



# Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 7

AUTUMN 1999

NUMBER 3

## Günter Grass--Nobel Laureate German Conscience or Polish Patriot?

by Paul Kulas

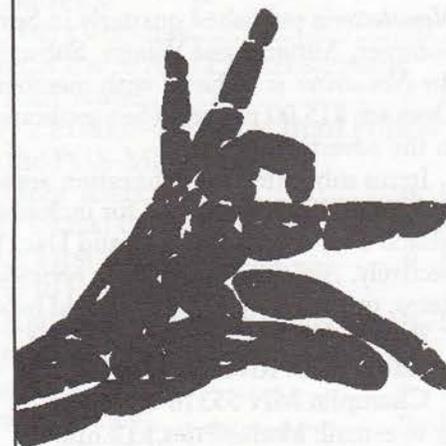
Günter Grass, the German novelist, poet, and artist, was named winner of the 1999 Nobel Prize for Literature in September. Grass is considered the most prominent post-war German writer to confront his countrymen about their Nazi past. He was born in the Free City of Danzig (now Gdańsk, Poland) in 1927 and he lived there until he began military service in 1944. He served in a tank corps, was wounded and hospitalized, and later interned in an American POW camp. His widely acclaimed "Danzig Trilogy"—*Die Blechtommell* (1959, English translation: *The Tin Drum*, 1962); *Katz und Maus* (1961, *Cat and Mouse*, 1963); *Hundejahre* (1963, *The Dog Years*, 1965)—are regarded as his most important works.

Grass writes with Rabelaisian humor and a fascination for the bizarre and grotesque. He is at times, beautifully poetic and at others, starkly graphic. His most famous work, *Die Blechtommell [The Tin Drum]*, was also made into a popular movie. The novel is a vivid description of the horror of the Nazi years. Set primarily in Danzig/Gdańsk, it covers the years 1899 to 1954 though it concentrates primarily on the years 1933 to 1945. Events are seen through the eyes of Oskar Matzerath (or is he Oskar Bronski?), a dwarf who refuses to grow and mature and to take part in the absurdities of war. Though Grass writes in German, the novel at times seems to have been written by a Polish patriot. Indeed, if the book is autobiographical (and many critics think that it is—though probably not in its genealogical details) Grass himself is partly (or wholly) of Kashubian ancestry.

There are many examples of Polish themes and imagery throughout the novel.<sup>1</sup> In one memorable scene, (page 21) Oskar's grandfather, Joseph Koljaiczek, has a confrontation with his German boss:

(Having) . . . gone to work in a sawmill at Schwetz, he had had a bit of trouble with the boss over a fence which he, Koljaiczek, had painted a provocative white and red. Whereupon the boss had broken one white and one red slat out of the fence and smashed the patriotic slats into tinder over Koljaiczek's Kashubian back. To Koljaiczek this had seemed ground enough for setting red fire to the brand-new, resplendently whitewashed sawmill the very next night, a starry night no doubt, in honor of a partitioned but for this very reason united Poland.

Thus began Koljaiczek's short career as a arsonist in which German-owned sawmills went up in glorious blazes of red and white.



<sup>1</sup> Page numbers in parentheses refer to the Fawcett Crest paperback edition, 1962.

Grass: continued on page 14

## Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

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Items submitted for publication are welcome and encouraged. Deadlines for inclusion are: March 15, June 15, Sept. 15 and Dec. 15 respectively. Articles, letters, book reviews, news items, queries, ad copy, etc. should be sent to:

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## President's Letter

by Greg Kishel

This time around I thought I'd present some of the frequently-asked questions ("FAQs," in the jargon of the World Wide Web) about the PGS-MN that we board members receive, and the answers I have for them.

*Why don't you do more articles about the Polish communities in Minneapolis? (or, ...in St. Paul?, ...in Winona?, etc.--you get the picture)* This organization is run entirely by volunteers; not a one of us gets paid a nickel for anything we do or contribute. Everything we publish in the *Newsletter* is submitted gratuitously by the authors. Almost all of us are involved in these little projects of family and local history as hobbyists. These circumstances have a consequence: almost all of the time, our contributors are writing about things that interest them personally. When one gets involved in genealogy, the things that interest one first--and for a long time--are the aspects of one's own background. That means that, by and large, our contributors who write about Minnesota write about the areas of the state in which their own ancestors settled. For reasons that are still obscure to me, we have not drawn either general membership or active newsletter submitters from the Twin Cities or Winona in numbers proportionate to the general prominence of those areas in Minnesota's Polonia. We have made efforts to do so, and would be very happy to see more published on those places, but it just has not happened as yet. Those of us who make the effort to research and write just happen to have roots in other parts of the state. The short answer is obvious: *if you think there's not enough on your areas of interest, please write something yourself.* We have several experienced contributors who can help you get organized and started, and we'd love to give you a forum for your results!

*Why doesn't the PGS-MN have more meetings in outstate Minnesota?* When I first became president, I announced that I wanted to increase access to our organization and resources outside the Twin Cities. We've done some of that, but not as much as any of us on the board would have liked to do. The reasons are several, but they all come back to a lack of time on the part of those of us who have undertaken the duties of program and outreach. We've felt that doing a major first appearance in a new place should involve a full-day program, including a unit on introductory Polish research techniques and something on the history of the local community. Most

of you have heard the couple of us who can deliver that sort of thing...but to date we only have a couple. Over the last several years we've made contact with local genealogical societies in a couple of outstate locales, who could cohost and who would provide the logistical support we'd need in places where our board members don't live. With luck, we will be able to build on that over the next year or two, and perhaps will build our roster of speakers with canned general-interest presentations appropriate to an introductory appearance. Yes, our board members feel badly about the fact that we've never made an organizational visit to Winona; I'd sure like to get something together for Duluth or the Iron Range. If we can get some help from some of you out there, we will be able to make such projects a priority.

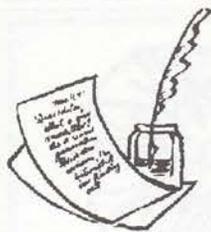
*Why doesn't the Website have more genealogical data on it?* We consistently get compliments on the quality of our Website, particularly our surname-query section, I received several such when I attended the annual conference of the Polish Genealogical Society of America in Chicago in October. The reason why we don't reproduce data compilations is simple, though: *we don't want to give it away--we want people to join our society, and to retain their memberships.* We've begun to feature both data compilations and good local history in our *Newsletter*. Our board made a conscious policy decision to make that the primary means by which we present this information to the world. Sure, we could post this material on the Website for genealogical Net-surfers to retrieve. Most all of them would vanish then, without contributing anything to the organization in return. That wouldn't be fair to those who pay their dues, those who attend our meetings, and those who do the work to compile these submissions. We are working on several indexes to post on the Website, but all of them will be keyed into the newsletter issues in which the subjects are covered. They will be good ways of publicizing the work we do, but they will also trumpet the benefits of membership. Promoting that will foster the survival of this organization, publishing via the casual and evanescent relationships of the Web won't necessarily do the same thing.

*Why didn't we have a meeting this fall?* The answer to this one is simple. I have had to maintain our schedule of programming for four years now, for lack of anyone else willing. When I got back from Poland, I found myself swamped at work with the pileup from a month's absence. Other extracurriculars related to work took up more time, I was committed to them for want of any substitute from among my colleagues. Then there were duties on the home front--a new and substantial requirement of parent volunteer time from my son's school, the same from his Boy Scout troop, and personal responsibilities to family. I really didn't want to subordinate the PGS-MN's fall program as far as I did, but I had to. This was not good for the organization, given the strong presence in the local genealogical and Polish-American communities that we've created over the last five years. *We really should not let it continue.* Can I ask a few of you out there, who haven't been involved yet but who want to see the Society continue and grow, to come forward to take up some of its central duties? Please get in touch with me by e-mail or the USPO, or with any other board member, see page 2 of this issue for e-mail addresses and phone numbers.



### In this issue . . .

Günter Grass--Nobel Laureate by Paul Kulas.....	page 1
President's Letter by Greg Kishel.....	p. 2
Letters to the Editor: Correction!! More questions than answers PGS-New York State Website And a 2nd e-mail Polish White Pages on CD?.....	p. 4
Names or titles?.....	p. 5
Rajgród parish Father Piotr Chowaniec Summer/Winter addresses? Missing issue! North Prairie, Opole.....	p. 6
Our website Query from Germany Add names to website Polish name for SEIDEL.....	p. 7
Full Circle: Polish Catholics in Browerville by Harry McOuat.....	p. 8
Origins of the WARZECHA surname by Paul Kulas.....	p. 10
Skarby z Polski--Treasures from Poland for the PGS-MN Library by Greg Kishel.....	p. 12
Günter Grass, continued.....	p. 14
Poland: First to Fight.....	p. 15
My trip to Poland by Kathryn Wilebski Schafer.....	p. 16
Missing Branches: Queries.....	p. 19
New members.....	p. 19
Renewed members.....	p. 20



## Letters to the Editor Listy do Redaktora

### Correction!!

As always your newsletters are beautifully presented, well organized and INTERESTING!!! Just a correction regarding my expertise and my query in the summer issue of the PGS-MN Newsletter.

On page 3, Greg Kishel mentions that I am a specialist on the Winona, St. Paul areas and their connections with the Ontario Kashubian community. This is incorrect. It should be turned around to read that: "I am a specialist in regards to the Canadian Kashubian community and interested in its connections to the Winona and St. Paul, Minnesota Kashubian settlements." On page 22, in regards to my Query, it should read: "is researching all Canadian Kashubian families from A to Z who settled in Renfrew and Renfrew County, Ontario, and originated in the parishes of Lipusz, Lesno, Wiele, Parchowo, Koscierzyna, Sierakowice, Steczyca and other nearby parishes in Kaszuby and is interested in their connections to the Kashubian families who settled in Polonia, WI. and St. Paul and Winona, MN."

Thanks again for including my articles and for the contacts you make for me through your efforts and your newsletter.

Shirley Mask Connolly <maskconn@intranet.ca>

### More questions than answers

Last fall I received the addresses for the Catholic parishes of three of the towns where my ancestors were born (see *PGS-MN Newsletter, Autumn 1998*, p. 4). I only wrote to Dziadowa Kłoda (Poland) and received a reply a couple of weeks ago (It was sent 27 April 1999). I received my great-grandparents marriage record and a letter in Polish. I had requested their parent's names but he could not provide this information. The marriage record only created more discrepancies as family history has the marriage date of Nov. 12, 1876 and not Dec. 12, 1876. Also my great-grandmother's age was two years younger than what is in our family history. Kornel gave a rough translation of the letter which is only two sentences long. I took his beginning Polish class and I'm going on his trip to Poland this fall. I plan to take a side trip to see my ancestors birthplaces which I'm looking forward to. Thanks for the encouragement.

Jan Bias <Jeanette.Bias@UNISYS.com>  
657 Belland Ave., Vadnais Heights MN 55127

## PGS-New York State Website

My name is David Newman and I'm the Membership Chairman of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State. My purpose of writing this message is to inform you of a project I'm working on that benefits all our societies.

I've been at awe lately with all the different sources of information available on the Internet concerning Polish Genealogy. However, the information is scattered all over the place. There has to be a better way of organizing this information. One solution is to compile all the links onto one website and keep it up-to-date.

I've begun to do just that. For the past couple of days I've searched the Internet for every website, newsgroup, mailing list related to Polish Genealogy and created a web page linking everything I could find. I've searched many of your newsletters for links also. I'm willing and dedicated to keep this web page up-to-date. The page I'm working on is located at: <<http://www.oss.buffalo.edu/~denewman/Genealogy/polwwlinks.html>>

I'm asking everyone to take a look at it and tell me what you think. What do you like about the list? What don't you like about it? Tell me if it stinks. I want this page to be the best for all Polish genealogists. I will be adding descriptions to each of the links. Eventually our society will have it's own web page and this listing will be housed there.

Please feel free to let your membership know about the page. Thank you for your time.

David Newman <akdave@webt.com>

### And a 2nd e-mail:

The Polish Genealogical Society of New York State now has it's own website located at: <<http://www.pgsnys.org>> I have moved my Polish Genealogical Links page over to it. My original Polish Links page will still reside at <<http://www.oss.buffalo.edu/~denewman/Genealogy/polwwlinks.html>> for awhile. I will have a referral page in it's place that will automatically forward them to the new location. Please inform you members and thank you for your time.

David Newman <akdave~webt.com>

### Polish White Pages on CD?

I got a computer disc (CD) of the white telephone pages of Germany. Does Poland have telephone white pages on CD?

Ed Melich, 1015 23rd Av. SE, Mpls, MN 55414  
(612-379-2905)

Editor's reply: I don't know. If any of our readers know, please inform us and give Ed a call.

## Names or titles?

Upon reading the Summer 1999 Newsletter I noticed that Marianne Springer said that her Zilka ancestors came from Warsaw. On my August visit to Salt Lake, I asked their Polish interpreter if it were possible that a family from Borzyszkowy would move to Warsaw. He said it was highly unlikely. That most often when someone said they were from Warsaw they meant the Duchy of Warsaw, and that covers a lot of territory.

When looking at records from Poland I noticed that very many of the earlier 1800 births and marriages had what could be titles between their first and last name. Example: Frank Chamier Cieminski, or: Joanna Wnuk Lipinski.

These are the ones I found in the Borzyszkowy area: 1. Aubraht, 2. Bala, 3. Bulla, 4. Chamier, 5. Bastian (Bastion), 6. Darzyn (Darzen), 7. Pozada, 8. Pupka, 9. Pannie, 10. Szada, 11. Zmuda, 12. Wantock, 13. Wnuk.

Are these titles? If so, who bestowed these titles on these families and under what circumstances and why? What time period do they come into use? The heraldry books I've seen give no insight into this.

Also what is the difference between a name spelled **Cieminerykowo** and **Cieminskiego**? Or are these two different family names?

I enjoy your Newsletter very much and read it from cover to cover. Keep up the good work. God bless.

**Margaret Koegel, 41519 Cruz Way, Temecula CA 92592-9418**

*Editor's reply: You ask some interesting questions which I will try to answer the best that I can (Readers, if anyone has any insights to these questions please write and let me know).*

*First, it was very common for Polish immigrants to use the name of a large city when asked about their place of origin. When I was young I asked my grandmother (she died in 1972 at the age of 100) where she came from in Poland. She replied "Posen." When I found out that Posen (Poznań) was not only the name of a city but also the name of a province I asked her again. She then replied "Krotoschin." Later, when I started doing genealogical research, I realized that Krotoschin (Krotoszyn) was not only the name of a city but also of a "kreis" (county). It was then too late to ask her again for she had died. I did eventually find her baptismal record in Rozdrażew, which is a bit north of the city of Krotoszyn.*

*Second, I too, have encountered constructions in Polish records that put the status or description of a person between their first and last names. The death record of my 6th great-grandfather (on 15 August*

*1729) records his name as "Casimirus Stary Kulasek de Janków" (Old Kazimierz Kulas from Janków). "Stary" means "old." It was probably inserted into his name to distinguish him from a younger Kazimierz Kulas living in Janków at that time. So what you are seeing is not unusual.*

*But you need to be careful. I also have seen that type of description after the last name in Polish records. For example: On the baptismal records of some (but not all) of the children of my 3rd great-grandfather, Józef Kokot (b. 1773, d. 1844), he is listed as "Josephi Kokot Wolny." "Wolny" means "leisured; free; independent." The term was used to distinguish "free peasants"—those who farmed their own land, from "landless peasants"—those who worked for others, and from "serfs"—those peasants who were tied to the landed estates.*

*With the above in mind, I looked up the names that you list in Hoffman, Polish Surnames: Origins and Meanings (for sale by PGS-MN—see advertising insert). I found: 1. **Aubraht** is not listed and it looks like a German name to me. 2. **Bala** comes from the root "bal-" which means "to tell tales"—so this person was probably quite a storyteller. 3. **Bulla** probably comes from "bula" or "buła" which means "bruise, swelling." 4. **Chamier** is not listed, but the root "Cham-" is. It means "cad, rustic, yokel." 5. **Bastian** comes from name elements such as "Bach, Sebastian, Bartłomiej, etc." 6. **Darzyn (Darzen)** is not listed but the root "Dar-" is, which means "gift." It could also come from a given name such as "Darius." 7. **Pozada** is not listed but the root "pozd-" is, which means "late." 8. **Pupka** means "doll." 9. **Pannie**—"Pan" means "man, master, bridegroom" ("Pani" means "lady, madam, mistress," "Panie" means "ladies"). 10. **Szada** comes from the root "Szad-" which means "grey, white, covered with mold." 11. **Zmuda** means "waste of time." 12. **Wantock** comes from "wantuch" which means "sackcloth, also pot-belly." 13. **Wnuk** means "grandson."*

*Third, regarding the difference between **Cieminerykowo** and **Cieminskiego**: They may or may not refer to the same family. You need to study the whole of the records very closely. The roots of both come from the word "ciemny" which means "dark." They have different suffixes, however. This is related to Polish grammar—"ego" is an adjectival ending and "-kowo" is, I believe, a place name ending ("-owa" would be a feminine name ending).*

*This is the best that I can do regarding your questions. Some of our readers may have different and/or better explanations.*

## Rajgród parish

As a new member of the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota I received my first issue of the society's newsletter and thoroughly enjoyed its contents. I look forward to receiving future issues.

I am researching my paternal grandparents who lived in Virginia, Minnesota from about 1908 to 1912. My grandmother supposedly came from Wosnawies in Russian Poland, and I'm trying to acquire information so I can correspond with the appropriate entity for that area, be it a Catholic church, a church archive, or a national or regional archive.

Therefore, I would like to order two back issues of the society's newsletters: Polish Genealogical Society Newsletter, v. 5, no. 4 (Winter 1997-98), "Selected Villages in Rajgród Parish." and v. 6, no. 2 (Summer 1998), "More Villages in Rajgród Parish."

I hope I can obtain information that will lead me in the right direction, as I understand that the post office location for Wosnawies was Rajgród, so I presume that the Catholic Church for Wosnawies was also in Rajgród.

I am looking forward to receiving these newsletters.  
**Vince Zotkiewicz, 3100 Timber Brook Drive,  
 Plano, TX 75074-8742**

## Father Piotr Chowaniec

I'm undertaking research on Father Piotr Chowaniec who, according to Rev. Waclaw Kruszka, was known as "the missionary of Minnesota" since he was responsible for the founding of seven parishes and the building of parish churches in your state. Father Chowaniec came to Baltimore in 1887 and died here in 1892. Any information your members can provide would be greatly appreciated.

**tom hollowak, Archives & special collections  
 <thollowak@UBmail.ubalt.edu>**

## Change of address?

I have had a couple address changes and am about to have another. It just dawned on me that I haven't received any Newsletters since Summer 1998! Is it possible to receive these back issues? This is one subscription I cannot miss any longer. Thank you for your help.

**Jenny Hall, Ridgeland MS**

*Editor's note: We sent Ms. Hall her missing issues. Members: Please let us know if you are going to have a change of address. The Post Office does not forward non-profit organization bulk mail. Sometimes it seems that the Post Office has trouble even if you haven't moved. If you ever are missing an issue, let us know. We don't want anyone missing any of our Newsletters.*

## Summer/Winter addresses?

Thank you for so promptly sending missing issues of the *PGS-MN Newsletter*. I've read them cover to cover as I do with every issue! So many of the names are familiar with my people being from Stearns and Morrison Counties (after a period in St. Louis Co.) but still haven't found the breakthrough I need to go past my great grandparents. Anyway, I appreciate getting the issues. While our summer address remains in Burtrum, from October to May we are in Lakeland FL.

**Helen Richard <jahmrRichard@juno.com>**

*Editor's note: All of you snowbirds out there: We need both your winter and summer addresses. Again, the Post Office will not forward our Newsletters and apparently they don't save them for you either.*

## Missing issue!

Enclosed find a check for membership renewal. I have not received a Summer issue of the *Newsletter*. Might a copy be sent to me. My entire family loves each and every issue. Every article is discussed many times over. So keep up the fantastic work!

**Suzanne Greenslit, Merrifield MN**

*Editor's note: Members: If you ever miss receiving a issue, please let us know. We will immediately send what you are missing via regular first-class US mail.*

## North Prairie, Opole

In the Spring 1997 issue are mentioned two books: (1) *History of the Parish of North Prairie*, and (2) *Opoliana* (pp. 5-6). Where are these books available and what is the cost? I'm in North Carolina so I do not have a PGS type library available.

**Jerry Orazem <gjorazem@gridusa.net>**

*Editor's reply: The two parish histories that you mention may be out-of-print. I suggest that you write directly to the two parishes to see if any are available. The addresses follow. For the North Prairie church: Holy Cross Church, PO Box 8, Bowlus MN 56314-0008. For the Opole church: Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 42942 125th Ave., Holdingford MN 56340-9718.*

*Rural Polish national Catholic parishes in Minnesota are undergoing marked changes these days (see article by Harry McOuat beginning on page 8). Many are being consolidated or paired. The North Prairie church now shares a pastor with St. Stanislaus Kostka Church in Bowlus. The Opole church is now combined with Immaculate Conception, St. Anna; St. Columbkille's, St. Wendell; and St. Hedwig's and St. Mary's in Holdingford.*

## Our website

The link you have listed in the newsletter was done by Dave Cross of MGS and served the purpose a few years ago. The following link has much more valuable information on it: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~mnpolgs/pgs-mn.html> This isn't a great page, but it is more valuable than the MGS page.

Ray Marshall <raymarsh@mninter.net>

*Our website chair replies: Thanks for your comments, and I hope I can explain this in an understandable fashion. When our website was created two years ago, because of various problems, it had two different URLs. We were advised that we should use the MGS branches page as our access address as that address was more likely to stay the same as time went by. We now have had our third URL to the PGS-MN homepage in these two years. Therefore, printing the MGS branches page address was a good idea so that no matter what our homepage URL is, our members could always get to our site via the MGS site. I guess we could print the direct address in the newsletter, but both addresses will get members to the same place.*

Mary Ellen Bruski, (Webmistress?), PGS-MN  
<bruski@pclink.com>

## Query from Germany

Ich interessiere mich für die Forschungen des Paul Kulas (Winter 97), betrefflich des Familiennamens WYRWAS in Rozdrazew, Koryta, Jankow Zalesny und Lutogniew und würde mich sehr freuen, wenn Sie diese an mich weiter geben würden.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Gerd Wyrwas <gwyrwas@rz-online.de>

*Editor's note: Our website continues to attract attention from far-away places. My rough translation of the above e-mail follows:*

"I am interested in the research of Paul Kulas regarding the family name WYRWAS in Rozdrazew . . . and it would please me if you could give me further information. With friendly greetings"

*I sent the following reply (in English);*

"My great-grandmother, Magdalena Kołodziejska, was first married to Antoni Wyrwas. Magdalena and Antoni married in Rozdrazew on 28 Feb 1859. They had two children: Franciszka, born 8 Feb 1860 and Konstancja, born 8 Feb 1861. Both were born in Henryków. Franciszka married a Błaszczyk and later emigrated to Chicago. I believe descendants still live there. Konstancja died in Poland on 8 June 1884. Antoni Wyrwas died on 7 Dec. 1861 and Magdalena later married my great-grandfather, Michał Junik. If you have links to any of the above, please let me know."

## Add names to website

Would you please post in your newsletter and internet the surnames I am researching: Jacob NARLOCH married Augustina Mondry (1870), Child: Frances (b. 10/1/1876). Nichlos LUSCZINSKI married Hannah Mondry (1/16/1866). Frank CISEWSKI married Pauline Helena Mondry (1880 at St. Stan's) Children: Romauld (4/13/1881), Cecilia (5/31/1876) The marriages took place in Winona, MN. Parents of these sisters were Mathias MONDRY (MADRY) and Augustina KLEPIN living in Pine Creek WI and/or Winona MN.

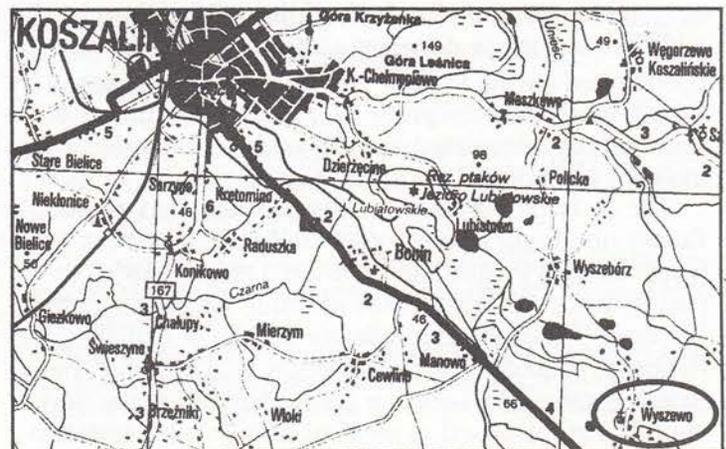
Karen Mondry <KAnder3066@aol.com>

## Polish name for SEIDEL

Does PGS-MN have a cross reference of German place names and Polish place names? If so, can you tell me what the Polish name is for the village the Germans called SEIDEL? Until the end of WWII, Seidel is/was a village in Pomerania, Prussia, Germany, about halfway between Köslin and Pollnow. The area is now part of Poland. Before January 1, 1999, when Poland reconstructed its provinces, the area was part of the Province of KOSZALIN. The German KÖSLIN is now the Polish KOSZALIN. The German POLLNOW is now the Polish POLANÓW. However, with the sources available to me, I have not been able to cross reference the German SEIDEL.

Thomas E. Ross, 5230 Fiore Terrace, K119 San Diego CA 92122

*Editors's reply: The Polish name for Seidel is Wyszewo (circled on the map below). I arrived at this conclusion after studying a pre-WWI German empire map and comparing it to a modern Polish map. The standard reference work for this type of question is Deutsch-Fremdsprachiges (fremdsprachis-deutsches Ortsnamenverzeichnis [German-foreign language (foreign language-German) place name changes]. However, this work only lists places restored to Poland after WWI. Readers: If anyone knows of a similar work for places restored to Poland after WWII, please let me know.*



## FULL CIRCLE:

### Polish Catholics in Browerville, MN

by Harry McOuat

4 Walton Ln., Wakefield, MA 01880

*Nieustraszy!!* That word is Polish; in English it means *intrepid* and that certainly describes what the early Polish settlers were when they immigrated to Browerville in Todd county in about 1869. The first three were, very likely, Thomas MUNDY, Anton WIESHALLA, and John MORCINCZYK.<sup>1</sup> A search of the 1870 US census for Hartford township, which includes Browerville, only produced an entry for Anton Wieshalla.

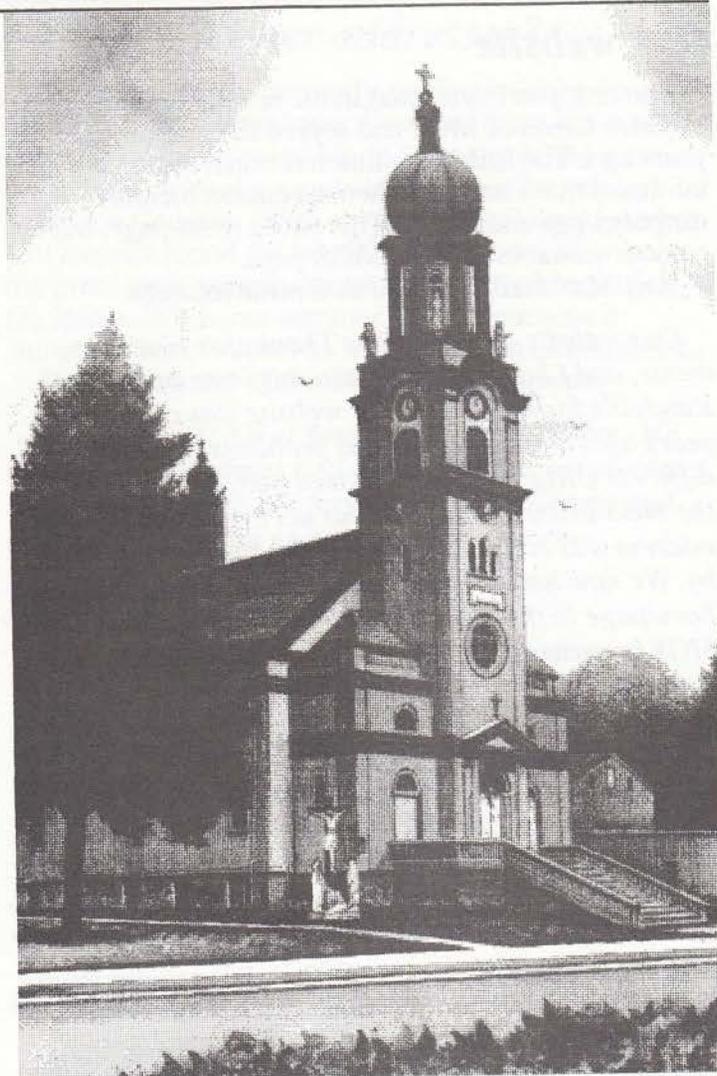
Polish immigrants arriving in Browerville came from Upper Silesia, near the present city of Opole (Oppeln in German), which was a part of the German Empire. The area was Polish ethnically and one reason for emigration was the attempted Germanization of the region.

When I visited this region in May 1997, in a quest to find my roots, I had the good fortune to actually set foot within the old homestead of my grandparents. These good people left Opole and emigrated to Minnesota, an area where climate and geography greatly resembled their birthplace in Silesia. Interestingly, by 1880 there were a significant number of Polish families in the US census for Hartford and surrounding townships.<sup>2</sup>

In their great concern for a place of worship, the inhabitants decided to establish a construction program to build a Catholic church in Browerville. At this time, 1882, the area Catholic families were evenly divided between Polish and German people.

The Diocese of St. Cloud had not yet been formed. However, St. Cloud was the seat of the Vicariate of Northern Minnesota. This Vicariate included the entire state north of the Twin Cities. With the permission of Bishop Seidenbush, the first formal meeting was held on March 5, 1882, resulting in the formation of an Advisory Group,<sup>3</sup> a Building Committee,<sup>4</sup> and a Society<sup>5</sup> to provide materials for the building of the church. In addition, monetary donations totaling \$600.00 were contributed by the Polish<sup>6</sup> parishioners and matched by their German counterparts. St. Joseph's Church was successfully completed in 1883 and formally dedicated in April 1884.

The early parish, as one might expect, had great difficulty obtaining a priest, especially one who was fluent in both Polish and German. During 1885, the parish was a mission served monthly by Father Urban Fischer OSB of the Benedictine Abbey at Collegeville. Research of early church records reveal a robust, busy monthly schedule awaiting Father Fischer at the new church. He officiated at the first two Polish baptisms:



Christ the King Catholic Church in Browerville, MN  
(formerly St. Joseph's—a Polish national parish)

<sup>1</sup>The name spellings are reproduced from the source data here and in later references.

<sup>2</sup>Names found in the 1880 census are: Polinski, Opitz, Peplinski, Bacie, Segan, Olik, Marzinzek, Guisande, Barron, Weischalla, Gallus, Dudek, Feist, Lamoska, Hosalla, John, Mundry, Miodek.

<sup>3</sup>John Marcinczyk, John Bartylla, Peter Lamuzga, Thomas Feist, Ignatius Baron, John Stevens, Joseph Cygan and John Becker

<sup>4</sup>Joseph Luke, John Stevens, Peter Hermes, Thomas Feist, John Bartylla, Ignatius Baron, Peter Lamuzga and John Becker.

<sup>5</sup>John Becker, Peter Lamuzga, Joseph Jon, Ignatius Baron, Thomas Feist, John Stevens, Frank Lamuzga, John Schneider, Mathias Hager, Joseph Gonsior, Francis Bartylla, John Bartylla, Martin Usobel, Thomas Mocko, Joseph Poplinski, Albert Lyson, Joseph Cygan, Joseph Luke, Francis Miodek and Peter Fischer.

<sup>6</sup>John Marcinczyk, \$30; Thomas Feist, \$31; Martin Wrobel, \$20; Rochus Czech, \$30; Francis Miodek, \$20; Francis Buhl, \$15; Stanley Kulig, \$30; Frederic Poplinski, \$20; Joseph Cygan, \$30; Thomas Mundry, \$10; Joseph Gonsior, \$30; Albert Lyson, \$25; Peter Lamuzga, \$25; Joseph Jon, \$30; Thomas Mocko, \$30; Norbert Mocko, \$30; Francis Bartylla, \$30; Stanley Stach, \$20; Rochus Kolodziej, \$10; John Bartylla \$30; John Cygan, \$10; Ignatius Baron, \$30; Joseph Poplinski, \$20; John Warzecha, \$10; Louis Pollak, \$10; Michael Ulik, \$10.

1. Mathilde Lukasz, born 14 March 1885 and baptized 22 March 1885. Parents: John Lukasz and Magdal. Szydło. Witnesses: Paul Gąsjar and Susannah Mączka

2. Agnes Pawolek, born 27 Nov. 1884 and baptized 22 March 1885. Parents: Ludov Pawolek and Marian Adamiec. Witnesses: Albert Adamiec and Hedwiga Adamiec

He also performed the first two weddings:

On 24 April 1885: Albert Lyson, son of Joseph Lyson and Maria Salanczyk and Maria Kubica, daughter of Joseph Kubica and Francis Jurek and on 24 May 1885: Paul Ulik, son of Stephen Ulik and Josephine Dgobieske and Regina Trun, daughter of John Trun and Victoria Karsz

The first available funeral records date from July 1890, while Father Methodius Slatinsky was pastor. His term ranged from 1887 to 1895. From July 1, 1890 to March 31, 1891 there were just three adult funerals:

1. Augustin Smolka, died 30 July 1890 and buried 2 August 1890. He was 40 years old and born in Silesia.

2. Barbara Ligan, died 12 January 1891 and buried 14 January 1891. She was 43 years old and born in Silesia.

3. Maria Bieniek, died 28 March 1891 and buried 31 March 1891 She was 54 years old and born in Laskowice, Silesia

During the above time interval there was also one adult German funeral, two teenagers, four children between one and three years of age and seven infants. Interestingly, for me, Maria Bieniek (nee Gmyrek) was a first cousin by marriage to my grandmother, Johanna Jakubik. Johanna did not even arrive in Browerville until October of 1893.

While Father Slatinsky was pastor, the first parochial school in the St. Cloud diocese was built in Browerville. It was completed in 1891, but only after a good deal of turmoil. In Europe the custom was to reapportion tax moneys and thus parochial schools received government support. This is not the case here in America. When voluntary support lagged, Father Slatinsky assessed the parishioners. The resulting dissatisfaction was resolved when Bishop Zardetti was ready to close both the church and the school. The parish surmounted this and other difficulties while the new immigrants underwent their Americanization process.

The next crisis occurred in 1895, when the parish had become predominantly Polish. The German people decided they would construct their own church. Bishop Marty OSB, chaired a meeting in April 1895, at which time separation was agreed upon. Ultimately, the Polish members accepted the current parish debts. The German members then organized their own St. Peter's parish. For quite some time following this decision both parishes shared the old physical assets. I remember, as a youth, how terribly impressed I was by these two lovely Catholic churches, St. Joseph's and

## Acknowledgement

A great big Thank You goes to Father Gerald Dalseth and his wonderful staff at Christ the King Church in Browerville for all their help. They are terrific. They provided the early Vital Records and the copy of my mother's original birth record shown below. I also appreciate the very helpful editorial consultations with Mrs. Mae Brenan.

—Harry McOuat

Ego infrascriptus baptizavi	Veronica
natam die	25. Jan. 94
ex	Matthaeo Jakubik
ex loco	
et	Johanna Soboczyk
ex loco	
Patrini fuerunt	Thomas Jambor Catharina Jambor M.C. Slatinsky

## Original Birth Record of Veronica Jakubik

St. Peter's, standing only two blocks apart.

The next parish project, the building of the rectory for St. Joseph's, was completed during Father Joseph Dudek's tenure in 1902. It is a substantial structure, adjacent to the church, still functioning today. It is difficult to comprehend today that the construction cost for the rectory was only \$4000.00.

Father John S. Guzdek arrived as pastor in June 1906 and remained until 1933. At the time Father Guzdek arrived, the church building was overcrowded, thus began a new construction project to replace the first church. In May 1907 a building committee<sup>7</sup> was formed. The funding would be generated by assessing each parish family. A group of assessors<sup>8</sup> was established, who made assessment allocations of five levels, varying from \$100 to \$300. Parishioners would be responsible for providing and hauling building materials such as stone and brick. Those who did not participate in this activity faced an additional monetary assessment.

The following is an excerpt from a letter my Aunt Mary wrote to her brother, who was working for the Great Northern railroad in Havre, Montana at the time. The letter is dated January 15, 1908.

<sup>7</sup>Rev. J.S. Guzdek, Martin Wrobel, Robert Holig, John Sobota, Vincent Maj, Valentine Brenny, Stephen Berczyk, Simon Kaluza and Peter Wodarz.

<sup>8</sup>Peter Buhl, Charles Hadash, Martin Hudalla, Theodore John, Frank Jambor, Mike Motzka, John Morcinczyk, Paul Pampuch, Casper Pietron, Joseph Schenk, Jacob Spychata, John Salawa and Paul Waleczka

We are going to build a new church in summer. They have hauled some bricks and stones already. We have to haul four loads of bricks and about seven loads of stone. If we would not haul that we will have to pay, and besides that we have to give \$150, half this year and the rest next year. Ben<sup>9</sup> has to pay \$125 and Frank has to pay the same. Some have to pay \$175 and some got \$200. There are about five who got \$300. Papa wants to give this year to Alex that \$200 that they borrowed, so I don't know if they will have enough when they sell wheat and rye.

Assuming a 4% inflation rate, their \$150 assessment becomes in today's dollars a whopping \$5300 for a family. Our hardworking forebears courageously showed true generosity for their faith. The new church was blessed on April 21, 1909, marking the parish Silver Jubilee.

I have wonderful memories of the church with its magnificent interior so ornately decorated. The striking Corpus Christi celebrations with their outdoor altars and grand processions were glorious events. The churchyard was also very lovely, with a simulated Garden of Gethsemane. The statues therein were sculpted by Joseph Kiselewski, the most famous parish son. He attended Holy Angels school and studied art in Minneapolis, Paris and Rome. After achieving international renown he spent his twilight years back home where he died February 29, 1988 in his 87th year.

Vatican II, in the early 1960s, brought cataclysmic change to the Church and Browerville was caught in the aftershock. In 1978, the two Browerville parishes were suppressed and a new parish, Christ the King, was organized. The actual building of St. Peter's no longer even exists and a greatly modified St. Joseph's is the site of the new parish. Christ the King still exhibits a stately exterior, however the interior no longer breathes an ornate Polish presence. The inspiring outdoor statues remain but Gethsemane has silently vanished. As the new millennium nears the late 19th century national parishes are exiting in lock step with the 20th century. And so St. Joseph's of Browerville has come 'Full Circle'.

<sup>9</sup>Ben, Frank and Alex are Uncles of mine.

#### References

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- Fuller, Clara K. *A History of Morrison and Todd Counties*. Indianapolis, Indiana: B.S. Bowen Co., 1915.
- Todd County Histories*. Todd County Bicentennial Committee in conjunction with the US Bicentennial 1776-1976.
- Zermans, Father Vincent A. *The Spirit in Central Minnesota: A Centennial Narrative of the Church of St. Cloud 1889-1989*, 2 vols. Saint Cloud, Minnesota: The Diocese of Saint Cloud, 1989.

## Origins of the WARZECHA surname

by Paul Kulas

PGS-MN member, **Veronica S. Freihammer** of Rice MN, requested the following surname search. She writes:

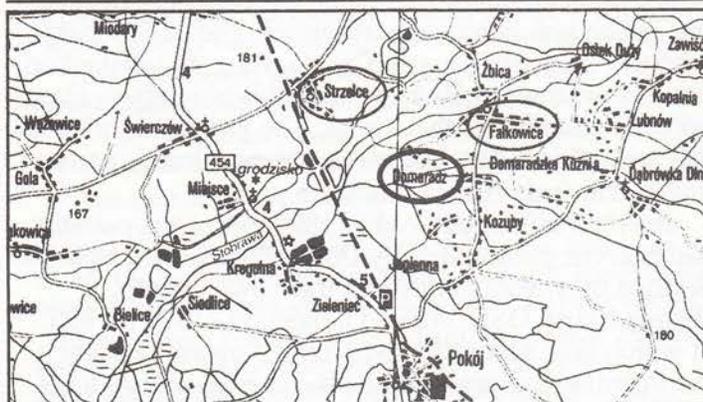
Enclosed is a check for surname research. The name to be researched is my maiden name, WARZECHA.

I have another question: How do I go about finding what parish in Poland my ancestors were registered at? I visited the Church of Jesus of Latter Day Saints and they informed me I needed this information before they could help me further. The area was German. On the immigration paper, the town was Dammratsch, county of Oppeln in the state of Silesian.

Also, does the MGS Library loan out material to other libraries, such as the Great Regional Library of St. Cloud? You may contact me at my e-mail address: <verfrei@uno.com>

According to Hoffman, *Polish Surnames: Origins and Meanings*, the Warzecha surname is derived from the Polish nouns, *warzocha*, *warzęcha*, *warzycha*, *warząchew*, which all mean "ladle" but which also may mean "horse-radish." Hoffman cites Rymut, *Nazwiska Polaków* as his source for this information.

According to *Słownik Nazwisk . . .* by Kazimierz Rymut, the Warzecha surname appeared 5727 times in a Polish governmental agency's records in 1990. It is therefore a fairly common Polish surname. A map



Domaradz (Dammratsch) is circled. It is probably in the parish at Falkowice--or else in Strzelce. Domaradz is located about 30 km. north-northwest of Opole.

**Map at right:  
Distribution of the  
WARZECHA surname  
according to  
Słownik nazwisk . . .**

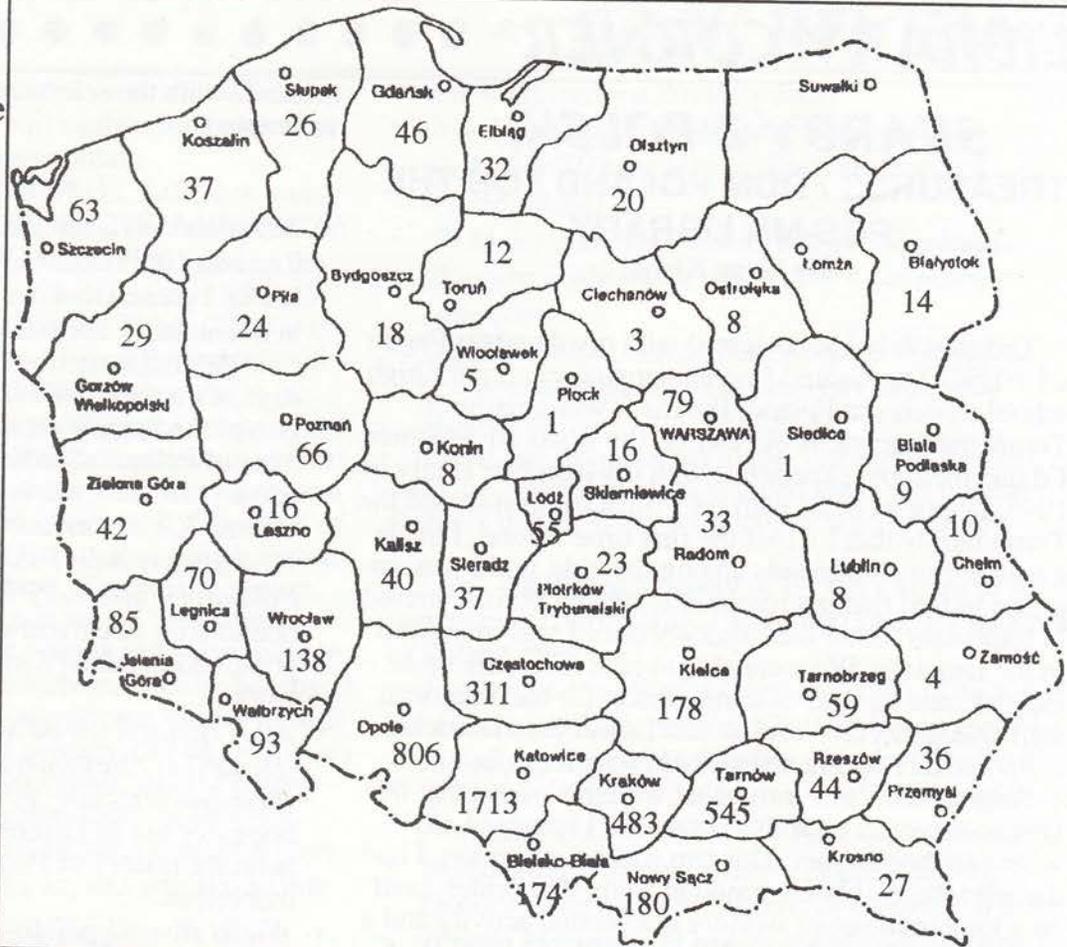
We continue our offer  
to research your  
Polish surnames  
in

William F. Hoffman's  
*Polish Surnames:  
Origins and Meanings*  
and in

Kazimierz Rymut's  
*Słownik nazwisk  
współcześnie w polsce  
używanych.*

Send your request to:  
Paul Kulas, editor  
*PGS-MN Newsletter*

12008 West River Road,  
Champlin MN 55316.  
Include \$10.00 per surname.  
Make check payable to:  
PGS-MN.



showing the provinces where the Warzecha surname was found in 1990 is shown above.

As you can see, the Warzecha surname is widely distributed throughout Poland but it is by far the most numerous in the Silesian provinces of Opole and Katowice. But you already know that your Warzecha ancestors came from Opole (Oppeln in German). This search verifies Silesia as the most likely origin of your Warzecha ancestors.

*Dammratsch* is now *Domaradz* (see map at left). It looks like it is in the parish at Fałkowice. You should check the locality index at a LDS Family History Center to see if Domaradz is included in the parish. You should also contact Bob Prokott <dprokott@pconline.com>. He is our Silesian expert and I believe his ancestors are from Fałkowice (See his article about Silesian immigration to Central Minnesota in the Winter 1996-97 *Newsletter*, pp. 8-9).

The MGS Library is a non-lending library. We have "Polish night at the library" on the 2nd Thursday of each month, 6:30 to 9:30 pm. One of our members is there to help patrons with their Polish research problems at that time.

One final question: Are you related to Zach and Mike Warzecha? They are my uncles. Both married sisters of my dad. Zach married Mary Kulas and Mike married Teresa Kulas. Zach farmed near Elmdale in Morrison County and Mike near Opole in Stearns County.

### About my Warzecha relatives:

Zacheus Warzecha married Mary Kulas (born 26 August 1895) at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in St. Anna on 29 September 1914. Both Zach and Mary are deceased.

Michael Warzecha married Teresa Kulas (born 30 November 1907) at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in St. Anna on 13 November 1934. Their daughter, Phyllis, is a PGS-MN member. Mike and Teresa recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary.

**Congratulations, Aunt Teresa and Uncle Mike!!**

## LIBRARY CORNER

### SKARBY Z POLSKI – TREASURES FROM POLAND FOR THE PGS-MN LIBRARY

By Greg Kishel

This past July I participated with my daughter Peg in a UNESCO-sponsored English-language camp for high school students in Poland. For me it was a return to Toruń, the marvelous old city on the Wisła River where I'd had the same experience with my daughter Emily in 1995. I cemented ties with the Polish camp staff and the Toruń family that I'd met the first time around, I made a half-dozen new friends among the kids, and I was surprised to find that my minimalist spoken Polish, unused in four years, came back quickly once I was immersed in the language. We were able to take a day trip up to Gdańsk, and the end-of-camp junket for the American staff was down to Wrocław and Lower Silesia, including an area or two rarely visited by Americans.

Anyone who's ever traveled with me knows that the first commercial establishments that I scout out anywhere are bookstores. This trip was no exception. I had the advantage of being based in a city that prides itself on a long tradition of worldly intellectual activity and a well-educated populace. (Toruń was the birthplace of Copernicus, and an ancient seat of trade.) With that sort of self-image, the city has a bookstore or two on every block in the *centrum*. I found quite a few *księgarnii* in Gdańsk, too. Finally, Wrocław is the site of the oldest continuously-operating publishing house in Poland (the Ossolineum, now approaching two centuries in age) and has one of the two headquarters of PPWK, *Polskie Przedsiębiorstwo Wydawnictw Kartograficznych*—the largest and most sophisticated publisher of maps and atlases in current Poland.

I decided that the two factors of availability and price presented an opportunity for the PGS-MN that I really could not pass up—in general, fine-quality books in Poland cost about 35-40% of the price you'd pay at import bookstores in the U.S. (The high customs duty on commercially-imported books these days is a shame—Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson would be blenching!) Recognizing that the only real negative would be the wear and tear on my lumbar spine during the last week of travel, I went ahead and bought everything that I thought would be of interest to our membership.

So here are the items that we are adding to our library collection at the MGS facility in Golden Valley. Some have already been shelved, others await the arrival of plastic dust-jacket protectors, all should be available by mid-January. I will start with books, and

continue with the selection of tourist maps that I assembled.

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- Jerzy Waldorff, *The Rest Is Silence: The Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw* (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1988): I picked this item up for approximately \$1.25 in a remainder bookstore in Toruń. Published by the now-defunct state-owned publisher of pre-communist days, it's a rather lavish pictorial and historical depiction of the huge Warsaw cemetery where now rest most of Poland's leading citizens for the last century-and-a-half. And, it's *in English*—translated by one Chester Kisiel (undoubtedly no relation).
- *Geograficzny Atlas Polski (Geographical atlas of Poland)* (Warsaw: PPWK, 1999): a nice little paper-bound atlas of current-day Poland, with detail on population, industry, agriculture, geology, the whole works.
- *Atlas Historyczny od Starożytności do współczesności (Historical Atlas from Antiquity to the Current Time)* (Warsaw/Wrocław: PPWK, 1999): a companion book, for use in elementary schools. Almost all of it is on the history of Poland, and the local detail is marvelous.
- *Wielki słownik polsko-angielski and Wielki słownik angielsko-polski (The Great Polish-English Dictionary and The Great English-Polish Dictionary)* (Warsaw: Philip Wilson, 1998 printing, 2 vol. each): When I got into Toruń I was pleased to see that the narrow little storefront *księgarnia* that specialized in foreign-language dictionaries was still in business. This is considered to be the best manageably-priced Polish-English dictionary currently in publication. I was also pleased to see that the 1999 price was a bit less than I'd paid for my own copy in 1995. This should enable PGS-MN members to get a lot further in translating entries from *Słownik geograficzny*, genealogical records, etc.
- Irena Swenson, ed., *Słownik geograficzno-krajoznawczy Polski (Geographical-tourist dictionary of Poland)* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1998): The years since the downfall of communism have seen a huge increase in the quality of materials on the geography and history of Poland, both academic and tourist-oriented. This compact but thick volume (1046 text pages) is a gazetteer with over 10,000 entries on Polish locales—cities and villages, small to huge, and physical features, including mountains, lakes, rivers, and parks. The orientation is more toward tourist interest, which means that there is much information about history and historical structures. It's in Polish, of course, but the language is

## BOOK REVIEWS

straight-forward; *Wielki słownik*, and a little familiarity with Polish grammar, will enable you to glean all the information these entries contain.

- Jerzy Kwiatek and Teofil Lijewski, *Leksykon miast polskich (Lexicon of Polish Cities)* (Warsaw: MUZA SA, 1998): Last spring I saw this book listed in the catalogue of a bookstore in Chicago, and I immediately resolved to find it in Poland. Thick (1104 text pages) but *not* compact, it's a *beautifully*-produced gazetteer of the 875 largest cities and towns in Poland—complete with color photographs, maps, illustrations, and city crests. All of the entries are at least 2/3 page in length, and those for the most prominent and largest cities can run to over ten. If, like most of ours, your ancestors lived in a smaller Polish town or village, you won't find it here. You will, however, find the nearby larger town in which they went to market, the capital of their *powiat* and *województwo*, the seat of the diocese to which their parish belonged—all of the institutionally-significant locales in their lives—and the entries will contain a lot of the history of their times. Again, it's in Polish, and the entries are a bit more challenging than those in *Słownik geograficzno-krajoznawczy*. However, make a photocopy of your entries and dig in, and you'll find this item a real gem.

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Those are the books I brought back, they weren't my only acquisitions. Remembering how much a modern tourist map of my paternal great-grandparents' home territory had helped me in my genealogical research, I decided to pick up these for as many areas of Poland as I could find. There were several varieties, almost all published by PPWK.

The first was the series of *Mapy Krajoznawcze (Touring Maps)*, for the larger regions of Poland. I brought back a full set, consisting of:

- (1) *Pomorze Zachodnie, Wielkopolska północno-zachodnia (Western Pomerania and Northwestern Wielkopolska)*
- (2) *Kaszuby, Kujawy, Wielkopolska północno-wschodnia (Kashubia, Kujawa, and Northeastern Wielkopolska)*
- (3) *Warmia, Mazury Zachodnie, Mazowsze Zachodnie (Warmia, Western Mazuria, and Western Mazovia)*
- (4) *Mazury Wschodnie, Podlasie, Mazowsze Wschodnie (Eastern Mazuria, Podlasia, and Eastern Mazovia)*
- (5) *Dolny Śląsk, Sudety, Wielkopolska południowo-zachodnia (Lower Silesia, the Sudeten Mountains,*

*and Southwestern Wielkopolska)*

- (6) *(Gorny Śląsk, Wielkopolska południowo-wschodnia (Upper Silesia, Southeastern Wielkopolska)*
- (7) *Małopolska Zachodnia, Karpaty Zachodnie (Western Małopolska, the Western Carpathian Mountains)*
- (8) *Małopolska Wschodnia, Karpaty Wschodnie (Eastern Małopolska, the Eastern Carpathian Mountains)*

These are large-format maps, vertically-oriented, with the fine detail on developed areas and natural features that PPWK's productions are known for.

I also purchased as many of PPWK's series of *Mapy turystyczny (Tourist Maps)* as I could find. By quadrant of Poland, they are:

- Northwestern: *Okolice Gorzowa Wklp. (The Vicinity of Gorzów Wielkopolska)*, *Okolice Koszalina (The Vicinity of Koszalin)*, *Okolice Słupska (The Vicinity of Słupsk)*, *Okolice Szczecina (The Vicinity of Szczecin)*, *Ziemia Kaszubska (The Kaszubian Country)*
- Northeastern: *Jeziro Mamry (Lake Mamry)*, *Okolice Olsztyna (The Vicinity of Olsztyn)*, *Wielkie Jeziora Mazurskie (The Great Lakes of Mazuria)*
- Central/Southwestern: *Okolice Częstochowy (The Vicinity of Częstochowa)*, *Okolice Łódź (The Vicinity of Łódź)*, *Okolice Zielonej Góry (The Vicinity of Zielona Góra)*, *Pojezierze Lubuskie (The Lubuski Lake Country)*, *Wielkopolska*
- Southeastern: *Okolice Kazimierza Dln. (The Vicinity of Kazimierz Dolny)*, *Okolice Lublina (The Vicinity of Lublin)*, *Roztocze Środkowe (The Central Roztoczy)*

Finally, I bought three national-scoped maps: *Białoruś (Belarus)* and *Ukraina: Część Wschodnia (Ukraine: Eastern Part)*, and *Polska: Nowy Podział Administracyjny (Poland: New Administrative Subdivisions)*. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to find the western-half counterpart of this map of Ukraine. However, the map showing the new Polish *województwa* and *powiaty* that were created a year ago should be a help to all of you who want to place their ancestral lands into the current structure of local and regional Polish government.

And those are my acquisitions, purchased through your Society's Library Fund. More extended reviews of the major items, particularly the gazetteers, may follow in a future issue of this newsletter. These items are yours for the using—may they help you broaden and deepen your family history!

3 Months on The New York Times  
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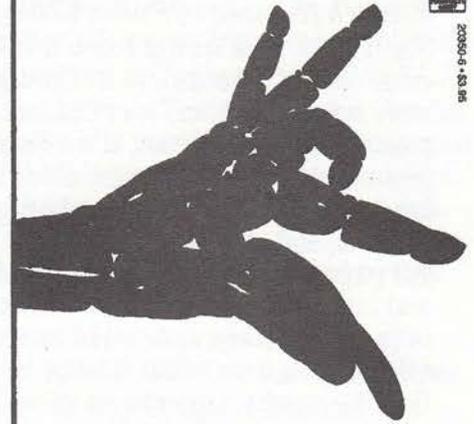
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AND THE FLOUNDER

# DOG YEARS

GÜNTER GRASS



"Grass is a born storyteller"

—*Life*

## "The Danzig Trilogy"

by Günter Grass

*Grass: continued from page 1*

In another memorable scene (pp. 557-58)—in a novel filled with many memorable scenes—Oskar "drums up" a squadron of Polish cavalry to save his friend, Victor Weluhn, from a pair of post-war Nazi assassins. (Victor had been a defender of the Polish Post Office in Danzig on 1 September 1939—the first day of the war. While all of the other Polish defenders, including Oskar's "presumptive father" Jan Bronski, were captured and shot, Victor had escaped from the ruins and survived the war. But Victor's pursuers were in possession of a twelve-year-old execution order naming Victor. They had pursued him throughout the war and after. "An order is an order" they said.) In a court disposition, a companion of Oskar describes the wondrous event:

I saw that my mother's garden had been chosen as the execution site. Both of us protested. Paying no attention, they knocked down the board fence, not a very difficult task for it was about to collapse of its own accord, and tied poor Victor to the apple tree just below my crook. When we continued to protest, they turned their flashlight on the crumpled execution order. It was signed by an inspector of courts martial by the name of Zelewski and dated, if I remember right, Zoppot, October 5, 1939. Even the rubber stamps seemed to be right. The situation looked hopeless. Nevertheless, we talked about the United Nations, collective guilt, Adenauer, and so on; but one of the green hats swept aside all our objections, which were without judicial foundation, he assured us, because the peace treaty had never been signed, or even drawn up. 'I vote for Adenauer just the same as you do,' he went on. 'But this execution order is still valid; we've consulted the highest authorities. We are simply doing our duty and the best thing you can do is to run along.'

We did nothing of the sort. When the green hats produced the machine pistols from under their coats, Mr. Matzerath put his drum in place. At that moment the moon—it was almost full, just the slightest bit battered—burst through the clouds. And Mr. Matzerath began to drum . . . desperately.

A strange rhythm, yet it seemed familiar. Over and over again the letter O took form: lost, not yet lost, Poland is not yet lost! But that was the voice of poor Victor, he knew the words to Mr. Matzerath's drumming: While we live, Poland cannot die. The green hats, too, seemed to know that rhythm, I could see them take fright behind their hardware in the moonlight. And well they might. For the march that Mr. Matzerath and poor Victor struck up in my mother's garden awakened the Polish cavalry to life. Maybe the moon helped, or maybe it was the drum, the moon, and poor, nearsighted Victor's cracking voice all together that sent those multitudes of horsemen springing from the ground: stallions whinnied, hoofs thundered, nostrils fumed, spurs jangled, hurrah, hurrah! . . . No, not at all: no thundering, no jangling, whinnying, or shouts of hurrah; silently they glided over the harvested fields outside of Gerresheim, but beyond any doubt they were a squadron of Polish Uhlans, for red and white like Mr. Matzerath's lacquered drum, the pennants clung to the lances; no, clung is not right, they floated, they glided, and indeed the whole squadron floated beneath the moon, coming perhaps from the moon, floated off, wheeled to the left, towards our garden, floated, seemingly not of flesh and blood, floated like toys fresh out of the box, phantoms, comparable perhaps to the spook-like figures that Mr. Matzerath's keeper makes out of knotted string: Polish cavalry of knotted string, soundless yet thundering, fleshless, bloodless, and yet Polish, down upon us they thundered, and we threw ourselves upon the ground while the moon and Poland's horsemen passed over us and over my mother's garden and all the other carefully tended gardens. But they did not harm the gardens. They merely took along poor Victor and the two executioners and were lost in the open fields under the moon—lost, not yet lost, they galloped off to the east, towards Poland beyond the moon.

The opening line of the novel has Oskar explaining: "Granted: I am an inmate of a mental hospital." Though he is considered a "lunatic" he is a very perceptive one. From his hospital bed Oskar contemplates the situation of post-war Poland (p.100). He proclaims:

I look for the land of the Poles that is lost to the Germans, for the moment at least. Nowadays the Germans have started searching for Poland with credits, Leicas, and compasses, with radar, divining rods, delegations, and moth-eaten provincial students' associations in costume. Some carry Chopin in their hearts, others thoughts of revenge. Condemning the first four partitions of Poland they are busily planning a fifth; in the meantime flying to Warsaw via Air France in order to deposit, with appropriate remorse, a wreath on the spot that was once the ghetto. One of these days they will go searching for Poland with rockets. I, meanwhile, conjure up Poland on my drum. And this is what I drum: Poland's lost, but not forever, all's lost, but not forever, Poland's not lost forever.

Regardless of Grass's political views, the novel remains a classic with vivid descriptions of the City of Danzig and the surrounding Kashubian countryside. One critic states that: "Grass's Danzig is already as vivid and timeless as Dickens' London or Joyce's Dublin."<sup>2</sup> (This writer would add Prus's Warsaw to that list [Bolesław Prus is Aleksander Głowacki's pseudonym].)<sup>3</sup> Regarding the Kashubian countryside, the critic states: "the evocation of Anna Bronski in her potato field in Chapter One . . . is surely one of the finest passages in the novel."<sup>4</sup> ". . . her multiple potato-coloured skirts (are) planted in her potato fields as though she were part of them. . ."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> John Reddick, introduction to *The Tin Drum* by Günther Grass (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), x.

<sup>3</sup> Bolesław Prus, *The Doll*, trans. David Welsh (New York: Twayne, 1972, first published in Polish as *Lalka* in 1890).

<sup>4</sup> Reddick, xiii. <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, xxi-xxii.



## Poland: First to Fight

Sixty years ago, on 1 September 1939, German armed forces invaded Poland to begin World War II. The Poles were the first to resist Nazi tyranny. Despite defensive alliances with England and France, Poland alone opposed Hitler's Germany in September 1939. A determined French and British attack in the West might well have succeeded and the many casualties of WWII and the Holocaust might have been avoided. Not only did the Poles valiantly oppose the German onslaught, they also faced a Soviet invasion on 17 September 1939. The German-Soviet invasions resulted in the loss of Polish independence for 50 years. Interestingly, Poland was also the first satellite nation to throw off Soviet domination in 1989. Polish heroism in the face of overwhelming odds should be a source of pride to all Polish Americans.

The September Campaign was the topic of talks by John Armstrong, Second Secretary at the U S Embassy in Warsaw and by John Radziłowski, Ph.D., president of PACIM and a PGS-MN board member, in August.

### The September Campaign: Selected Reading

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## My Trip to Poland

by Kathryn Wilebski Schafer

30222 Cty Rd 6, Strathcona, MN 56759

The poppies are beautiful in early June along the Polish countryside. These poppy petals littered the sidewalks of the Nowa Huta church outside of Krakow as a week of celebrating the Feast of Corpus Christi came to an end. I felt privileged to spend my first visit to Poland, the homeland of my ancestors, during the time of this great feast.

I was also privileged that my trip coincided with Pope John Paul II's pilgrimage to Poland, June 5-17. The pride and welcoming spirit of the Polish people for "their John Paul II" was evident everywhere. Red and white and yellow and white banners and flags welcoming him home were in every city and town which we passed through.

The importance of Corpus Christi in the lives of my Polish ancestors became evident to me in 1981 when I began work on my family history. We were planning our first Wilebski family reunion, collecting names and locations of relatives. I remember setting up old photographs from Grandma's trunk. Two pictures from the celebration of Corpus Christi in the parish of Holy Rosary (Krose) were among them. There too, flags and banners in the procession were part of the celebration.

My great-grandparents, Franciszek and Antonia Januszek Wilebski, left Poland in the spring of 1880, immigrating to America. On May 7 they landed at the Port of Baltimore. They migrated to LaSalle, Illinois and then to the Ivanhoe/Wilno area of southern Minnesota and finally to Krose or Orleans (near present day rural Lancaster) in Kittson County of northern Minnesota. Finding this migration route was the result of years of family research since 1981.

By 1996 we were at the point of crossing the ocean. From our research in America we knew Franciszek's oldest brother was born in the area of Poznań, but we were never told the parish in which our great-grandparents lived or married in Poland. My cousin had a friend working in Warsaw. He looked in the Poznan telephone directory for the surname Wilebski/Wielebski and Januzik/Januszek. After calling the people listed, a Maria Wielebska was willing to help us with our research. So correspondence began along with my desire to travel to Poland.

On 4 June 1999, this dream became reality. I left JFK airport with a tour group, headed for Warsaw to meet Maria Wielebska. I was returning to our Polish homeland almost 120 years of after my family's departure. I had left home without an interpreter. Maria had studied English a little and I had attempted to learn some Polish but I knew to accomplish anything we needed an interpreter. Luckily, five people on the tour could speak both Polish and English fluently.

A bus and a guide welcomed us at the airport in Warsaw. After briefly being shown some of the city we stopped in the Old Town Square to exchange money and to see the sights. It didn't take long to catch on to the money exchange. The zloty was worth about a quarter in American money. We were able to take some pictures, buy souvenirs and postcards and then returned to the bus for a three hour drive west to Konin.

From June 5-7 we stayed in a resort in the village of Mikorzyn about 10 km from Konin. This is a mining area of Poland in Wielkopolskie province (previously it was in Koninskie province). I had arranged to meet Maria in the hotel of this resort. When our bus arrived that evening my anticipation and excitement was overwhelming. I walked up to the front desk and inquired for Maria's room number. The receptionist relayed a message by phone that I was downstairs and within minutes Maria descended the stairway with flowers, a big smile, and an embrace. Words can't describe the joy of that moment! Through our limited ability to speak each others' language we spoke briefly then called on Fr. Darius, the Polish priest heading our pilgrimage, to interpret. The three of us arranged



**Antonia (Januszek) and Franciszek Wilebski**

to meet at 8:00 that evening in Maria's room to discuss family history.

During that meeting I recorded in my journal information that Maria shared concerning the Wielebski family in Poland. We are of two different lines of Wielebskis. She had located a woman from Borne Sulnowo who sent her a letter with a description of those who had left for America. This information had been recorded in a "memory book" of oral tradition. This is what the woman had told Maria concerning our family: "The father, Kasper Wielebski, came from Górnego Śląska (Górny Śląsk). He was a 'komisarzem' (police officer/commissioner) in Ślesinie, but when the Germans invaded he was forced to flee and go into hiding in Wielkopolska. Unfortunately at this time, Kasper assumed a false name as did his son, Szymon, the father of Franceszek, just previous to Franceszek's immigration to America."

This unknown false name had made Maria's research difficult to locate documents in Poland. However, Maria did find a birth certificate for another son, Walenty, whose family stayed in Poland. Apparently, Kasper had lived a short time in the village of Pawłowo, parish Jutrosin, county Leszczyńskie, where the birth certificate of Walenty Wielebski, dated 1810, had been found. The other members of the family were not found.

Walenty lived and died in Kalina near Chodzież. Maria recited a story concerning Walenty's son, Nepomucen, who was born in 1845 in Kalina: "Nepomucen was a righteous Polish man of deep Catholic faith who would rather lose his function/position and bread than to vote for the German official of the German government. When he was going to war his mother gave him a holy medal. It was a tradition to bless the son and place him under Our Lady's protection. During the attack he was shot and the bullet hit the medal. The medal saved his life. It was in front of a number of people as witnesses and the Chaplain of his battalion knew it and witnessed it also."

Maria and Fr. Darius also noted when looking at a picture of Franceszek and Antonia that there is a pearl on Franceszek's tie. They said in Poland this has the meaning that you are in charge of something and/or that you have wealth. I wondered how I could find out if this were true concerning my family.

We spent 2 1/2 hours sharing information and pictures of Maria and her late husband, Zygmunt Wielebski's family. She said the important thing was that she and her husband survived the time of captivity in Poland. Some family members did not. Zygmunt had died in 1983. Maria, 62, now lives with her daughter's family.



**Kathryn Wilebski Schafer at Jasna Góra  
of Częstochowa--8 June 1999**

Maria believes our family lines are connected with Kasper's siblings in the late 1700s due to the fact that the godparents listed on Walenty's birth certificate are from Zygmunt's family line. I spent the next two days with Maria touring the Shrine of Lichen, not far from our hotel in Konin. We took part in the Mass and the Eucharistic procession around the grounds of the shrine on June 6, the Feast of Corpus Christi. The weather was humid and warm. We walked the 2 km to the shrine because papal security did not allow busses in. By afternoon I had run out of bottled water and drank spring water at the shrine which was a mistake. I became ill on the bus, a combination of heat exhaustion and possibly food poisoning and/or drinking from the spring.

It was quite the experience to be lying on the porch step of a family home in Ślesin with a Polish doctor and Polish American doctor discussing what to do with me. Thankfully, this lady physician from North Dakota happened to be on our tour. She originally was from Poland, and helped to translate since the doctor and nurses only spoke Polish. She accompanied me to the medical center where I was given medication and two liter bags of glucose water for dehydration. Later

she told me the Polish doctor had saved my life in making the correct diagnosis and in his decision as to what medication to give me. I was feeling much better and able to eat soup and bread later that evening. The medical facility I had been taken to was quite primitive.

I was fortunate not to miss my first opportunity to see the Holy Father at the shrine in Lichen the next morning, June 7th. We attended the blessing of the unfinished basilica at Lichen in pouring rain among an estimated 250,000 pilgrims. The future basilica will be the seventh largest in Europe and the 11th largest in the world.

The afternoon of June 7th, Maria and I said good-bye and our tour bus headed south to Jasna Gora in Częstochowa. At Mass on June 8th (the feast of St. Hedwig, queen of Poland during the Jagiellonian period), I was honored to be seated in the front row below the Miraculous Icon of our Lady of Jasna Gora. The day was spent touring this holy place of our Polish ancestors. Praying here brought to mind what the Jews must experience when they travel to the temple in Jerusalem. We celebrated the evening in Częstochowa with Polish ethnic food—pierogi, cabbage rolls and wine. June 9th we continued south to Auschwitz. The Polish countryside, rural towns and fields were green with gardens, hayfields and red-orange with poppies. I noticed the gardens and crops were much farther along than ours in northern Minnesota for early June.

Seeing the Auschwitz concentration camp was sobering as is trying to understand the suffering the Polish people have endured during the many years of captivity and war. We saw the cell where St. Maximilian Kolbe died of lethal injection as well as the gas chambers where many Poles (Catholics and Jews), were exterminated.

From Auschwitz-Birkenau we continued on to the birthplace of the Holy Father in Wadowice. Then we went through the monastery of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska built in 1641. The evening of June 9th we arrived in Krakow which I came to love—my favorite city in Poland.

Krakow is a historical city, it was the capitol of Poland prior to it being moved to Warsaw. The Wawel Castle where the kings and queens of Poland reigned back through the centuries, the Wawel Cathedral, the Market Square, Cloth Hall, the Town Hall Tower, the churches of St. Adalbert, St. Andrew, the Church of the Virgin Mary dedicated to the Assumption of Mary with its elaborate altar, the Franciscan and the Dominican churches, were all included in our sightseeing. Polish architecture, history and culture surrounded us.

We ate in wonderful restaurants and witnessed a Crakovian parade and dancing in the streets during the evening as well as one special night of entertainment by Crakovian musicians who taught us old Crakovian folk dances. I even managed to find my way to the office of the Archdiocese of Krakow on Franciszkańca Street to do some research work on family history. A priest who spoke English helped me locate the different parishes of Kalina and gave me addresses for the two near Chodzież where I later sent letters inquiring about a marriage record for Franciszek and Antonia. The Divine Mercy Convent of Blessed Sister Faustina was another stop for our group, as were the famous church of Nowa Huta and the underground Salt Mines of Wieliczka where we were taken to the bottom to see the Chapel of Blessed Kinga, where everything is carved out of salt.

On June 12 we headed north to Warsaw again for our final two days in Poland. Maria came by train from Poznan to the Prestige Jan III Sobieski Hotel where we stayed. She brought presents that evening for my family and gave me a beautiful handmade needlework keepsake of the Holy Father from her daughter, Krystyna. We visited, took pictures and then I walked with her down the streets of Warsaw to say a final good-bye before she caught the train back home.

Sunday, June 13th our tour group joined 700,000 pilgrims for an outdoor Beatification Mass of 108 Polish martyrs, an historic event celebrated by Pope John Paul II, with many cardinals, archbishops and bishops present. The security was tight—no cameras or umbrellas were to be brought in. The crowd was enormous. A special moment took place at the end of Mass when a Polish woman turned to me and said in English, "The war is over." I replied, "I hadn't heard. We haven't listened to the news or watched TV for a number of days." The prayers for peace from Polish soil in the land of my forefathers of the many pilgrims, the Holy Father and the Polish people were heard during this special week of the Feast of Corpus Christi!

After a final farewell supper we boarded the bus the following morning for the airport, leaving Warsaw to return to the United States—the end of a trip of a lifetime.

## Missing Branches:

**QUERIES**, Send to: **Paul Kulas**, editor, *PGS-MN Newsletter*, 12008 West River Road, Champlin, MN 55316-2145 or to e-mail: [kkulas@ties.k12.mn.us](mailto:kkulas@ties.k12.mn.us)

### Researching BIEDA surname

I am researching my family tree and I know that my grandparents came from the Zakopane, Maruszyna and Rogóznik area. I was wondering if you might be able to direct me to someone locally that might know something about our name and family. I am also considering having a reunion of the Bieda family.

**Stephen Bieda**

<[stephen@biedaspowersports.com](mailto:stephen@biedaspowersports.com)>

### NEW MEMBERS; We welcome the following:

**Lisa R. Berger**, 1000 Cannon Ave., Shoreview MN 55126-8110 is researching BOROWIAK, MODRAK, MAZUR, GROCHOWSKI, INWALSKI, PESKOW-ZU in Poland and in Chicago IL and Toledo OH.

**Adele Cloutier**, E. 3rd St., St. Paul MN 55106-5706 <[Adele.Cloutier@metrostate.edu](mailto:Adele.Cloutier@metrostate.edu)> is researching the GAWARECKI surname.

**Joan Davy**, 8711 Summit Drive, Eden Prairie MN 55347-2326 <[JCDavy@aol.com](mailto:JCDavy@aol.com)> is researching NOVAK, ZYWICKI in St. Paul, Willow River and Duluth MN.

**Mary Forsman**, 6128 Upton Ave. S., Mpls MN 55410 is researching Franz LYSCHIK in Damritch near Falkwice and Marie PIEKNY in Lubnow near Falkwice and both in Royalton near Little Falls, MN.

**Greg/Kathy Gontarek**, 12205 131st Cir. So., Hastings MN 55033 is researching GONTAREK, PELOWSKI, GOERGEL. GALASKI family names.

**Roberta Hoyt**, 22 E. Skyline Pkwy, Duluth MN 55805 writes: "While visiting the Polish Museum, I learned about the Polish Genealogy Society. I would like to join and am enclosing a check for the membership. My husband's Polish ancestors came to the US in 1880 but I'm not sure from where in Poland. They settled in Duluth. I am hoping to glean some clues as to how to backtrack to Poland. If you know of resources which might help me please let me know. Thanks. Family names: SOBCZAK, BRONIKOWSKI, WALKWIAK, possibly from Poznan region."

**Veronica Keller**, 4020 - 9th Ave. W., Apt 206, Hibbing MN 55747 is researching Ludwik PLOSZAJ in Sakolow and Mary WRZAS (parents: Albertus and

Marianna Wrzas) in Ryfiszow? and both in Mpls, MN.

**Leona Lackner**, 7468 Isaak Ave NW, Annandale MN 55302-2432 is researching OPATZ in Opole, MN and WARZECKA in St. Cloud, MN.

**Edward Paul Melich**, 1015 23rd Av. SE, Mpls. MN 55414 is researching KUJAWA--probably near Bydgoesch or Posen and MELICH/MEHLICH--near Opole, Poland.

**Marlene Trader Molisee**, W7395 Hwy 12, Whitewater WI 53190-3923 <[mmolisee@idcnet.com](mailto:mmolisee@idcnet.com)> is researching TRADER (several spellings) and KARPINSKI in Tuskowy, Poland; SOBIESKI, LEPAK/LEPACK in Poland, KUYAWA in Warsaw, Krakow, and Gdansk and all in Duluth MN.

**Stephanie Nilsen**, 615 4th St. NE, Little Falls MN 56345 <[dnilsen@earthlink.net](mailto:dnilsen@earthlink.net)> is researching RINGWELSKI, MODRZEJEWSKI, CIEMINSKI in Borzyszkowy and Lapinence in Poland and in Winona and Little Falls in Minnesota.

**Gerald Orazem**, 1259 Westbrook Circle, Gastonia NC 28052 is researching GOLTZ, MYDLACH in the Danzig area, KROENING in the Parsow (now Parsowo) in Kreis Kolberg/Koeslin area and WROBEL/SIEGMUND near Krogulna (Opole) in Silesia, all in the early 1800s.

**James & Josephine Petron**, 5300 Fillmore St. NE, Minneapolis MN 55421 is researching PETRON (PIETRON), OSTOJ, RUDOLPH, SYMANIETZ (had a different spelling but we're not sure of it), SMALLY, BIAS(BJAS) in southern Selisia (Dombrowa, Opole, etc.).

**Jan Piotrowski**, 5370 Fawn Lake Dr. NE, Stacy MN 55079 is researching the PIOTROWSKI surname.

**James R. Price**, 103 F. South Drive, Circle Pines MN 55014-3318 is researching Stanislaus A. PRZASNYCKI aka in US as Stanley A. Price, arrived in Philadelphia, PA around 1914-1917

**John Prondzinski**, 412 Harold Dr., Burnsville MN 55337 <[jprondzinski@commstarinc.com](mailto:jprondzinski@commstarinc.com)> is researching PRONDZINSKI and ROLEZYNSKI in Warsaw ND, WROBLEWSKI in Minto ND and STENCEL in Ardoch ND.

**Marie Fierck Przynski**, 1848 Prosperity Rd., Maplewood MN 55109-4618 <[marie.przynski@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:marie.przynski@ci.minneapolis.mn.us)> is researching NIEDZIELSKI, FIERCK, PRZYNSKI, JUREK in Poland and in PA, MI, WI, and MN.

**Linda Roddy**, 4954 McAllister Ave NE, St. Michael MN 55376 <lroddy.hbc.honeywell.com> is researching PRADZINSKI, PRONDZINSKI, PROZINSKI, CUZENSKI, KUCHINSKI in Morrison County, MN--Little Falls and Sobieski, Pike Creek Township.

**Patricia Schoenhoff**, 1908 - 114 Av NW, Coon Rapids MN 55433 <FREELNCE@AOL> is researching NIEDZIELSKI, FIERCK, PRZYNSKI, JUREK in Poland and in PA, MI, WI, and MN.

**Lisa Trembley**, 10149 Nottingham Tr, Eden Prairie MN 55342 <ltrembley@uswest.net> is researching RAFIŃSKI, BEDNERSKI in Duelm in Benton Co. and Bovey, Grand Rapids, Ball Club and Deer River in Itasca Co., MN.

**Ron Zurek**, 12569 Parke Circle, Etiwanda CA 91739-2377 <rzurek@aol.com> is researching ZAWACKI in Danzig (now Gdansk) and in Foley MN. Ron is the Benton County, MN Coordinator for the MNGenWeb/USGenWeb Project.

**RENEWED MEMBERS:** *The following are renewed members who indicated their e-mail address for the first time or more complete areas of research:*

**Thomas J. Draus**, 888 Hwy 11, B464, Hazel Green WI 53811-0464 <TJDRAUS@MHTC.NET> is researching OPYD in Kamienica, MADON in Szczawa, DRAUS in Swilcza and all in Chicago.

**Diana J. Gustafson**, 1565 NE 148th Ave., Portland OR 97230-4615 <gramgus@worldaccessnet.com> is researching KUCHARSKI, URBANIAK, SZLAHTS

in Skrzebowa and Raciaz in Poland.

**Pauline Jagusch**, 1824 W 5th St., Red Wing MN 55066-2019 <Pjag@rocketmail.com> is researching PADINA in Pomorskie? and JAGUSCH in Opolskie and in Red Wing, Goodhue Co. MN.

**Raymond E. Karels**, 3612 Oakland Ave S., Mpls. MN 55407 <LqPCoGen@AOL.COM> is researching STOICK, KANTHAK, SPORS, MISCHNICK, ALBRECHT, SCHNASE, FUHLMAN, MICHALKE, STOLPMAN and all others in Kreis Schlochau--Floetenstein, Prechlau, Esenhammer, Lanken, Enbsee and surrounding area and in Lac qui Parle and Carver counties in MN, Huron Co. in MI and in WI.

**Richard Lis**, 911 LaLoma Rd., Pasadena CA 91105-2309 <RICPAS@JUNO.COM> is researching LIS, BUKALA, LENART, FLUDER in Pruszyń, Załuczne, Dąbrówka and Dąbie in Poland.

**William F. Muchlinski**, 6253C Magda Dr., Maple Grove MN 55369 is researching MUCHLINSKI in Muchlin, Poland and in Nebraska, Wisconsin and California. Plattsmouth NE was the city where the family first came upon arrival.

**Catherine Polanski**, 871 Lenox Ave., St. Paul MN 55119-5642 <T871.@aol.com> is researching Jan POLANSKI in Poland.

**Susan Riebeling**, 1406 Galtier St., St. Paul MN 55117 <MRIEBE4002@AOL.Com> or <SusanRiebeling@WestGroup.Com> is researching GRUBA, DOLNEY, SNAZA, RUMPZA in MN, SD and ND.

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