail, mailings and the web site. – TJK



## The Bulletin Board

### Message from the Editor: Correction

In the last Newsletter we neglected to give the full address to the author of the *Genealogy in Poland* article on page 29. It is: Henryk Skrzpiński, ul. Kijowski 13/9, 85-703 Bydgoszcz. Henryk is also a recommended resource in the Bydgoszcz area.

### MGS Branching Out - April 14, 2007

PGS-MN participated in this annual MGS meeting. Greg Kishel presented the concept of Chain Migration. An outline of his presentation is contained on page 8. The plenary session was a talk by Matt Bower from the University of Minnesota entitled: *DNA Testing in Genealogy – Promises and Pitfalls*.

### PGS-MN Awards – April 19, 2007

MGS, our parent organization, hosted an awards program at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. As part of the program most branches and PGS-MN presented awards for their organizations. The five PGS-MN awards given emphasized early achievements in starting the organization:

**Ed Brandt** – Founder and early pioneer. Ed was also honored by the Germanic Genealogical Society for his contributions and co-authorship of *Germanic Genealogy*, Third Edition.

**Paul Kulas** – Served as Newsletter editor for 14 years.

**Barbara Rockman** – Early long-time treasurer of the organization.

**Blanche Krbechek** – Founding president of the organization. Blanche is the current president of the Kashubian Association of North America.

**Kornel Kondy** – Early president of the organization  
**Photographs of the event are on page 10.**

### John Radziłowski – May 5, 2007

John discussed his new book: *A Traveller's History of Poland*. About 35 members attended the interesting presentation and book signing. The book is one of the many books in the *Traveller's History*

series. The book is not a travel guide, but provides the history of Poland from the Slavic origins to the death of John Paul. The book is reviewed on the insert page. It may also be purchased through PGS-MN (see insert page).

### PGS-MN and MGS are Moving

The MGS library will relocate from its present Golden Valley location sometime between October 1 and December 31. Lease negotiations are underway for space in a building at 1185 Concord Ave. S. in South St. Paul and are expected to be completed by July 1, which would then allow an October 1 move. The building is located several miles north of the intersection of the 494 freeway on Concord Ave. on the west side of the Mississippi River. The new building will allow for all books in a single room as well as several ample-space meeting rooms.

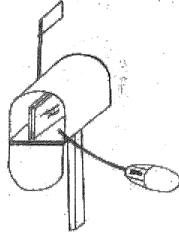
### FamilySearch.org Update

David E. Rencher, who is in charge of the LDS library's collection and digitization project in Salt Lake City, will provide an update on what is new and upcoming. He will provide a look at the project to digitize and index the 2.4 million rolls of microfilm which the library now has. The Irish Genealogical Society International is sponsoring the talk to be held at **7 PM on Friday, August 24 at the MGS library in Golden Valley**. There will be a \$10 charge for the session.

### Polish Immigrants in St. Paul

Former PGS-MN board member JOHN RADZIŁOWSKI, Ph.D., has just published "*Wojciechowo: Polish Immigrants in St. Paul, Minnesota, 1875-1925*," based in part on John's research for his doctoral dissertation, in *Polish American Studies*, v. LXIII, no. 2 (Autumn 2006). Those with roots in St. Paul's Polonian community will find this an invaluable background resource for the day-to-day world of their first American ancestors. John has accepted a tenure-track faculty position at the University of Alaska Southeast at Ketchikan, starting in the fall semester of 2007. His most recent book is the excellent *A Traveller's History of Poland* (Northampton, Mass: Interlink Books, 2007), the first general survey of Poland's history in English language to be published in the new millennium. It is reviewed by Jay Biedny on the insert of this newsletter.

## Correspondence ... *Komunikacja*



### Forthcoming Book on Świącany

We received this information from Grażyna Rychlik, <gsp@guidingpoland.pl>, a tour manager and genealogist from Poland, letting us know about a book in preparation. The author, Jan Wędrychowicz's book deals with the genealogy of the Kedzior family from Świącany from 1784. Świącany is in the Podkarpacie (Subcarpathia) region of Poland near the southern border. The book, about 1000 pages (500 pages of pictures), covers the family names of: Kedzior, Wędrychowicz, Zimka, Halpa, Niemiec and Bora. Cost is expected to about \$40 plus shipping. If you are interested you can contact: Jan Wędrychowicz, Siepietnica 33, 38-340 Biecz, Poland. Requests should be in Polish.

### Re: Polish Church Microfilm Indexes

*In the Spring newsletter, John Rys from the research committee provided the status of our indexing project of Polish parishes of the Archdiocese of St. Paul. PGS-MN would provide a customized surname report from five Polish parishes of Minneapolis. To test the system John entered the surnames of one of our members and received this response. – JWK*

It was an unexpected pleasure to receive a packet of genealogical information from you this week! The printout held some treasured data on my husband's family, who have all died out. We were so surprised to learn of his great-grandparents' names and the city of origin. We, too, have been to Poland and were fortunate enough to connect with extended family from his maternal grandmother's side in Zywiec [Żywiec].

Thank you so much for taking the time to do this research for us. I will gladly send a donation to PGS-MN. Very sincerely,  
Dianne Rapacz

## Queries ... *Pytania*

Do you know where I can find Catholic Church records of Ksiaznice, Poland ?

G. LaMont <lamontski@cox.net>

*The LDS Family History Library has filmed the parish records (1615-1919) of Ksiaznice. Check at your nearest LDS Family History Center. You can check <familysearch.org> to see if the LDS Family History Library has filmed records of any parish in Poland. - PTK*

I am interested in any information available about Dobrotwer, Poland. I am not sure where in Poland it is or was. I believe my mother was born there in the early 1900s. Her maiden name was Menkes.

Allen Freund <allenf@squashvalley.com>

*Dobrotwor is now in the Ukraine, about halfway between L'vov [L'viv in Ukrainian] and Luck. We have a geographical dictionary in our collection (in Polish) called Słownik Geograficzny that gives a bit of information about this locality. You might want to get the entry translated. - PTK*

### Future Meetings...continued from page 1

#### October 6 (10 -12) at MGS Library, Golden Valley

– Anastasia Dzenowagis will take you through her family's journey of discovery of all her grandparents' relatives in Poland, Belarus, and Lithuania, and her family's trip to the homeland after 80 years. If you have hit the genealogy "brick wall" you may find inspiration in her story of finding her Grandmother Anastazja's relatives in Poland after giving up for 15 years, and find new ideas for continuing your own genealogy journey. Technology permitting, her talk may include pictures and videotape.

#### November 3 (10 – 2) at LDS Library, 3801 N.

**Douglas Dr., Crystal** – Deb Vevea, library director, will speak about the data available through the LDS libraries, especially little-known sources. Attendees will be able to use the library for research until 2 PM. The session is limited to 70 attendees so if you plan to go please contact: Terry Kita, personally, 612-927-0719 or at <terrykita@earthlink.net>.



## Never Give Up on Your Journey

By Anastasia Dzenowagis

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At our last Polish Genealogical Society meeting at the MGS library, I noticed these quotes on an exhibit wall:

*"A genealogist is a wayfarer with a destination. We journey to an unknown destination in time and place and come back changed by the experience."*

*"We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time." T.S.Eliot*

These could not more clearly express what all of us have in common in the Polish Genealogical Society. I encourage you to never give up on your journey. In the end you will achieve your goal, whether it is the end result you sought, or what you learned and experienced along the way. In either case you will have found the journey more than worth the effort.

In the late 80's I discovered my maternal Grandfather's relatives in Belarus and in the 90's, my paternal Grandparents' relatives in Poland, who repatriated from Lithuania. These are stories unto themselves. But it was the journey to find my maternal Grandmother's relatives which was the longest journey.

My *Babcia* - Anastazja Pokornicka Kazarnovicz – after whom I am named, died when I was a child. I remember her warmth and laughter, her long dark hair and the smells of Polish food cooking in her kitchen. She didn't speak much English so we couldn't communicate, but I always wondered if she minded that I shared her name. *Babcia's* life in Massachusetts as a Polish immigrant, living on a farm, then in the city, raising seven children was not easy. Mother said that *Babcia* rarely talked about the Old Country, and when she did she would become very sad. Mother said these weren't things you asked your parents about.

After our success in finding my paternal Grandparents' relatives, in 1992 while visiting them on a family trip to Poland we tried to find *Babcia's* relatives. We knew only that she was from somewhere near Łomża and her maiden name was Pokornicka. Our search was fruitless and disappointing for my Mother. Conflicting family memories said that *Babcia* was actually born in the U.S. when her parents were there and that they all returned to Poland, but this seemed improbable. No documents could be located in the U.S. My Mother spent considerable time pursuing leads in the U.S., none of which yielded clear answers.

When the Ellis Island records became available, with the help of the researchers, we found *Babcia's* record on a family trip to Ellis Island. However it listed her as being from Russia, and a town name that we could not locate on the Russian map (Montfitze). Over the years it became a source of sadness for my Mother that we were unable to find her Mother's people.

In 2006 I was sponsoring a Dzenowagis cousin from Poland for a trip to the U.S. and came across information on the embassy site about locating relatives in Poland. With the Internet there is more information available now about which bureaus to contact. At the time I was studying Polish with Kasia Polanska and had the idea to begin my search again, to use it as a way to practice the language and to use Kasia's native-speaking ability to assist. (Kasia is a university level instructor who also tutors in Polish and has a translation business <KPolanska@yahoo.com>). I absolutely could not have completed this journey without Kasia's assistance. Kasia introduced me to the Polish Genealogical Society and I attended a meeting at which I was inspired by the members who spoke about their experiences finding their relatives. Being part of a group of people on similar journeys gave me a feeling of support.

As all the Polish genealogy books will tell you, you need to know the name of the town of your relative. This was still a source of confusion about

*Babcia*. On a trip to my parents' house I scoured it looking for any clues and found a piece of paper with notes taken from a family discussion with my Grandfather. It had yet another town listed for *Babcia*. I sent all the variations of the town name to my Dzenowagis cousin Nina in Slovenia who works for the Slovenian Polish embassy. She located the village Małwica outside of Łomża as the probable location. I showed my Mother this map and she stared at it for a long time. Finally she asked, "Is there a place nearby which starts with 'N'?" Amazingly, although it did not show on the map, *Babcia's* church was in Nowogród and she must have mentioned it to my Mother some 70 years previously!

Kasia and I met often and mapped out a project plan which helped us focus. Kasia could not have been more dedicated to my cause than if it had been her own relatives. She located on the Internet a woman artist with the same last name, Pokornicki, as *Babcia's*. Kasia phoned her a number of times and she gave us some information potentially about the family name in the area. It was unclear if they were related and the mystery remained.

Over the Internet Kasia located what she thought was *Babcia's* church (she was right). The church was originally founded in 1409 by a prince. However in 1915 it was completely destroyed in the war. It was rebuilt in 1922-1926. Kasia phoned the priest and he confirmed it always was the church for Małwica. However the priests' quarters, built in 1882, still stand and are on a registry of historic buildings. The priest said some records were destroyed and some remained, that I needed to go in person and talk to the organist. The organist kept all the old church records in his closet at his home (next to the church). The priest said there was no family by the name of Pokornicki in the church.

Kasia began the search process with the various bureaus in the area as records are stored in a number of places depending on the age of the record. There were difficulties with sending the required wire

transfers, both in Poland and in the U.S.; no one at Wells Fargo seemed to have ever sent one before. Kasia phoned Poland early in the morning and reported to me by e-mail. At that time I was traveling and working in Europe and Kasia e-mailed me that we received initial results back from the Łomża bureau! It indicated that Anastazja had been found on a census for Małwica but it was notated she was born in the U.S. There were other siblings listed of whom we were not previously aware.

I decided while in Europe to take a few days to go to Poland and visit the bureaus and the Nowogród church archives. As many people in the PGS will tell you there is a certain point in your search where you need to go to Poland, you can only do so much remotely. I hired a resource in Poland to assist and began my journey back.

The people in the archives in Łomża and Nowogród could not have been more helpful. In Nowogród they phoned Warsaw, they searched in the phone book, they talked to the son of the oldest woman in the village, they scoured their own records. Within hours we located relatives still living on the land where my *Babcia* lived (the house had been rebuilt three times) who were descended through her sister Jozefa. We located other relatives descended from another sister Julka. It was a shock to all that a granddaughter of Anastazja's would arrive without warning almost 100 years after *Babcia* had left. The older relatives were aware that the eldest sister Anastazja had left for America but the younger relatives were astonished.

Together we finally pieced together the fascinating journey of Anastazja Pokornicka. Małwica, *Babcia's* village, is an old village just outside of Łomża. It was under Russian control at the time and *Babcia's* Father urged her to leave to be safe. She was supposed to depart with a friend and at the last minute her friend could not bear to leave so *Babcia* made the journey alone. The area, close to the Eastern border historically was the scene of fierce fighting between different groups such as Polish partisans, Russians and Germans.

The actual war front was in the Nowogród cemetery; the church was burned down and remnants of a German bunker remain in the area. The family's original house was wood and burned down by Russians. Małwica has a special atmosphere and its inhabitants have a sense of being part of an important and rich history. I understand better why it was so painful for *Babcia* to leave and to remember.

*Babcia's* Father, Apolinary Pokornicki was born in Gaški; I found his birth certificate in the church records. Her Mother, Marianna Józ, was born in Małwica. Both families are descendants of those respective areas for generations. *Babcia's* parents went to the U.S. so her Father could earn money. *Babcia* was born there and they returned to Poland. They earned enough money to buy a large plot of land in Małwica. *Babcia* lived there with her two sisters and one brother until she left. Her parents died sometime between 1922-1938 and are buried in Nowogród in an area where the gravestones were destroyed. From church records, I learned *Babcia's* Mother (Marianna Józ) had a younger sister Anastazja. I think that is why she named her eldest child Anastazja and is the origin of my own name.

*Babcia's* brother Franciszek and his two sons left the town to go to an area formerly occupied by the Germans. His portion of the family land was sold when he left. I had a photocopy of a picture of Franciszek which *Babcia* had. This was consistent with the information we learned from the artist Kasia found via the Internet and contacted.

*Babcia's* sister Jozefa stayed on the land and raised her children there. Her grandson Krzysztof still lives there with his family, whom I met. Jozefa is buried in Nowogród.

*Babcia's* sister Julka lived on the family land, married, had a child and lived out her final days in Łomża with her child's descendants. She is buried in Nowogród. I have a photocopy of a picture of Julka which *Babcia* had. I saw her grave and met her descendants.

My journey concluded joyfully with my brother Victor and me taking our parents Helen and Joseph, who are in their 80's, to Poland one month later to meet *Babcia's* relatives. My Mother's first cousin and last living cousin (who looks like *Babcia*) traveled 8 hours by bus from Gdańsk to meet my Mother. We brought photos of *Babcia* and other family members. With multiple generations together on the site of family land in Małwica, it was a heartfelt and emotional reunion for all (picture on page 8). Together we went to the cemetery to pay our respects to our common ancestors. Our cousin Krzysztof, who lives on the family land said although it is not economical for the small farmer, he will stay on the land, because it was a gift to him from those who came before him. I know I will go back and visit again. I hope to fund a memorial stone for *Babcia's* parents in the cemetery, and I may contribute to the small primary school in Małwica after befriending the grandchild of the eldest woman in the village, who lives near my relatives.

I encourage any of you who may have given up on your journey, or who have stopped along the way, to start anew. Find a new path, or someone to help you with your journey. I wish for each of you the peace I have found by understanding my Grandmother Anastazja's journey and thereby completing my own.



**Jozepha's (*Babcia's* Sister) Grave  
in Nowogród**



### Reunion of the Pokornicki Relatives in Małtwica, Poland on the Family's Land

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#### Chain Migrations and Their Utility to Genealogical Research PGS-MN Presentation for MGS Branching Out Meeting, April 14, 2007 By Greg Kishel < gfk1@cornell.edu >

- I. *Chain migration*: a pattern of immigrant settlement in which individuals and families migrate *over time* from one (usually home) locale to another, for settlement purposes, usually prompted by personal ties to an original settler or group of settlers. (As distinguished from *colonization*, a migration en masse for settlement in one new location, *at one time or over a short duration*, often prompted by a commercial promotion of land sales or the deliberate formation of an ethnically- or regionally-defined community in the new locale.)
- II. *The existence of chain migrations* can be determined from:
- A. The fruits of other people's research:
    1. Local histories (check, esp., WPA products and materials prepared for larger historical commemorations (in Minnesota, esp. 1949, 1958, 1976))
    2. Church histories (parish and diocesan)
    3. Pioneer or old-settler interviews or surveys (WPA, local historical society)
  - B. Your own search and discovery, *watching for patterns* in the same materials used to determine family origins for genealogical research:
    1. Church (sacramental) records, esp. Roman Catholic marriage records
    2. Naturalization records, post-1906
    3. Obituaries (esp. from Polish-language newspapers)
    4. Ancestral papers that have survived (passports/visas, birth certificates, letters, funeral cards, records of official acts from European sources, etc.)
    5. Ship's passenger records (sometimes)
    6. Local employers' recruitment materials (rare)
    7. Fraternal benefit societies' records
    8. Alien registration records (at MHS; unique to Minnesota); WW I draft reg.
    9. Haller's Army (Polish Army in France) recruitment materials



- 
- III. Once a pattern is found, *work outward and back*:
- A. Clumping of immigrants from a particular place is a clue to the possible origin of your own ancestor who lived in the same area in the United States, even if the same records don't indicate his/her origins
  - B. Use [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) to determine whether LDS FHL has filmed records from that place
  - C. Corroborate geographic links by finding European records for members of your non-family clump
  - D. Using your own ancestor's birth or marriage dates, obtain appropriate FHL films at your local FHC and search them for records of those events for your own ancestors
  - E. Be wary of changes in parish boundaries in the Polish lands
  - F. Use 1910-1920 U.S. census, naturalization records, etc. to assemble timeline for chain migration
  - G. A given U.S. location may have had more than one in-migration in a chain format, within a particular ethnic group
  - H. Chain migration may have followed colonization, in a particular U.S. location
- IV. Polish-American chain migrations to Minnesota identified by PGS-MN members:
- A. *Syców region, Silesia to Wells, Faribault County*: Jan Bias, "How Many Cousins Were in Your 8th Grade Class? Silesian Polish Settlement in South Central Minnesota," *PGS-MN Newsletter*, v. 8, no. 3 (Autumn, 2000)
  - B. *Rajgród/Bargłów, Podlasia to Virginia and environs, St. Louis County*: Greg Kishel, "Z *Leśnictwa Rajgrodzkiego*: A Chain Migration from Poland's North Country to Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range," *PGS-MN Newsletter*, v. 9, no. 2 (Summer, 2001)
  - C. *Mszana Dolna, Galicia to Virginia and environs, St. Louis County*: Greg Kishel, "Z *Beskidu Wyspowego*: Another Chain Migration to the Mesabi Range.," *PGS-MN Newsletter*, v. 11, no. 2 (Summer, 2003)
  - D. *Gogebic County, Michigan to northern St. Louis County*: Greg Kishel, "From the *Virginia Pioneers Scrapbook*: Early Polish Settlers on the Mesabi Iron Range," *PGS-MN Newsletter*, v. 12, no. 1 (Spring, 2004)
  - E. *Wągrowiec region, Poznania and various Kaszubian villages to Duluth, St. Louis County*: Richard G. Bates, "Origins and Relationships of Selected Duluth Area Families of Polish Ancestry (A Chain Migration)," *PGS-MN Newsletter*, v. 13, no. 3 (Autumn, 2005)
  - F. *Ostrów Wielkopolski region, Poznania to Split Rock Township, Carlton County*: noted in "Missing Branches" query by Mark Dobosenski, *PGS-MN Newsletter*, v. 12, no. 3 (Autumn, 2004)
  - G. Plus others noted by PGS-MN members but not yet formally documented, organized, and published in *PGS-MN Newsletter*: *Kaszubia to Winona and then on to central Minnesota and Warsaw, North Dakota; Opole area, Silesia to Stearns and Morrison Counties; Rabka area, Galicia to Northeast Minneapolis; ? to Silver Lake, McLeod County.*
- V. **AND WE'D LIKE TO HEAR AND READ ABOUT THE POLISH CHAIN MIGRATIONS YOU SUSPECT OR HAVE DISCOVERED!**

## Photographs of Interest



**PGS-MN Members Receiving Awards at History Center**  
**From Left: Robin PanLener (President of MGS), Edward Brandt, Barbara Rockman, Kornel Kondy, Blanche Krbechek, Paul Kulas and Terry Kita (PGS-MN President)**



**PGS-MN was well-represented at Awards Dinner. Polish contingent shows Terry Kita, Blanche Krbechek and visitor from Poland at one of the tables.**



**Paul Kulas at the book table, under our new sign, at the Urban Expedition: Poland gathering at the Landmark Center in St. Paul in February**

**Kaszubian Article...***continued from page 1*

Bartłomiy took on the responsibilities of landlord or "village mayor" (*sculteti*)<sup>1</sup> from his father. He married Marianna RAMCZYKOWSKA (1759-1811) in 1776. They had three boys and three girls - Francisca (1777-?), Lucia (1779-?), Joanne (1783-1847), Paul (1786-?), Maria (1789-1850) and Andreas Mathew (1796-?).

Mathew DERDA (son of Łukasz) married Constantina IESTIS. They had two boys and a girl - Constance, (1772-?), Joannes (1777-1777) and Joannes (1779-?).

Joseph DERDA (son of Łukasz) married and had five sons - Adalbertus (1775-?), Joannes (1777), Joannem (1784), Joannem (1792-?) and Andreas (1798-?).

Joanne (son of Bartłomiy) married Marianna PIERSZEWSKA in 1807. They had six boys and one girl - Joanne (1812-1886), Francis Joseph Ludwig (1815-1871), Andrea (1816-?), Peter Paul (1819-1887), Michael Matthew (1821-?), Catharina Marjanna (1822-?), Joseph Joannes (1826-?).

Michael Matthew DERDOWSKI (son of Joanne) married Catharina MIŁOCH. They had four boys and three girls - Franciscus (1847-1849?), Marjana Mariam (1849-1904, at Warsaw, ND), Monica (1852-1930, at Warsaw, ND), Michael (1855-?), Joseph (1858-?), Josephina (1860-?) and Peter (1863-?).

Marjana Mariam (daughter of Michael Matthew) married Johann KULAS (Theodore's brother). They had fourteen children - Anthony (1872-1952), Mary (1873-1873), Theofil (1874-1902), John (1875-1968), Frank (1879-1945), Anastasia (1880-1959), Augusta (1882-1951), Leon (1883-1967), Stanley (1885-1967), Antononia (1887-1947), Edward (1889-1971), Minnie (? -1982), Bazel (1891-1971), Ludwik (1893-1976).

Ludwik Marion KULAS married Emma TANDESKI in 1914. They had four boys and a

girl - Ludwik KULAS, Jr. (1922-2004), Englebert (1917-1998), and Ernest, Alfred and Eryka (statistics unknown). After Emma passed away, Ludwik married Clara Marie KRYSZKO. They had three boys - James, Dennis and Roger.

Jan (John) KULAS, son of Jacob KULAS and Josephine KIEDROWSKI, was born in April of 1839 and died on a Sunday evening, November 7, 1920. He was buried on November 9, 1920 in the Warsaw, North Dakota cemetery. He came to America from Poland (then West Prussia) after the American Civil War. Why he decided to come to America is not known for sure. One story is that Jan was the assistant gamekeeper on an estate and that he was caught poaching by the head gamesman, and during the incident there was an exchange of shots and that Jan and/or the head gamekeeper were wounded, and that Jan spent some time in jail for the incident. When he got out of jail he came to America to better himself. According to Victor STOLTMAN of Warsaw (North Dakota), Jan used to walk with a limp, which could have come from being shot. Supposedly, this incident also made Jan ineligible for service in the military.

Another story told is that after serving in the Prussian Army for eight years, Jan was expecting to be drafted again for another Prussian campaign. However, this story is said and believed to apply to Jan's brother, Theodore. However, maybe the American railroads were in Europe recruiting men to come to America to help build railways west after the Civil War, so he may have signed up with them because he didn't want to serve another eight years in the Prussian Army, or just to better himself.

Jan may have disembarked in New York City about 1873. He started work on the railroad, worked his way to Chicago and sent for his wife, Marya (Mary) DERDOWSKA, and his children, Anthony and Mary. Mary may have died as an infant en route to America and been buried at sea. Marya was born in 1849 and died on July 29, 1904 with burial in the Warsaw, North Dakota, cemetery on July 31<sup>st</sup>. Jan became sick in Chicago and

Marya worked as a scrubwoman to keep the family going. His illness or injury is said to have been due to back problems which caused him to be laid up in bed for about a year, perhaps caused by lifting heavy railroad rails.

From Chicago, they worked their way to Winona, Minnesota, on the railroad. Their oldest child, Anthony, started school in Winona. It has also been stated that their third child, Theofil, was born in Winona. From Winona, they traveled to North Dakota and homesteaded 1.5 miles north and ½ mile east of Warsaw, in the summer of 1879, in time for the storm of 1880.

How they got to North Dakota is not clear; different stories are told. One story is that Jan walked with others from Winona to the homestead area in North Dakota and staked his claim. He stayed on the claim till the fall, then early next spring he sold everything at Winona that wasn't needed, bought two oxen and an oxcart, loaded up with necessities, and everyone in the family walked all the way to the homestead. Records at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, North Dakota do show John KULAS purchasing 160 acres for \$1.25 per acre on June 11, 1878 and another 170.39 acres (called a tree claim) on July 5, 1878.

Another story is that they came by steamboat on the Red River to Acton, North Dakota. Most probably they would have boarded at Fishers Landing, Minnesota, after coming by train from Winona and St Paul. After arriving, Jan and his wife homesteaded north of Warsaw, by building a two-room log cabin that first summer. Their sixth child, Anastasia, was born to them the next year in the log cabin. Jan sent for his brother Theodore and his family. When they arrived in 1881, Jan gave them the tree claim north of Warsaw in exchange for the first crop. University of North Dakota records show Theodore KULAS taking claim to 170.39 acres on June 28, 1881 and John KULAS giving up claim to that same acreage on the same day.

Reportedly, the first crop failed and supposedly there may have been a dispute between Jan and Theodore over the second crop, which caused Jan to sell his farm (which was next to Theodore's) and move to a farm 5.5 miles due east of Warsaw on the Red River of the North in Pulaski Township. Jan lived there until his death. Plat maps of Pulaski Township in 1893 show FELTMAN and KULAS jointly owning 87.6 acres of timberland 5.5 miles east of Warsaw along the Red River.

A tale is told that during those first winters in North Dakota Jan saved the life of old man August BYZEWSKI by cutting off his frozen toes to prevent gangrene from spreading, and that Mr. BYZEWSKI never forgave Jan for cutting off his toes.

Marya, Jan's wife, was a midwife. It has been said that she got a blood clot or blood poisoning from a fence-wire cut she sustained when she was running home after delivering a baby. She reportedly died of a ruptured appendix. She had been sick for a couple of days and was suffering so terribly that a veterinarian and apothecary were obtained from Oslo, Minnesota to come and help. The doctor was not available, as he had gone to help out at a diphtheria outbreak. They operated on her on the kitchen table, but the appendix had already burst and she died that night.

Life on the farm was filled with hard work and strange happenings. Tales are told of how Jan's fifth son Frank was hit by lightning at threshing time and was given up for dead, until a newly-arrived immigrant remembered that in the old country they always dug a trench and put the victim in it and covered him up with the moist dirt to revive the victim. They did that with Frank and he came to, living until March 1945. Another tale told is that Theofil, Jan's third child, got a pitchfork in his abdomen during threshing. Some fool pitched his fork up onto the top of a load of bundles and pitched too hard so the fork went over the top and down the other side into Theofil's abdomen. It developed into peritonitis and he died at a young age.



Also told is a yarn about Jan being thrown out or barred from the church in Warsaw. Apparently, one Sunday in church, the priest, Father KUPKA, accused Jan of some wrongdoing and Jan got up, answered the priest in church and then walked out of the church, and after that he wouldn't go back to the church. It is said that a nasty letter was sent by a member of the church committee, of which Jan was a senior member or in charge of, to Father KUPKA, after which Father KUPKA apparently blamed Jan for the letter. Later, due to church-member dissatisfaction, Father KUPKA was replaced or forced to leave Warsaw, but Jan refused to return to the church.

Jan and Theodore supposedly were born in the locality of Bąk, Poland. Their parish church was in the province of Bydgoszcz, where records of birth should be. Mary and Monika DERDOWSKA (sisters) were born in Osowo village and their parish church was in Wiele, Poland. Monika was the wife of Theodore KULAS. Jan's relatives trace back to the Bąk locality in the province of Bydgoszcz, Poland, where his father Jakub (Jacob) and grandfather Jan resided back to 1768. Presently his relatives reside in the areas around Wiele and Czersk [Chojnice *powiat* (county) and Bydgoszcz *województwo* (province) of Poland].

Around 1900, Jan took a family portrait of himself, his wife and their 13 children. Jan mailed a copy of this photograph back to Prussia with instructions on the back of the photograph to deliver it to someone in the village of Bąk, a small village north of Czersk, Poland, east of the village of Wiele. In July 1991, Jim KULAS and his wife Lim were touring Poland and visited the villages of Bąk and Wiele, and the town of Czersk, where they saw the photograph that Jan mailed about 1900. It was in the home of Leokadia and Zygmunt LACKA at 89-650 Czersk, Poland, Kubna number 9 (in a suburb of Czersk shown on a Polish map as Łubna on the northeast outskirts of Czersk). The LACKAs (brother and sister living together) said they had saved the photo from their mother's family. They said that when German and Russian

soldiers went through their home looking for valuables during World War II, the soldiers had thrown the photo out of the house, but each time they recovered and save it. The soldiers took their horses. They thought they were related to the KULASes in the photo through their mother, but were not sure. (These stories of Jan and Theodore KULAS were recounted by James KULAS.)

Monica (daughter of Michael Matthew) married Theodore KULAS (Johann's brother). They had nine children - Michael (1872-?), Mary (1875-?), John (1876-1938), Francis (1882-1882), Frances (1879-?), Minnie (1883-1964), Stella (1886-1985), Joseph (1888-1969), Mariana Stanisława (1890-1938).

Mary (daughter of Theodore KULAS and Monica DERDOWSKA) married Joseph KOSMATKA, Sr. in 1924. They had three boys and a girl: Isabel (1901-living), Frank, John and Joseph (statistics unknown).

Michael DERDOWSKI (son of Michael Matthew) married Clara DOBEKA in 1877 in Karsin, Poland. They had a boy and a girl - Nicolaus (1879-?) and Marianna (1880-?). Peter Paul married Marijana KONKOLEWSKA in 1846 in Wiele. They had nine boys and five girls - Michalina Marianna (1847-?), Mariam Michalina (1849-circa 1871), Jan Hieronim (1852-1902), Amalia (1854-?), Joseph Johann Maximillian (1856-1884), Michael Theophil (1858-1938), Johann Anton (1860-?), Michael Robert (1861-?), Marcus (1864-?), Toufanna Juliana (1865-?), Joseph Zacharia (1867-?), Anton (1872-1878) and Theophila Fraziska (1876-1894). There is also an additional boy. Only the underlined children lived well into adulthood. An early postcard photograph of Hieronim is shown on the next page.

Jan Hieronim DERDOWSKI married Joanna LUBOWIECKA, who was an opera singer. Hieronim fell for her after seeing her perform. In love with her and her voice, he stood outside her dressing room until she came out. During courtship



Josepha (1925-1991), Joann Aldonna (1931-Living), Florence Marie (1933-Living) and Adeline Anne (1934-1998).

*“There is no Kaszubia without Poland and there is no Poland without Kaszubia.”*

These are the well-known words of Hieronim DERDOWSKI, Winona resident, poet, journalist, and editor. Long after his passing, his words were a battle cry for many Poles--during World War I and from 1939-1945 during the occupation by the Nazis. A statue with a bust of Hieronim atop was erected in his hometown of Wiele in 1930. The statue was blown up by the Nazis in 1939, but the bust escaped virtually unscathed. A villager discovered the bust in the ruins and hid it in a vault of a mausoleum until after the war. The statue's foundation was rebuilt (albeit different in design and lacking its original grandeur). It was rededicated in 1957 and it remains standing in Wiele to this day. My great-grandfather Michael T. Derdowski is shown below with Hieronim's statue. Today, many literary scholars in Poland consider Hieronim Derdowski to be the Washington Irving of Poland.



he asked her if she would come to America after he had settled and marry him. She accepted. In 1885, Hieronim left for America, traveling from Bremen, Germany, to New York at the age of 33. Hieronim and Joanna had one son and three daughters - Thadeus (1889-1889), Halka (1891-1892), Helena (1892-1985) and Harriott (1895-1928). Photograph of family taken in 1892 is shown on page 15.

Harriott DERDOWSKA, aka: Jeremina, was the first person in Winona, Minnesota to receive a master's degree. Sometime thereafter, she contracted tuberculosis and passed away. She had been a teacher for elementary school and high school. Harriott never married.

Helena married Walter ZIMNIEWICZ in 1921. They had two boys and four girls: Thadeus Stanley (1922-1997), Chester Jarome (1923-1991), Wanda



Michalina Marianna married Jozef FELSKOWSKI in Viele, Poland. Nothing is known beyond that. Her sister Amalia married Dionizego BALACHOWSKI and they had a son named Chester who was born about 1890. Michael Theophil (aka: Teofil) married Anna DRAŻKOWSKA in 1888. Their two oldest children were born in Viele: Rosalie (1889-1980) and Peter Paul (1892-1969).

Michael Theophil immigrated to the United States in 1893. The following year, he sent for his wife and children who came to his cousin's farm in Warsaw, North Dakota. Their daughter Anna Wanda (1895-1973) was born on the farm of Theodore and Monica Derdowska KULAS. Their last two children, William Julius (1898-1939) and Louisa (1900-1977) were born in Mellen, Wisconsin where "Teofil" opened up shop as the proprietor of a boarding house and saloon for lumberjacks.

Rosalie married Walter KOWALCZYK in 1909 and they had three children: Walter (1916-unknown), Wanda Nepomocena (1910-1986) and Edward Hieronim (1911-unknown). Walter married and had a son named Walter Gerald (1941-1997). Walter Gerald married and had three children - Kimberly, Linda and Matthew. Kimberly married Brian STAFFORD and had a daughter named Sarah.

Peter and his siblings grew up in a dysfunctional household where his father was a slave to the bottle. At the naïve age of thirteen, Peter ran away from home and joined the railroad. Eventually, he married Opal Adeline ARMSTRONG in the summer of 1918. Shortly after they wed, Peter (who had enlisted in the U.S. Army on June 4, 1917) was sent to Europe during WWI. He served on the railroads in France. While there, he was promoted to Sergeant three times!! He also boxed lumberjacks.

professionally from time to time and boxed in the "title bout" aboard ship on his return voyage from Europe. When Peter came back from the Great War, he found Opal in Washington State with her family - suffering from tuberculosis. He took her to Weimar, California where she passed away at the tuberculosis sanitarium in 1921.

In 1922, Peter came down with typhoid fever in the fall while working on a ranch during harvest in Warsaw, North Dakota. His older sister Rose came out and took care of him at the hotel until he recuperated. Between 1921 and 1928, Peter bounced around between agricultural harvests from Newcastle (East of Sacramento) and El Centro, California (in the bountiful Imperial Valley) to Warsaw, North Dakota. Between harvests, Peter "railroaded" as a fireman on various railroads, including the famous Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. He was involved in three rear-ender and two head-on collisions. One collision resulted in his being pinned between two cars. Peter suffered from varicose veins in his legs after that. He also worked on the construction of Highway 49 between Auburn and Grass Valley, California.

Peter married Mary Sophia ZWAINZ, a school teacher, in El Centro in 1928. They moved to Sacramento, California where he purchased a gasoline station on Broadway. Soon after, Peter started Pete's Trailer Company in 1929, manufacturing and repairing trailers. His sons took over his business, stopped manufacturing and moved into mobile homes. They closed the business in 1999, after 70 years in business. Peter served America in France during WWI and in California naval shipyards during WWII, yet he wanted to be an American-born citizen so much that not even his children knew he was an immigrant until after his death. Even today, Peter's grave marker at Calvary Cemetery in Sacramento, California shows he was born in Warsaw, North Dakota. However, I've seen the actual records from Wiele, Poland showing his birth.

Once, Peter saved the life of his oldest son Peter Paul, Jr. As his son stood too close to the edge of a cliff in the Sierra-Nevada Mountains, Peter grabbed his son's arm as the rocks gave out from below his feet and threw him to safety, and then fell nearly 300 feet down into the steep granite canyon below. He survived! He was a legend in his own right in his day.

Pete and Mary had three children - Mary (1929-Living), Peter Paul, Jr. (1931-Living) and Theodore Michael (1933-Living). Mary married Richard JOHNSON and had eight children. Peter Paul, Jr. married Patricia FUCHS and had seven children. Theodore married Margaret KERN of Pasadena, California in 1956 and had five children - Sheryl, Peter (1959-1969), Annette, and twins Michael (yours truly!) and Monica (1964-1997). Sheryl married Brian JONASSON. They had a boy and a girl - Olivia and Elliott JONASSON. Monica married and had a son - Adam VON BOLTENSTERN. Michael (yours truly again!) married and has a wonderful daughter Krista Leyna DERDOWSKI. I am now a single father.

Anna Wanda married Stanley CADE early in her adulthood. They never had children. William Julius served in the U.S. Army at the same time as Peter. He railroaded like his brother and threw himself under a freight engine in Pittsburg, California in 1939. Louisa married Clifford OLEWSKI. They never had children.

Joseph Zacharia married and had three children in Poland: Anthony DERDOWSKI (circa 1894-died very young), Joanna Stanisława (1894-?) and Jozefa (1895-1991). Joanna Stanisława married Alojzy GIERSZEWSKI. They had three children - Gertruda (1919-Living), Henryk (1922-unknown) and Halina (1925-Living). Henryk married and had five children in Poland - Jerzy, Bogdan, Henryk, Roman and Renata. Halina married Bernard ZAJAKALA. They had two children - Regina and Hanna. Regina ZAJAKALA married Stanislaw KORNILUK. They had two children - Tomasz (1980-Living) and Karol (1986-Living).



I am in contact with Tomasz KORNILUK and several other people with the surname "Derdowski" in Poland.

I am running down every lead I come across. I have the family trees for all five "Derdowski Clans" other than my own in the U.S. In my research, I have reduced them to three. I have made contact with a "Derdowski Clan" in Vancouver and another near Sydney, Australia.

I know all Derdowski families hail from the loins of Łukasz DERDA of Wiele, Poland. There are several Derdowski families in England that I've not been successful in contacting. There are a number of Derdowski men and Derdowska women in Poland that I'm attempting to reach. I have their telephone numbers and am working on an organized plan to contact them.

I've also been trying to make connections with Derda families who may have branched off from the "tree" before the change in the surname of Derda to Derdowski. At times, it is like trying to find a black needle in a black haystack in the dark! In the Wiele records, all of the men changed their surname from Derda to Derdowski between 1810 and 1820.

The Derda/Derdowski clans have a very rich heritage with connections from the great Kaszubian poet Hieronim DERDOWSKI to Łukasz DERDA and his descendants who were gifted with the position of *sculteti*<sup>1</sup> for the parish of Wiele by the last King of Poland. There are rumors that our heritage reaches all the way back to the "Winged Horsemen" who fought so valiantly under the command of Jan SOBIESKI at the gates of Vienna in 1683. If this proves true, then all the more outstanding heritage I share with my relatives.

I have uploaded my family tree and all of the Derdowski families I have encountered over the past decade onto <<http://www.rootsweb.com>>.

Anyone can view all that I have on my computer there.

Contributors of information represented in this article include, but are not limited to: *Theodore Derdowski* (my father and grandson of Teofil Derdowski. Dad put me in pursuit of the Kulas connections!); *Fr. Aloysius Rekowski* (an incredible gift of God and an encyclopedia of Kaszubian knowledge that will never be replaced - who translated some of Hieronim's poems and who slipped from our world on June 17, 2006 at the age of 84); *Donna Zimmiewicz Lisson* and *Florence Zimmiewicz* (granddaughters of Hieronim Derdowski and keepers of his life's stories); *James Kulas* (grandson of Jan Kulas and Marya Derdowska Kulas and brother to Dennis and Roger); *Dennis Kulas* (grandson of Jan Kulas and Marya Derdowska Kulas and brother to James and Roger); *Isabel Klave* (granddaughter of Theodore Kulas and Monica Derdowska Kulas - age 104 at the time she related stories to me in 2005 with a VERY sharp memory! After we spoke, I sent her pictures of my grandfather and his siblings from the early 1920's. Her nurse told me she put them next to her bed and touches their faces every morning when she wakes up.); *Fr. Paul Breza* (a living legend at the Polish Cultural Institute in Winona); *Tim Breza* (city councilman of Winona, Minnesota, loyal Kaszub and possessor of a plethora of knowledge about Poland); and *Stanislaw Janke* (author of Derdowski). If I have missed anyone, please forgive me.

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<sup>1</sup> The imperial cities in Germany were governed by royal officials called *sculteti* (Latin).



Kaszubian Griffin

**Missing Branches...continued from page 32**

**Judith A. Keller**, W1211 072 Meadow View Drive, Sullivan WI 53178

<Kellerjudy@hotmail.com> is researching KASPRZAK, PROBULIS, NAPIERALA, MUR/MOHR, JUROSZ in Sulawki [Suwałki] and Posen and in Milwaukee WI.

**Evelyn A. Karn**, 4227 N.E. Washington St., Columbia Heights MN 55421 is researching Henry A. KUFFEL and his father John in Ronowo Poland-Prussia and in Shimoken [Shamokin] PA to Freeport IL to St. Cloud MN.

**Donald A. McCavic**, 5487 Lehigh St., Ventura CA 93003-4009 is researching Julian BLOCH/BLOCK in Buyck - St. Louis County, MN 1903.

**Laurentia J. Smieja**, 1639 Woodbridge St., St. Paul MN 55117 is researching WAREZECHA, CZECH, SMIEJA in Opole, Poland.

**Annette Nalipinski Stenger**, 54 - 206th St., New Richmond WI 54017 (May 1 to Sept. 1), 9400 No. Frontage Road, #63, Yuma AZ 85365 <fransten@peoplepc.com> is researching NALIPINSKI/NALEPINSKI, PRZYBYLSKI/PRYBLE in Posen in Poland, LUCKY/LUCKI in Kryzworzeka in Poland and all in Minnesota. Also EUDZERSKA, KLIMEK in Minnesota. She writes: "I really appreciate having the information from the wonderful programs printed in the newsletter. Thank you to the guest speakers and newsletter editors who take the extra time to provide the articles on those programs for those of us who are out of state."

**Robert A. Stryk**, 5441 Halifax Lane, Edina MN 55424-1438 <rastryk@tcq.net> is researching STRYK (may be shortened name), SCZERBYNSKI in the ?Carpathians? and in NY, PA and WI.

**Judy Swenson**, 1498 Grant McMahon Blvds, Ely MN 55731 <jmswens@cpinternet.com> is researching MICHOR in Posen in Poland and in Duluth

**Assistance in Poland**

Periodically we publish a list of professional researchers and guides in Poland who can help you. We endeavor to list only those which our membership have used and provided no negative comments. The Newsletter welcomes your comments (good and bad) about your experience and any corrections or additions.

**Bydgoszcz Area:** Henryk Skrzypiński  
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**Warsaw Area:** Danuta Jampolska  
*Both of my e-mail addresses for Danuta failed. If anyone can update please let me know. – JWK*

**Extra Contributions**

We thank the following for their extra contributions to PGS-MN:

Linda Krajnak Black  
John Grech  
Dianna Gustafson  
Gerald Keeville

Larry Kulis  
Donald A. McCavic  
Diane Rapacz  
Lucy Kruchowski

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**DROBNE ECHA***Installment #11***Dateline: Duluth**

From *Straż*, 1904 and 1907, *Wiarus*, 1906-08, *Rolnik*, 1908, and *Kuryer Polski*, 1908-1909

**By Greg Kishel****<gfk1@cornell.edu>**

The Polish National Catholic parish of St. Josephat's in Duluth is not well-known, in the Twin Ports community or outside of it. Nonetheless, this parish has been one of the most distinctive Polish-American institutions in Minnesota, from the very date of its founding in 1907. Established out of a long-simmering controversy between some members of Duluth's Polish-American community and the local Roman Catholic diocesan hierarchy, it survived great financial challenges during the Depression and grew in size, property, and the loyalty of its members.

Now St. Josephat's is small in numbers, and a year ago it lost its beloved long-time pastor, Father Stephen Krawiec.<sup>1</sup> However, the parish is going forward on the fierce loyalty of its members, and is currently served on a circuit-riding basis by Father John Kutek of Sacred Heart of Jesus PNC Church in Minneapolis. We are particularly well-put to note its historical significance in this year, the centennial of its founding.

Thus, I present my translations of reportage from various Polish-language newspapers that were published contemporaneously with the events of a century ago in Duluth. They include the correspondence I found in *Straż*, then the official publication of the Polish National Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Father Krawiec's obituary is found in the January 1, 2006 issue of the Duluth *News-Tribune*, p. 6C. Some time later this year, a memoir of your translator's brief acquaintance with this gentle shepherd will appear in *PolAm*, the newsletter of the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota.

<sup>2</sup>I uncovered these items with the aid of *An Index to Straż – The Guard, 1897-1915, Volume I* (Scranton, Pa.: Polish National Union of America, 1994), compiled by Father (now Bishop) Casimir J. Grotnik. The PGS-MN library includes both volumes of this index.

I'm also presenting items from the general Polish-American press, that I found myself or with the assistance of our PGS-MN colleagues John Radziłowski and Ray Marshall.<sup>3</sup>



**St Josephat's Church, Duluth (Photo by the author, 2002)**

<sup>3</sup>Some years back John compiled a list of local reportage datelined in Minnesota that was published in *Wiarus*, the prominent Polish-language newspaper published at Winona. Ray collated the texts of many items from Polonian communities in northeastern Minnesota, using John's index. Using the microfilming available at the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota, I have been reviewing 1905-1910 runs of *Rolnik*, published at Stevens Point, Wisconsin, and *Kuryer Polski*, published at Milwaukee; both of these newspapers featured correspondence from Minnesota locales.

As you will see, these pieces are written from very different perspectives on a deep, sharp, and persisting divide between Polish-American “nationalists” and Polish and non-Polish Catholic traditionalists in Duluth. To preserve the newsreel-style “You are There” feel that I try to cultivate in this series, I am presenting everything in chronological order of publication. Do not get disoriented by the fluctuations in attitude, tone, and ideology! And, folks, I have not excavated and showcased this material to revive the antagonisms of a century ago. I have no personal allegiance toward either side on the matter of this dispute. As an amateur local historian, I will again say that I did not make this old news, I’m only reporting it!

We begin with a couple of items from *Straż* from 1904. This was two to three years before the events that culminated in the founding of St. Josephat’s. Building on my past presentation of material on the founding of Duluth’s Polish Cemetery,<sup>4</sup> they show some of the “prehistory” of the PNCC presence in Duluth. The fact of their publication in a church organ issued far from Minnesota shows that disaffected Polish Roman Catholics in Duluth were early watching the PNCC...and, undoubtedly, the PNCC was watching right back. From there we have a local backdrop item or two from *Wiarus*, from just before the split; the PNCC’s 1907 coverage of the inauguration of its frontier parish in Minnesota; a short syndicated bulletin from *Rolnik*; traditionalist Roman Catholic Poles’ reactions to the founding of St. Josephat’s, which appeared in *Wiarus* and *Rolnik*; from *Kuryer Polski*, a debate between Duluth locals over the proper guardianship of Polish ethnicity; and later reportage on the Polish-American priest in Duluth who had been at the center of all of these events. *Zaczynamy*--Let’s begin!

# STRAŻ

No. 33

Scranton, Pa., Sobota Dnia 17-go Sierpnia, 1907 Roku

Rok XII

## Ciągle Naprzód.

Uwagi o Kościele  
Narodowym.

W tych dniach połączyła się z Polsko-Narodowym Kościołem nowa parafia w Duluth w stanie Minnesota. Proboz-czem tej pierwszej Narodowej placówki na Zachodzie jest ks. Dr. K. Sierzputowski.

Historja powstania nowej parafii Narodowej, liczącej o

po kłopotach z księdzem i ludem polskim. A tu ani rusz. Ajrysz kazal i ksiadz bythy moze i posluchał, bo ksiadz chowany w dyscyplinie, ale lu dzie stanęli murem i rzekli jedno **energiczne słowo**.

—Nie puścimy!!

Nie puścimy i basta! Nam się ksiadz udał: gospodarzy z narodem aż miło, kazania prawi, aż czleka mrowie przecho-dzi od wzruszenia i radości, o

dalej światło, idea Wolnego, Narodowego Kościoła ku brzegom Spokojnego Oceanu. Hasłem polskiego narodu w Duluth stała się ta nasza pigkna dewiza, pod którą idą polacy w Poznańskiem, Królestwie i Galicyi: Nie damy się! Tak, ani pludrom niemieckim, ani krwawym oprawcom moskiewskim, ani obłudnym ajryszom w Ameryce nie: poddamy się, duszy nie zaprzędamy, języka

## Z TYGODNIA.

Zapoczątkowany strajk telegrafistów z kompanii Western Union, którzy porzucili pracę wskutek nadużyć urzędników kompanii rozszerzył się po całych Stanach Zjednoczonych. W każdym większym mieście robotnicy telegraficzny wzięli na strajk, solidaryzując się ze swymi towarzyszami. Dnia 12 bm. w New York zaprzestano pracy 3 tysiące telegrafistów z kompanii Western Union i 2 tysiące z Postal Telegraph Co. Ze względu na

braćmi Tymanowskimi. Najpierw Rubińscy poezeli się bić na pięści z Tymanowskimi. Do tej walki przy-huczyła się żona Rubińskiego i po krótkiej chwili wojowniczość ogarnęła wszystkich tych polaków, którym alkohol odebrał zmysły. Bójka była zażarta. Ze wszystkich stron latały próżne butelki, kamienie, a nawet podolowano nożów i raczono się nimi wzajemnie.

Policja ze stacyi Lawndale otrzy-mała telefoniczne zawiadomienie o walce z nadmienieniem, że dwie osoby zostały zabite. Gdy wóz poli-

## Front Page of *Straż*, August 17, 1907 with article on St. Josephat’s

<sup>4</sup>*Drobne Echa*, Installment #5, *PGS-MN Newsletter*, v. 13, no. 2 (Summer, 2005), p.14



*From Straż, issue of July 23, 1904:*

On July 8 was celebrated the consecration of Ss. Peter and Paul church, which is presumably a Polish parish.

I will not write at length, about the usual ceremonies performed for the consecration; instead the thought has glided out from my pen unconsciously, about the unlimited greed of the one who celebrated the consecration, that is, of the bishop.

A year had gone by as a committee presented him with this matter, offering him one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for the consecration; the bishop showed our committee the door, informing them that they had to sign the church over to his name and only later ask about a consecration.

The consecration took place. The church was consecrated. And the only thing left to us sheep was to pay off the debt, in round figures \$13000.00, distinctly thirteen thousand dollars (though all of the property is worth 8,000.00), so that the Irishman had a clear title. In the face of that, if it may be said, where the motherland is in slavery, do we love Poland? The latter is a lie; we are only deceiving ourselves.

A parishioner.

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*From Straż, issue of October 8, 1904:*

**Duluth, Minn.** I liked your publication, which I have just read. Thus, whenever a Pole has a Polish heart, he must admit that these Irish and Krauts have done wrong to us. I desire only your newspaper, with which I am satisfied.

Jan FORYSIAK.

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*From Straż, issue of October 24, 1904:*

**What's happening in Duluth.**

Despite the fact that the Polish community here is numerous enough, consisting of around 2,000 people, and has been established for something like 25 years already; despite the fact that it has built two churches; however, on the matter of education,

no matter how much else has been done, there is not so much as one step forward.

Here you do not have so much as a singing circle, nor anyone willing to do amateur theatrical scenes, not to mention the "Młodzieży" or the Falcons' Nests, there is no one to remember that. The only societies here are like to be vegetating; they are two groups of the Polish National Alliance, resting on medieval rules dictated by former parish priests.

Through the work of the societies just mentioned, the pockets of the Fathers are financially supported; labors on the national field and concordant learning with the spirit of the time are forbidden outright, by our "messengers of God."

Let a few individuals be upright and willing to toil on the soil of our Polish germinal work, and then a curse from the pulpit is dropped on them like a thunderbolt from a sunny sky, as if the people with the Roman clergy had been standing higher in the sky from such outcasts. For their deeds are as follows: The so-called (*fairs*) bazaars arranged several times per year have brought such disgrace and demoralization to us, and yet our Father LASKOWSKI explained to us that they are to be in commemoration of some feast-day, of a female or male saint.

This time the occasion arose at the occasion of the proclamation of the fifty-year jubilee of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. In order to sanctify that feast, there was once again a bazaar on a large scale; and what went with that, but exploitation, corruption, brawls, shame brought to all things Polish, and to one person a money-belt of gold.

One of the many.

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*From Wiarus, issue of September 16, 1906:*

I beg the kind placement in *Wiarus* of the following acknowledgments.

On August 5 the splendid solemn consecration of our new place of worship was celebrated. We hereby pay thanks to the Reverend Clergymen, who deigned to honor us with their attendance; thanks also to the Societies that took part in that solemnity.

Above all, thanks are owed not only to our Countrymen from the West End, but also to our Countrymen from Superior, Wis., who gathered in such numbers on that day and who contributed in no small amount to the luster of the ceremonies.

From the foreign Societies, the Italian Society is deserving of thanks; it gave proof that we are the children of one Mother Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, an old-fashioned *Bóg zapłać* to all.

The Pastor, Father  
K. SIERZPUTOWSKI.  
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*From Straż, issue of August 17, 1907:*

**Continually onward.  
Observations about the National Church.**

In recent days a new parish in Duluth, in the State of Minnesota, has united with the Polish National Church. The parish priest of this first National outpost in the West is Father-Doctor K. SIERZPUTOWSKI.

The history of the formation of the new National parish, numbering around 300 families, is very simple.

The Polish church of the Virgin Mary in Duluth,<sup>5</sup> the parish priest of which was Father-Doctor SIERZPUTOWSKI, belonged to Bishop McGOLRICK, known in America to be an enemy of the immigration of Poles, Italians, Lithuanians, and the like. Bishop McGOLRICK decreed that there had to be only one Roman Catholic cemetery in Duluth, under the management of the Irish. Of course, these Irish mercilessly stole from the Poles and non-Poles alike and commanded them to pay exorbitant prices for wretched cemetery plots.

The Poles soon tired of such a state of affairs, but especially when Father-Doctor SIERZPUTOWSKI became the pastor of the church—a priest still young, well-educated in Warsaw, [St.] Petersburg, Kraków and Lwów, and by all that a Pole in soul and heart.

He thus exhorted his parish, that if it were to persist in the matter, it would be able to have its own cemetery, under Polish administration, and as long as it went from Annaias to Kafais, and they knocked and knocked, eventually there would be a good piece of land for a cemetery. But then a persecution of the people and the priest began there, from the side of the Irish bishop.

Since he was not able to do much ill to the steadfast, Bishop McGOLRICK turned with all ferocity on Father SIERZPUTOWSKI. He began to stab him with the pins of petty difficulties, to treat him like dirt, to humiliate him, to incite his brothers; and in the end he ordered the parish and the people connected with it to forsake him, for his work and sacrifice.

But the Irishman mistook the Polish nature. He thought, that he would go thus at Father-Doctor SIERZPUTOWSKI in this way, like Archbishop MESMER went at Father KRUSZKA, following the trouble with the Polish priest and people. But it was without luck!

The Irishman ordered and the priest would have had to obey, because a priest is educated in discipline; but the people stood up like a wall and they uttered a single word energetically:

“We will not forsake him!!”

“We will not forsake him and that is that! The priest has worked well for us; it’s a pleasure to watch a steward with his people; he declaims his sermons, until one is brought to goosebumps from feeling and joy; he speaks about Poland like such a patriot from Poznań or Kraków; and he defends the working people everywhere.... Thus we will not forsake him!”

“But, how on earth to contend with such Irish and German power all alone—” responded the pastor, delighted but not being given to understand this for himself, “—how would we manage?”

<sup>5</sup>*Transl. note:* St. Mary, Star of the Sea.

“We will manage, because we will not go forward alone into the fight with the enemies of the Polish nation. We have heard, that there in Scranton, in the state of Pennsylvania, a people have arisen in a church with their own priest and for ten years already they have had success in their struggle, and with Father HODUR fourteen Polish priests stand already, preparing for all for the work of God and country, and with the Scrantonians 30,000 have already united anew from Priceburg, Duryea, Wilkes-Barre, Plymouth, Nanticoke, Shamokin, Baltimore, Passaic, Bayonne, Lowell, Adams, Chicopee, Fall River, Webster and Bridgeport. Then we will become united with them, let us give them our hands and let us go forth to the holy struggle.”

Of course, after such a conversation, Father-Doctor SIERZPUTOWSKI wrote to Bishop HODUR, after which he and the parish subscribed to a resolution of affiliation with the National Church, they received the rules and the principles, and one more fortress of the Polish soul had arisen in America. Now they are undertaking to the construction of a House of God; and meanwhile they have bought a church building from the Swedes, remodeled it, decorated it, and consecrated it, and the people have a roof over their heads.

Falling among the people, a tremendous, feverish movement reigns. Old people, the young people, children, all thus are speaking only about this, that the First Polish National Church in the West would be established in Duluth, worthy of the Polish people, and that with Scranton in the East the light might go forth like this from here, the cause of a Free, Polish National Church going toward the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Our beautiful motto has been established through the watchword of the Polish nation in Duluth, under which the Poles go forth in Poznań, in the Kingdom of Poland, and in Galicia. We will not surrender! Thus we will not yield, to either the German plunderers, or the bloody Muscovite butchers, or the hypocritical Irishmen in America; we will not sell our souls, we will not abandon our language, we will not give our church into slavery!

*From Straż, issue of November 16, 1907:*

Dulut,<sup>6</sup> Minn. I am informing you, that with the change in parish administration here, the practices have changed further and for the better. For sixteen years there had never been rites and a procession to the cemetery on All Saints' Day; but from the time when our beloved shepherd Fr. SIERZPUTOWSKI associated with the Polish National Church, the administration went for the better. Our beloved pastor gave us a great joy, when he announced that he was organizing a procession to the national cemetery, that we should pray in common for the souls suffering in Purgatory and that we should maintain such a beautiful Polish custom for the younger generation. Our brothers from the Roman faith found out quickly, and they did the same. And thus the National church always leads in that which is Polish, that which pleases us Poles and from which we are bound together and educated. This gladdens us beyond measure, that we have a national cemetery all our own, and that soon, may God grant it, we will finish off our national church under the patronage of St. Joseph.<sup>7</sup>

Jan FORYSIAK.

\* \* \* \* \*

*From Rolnik, issue of January 10, 1908:*

**Duluth, Minn.** – The Poles from the parish of St. Josephat are beginning the construction of a new Sanctuary of the Lord under the patronage of St. Josephat. The new church will stand on the northeast corner of Third Avenue and Fifth Street. The width of the church will amount to 45 feet, and the length 145 feet. The front of the church will be on Fifth Street.

Messrs. Karol NEUMAN and Tomasz MATLAK are supervising the construction of the building; while the architects are BRAY and NYSTROM.

The foundation is of compressed brick, and the upper structure will be from Menominee veneered brick. The church will be in the Italian Renaissance style, the windows will be colored, and the interior finishes will be of oak wood.

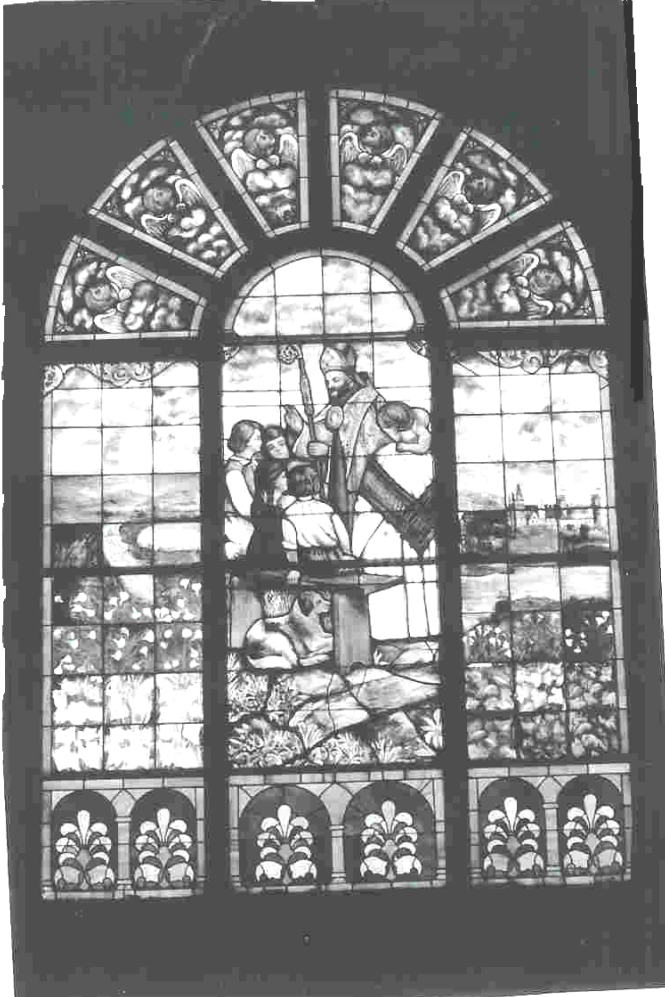
<sup>6</sup>*Transl. note:* So in original; obviously a typo.

<sup>7</sup>*Transl. note:* Again, so in original.

The basement will be used for the Sunday school as well as for meetings of the Societies.

After it is finished, the church will cost from \$25,000 to \$36,000.

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**Window in east transept, St. Josephat's Church, Duluth (Photo by the author, 2002)**

*From Kuryer Polski, issue of February 29, 1908:*

### **THE DENATIONALIZATION OF THE POLES IN DULUTH.**

(Correspondence to *Kuryer Polski*)

Duluth, Minn., February 19. – There are around 700 families of Poles in Duluth, and since Duluth is spread out over a number of miles in extent we likewise have had three Polish parishes with three churches for awhile here.

In but a single parish, that of St. Józefat, where the pastor is Fr. SIERZPUTOWSKI, the Poles cherish their own pure language and speak among themselves in Polish; because Fr. SIERZPUTOWSKI is a good patriot and a good Pole, he thus is vigilant over that, so the Polish people do not lose their national character.

However, in the parishes on the East and West Ends, where the pastors are Fr. LASKOWSKI and Fr. ICIEK, priests of the so-called “new school,” the Poles are losing their ethnicity completely.

In recent times Fr. LASKOWSKI had started to bring out Polish qualities in the Irish people, recognizing that the duty of a Polish chaplain is not only to propagate the faith but also to uphold the national life. However, Fr. ICIEK in the East End is completely of Irish nationality. This priest speaks only in English to himself at home and to the parishioners, and he is ashamed to speak in Polish. All of the Poles belonging to this parish use only the English language among themselves; many of their children do not know a single word in Polish, and the women and young girls even publicly ridicule the Polish language in the presence of Fr. ICIEK, who is enormously pleased by this.

It very much astonishes us, that the clique of patriots belonging to that parish such as: Messrs. BUL., GRABAR., DUN., RYDL., BUCH., DRYM., STAW., are not preventing this. Are they also becoming completely Irish?

It is sad and distasteful to see these Poles the victims of denationalization, and the heart aches. We hear constantly about certain monuments that are supposed to be built..., but we are completely forgetting about Polish schools. Are those monuments to be erected for our Irish generation? A bad thing it is, brothers of ours here in the States, that the assimilation proceeds by swift steps; and in a short time, through the help of the Irishized chaplains here in Duluth, not a trace of the Poles will remain!

This is tragic but true!

**H. W.**



*From Kuryer Polski, issue of March 9, 1908:*

**AN EXPLANATION FROM DULUTH, MINN.**

**The pastor Fr. ICIEK is a good Pole and chaplain.**

**The malice of a correspondent is punished.**

(Correspondence to *Kuryer Polski*)

We have received a communiqué rectifying the correspondence from Mr. H. W., which we are publishing in the interest of impartiality.

Duluth, Minn., March 5. – In number 51 of *Kuryer Polski* correspondence from Duluth appeared, signed with the letters H. W., which defamed us the undersigned, our parish, and our venerable pastor Fr. Stanisław ICIEK.

Before we set about the proof of the falsity of the many accusations published in the cited article, we point out immediately beforehand that Mr. H. W. has perpetrated an affront against the undersigned and against all upright Poles! This is so because the author notes in his correspondence that the former Roman Catholic priest SIERZPUTOWSKI is “a good patriot and a good Pole” and then, appealing to us, he mentions part of our last names, and he indulges us by further titling us “patriots”! We solemnly protest against placing us on the same level as the former Roman Catholic priest SIERZPUTOWSKI!!

After that preamble, so unpleasant for every Pole, we proceed to the “main item.”

It is a lie that in the independent parish of St. Józefat, where the pastor is the independent Fr. SIERZPUTOWSKI, the Poles have cherished their pure ancestral language and have been speaking among themselves in Polish; instead the fact and the truth is, that the so-called “leading lights” of that parish do not speak Polish at home and instead are ashamed of their own Polish surnames, having changed them to English forms such as: Mr. KĘPINSKI renamed himself “KEMP”; Mr. FRANKOWSKI, FRANKLIN; Mr. BOROWIAK, BURKE; Mr. NAIMAN–NEWMAN (read as *Niuman*); and so forth. The children of these

gentlemen even do not know any Polish at all, and those of Mr. NAIMAN do not even understand Polish. It is a lie, that Fr. SIERZPUTOWSKI is on guard that the Polish people do not lose their nationality! On the contrary, the truth is that he has forbidden his own parishioners to send their children to the Polish school! It is further the truth, that Fr. SIERZPUTOWSKI has not arranged for even one Polish national holiday here and is forbidding his parishioners to attend the national celebrations organized in our parish!

We have no thought at all of denying that many in our parish are using the English language; but that is not the fault of Fr. ICIEK, who has been the pastor here for barely a few months! Why, before he “broke his oath and deserted the faith” the renegade SIERZPUTOWSKI was the pastor here! Why did the actions of the independent priest not depolonize our parish, rather than those of Fr. ICIEK? Why, we are asking did this “strange” priest not undertake some sort of measures against the depolonization of our parish?

And when all is said and done, Fr. ICIEK is reviving the spirit of patriotism and joy toward our great Motherland; he has founded here a “Literary-dramatic Circle,” a “Society of Polish Youth,” and a “Society of Polish Children.” Through Fr. ICIEK’s efforts the Drama Circle has already given three performances arranged for the observance of the January uprising, and besides that two evening vocal declamations.

Fr. ICIEK has devoted all of his time free from work to our Polish school, and has even forbidden the children to converse among themselves in English!

We should be witnesses ourselves when Fr. ICIEK reprimanded those who spoke to him in English! At times Fr. ICIEK does use the English language, but he does this only at those times when he may not speak in Polish, because several Irish, Swedes, and Frenchmen who have gotten married to Polish women belong to our Parish, and have been going to our church; and after all Fr. ICIEK must converse with them in English!

It seems to us, that we have irrefutably demonstrated to Mr. H. W. the lack of foundation for his correspondence, from which we wholeheartedly advise him that he should not trouble his head about our parish, we are resolutely looking to the future; and if everywhere they were to have such chaplains as our pastor Fr. ICIEK, then the Poles here in the States would rate very highly in relation to their patriotism and uprightness.

- Ignacy GULCZ**
  - Antoni GRABARKIEWICZ**
  - Mieczysław S. DUNIN**
  - Józef REDLOSK**
  - Peter BUCHOTZ**
  - Franciszek DRYMA**
  - Andrzej SŁAWNY**
- \*\*\*\*\*

*From Wiarus, issue of June 4, 1908:*

**DULUTH, MINN.  
Attention Countrymen, Poland is saved!**

A miracle has occurred in Duluth; Messrs. HODUR and Count SIERZPUTOWSKI saved Poland on May 24, 1908.

The fight was dreadful, under the banner cry: "For your freedom and ours!"

Clothed in everlasting glory, they lie in serenity on the laurels of victory!

Oy, gentlemen, gentlemen, there are none like you rogues, you shattered the rock of Peter! And it will go the same with you. Your falsehood and heretical theater will not last; and the Lord's truth will endure for the ages.

AN INDEPENDENT.

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*From Wiarus, issue of July 30, 1908:*

DULUTH, Minn. What we once hoped for, has occurred. The notorious SIERZPUTOWSKI, the "independent" priest, scurried away as soon as a wrangle exploded in the local independent parish. SIERZPUTOWSKI packed up his bags in the night and slipped away, together with a companion. They

say that he went to Canada, but this has not been ascertained yet. SIERZPUTOWSKI was the previous Roman Catholic priest in the parish of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in Duluth. On the complaints of the parishioners, the Most Reverend Bishop McGORLIK [McGOLRICK] ordered an investigation of him. Naturally, SIERZPUTOWSKI did not like this; accordingly he founded an "independent" parish and declared himself an independent canon. Building an independent church, he encumbered his own followers in debt for a thousand dollars and currently has escaped. This is the usual end of renegades and betrayers of the trust of the people.

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*From Wiarus, issue of September 17, 1908:*

**Father SIERZPUTOWSKI has reformed  
(From Nowiny Polskie)**

Through a special posting we have received two very significant letters from the Very Reverend Father Augustyn BABIŃSKI from Superior, with a request for publication. These are letters from Father K. SIERZPUTOWSKI, who was excommunicated from the Church and who is now repenting.

Below we submit a letter from Father SIERZPUTOWSKI to the Reverend Father ICIEK in Duluth, Father LASKOWSKI in Duluth, and Father BABIŃSKI in Superior. This letter got sent with a request to read it from the pulpit on Sunday, September 13. It was read in the three churches.

Fr. SIERZPUTOWSKI's letter to the Poles reads as follows:

Cleveland, O., September 20.  
Beloved Brothers in Christ!

After a year of heavy trials and work I am today persuaded that grief and bitterness have sent us onto bad paths.

Let us love the Faith of our holy Father, let us respect the sentiments of our people, but let us not yet forget that all authentic authority descends from God.

As I am presently convinced, the Polish National Church has altogether lost the justification for existence, and has followed a bad path. I now feel fortunate, that I made the way home to this connection.

Pardon me then my errors, and pray for me, and God will bless us without end.

May Poland always believe in the Church.  
Your former pastor in Duluth,  
Father K. SIERZPUTOWSKI, D.D.

THE LETTER OF FR. SIERZPUTOWSKI TO HIS BISHOP.

Most Esteemed Bishop!

After appropriate reflection, I have decided to submit to legitimate authority and to acknowledge my separation from the church, as having been in error and wrong.

I thus ask you for forgiveness, my Bishop and I beseech you to have mercy on me.

I have sent a letter to all of the Reverend priests who administer the Polish parishes, authorizing them in my name to ask for forgiveness. This letter is equipped with my signature.

Together with the independent Bishop J. TICZY I want to submit ourselves to the Roman Catholic bishop in the Diocese of Cleveland.

Asking for your prayers at Mass, I await a favorable decision.

A servant in Christ,  
Fr. K. SIERZPUTOWSKI, D.D.

And thus yet another prodigal son has repented; he has returned to the house of the Father. Would to God that all such, all of you, who have fallen away and have sown scandal, were to go on the record and to return to the bosom of the Catholic Church.

The Seat of Peter gave us one Polish Bishop, in the person of the Most Reverend Bishop RHODE. His conciliatory work is overturning the Polish schism

in America. Within two months after his consecration several independent priests returned, and here and there their whole parishes are returning to the old fold.

Bishop RHODE is going to the East, to Pennsylvania, there where the notorious independent Fr. HODUR still holds several thousand Poles in infatuation. With certainty, there also he will begin to convert our countrymen back.

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*From Rolnik, issue of September 18, 1908:*  
**DULUTH, MINN.**

**Father Sierzputowski is repenting.** After deserting his own local parish, the independent priest K. SIERZPUTOWSKI has left for Cleveland, and now desires to return to the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church, of which he previously was a servant. He has sent a letter to Bishop McGERLICK [McGOLRICK] with a request for forgiveness as well as acceptance as a Catholic priest. Together with SIERZPUTOWSKI the independent Slovenian "bishop" TICHY is repenting.

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*From Kuryer Polski, issue of September 21, 1909:*

**The Letter-Box.**

**From Duluth, Minn.,** we received two pieces of correspondence almost simultaneously: one against the independent priest, the second against the Roman-Catholic priests. The affair there evidently is coming to a head. Not wanting to pour oil on the fire, we consider it for the best not to publish either the first or the second correspondence. This is unpleasant, that Poles are waging such fierce religious wars in the current civilized times.

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Alas, the story outlined in these terse, scattered, fragmentary, and very partisan reports is incomplete. One gets the impression of a swirling vortex of emotions and events, boiling up out of longstanding grievances with the stands of the local diocesan hierarchy on several matters very important to the Duluth Poles.

But these sources do not enable us to precisely identify the precipitant of the sharp split within the congregation of St. Mary, Star of the Sea in late 1906 and very early 1907, not to mention the huge and historically-unprecedented decision to withdraw from allegiance to Rome and to reaffiliate with the PNCC.

By that time the matter of the local Polish cemetery was close to fifteen years old.<sup>8</sup> It clearly was an ongoing source of tension; its founders, supporters, and lot-owners were interring their departed ones there, but it still was not consecrated ground at which a Roman Catholic priest could perform graveside rites. Nonetheless, there does not seem to have been any pivotal action on this matter in 1906-1907 that would have fired the Poles' anger so high.<sup>9</sup>

A dispute between the Bishop and a group at Duluth's Polish-ethnic Ss. Peter & Paul parish, over the ownership of the real estate and the parish church building, was very much alive at that point; and it either was already in civil litigation, or was heading for a lawsuit.<sup>10</sup> But while this undoubtedly was an emotionally-charged goad to Duluth's Poles generally, it had to have been an indirect one at most for the people at St. Mary, Star of the Sea; it involved

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<sup>8</sup>See *Drobne Echa, Installment #5, op. cit.* n. 4, for translations of two letters from *Wiarus*, 1894, on the local Poles' withdrawal from the diocese's newly-established and prescribed Calvary Cemetery and their founding of a neighboring cemetery of their own, in defiance of the newly-installed Bishop McGOLRICK.

<sup>9</sup>The *Straż* correspondent from 1907 definitely has it wrong, in attributing to Father SIERZPUTOWSKI an involvement in the seminal events surrounding the Polish cemetery; that all happened long before his arrival on the Duluth scene.

<sup>10</sup>The parishioner-group's initial victory in the litigation in the state courts was reported a year later, in English- and Polish-language newspapers. See, e.g., "Poles Win Their Case," *Duluth Evening Herald*, Jan. 8, 1909, and "Parafia przegrała proces," *Rolnik*, Jan. 15, 1909, p. 5.

a different parish and a different place, in Duluth's West End. So again it does not seem reasonable to conclude that this was the immediate precipitant.

As several of our featured reports show, for some within Duluth's Polish community there was ongoing concern over the preservation of Polish traditions and ethnic identity, versus the process of Americanization and the second generation's adoption of the English language. Our 1904 *Straż* correspondent seems to have taken especial umbrage to the locals' use of American-style church fairs as fundraisers for their parish.<sup>11</sup> While they are tantalizingly vague, the August, 1907 *Straż* report and the near-contemporaneous material from non-PNCC sources suggest that Father SIERZPUTOWSKI came under some sort of pressure from the Bishop on the matter of acculturation, perhaps due to a resistance on his part to diocesan efforts toward Americanization. It could be that one thing led to another, with the strength of personal wills pitching animosity to a high level. If there was some act of discipline against SIERZPUTOWSKI, that may have ignited the emotions of his followers on ethnic-cultural issues and prompted a show of loyalty that ripened into a schism.

But I hasten to say that this is only my conjecture, and it is only one of many possible flows of events. From the sources readily-accessible to us, we just can not tell with certainty.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>The Poles in Duluth had adopted this sort of event early in their institutional life. See "Fair w Duluth," *Wiarus*, Sept. 20, 1888, p. 5, about a *polski fair* used to raise money for a remodeling of the first building of St. Mary, Star of the Sea.

<sup>12</sup>There is an accord of sorts with my frustration, in one of the few other modern published historical treatments of Duluth's Polish community. From the sources he used, the late Father John Whitney EVANS was not able to identify the specific reason for the Bishop's actions against Father SIERZPUTOWSKI either. *Faith on a Changing Frontier: A History of St. Joseph's Parish, Gnesen, Minnesota* (Gnesen, Minn. [?]: publ. by the author, 1996 [?]), p. 8.



The really consequential aspect was the near-immediate establishment of an institution founded in both religious and Polish-ethnic identification, which was incorporated into the supporting superstructure of the PNCC. Father SIERZPUTOWSKI's personal break with the Roman church must have taken place after his mid-September, 1906 expression of thanks in connection with the consecration of the new building at St. Mary, Star of the Sea.<sup>13</sup> PNCC-issued histories give February 2, 1907 as the date of the organizational meeting for St. Josephat's parish.<sup>14</sup> It is not clear from these publicly-available sources whether the founders' initial intention was to join the PNCC, or whether the parish was first contemplated as an "independent" one that later affiliated. Given our evidence of contact between St. Mary's parishioners and the PNCC several years earlier, the former is the more likely.<sup>15</sup>

In any event, by mid-1907 St. Josephat's was part of the Scranton fold, and it remains so to this day. The devotion of its founders--not to mention their numbers--is indisputably evidenced by the large and ornate sanctuary they envisioned for their worship, and the short time it took to fund and build it.<sup>16</sup> The

<sup>13</sup>The old St. Mary's building had been destroyed by fire in mid-1905. *Wiarus*, July 20, 1905, p. 4. *Wiarus* published a lengthy report on the new structure's dedication in its issue of August 2, 1906, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup>"St. Josephat's Parish," *A History of the Parishes of the Western Diocese, Polish National Catholic Church* (Park Ridge, Ill.: Chancery of the Western Diocese, 1998), p. 22; *Fortieth Anniversary, St. Josephat's Parish, Polish National Catholic Church, Duluth, Minnesota*, (Duluth: publ. by the parish, 1948), p. 13.

<sup>15</sup>Research into internal parish or PNCC records probably would answer this question, but that is beyond the depth of this series.

<sup>16</sup>Father KRAWIEC recorded the parish tradition from St. Josephat's that "[a]pproximately half of the

impressive features of the Neogothic structure are described in thumbnail in our *Rolnik* text.<sup>17</sup> A visit today will attest to the strong efforts of the flock to preserve them over the years. The details most immediately striking are the windows: two large stained glass depictions of patron St. Józefat KUNCEWICZ in his roles as pastoral minister and archbishop,<sup>18</sup> and a marvelous Polish-themed rose window between the two steeples. The consecration of the building by PNCC founding bishop HODUR on May 24, 1908, obviously prompted the lament I found in *Wiarus*'s June 4 issue from that year.<sup>19</sup>

As the balance of this installment's items show, the completion of a physical foundation was only the beginning of the challenges for this Polonian institution. Its founding pastor's change of heart

members of St. Mary Star of the Sea Roman Catholic parish broke away and organized the St. Josephat's Parish..." *St. Josephat Church Bulletin*, March 13, 1994, p. 4. Before the new edifice was constructed, Father SIERZPUTOWSKI held services for his congregation at the Lutheran church at Second Avenue West and Second Street. *Fortieth Anniversary History*, at pp. 13 and 15.

<sup>17</sup>As to the beautiful ornamentation, see "for the Glory of God..." *Golden Anniversary 1907-1957, St. Josephat Church, Duluth, Minnesota* (Duluth: publ. by the parish, 1957), pp. 22-24.

<sup>18</sup>In the former role, as a friend and teacher to children; the parishioners proudly point out that the design is a very rare example of the depiction of a dog in a church window! As to St. Josephat himself, the first person of Eastern Rite Catholicism to be canonized, see Michael Walsh, ed., *Butler's Lives of the Saints* (Concise Ed., San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), pp. 373-375.

<sup>19</sup>As to the consecration, see also "Separated Poles Dedicate Church," *Duluth News-Tribune*, May 25, 1908, p. 8; *Fortieth Anniversary History*, p. 13.

and departure could have presented a supreme challenge for the congregation and the PNCC.<sup>20</sup> However, the PNCC leadership in Scranton met their needs, sending successors. Though there was a frequent change of pastors until Father KRAWIEC arrived in 1980,<sup>21</sup> the allegiance of the core of the congregation has not wavered, and the parish is part of the PNCC to this day.

The story of St. Josephat's is a remarkable one, both in the significance of its founding as an event of deep ethnic competition in northeastern Minnesota and in the persistence of its institutional existence. The discoveries I have just presented give no more than elusive hints as to the nature of the former. We are left with such mysteries as the real precipitant of the secession, the clerical fate of Father SIERZPUTOWSKI, and the motivations of the laity in all of the events. However, pursuing those is beyond the scope of this series. This story presents a real opportunity for a significant

<sup>20</sup>When I finished translating the *Wiarus* items from the mid-summer and fall of 1908, the revelation thunderstruck me, as it did long-time Duluth Polonia researcher Ray Marshall. Once he had given his allegiance to the PNCC, Father SIERZPUTOWSKI had come under excoriating public criticism from a former colleague in the Roman Catholic clergy. "Nieszczęśliwego Księdza Kamilla Sierzputowskiego, Doktora Filozofii: List Otwarty," *Wiarus*, Oct. 24, 1907, p. 4; "Wychodzi szydło i worka," *Wiarus*, Dec. 12, 1907, p. 5 (both authored by Father A. BĄCZYK, then of St. Isidore's parish in Sturgeon Lake, Minnesota). Father SIERZPUTOWSKI must have been in overwhelming personal turmoil during the summer of 1908.

<sup>21</sup>Father KRAWIEC gave me a copy of a typewritten list of the priests who have served St. Josephat's since 1907. Not counting him, it includes 26 numbered names--apparently the resident pastors--and two more--apparently visiting priests from Minneapolis.

historical case study in ethnicity, right out of Minnesota's Arrowhead--but that is an effort for another time.

In the end, for us as genealogists and amateur historians of the Polish experience in Minnesota, my last little discovery is the one best taken to heart. As *Kuryer's* editor observed, Polonians should not "wag[e] such fierce religious wars in the current civilized times." Let us give respect to the deep, honest, and incontrovertible convictions of all of the participants on both sides of this story, and of those who followed them: though we can inquire from the distance of a century's passing, the fierce ill-will that accompanied the founding and growth of St. Josephat's parish must be relegated to the status of historical artifact. The story here is a very significant one, and one worth further investigation, but it should not be the source of any revived resentments or divisiveness among anyone who reads this.

**Drobne Echa.....continued on page 31**

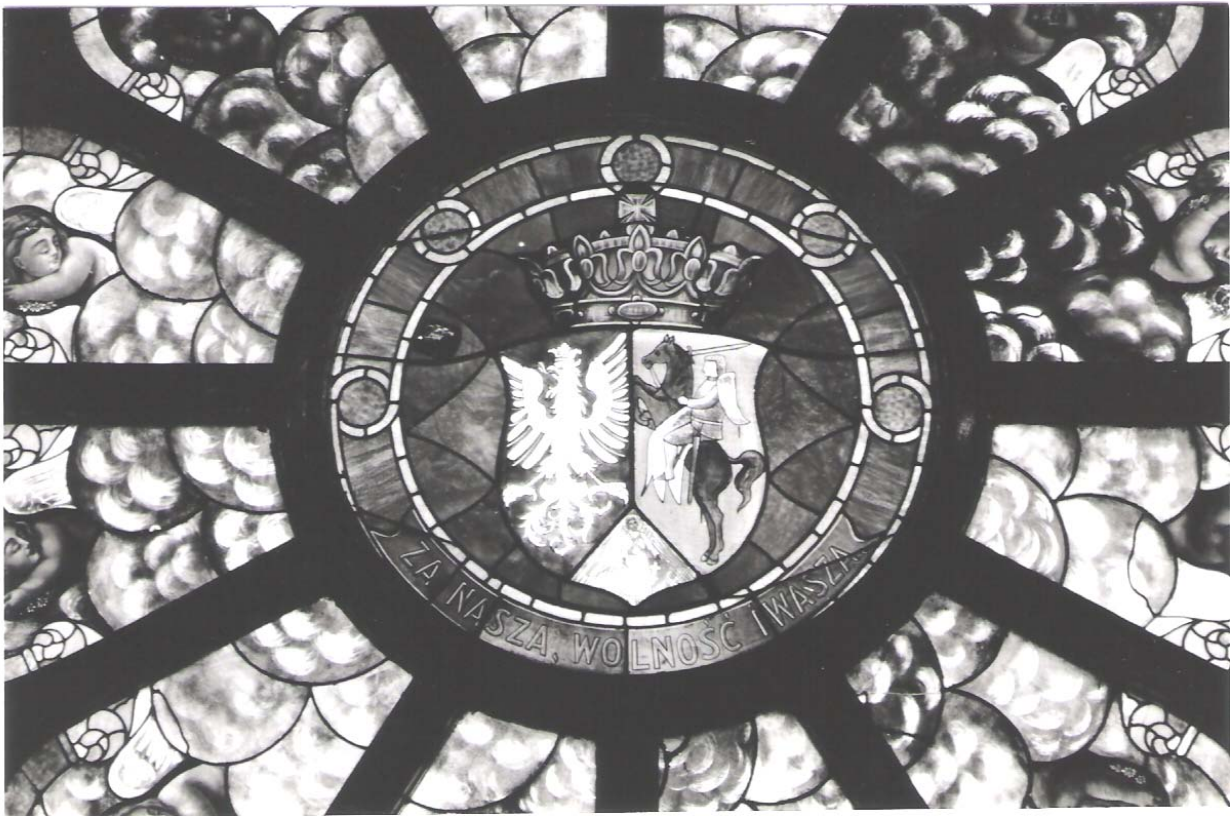
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### **To Probe Further.....**

The PGS-MN Library contains a number of resources related to the Polish National Catholic Church. Some are mentioned herein: -JWK

- Indexes to *Starz* 1897-1997
- *The Polish National Catholic Church in the USA from 1897-1980*
- *The Origin and Growth of the Polish National Catholic Church*
- *The Polish National Catholic Church*
- PNCC Studies Index (1980-1991)
- *Polish National Catholic Church Independent Movements and Old Catholic Church*
- Synods of the Polish National Catholic Church 1904-1958
- *The Polish National Catholic Church*

**WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS:** I began the inquiry that turned into this installment six years ago, when I first started searching out Minnesota correspondence in *Straż* through Bishop Grotnik's index. Then I coordinated these first findings with the non-PNCC reportage I found using the work of John Radziłowski and Ray Marshall, and went from there on my own. The project stretched out beyond my anticipation, due to the breadth of the sources, my own unfamiliarity with the backdrop history, and the relative difficulty of some of the translations! Pat Maus, archivist at the Northeast Minnesota History Center at UMD, helped me with materials from that collection's files on Duluth's Polish community. I again received great help from Anna Kuroczycka, my Polish translation consultant, now close to receiving her M.A. in American Studies from the University of Warsaw. The ladies of St. Josephat's were gracious hostesses and guides for a historical and architectural tour of their church, given for the PGS-MN's outstate meeting in Duluth on September 6, 2006. And, most importantly, this installment is dedicated to the memory of Father Stephen Krawiec (1924 - 2006). I know Father Krawiec was flattered by the attention from an outside historian when I first contacted him in early 2002. But in measure far broader than my outreach, he immediately opened himself, his life, and the story of his parish to me, with great kindness, generosity, and graciousness. Though my contacts with him were unfortunately too brief, I know why his parishioners miss him so. May he rest in peace! And *dziękuję bardzo* to all the others who helped with this large project!



Detail of Rose Window, St. Josephat's Church, Duluth (Photo by author, 2002)

## *Missing Branches*

**QUERIES**, Send to: *Paul Kulas, Associate Editor, PGS-MN Newsletter, 12008 West River Road, Champlin, MN 55316-2145* or e-mail to: <kkulas@ties2.net>

**NEW MEMBERS**--*We welcome the following:*

**Kay Blaha**, 3325 70th Street W., Northfield MN 55057 <kayblaha@integra.net> is researching BULERA, LAZEWSKI/LASKY, STRZYZEWSKI, KISZKA in St. Paul MN.

**Lois Mackin**, 2800 Brockton Lane N., Plymouth MN 55447 <LoisMackin@aol.com> is researching in Lazdijai (present-day Lithuania) and in Shenendoah, Tamaqua, Mahanoy City, PA.

**Linda Mike**, 515 W. Curtice St., St. Paul MN 55107 <ldahermike@aol.com> is researching SUCHY in Flatow in Poland and in Millerville MN and PISCHKE in Urbank MN.

**Tom and Kathleen Morris**, 2122 Western Ave N., Roseville MN 55113 <Morri0652umn.edu> are researching KOTOWSKI in Pomerania, ZIEBOLD (ZIEBOL) in Poznań and both in St. Cloud MN.

**Carole Pokracki**, 3318 W. 194th St., Homewood Il 60430-1234 is a new member.

**Iwona Srienc**, 4955 Jerome Ave. N., Lake Elmo MN 55042 <iwons@msn.net> is a new member. She is an interpreter/translator in Polish, Russian and Slovenian.

**RENEWALS**-- *The following members indicated updated information on their renewal forms:*

**Beverly Boyer**, <boyer017@comcast.net> is researching the DOSDALL family from Runow/Runau in Posen or Hanover who immigrated to WI about 1863 and then to Minnesota.

**Diana Gustafson**, 1565 NE 148th Ave., Portland OR 97230 <gramagus@msn.com> is researching KUCHARSKI in Raciaz [Raciąż] in Poland, URBANIAK in Skrzebova and both in MN and WA. She writes: [PGS-MN Newsletter is] "a great publication -- only wish someone would connect with my names."

**Kevin and Mary Ann M. Johnson**, 3210 - 139th Lane NW, Andover MN 55304 <kmmmjohnson@msn.com> are researching MANIAK, CIESIELSKI, OWEZAREK, NOWICKI, SERWANSKI, DUDA, MALECHA, MYNARCZYKA, SZYDTOWSKA, KOMOROWSKI, WITKOWSKI, TOKARSKI, GAPINWICZ in Posen, Poland and in Buffalo NY, Superior WI and Minnesota; BUTKIEWICZ, SZEDIS in Poland, Lithuania and in Superior WI and Minnesota; KRZESZEWSKI, KUBICKI, MUSOLF, DAMASEN, OLSZEWSKI, KOSLAKIEWICZ, BAUZE in Poland and in Buffalo NY and Duluth MN.

**Gerald Keeville**, 10773 181st Cir. N.W., Elk River MN 55330 is researching WREZA(FRASER), ZALESKA in Leczyn, Danzig/Gdańsk and LESSNAU (MUDLOF) in Polczyn/Polzin (Puck/Putzig), Gdańsk/Danzig and all in Gilman Township, MN.

**Missing Branches...continued on page 18**

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**Polish Genealogical Society  
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