

Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota NEWSLETTER

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Never Give Up on Your Journey *Navigating the Archives in Polish Lithuania* By Anastasia Dzenowagis <Anastasia_Dzenowagis@yahoo.com>

In the autumn 2006 edition of the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota newsletter I wrote the article “*Experience Searching for Polish Family Documents in the Lithuanian Archives.*” This documented my experiences navigating the Lithuanian archives searching for records of my father’s Polish parents. The experience ended with my “test.” I ordered my Grandfather’s birth certificate and returned to the U.S.A. You might have wondered if I ever received the document from the archives.

Journey Article ...continued on page 5



Judy and John Rys (wearing traditional Tatra Mountain hat) are shown staffing the PGS-MN Booth at the Twin City Polish Festival (see page 19 for story).

Coming in the Next Issue

The planned *Drobne Echa* feature could not be included in this issue because of time and space constraints. However, in the Winter Newsletter, Greg Kishel will present his research of the important Polish settlement in Wilno, Lincoln County, which is considered to be one of the very few “true” Polish colonies in Minnesota. It will feature translations of reports from the Polish immigrant presence there in the mid- and late 1880s.

2010 Census

The census short form, which everyone fills out, will not have an ancestry question. However, the on-going American Committee Survey (mandatory), sent to a small percentage of the population, will ask the question.

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Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

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Please use application form on the insert page.

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

Address/e-mail changes or membership questions?

Contact: Dori Marszalek, Membership Chair
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President's Letter

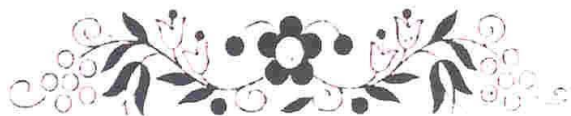
In mid-August along the beautiful Mississippi riverfront, after a long absence, another Twin City Polish Festival was held. Despite some rain, the event was very well attended and is destined to become a yearly event. PGS-MN was there. We staffed a booth which gave us visibility in a great target market. We sold many books and recruited several new members on the spot, with more to come by mail. Our involvement would not have been possible without the boundless energy and enthusiasm of Dori Marszalek and her team. *Sto Lat* to Dori for excellent results.

The Board has taken on a little summer house-cleaning project. We are organizing and archiving the records of our society. Terry Kita has several boxes of information from the past ten years, but we are in need of records from the 1990s. So, I am requesting that any past or present board members, committee chairs, etc. who may have records gathering dust at home contact Terry or me. We will fold your records into the larger archive efforts so that they are all in one place. Do we have any budding archivists out there? We need a point person to help with the culling and then to maintain and add to the records as time goes on. If interested please contact me.

Finally, remember that October is Polish Heritage Month. Take time to share with your family, co-worker or friend a story about Madame Curie, Copernicus, Pulaski, Chopin or the Polish hero of your choice. Every time someone learns about Poles in a positive way, it reduces the impact of negative stereotypes still perpetuated in this supposedly tolerant, diverse culture.

Sincerely,

Jerome Biedny



The Bulletin Board

Note: Minn. History Ctr. Library Hours Change

Due to budget cuts the library at 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul will be changing its hours. The biggest changes involve closing Wed.-Fri. mornings but adding Sunday afternoon. The new hours, effective September 8 are: Monday – Closed, Tuesday through Friday noon to 5 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and now Sunday noon to 4 p.m.

PACIM's Soup Festival – 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, October 25 at Kolbe Hall in lower level of Holy Cross School, 17th Avenue and Fourth St. N.E., Minneapolis

The festival will feature a dozen Polish soups with bread and desserts along with Polish-item sales. Due to space limitations and the popularity of this event, this is a limited-seating event. Tickets must be purchased online at <www.pacim.org> to ensure a seat. Limited seating will be available for walk-ins. Cost is \$12 for adults and \$6 for children under 12.

PGS-MN Future Meetings

Out-State Meeting in Marshall, Minnesota at Charter Hall (201), Southwest Minnesota State University, Saturday October 3, 2009. The meeting will be sponsored by SMSU History Center, Prairieland Genealogical Society, Society for the Study of Local and Regional History and PGS-MN. A map is at <www.smsu.edu/maps>.

Agenda

- 9:30 Registration and coffee/sweets
- 10:00 Local Resources Available (Jan Louwagie from SMSU and the Prairieland Genealogical Society)
- 10:45 Resources for Polish Genealogy - handouts available in a packet (John Kowles)
- 11:00 The Gazetteer and Maps Goldmine: Finding Localities in Germany/Poland (Stephen S. Barthel-formerly at FHC in Salt Lake City)
- 12:00 Box Lunch and Q&A Session - including Challenges and Successes in Genealogical

- Research (PGS-MN Panel Discussion)
- 1:00 Breaking the "Sound" Barrier: Working with Phonetics (Stephen S. Barthel)
- 2:00 The Polish Pioneers of Lincoln and Lyon Counties (Greg Kishel)
- 3:00 Wrap-up
- 4:00 Optional Tour of St. John Cantius Catholic Church in Wilno (Sister Ellen Hoemberg)
Wilno is about a half-hour drive away.

Registration and Cost

A nominal fee of \$14 will be charged to cover the cost of meals, materials provided and speaker expenses. The fee can be paid at the door; however, we request reservations be made **ASAP** so we can make proper preparations. Please **RSVP** to Dori at <doripgs@comcast.net> or call 763-535-2296.

PGS-MN Board Meeting

8:30 – 9:30 a.m., Saturday, November 7, 2009 in Library Board Room

The Board will meet before the regularly-scheduled monthly meeting. This is an opportunity for members to attend to ask questions, provide suggestions or talk about any issues or concerns.

Immigration History Research Center

Presentation – 10 a.m., Saturday, November 7, 2009 in Library Board Room

The presentation will be made by Haven Haus, director on the resources available at the IHRC.

Annual Meeting – 11 a.m. Sat., January 16, 2009

PGS-MN will hold its Annual Meeting at *Gasthof zur Gemütlichkeit*, 2300 N.E. University Ave., Minneapolis. The agenda will be as follows:

- **ELECTIONS** - Treasurer and secretary and two directors will be elected. If you would like to be considered for one of these positions please contact Terry Kita at: <terrykita@earthlink.net>, 612-927-0719 or 5036 Queen Ave. So., Minneapolis MN 55406.
- **BUSINESS MEETING** - Review year-end finances.
- **POLISH BUFFET** - Pork loin, chicken, pierogi, potatoes, vegetable, sauerkraut, dessert and beverage (cost is \$17 which includes tax and service).
- **Members** are encouraged to bring up any business for discussion.

Please **RSVP** by January 9 to Terry Kita at above contact information for the buffet.

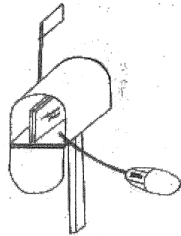
PGS-MN/Pommern Regional Group Meeting

About 50 people attended our annual joint meeting with the Pommern Group. Paul Kulas discussed the PGS-MN map collection and how it can benefit genealogical research. He shared some of his personal experiences in pursuing his family tree.

Jerry Savage gave an interesting, informative lecture on preserving documents. Jan Savage then finished with a slide show of the Savages' travels and research in Pomerania. As usual we enjoyed a catered-buffet lunch.

White Eagle Insurance Record Index

The index, containing about 3000 post-1906 insurance records, can now be accessed online at <<http://www.pgsa.org>>. It is also available at the MGS Library. However to view the records you must go to the Immigration History Research Center in the Elmer L. Andersen Library on the University of Minnesota West Bank. This project was driven by John Rys of our Research Committee.

Correspondence ... *Komunikacja***Article About Poland**

I thought that you might enjoy reading this article about Poland and seeing an assortment of pictures. <<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/Under-the-Polish-Sun.html>>

Dorothy Pretare

This is a short, but detailed, article entitled "A Whirlwind Tour Around Poland," from the current issue of Smithsonian Magazine. It describes the recent trip made by the article's author and her husband to the Kraków area, Gdańsk, and Kashubia. Incidentally, her husband is from Winona. It makes one long for a visit.

-JWK

Missing Branches ...continued from page 32

Joe and Dardra Pawlikowski, 16356 Impatiens Ct., Lakeville MN 55044 <pawski@frontiernet.net> are researching PAWLIKOWSKI in Zakopane and in Chicago; and also KWAK and GROHOVENA.

Terry Ratajczyk, 9831 Xebec St. N.E., Circle Pines MN 55014 <loretta9831@q.com> is a new member.

Monica Schaefer, 200 Nathan Lane N., #232, Plymouth MN 55441

<monicaschaefer@comcast.net> is researching John POPOWSKI, Sr. in Posen, German Poland and in Ivanhoe MN; Anne PRESSINGER in Poland and in Milbank SD; Mary KUFFLE in Poland and in Tacoma WA. Monica writes: "I am an old friend of John **Kowles** growing up in Ivanhoe. Rick **Theissen** is my cousin working on the **Andrzejek** family history."

Jennifer Shaltz, 2815 Norwood Ln., Plymouth MN 55441 <jshaltz@comcast.net> is researching CHOROMANSKI in Poland and in Minneapolis.

David Teclaw, 4301 Courtland Road, Minnetonka MN 55345 is researching TECLAW/TECŁAW in the Poznan area in Poland.



PGS-MN member Tom Woychick and his wife Mary died tragically on August 19, 2009 in Boise, Idaho. They were struck and killed while crossing a street walking home from daily Mass. We extend our sympathy to their family. Tom was our only member in Idaho.

Journey Article ...continued from page 1

A Signpost - An Archive Request

A few months later I did receive an envelope from the archives, although misaddressed. It included a letter in Lithuanian stating they could not find my Grandfather Wincenty Dzenowagis' birth certificate. They did however include a photocopy of his baptismal certificate, in Old Russian.

Traveling Through Polish History in Lithuania

Since that time, I intended to delve deeper into the Lithuanian Archives to obtain more information on my father's parents, siblings and earlier generations. My father's parents were ethnic Poles born near Trakai, outside of Vilnius (now in Lithuania - see map). The history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is too complicated to describe here but to simplify, we shall say it was formerly Poland. After approximately 1900, during breaks in the regimes, some Poles were allowed to leave the country known as Lithuania/Russia/Soviet Union and repatriate to Poland. Some Poles chose to remain on their original family land. If they survived, today their descendants may consider themselves ethnically Polish, or they may have intermarried with Russians or Lithuanians.

Restarting the Journey

Trying to persuade my relatives in Lithuania to pursue family documents in the archives was not proving successful. In modern-day Lithuania, my relatives were busy with their own lives and had no knowledge or faith in the system of the archives. I decided this year I would finish my father's family tree. After multiple trips to Poland and Lithuania, I had as much information as I would get from living relatives. This family tree included my father's parents and their siblings, grandparents, and little prior to that. Since I knew my father's ancestors had been there for hundreds of years, there must be more information. Our last name "Dzenowagis" (which some relatives said had been changed over the years) could possibly be related to a noble Lithuanian family from the Troki area: Dzienajewicz. One relative used to tell a story of treasures buried for safekeeping in the fields of our ancestral land. Of course, I wanted to know if we were of noble descent.

Finding a Guide for the Journey

I researched genealogists on the web and

contacted one who seemed highly regarded - no response. I followed up a few times and finally she answered that she could not help me and luckily referred me to Sigita Gasparaviciene <rytig20@takas.lt> at <<http://archeonas.antiques.lt/famweb/famresearch.htm>>. What I admired about Pani Sigita straight away was she said she would need to investigate prior to taking my case and payment. She did not take any cases if she could not be successful in helping the individual.

Our entire correspondence was via e-mail. Although time-consuming for both of us, surprisingly it was successful. Pani Sigita seemed to be always working and replying to messages very quickly. It took me time to decide the best language in which to correspond. I chose Polish as I wished to work on my Polish and didn't want to risk any misunderstandings using English, or put the other person at a disadvantage.

For documents, Pani Sigita explained there were two possibilities. One was the Archives and the other the church records in Trakai, a 30-minute drive from Vilnius. Success in navigating records in the Trakai church depended on the priest's willingness to assist. She chose the Archives. With her contacts and knowledge of their system from her previous work this saved considerable time. Pani Sigita explained that sadly some records from specific periods were so fragile and damaged there was no possibility to get a photocopy or scan. Instead she was quite resourceful. She obtained photographs of specific documents, embedded them



Lithuania's Borders and the Area of Places Discussed in Article [At its greatest extent (1635) the Poland-Lithuanian Union encompassed most of Lithuania as it exists today. At this time Vilnius was called Wilno.]

in MS Word documents, and typed in English translations. She obtained four generations of records on each of my father's parents' trees. The cost was 150 euros per completed family tree, with a few small fees for specific scans I requested, paid via PayPal. Considering the time and money I spent on my journey in the past, this price was absolutely worth the value my family received. At my request, Pani Sigita even met with one of my father's elderly cousins in person to uncover any hidden family information.

Completing the Journey

My sister Joan and I were able to coordinate a trip to Lithuania along with my Polish cousin Janusz Olszewki from Olsztyn. Janusz took me to Dziewieniszki to the Polish children's school to deliver the contribution raised by the Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota (PACIM). Joan and I were able to meet the intelligent and captivating Pani Sigita. Sigita spoke at least four languages fluently, English, Polish, Russian and Lithuanian. She told us about the positive impact Poland had on Lithuania as a country, bringing culture, civilization, religion and business to the Union. Charmed by her personality and extensive knowledge of the country's history we tried to persuade her to write a book, but I don't think she took our suggestion seriously.

Pani Sigita had e-mailed me all the scans of family documents I requested as well as family trees which she put together. I prepared genealogy packets for each of my relatives in Lithuania and delivered them in person. They were shocked and pleased that we could know this information after all of these years.

Did we uncover if we were of noble descent? Unfortunately, there is still a 130-year gap between our oldest family-tree entry and the record of the nobles, so this may be one mystery revealed only in the afterlife.

Never Give Up on Your Journey

What was surprising to me was that these signposts to my ancestors were always there, available, although perhaps not easily accessible. The baptismal, death and census records of my ancestors were documented for over two hundred years. They were in a sense, waiting for me.

What it takes, is someone wanting the information badly enough to take the journey and to search out the path with a destination in mind. I know personally, it is easier to stand still than to restart the steps on one's journey. I sadly regret years wasted and opportunities lost when relatives I had not met passed away.

All we have is today - our new starting point - where we are right now, and a conscious decision to continue progressing on our journey. To restart might take being willing to try a new path and to go in a new direction. A fresh approach could be finding that one remarkable person with the energy and skills who can take you the final distance. You can't imagine the wonderful places your journey may take you. I wish you blessed travels.

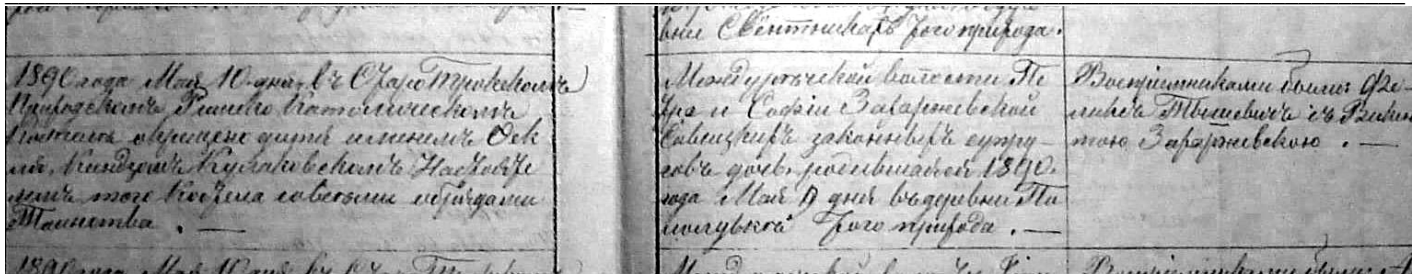
Never give up on your journey.



Here I Am Pictured with Pani Sigita



The Old (Typical 19th-Century Archive Books) and New (Computer in Background) in the Archive



Anastasia Dzenowagis' Grandmother's Record - Entry About the Baptism of Tecla Sawicka on May 10, 1890 in Roman Catholic Church in Senieji Trakat (Stare Troki)

Translation from Russian language (LSHA, H.604, Inventory 38, folder 205, pages 159v-160, line 154)

On 10th of May, 1890 a child of a female sex was baptised in Roman catholic church in Senieji Trakai (Stare Troki) by Rev. Kulakowski, the pastor of this church and was given the name Tecla. This child was born on May 9, 1890 in village of Pilialaukis of the parish of Senieji Trakai (Stare Troki) to lawfully married the peasants of county of Międzyrzecze the Peter Sawicki and Zofija, maiden surname Zacharzewska. Godparents were – Felix Tyszewitch and Wincenta Zacharzewska.

A Polish Community Goes to War

A Review of the Turbulent Events of 1939-1946

By John W. Kowles <johnkow@att.net>

Preface

September 1, 2009 marked the 70th anniversary of the start of World War II. On that day in 1939 the German battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* fired on the Polish garrison at Westerplatte at the entrance to Danzig (now Gdańsk) harbor. It was the German response to a supposed Polish incursion into Germany on August 31 at Gleiwitz (now Gliwice) in Upper Silesia which was staged by Germany as a pretext for invasion. The 182-man Polish garrison at Westerplatte held out for seven days before surrendering after suffering one-third casualties.

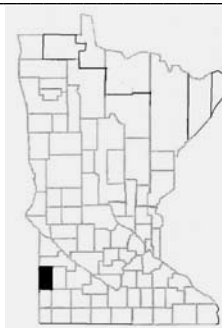
The author of this article was born in Winona but grew up in Ivanhoe, Minnesota during this period and still has some vague memories of the events and general climate of the early 1940s. However, the thrust of this research was to review the news stories and local reaction and related news as reported in the *Ivanhoe Times* in the years 1939 to 1946, with emphasis on the events preceding America's entrance into the war.

The *Ivanhoe Times* in those years was only eight pages but there was significant national and regional reporting along with local stories and excellent lengthy editorials. The national and international news reports were a good summary of the events – often overlooked in today's history classes. For the sake of brevity citations are not provided and some of the material is paraphrased;

however, all of the material was taken from the *Ivanhoe Times* Volumes 38 to 45 with the exception of explanatory footnotes which is my research – largely taken from non-controversial sources such as Wikipedia.com. The newspaper is archived at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. Local stories are set off in italics and approximately coincide chronologically with the national news.

The Polish Community

Polish settlement of this area initially started near Wilno in the early 1880s with heavy recruiting of Chicago Polish to settle in a new community platted in 1883 (see *PGS-MN Newsletters* Summer 1996, p. 7 and Autumn 1996, p. 7 for Wilno/Ivanhoe church histories). In 1900 the Chicago Northwestern railroad decided to bypass the established Polish settlement at Wilno in extending its line into South Dakota and run the tracks about two miles south giving rise to Ivanhoe - originally called "New Wilno." Various opinions exist as to why the line did not go through Wilno. Eventually the town fathers wanted a unique name and took Ivanhoe which was a popular novel at the turn of the century. The town was laid out by the Western Town Lot Company in 1899 and the first lots were sold in April, 1900. The first train came through Ivanhoe on July 2, 1900. The first issue of the *Ivanhoe Times* is dated August 10, 1900 and is available at the Minnesota History Center. At the turn of the 20th century the Ivanhoe/Wilno community and the Royal/Limestone townships had a population consisting of about two-thirds of the residents with Polish ancestry. There was also a significant



Lincoln County

percentage of Poles in the neighboring townships to the north of Marble and Alta Vista, and Ash Lake to the south.¹ By 1940 Ivanhoe became more ethnically-diverse but still about 50% were Polish and the dominant ethnic group. However the rural townships served by the community remained much the same as shown by the map on the right. Remarkably, the turn-of-the-20th-century data and the 2000 census data percentages did not change significantly, except in Hansonville it increased and in Limestone it decreased by small percentages.

Prelude to War (1939)

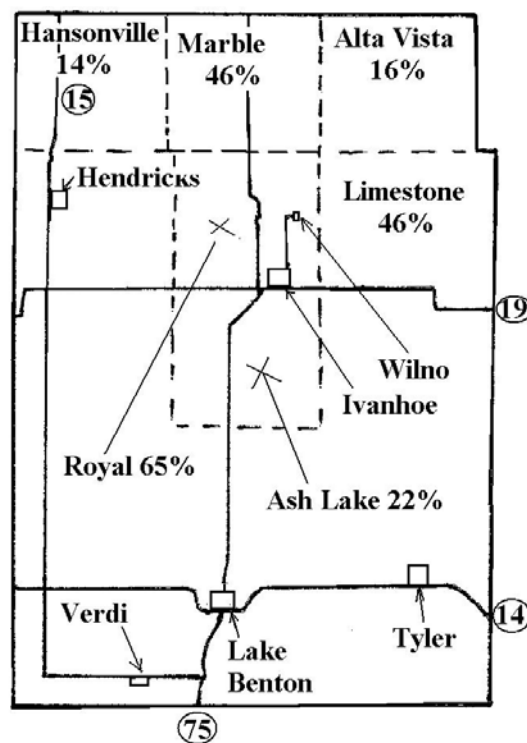
The January 6, 1939 issue of the *Ivanhoe Times* spoke of the aggression of Germany and Japan and prophetically noted: "No one knows the future but the answer may come in 1939." Throughout the year the national articles seemed to indicate the U.S. should stay out of any European wars and maintain neutrality. This opinion was also held by former president Herbert Hoover.

The games of the local independent baseball team called the "Poles" were always well-covered. A majority of the players were of Polish descent (see page 22 for a typical box score).

There was talk of Danzig, then largely having a German population, declaring a union with Germany and thus maybe war could be averted. The September 1 issue carried nothing about the war since national news was always about two weeks late. It indicated there was a new crisis with Poland mobilizing its forces and German troops massing on the Slovak border. Hitler was making demands for Danzig and the Polish Corridor.² The

¹ Radzilowski, John, *One Community, One Church, Two Towns: The Poles of Southwestern Minnesota, 1882-1905*, Southwest State University History Department, Marshall, Minnesota, 1991.

² The Polish Corridor was awarded to Poland as a result of the Treaty of Versailles in 1918. It was one of the points in



Author's Estimate of Residents with Polish Ancestry in 1940 in Northern Lincoln County Townships (Based on Average from Reference 1 and the 2000 Census [Ref: www.city-data.com])

September 8 issue said talks were continuing. The September 15 issue had no headlines but reported the outbreak of war between Germany and Poland and that France and Great Britain had declared war on Germany in solidarity with Poland. The paper featured an entire page of war news consisting primarily of pictures from Poland.

The October 27 issue included a news story that to increase the size of the Army from 166,000 to 227,000 the U.S. Army opened enlistments for 18 to 36-year olds; they could start at \$21 a month. This issue also had a picture of Julien Byran,³ noted American lecturer, looking at his ruined car in Warsaw. Reportedly he was the last American to leave Warsaw before its downfall.

President Woodrow Wilson's peace plan. The area of 6000 square miles provided Poland with 80 miles of the Baltic coast. The area had a mixed Polish-German population but the majority of the residents were Poles.

³ Julien Byran was a photographer, writer, cameraman, cinematographer who was the only neutral-country reporter in Warsaw during the German Blitzkrieg. He documented the early fighting and his pictures and description of what occurred are gut-wrenching.

Prominently featured in this issue was the local congressman (H. Carl Andersen) who was against any involvement. On November 7, Alden Bartz from Ivanhoe enlisted in the Navy. At the end of 1939 there were ads for the 1940 Chevrolet (85 hp) for \$659 and war-toy advertisements started to appear for Christmas.

President Roosevelt signed a neutrality bill concerning sales to all nations at war. It had restrictions but “cash and carry” sales were allowed. The isolationists wanted even more restrictions so the bill was actually a setback for them. In 1940 it was reported sales to France and Great Britain were \$110 million while to Germany they were zero. Russia invaded Finland in November.⁴ There was always a glimmer of hope in the on-going peace talks.

There was strong reaction from the Finns in northern Minnesota but there seemed to be no similar Polish outrage reported in the newspaper in 1939. (In 1940 a Finnish relief fund was established in Ivanhoe and maps of Finland were sold to raise money for them.)

The War Drags On (1940-1941)

With the fall of Poland, news from the country waned except for an occasional reference. Generally 50-60% of the people did not want any U.S. involvement without the people being consulted. In June, 1940 a bill was passed requiring eight months of military conscription for all men 18-35 years. The Government expected 16.5 million would have to register for the compulsory service.

Local editorials by W.N. Johnson against U.S. involvement increased in the paper. He posed thoughtful arguments which seemed to represent the general mood of many in the country. The paper supported Wendell Willkie in 1940 but oddly Willkie's foreign policy didn't differ significantly from Roosevelt's. Unemployment was still a big issue. Lincoln County gave Roosevelt a small plurality with Ivanhoe and Limestone giving him a healthy margin in the presidential election. Royal

Township was split. An editorial decried the conscription bill.

Eventually European countries fell to the Axis: Norway, Denmark, France and Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union absorbed the Baltic States and moved into Romania. The first American, an eight-year-old boy, was killed in bombing in Ulm, Germany. A number of news stories questioned what would happen if Great Britain were to fall. Some proposed the British Government would be set up in Canada. (A little-known fact was raised that a clause in the Articles of Confederation would allow Canada to join the U.S. with only the approval of the original 13 states.)⁵ Others said all English-speaking people should unite. In 1940 the Burke-Wadsworth Alien Act required all aliens to register.⁶ Lend-lease was also approved by Congress.

Eventually 1394⁷ men from Lincoln County registered for the “peace-time” draft. Of the first 27 drafted from the county four were from Ivanhoe – all had Polish ancestry (John Shaikoski, Florian Muchlinski, Roman Felcyn and Anton Popowksi). In subsequent months the inductions were often filled with volunteers. In the months to follow the paper carried many letters from servicemen stationed all over the states and in Alaska, and from a pen pal in England. In May, 1941 U.S. Defense Savings Bonds and Postal Saving Bonds went on sale in Ivanhoe.

The U.S. opened its first concentration camp in New Mexico. It housed 300 Germans from the scuttled luxury liner *Columbus*.⁸ They were to be

Polish Community ...continued on page 22

⁴ This war was concluded with the Moscow Peace Treaty in March, 1940 with Finland ceding territory to the Soviet Union but retaining its sovereignty.

⁵ This is not quite true from my research. Article XI of the Articles of Confederation, approved in 1783, did allow Canada to join the U.S. without any approval requirement. However, the Articles were superseded by the Constitution which was passed by the Constitutional Congress in 1787 and subsequently ratified by all the states. It required the approval of Congress for new states to be admitted.

⁶ This has proven to be an aid to genealogists since these records are now available for research.

⁷ Lincoln County only had a population in 1940 of 10,800 so this represented about 13% of the total county population.

⁸ The German Liner S.S. *Columbus* was at sea when war broke out and was ordered to be scuttled rather than captured. The U.S. took the crew into custody along the Atlantic coast and they, along with others, were kept at Fort Stanton in New Mexico until the war ended.

WINONA'S KASHUBS, KOWALEWSKIS AND THE HOT FISH SHOP

Part I - Early History and Social Development

By William L. Crozier, Archivist, St. Mary's University of Minnesota, Winona, MN
<bcrozier@smumn.edu>

Winona was officially established as a city in 1854. Because it was a Mississippi River port and the southernmost route to the west in Minnesota Territory, it quickly became a thriving transport, commercial and manufacturing city. In 1860 Winona was the third largest city in Minnesota; its population was only 100 people fewer than Minneapolis. Although unable to keep up with the rapid growth of Minneapolis and St. Paul it remained the most significant city in southern Minnesota.

The population and character of the city changed with the immigration of people from abroad. By 1905 over two-thirds of the people of Winona were of foreign ethnic stock. Over 30 percent were German, 20 percent were Polish, 4 percent Irish, and 3 percent Norwegian. From the earliest years of the city the people who came here were self-reliant, industrious, innovative and entrepreneurial. Many started new businesses to meet the new needs that accompanied modernization and industrialization.

Winona had become an ethnically diverse and dynamic river city. Even though there was a strong German flavor to the city with its many beer gardens, churches, fraternal societies, library and newspapers, the Polish community was so cohesive and active that most people thought Winona was largely Polish. The reason for this was that the Polish identity was more interconnected, characterized in particular by social class and religion. A Polish identity that centered on the Catholic Church had developed over the years, and it adapted to social and cultural life in America. Polish fraternal societies, a library, and a Polish-language newspaper strengthened this identity; but probably the most important contribution to Polish identity was the community-building role played by St. Stanislaus parish in the eastern neighborhoods of the city, establishing a dynamic Polonia. Father James Pacholski was transferred from Holy Cross

parish in Minneapolis to St. Stanislaus in 1894 to mediate disputes among the parishioners and between the parish and the diocese. He was successful in calming the local ecclesiastical storm and under his leadership the parish thrived. By 1912 it was a vibrant parish with over 3800 parishioners and an array of cultural, social and religious parish-sponsored organizations including: the Polish Legion, the Kosciusko Dramatic Club and the Philharmonic Club.¹ A bastion of Polish culture, St. Stanislaus to east-enders was "our church."

People from Prussian Poland started immigrating to Winona in 1855, four years after Minnesota Territory was opened to European immigration. Most of the Polish who came here were Kashubs, a West Slavic people with strong ties to Polish culture living west and south of the Baltic seaport Gdańsk. According to Frank Renkiewicz, the historian of Minnesota Polonia,

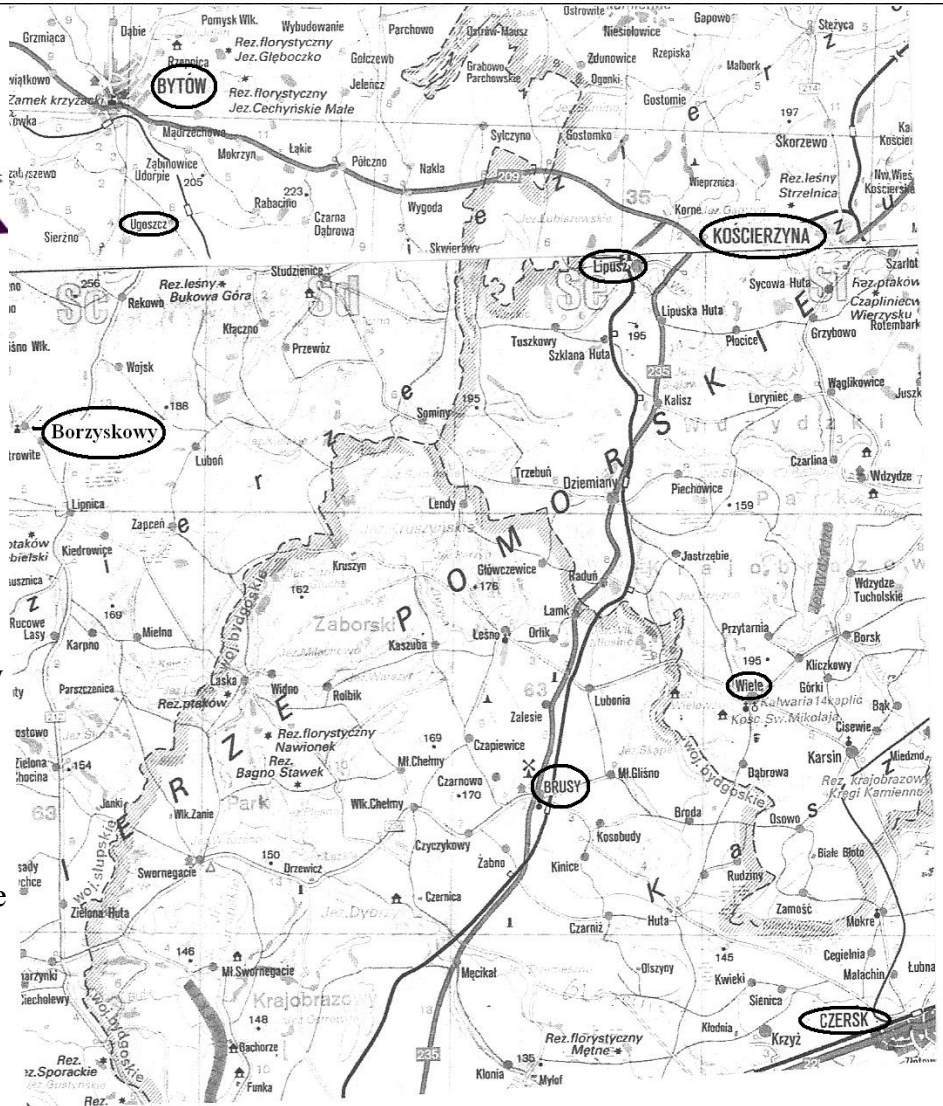
Four-fifths [of Winona's Polish population] was Kaszubs drawn largely from the area near the villages of Ugoszcz, Borzyszkowy, Brusy, Leśnice, Lipusz, and Wiele. Winona held a large minority of the 90,000 Kaszubs in the United States, ranking fourth after the Stevens Point, Wisconsin area with 10,000 and Buffalo, New York and Detroit, Michigan with 5,000 each. The remainder of the state's 4,000 Kaszubs (over 600 families) lived mainly in rural Sturgeon Lake, New Brighton, and St. Paul.

Other non-Kaszub Poles, who are sometimes referred to as "pure" Poles, emigrated primarily from Poznan, the heart of ancient and early historic Poland and from Upper Silesia. About 1,000 lived in Winona.²

¹ James Pacholski, "Polish People," in Curtis B. Wedge, *History of Winona County*, Vol. II (Chicago: H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co., 1913) pp. 1098-1101.

² Frank Renkiewicz, "The Poles," in Barbara Holmquist (ed.) *They Chose Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1976), p. 365.

Kashubia in the mid-1800s



The map on the right identifies the villages mentioned in the article except Leśnice which is located north of the inset. Bytów is the sister city of Winona. Kościerzyna is the largest city in the present-day Kashubian region. Czersk and Brusy are where the earliest traces of the Kowalewski family of Winona have been found to date. The name is common in Kashubia and was a well-established surname in the 1700s and possibly the late 1600s.

Map adapted from: RV Reise- und Verkehrsverlag and Kartographie: GeoData, 1995/96 (Scale: About 1:300,000)

One of the most outstanding Kashubians in Winona’s history was Hieronim Derdowski - a Kashub intellectual, nationalist and writer. He arrived in Winona in 1902 and became the editor of the Polish-language newspaper, *Wiarus (Veteran)*. This newspaper which was foundering at that time was infused with new life and vigor under his leadership and became a significant factor in promoting Kashub identity and nationalism in Winona and other Kashubian communities. Derdowski, who was also a poet, jokester and a wit, was born in Wiele, Poland. He attended several German schools and transferred, or was removed for making provocative remarks and writing epigrams ridiculing his teachers. He received a certificate of graduation in the city of Olsztyn and served as a tutor in the homes of the noble class in Kashubia and Poznań. He worked for a year or so

at the *Toruń Gazette* and *The Pilgrim*, after which he studied for a short while in Paris. He returned to Toruń and was again employed by the *Gazette* from 1879-1885. During this period, he was writing poetry about Kashubia, its heroic history and people. Much of his work was patriotic and directed against Prussian attempts to weaken Kashubian culture and nationality.³ One of these witty yet heroic poems was *O Panu Czôrlińszcim, co do Pucka po sęcë jachol* (About Mr. Czorlinski who Went to Puck to Buy Fishnets) published in Toruń in 1880. Later Felix Nowowiejski wrote a

³ Michael Derdowski, “A Kettle of Kashubians,” *PGS-MN Newsletter*, v. 15, no. 2 (Summer, 2007), p. 1; Gerald J. Langowski, (ed.) *Winona’s Polish Hall of Fame*, (Winona: The Polish Heritage Society, 1996), pp. 12-14; Leo Ochrymowycz, “Derdowski and Pacholski,” in Gerald Langowski, *The Polish Heritage*, (Winona: Polish Heritage Society, 1981), pp. 49-74.

melody for portions of this poem and called it *Hymn Kashubian* which is recognized as the Kashubian national anthem.

Never will the Kaszube Man
Come to loss and ruin
March, March after the foe
It is with God that we go!

In the depths of our hearts
We have strength from our apostles.
There is no Kashubia without Poland
And without Kashubia, no Poland.⁴

As editor, Derdowski was a strong voice for the Polish community, the church and the working-man.

The class structure that existed in Poland in the nineteenth century was not copied in America. The Polish upper gentry, aristocracy and intelligentsia were not well-represented in Minnesota. Priests were the exception. One consequence was a heightened role for the clergy in Polish-American life; another was increased opportunity for the few artisans, intelligentsia, and lower gentry as well as some peasants to create a small ethnic business class. Both clerical and business elites competed for control of the immigrant community's wealth.

Winona Polonia was essentially a blue-collar society with a high proportion of unskilled workers. Some historians attribute this to the fact that few middle class and no aristocratic Poles migrated to America in the nineteenth century. Poles persisted in lower-status occupations into the twentieth century. Winona's Poles provided a workforce of dependable, industrious workers who literally built the city. The Poles ranked high among ethnics in home ownership and Polish neighborhoods were noted for their neatness, stability, and efficient use of space. Polish families planted gardens and raised chickens and pigs to strengthen their economic reliance in an industrial economy. Many women

worked in candy and cigar factories; others took in washing to increase the family income.

It is difficult to explain the persistent low economic rank of Poles, but several answers suggest themselves. Employer paternalism, which diffused or repressed labor activism, was a factor at least in Winona in the 1880s. Cultural barriers, vividly represented by Anglo difficulties with Polish names and customs, and various kinds of discrimination probably played a part. A popular genetic theory, still circulated orally in Winona (1981) held that generations of intermarriage among local Poles, accounted for a high incidence of "slow learners" among them. Such factors may have encouraged a presumption of intellectual inferiority and a self-fulfilling prediction of low social status. Possibly, too, the commitment of Poles to parish and family outweighed the desire for mobility and economic success.⁵

The table below presents the Occupational Ranking of the Polish Workforce in 1905 and 1976 and Percent Change.

Occupational Ranking	1905	1976	Percent Change
Professional	0.8	5.4	513.0
Proprietary	8.9	37.8	28.9
Skilled	13.4	25.2	11.8
Unskilled	76.9	31.5	-45.4
n (sample size)	1593	NA	

Sources: Manuscript of the Census of Minnesota: Population of Minnesota, 1905; Window on Winona Data, 1976; William L. Crozier, "A People Apart: A Census Analysis of the Polish Community of Winona, Minnesota, 1880-1905," *Polish American Studies* v. 38, no. 1 (Spring, 1981), p. 8.

⁴ Jozef Borzyszkowski, "Afterword to *Kaszëbë pod Widnem*," in Hieronim Jarosz Derdowski, *Kasubes at Vienna*, trans. Blanche Krbechek and Stanislaw Frymark (Gdansk: Instytut Kaszubski, 2007), p. 31.

⁵ Renkiewicz, "The Poles," p. 368.

The information depicted in the table comparing the Polish workforce by occupational ranking over a period of 71 years allows us to see that in fact the Polish workforce changed dramatically. It went from one that was dominated at the beginning of the twentieth century by low-paying, low-prestige jobs to one almost three-quarters of a century later where two-thirds of the Polish working people held jobs in the skilled and white-collar occupations. This rise in social mobility challenges the popular presumption about the social status of Winona's Polish people reported by Frank Renkiewicz. This remarkable rise in social mobility in the workforce coincided with emergence of a Polish middle class that was in part based upon a growing number of self-employed Poles and in a rising Polish business class which was accompanied by the increasing success of Polish young people in secondary and higher education. The Kashubs had a high respect and reverence for learning both in their native language and in English. St. Stanislaus School conducted classes in English and Polish into the 1930s. Many Winona Polish were multi-lingual, speaking Polish, German and English. Another affirmation of the importance of learning was the remarkable achievement of Winona Polish students at Saint Mary's College who earned the most prestigious scholarships awarded by national and international organizations, among them the Rhodes, Fulbright, and Marshall scholarships. Also, in the 1970s there was a renaissance of ethnic pride among many ethnic communities. This was especially true of Winona's Polonia which already had a solid sense of Kashub identity. During this period the Polish Heritage Society and the Polish Cultural Institute were founded. A few years later the Polish Museum, largely the work of Father Paul Breza, his family and friends, was established to preserve the documents and artifacts of the Polish experience in Winona.

Intelligence, education and an innate business sense among many Poles also accounts for a rise in Polish-owned businesses in the 1920s and 1930s. In its early years Winona's economy was dominated by the lumber industry, steamboats, and railroads.

The lumber industry faded after the turn of the century and steamboats were eclipsed by the railroads that provided all-season services. Winona's business leaders encouraged the development of new businesses and industries to replace the loss of the lumber mills and to adapt to changing times. The "lumber crisis" enabled city leaders to encourage new business and industries to establish a diverse economy. In the early twentieth century a number of Polish entrepreneurs emerged and created businesses that paved the way for others to follow. These businesses enhanced Winona's economy, providing new jobs for the city's growing population. Some of these businesses made Winona better-known regionally and nationally, and others promoted a better awareness of Polish culture.

Some of these entrepreneurs were:

- Joseph Jereczek established the Polish Stock Company, a general merchandise and grocery store, to which he also added a mortuary. He also encouraged the entrepreneurial spirit of his community by providing capital for young Poles who had business plans, and who demonstrated the ability to start a successful business.
- Henry Jezewski and Leonard Slagge founded the Gate City insurance and real estate company and built it into a strong business that flourishes today.
- Entrepreneurship became a family tradition for the Bambeneks and the Kowalewskis.
- The Bambenek brothers built a major business on a patent for chains that they modified and adapted for use in a number of industries. Beginning in a former butcher shop on Mankato Street, Al, Dominic and Joe built a national corporation, the Peerless Chain Company.
- The Kowalewskis created a restaurant that put Winona on the national culinary scene: the Hot Fish Shop.

Part II – The Hot Fish Shop Story

By Richard V. Kowles, Professor Emeritus in Biology, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, Winona, MN <dkowles@smumn.edu>

Joseph Kowalewski and his wife Anastasia opened a tavern and billiards hall called the Black Four in the 1920s on the corner of Wabasha (7th Street) and Mankato Avenue in Winona. Later, a café and barbershop were added. Prohibition, which became effective on January 16, 1920, certainly didn't help the business. During this time, Joseph and/or his oldest son, Henry Kowalewski, purchased a 20-acre plot of land at the intersection of Mankato Avenue and Highway 61 near the well-known Sugar Loaf Rock. The purchase eventually turned out to be a fortunate venture.

Joseph died in 1930, and Henry and his wife Helen (Bambenek) opened the first Hot Fish Shop at the site of the Black Four Tavern in 1931. Prohibition was repealed in 1933, but the next serious business obstacle became the Great Depression. The first cook was Maxmillian "Bubby" Ruhnke, and the restaurant opened on Christmas night. The initial menu featured two pike fillets, cabbage salad, and French fries, all for the sum of 35 cents. The gross income on that first special evening was about \$8.00. A week later on New Year's Eve, the gross income was over \$100.00. Business at the Hot Fish Shop began to grow rapidly in the 1930s. Walleye pike was by far the most popular meal (75% of the orders), with the price eventually reaching 80 cents during those early years; a lobster dinner was only \$1.25. A menu from this era is shown on page 15.

In 1935, the Winona School District purchased the original site of the Hot Fish Shop in order to build the Washington-Kosciuszko Elementary School. Thaddeus Kosciuszko was a notable general on the side of America in the Revolutionary War. He is a national hero in both the United States and Poland. Children attending this elementary school in Winona are still taught about Kosciuszko's contributions to winning the Revolutionary War.

Following the sale of the Hot Fish Shop site in 1935, a new restaurant was relocated and built on the previously-purchased land at Mankato Avenue and Highway 61 (see photograph on page 17). Henry Kowalewski, wife Helen, and son Lambert

lived above the new Hot Fish Shop. A fish market and a gas station were later added to the site. Business continued to grow, and another cook, Alphonse (Mose) Bambenek, was hired. Mose Bambenek became another key figure in the success of the Hot Fish Shop. Recipes for the fish batter, tartar sauce, and cocktail sauce also played a role in the success of the restaurant. The actual origin of these recipes attributed to various Hot Fish Shop employees has always been a matter of contention. One member of the family eventually related that the batter was not really a special recipe. Rather, the success came about from the method of deep-frying the fish and seafood in very large metal vats whereby the temperature of the large volume of oil could be carefully controlled and kept constant. The restaurant soon became synonymous with Winona. It was listed in Duncan Hines, McCall's magazine, numerous restaurant guides, and other featured articles.

Henry Kowalewski (shown below in a late 1940s photograph), the founder of the Hot Fish Shop, was a very interesting person. Long lines would form at the restaurant for both lunch and dinner, sometimes extending through the small lobby to the outside area and partly around the building. Henry would greet and find seating for the people in line and at the same time learn who the customers were and something about them. He also had a tremendous



FRESH JUMBO SHRIMP

1/2 Doz. in shell, with wafers, Tartar or Cocktail sauce	.20	Bluepoints on half shell	.40
1/2 Doz. Peeled, with wafers, Tartar or Cocktail sauce	.25	Oyster Stew, with Cream	.35
Order of French Fried Shrimp, Potatoes, Cole Slaw and Sauce	.40	Select Oysters, Fried, Lunch	.50
		Select Oysters, Fried, Dinner	.75
DEEP SEA SCALLOPS, Fried	.50	Lunch	.75
FROG LEGS, Medium Saddles, Fried	.60	Lunch	.90

OYSTERS IN SEASON

The production of fish is unforeseen, the demand uncertain, and the product highly perishable. We are governed by fluctuating prices. Fish are served at their best, when cooked to order. Please give us sufficient time to cook and serve properly.

SOUPS

Homemade Clam Chowder	.15	Bismark Herring	.20
Vegetable	.15	Anchovies	.25
Vegetable Beef	.15	Tomato Juice	.15
Cream of Tomato	.20		
Cream of Mushroom	.20		

APPETIZERS

SALADS

COCKTAILS

Fresh Shrimp	.30	Crab Meat	.60
Crab Meat	.30	Tuna Fish	.60
Lobster	.30	Sliced Tomatoes	.20
Select Oysters	.20	Kiwi Lettuce	.15

Celery and Olives .20

BONELESS PIKE SANDWICH .25
with or without Tartar Sauce

BONELESS PIKE LUNCH in BATTER,
French Fried Potatoes,
Cole Slaw, Tartar Sauce.
.35

BONELESS PIKE DINNER in Batter,
with French Fried Potatoes, Shrimp
Cocktail, Cole Slaw, Tartar Sauce,
bread, beverage and sherbet.
.65

CHILD'S ORDER
BONELESS PIKE IN BATTER,
French Fried Potatoes,
Cole Slaw, Tartar Sauce.
.25

Boneless Pike Fried in Batter, extra .10

Lake Trout, Fried in Butter	.50	Dinner	.10
BROOK TROUT	.60	Lunch	.75
CATFISH, Mississippi River	.50		.90
SALMON, Fried in Butter	.50		.75
HALLIBUT	.50		.75
BULLHEADS	.50		.75
PERCH	.50		.75
SMELTS	.50		.75
COD	.50		.75
Whitefish, Perch, Bullheads, Catfish, Smelts and Cod, are seasonal varieties.			

Lunch, consists of Fish, Fr. Fried Potatoes, Cole Slaw, Tartar Sauce.
Dinner, consists of Fish, Fr. Fried Potatoes, Cole Slaw, Tartar Sauce, Fresh Shrimp Cocktail, Bread, Beverage and Sherbet.

LOBSTER, Whole Broiled Baby, Complete Dinner \$1.25 A la Carte \$1.00

MEATS AND SANDWICHES

STEAK, Porterhouse cut from Short Loin, with Salad, Potatoes, Bread, Beverage and Dessert	1.00
With Mushrooms, Extra	.25
HAMBURGER STEAK, French Fried Potatoes, Bread, Beverage	.45
With Fried Onions, Extra	.10
WHITEFISH CAVIAR, Sandwich	.25
HAMBURGER,	.15
BACON and TOMATO,	.20
LETTUCE and TOMATO,	.15
CHEESE,	.15
HAM,	.15
Sandwiches on Toast, 5c extra.	.20

BEVERAGES, Coffee, Milk, Tea, Hot Chocolate, Buttermilk.

DRAUGHT BEER, served in dining room,	.10
BOTTLED BEERS, served at table, pt. Bottle	.15

Having a Fish Market in connection with our restaurant, we prepare fish to take home for cooking. We deliver daily from the Fish Market. We deliver cooked fish in order in the city, delivery fee. We cater to parties; extra dining room downstairs.

IF IT ISN'T LISTED HERE ASK US FOR IT!

PHONE 5002

White Dining Have Your Car Checked for Gas and Oil by Our Attendant

Hot Fish Shop Menu in the 1930s

Postcards now sell on e-bay for \$5-10 but the slick menus are hard to come by.

memory and often would remember people when they returned at another time. He could also talk Polish to a certain extent with some of them. One time, the famous actor of western films, Randolph Scott, was in that line of people. A reliable source said that he was a great tipper.

During World War II, the cooks joined the military, along with Henry Kowalewski's son, Lambert, where they did their cooking for the U. S. Army. Without these indispensable cooks, the Hot Fish Shop actually closed for an entire year during that turbulent time. After the war, the business again flourished serving about 2400 customers per week. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, 1000 pounds of pike and 75 gallons of tartar sauce were served and consumed every week. Three fishponds south of Winona adjacent to the Mississippi River were used to raise rough fish for smoking. Five acres of land next to the Hot Fish Shop were used for growing beets, cabbage, and other vegetables for the restaurant. The beets were pickled and served as a side with all meals. The cabbage was used to prepare coleslaw. The restaurant was indeed an enterprising operation. The fish and seafood were never frozen since much of it was shipped daily in large crates packed in ice, often from Chicago distributors. The fish were filleted daily in the adjacent fish market. Even the tartar sauce was served in small porcelain dishes and not in paper cups. The tartar sauce was famous and a complement to all fish and seafood entrées. Recipes were carefully researched and never changed. Those running the Hot Fish Shop always made it known that good food could not be cooked fast.

Henry Kowalewski was a generous man. He owned a large nine-seat sedan, probably comparable to today's SUVs. Everyday he would drive to the predominantly Polish east end of Winona to pick up waitresses, many of them poor women without vehicles. After work each evening, he would take the workers home. He often found jobs at the Hot Fish Shop for persons down and out, sometimes creating jobs in order to hire them. He also loaned money to people when they were really in need. On many occasions, he would instruct his waitresses not to charge certain individuals for their meals

because they were good friends or relatives. Every year, the Hot Fish Shop would completely close from Thanksgiving until New Year's. This tradition was held so that the restaurant help could spend the holiday season with their families. Henry also sponsored a Polish family following World War II. They were called "Displaced Persons" or DPs at that time. He gave the Polish family employment at the Hot Fish Shop and helped them assimilate into the Winona community. Henry was extremely proud of his Polish heritage, along with American patriotism. He decorated the restaurant with traditional Polish costumes and other items that reflected a strong attachment to the Mother Country (see picture of interior on page 17).

Henry Kowalewski died in 1966. Lambert, Henry's only son, immediately took over the restaurant. By 1970, Lambert had added a lounge, liquor license, and live entertainment. Seating expanded to 300 in the restaurant and another 180 in the lounge. The fame of the Hot Fish Shop continued to thrive and spread. Lambert died in 1987, and his wife, Helen, ran the business for a period of time. A daughter of Lambert and Helen was next to take over. This change became the third generation to operate the restaurant. For a variety of reasons, difficult times eventually ensued, and the historic Hot Fish Shop finally closed in 1999, much to the dismay of the Winona community and many Winona visitors ever since. In 2001, the demise was finalized as bulldozers removed the last signs of the Hot Fish Shop structure.

A friend of the author was recently on a business/vacation trip in Arizona. When at a golf course, a stranger from Arizona asked him where he was from. After responding "Winona, Minnesota" the quizzing man asked my friend how the Hot Fish Shop was doing. Solemnly, the man had to be told that the site of the famous Hot Fish Shop is now a Dairy Queen. Even the man from Arizona appeared jolted.

Pike is very common in Poland sometimes called pike-perch on English menus. In Polish it is *szczupak* pronounced sh-choopak.



Hot Fish Shop and Fish Market (late 1930s)



Photograph of Hot Fish Shop Interior (probably taken in the 1970s)
The picture on the left is Kościuszko and Pulaski is on the right. In later years a large photograph of John Paul II was displayed in the lobby.

Part III - Origins of the Kowalewski Family

By John W. Kowles <johnkow@att.net>

A Kashubian-Polish Background

Casimir Kowalewski, my great grandfather, was born about 1814 in what I believe to be the Brusy area of Kashubia, then in Prussia, but I have not located a birth record which I have complete confidence is correct. The family indicated his parents were Kashubian.

His wife, Anna Gradowska, was born about 1818, likely near Czersk, but again the birth records have not been located. Czersk lies on the southern boundary of what was considered Kashubia in the early 1800s; however, she was not Kashubian.

The couple was married in Czersk on January 23, 1849 and they lived nearby in the small township of Bielawy. They had five children including: Rosalia (1849), John (1851), Marianna (1855), Andreas (1857) and Joseph, my grandfather, (1860).

Casimir died of typhoid in 1871 and Anna in 1880 in Kwieck (now Kwieki). Kwieki, lying a short distance from the family home where the children were born, was apparently the home of their daughter Rosalia and her husband. At this time, with no parents to support and little future economic prospects, the family decided to emigrate from Poland. I have not found any close Kowalewski relatives in Poland.

Emigration from Poland

John, the oldest boy, came to the Winona area in 1881 or 1882, then Andrew in 1885 and Joseph at the same time or shortly thereafter. Rosalia and Marianna may also have come in this time frame. The exact circumstances of the Kowalewski trek to America have eluded me thus far. In 1900 John ran a saloon and pool hall on High Forest Street in Winona. Rosalia was believed to have settled in Wisconsin initially but she and her sister Marianna immigrated to Brazil. (It is known Brazil was heavily recruiting people to settle there in the 1890s.) The family lost track of them in the 1900s. It is speculated Casimir (my great grandfather) had a brother, Antoni, who immigrated to Canada. His son, Andrew, also eventually settled in Winona in the 1880s.

Joseph married Anastasia Fortuna (who had emigrated from the same area of Poland about the same time) in 1886 at St. Stanislaus Kostka Church. They had a large family consisting of six boys and four girls. Henry, the prime mover of the Hot Fish Shop, was born in 1889 in Hart Township southwest of Winona and shortly thereafter the family moved to the city.

From the Poorest of Circumstances

Joseph's birth record in German describes his father Casimir as a "landless farm laborer." A Polish acquaintance who lives in the area identified where he thought the original family home was in Bielawy but now it is only a clearing in the forest. He said the house was torn down after World War II. The house was apparently small and possibly built in the late 1700s, seemingly indicating it wasn't of much value. The land adjacent to the homestead does not seem very fertile – populated with woods interspersed with few small farmable clearings. It is difficult to see how a large family could earn a living there.

During the course of my research, a Polish acquaintance indicated there was royalty on both sides of the Kowalewski and Gradowski families in this area. This is hard to believe unless it was a long time ago because from my research of the family in the mid-1800s they seemed to be the "poorest of the poor." However, arriving in Winona for a new life they turned this around as related in the Hot Fish Shop segment.

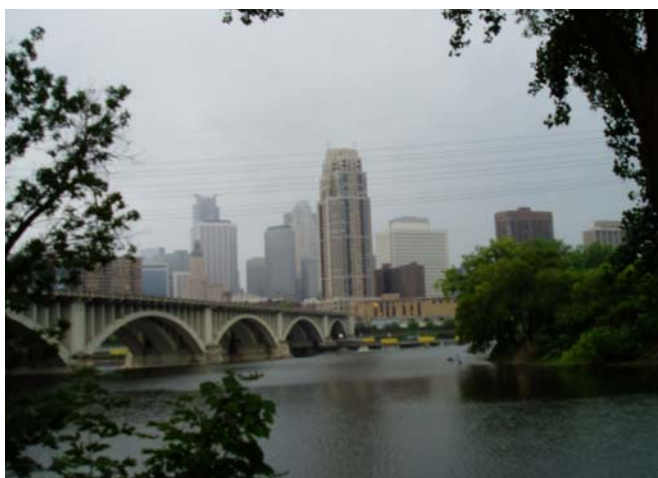


In Memoriam

Anetta Korowaj – We were sad to learn Anetta passed away unexpectedly last July in Poland. Anetta, who worked out of Nowogard, was one of our recommended resources for research in Pomerania.

Twin City Polish Festival - A Great Success for Polonia

Attendance at the two-day Twin City Polish Festival was estimated to be 10,000 to 15,000. The festival was held in Minneapolis on August 15 and 16. Rainy weather the first evening did not seem to dampen the revelers. PGS-MN was present displaying resources available for researching, handing out brochures and answering questions. More than 500 people visited the booth. Organizers say they plan a 2010 event.



The Mississippi waterfront served as a picturesque backdrop for the festival.



Terri DiCarlo (wearing traditional folk dress of the Kraków region) and Dori Marszalek (PGS-MN's organizer for the event) are shown here next to the booth.



Even Polish dogs were present. Above is “Quincy,” a Polish Tatra Mountain Sheep Dog (*Owczarek Podhalanski*). It is a rare breed working dog probably dating back to the 14th century. Below is the Polish Lowland Sheep Dog (*Polski Owczarek Nizinny* or PON in the U.S.). The breed was apparently introduced from Asia in the 1500s. Now it is more often a house dog. Exhibitors were soliciting support for preserving these beautiful breeds at the festival.



“The case is never closed on genealogical conclusions.” This is from Elizabeth Shown Mills’ excellent reference book: *Evidence! Citation and Analysis for the Family Historian*. The book is available in the MGS library.

POLISH CHURCH MICROFILM AND INDEXES AVAILABLE
Polish Churches from the Archdiocese of St. Paul

MICROFILM: Records of many Catholic churches from the Archdiocese of St. Paul are available on microfilm at the Minnesota Genealogical Society Library in South St. Paul. The Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota (PGS-MN) has purchased microfilm of Polish churches to add to this collection. Microfilm records were purchased for the following twelve (12) ethnically Polish churches.

All Saints	Minneapolis
Holy Cross	Minneapolis
Holy Trinity	South St. Paul
Sacred Heart	Rush City
St. Adalbert	St. Paul
St. Casimir	St. Paul
St. Hedwig	Minneapolis
St. John the Baptist	New Brighton
St. Joseph and Mary	Delano
St. Joseph	Lexington
St. Mary Czestochowa	Delano
St. Philip	Minneapolis

INDEXES: PGS-MN member, John Rys is indexing this Polish church microfilm collection. The baptismal and marriage indexes are a work in progress and as the database grows, so will these two indexes. Indexing covers primarily years prior to 1935.

- 1) A printed index of **BAPTISM** records for seven (7) Minnesota Polish churches is available at the MGS Library.
- 2) A printed index of **MARRIAGE** records for ten (10) Minnesota Polish churches is available at the MGS Library.

Note: Additional indexes have been added. The Minnesota Polish churches now indexed are: All Saints Church, Mpls.; Holy Cross Church, Mpls.; St. Casimir's, St. Paul; St. Hedwig's Church, Mpls.; St. John the Baptist, New Brighton; St. Philip's Church, Mpls.; and Sacred Heart Polish National Catholic Church, Mpls. Marriage records have been indexed for all the above churches and St. Adalbert's, St. Paul (up to 1900); St. Joseph and Mary, Delano and St. Joseph's, Lexington. The indexes are available in the Minnesota Genealogical Society Library, among the Minnesota materials under Library call number MN, H-1, 217 Rys.

CUSTOM REPORT: Customized reports from these Minnesota churches can be prepared for surnames upon request. This customized report finds all occurrences (prior to 1935) of a particular surname whether as primary participant, parent or witness. This "Family Ties" report can be requested from John Rys by e-mail at <john@john.rys.name>. Label the e-mail with the subject as "**Family Ties.**" A donation to the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota of \$15 is suggested for each surname report.

The indexes, containing over 21,000 records, are now accessible to the public at <<http://www.pgsa.org>>. Go to the web site and then click on databases. The actual record can be viewed on microfilm at the MGS library. Thanks to John Rys of our Research Committee for many years of work to make this project come to fruition.

-JWK



Scanning Polish Publications

PACIM *PolAm*

Vol. 31, No. 6, June 2009

“Two Sister Cities – A Long History”
(Łomianki) By Gilbert J. Mros

PGS of Michigan *Polish Eaglet*

Vol. 29, No. 1, Spring 2009

(This issue contains a list of burials in a number of Michigan cemeteries. Check out the surname list if you have connections in this area.)

Family Tree Magazine

Vol. 10, Issue 5, September 2009

“National Archives” By Rick Crume
(explores the many records available at NARA)

PGSA *Rodziny*

Vol. XXXII, No. 2, Spring 2009

“Getting the Most Out of Databases”
By James J. Czuchra

Vol. XXXII, No. 3, Summer 2009

“How to Deal with Priests”
By Iwona Dakiniewicz

“The 1864 Liquidation Table in the Russian Partition” By Jay M. Orbik, Ed.D.

KANA Przejòcèl Lèdu Kaszëbsczégò (Friend of the Kashubian People)

Vol. XIII, No. 2, Summer 2009

Daniel Nikolaus Chodowiecki’s “Journey from Berlin to Gdańsk, 1773” By Blanche Krbechek
(contains Chodowiecki’s penciled drawings)

“Obodryci, Wieleci, Kashubi and Poles and Germans” (from *Acta Cassubiana*, Vol. X)
By Gerald Labuda - translated by Blanche Krbechek and Renata Stachowicz
(contains an early history of Kashubia)

“Gdańsk and Pomerania – a Land of Great Settlements and Encounters” (from *Kashubs, Pomerania and Gdańsk*) By Joseph Borzyszkowski

PGS of California *Bulletin*

Vol. 21, No. 3, July 2009

“Woch Alias Zalecki”

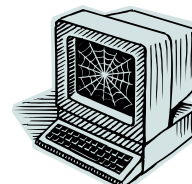
By Janice Lipinski, Fred Hoffman and Brian Lenius (This article has a discussion by noted genealogists of the dilemma of records containing two surnames for the same person.)

MGS *Minnesota Genealogist*

Vol. 40, No. 1, Spring 2009

“The Use of DNA Sampling to Support and Supplement the Eustace Family Tree”
By Ronald F. Eustice

Note: These publications and many others can be found in the Polish section of the MGS library.



http://

AI’s Polish-American Genealogy Research

This is an interesting site you can find at:

<<http://www.polishamerican.blogspot.com>>.

Scroll down to find subjects (labels) and number of posts on each. Click on one of your interest to read. Typical of the subjects are *Słownik Geograficzny* translations, Kashubia, etc. The site also has many handy links. You can also subscribe and enter a post of your own.

National Polish Center in Washington

This is a new site which provides resources and information about Poland and Polish culture. You can access it at:

<<http://www.NationalPolishCultureCenter.org>>

PGS-MN Web Site Update

The surname function has been restored. Please check it out. The instructions for using it are listed in the front. The site also has a list of upcoming events, the Polish book collection and those which are for sale, information on mail lists and a number of useful links. The current web site address is a little cumbersome: **<<http://www.rootsweb.com/~mnpolgs/pgs-mn.html>>**. We recommend a bookmark or go to Google and put in Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota for a link.

Polish Community ...continued from page 9

confined there until the end of the war. Charles Lindberg resigned his colonelcy in the U.S. Army Air Force. He was active in the America First⁹ Committee. Support for him and the committee waned as the year progressed.

A letter to the editor sharply chastised the America First Committee and another supported Lindberg's position on the war. Minnesota was said to be a hotbed of isolationists at the time but this was also condemned by many Minnesotans. In a visit to Ivanhoe Congressman Andersen said Congress would not authorize war. The number of men being drafted increased.

A June 1941 issue had a picture of sailors in Hawaii enjoying local festivities. In national news the term "World War II" started to appear. The national news featured a segment called "Hawaii – Our Pacific Gibraltar" showing preparations for defenses with tanks, large guns, aircraft, searchlights, etc. A U.S. ship, the *Robin Moor*¹⁰ was sunk on a trip to Africa. The U.S. froze the assets of the Axis powers and Germany closed its consulates in the U.S. The FBI arrested 29 persons they indicated were German spies.

At this time an editorial in the Times said the U.S. was already in a de facto war. A Lincoln County Civil Defense Chief was named. Plane-spotter volunteer observers were being recruited. Later they were organized down to the township level. A collection of scrap materials was started.

Ignacy Paderewski died in New York. Besides his musical career he was the first Prime Minister of free Poland in 1919. Troops in the Philippines were mobilized.

Baseball was still very important – usually on the front page. From a summer 1941 issue a headline read: **Fighting Poles Win Over Bohunks**¹¹ 10-4

⁹ The Committee was formed in 1940 and its membership peaked at 800,000. The committee was disbanded a few days after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

¹⁰ The *Robin Moor* was sunk by the Germans in the Caribbean on its way to South Africa. The crew was put in lifeboats and all except one were rescued in a couple of weeks.

¹¹ Political-correctness was not evident. "Bohunk" is sometimes a derogatory reference for eastern Europeans – generally Bohemians and Hungarians. A good number of Czechs settled in the sparsely-populated Hansonville Township of Lincoln County, northwest of Ivanhoe - hence the baseball team reference.

(see box score below). A Navy recruiter visited Ivanhoe.

Ivanhoe	AU	R	H
M. Kaczowski 2b	6	2	1
L. Sterzinger 3b	6	3	1
N. Vos ss	6	3	1
E. Pippas p	6	0	0
W. Andrzejek lf-c	5	1	1
F. Muchinski lf	5	0	0
D. Loren cf	5	0	0
E. Jertzak 1b	5	0	1
W. Eligen c	3	0	0
J. Kaczowski rf	1	1	0
S. Nixon rf	1	0	0
	49	10	12

Hansonville:	AU	R	H
R. Olson lf	5	0	1
Z. Moravetz ss	5	1	1
L. Veverka 3b	4	2	2
L. Moravetz c	4	1	0
E. Moravetz 2b	4	0	0
V. Moravetz cf	5	0	0
G. Bruffat p	4	0	1
W. Veverka rf	4	0	0
C. Trulock 1b	4	0	1
	39	4	10

Ivanhoe:	1	0	2	0	1	2	0	0	4	—10
Hansonville:	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	—4

There was a renewed intensity in defense preparations. Iceland was occupied by U.S. naval forces. In September the U.S.S. *Greer* had a skirmish with a German submarine near Iceland. Later the destroyer U.S.S. *Kearny*¹² was torpedoed with the loss of 11 crewmen. News from Poland virtually disappeared from the nation's news but this item came from Germany: "Germans required Poles to work in war plants. They were required to wear yellow-bordered bands with a black P on the left arm."

The War Begins for America (Dec. 7, 1941-1942)

The national news in the December 12 issue indicated the U.S. and Japan were engaged in stormy talks. Japan labeled the U.S. and Great Britain "hostile." There was no news of the Pearl Harbor attack due to the delay in reporting national news.

However the editorial, written a few days before the issue was printed, described the Sunday attack and said "the die is now cast." In subsequent editorials there were scathing condemnations of the Axis Powers.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor the U.S. declared war on the Axis powers (Germany, Italy and Japan) as well as Finland in both houses of Congress with one vote against. The Finland declaration was because of their continuing feud with Russia (now our ally). The news stories pointed out how ironic this was. Los Angeles was girding for attack and the Japanese on the west coast were rounded up and interned.

¹² The *Kearny* was escorting a convoy when torpedoed by a German submarine but was able to limp to Iceland.

Local businesses were being inspected for compliance with the "Wages and Hour Law." In Ivanhoe all men age 20-44 were required to register for the draft. Red Cross fundraising started. Marine recruiting also started in Ivanhoe. A vegetable garden campaign started.

In 1942 the Japanese torpedoed the freighter *Absaroka*¹³ off the California coast. A Japanese submarine shelled an oil field off Santa Barbara. There were no casualties and minimum damage. This was the first attack on the U.S. mainland of World War II! The Army and Navy commanders (Short and Kimmel) who were in charge during the attack in Hawaii were relieved of duty. A court-martial was recommended for the two but they asked for retirement.¹⁴

The May 1, 1942 edition carried an unsigned front-page article on the Polish Constitution Day (May 3). It provided Polish history and outlined the current efforts by the Poles in the War. Thirty-four county draftees were ordered to report for duty on August 17. Also starting in August over 100 county men were drafted every month. At this time 32 from Ivanhoe were already in the military. The first conscientious objector in the county was arrested. Shortly thereafter two others from the county were also arrested. (In 1943 the objectors were sentenced to up to three years in prison.)

War news dominated the national page of the *Times*. Russia was our ally and anti-Japanese sentiment ran high. The first raids on Tokyo were reported. Corregidor fell to the Japanese and the battle of Midway was seen as a great naval victory for the Allies. Japan gained a foothold in the tip of the Aleutians.

A 40-mph speed limit was imposed. It was later reduced to 35. Non-business drivers were only allowed 16 gallons of gas per month. There was a big campaign to collect junk (metal, rubber, fabrics, and hemp). Ivanhoe had 225 participants in the

¹³ The S.S. *Absaroka* was torpedoed but made it back to California with loss of one crewman.

¹⁴ Both were reduced in rank and allowed to retire in early 1942. Recent investigations have indicated they were probably treated unfairly but no absolution has been granted by recent presidents. Others were partially blamed for not having the early-warning radar systems completely operational.

war-materials drive. The Boy Scouts were collecting paper. Rationing was started for food. Meat was limited to 35 oz. per person per week. The county had 600 volunteer aircraft spotters. Ivanhoe participated in the first state-wide blackout with few infractions. Later surprise blackouts were conducted. The Navy and Women's Army Air Force were recruiting women in Ivanhoe. In June a local man, Phillip E. Cherp [Cierpiszewski] working for the American Consulate in Shanghai when the Japanese took the city, was exchanged with other officials for Japanese prisoners.

Spain supported the Axis Powers. Ireland, Sweden and Turkey remained neutral. Germany wanted occupied-France to declare war on the Allies. The Nazis raided the Jewish Ghetto in Warsaw in October, 1942. Eddie Rickenbacker's plane was reported to be missing in the Pacific.¹⁵ The Alaskan Highway was completed. U.S. casualties in the first year of the war were listed as 58,000.

The Allies Make Gains (1943)

Farm workers were in short supply locally. All 38-year-olds in the military stationed in the U.S. could get discharged to work on the farm. Many state schools delayed school opening for two weeks so that children could help on the farm but the Ivanhoe school did not close. However, 127 Lincoln County townspeople helped farmers harvest the crops. A Victory Tax went into effect. Employers were required to collect 5% of wages paid. Governor Harold Stassen promoted the idea of post-war cooperation of nations to prevent future wars. The Wall Street Journal opposed the idea as "unlikely to come about or endure."

Mussolini was forced to resign.¹⁶ Talk was now beginning on what will happen after the war. The U.S. promised the Philippines independence if they would resist the Japanese occupation. The national news reported heavy restrictions were being placed on Poland, and Russia was beginning to move into German-held territory. The U.S. debt reached 165 billion dollars.

¹⁵ Rickenbacker was the highly-decorated fighter ace of World War I. He spent 24 harrowing days at sea near Samoa before being rescued.

¹⁶ In 1945 Mussolini was executed by Italian partisans.

The local editorial questioned why Russia did not declare war on Japan but ended it by saying, “We should be able to play ball with them in future years.” The first county soldier was killed in action. Shortly after, the first soldier of Polish descent from Ivanhoe (Thomas Skorczewski) died in a plane crash in the Pacific. He was later awarded the Legion of Merit. Local stores were closed during his funeral and a long poignant memorial written by Dan W. Johnson was run on the newspaper’s front page.

The Tide Begins to Turn (1944)

The paper’s editorial said it will be a grim year because of the war. Monthly draft numbers remained high – reaching 117 in March. By mid-year 180 from the Ivanhoe area were in the military. They generally were calling up 30-year-olds and many were married. Harold Stassen indicated he was going to run for president. Independence Day was quietly observed in Ivanhoe.

While war in the Pacific was raging the invasion of Europe started. Lt.-Col. Francis Gabreski¹⁷ scored his 28th plane shot down. Roosevelt sought a fourth term as president – opposed by Dewey. An unsuccessful bomb attack was made on Hitler.¹⁸ The Russians crossed the East Prussian border and the U.S. Army penetrated Germany. Marseille, Paris, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg fell to the Allies and American forces returned to the Philippines.

The paper supported Dewey. Roosevelt captured almost 60% of the Lincoln County vote. Two more local boys were killed in the fighting (Elmer Ertz and Max Bonczek). In July a letter received by Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Spinner from Walter Gruszka,¹⁹ held in a German prison camp, was printed in the paper:

¹⁷ Francis Gabreski (Franciszek Gabryszewski) was the son of Polish parents who immigrated to the U.S. in the early 1900s. Gabreski was the highly-decorated top American fighter ace in Europe. He also was credited with shooting down 6 ½ MIGs in Korea. The Polish-speaking Gabreski was proud of his Polish heritage and requested to join a Polish RAF squadron in England.

¹⁸ The almost-successful attack took place at Hitler’s Wolf’s Lair near what is now Gierloz, Poland. It is now a tourist attraction.

¹⁹ Walter Gruszka is the author’s first cousin once-removed.

Dear Brother-in-law and Sister,

I am fine and hope you are all in the best of health. I am in Germany, back of the wire fence now. Don’t worry for I am o.k. Wishing you all the best health and loads of luck.

Walter

The Beginning of the End (1945)

There was talk of what happens after peace is restored. The formation of the United Nations was in progress. Some Polish orphans were sent to India. Ernie Pyle’s²⁰ weekly columns from the front were prominently featured. The Big Three held a conference at Yalta and shortly thereafter Roosevelt died. On May 8 war in Europe ended. Petain²¹ was put on trial in France.

The county continued to draft high numbers of young (18-year-olds) and older men. More local battle casualties were reported. Now there were weekly reports from locals in the service – generally by-lines “from somewhere in the Pacific or Europe.” Victory-in-Europe Day was observed in Ivanhoe by businesses closing, displaying the flag, ringing of church bells and blowing the siren.

Now all of the war news shifted to the Pacific Theatre. Christmas lights were being manufactured again. In August two atomic bombs were dropped on Japan. A few days later Russia finally declared war on Japan. On August 14 World War II ended after the Japanese accepted unconditional surrender.

Some servicemen who had served for several years were being discharged and speaking about their experiences. Ivanhoe chose to stay on Daylight Savings time.²² Some rationing controls were lifted but tires remained scarce. The Ivanhoe Times of August 17 carried its biggest headline ever - shown on the next page. Draftees were still being called up for the “peace-time military” but discharges were starting in earnest by the end of the year.

²⁰ Ernie Pyle was the Pulitzer-Prize-winning war correspondent, who was killed in 1945 near Okinawa.

²¹ Marshall Petain was the French leader in World War I and became the head of state during World War II. He surrendered France to the Germans. After the war he was sentenced to death for treason but de Gaulle commuted the sentence to life in prison and he died in 1951.

²² DST was implemented in 1942 and ended in 1945 but places were allowed to remain on it, causing confusion. The law standardized it in 1966 and was subsequently amended.



The Ivanhoe Times



The Leading Newspaper and Advertising Medium of Ivanhoe and Lincoln County

MINNESOTA
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

VOL. XLV

NO. 10

IVANHOE, MINNESOTA, FRIDAY, AUGUST 17, 1945

Price \$2.50 Per Year in Advance

War Ends as Japs Bow

Nation Observes Double Holiday

RIBBONS AWARDED CLUB WORKERS AT COUNTY CONTEST

Thirteen 4-H Club Girls Give Demonstration at Annual Achievement Day in Culinary Art and Home-Making

Dan W. Johnson, CIC, and Jeanne Gordon, CWAC, Exchange Marriage Vows in Presence of Large Group of Army Officials at Antwerp, Belgium . . .

Antwerp, Belgium July 15, 1945 (Special To THE TIMES) Dan William Johnson of Ivanhoe, Minn. and Jeanne Isabelle Gordon of Liverpool, England and Windsor, Canada were united in marriage at St. Ignatius Catholic chapel, the couple were united in a Catholic marriage ceremony by Lt. Col. Guy Laramie of Montreal, Canada and the Canadian Chaplains' Corps. Ceremonial witnesses were the bridesmaid, Miss Theresa Marucci and Walter T. Maranda. Here, on discharge from the army, Mr.

STATE SHIPPERS TO GET REDUCED RAILROAD RATES

Saving of Many Thousands of Dollars Will Result from New Rate Order of State Railroad and

WHAT MOMENTOUS WORDS THEY ARE! AUGUST 14, 1945, WHAT AN IMPORTANT DATE IN HISTORY!

When the official information was given out at the Nation's Capitol Tuesday evening, August 14, 1945, at 6 o'clock, the peoples of this nation, as well as the rest of the Allied Nations of the world, simply went wild with joy. Since Sunday evening when the first flash was

The Aftermath (1946)

In Lincoln County some veterans were potentially facing charges for collecting Government unemployment but working. The veterans of the county wanted to have an "Appreciation Day" but it was ultimately cancelled because there was no agreement on the details. Nylons were back in one local store. In Ivanhoe on Memorial Day the usual service was held honoring the fallen of both wars. This time more names²³ were added – at least seven of Polish ancestry. By the middle of the year the Ivanhoe Times dropped the national news pages and local news related to the war focused on veteran benefits. Both Wilno and Ivanhoe Catholic Churches were collecting for aid packages to be sent to Poland.

Epilogue

The one surprise of my research was that local reaction of the Polish in the community was that it was not more vociferous – unlike the reaction to Russia invading Finland during the early phases of the war even though there were virtually no Finns living in the area. Perhaps this was because the servicemen and servicewomen of the 1940s were largely the grandchildren of the native-born Polish

who settled the area much earlier, in the 1880-1910 time frames.

The local news is also a valuable resource for ancestral research (especially obituaries) and writing family histories, providing timelines which often can only be approximated from oral histories.



This work is DEDICATED to the almost 1000 Lincoln County men and women who served in the military during World War II, about 10% of the total population at that time, AND in MEMORIAM to those who lost their lives:

- Army and Air Force casualties from Lincoln and Lyon Counties are listed at <<http://www.accessgenealogy.com>>.
- Navy, Coast Guard and Marines casualties (indexed for Minnesota) are listed at <www.archives.gov/research/www2navy-arc/casualties.html>.
- Merchant Marine (U.S.) casualties are listed at <<http://www.usmm.org/casualty.html>>.

Note: These might not be complete for a variety of reasons.

²³ Soldiers from, or with connections to the area, included: Alden Bartz, Marcellus Bonczek, Max Bonczek, Roy Carr, Elmer Ertz, Louis Gruhot, Anton Gruszka, Ronald Hall, Daniel Herchowski, Erwin Husby, Roy Przymus, Thomas Skorczewski, Henry Van Hyfte.



PGS-MN NEWSLETTER

Surname Indexing Project—Volume 13

We are continuing to index the surnames included in the past issues of the *PGS-MN Newsletter*. The following listing includes all surnames that appeared in Volume 13, Nos. 1-4; Spring, Summer and Autumn 2005, and Winter 2005-06. The code used in this listing is as follows: the first number is the volume number, the second number is the issue number, and the third numbers are page numbers (volume:issue:page). We are indebted to Kay Freund for the indexing of this volume. Back issues of Volume 13 may be ordered from: Paul Kulas, *PGS-MN Newsletter*, 12008 West River Road, Champlin MN 55316-2145. The cost is \$5.00 per issue. Make check payable to PGS-MN.

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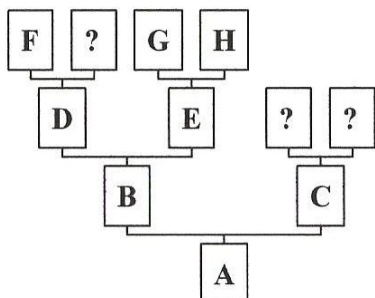
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