



Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 18

SUMMER 2010

NUMBER 2

DROBNE ECHA

Installment #20

Dateline: Wilno, Minnesota

From *Wiarus* and *Katolik*, 1886 - 1894

By Greg Kishel

<gfk1@cornell.edu>

For this issue's coverage of Minnesota's past in the Polish-language press, we return to Wilno, the agricultural village in southwestern Minnesota's Lincoln County that was founded as a Polish-American colony. In installment #18 of this series, featured in our Winter 2009-2010 issue, I presented translations of letters and reports from Wilno to Winona's *Wiarus*, published in 1886-1887. I have gone on to the ensuing years of *Wiarus* (retitled *Katolik* for a couple of years in the mid-1890s).

This time we start with a couple of items from 1886-1887 that I missed in my earlier collation, and go through the mid-1890s. We again see how Marcin MAZANY, a young, American-raised Polish immigrant, was an early business entrepreneur in Wilno (as grocer and postmaster), and continued to be the most vocal promoter of the colony in its early years, at least in the pages of *Wiarus*. But this issue's selections bear out a conclusion drawn in much greater detail by Prof. John Radziłowski in his scholarly work on Wilno's early history: though MAZANY left Lincoln County in mid-1890, other Poles in the Wilno community took his place as local leaders and advocates for its growth. In the years after that, they pursued the community's interests in local politics and business, rapidly acclimating to the American way. It's a fascinating picture of the maturation of a Midwestern immigrant community in the late 19th century.

From *Wiarus*, August 19, 1886:

FROM WILNO.

Wilno, Lincoln Co., Minnesota, August 4, 1886.

We have read in the newspapers that in some of the states of America no rain at all has fallen this year and that the drought has caused scarcity in the crops; likewise, there is a shortage in cattle fodder to such a degree that for lack of that some farmers are forced to get rid of part of their horses and livestock, for dirt-cheap prices.

Wilno ...continued on page 18



**1895 Map of Lincoln County and
Adjacent Areas**

Source: www.MemorialLibrary.com –
used with permission

In this Issue ...

<i>Drobne Echa</i> Dateline: Wilno	p.1
President's Letter	2
The Bulletin Board	3
http://	5
The Prokott Heritage	6
Scanning Polish Publications	17
Polish Place Names in Minnesota	29
Local Polish Church Indexes	30
Missing Branches	32

Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

A Branch of the Minnesota Genealogical Society
1185 No. Concord St.
So. St. Paul MN 55075-1150

<<http://www.rootsweb.com/~mnpolgs/pgs-mn.html>>

Officers/Board of Directors:

President.....Jerome Biedny (952-944-5905)
<jaybiedny@juno.com>
Vice President....Richard Theissen (651-739-1490)
<rftheissen@comcast.net>
Secretary.....Dana Halberg-Ridley (952-393-3516)
<dhalberg@yahoo.com>
Treasurer.....Michael Eckman (952-944-4008)
<mceckman@msn.com>
Past President.....Terry Kita (612-927-0719)
<terrykita@earthlink.net>
Director.....Jan Bias (651-766-0147)
<biasj52@gmail.com>
Director.....Jason Waldowski (763-323-0639)
<waldo20@aol.com>
Director.....Janet Mitchell (651-454-8211)
<Mitch088@tc.umn.edu>
Director.....Dori Marszalek (763-535-2296)
<doripgs@comcast.net>

Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs

Library.....Jan Bias
Membership.....Dori Marszalek
Newsletter.....John Kowles
Program/Publicity.....Rick Theissen, Jay Biedny
Research.....Greg Kishel, John Rys
Web Site.....Jason Waldowski

**Polish Genealogical Society
of Minnesota Newsletter**

Editor.....John Kowles (612-721-7227)
Associate Editors.....Paul Kulas, Greg Kishel
Mailing labels.....Dori Marszalek
Surname indexing.....Kay Freund, Mary Kowles

The *Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota Newsletter* is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Subscription to the *Newsletter* is included with membership. Dues are \$20.00 per year or \$50 for three years.

Please use application form on 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 to e-mail: <johnkow@q.com>.

Address/e-mail changes or membership questions?

Contact: Dori Marszalek, Membership Chair
3901 - 61st Ave. N., Brooklyn Center MN 55429-2403
or e-mail: <doripgs@comcast.net>

© 2010 Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

**President's Letter**

Dear Members,

Summer is coming and the living does get easier. But there are plenty of opportunities to keep that family research going. Here are just a few.

Include in your summer reading list a "How To" book on the part of the world or state that you are currently researching. It is always great to read how another author tackles the same problems you are facing. If fiction is more your style, try a good historical novel that may give you an insight into the life your ancestors lived. The Minnesota Historical Society's Press has dozens of fiction and nonfiction titles that detail life on the frontier, the Civil or World Wars, and the rural or urban Midwest.

Use family get-togethers as opportunities to gather stories and write them down. You don't have to wait for the next all-family reunion in 2012 in Bemidji, do something now. Even if it is just at the family BBQ over the Fourth of July, make a point to sit the oldest next to the youngest and get them talking. Reach out to that "long lost" member of the family to reconnect and share.

Find an unexplored thread and pull hard to see what unravels. I knew a man who wrote an open letter of introduction to yet-to-be-met relatives. He would put them in a plastic bag and place it (with a rock on top) on grave stones in mid-May. He would then wait to get replies when distant relatives would go to the cemetery to tend the grave over Memorial Day. They would read the letter and contact him!

However you spend the next few months, remember the library is open to help you and the fall is packed with great monthly program meetings starting in September. Have a safe and productive summer and see you in the fall.

Sincerely,
Jerome Biedny



The Bulletin Board

PGS-MN Recent Meetings

Visiting Poland: The Glory of the Past and the Promise of the Future – April 10

Almost 60 people were in attendance for a slide presentation and lecture by Professor Michael Mikos from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The gathering started on a somber note since everyone had just heard about the terrible plane crash in Smolensk, Russia which took the life of 96 persons. Rick Theissen opened the meeting with a prayer.

Professor Mikos presented a number of facets of Poland starting with various art and architectural styles beginning in 500 BCE going to the present. He also showed some interesting Polish landscapes, some dating back to the 1930s, and early maps which are not readily available. Afterwards Professor Mikos answered questions about contemporary Poland.

Trinity of Family History: Genealogy, Places and Stories – May 1

A good crowd was in attendance at PGS-MN's final meeting before the summer break to hear Joseph A. Amato speak on family history. Professor Amato's talk was about knowing the family in place and time, its movements and migrations and family stories in addition to the basic genealogical facts. His talk drew from his own family history which is documented in his books, *Jacob's Well: A Case for Rethinking Family History* and *Coal Cousins*. (Both books have been donated to the library and will be available in the Polish section this summer.) Professor Amato made a strong case for focusing on your grandparents when writing your history instead of plunging into cousins and great-ancestors, unless they were VERY INTERESTING.

PGS-MN Future Meetings

September 11, 2010 "Breakthroughs and Unsolved Mysteries: Genealogy of Poland and Polonia" This session will be presented by Anne

Klejment of the University of St. Thomas. It will be in the MGS library board room starting at 10 a.m.

October – To be determined

November 6 Joint Meeting with Pommern Group

This meeting will start at 10 a.m. in the auditorium with a number of speakers from PGS-MN. There will be an optional noon lunch (approximately \$9). In the afternoon Jim Neuenfeldt will talk about his experiences teaching English in Poland and show recent slides.

Other Events of Interest to Polonia

July 29-31 FEEFHS 2010 Conference

This year it will be held in Salt Lake City. For details check: <www.feefhs.org>.

August 7 Annual Polish Fest

This is sponsored by Sacred Heart of Jesus Polish National Catholic Church located at 410 - 22nd Ave. N.E., Minneapolis.

August 14-15 Twin City Polish Festival

It will be held in the same place as last year—on Old Main Street along the Mississippi River bank. On Saturday it will run from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and on Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. (see insert page).

August 30 - September 14 Heritage, Culture and History Tour of Poland

This is sponsored by the Eastern European Cultural Society. For information contact: <tylkoChris@yahoo.com>.

October 1-2 MGS North Star Conference

Meetings will be held at the MGS library.

October 1-2 PGSA 32nd Conference

This year's theme is "19th Century Research Using 21st Century Technology." It will be held at the Hilton Hotel in Oak Lawn, Illinois. For details check: <www.pgsa.org>.

October 24-31 2010 Minnesota Genealogy Group Trip to Family History Center, Salt Lake City

This is an informal group which obtains special hotel rates and plans special events for the week. For information contact: Janet or Warren Mitchell at <info@familytreefinders.net> or 651-454-8211.



The local Polish community was saddened to hear of the plane crash on April 10 which took the life of 96 people enroute to the memorial service for the victims of the Katyn Massacre 70 years ago this month. Katyn claimed 20,000 military officers and intelligentsia. In addition to the Polish president Lech Kaczynski and his wife, the crash claimed the chairman of the national bank, the Army chief of staff, many top military personnel, the deputy foreign minister and 18 members of parliament. One American was also on-board, Wojciech Seweryn—a sculptor from Chicago. We offer our sympathy to the bereaved families and people of Poland.

Copernicus Is in His Element

The latest element (No.112, symbol Cn), has been named copernicium after the astronomer born in Toruń in 1473. Its properties are related to zinc, cadmium and mercury. German researchers were allowed to name the element.

In a related story, *Kurier Polski of Minnesota* reported Copernicus's remains, which recently were identified by DNA testing in Frombork, were brought to St. John's Cathedral in Toruń for reburial. The huge Middle-Ages bell called *Tuba Dei* was rung to announce the event.

Talking Tombstones?

Mary Ellen Bruski called this news item to our attention. An Arizona company, Objecs, announced it had developed a chip which allows text and photos to be embedded in grave headstones that can be retrieved with a cell phone. They claim it can be readable for up to 300 years. Each would have a unique data tag.

In reviewing chat-line comments about the product they range from "freaky" to "will eventually be hacked" and finally "won't be able to be read in the future because of technology changes." While I am not enthusiastic about such a product it is nice to go to a cemetery in Europe and see a picture of the deceased.

-JWK

Neanderthals and Us

In the Spring 2010 Newsletter p. 31, we reported Polish scientists had discovered Neanderthal teeth north of the Carpathian Mountains and that DNA testing indicated there is no genome relationship with modern man. In the interest of accuracy: More accurate testing by 57 scientists over four years revealed 1-4% of Neanderthal genes flow into genomes of all modern non-Africans indicating some interbreeding must have taken place. The results stem from bones excavated in Croatia—not far from the recent Polish discoveries.

Sources: *Washington Post* and *New York Times*

Records from St. Mary's and Calvary Cemeteries in the Twin Cities

These are the oldest Catholic cemeteries in Minneapolis and St. Paul respectively.

Genealogical information will be provided by contacting Linda Radtke at <Linda@catholic-cemeteries.org> or by calling 651-488-8866.

However, the information provided is limited to: name, date of burial, age and location of grave.

Tourism in Poland (2010)

Kraków has now become the most expensive city in Poland. Even with the stronger dollar against the euro and złoty you can expect to pay about \$110 for a three-star hotel in the city center during the summer high season. Of course you can get much better deals by going outside the city proper or dropping down to two-star hotels.

Also in **Kraków** – The administration building of Oskar Schindler's former enamelware factory was recently turned into a World War II museum with many multi-media stands. Schindler, a German industrialist, saved some 1200 of his Jewish workers during the war.

Zakopane has experienced a number of cancellations due to people's fear of the floods. However, promoters say no flooding took place in Zakopane. The June flooding primarily was in Pomerania, south of Gdańsk.

Fuel costs will be fairly high this summer for those who drive. A liter will cost about 5 złoty or approximately \$5.66 per gallon.

-JWK



http://

Kashubian Information

<<http://Kaszubia.com>> is a good general web site for news, geographical names (correlation between Kashubian-Polish-German), history, maps of Kashubia throughout history, an interesting comment line, etc. The feature news item was the celebration last March 19 of Kashubian Unity Day in Kartuzy. This day was chosen because Pope Gregory IX promoted the Dukes of Pomerania to the title of “Dukes of the Slavs and Kashubs” in 1238 which was a formal recognition of the area.

Interested in Social Networking?

<<http://www.genealogywise.org>> is a free social networking site covering all ethnic groups with about 20,000 members. There are many interest groups and links you can peruse. Two of the more popular ones are Legacy Family Tree fans and FindaGrave addicts. It is easy to post comments and join the discussion forums.

World Vital Records Site

<WorldVitalRecords.com> claims access to over 1.5 billion records. While many of the free databases are available separately it does tie together many of them like ancestry.com and is worth looking at. Note that it provides many indexes but fees are required for some of them to view the actual record. In testing the site I found the databases are incomplete and have limited Minnesota connections. I put in my grandfather’s name and got 182 links. There was only one real “hit” of my grandfather—the 1930 census index. This could save the researcher time because it located the enumeration district which previously I spent several hours trying to find.

Detailed Information on Polish Dioceses

Everything you wanted to know about current Polish dioceses can be found at <www.catholic-hierachy.org/country/dpl.html>.

Canadian Search Engine

<<http://voicimafamille.info>> (that’s my family) accesses several archival databases in Canada. You can narrow your search to a specific province. Canadian censuses are available only after 92 years. I found some records tend to be newer, like immigration (1925-35). Check out the A-Z index.

Indexes of Roman Catholic Records from Plock

<http://www.archiwum.plock/acts_en.php?open=go> This is an interesting site which is still in progress but will eventually have the Plock records from 1826-1907. Currently it is from 1864 to 1907. The instructions are in English. Note the names are *as recorded* in the registers and Polish letters must be used. However it has a nice feature which is a small keyboard next to the entry with the nine Polish diacritical letters on it which can be clicked on to form the name.

Indexes of Roman Catholic Records from Pultusk

<<http://www.warszawa.ap.gov.pl/indeksy.html>> This is similar to the Plock web site. While it is in Polish it is fairly easy to navigate.

(There is also a limited Warsaw site which is a little more challenging. We will try to report on this in a future newsletter.)

Missing Branches ...continued from page 32

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

Mary Moriarty, 3885 Niagara Ln. N., Plymouth MN 55446
<mimoriarty@earthlink.net> is researching MURKOWSKI, CZUBEK, CYWINSKI in Kycinia and Bobowo in Poland.

Louis Welna, 632 Sodom Road, Milton VT 05468 <ojciec@comcast.net> is researching WELNA in Dambrowka in Poland and in Brooklyn NY and Opole and Holdingford MN; DEJA in Kobyla in Poland and in Brooklyn, Opole and in Detroit MI; PHILIPSEK in Trawdawa/Mechnice and in Holdingford/Avon, MN; PYKA in Dammratsch and in Holdingford and St. Cloud MN.

THE PROKOTT HERITAGE

By Robert J. Prokott
<prokott@peoplepc.com>

The following article is an excerpt from Silesia to America: The Prokott Heritage. It can be found in the MGS library (Call No. POL203Pro).

Simon Prokopp and Catharina Gierok

This chronicle of the Prokott heritage begins with a review of marriage records from the church at Gros Dobern, Prussia (now Dobrzen Wielki, Poland). This record states that on May 21, 1797, before the parish priest, Bartholomeus Klich, Simon Prokopp, a single man not previously married, was united in marriage with the widow, Catharina Waloskin. Simon was a soldier with the Herzberschen Regiment. (In the Prussian Army the regiment was usually named after the surname of its commandant.) Witnesses to the marriage were Wawrzyn Goiowczyk and Thomek Lazinka, both residents of Salzbrunn Colonie. At the time of the marriage his age was shown to be 26 years. Simon lived in Hirschfelde, Prussia (now Kaniow, Poland) at the time of his first marriage and continued to live there until his death in 1847. This small village was established in about 1771 and most of its residents moved there from other nearby villages. It is presumed that Simon was born in the same vicinity but we found no record of his baptism in either the Gros Dobern or Alt Schalkowitz parish records.

Catharina was previously married at Kupp, Prussia on November 5, 1786 to Mertin Walosek, son of Jacob Walosek. Her maiden name was Gierok and she was the daughter of Mertin Gierok of Kupp. During their marriage they lived at a small village known as Blumenthal Colonie and Catharina gave birth to four children. Two of the children, Hedwig and Albert Walosek, died in infancy. The other two children, Josepha and Agneska Walosek, lived with their mother and stepfather, Simon Prokopp, until adulthood. Mertin Walosek died in June of 1795, and was buried at St. Rochus cemetery in Gros Dobern on June 30, 1795.

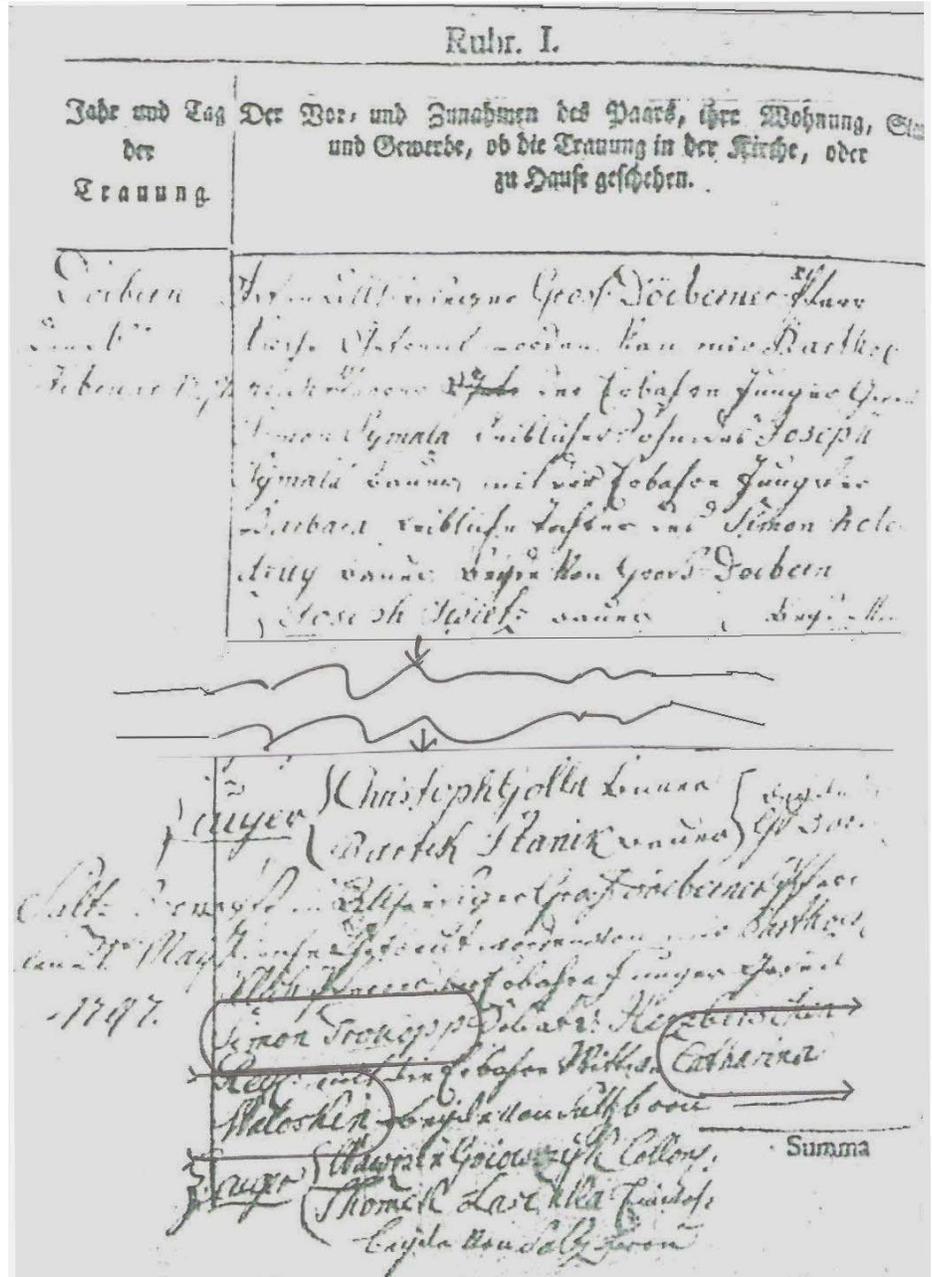
Simon Prokopp and Catharina Gierok had three children from their marriage. We were not able to locate the birth record on the oldest child, Franz. However, we found a death record which states that

Franz, son of Simon Prokop of Hirschfelde, died on September 18, 1816 at Kupp after he was shot as a result of carelessness by another person. He was 18 years of age at the time of his death and was buried at St. Rochus cemetery in Gros Dobern on September 20, 1816. A daughter, Catharina Prokopp, was born at Hirschfelde on March 28, 1799 but no further information about her was found. Their third child was Marianna Prokopp, born at Hirschfelde on July 30, and baptized on July 31, 1801. Her baptismal record from Alt Schalkowitz parish indicates that Simon Prokopp was a small farmer and a musquetier with the Von Gravert Regiment of the Prussian Army. Godparents were Johann Stiller and Maria Kupka. The baptismal record also states that Marianna was the first person baptized by the new parish priest, Fr. Antonius Renner. Of note in this baptismal record is the fact that the name of Simon Prokopp as shown in this record was changed at some unknown later date to Prokot.

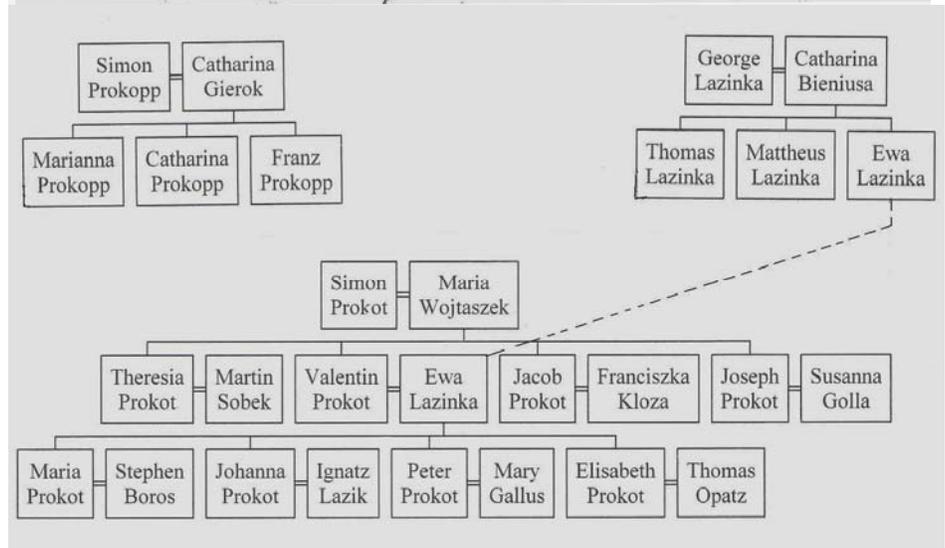
The Alt Schalkowitz parish records show that Catharina Prokott, nee Gierok, the wife of Simon Prokott, died at Hirschfelde on May 23, 1817. She was buried on May 25, 1817. This is one of the very few places in records from Prussia where the name is shown as Prokott. The name is shown as Prokot in nearly all records after 1817. The two daughters from Catharina's first marriage, Josepha and Agneska Walosek were both married around this time. Agneska Walosek married Valentin Golla on February 4, 1816 and Josepha married Johann Drass on July 27, 1817, shortly after the death of her mother. Both marriages were at Gros Dobern. Some birth records of the Golla children in the 1820s indicate the maiden name of Agneska as Prokot, apparently in error but certainly indicating the connection between her and Simon Prokot, her stepfather.

Marianna Prokopp married Andreas Skrzypiec at Alt Schalkowitz on May 16, 1824. They had two sons, Michael and Hyacenth, prior to Marianna's death at the age of 30 years at Hirschfelde on March 18, 1832. Hyacenth subsequently married Juliana Nalawaja, daughter of Johann Nalawaja of Chroschwitz. Birth records show that they had a son, Franz, born at Gros Dobern on January 21, 1863. We have no information about them after this birth.

On right is shown the 1797 Marriage Certificate of Simon and Catharina Waloskin Prokopp



The descendant tree of Simon Prokopp is shown here as a reference to the text.



Simon Prokot and Maria Wojtaszek

On August 3, 1817 at Alt Schalkowitz, Simon Prokot, widower and farmer, age 43 years, was married to Maria Wojtaszek, daughter of Johann Wojtaszek. She was indicated to be 24 years of age and had not been previously married. We were unable to locate her birth record but did find baptismal records for a sister, Magdalena, born at Colonie Schalkowitz on September 30, 1798. A brother, Urban, was born May 24, 1801 at Hirschfelde and another brother, Johann Wojtaszek, died at Hirschfelde at the age of six months on June 6, 1804. Urban Wojtaszek had at least one descendant who came to the United States, a granddaughter, Julia Wojtaszek, born at Hirschfelde on April 19, 1864, who later was married to Frank Bzdok. She was a daughter of Adam Wojtaszek and Elizabeth Kupka. The parents of Maria Wojtaszek, Johann, son of Sebastian Wojtaszek, and Maria, daughter of Johann Owczorz, were married in Poppelau, Prussia on January 21, 1787. They moved to Hirschfelde about 1800 and lived there until their deaths. Both died at Hirschfelde, Johann on May 1, 1814 and Maria on March 8, 1831. Simon Prokot and Maria Wojtaszek had four children, Theresia, Valentin, Jacob and Joseph. The family lived in Hirschfelde where Simon was a farmer. Maria died at Hirschfelde on January 30, 1844 and was buried on February 3. Simon died at Hirschfelde on May 30, 1847 and was buried on June 2. His death was due to a lung condition, probably pneumonia.

Joseph Prokot and Susanna Golla

Their children lived their entire lives in Hirschfelde except the youngest son, Joseph, who lived in Gros Dobern after he married. Joseph died at Gros Dobern on October 24, 1876. Gros Dobern church records show that on November 21, 1865, Joseph, son of Simon Prokot of Hirschfelde, was married to Susanna Golla, daughter of Blasius Golla and Catharina Gabriel of Gros Dobern. Susanna was born at Gros Dobern on June 29, 1840. Joseph and Susanna had three children, Margaret, Adalbert and Joseph. Joseph died in 1875 at Gros Dobern at the age of three years. Margaret was married to Albert Sosna on February 16, 1897 and Adalbert married Franciska Pollok on November 16, 1896. Both couples spent their lives in Gros Dobern and some of their descendants presently reside in the

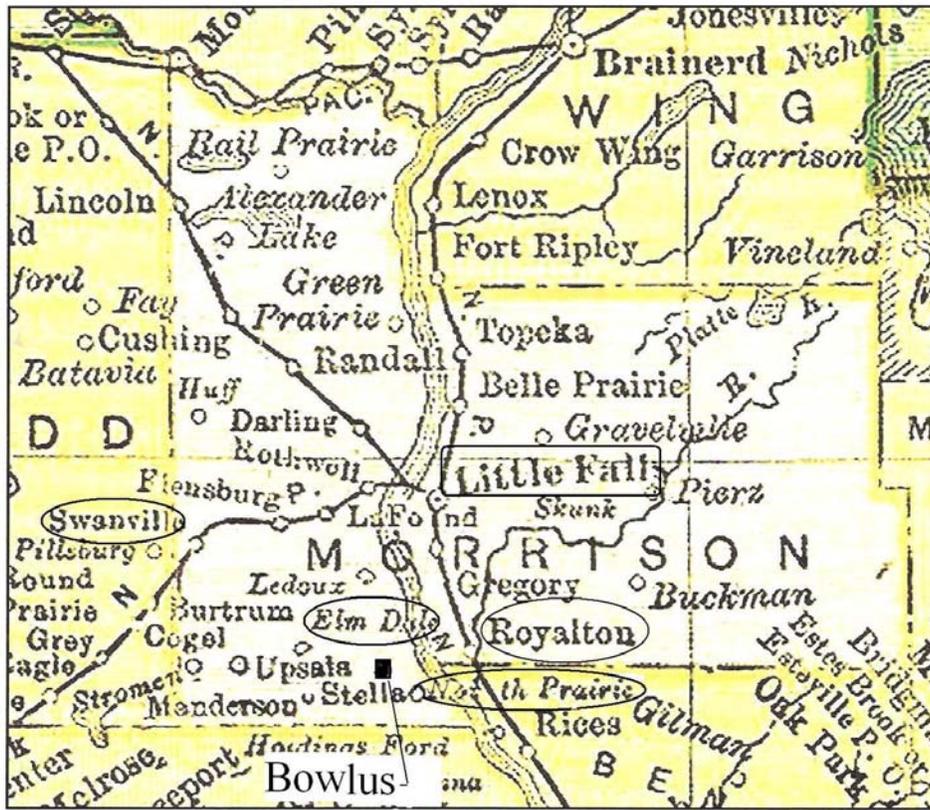
same town, now known as Dobrzen Wielki, Poland. Adalbert and Franciska had nine children and Albert and Margaret Sosna had three.

Martin Sobek and Theresia Prokot

Theresia was first married to Martin Sobek, son of Johann Sobek and Jadwiga Walczok of Dammratsch. Martin was born on November 7, 1802 at Dammratsch and married Theresia on November 18, 1844 at Alt Schalkowitz. They lived in Hirschfelde where he was a farmer. He died at Hirschfelde on March 18, 1856. Theresia then married Jacob Golla, a widower, the son of Johann Golla and Catharina Kupka of Chroscitz, at Alt Schalkowitz on September 28, 1858. They lived at Hirschfelde where Theresia died on November 14, 1865. Theresia had two daughters from her first marriage, Maria Sobek, who died in 1853 at the age of five years, and Margareth Sobek who married Leopold Kokot, son of Joseph Kokot, in 1874. Theresia had a son, Johann Golla, from her second marriage. He died at the age of eight years on January 28, 1868. This son was then living with his father and the third wife of Jacob Golla, Carolina Standzik of Chroscitz to whom he had been married on June 19, 1866 at Alt Schalkowitz.

Jacob Prokot and Francizka Kloza

Jacob Prokot married Franciska Kloza, the daughter of Casper Kloza and Rosina Hennek, at Gros Dobern on November 13, 1859. Franciska was born at Salzbrunn, Prussia on December 18, 1829. They had two sons, Johann and Anton, and one daughter, Dorothea, who died in Hirschfelde in 1868 when she was two years old. Jacob and Franciska lived at Hirschfelde their entire lives. Both died at Hirschfelde, Franciska on July 17, 1887 and Jacob on Oct 17, 1888. Anton was married to Julianna Tomalla at Alt Schalkowitz on February 19, 1889 and they had eight children. Johann married Juliana, daughter of Sebastian Kurc of Hirschfelde, on January 27, 1885 at Alt Schalkowitz. Juliana died at Mittel-Bielau, Kreis (county), Goldberg-Haynau on November 26, 1886 due to complications of pregnancy. She had previously given birth to a stillborn son on January 21, 1886. Johann was working in that area for several months. On February 16, 1887, Johann was married to Maria Bannasch, daughter of Johann Bannasch of Hirschfelde. They were married



Morrison County Map (1895) – The map shows the places mentioned in the article. Bowlus is not shown because it was not platted until 1907. Opole, Minnesota is in the extreme northern part of Stearns County. Settlements of Stromen and Stella (originally a stagecoach stop outside of Bowlus) no longer exist and Ledoux became Sobieski.

Source: www.MemorialLibrary.com - used with permission



Home Farm Barn – Constructed by Peter Prokott circa 1888

at Alt Schalkowitz and subsequently had ten children. Johann Prokot died at Hirschfelde on June 23, 1927 after living there all of his life.

Valentin Prokot and Ewa Lazinka

Valentin Prokot was married to Ewa Lazinka on January 21, 1845 at Alt Schalkowitz. The marriage record shows that she was the daughter of the deceased George Lazinka and Valentin was the son of Simon Prokot of Hirschfelde. Witnesses to the marriage were Lorenz Pogrzeba and Thomas Lazinka. Valentin and Ewa had a total of six children, three sons and three daughters. Two of the sons, Martin and Adalbert, died in infancy. The other four children, Maria, Johanna, Peter and Elisabeth are covered later in this book. Valentin was a small farmer at Hirschfelde until his death at the age of 37 years. He died of pneumonia at Hirschfelde on April 7, 1860. Ewa lived as a widow for 45 years and remained in Hirschfelde until 1881 when she came to the United States with Peter and Elisabeth.

After coming to the United States she lived with her three children at various times. The 1885 census indicates she was then living with Stephen and Maria Borosh, her eldest daughter and son-in-law. The 1900 census indicates that she was living with her other daughter, Elisabeth Opatz. Ewa died on February 19, 1905 and was buried at North Prairie, MN on February 21. The Little Falls Daily Transcript dated Friday, February 24, 1905, has the following article: Died, Sunday night, Feb. 19, Mrs. J. Prockott of old age. Mrs. Prockott has been staying with her son, Peter Prockott. Her age was about 90 years. The funeral took place at North Prairie Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock. She was actually 86 years of age when she died (she was born at Hirschfelde on December 21, 1818).

George Lazinka and Catharina Bieniusa

The parents of Ewa Lazinka were George Lazinka and Catharina Bieniusa. George Lazinka was born about 1756 but we have been unable to locate a birth record to establish exact date of birth. His father was Simon Lazinka. Marriage records from Alt Schalkowitz show that on September 4, 1774, George Lazinka, age 25 years, son of Simon, was married to Hedwig Pietron, age 18, daughter of Thomas Pietron of Chroschwitz. They had a number of children from this marriage prior to the death of

Hedwig at Hirschfelde on July 10, 1806. On January 26, 1807, the widower, George Lazinka, was married to Catharina Bieniusa, a woman who had not been previously married. They were married at Alt Schalkowitz. Catharina Bieniusa was born at Alt Schalkowitz on October 19, 1778, the eldest daughter of Jacob Bieniusa and Maria Lotko. Her mother died at Colonie Schalkowitz on May 25, 1790 at the age of 36 years. Her father died on August 11, 1793 at the age of 50. Descendants of Jacob and Maria Bieniusa later migrated to the United States and some of those descendants presently reside in the Bowlus, Minnesota area as well as elsewhere in the United States. Spelling of their surname has been changed to Benusa.

George Lazinka and Catharina Bieniusa had three children. The oldest was Thomas Lazinka, born at Hirschfelde on December 10, 1807. On February 20, 1832 at Alt Schalkowitz he married Anna Misch (Misch), the widow of Jacob Misch, age 40 years. Her maiden name was Mielek. Witnesses to this marriage were Urban Wosch and Valentin Misch. We have been unable to establish any information about Thomas Lazinka after this marriage except for the fact that he was a witness to the marriage of his sister, Ewa, in 1845. We also located his death record which shows that he was a widower when he died at Alt Schalkowitz on April 30, 1886. The second child born to Catharina was a son, Matheus, born at Hirschfelde on September 1, 1813. He died at Hirschfelde on November 11, 1818. The third child was Ewa, born December 21, 1818, who later married Valentin Prokot. Ewa was discussed earlier in this book.

Stephan Boros (Borash) and Maria Prokot

Maria Prokot, the eldest daughter of Valentin and Ewa Prokot, was 11 years old when her father died. The extent of her education is not known. She lived in Hirschfelde with her mother, sister and brother until her marriage at Alt Schalkowitz on February 10, 1874 to Stephan Boros. Stephan was born at Hirschfelde on December 25, 1847, the eldest son of Paul Boros and Susanna Filip. His father, Paul Boros, son of Jacob Boros and Christina Pogrzeba, was baptized at Chroschwitz on July 6, 1819, married to Susanna Filip on March 1, 1848. They lived in Hirschfelde until his death in 1872. He was killed in an accident that happened in the woods where he was working, the Royal Forests. Stephan's



Peter and Mary Prokott in the 1890s

mother, Susanna Filip, daughter of Johann Filip, was born at Hirschfelde on July 24, 1824. A few years after the death of her husband she came to the United States, lived with her grown children in the vicinity of North Prairie, MN. Susanna Boros died on April 7, 1907 and is buried in the Holy Cross Cemetery at North Prairie.

Stephen Boros had four sisters, Mary, Eva, Elisabeth and Anna, also a brother, Charlie, who was the youngest in the family, born November 4, 1860 at Hirschfelde. Stephen Boros and his bride, Mary Prokot, came to the United States in 1875. They came aboard the ship, LESSING, sailing from Hamburg, Germany on April 15, 1875 and arriving at New York on April 28, 1875. In the United States, when he applied for citizenship on May 10, 1875 he signed his name as Stephen Borosch and in the United States his name was spelled this way or in some instances Borosh or Borash. As was the case with most immigrants to the Central Minnesota area, it is presumed that Stephan and Maria Borosch went by train from New

York to St. Cloud, MN and then by oxcart to Swan River Township in Morrison County, MN where they settled. Stephan's mother, brother and sisters came to the area several years later.

Stephen and Maria had a total of 13 children between 1874 and 1892. Their oldest daughter, Katherina, died in Prussia on February 2, 1875, just months before they came to the United States. The oldest son, Carl (Charles), born in 1876, survived to adulthood. However, the next four children, all sons born between 1877 and 1880, died less than three months after birth. One can only surmise that living conditions during severe Minnesota winters contributed to the early deaths of these infants.

The Agriculture census of 1880 for Swan River Township, Morrison County, MN includes an enumeration by Mr. Hans C. Hansen on the farm of Stephen Borash. This states that he owned 80 acres of which 69 acres was woodland, eight acres was tilled land, and three acres was permanent pastures, meadows, etc. The farm value was \$400, machinery was valued at \$35, and livestock value was \$190. The estimated value of farm production during 1879 was \$250. As of June 1, 1880 he owned two working oxen, two milk cows, three other livestock, two swine and 14 poultry. One calf dropped during 1879, one cattle died during 1879. The farm produced 110 lbs. of butter and 20 dozen eggs during 1879. During the same year the farm had a half-acre of oats producing 28 bushels; six acres of wheat producing 78 bushels; and a half-acre of potatoes producing 20 bushels. The value of wood products sold in 1879 was \$73.

The 1895 census for Swan River Township lists Stefan Borosh, wife Maria and their eight children aged between three and 19 years. We could find no listing for them in the 1900 census for Morrison County. In the 1905 and 1910 census Stephen Borosh is listed as living in Bellevue Township (near Royalton, MN). Maria Prokot Borosh died in Swan River Township on November 25, 1896. The

Morrison County death records show the cause of death as dropsy. After her death, Stephen Borosh moved to Bellevue Township near Royalton, MN and lived there until June of 1915. He then lived at St. Otto's Home in Little Falls, MN where he died on March 9, 1916. Morrison County death records indicate cause of death was asthma and heart disease valvular. He was listed as a retired farmer and was under the care of Dr. J. G. Millspaugh prior to his death.

Ignatz Lazik and Johanna Prokot

Johanna, the second daughter of Valentin and Ewa Prokot, born at Hirschfelde on June 24, 1851, was married to widower Ignatz Lazik, the son of Matheus Lazik of Chroscitz, at Alt Schalkowitz on September 26, 1876. Ignatz had previously been married (on October 25, 1864) at Alt Schalkowitz to Juliana Psyk, daughter of Christian Psyk of Chroscitz. He had six children from that marriage, all born between 1865 and 1874. Juliana died on June 24, 1876 at the age of 33 years.

Ignatz and Johanna Lazik lived at Chroscitz and had eight children from their marriage. Four of the children died in infancy. A son, Gregor, born March 11, 1881, was married to a Gordalla girl in Alt Schalkowitz and they lived in Chroscitz and had six children. Gregor's first wife died and he then remarried a woman whose first name was Constantina. One daughter, Franciska, was married and later died while living in Chroscitz. The name of her husband is not known. The other five children moved to Berlin before 1945. Gregor and his second wife also moved there. As of 1994 only the youngest daughter, Olga, married to a man named Penczynski, was still living. A second son, Ignatz Lazik Jr., born September 8, 1885, was killed in action in 1917 or 1918 during World War I. He had married Petronella Przybilla on January 23, 1911 and they had three children, all of whom died at a young age.

Another son, Johann Lazik, born June 20, 1892, married Ignatz Jr.'s widow in Alt Schalkowitz on June 16, 1919. They had four daughters and one son. Petronella died at Chróśice, Poland (formerly Chroscitz) on January 20, 1958 and Johann Lazik died there on September 1, 1969. Their one son, Stefan, born December 12, 1924, died at Chroscice on February 14, 1977. He is known to have had

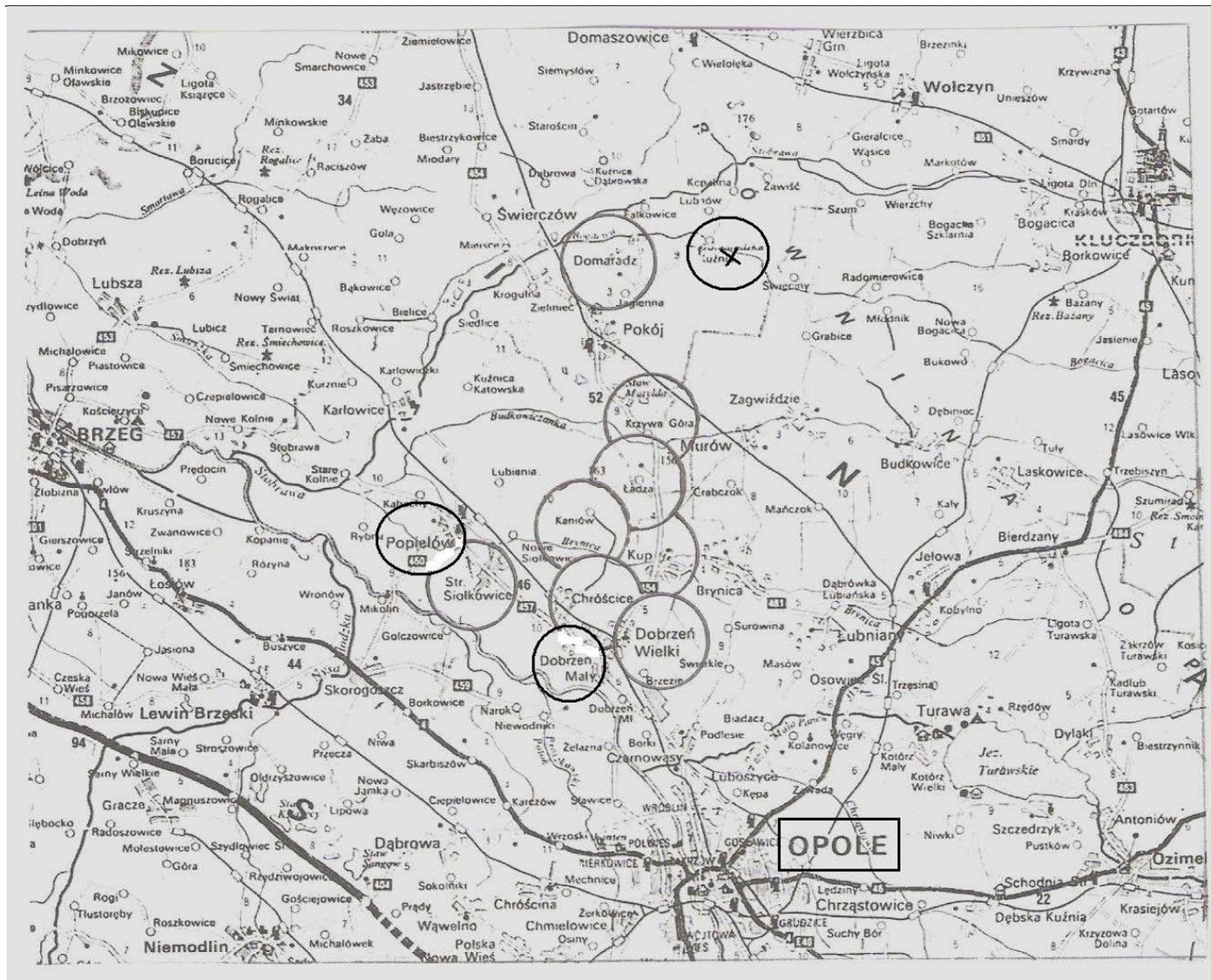
two daughters. The oldest daughter of John Lazik, Anna, born July 22, 1920, is known to have died in Germany. She was married to Josef Gamroth on September 9, 1941, and later was married to a man named Ziemczyk. Elizabeth Lazik, born November 4, 1923, was killed by Russian soldiers in January of 1945. Angela Petronella Lazik, born May 31, 1922, died on August 2, 1922. The youngest child of Johann Lazik was Theresa Maria, born March 3, 1929. She was married to Paul Starosta on July 5, 1949 and as last known was living somewhere in Germany.

The other child of Ignatz and Johanna Lazik was Sofia, born May 3, 1888. Sofia was married on October 25, 1909 at Chroscitz to Paul Kokott and they lived in Klein Dobern (now Dobrzeń Mały, Poland). They had a total of nine children, seven are now deceased. The two youngest sons were last known to be living in Germany. One of the other children, Monika Kwossek, died on December 20, 2004 at the age of 88 years. She lived her entire life in the same home where her parents had lived in Dobrzeń Mały, Poland. Her address was ul. Brzegowa 39, 46-081 Dobrzeń Mały, Poland. Monika's youngest son, Peter Kwossek continues to live at that address. We visited with Monika and her six children in 2001 and continue to correspond with Peter to the present time.

Ignatz Lazik died at Chroscitz on February 16, 1904. Johanna died on March 2, 1908, also at Chroscitz.

Thomas Opatz and Elisabeth Prokott

Elisabeth, Valentin Prokot's youngest child, was less than two years old when her father died. She lived at Hirschfelde with her mother, brother, and sisters and attended a Polish school. It is not known where she was gainfully employed before coming to the United States. After coming to the United States in November of 1881 she initially lived with her sister and her sister's husband, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Borosch, on their farm in Swan River Township. They had come to the United States six years earlier. Elisabeth later worked at different hotels in the Brainerd, MN area, including at the Headquarters Hotel (where she was paid fourteen dollars per month) and at the Babcock and Petove Hotels (where she earned ten dollars per month).



Map of Opole Area of Poland in 1999 – Source: EKO-GRAF Wrocław©1999
 The map identifies the places mentioned in the article. Dąbrowka Dolna (also known as Dombrowka) is not shown on the map but its location is marked with an X. Below are the place-name correlations between Germany and Poland.

<u>Polish</u>	<u>German</u>
Chróscice	Chrosnitz
Dąbrowka Dolna	Eichendorf
Dobrzem Malý	Klein Dobern
Dobrzem Wielki	Gros Dobern
Domaradz	Dammratsch
Kaniow	Hirschfelde
Krzywa Góra	Blumenthal
Kup	Kupp
Ladza	Salzbrunn Col
Popielów	Poppelau
Stare Siolkowice	Alt Schalkowitz

On November 23, 1883 Elisabeth married Thomas Opatz at Holy Cross Church in North Prairie, MN. Father Edward Nagl performed the ceremony and witnesses to the marriage were Charles Borasch and Maria Cekalla. They made their home on a farm in the North Prairie area until 1921 when they retired and moved to the village of Bowlus, MN. Thomas Opatz died from arteriosclerosis at St. Gabriel's Hospital in Little Falls, MN on August 10, 1927. Elisabeth continued to live in Bowlus until her death on January 14, 1946 at the age of 87 years.

Her son, Peter, who never had married, lived with her and continued to live in the family home in Bowlus until his death due to a heart attack in 1962. He was a relatively short and stocky individual who had drunk to excess in his younger years but discontinued drinking and was sober for many years prior to his death. He was often playing cards (his game was Smear) at Joe Smieja's Barber Shop and tavern, was known in Bowlus as Pepsi Cola Pete. Elisabeth and Peter both died at St. Gabriel's Hospital in Little Falls. At the time of her death in 1946, Elisabeth Opatz had 37 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren.

Thomas Opatz had been born in Dombrowka, Prussia on December 20, 1854 and was the oldest son of Thomas Opatz and Hedwig Krystosek. His grandparents were Valentin Opatz and Hedwig Neuman. The Opatz family had lived in Dombrowka since 1804 but their name spelling was slightly different, name had been OPAC. Thomas attended a Polish school before coming to the United States in 1881. He declared his intent for United States citizenship on October 31, 1884, indicating that he had entered the port of New York in May, 1881. He became a naturalized United States citizen on October 22, 1897 in Morrison County. Witnesses were T.F.Trutwin and J.J. Trutwin.

His parents and grandparents were farmers in Prussia and after he came to the United States he purchased 80 acres in Section 12, Two Rivers Township. Twenty acres had been cleared and there was a log house on the place. He built a new house and later, (about 1891), he purchased 80 acres of wooded land in Swan River Township. Later he bought another 120 acre farm which had been partially cleared and had no buildings. He also bought 80 acres in Brockway Township near Opole,

MN. When he and his wife moved to Bowlus in 1921, the farms were given to their sons, John, Thomas, Peter and Joseph. Joseph later moved to St. Paul, MN and worked for a railroad for many years. The youngest son, Frank lived in the St. Paul area and worked for the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad for 44 years. Another son, Alois, lived in California for many years prior to his death there in 1972. Thomas and Elisabeth Opatz had a total of nine children. The three oldest were girls and the last six were boys. The oldest daughter, Maria, died in infancy in 1887. Anna was married to John Meyer and Mary was married to William Krottoschinsky. They both lived in Morrison County, died in the early 1950s. Some of the descendants of the Opatz family still live in Morrison County but most have moved to other parts of Minnesota and the United States.

Peter Prokott and Mary Gallus

Peter Prokott, the only son of Valentin and Ewa Prokot who survived to adulthood, was less than four years of age at the time of his father's death. He attended Polish school at Hirschfelde and later is known to have taken apprenticeship training to become a stonemason. This training was put to good use after he came to the United States in connection with building foundations for various farm buildings.

Peter's brother-in-law and sister, Stephen and Maria Borosch, in correspondence back to Prussia, told Peter that he should remain single, indicating that a young woman already in the United States would make a good wife for him. They were referring to Mary Gallus, who had come to America in 1875 with her parents and lived on a farm near the Borosch farm. Peter did correspond with Mary Gallus while he was still in Prussia.

Peter, along with his mother, Ewa, and his younger sister, Elisabeth, arrived at the port of New York aboard the ship RYHNLAND on November 10, 1881. This ship came from Antwerp, Belgium. It is not known whether the family had come to Antwerp by rail or by another ship from a port closer to Prussia, probably had come from Prussia to Antwerp by train. They traveled from New York by rail to the end of the rail line near St. Cloud, MN, then probably by oxcart to Swan River Township where the Borosch family lived.

They initially stayed with the Borosch family and Peter purchased 40 acres of land in Swan River township on which he built a small log house. In 1887 he purchased an additional 80 acres of land to the east of the original 40 and on that property built a home in which a member of the Prokott family has been living ever since. In 2001, the farm was occupied by Sylvester Prokott, grandson of Peter, and as of 2009 by Scott Prokott who is Sylvester's son.

After arriving in Minnesota, Peter personally met Mary Gallus and they had a short courtship that culminated with their marriage at Holy Cross Church in North Prairie, MN on February 13, 1882. Fr. Edward Nagl, who was the parish priest at North Prairie from 1876 to 1893, performed the ceremony. Witnesses to the marriage were Carl Borosch (Stephan's younger brother) and Sophia Karasch. After the marriage they lived in the small log house and later in the home mentioned above, both located within Section 31, Swan River Township.

Mary Gallus had been born at Dammratsch, Prussia on August 16, 1864, daughter of Gregor Gallus and Margaret Kroll. She came to the United States with her parents and two sisters aboard the ship, FRISIA, which arrived at the port of New York on May 19, 1875, coming from Hamburg and Havre. The Gallus farm of 80 acres was located in Section 31 of Swan River Township and the land that Peter Prokott purchased was adjacent to the Gallus farm.

The Agriculture Census taken on June 2, 1880 indicated that Gregor Gallus owned 80 acres, consisting of 69 acres of woodland, nine acres of tilled land and two acres of pastures, meadows, etc. His farm value was \$300, machinery value \$15, and livestock value was \$125. The value of farm production during 1879 was \$185. He had two working oxen, no horses, one milk cow, one calf, one other animal, two swine, and 16 poultry. Two hundred pounds of butter and 40 dozen eggs had been produced during 1879. In 1879, a half acre of barley produced ten bushels, a half acre of oats produced 25 bushels, eight acres of wheat produced 100 bushels and ten bushels of potatoes were also produced on the farm. Value of wood products sold in 1879 was \$60. The Agriculture Census was taken every ten years until 1880, was then discontinued.

Peter and Mary Prokott had a total of eight children born between 1883 and 1898. The oldest of the children, Francis, was born on October 10, 1883, died at the age of seven years on June 27, 1891. Cause of death is shown as pertussis and cholera on the death record. He is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in North Prairie, MN. A small, weather worn marker is located at his gravesite, near the center of the cemetery. The other seven children, Anna Mary, Paul, Frances, Michael, Catherine, Agnes and Joseph, lived to adulthood and each individual will be covered later.

Peter Prokott made his declaration of intent to become a citizen on November 1, 1884 in Morrison County, MN. He became a citizen of the United States, also in Morrison County, on March 2, 1897. Witnesses were Joseph Wozniak and Stephen Borosh. His birth records from Prussia as well as those of his brothers and sisters always showed their surname as PROKOT except for ancestors in the early nineteenth century when the name was PROKOPP. When he applied for citizenship he signed his name as PROKOTT and always used that spelling of his surname in this country. We are of the opinion that any person named Prokott in the United States is a direct descendant of Peter Prokott.

Peter and Mary Prokott lived in Section 31 of Swan River Township from the time they came to the United States until they moved into a new home in Section 36, Swan River Township, in 1919. That home was located two and one-fourths miles north of the Bowlus church along what is now Minnesota State Highway 238. Over the years Peter had purchased additional land in Sections 31 and 36, also 40 acres of woodland in Section 35. These lands were subsequently farmed by the three sons, Paul, Mike, and Joe Prokott. Paul's farm home was located about a half mile west of the "home place." When Mike was married in 1919 he remained on the "home place" while Peter and Mary, along with the youngest son, Joe, moved to the farm located about one and three-fourths mile due west of the "home place."

Another person living with them at the time was Amelia, then known as Amelia Prokott, who was born out of wedlock to Frances Prokott in 1912. The story that has been passed down over the years is that Frances was staying with relatives and

working in Superior, Wisconsin when Amelia was born. Peter Prokott was unaware of the pregnancy or birth until sometime later and when he found out that Frances had a child he sent his wife, Mary, to Superior to bring the child to the Prokott home. Mary went to Superior by train on the Soo Line Railroad that ran through the Prokott farm and had been built some four or five years earlier. Mary returned with Amelia and the train stopped at the Prokott farm to allow them to get off the train.

Amelia was raised by her grandparents, living with them from shortly after her birth until 1929 when her youngest uncle, Joe, was married. Amelia was then 17 years of age and went to live in Minneapolis. She then began using the surname of Albrecht, which was her mother's married name. She continued to use the surname of Albrecht after that until her marriage in 1952. Amelia believed that she was the daughter of Peter and Mary Prokott until she was 14 years of age when she was told that Frances Prokott was her mother. She was quite unhappy about the fact that she had not been informed of this earlier.

Amelia went to school at Morrison County School District #8 for one year. District #8 was located along River Road a little over a mile south of the "home place" and all of the Prokott children went to school there. After Peter and Mary moved in 1919 Amelia completed her schooling at District #59 which was located towards Elmdale on what is now Hwy. 238.

There was some family turmoil in connection with the move in 1919 in that Mary did not want to move to the new place. She wanted to remain on the "home place." After some haggling they did move and Peter and Mary Prokott lived at the new location until their deaths. Their youngest son, Joe, lived with them and continued living on the same farm after the death of his parents. The "home place" was thereafter occupied by son, Mike, who married in 1919.

Peter Prokott also built a house in Bowlus, MN, the first house due east of the parish house at the beginning of the next block. That house was reportedly sold for \$1100 in the early 1920s. A news article that appeared in the newspaper, Bowlus Advance, dated June 11, 1920 relates that a small cyclone did considerable damage to the Village of Bowlus including information that Prokott's barn by the church was smashed flat. This undoubtedly

refers to a small barn located near this house in Bowlus. It was common to have a small barn to house horses which were then the main mode of transportation because there were then relatively few automobiles in that area.

Peter Prokott died at his home on Sunday, July 13, 1924. Immediate cause of death was dropsy, but he had been suffering from diabetes for two years. The Little Falls Daily Transcript dated July 14, 1924 had a brief article that states Peter Prokott, 66, died at his home in Swan River at five o'clock yesterday afternoon after an illness of several months. He had been a resident of Swan River for 40 years. Funeral services will be held tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock from the Bowlus church. Mary continued to live on the farm with her youngest son, Joe, and Amelia, then known as Amelia Prokott, until her death on April 2, 1929. The Little Falls *Herald*, dated April 5, 1929, states that Mrs. Mary Prokott, 64, passed away Tuesday at her home in Swan River Township after a brief illness. Her death was due to pernicious anemia. Peter and Mary are both buried at St. Stanislaus Kostka cemetery at Bowlus, MN. They became members of the Bowlus church when it was built in 1909. Prior to that, they had been members of Holy Cross church in North Prairie since coming to the United States.

In checking old newspapers, several articles of interest were located. The Little Falls *Daily Transcript* dated Thursday, November 19, 1903, in the Swan River news, states Peter Prokott was taken to Little Falls hospital Monday. Mr. Prokott is dangerously ill with blood poisoning in his leg. It is thought that after a few weeks treatment he will recover. Dr. J. P. Chance of Royalton is attending him. Mr. Prokott had a boil on his leg, which developed into blood poisoning.

The Little Falls *Daily Transcript* of October 22, 1910 states Mr. and Mrs. Peter Prokott and Mrs. Paul Oldakowski left for West Superior Monday for a week's visit with relatives. (These relatives probably would have been the Joseph Krych family. Mrs. Joseph (Agnes) Krych was a sister to Mrs. Peter Prokott and Mrs. Paul Oldakowski and the Krych family was then living in the Superior Wisconsin area).

The Bowlus Advance dated Friday, May 18, 1917, states: Peter Prokott had a lively ride down Main Street Tuesday morning behind his span of splendid blacks. The nags got the idea they ought

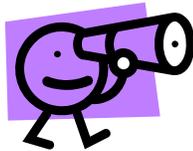
to be frightened at something as he drove off the elevator platform and they went through town like a cavalry charge. Mr. Prokott stuck to the lines and stopped them over near the church. The distance from the elevator to the church in Bowlus is about five blocks.

Peter Prokott did not drive a car and did not own a car until he purchased a 1924 Overland shortly before his death. This vehicle was used by his son, Joe, and years later in 1940 and 1941, was used as a tractor on the farm. It had been parked in the machine shed for five or six years in disuse before being repaired and converted for use in pulling farm machinery in 1940.

Stories passed down over the years include the fact that when the family first came here from Prussia the nearest mill was located near the junction of the Sauk River and the Mississippi River in what is now Sauk Rapids, MN. Peter Prokott reportedly on more than one occasion walked to this mill and purchased a sack of flour, then walked back home carrying the 100 pound sack of flour. The distance of this walk would have been about 20 miles each way.

At another time Peter was working in Brainerd, MN. In those days the work-week was six days with only Sundays off. Peter would walk from Brainerd to his home after work on Saturday to visit his wife and family, getting home late at night, visiting with wife and family for only a few hours before walking back to Brainerd so he could be back to work again on Monday morning. The one-way distance between the Prokott farm and Brainerd, MN was nearly 40 miles.

Peter and Mary had 8 children and 53 grandchildren. Six of the grandchildren died in infancy. Nearly all of the grandchildren who lived to adulthood have spent their lives in Minnesota and descendants are proud to proclaim their Prokott heritage.



Scanning Polish Publications

PGS of New York State Searchers No. 53, Issue 1, Spring 2010

“Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin”
Researched by Denise Oliansky

KANA *Przëjòcél Lëdu Kaszëbsczégò (Friend of the Kashubian People)*

Vol. XIV, No. 1, Spring 2010

“Saint Martin of Tours Church in Borzyszkowy”

By Tadeusz Sadkowski

Compiled by Józef Borzyszkowski and translated by Stanisław Frymak and Blanche Krbeček

“What Folk Literature Says About Towns – Excerpts, Stories about Naivety of Neighbors”

By Bernard Sychta *A light-hearted look at relations between Kashubian Towns*

“Wejherowo”

Excerpted from *Kashubia, Homeland of the Baltic Slavs, A Tourist Handbook* By Jarosław Ellwart, translated by John M. and Liesel Hingst

Germanic Genealogy Society Journal

Vol. 13, No. 1, Spring 2010

“Spotlight on Pomerania” By Lois Edwards

“Four Routes to Pommern” By Donald J. Larsen

PGSA *Rodziny*

Vol. XXXIII, No. 2, Spring 2010

“Applications for Passports in Warsaw *Gubernia*”
By Iwona Dakiniewicz

“A Polish-American Perspective of Mitochondrial DNA Testing” By Robert P. Skiwunski

“Notary Records as a Source for Solving Family Mysteries” By Jay M. Orbik, Ed. D., with translations by Ola Heska and Iwona Dakiniewicz

PGS of California *Bulletin*

Vol. 22, No. 3, April 2010

“Translations from *Słownik Geograficzny*”

By Helen Bienick

Chelm, Książnica and Łęzkowic

“Genomic Journey of Polish Ancestors, Part I”

By Robert S. Sherins, M.D.

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

Wilno Article ...continued from page 1

And so it falls to us to announce what follows, about our colony of Wilno:

Though here as well no rain fell at all, from the time of sowing all the way to the harvests, though on account of that we brought in the harvest somewhat earlier than in other years—despite that we are not able to complain about scarcity, since wheat, oats and peas are yielding quite productively—and corn, grains, potatoes, cabbage, and other vegetables are promising a good harvest—and there is no lack of feedstuffs for the livestock; and so in relation to his need, every farmer is ready for winter in sufficient supply.

Should anyone not knowing the local conditions and the local soils, indulge himself to make the accusation, that this above-written is a lie—this we would be able to reply to him at the same time, that thanks to our Almighty God, we have black soils with deposits of marl in Wilno, and that this soil, despite the droughts, always holds the moisture—this is affirmed universally, and we agree in this contention. And in the second place, considerable nighttime dews prevailed over the whole period of the summer, which are also very welcome for the growth of the crops.

In conclusion, we cannot overlook the pleasant surprise that we had, when the Rev. Fr. GRABOWSKI from Polonia, Wis. visited our parish on July 30 of this year, and that a solemn High Mass with a sermon was celebrated on August 1, until 2:00 in the afternoon.

On August 3 of this year, both pastors, Fr. GRABOWSKI and Fr. JAŹDŹEWSKI, left for St. Paul, for the anniversary of the ordination of Fr. MAJER.

During his several-day visit to Wilno, Fr. GRABOWSKI was completely satisfied. Touring the Polish farms, it gladdened him that he found the harvests and prosperity among the local farmers; and he stated his opinion about our colony as follows: of all the Polish colonies that he had encountered to now, the best is the colony of Wilno. It strongly surprised him that Poles are settling on farms where there are forests, sand, and swamps, frittering away their hard-earned pennies, whereas several hundred families could still be settled at the Wilno colony, and they would be assured of greater material prosperity than they would have elsewhere.

Your countryman
M. A. MAZANY.

* * * * *

From Wiarus, October 14, 1886:

A collection for the church in Wilno.

Wilno, Lincoln Co., Minn., October 5, 1886.

We hasten to share this gratifying piece of information with our countrymen who have purchased land in Wilno and who to date have not arrived here yet, that through the efforts of our venerable pastor Fr. JAŹDŹEWSKI the parish church in Wilno will be suitably provided with a foundation of stone, a presbyterium will be attached on which a steeple will be constructed, and the steeple that has existed up to now on the church has been demolished—at last a sacristy will be attached, and in this manner the church structure will become grand, considerably larger and fortified.

In such a parish, where harmony and Christian love prevails between the parishioners and their spiritual shepherd, all give themselves to work without the smallest murmur or discontent. Thus likewise when the Rev. Fr. JAŹDŹEWSKI made a proposal in the above-mentioned direction at a general meeting held on September 5 of this year, all of the parishioners unanimously consented to it—because if they had not agreed to it, what consequence would have been left, that would have been for the good of the parish?

Immediately after the general assembly was held, on motion brought by a certain citizen, considerable sums were pledged for the purpose noted above. Such came forward, that they offered over 50, 30 and 15 dollars; and the rest, less affluent, all offered 5 dollars; and if this was not pledged, then it undoubtedly will be pledged.

For better control, these moneys will be directed to the hands of our pastor, who subsequently will give them to the parish treasurer; and citizen Jakób GÓRECKI has been appointed as treasurer.

Esteemed citizens! You who have already bought land and most likely will be moving to Wilno in a short time, do not forget about the House of God in Wilno; contribute also in equal degree to such a splendid cause, sending such in a registered letter, P.O. Wilno, care of the Rev. Fr. JAŹDŹEWSKI, because everything will be received willingly, and the surplus will be used for a Polish school in Wilno, which we intend to build in a short time, because there will be a need for it.

Your countryman
M. A. MAZANY.

From Wiarus, March 31, 1887:

A sigh from Wilno.

Our Father, Who art in Heaven!
 You surround the Polish nation
 as neighbors in a circle,
 So they have love for one another,
 In Wilno it lives joyfully.
 Oh my God, I strongly pray,
 Have mercy on the people in Wilno,
 Make harmony among us,
 As there is among the stars
 Let each one on his own land
 Be his own master,
 And give you praise in the Polish language
 –For ever and ever, Amen!
 M. A. MAZANY.

From Wiarus, May 17, 1888:

IN WILNO, Lincoln Co., Minn., where Fr. JAŹDŹEWSKI is the pastor, a 3-day devotion was held with the help of Fr. BYZEWSKI from Winona. – From the money collected from the parishioners Fr. JAŹDŹEWSKI purchased a bell, weighing 1500 pounds, which will be blessed on May 1 with the assistance of Fr. BYZEWSKI. The settlement’s postmaster Mr. M. A. MAZANY writes us, that the spring planting there came off as successfully as possible, sprouting immediately, since sudden cold did not occur in the vicinity of Wilno, to say nothing of the bygone winter, nor was there a single unnatural loss through frost.

From Wiarus, June 21, 1888:

The English-language publication *Chronicle* for Lincoln county writes at length with admiration about the rapid growth of our Polish colony. Among other things it points out: There was nothing here three years ago; it was like a wilderness, and extreme poverty lay in the hands of the newcomers, neither a school nor a church. Today there is a church and a thriving Polish township around it. Morning and evening the melodious voice of the bell rings out over the prairie, calling to mind their Catholic homeland far

away. The church is in good order in everything that is necessary for the glorious inner revelations of our holy faith. Although young, the parish swiftly organized itself so as to cover its costs without any outside help at all. Pastor JAŹDŹEWSKI is tireless in his work for the good of the people. The future of this Catholic colony looks very excellent.

From Wiarus, November 1, 1888:

MR. MAZANY from Wilno, in Minnesota, writes us that he was nominated for county judge without his knowledge; that nevertheless if he were elected he would not take that office because he never has wanted any public office at all, nor does he desire one at the present time. In the same thought he made a public announcement in the English-language newspaper *Lake Benton News*, excusing himself from that election, on the ground that his business and other circumstances do not permit him to do such things.

From Wiarus, March 21, 1889:

THE POLES IN WILNO.

Wilno, Minn., March 9.

Esteemed Editor of *Wiarus!*

The Lord has helped our Poles in Wilno so, that we have been able to add 20 feet in length and 80 feet in width to our church, which had been somewhat too small for us. There are 350 families of Poles here; we bought a bell for the church ourselves, and an organ and a Madonna of the Rosary, and we have a good priest since we are satisfied with him. We have built a new rectory and school; only we must find a good teacher, one who would be able to teach our children in Polish and English. We have one store here, and we think that we will get more, since several Polish citizens have purchased lots in Wilno for themselves.

And so I advise our Esteemed Countrymen, who have the willingness to settle on farms, to come here and to settle here while there is still time; and they will not regret it, since there will be no poverty here. I advise as well, that he who comes here will not need to feel like a stranger, because proprietors from his homeland reside here.

From Wiarus, March 13, 1890:

THE POLISH SETTLEMENT of Wilno, Minn., consists of a store (together with a post office), a blacksmith shop, 3 residence houses, as well as a rectory and church; Polish farmers are dispersed all around. There is a school as well, but it is without a teacher because the parish is too poor to maintain one. It is 10 American miles to the nearest train station, Porter, Minn. There are no forests here; the people burn hay from the marshlands. The mail comes from Porter two times a week and the mail goes out as many times a week.

From Wiarus, April 14, 1892:

WILNO, Lincoln Co., Minn. – Our reverend pastor Fr. JAŹDŹEWSKI constructed three altars for our Polish church with his own hands; also, he made all of the seats that are found in our church, he constructed a pretty organ-loft, and he painted the church very beautifully on the inside. Fr. JAŹDŹEWSKI also contributed \$1,100.00 from his own pocket for the good of the church. – Our church is already too crowded for 300 families; hence, a new church has to be built, and this will be very splendid. – Parishioner Jan GONIA donated a perpetual lamp for the church, at a cost of \$45.00.

From Wiarus, October 27, 1892:

From Wilno, in Minnesota.

Wilno, Lincoln Co., October 20, 1892.

Esteemed Editor!

I must impart joyful news to our esteemed countrymen.

We were witnesses to a solemnity here, which was held on Saturday, October 16 in our parish church of St. John Kanty, which was the ceremony in which every person is a participant only one time in his life, that is the first holy communion for the children.

For a long time before that, the Reverend Father A. ZALEWSKI, our beloved spiritual shepherd, spared no pains; he taught our children their catechism daily, and prepared them for the Lord's Table.

Before Mass last Sunday the children, in the number of 57, were assembled in the school; from

there they were led by the Society of St. Michael and the Rosary Society, and also by our Pastor and the gathered people, to the church in a procession.

Our Reverend Pastor sprinkled the children with holy water; and with the resounding of the old Polish hymn, *Kto się w opiekę*, they were taken to the church. All the girls were in white and all of the children carried candles.

Approaching the church, the organist Mr. Juliusz ZACZEK sang, *Ciebie Boże chwalimy* and then the *Veni Creator*.

During the Mass the Rev. Fr. A. ZALEWSKI delivered a beautiful address to the children, so that they should never forget this day, and that what an opportunity they were getting now. He upbraided the elders, that they keep watch over their children, and that they not injure them with the weapon of taking the Lord's name in vain.

The children came to communion, in groups of four and in perfect order.

The organist played the *Venerana* Mass on the organ. After the Mass there were vespers, and after that but before Benediction our Reverend Pastor placed a scapular on each child.

After the end of the solemnities the children were taken back to the school to the sounding of the psalm *Miserere!*

In the school the children ate breakfast together and after breakfast our Reverend Pastor gave every child a keepsake certificate: "In Remembrance of My First Holy Communion."

That day will remain long in our memory. We salute you, our Reverend Spiritual Shepherd, for your labors carried out for the salvation of our children.

Long live our noble pastor, Father A. ZALEWSKI!

One who was there.

From Wiarus, February 2, 1893:

FROM WILNO

(in Minnesota).

Wilno, Lincoln Co., Minn., January 20, 1893.

Esteemed Editor!

From all of the Polish settlements in the United States, undoubtedly the least is written from Wilno. And, sure enough, there is not much new going on here.

We do not have glorious Polish national celebrations or the Columbian Exposition here; we do not make marvels like they have in Manitowoc and in Canton, Minn.; we do not produce saints like they do in Detroit; we do not revel in either the [Polish National] Alliance or the [Polish Roman Catholic] Union; we do not have any issues over the PNA garbage at all, or school-related issues like, for example, in Faribault; on the Fourth of July nobody shoots himself in the nose or the finger; though the hail last year devastated all the harvest, nobody blew his brains out from distress or from hunger. We do not have infamous tyrannical organist-directors *a la* the one from Dakota, who in Michigan exhausted up to eleven organists in two years; we are not even able to take pride in great people, since the time Mr. NICKI left his farm here and went to edit *Zgoda*. There are no famous GRAJGELS, DRAJMANs, MORGENSTERNs, MAŁLESes, and so forth here—but nonetheless one has to write about something.

Our Polish parish of St. John Kanty is one of the small number of those parishes in the United States that have no debt. At the New Year, after reconciling income and expenses, it turned out that we have 625 dollars in the treasury. And all of this thanks to the good management of the Rev. Fr. H. JAŻDŻEWSKI, who left us last year to assume the newly-founded Polish parish of St. Casimir in East St. Paul, Minn.

Our current pastor, the Reverend Father Aleksander ZALEWSKI, is going forward in the steps of his predecessor as well. Through the efforts of the Reverend Fr. ZALEWSKI we purchased an attractive baptismal font, and also a pulpit that arrived recently. A new rectory will be built in the spring—the old one will be given over to the teacher for a residence.

The closest railroad station is called Porter, and it is situated on the Chicago & North Western Railroad. It is nine miles from Porter to Wilno. On Saturday, December 28, 1892, all of the local citizens gathered at the Polish school in Wilno for a meeting, at which was signed a petition to the Chicago & North Western Railroad company in Chicago, asking that it build a railroad line to Wilno from some other station. For the time being, nearly one hundred signatures were collected, and the citizens committed themselves to donate money and land, if the station were to be in Wilno.

Messrs. GÓRECKI and POLITOWSKI presided over this meeting.

An interim board was elected and everyone gave 10 cents for the initial cost of the composition of the petition, postage, etc. If the previously-mentioned Company gives a negative response, then a request will be sent to the Great Northern Company in St. Paul, that it construct a line from Marshall to Wilno, 27 miles.

We happen to have patriotic observances here also. Just last Wednesday, January 11, Mr. & Mrs. TYKWIŃSKI observed their silver wedding anniversary. And since this event was the first of its type in Wilno, it was observed with unusual pomp.

Already on last Sunday the Rev. Fr. ZALEWSKI invited the Society of St. Michael and the Rosary Society of St. Mary, to which Mr. & Mrs TYKWIŃSKI belong.

At 10:00 in the morning, both spouses were escorted in a procession from the school to the church, with candles and banners and with the singing of the hymn *Boże w dobroci*. During the procession deafening shots from rifles and pistols thundered, as though they were the guns firing at the battle of Stoczek.

When the procession arrived at the church, the *Veni Creator* and a litany to All Saints in Latin were sung, after which our reverend pastor bound the two spouses together forever, for the second time.

The members of the Society of St. Michael assisted Mr. TYKWIŃSKI, and the Rosary Sisters assisted Mrs. TYKWIŃSKI.

Our Reverend Pastor also gave a beautiful sermon, suitable to the solemnities.

A Latin Mass was sung in parts; but I am not able to say how many parts it was in, because I forgot to count.

During the Mass both of the spouses came to the Lord's Table. After Mass *Te Deum Laudamus* was sung, and both spouses were escorted from the church to the school in the same order as before the rites.

There are around 200 Polish families here, who for the most part came from Chicago, where they were weary of laboring for the big *bosses*. All have large farms.

There are still inexpensive farms for sale here.

The winter this year is unusually gentle; the cold stung suddenly only on Christmas and on January 2.

Finishing this letter, I commend it to the kind consideration of my countrymen.

O.

From Wiarus, February 23, 1893:

From Wilno.

(IN MINNESOTA).

Esteemed Editor!

Emboldened by your good favor in deigning to publish my letter in *Wiarus*, I proceed for the second time with a request for the publication of the following correspondence.

On Friday, January 25, a meeting was held in the Polish school in Wilno on the matter of the construction of a railway line to Wilno. A letter from the Chicago and North Western Railroad Company was read, in which it was written, that this year it is not possible to consider the building of a rail line to Wilno; the reason is that last year it had many expenses, because it had to lay replacement track in many places, because of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Mr. Józef BIGHAM from Lake Benton, our county attorney, was introduced as our first speaker. This gentleman told us, that we cannot expect anything from the Chicago & North Western Railroad, since it has us in the palm of its hand. It rings around us from the north and the south like an enormous snake, it throttles us like its own prey, and it squeezes every possible life-blood from us.

We therefore must apply to another Company, in order to start a competition. When another company builds a rail line to Wilno, we will get inexpensive coal from Duluth or from other places, and we will get more for our wheat as well. He told us further, that he has an acquaintance at the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad Company in Chicago, who is an officer with that Railroad, and this one has written that the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Company would be inclined to construct a rail line from Ortonville to Canby, Wilno, Tyler, Washington, and so forth, if it were to see enough profit in this. But how to set about doing this? Petitions and delegations give no help here. If we were to send two delegates to Chicago and if those two delegates went to the President of the railroad and said, "Wilno wants to have a rail line!"—to this he would respond, "*Who is Wilno?*"

At the same time all of the railroads are in cahoots, and one of them cannot tread on the second one's territory; thus not a single one of these large companies can infringe on the business of a second. Also, not a single company will consent to a short line. So one must resort to a strategy for this. It will be necessary to appoint delegates, who would come from all of the Townships on the whole line from Ortonville to Washington, and seek out all the people who are interested in that rail line, and see that meetings similar to those here in Wilno are conducted in all locations. After that the farmers on the whole line should organize in a local railroad company; incorporate it; donate land for the rail line; give bonds; survey where the line is supposed to go; procure a charter; reckon how much the railroad will cost—and only when all this is already prepared, then, without fail, the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Company will buy that railroad from us and will build it.

Then a second company will not be able to go up against the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, because it will have bought the only route here, which will have been already established though only on paper.

This advice suited us in all respects and Mr. BIGHAM's speech was accepted with applause. Immediately, a committee was selected to go among the other settlements and to agitate on the matter of a railroad. Mr. BIGHAM and Mr. Franciszek GROCHOWSKI were elected to this committee first of all; and the third is to be someone from Canby whom Mr. BIGHAM will select himself. For the travel expenses for this committee, 23 dollars was gathered on the spot.

(To be concluded later.)

From Wiarus, March 2, 1893:

From Wilno.

IN MINNESOTA.

(The conclusion.)

Yesterday—that is, on Sunday, February 5—the third meeting on the railroad matter was held. Mr. BIGHAM from Lake Benton came for the meeting and gave us a report on his work. He told us that as a result of the cold, which came here to us in February as well, he had not been able to travel to those towns, but that he had sent letters far and

wide. He had received a reply to his letters, that there is already a local railroad in Sioux Falls, organized and even incorporated, which shortly in the spring will start work and is committed to surveying a route. He said further that he had heard that this railroad is supposed to go across Lincoln County, but he does not know whether it is to be through Wilno, or how far from Wilno. Thus, nothing remains for us but to associate with this company and to send delegates to it, so that it will not leave Wilno behind but rather will build the railroad through Wilno.

Mr. BIGHAM and Mr. GÓRECKI were chosen as delegates. They are to proceed without delay to that local company, and to find out what they would charge us if that railroad were to be built through Wilno.

The Most Reverend Archbishop IRELAND has promised to come here in the spring for Confirmation, and we are hoping that our former pastor the Rev. H. JAŹDŹEWSKI will visit us as well.

Our parish is growing visibly, and better and better order is being introduced here. At a parish meeting on Sunday, January 29, we established a sexton at our church, like they have in other Polish parishes. Mr. S. KUFEL became the sexton.

Our parish is also growing in number of families.

During the current winter, the following young people were united in marriage in our church and were blessed by our beloved pastor, the Reverend Father A. ZALEWSKI:

Mr. PAROLSKI with Miss KORCAL,
Mr. Józef SZREDER with Miss Katarzyna
NADOLSKA,

Mr. Mikołaj KABOCIŃSKI with Miss Helena
WIZA.

Concluding my letter, I call on all my countrymen, and especially those residing here in Minnesota, to all subscribe to *Wiarus* for themselves and I encourage others to do so, because *Wiarus* is a newspaper of the people, and everywhere and always stands on the side of those who have been done injustice, defending them against the unfairness of this world. – In the second place, *Wiarus* is the only Polish newspaper in Minnesota, it lives here among us, it knows our needs the best, and therefore it is able to defend us the most effectively. *Wiarus* does not belong to any corporation or clique, and thus it takes an impartial

view on everything, while the other newspapers often go astray, trying in everything to interpret for the benefit of the corporation or clique for which they are flunkies, and on which they depend for their existence.

And thus, long live our *Wiarus* in Minnesota!

O.

From Wiarus, January 18, 1894:

A farm for sale in Wilno.

There is a large farm for sale in Wilno, Minn. – 200 acres, of which half is under the plow. The farm buildings are in good order—a house, a stable, a granary and a well. There are trees around the buildings; it is 5 miles from the town, 6 miles from the Catholic church.

Inquire at the address: Antoni MASEREK,
Wilno, Minn.

From Katolik, August 16, 1894:

The Poles in Wilno.

Wilno, Minn., August 8.

Esteemed Editor!

It has been eight months already, since a letter from our prairies here was published in *Katolik*.

Since that time, many a thing worthy of notice has happened here. And so this year in the spring our Society of St. Michael was incorporated, in accordance with the laws of this state.

In March we had elections for the offices for Royal Township. All of the officials are Poles, except for three. Jan MAZUREK, Stanisław JASIŃSKI and Anastazy GOLATA, are supervisors; Juliusz ZACZEK is the clerk and justice of the peace; Mikołaj KLUCZNY is treasurer and assessor; Jan MACA is the constable; Michał PUKROP, Franciszek DOMEK and Franciszek CICHĄŃSKI are caretakers of the public roads.

In May we had the annual parish meeting and new parish officers were elected, to-wit: Piotr BEDNAREK, treasurer; Michał TYKWIŃSKI, secretary; Michał FELCYN, Jan HOFFMAN and Marcin WRZESZCZ, councilors.

Last summer we renewed the contract with our teacher and organist for a second two-year period, that is to November 1, 1896. It would be nice, if all Polish parishes were to do the same, and they would be spared great troubles and difficulties.

On July 1, Governor Nelson appointed our teacher and organist, Mr. Juliusz ZACZEK, a notary public for 7 years. On Sunday more than fifty children were received by our pastor, the Rev. Fr. A. ZALEWSKI, for First Holy Communion. On Saturday, July 25, our Most Rev. Archbishop IRELAND visited us from St. Paul, and confirmed 320 people. Father Franciszek JAGER from Marshall helped our Reverend pastor in the confessional.

The local Poles were hoping to usher the Archbishop into Wilno with a parade on horseback, but the Archbishop himself did not want a parade at all; and when he arrived in the evening on July 24, in the company of the priest from Ghent, he did not want a parade on the second day either.

After confirmation he preached a beautiful sermon. Among other things, he said that the Poles are renowned because they adhere to their holy faith and there is no nation more God-fearing than the Poles. That is why he himself wishes that all of Lincoln County had been settled by Polish Catholics alone. He recalled the poverty and unemployment that reign in the cities, and he added that, even though there are poor harvests on the farm sometimes, there is always food there, and one cannot grow wheat on the streets in the cities. So for that reason he urged all of the Poles in Wilno to write to their relatives and friends who are located in the big cities, and he bade them to announce in all of the Polish newspapers in America, that Poles should come here to Lincoln County for farms and should buy out the heretics, so that the whole of Lincoln County would be Polish. And if Lincoln County were too small, he told them to go beyond it. After that he warned against drunkenness and saloons, and he exhorted the Poles to harmony and unity, because there are disturbances in the Polish parishes, and they have become too frequent in recent times. He expressed his hope that nothing similar would appear in the Archdiocese of St. Paul. In conclusion, he cautioned the young people to beware of the curse of heresy. Next, he gave his blessing to all.

Other than that, everything here is the same old thing. Last spring an epidemic, known to the Polish organists and teachers in America by the name of *Klosterfieber*, began to sweep; but it has already suffered to end, thanks be to God.

Jan GONIA wants to build a little church on his farm; but the Archbishop has not permitted it, because it is too close to Wilno. But if this were further from Wilno, and there were a sufficient number of Poles, this would be allowed.

The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth were here from Chicago recently, and they wanted to found a large convent on a lake some two miles from Wilno. Mrs. F. DROZDOWSKA from Chicago had made a gift to them of ten acres of land. Archbishop IRELAND did not want to grant permission to build a convent anywhere but in Wilno; whereas they did not want that, so nothing came of it.

The harvests are good enough this year around Wilno; the threshing is already beginning.

Franciszek FELCYN, the seventeen-year-old son of Michał FELCYN, fired shots at two American boys named LANE, and slightly injured one of them and a horse as well, after which he fled. Since he is not of the age of majority, his father, Michał FELCYN thus was arrested, and appeared before the District Court. This case will be proceeding before the jury in July, next year.

POLUS.

* * * * *

From Katolik, October 11, 1894:

WILNO, Minn. – Mr. Józef OKONIEWSKI from Chicago has purchased a farm here from NICKI and now resides among us.

* * * * *

From Katolik, December 20, 1894:

WILNO, Minn. – We have a smith here, a German, who is earning 10 to 12 dollars per day in the summer. And since he has already earned so much for himself, he wants to go to Dakota, to a larger town and among his countrymen, and he wants to sell his smithy. This is a good opportunity for a Pole, since there is dependable work here. It is 10 miles to the closest town, hence a smith has so much work that he cannot handle it all. There are

175 Polish families here, the rest are exclusively Norwegians. – Whoever wants to avail himself of this opportunity should come as fast as he can.

* * * * *

Our selection this time spans less than a decade, but it evidences significant change in the Polish community in Wilno.

Like those presented in installment #18, the earlier reports from Marcin MAZANY are emblematic of the boosterism that I've found in other Polish settlements in rural Minnesota. It shows the recurrent themes: the great fertility of the local soil, the growing solidity of the local ethnic community, and (for the urban residents in *Wiarus*'s readership) the superiority of a return to European-style rural life over the dirty, nasty, oppressive conditions in urban, industrial America. There's also something we've seen before, an exhortation to those who have already purchased local land but not yet relocated, to act fairly and squarely by financially supporting the development of the new Polish parish right now, from afar. (The insinuation is clearly that those who do not will get an unfair benefit when they arrive later, finding a completed church ready for their attendance that was funded by the donations of those who arrived and labored earlier. MAZANY does not expressly scorn the possibility of speculation by those without serious intentions to settle in Wilno, but that thought was probably under the surface too.) We also have a first mention of Father GRABOWSKI from Polonia, Wisconsin, who a year later¹ was reported to have purchased significant acreage near Wilno and to be supporting a large farming operation as a non-resident proprietor.²

MAZANY seems to have accrued large personal goodwill in the local community, so much so that he, a non-lawyer, was nominated for that *judicial* office noted in our November 1, 1888 report.³

¹In *Wiarus*, Sept. 29, 1887, presented in translation in installment #18.

²I still have not been able to verify the veracity of the 1887 report. The phenomenon described there still seems anomalous to me.

³MAZANY received the nomination at the county convention of the Democratic Party. Lake Benton

However, he never had to stand on his protestation in *Wiarus*, i.e. "if elected, I will not serve," because the candidate of the opposing party apparently prevailed in the polls.⁴

By early 1890, it seems, MAZANY decided to seek new opportunities elsewhere: in mid-April he was trying to sell his store; he apparently left Wilno around July 1; and after a brief attempt at saloon proprietorship in Chicago he returned to his childhood environs in Dunkirk, New York.⁵

It's probably not coincidental that MAZANY's departure was followed by a two-year dearth of Wilno correspondence in *Wiarus*. However, by 1892-1893 one or more locals stepped up, with a greater bombast and vividness more resembling *Wiarus* reportage from other locales.⁶ From that

News, Wed., Oct. 10, 1888, p. 1. He was described in this report as "a leading Polander and a No. 1 citizen." There is no indication that he was present at the convention.

⁴Lake Benton *News*, Wed., Nov. 7, 1888, p. 1 (headlined "A CLEAN SWEEP! Everything Goes Republican—National, State and County," though without mentioning the probate judgeship in Lincoln County).

⁵*Wiarus*, Apr. 17, 1890 (advertising his store for sale, with inquiries to be mailed to him at Wilno); June 12, 1890 (resigns Wilno postmastership and asks his store debtors to settle with him by July 1); Aug. 7, 1890 (opens saloon in Chicago); and October 30, 1890 (has moved to Dunkirk, New York, and asks his Wilno debtors to send payment there). *Erratum*: My notation in installment #18 that MAZANY moved on to South Dakota was my error, the product of a confused memory mistaking him for another restless Polish-American entrepreneur from elsewhere in Minnesota. Consider that a caution for all genealogists and historians: fully check your sources before you publish!

⁶Strong stylistic and thematic color was very much the habit of *Wiarus* editor Hieronim DERDOWSKI himself. John Radziłowski, *Poles in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005), p. 48. He obviously encouraged it in his correspondents.

point to the end of this installment, our material shows how the Wilno Poles energetically strengthened their presence in Lincoln County, both internally and externally.

As we see, they took their sacramental occasions very seriously, under the two priests locally resident during this period, Father Henryk JAŹDŹEWSKI (serving at Wilno 1885-1892) and Father A. ZALEWSKI (serving there 1892-1896).⁷ Prof. John Radziłowski has attributed much cultural significance to the description of the events during the TYKWIŃSKI silver wedding anniversary, which were reported in the local English-language press in much the same way as in *Wiarus*.⁸

A second significant aspect of community growth shown here was the Wilno Poles' organized advocacy for the extension of a railroad line through their village. The prospect for this went back to the founding of the settlement on land previously under the ownership of the Winona and St. Peter Railroad, a subsidiary of the Chicago and North Western.⁹ In the late 19th century, nearby access to a railroad

⁷See submission under "Wilno" in response to 1949 *Questionnaire on Parish History* for Archdiocese of St. Paul, typescript addition pp. (A) and (E) [on microfilm M260, roll 23, Minnesota History Center, St. Paul].

⁸See *Poles in Minnesota*, pp. 31-32, and John Radziłowski, "Out on the Wind: Life in Minnesota's Polish Farming Communities," *Minnesota History*, vol. 58, no. 1 (Spring, 2002), p. 24. In a presentation he made to the PGS-MN about a decade ago, before the publication of either of these writings, John emphasized that the Wilno Poles themselves had obviously created the formalities of the TYKWIŃSKI celebration, as people in the Polish lands of Europe would not have engaged in the same activities on a like occasion. The local reportage appeared in the *Lake Benton News*, Wed. Feb. 1, 1893, p. 1. It was noted there that this had been the first silver wedding anniversary observed at Wilno, with several more expected in the coming year.

⁹John Radziłowski, *Out on the Wind: Poles and Danes in Lincoln County, Minnesota, 1880-1905* (Marshall, Minn.: Crossings Press, 1992), p. 59.

made all the difference for the growth of prosperity in rural areas, with easy transport of local agricultural production and regular receipt of supplies, equipment, and consumer goods for local retail trade. Our 1893 reports show the interesting alliance between the Wilno Poles and Joseph BIGHAM, the newly-elected, young County Attorney, to push for a line through central Lincoln County. There undoubtedly was advantage for both sides in the effort—BIGHAM, a native of Lake Benton who was just setting up a law practice there, had apparently won office in an upset, and was cannily courting a growing ethnic community within his constituency.¹⁰

In 1893 there was optimism about the prospects of getting the line, though there was competition from a Lake Benton-based group that did not favor it.¹¹ By the end of the year, however, the Chicago and North Western Railroad was communicating to Wilno that "it was of no use just at the present hard times, that Cleveland's administration was responsible for it..."¹² As it turned out, the alternate line of the Chicago and North Western built to cross

¹⁰See *Lake Benton News*, Wed., Jan. 4, 1893, as to BIGHAM's election victory. This item suggests that he had run as an independent, against Republican and Democratic candidates.

¹¹Expressions to this effect appeared in the "Wilno News" column and other places in the *Lake Benton News*, Wednesday issues of Mar. 1, 1893, p. 1 (noting that the "outlook for the railroad at Wilno [was] very encouraging," and quoting BIGHAM that "surveying [would] be commenced as soon as the snow is gone"); Mar. 29, 1893, p. 1 (covering another "railroad meeting" held at Wilno on March 11); May 31, 1893, p. 1 (noting the efforts BIGHAM was making on the issue and noting his opinion, "giv[en] out on the cool, that a north and south road [would] be built through the county within the next twelve months"); and April 5, 1893, p. 1.

¹²*Lake Benton News*, Wed., Dec. 13, 1893, p. 1 (quoting communication from Joseph Gillmeister of the Chicago and North Western—a name we have seen several times in *Wiarus*, in ads for railroad lands in various parts of southern Minnesota).

Lincoln County was not actually laid out until 1899, or constructed until 1900; and it cut up through the county south of Wilno, with the outcome that the town of Ivanhoe was platted and settled as its principal local stop.¹³ However, the Polish settlement in Wilno prospered despite the failure to get direct rail access, and for decades afterward there was a very strong identification between the Polish-American populations in the contiguous area between Wilno and Ivanhoe.¹⁴

One last item that merits comment is the tone of the opening of the February 2, 1893 letter, which echoes *Wiarus* correspondence from other isolated Polonian settlements in Minnesota. There's an obvious tension between resentment and self-deprecation here, on the part of someone from a small place who did not believe that his (or her) home had received enough attention in the Polish-language press that he (or she) followed closely. Without deeper research into contemporaneous reportage from the other Polish localities mentioned, one cannot know the precise nature of the much-noted events compared with the quietude at Wilno. I did find two, however. The reference to a "miracle" at Canton is to the Minnesota town, in

¹³See entries for line from Tyler, Lincoln County to South Dakota border, in Richard S. Prosser, *Rails to the North Star: A Minnesota Railroad Atlas* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, reprint ed. 2007), pp. 120-121 (Chicago and North Western Railway Company) and 149 (Minnesota and South Dakota Railway Company, incorporated 1899 and acquired by the Chicago and North Western in 1900).

¹⁴John Radziłowski tells the story of the new line in far greater detail, and analyzes toward a very credible explanation for the outcome, in *Out on the Wind*, pp. 56-62. In 1908 Father Waclaw Kruszcza mistakenly reported, "The railroad passes through Wilno, which is very convenient for the Polish farmers." *A History of the Poles in America to 1908, Part IV: Poles in the Central and Western States* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), p. 119.

Fillmore County; from 1892-on, there were persisting reports of an apparition of the Virgin Mary in a window at the Catholic Church there."¹⁵ And the reference to "Mr. NICKI" is to Wilno settler Stanisław NICKI, who did indeed edit *Zgoda*, the newspaper of the Polish National Alliance, from Chicago for four years before he was replaced in mid-1893 and returned to Wilno.¹⁶

The years covered by this installment still do not take us to the most striking physical achievement of the Polonian community at Wilno, the construction of the large brick structure of St. John Cantius Church in the very late 1890s. That, I am sure, is covered in further reportage in the regional Polish-language press. I have yet to fully collect that material, but it will be assembled, translated, and presented in a future installment of this series.

* * * * *



St. John Cantius Church (1997) This picture was taken after the steeples were removed because they were deemed a hazard.

Picture courtesy of Josi Meyer

¹⁵William L. Crozier, *Gathering a People: A History of the Diocese of Winona* (Winona, Minn.: The Diocese of Winona, 1989), pp. 205-218.

¹⁶Lake Benton News, Wed., Sept. 27, 1893, p. 1.

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS:

Every last one of these *Wiarus* items was located by John Radziłowski, in his pioneering research into that publication and the early history of Wilno. As ever, I am grateful to John for his work. This time I received able collaboration on the difficult aspects of the translation from Izabela Szałkowska Holmes, a student of mine at the 1995 UNESCO-sponsored English-language camp at Toruń, Republic of Poland.

To probe further: A more contemporary history of Wilno is documented in the Saint John Cantius Church Centennial History (available at the MGS Library, Call Number MN L-5 09). The PGS-MN Summer, 1996 newsletter featured the church and is also available in the library in the Polish section. It includes the 1884 and 1885 parishioner lists. Other research resources for Wilno are available at the Immigration History Resource Center located in the Anderson Library on the West Bank of the University of Minnesota. Early records are available on microfilm. Issues of The Ivanhoe Times beginning in 1900 carry news items from the Wilno area. A complete set of newspapers is available at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. Finally the Southwest Minnesota History Center at Southwest State University in Marshall contains land records and many lesser-known records from the area.

-JWK

**A Plea for Articles**

The PGS-MN Newsletter endeavors to publish 128 pages of original material each year for its members. Therefore, if you have something of interest, please send it to us. It can be on Polish genealogy, travel, history or culture. Queries are also encouraged as we can try to answer them with our panel of experts. We will publish old family pictures as space permits.

**Summer Reading**

In the May 31 issue of *Gen Dobry!* William Hoffman has included a number of book recommendations along with a brief commentary from one of his readers (Ed Rozyłowicz).

The Peasant Prince: Thaddeus Kosciuszko and the Age of Revolution
By Alex Storożynski, Published in 2009

Images of America – The Anthracite Coal Region’s Slavic Community
By Brian Ardan, Published in 2009

The First Polish Americans – Silesian Settlements In Texas
By T. Lindsay Baker, Published in 1979
(This book is in the MGS library, Call No. US TX 030)

German Boy – A Child of War
By Wolfgang W.E. Samuel, Published in 2001

You can review the comments at:
<<http://www.polishroots.org/GenDobry/tabid/60/Default.aspx>>. Click on May issue.

The 70th anniversary of the invasions of Poland occurred in 2009 and thus there were a number of newly-published books which detail the history during the war years. Two books are listed below.

No Greater Ally: The Untold Story of Poland’s Forces in World War II
By Kenneth Koskudan

Poland Betrayed: The Nazi-Soviet Invasions of 1939
By David Williamson

Reviews were generally positive at <www.amazon.com> but there were a few detractors so the reader should check them out on the Amazon web site.

Geographic Places in Minnesota with Polish Names

By John W. Kowles
<johnkow@q.com>

A large percentage of Minnesota cities and townships were named after early settlers or quite often the first postmaster. Following that are places related to topographic features or Native American names. There are a few that are named after cities in Europe. Below is the Polish-name list of villages and townships I identified with a Polish connection. Perhaps our readers can fill in some history.

Bujanski was a village located in Granite Ledge Township in Benton County. It was named after an early settler but the village no longer exists.

Opole is an existing community located in northern Stearns County. The first settlers arrived in 1870 making it one of the oldest Polish settlements in Minnesota. It was named after the city in Poland of the same name which is considered the historic capital of Upper Silesia. In the 1800s the population of Opole, Poland was largely German-speaking but today is primarily Polish-speaking.

Polonia is a township located in Roseau County which was organized in 1899. Actually, *Polonia* is a Latin (and other Romance languages) word for people of Polish origin living abroad. It got its original association from the large number of Poles (most of any European country) which left Poland for a multiplicity of reasons in the last two centuries.

Posen is a township in Yellow Medicine County which was first settled in 1868. While the name was derived from the Posen Province, the early settlers were mostly German so the only Polish connection is that the area now largely lies in the Wielkopolska region of Poland.

Pularski was a settlement (circa 1935) in Benton County. It was named after an early settler but no longer exists.

Pulaski is a township in Morrison County which was organized in 1899. It was named after Casimir Pulaski, Revolutionary War general and one of only seven people to be awarded an Honorary Citizen of the U.S.

Pulaski Beach was a settlement started in 1901 on Lake Pulaski in Wright County. It no longer exists and was probably incorporated into the city of Buffalo.

Sobieski is an existing community incorporated in 1915. The settlement is much older as it was originally called Ledoux. It is named after Jan Sobieski, King of Poland and hero of the Battle of Vienna in 1683.

Warsaw is both a township and village within the Warsaw Township in Rice County. The county was first settled and organized in the 1850s. While it was certainly named after Warsaw, Poland the early settlers came from a town by the same name in New York and that is how it was named. Interestingly, 12 states also have geographic places with the name Warsaw.

Warsaw is also a township in Goodhue County, also settled and organized in the 1850s. It was originally called Klock Township.

Wilno is an unincorporated village in Lincoln County which was first settled in 1883. It is the English equivalent for Vilnius which was originally located in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and controlled by Poland until after World War II. It is perplexing how the name came about because early Wilno settlers mainly came from the western areas of Poland. The post office was moved two miles south in 1901 to be on the railroad siding and the new settlement was initially referred to as New Wilno. Shortly after the name was changed to Ivanhoe while the Wilno community and church remained.

Reference: Upham, Warren, *Minnesota Place Names*, Minnesota Historical Society Press, Third Edition, 2001

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.

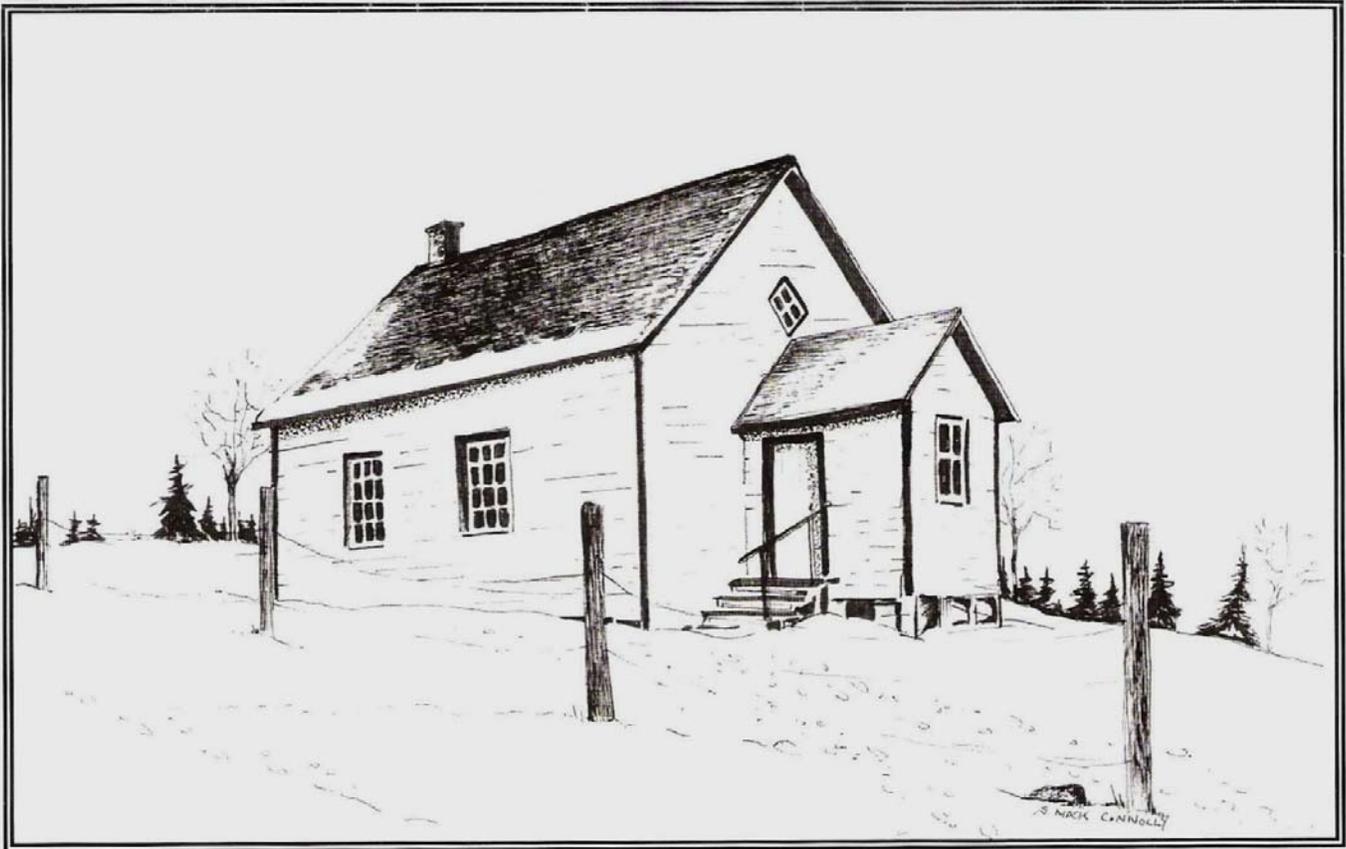
- 1) A printed index of **BAPTISM** records for seven (7) Minnesota Polish churches is available at the MGS Library.
- 2) A printed index of **MARRIAGE** records for ten (10) Minnesota Polish churches is available at the MGS Library.

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



Old One-Room Schoolhouse

near Wilno, Ontario in Renfrew County

Drawing by Shirley Mask Connolly

The children in Canada's First Polish Settlement, including myself and my father and grandparents, received their early [and usually only] education in rural schoolhouses such as this— scattered throughout the countryside, on the backroads, built on isolated one acre lots donated from a corner of someone's farm property. All primary grades were taught in a single classroom. The school [S.S. #14] in the drawing is located on the Simpson Pit Road. In the early days, there was little time for formal education with so much work to be done on the farm and children needed to help out. In winter months, the walk to school was often impossible over unplowed roads. The teachers were English-speaking young women, usually from the Irish families from Killaloe or Brudenell. Many children, such as my father, did not know even one word of English on the first day of school. In many cases, students were forbidden to speak anything but English once they entered the schoolyard, at the risk of getting the strap.

The school in the drawing was built in 1902 and intended as a separate school, but never officially recognized as such. Faith was central to the lives of the Polish Kashub families and religious education a priority— there was a Catholic school in Wilno, established in 1893, and in summer, the local farm children walked from many miles away to catechism classes. The last rural one-room schoolhouses were closed in the mid 1960s and farm children bused to nearby towns.

Note: PGS-MN member Shirley Mask Connolly provided this picture and commentary to us. Wilno (a hamlet near Ottawa, Ontario) is the oldest Polish settlement in Canada and is also known as Canada's Kashub Heartland. I know some of our rural members attended a school like this. -JWK

Change Service Requested

siblings and extend the KIEDROWSKI, KEDROWSKI or KEDROSKE and the MASCHKE, MAZKE or MAZK lines further back in Poland.”

NEW MEMBERS – We welcome the following:

Mary T. Christl, 2927 Clawson Ave., Royal Oak MI 48073 is a new member.

Stephanie Geisler, 108 Goldfinch Ln., Clearwater MN 55320 <stephanieg@mywdo.com> is researching GARBACZ in Gorlice? in Poland and in N.E. Mpls.

Veronica Kavaloski, 276 East Bernard, West St. Paul MN 55118 is a new member.

Judy Zdon Niederkruger, 113 Front St. N.W., St. Michael MN 55376 <judmarie@gmail.com> is researching RÓG, ZDUN/ZDON in Pcim (Kraków) in Poland and in Mpls. MN; DREWNIAK, KIELB, RZESZUTEK in Poland and in Mpls.; CZAPINSKA, CIAPIEJSKA in Wola Sokolowska, Sokolow (Rzeszów) and in New York to Mpls. MN; HANUSIAK in Lewtonia and in Mpls.

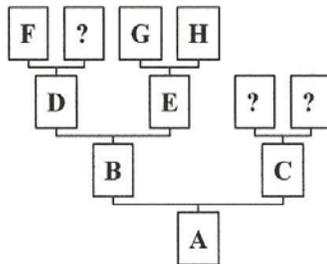
Rita Peterson, 5752 W. 154th St., Prior Lake MN 55372 <whosit@integra.net> is researching PLASCZ in Poland and Wisconsin and KUFEL in Poland and Minnesota.

Nancy Sansone, 2447 Skyline Drive, Bloomington MN 55425 <nancysansone@msn.com> is researching PEPERA in Austria/Poland and in St. Paul.

James Schelonka, 16 Pine Tree Court, Sartell MN 56377 <jjskms96@gmail.com> is researching SCHELONKA in Poland/Germany.

Judie Steenberg, 1854 Barclay St. N., Maplewood MN 55109 <jjsteenberga@msn.com> is researching Jon WIERZBA in “Austria” and in Mpls MN and Weyerhaeuser WI; Sophie KOZA in Jordanów/Topozysko (Toporzysko) and in Mpls. and Weyerhaeuser; Anton JASICKI in Jarocin in Poland and in Weyerhaeuser; Clara ZENSKI in Milwaukee WI (born there in 1883) and in Weyerhaeuser WI.

Missing Branches



Send queries and branch updates to: **Paul Kulas**, Associate Editor, *PGS-MN Newsletter*, 12008 West River Road, Champlin MN 55316-2145 (e-mail: <kkulas@ties2.net>) or with new or renewal forms.

QUERIES –

George Koleas, W156 N10640 Cobbler Lane, Germantown WI 53022 <GeorgeJK676@wi.rr.com> writes: “I am seeking information on Andrew KIEDROWSKI, KEDROWSKI, KEDROSKE born 23 October 1823 in Konitop, Lipusz, Kościerzyna. He was the son of Martin KIEDROWSKI and Victoria MASCHKE, MAZKE or MAZK. His siblings include: Anna, Catherina, Jacob, Joseph, Mathias, Peter, Paul and Valentin. Andrew was in Winona, Minnesota before he came to Portage County, Wisconsin. Some of his siblings may have also followed him. Andrew died 30 December 1895 in Pike Lake (Bevent), Marathon County WI. I would like to locate information on Andrew KIEDROWSKI, KEDROWSKI, KEDROSKE

Missing Branches ...continued on page 5