



The Polish Genealogy Society of Minnesota



Volume 31, Issue #2
Summer 2023

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About Us

For over 25 years, the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota (PGS-MN) has been assisting Polish-Americans explore their genealogy roots in Minnesota. Whether your relatives immigrated to the Iron Range, the north shore, the farm communities of the west, the southern Mississippi river bluff country, or the urban areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul, we have people and resources to help you search for those connections – here and in Poland.

Our society assists those interested in exploring their Polish ancestry, culture, language and history. We offer research and library resources as well as meetings and events at the Minnesota Genealogy Center in Mendota Heights.

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We are pleased to announce that Karen Brill has accepted the Membership Chair position. Karen joined PGS-MN in January 2023 and has a real passion for her family history and genealogy. We're very lucky to have Karen both as a new member and committee chair and she will be a real asset to the Society. She has close to 40 years' experience in Consumer Affairs (mostly food & beverage industry) and has her own consumer relations management consulting business. A St. Catherine University graduate, she is excited about her membership in PGSMN and the chance to make a contribution in her new role. Karen lives in Eagan with her three senior canine rescues. Contact information is polishkatarzyna007@gmail.com, 651-485-5008 (cell).

President's Letter

The Board of Directors approved a donation to assist the resettlement of Ukrainian refugees.

Director Tom Losinski had initiated the request to do so. Last week the donation funds were transferred to the Caritas organization in Bytow, Poland, where the funds will be used to resettle refugees displaced by the Russian invasion. Other Polish communities and organizations in Minnesota have done so.

After our May 6th program, Polish Art & Culture, we will take our summer hiatus, resuming in September. PGSMN intends to participate in a number of Minnesota cultural events this summer, as we have done in the past, and will keep you informed. We will participate with the Morrison County Historical Society, in October, in a joint meeting. If you are aware of an out-state event which may be of interest to us, let us know—email to pgsminnesota@gmail.com.

We are a volunteer organization. Volunteers make up the Board of Directors. Volunteers constitute the various committees—newsletter, website, programs, membership, library, etc. Volunteers write articles for our newsletter, and conduct programs. Without volunteers we would have very little to offer our members. We make no demands on our volunteers other than they assist with the task for which they volunteer. Contact us at pgsminnesota@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer.

If you have an interest, or just want to inquire about opportunities, send an email to pgsminnesota@gmail.com, with the heading “volunteer opportunities.”

Enjoy your summer.

Terry, 04/24/23



Start Your Family Research—US National Archives

The US National Archives is a cornucopia of information, and research is open to all—
<https://archives.gov>

The Genealogy section not only gives helpful information on how to start your genealogical research, but provides innumerable resources, charts and forms to accomplish your journey. Additionally they provide free databases at their various facilities, and provide a calendar of workshops and events. They cover popular topics such as census records, military service, immigration and naturalization records, and so much more. They maintain a catalog guide for genealogists, and provide electronic records also. They maintain a microfilm catalog also, and offer many additional tools. All of the above can be found at the National Archives webpage – <https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy>.

In recognition of public service, the US National Archives is offering a special #Genealogy series that started in May and focuses on both military and civilian records. The series presentation are by experts from the National Archives staff, and provide a general overview of specific subjects—and will include tools for family history research at all skill levels. These programs will be on the YouTube channel.

That Polish Journey—Thad Ludwiczak

It's time for reflection. I have reached almost 72 years of age and my life journey has been relatively long. Now living in Minnesota, I grew up in Philadelphia. How I got here is not important at this point but how I started is.

My birth family, grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles, except for two, (which I will refer to later) are Polish. I myself am second generation and was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. All four of my grandparents were born in Poland and migrated to this country between 1895 and 1918.

In my view there are three primary characteristics of Polish life as experienced by immigrants; family, church and culture. I had a healthy dose of all three. As second generation I was moving "up the ladder", although the ladder was not very high when I was born. Still I had certain advantages that my grandparents never had.

In 1951 I was born into the Philadelphia Polish ghetto. I use the word "ghetto" not as a pejorative term but simply as a way of describing the neighborhood of the Polish diaspora. These were hard working, blue collar laborers and their families trying to make good in the all promising world of the United States.

When I was able to do a little research about my great-grandfather, Martin, it turned out he was working as a tanner when he first came to the U.S. This is probably one of the most filthy and obnoxious jobs that is out there. It is indicative of the type of work available to people without an education and without the English language, that is, the vast majority of people coming into this country from a foreign land.

The first generation of Polish families tended to be large - usually six or more children. As a result, I have plenty of aunts and uncles. And plenty of cousins. My mother was the youngest and had six siblings. She was the youngest, 20 years younger than the oldest, and all have passed away now except her. She is 94.

My first memories are of the city neighborhood where the odor of the local chocolate factory permeated the air many of the times we would visit babcia (grandmom) and dziadek (grandfather). The neighborhood was filled with what is known as "row" houses whereby each home shared a wall with the next neighbor. Think of the show "All In The Family". You don't see that kind of housing here in Minnesota. Everything was concrete and brick and noisy. The train tracks were just a couple blocks away and you always heard the whistle and movement of the railroad cars.

My grandmother Ludwiczak was unusual in that her home was a brick duplex. She shared a wall with her neighbor but there was just one wall. Everyone called her "pani" and she did the same with her neighbors. There was a 3 foot wrought iron fence that divided her yard from everyone else but you could see all of the neighbor's backyards just fine and talk to them across this small barrier.

Babcia Ludwiczak loved roses. Unlike Minnesota where growing roses is problematic, Philadelphia is much more rose-friendly. No need to bury them like so many varieties here must be. Those roses lined the entirety of her iron fence and were of every color. And she had a gift of coaxing the largest and most fragrant blooms. They were in full view of the neighbors.

Family was everything. Even after we moved out of the city into the suburbs, another move "up the ladder", we were close enough to visit babcia and other relatives every week. The visiting day, usually Sunday, was split between both grandmothers - my dad's mom and my mother's mom.

My dad's mom, Babcia Ludwiczak, was an incredibly good cook. She made all of the Polish dishes that people talk about today and she made them all from scratch - chicken noodle soup, czarnina (duck's blood soup), pierogi, babka, chruscziki (deep fried pastry), barszcz (Russian borscht) and many more. We sat around her kitchen table to eat the noon meal and she never disappointed.

One of my favorite meals was a soup named “czarnina”. It was only later that I learned that it was made from duck’s blood. Babcia would add prunes, noodles and vinegar and voila, you had yourself a very tasty meal. Babcia told me when I was older that she went down to the butcher, picked out the live duck, and asked the butcher to save the blood. Then she walked home.

My grandmother Ludwiczak had an incredibly interesting journey from Poland and a very difficult life, not unlike millions of other immigrants to our country. She would often regale me with her stories. Born in 1900, she came to this country alone as a 16-year-old woman, chosen by her widowed mother, to make this long and treacherous journey.

To pay for her transit, her mother sold the only major possession they had – a cow. I cannot imagine how difficult that must have been since that cow provided the majority of their subsistence – milk and cheese and ultimately leather and meat for the table.

Babcia had to venture alone into an unknown world, buying a train ticket, riding a train into Germany where the transport ship disembarked, only speaking Polish and boarding a boat to America. She was still a teenager who comparably would be a junior in high school today. No guarantees and no job.

As a girl she was tasked with watching the cows of the local baron, making sure they did not wander too far from the manor. In Poland, there were really only two classes – the peasants and the lords. My grandmother was a peasant.

As she grew older, the baron brought her into his castle where she learned a number of skills. This is where she learned to cook under the supervision of the manor chef. She also learned how to sew, embroider, decorate Easter eggs and as well as other domestic arts. She excelled at all of them. I remember she had a collection of dolls where she sewed colorful dresses for them in the tradition of her Polish culture.

I never asked how and when the decision was made to come to America. That is a question I wish I could go back and ask. However, I think it probably had to do with the oppression felt by the Polish people at the time.

At the turn of 1900, Poland was divided into three territories governed by Russia, Germany and Austria. Poland was not an independent nation. The first world war broke out in 1914 and Poland became a killing field. One of the most vivid images I have is when babcia told me that she and her mother went through the streets of the village finding and burying the soldiers who died. There were no men to do the job. They were all in various armies.

I think that would have been a lot for a 14 year old girl to handle. And I am speculating that was the major reason why Babcia and her mother had had enough.

She arrived at Ellis Island in 1918 and that’s where the story gets murky to me. The next thing I know is she is married living on Duncan St in Philadelphia. I never saw or knew her home on Duncan Street. She and my grandfather ultimately ended up on Haworth Street in Northeast Philadelphia, just a few minutes from the Tacony-Palmyra bridge that linked New Jersey with Pennsylvania.

If you want you can find all of these landmarks today with Google maps.

About 10 years after her arrival, she sent for her mother and brought her to America to live with her. I was able to see her mother listed in the 1930 census as part of her household, so I was able to conclude that she successfully brought her here.

To my knowledge, Babcia Ludwiczak had no other family here but my other grandmother, Babcia Mrozinski did – many of them. Any older woman related to the family in whatever way was referred to as “Ciocia” or aunt. And it seems like there were endless “ciocia’s” in my family, mostly on my Grandmother Mrozinski’s side. I believe she had 9 other siblings, almost all of them women.

And a lot of them were old when I was a teenager. I attended many funerals when I was a boy and teen, not knowing anything about the person. But funerals, especially wakes, were a big deal. The viewings and wakes were always held at an inner-city funeral parlor in the Polish neighborhood.

After the funeral, there was always food and drink with emphasis on “drink”, as in alcohol. The after-funeral event was usually in a church basement and I remember such an event vividly - one bottle of whiskey, not wine, placed on each table.

It was Babcia Ludwiczak who gave me the most information about the old country. Her husband, Dziadek Ludwiczak was not one for communicating. On my mother’s side, Dziadek Mrozinski had passed away in 1951 when I was just one year old. His wife, Babcia Mrozinski, did not speak or understand English, a great handicap for me to get to know her better.

Unfortunately, I do not know many details about the history of the Mrozinski family. but hope to learn more in the years ahead as I do more research. Ancestry.com is a great resource and I have learned a lot from the records and documents they have been able to provide. Still much is unknown to me.

The Polish language was spoken all the time among my relatives. Of course, for the grandparents, it was the preferred way of communicating. Since we were 3rd generation, we were not exposed enough day by day to the words and so by the time I was seven or eight I missed the opportunity to become fluent. That has always been my regret.

You cannot talk about Poland without talking about the Catholic Church. Throughout the centuries, the Catholic Church was the center of social and religious life for all Poland. And it was a refuge from the horrors that Poland experienced. Some 95% of Poles identify as catholic. Polish immigrants brought their religion with them.

My Polish grandparents were no different. Religious paintings and icons were everywhere. Sunday Mass was faithfully attended, and the religious calendar was filled with obligations with other feast days sprinkled in between Sunday Mass.

My education was Catholic private schools. If you include my university years, I attended catholic schools for 16 years. In fact, when we briefly lived in Syracuse New York, my parents unbelievably found a Polish catholic school. I was eight years old and my sister was 7. We had to take a public bus into the city unchaperoned to get there. This was before the fear set in by our society concerning kids being abducted or abused. It certainly was a different time.

The greatest religious holiday for our family was Christmas Eve. In Poland it is known as “Wigilia”, or the “vigil” in English. The family would gather around a formal dinner table, wait for the first star to appear, and then celebrate a six course, dinner with the best cuisine you could imagine. Pierogi with sour cream and onions, pickled herring, barszcz, rye bread with caraway seeds, and babka.

One of my favorite parts of the meal was the breaking of the “opwatek” which was a large thin bread wafer, about 3”x5” in size, embossed with religious symbols. The opwatek was passed around with one person breaking off a small piece then turning to his/her neighbor and wishing them peace, happiness, good fortune, or whatever other positive thought came to mind.

But this was the way it was. A generation from Poland, living in a Polish diaspora, my family was trying just to survive in this new country, the United States. It must have been both wonderful and terrifying. The second generation, my parents, trying to emerge and live the American dream, moving to the suburbs and struggling to give their children an even better life. They did so.

I graduated from the University of Notre Dame and all of my sisters have college degrees. I have never forgotten the sacrifice of those who have brought me to the place where I am today. As I age, I have become even more appreciative of the great gifts my ancestors have given me.

The first 20 years of my life were the most formative – those years in and around Philadelphia. I have been a resident of Minnesota for 50 years, but those early experiences have taught me the importance of family, community and the value system I hold today.

That's not to say that the past was perfect. It was not. My family experienced all the turbulence and heartbreak that every family goes through – divorce, mental illness, alcoholism, unwanted pregnancies, and more.

But I like to think that we have continued to love and support one another through both the good and touch times.

Finally, whenever I see other immigrants, no matter what country they are from, I try to be empathetic, knowing what my grandparents went through just to get here and what they had to do to sustain their families.

Donations

Thank you for the generous memorial donation. We are appreciative of your generosity.

Memorial Donation in memory of Roman Chock .

Memorial Donation in memory of Terri Michurski

Missing Branches—New Members Welcome to PGSMN

Janelle Turner—Janelle.turner@icloud.com, looking for **Dzieweczanska** from Poznan, settled in Holdingford, MN

Colleen Zenk—cazenk8250@outlook.com, **Fijol/Fiyol/Feol** from Radomich/Tamow, Poland; settled in Minnesota Lake and later Mapleton, MN; **Lonczak/Lunsack** from Radomich/Tarnow, Poland. Settled in Minnesota Lake and later Mapleton .

Charlene Tinka - chaz4jazz@live.com, looking for Sweda, **Vroblosky, Wroblewski, Benczik, Bendzick**

Hoffman Research Library

MGS Hoffman Research Library

Mondays 10 am–4 pm (new hours)
Wednesday 10 am–4 pm
Thursday 10 am–8 pm
Saturdays 10 am–4 pm

Polish Night at the library occurs:

- First Saturday of each month, from 10 AM until 4PM
- Second Thursday of each month, from 3PM – 8PM



Before visiting the library please check hours and availability at www.mngs.org

Please note the Library will be closed Saturday, October 28, Thursday, November 23 and Saturday, December 23.

Library Fees—Library admission is free to MGS, branch (PGSMN is a branch) and partner members. Non-members are asked to pay a \$10 day use fee.

From Poland to Minnesota

PGSMN offers excellent resource “From Poland to Minnesota” to assist in your genealogical journey .

Have you experienced ***From Poland to Minnesota*** yet? Even if you aren’t working on your family history right now, it can be fun to explore the areas of Minnesota where our Polish ancestors settled.

You can begin with all of Minnesota, or choose from 7 regions to start your journey. If you want to focus on Poland, you have exciting paths to discover! Want to help / add to ***From Poland to Minnesota*** for other folks doing their research? Email us at pgsminnesota@gmail.com today.

From Poland to Minnesota

Project Purpose:

- Provide region-specific and genealogical resources related to the regions of Poland where Minnesota Poles originated from
- Provide information and genealogical resources related to where immigrants from those defined Polish regions settled in Minnesota
- Promote opportunities for PGS-MN members to share information with others who have ancestors from the same Poland and/or Minnesota towns.

Defined Areas of Poland Where MN Poles Came From

Kashubia	Poznań	Russian Poland
Galicia	Silesia	

Areas of MN Where Poles Settled

28 Counties

Over 100 towns, townships, and unincorporated communities

Information Covered

Poland	Minnesota
Maps	Maps
Polish towns/villages where MN Poles emigrated from and affiliated churches	Minnesota towns/townships where immigrants from Poland settled
Population, demographic, geographic information	Churches and cemeteries affiliated with Poles in MN towns
Links to genealogical websites specific to each area	Links to overall MN genealogical resources as well as local resources (books, articles, websites)
Ethnic/cultural aspects (food, customs, language, religion, flag/coat of arms)	Links to articles from past PGS-MN newsletters about the MN towns and Poles who settled there
Links to articles from past PGS-MN newsletters about specific areas of Poland where MN Poles came from	
Emigration resources	

Summer Recipe—Judith Blanchard

Every Saturday, at 10:00 AM, TPT Channel 2.1 airs a half hour show “Flavor of Poland” with Alexander August. This is a combination travel-cooking show hosted by Alexander August, who was born in Poland but currently resides in the US. Each week, a new area of Poland is explored traveling through the area and then creating Polish food dishes in her kitchen. Episodes are aired on Wednesdays at 10:00 AM. (More info at <https://www.flavorofpoland.com/episodes>).

May 10 allowed the viewer to walk through the making of Sekacz—a truly delicious cake.



Here's some information about the cake, for those who are not familiar with the process:

Known as *sękacz* in Poland, *šakotis* in Lithuania, and *bankucha* in Belarus, this famous tree cake is a vital part of traditional Polish, Lithuanian and Belarusian cuisine. Prepared with a thick batter which is repeatedly poured over a rotating horizontal spit, the cake is often slowly baked in the oven, or more traditionally—over an open fire.

During baking, the creamy egg batter slowly drips on the sides, creating a recognizable shape of this sweet treat. Although commonly regarded as the same cake, *sękacz*, *šakotis* and *bankucha* share some differences. The *sękacz* is usually described as the softer, more delicate version, while *šakotis* and *bankucha* tend to be denser and more decorative.

You start by building a large fire. A long wooden spool is set up on a spit fireside. The cake batter is dripped over the hot spool and is built up layer after layer after layer, with the drips becoming the tree branches. The cake, when you break off a branch, shows rings just like the growth rings you'd see on a tree.

Here's a recipe: (you may want to have a smaller version. You can probably find one that makes less on the internet.)

Let it sit for 5 hours and only then, it solidifies and hardens enough to stand. Voila! You have your traditional Sekacz.

You can serve it plain or drizzle with chocolate or sugar icing. There is no going back once you try this Polish delicacy! With every layer of this spit cake, you can taste the richness of cream and fresh eggs.

Sekacz – Tree Cake from Podlasie, Poland

This is one of the oldest traditional Polish recipes but it is definitely a challenge to prepare this at home. Fun fact: Sekacz can last six months!

PREP TIME 50 minutes / COOK TIME 30 minutes / TOTAL TIME 1 hour 20 minutes

Ingredients

1 kg (approximately 2 1/4 pounds) of butter
4 packets of vanilla sugar (approximately 4 tablespoons)
40 eggs
1 kg of flour (approximately 2 1/4 pounds)
1 liter of sour cream (a tad over 1 quart)
2 lemons

Instructions

A traditional Sekacz is made by mixing 1 kg of butter with 4 packets of vanilla sugar until it dissolves. Add the egg yolks from 40 eggs and stir.

The next step is to add 1 kg of flour slowly to the egg yolk mixture and stirred.

Then, you add 1 liter of sour cream, the juice from two lemons and some aroma, and mix it to get an even batter.

Keep this batter aside and whisk the egg whites to get a thick, foamy texture. Now, you pour in the egg whites and get a fluffier cake.

On an open fire or a big oven, the batter is gradually poured on a rolling pin. Baked for over 3 hours! But that's not enough.

Editor's Note—Foodly cooks (<https://www.foodly.com>) indicate that there are 8 grams of vanilla sugar in a packet, which equals about a tablespoon. In their experience, one packet of vanilla sugar adds about the same amount of vanilla flavor as one teaspoon of vanilla extract.

Vanilla sugar is regular sugar infused with vanilla beans. It's a common baking ingredient in some European regions, but in US mostly found in kitchen stores, bakeries and specialty stores. It is easily mixed up at home. (<https://sallybakingaddictionl.com>)

Ingredients

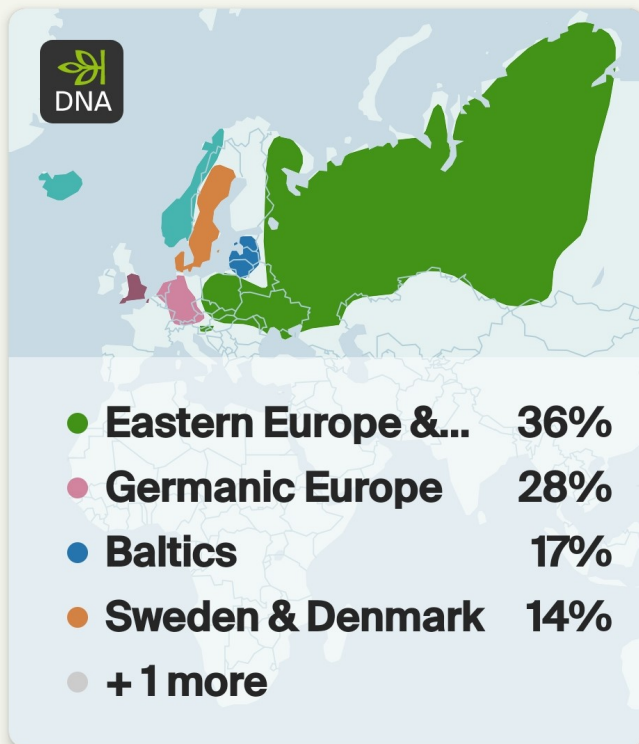
2 cups (400g) granulated sugar
1 vanilla bean (5-7 inch long) - recommended Grade B beans (less moisture), but Grade A works.

- 1) Place sugar in your food processor or blender. Any small chopper or even a coffee bean grinder works. (Process in batches if needed.) You can skip the food processor/blender and just mix the sugar and vanilla bean seeds in a bowl with a whisk, but you'll get better flavor if you pulse the two together.
- 2) Cut the vanilla bean pod in half lengthwise. Use a knife to scrape out the seeds. Place the seeds on top of the sugar. (Save the empty beans/pods.) Use a spoon or another knife to scrape the seeds off the knife—they're sticky and clumpy.
- 3) Pulse/blend/whisk until all the seeds are broken up and blended, about 10-12 pulses. If you notice extra large clumps, feel free to keep pulsing/whisking or sift them out. Pour vanilla sugar into your jar or container. Make sure tightly sealed to preserve the freshness.
- 4) Submerge the empty bean/pod into the sugar. Cut it as needed to fit. This is actually optional, but the empty bean adds more flavor as the weeks go on.
- 5) Store vanilla sugar at room temperature. Give it a shake every few weeks because it can clump up. If stored in a cool, dry place, vanilla sugar has a long shelf life, 2+ years at least.

The vanilla flavor will come through the most if you use regular granulated sugar. It can also be used in your coffee or tea.

PGSMN Program Meetings

We host program meetings on Polish Genealogy and Culture six times a year. Meetings take place on the first Saturday of the month. Program meetings are held at the Minnesota Genealogy Center, streamed online, and recorded for members to watch anytime. Meetings are held in September, October, November, March, April and May. Please join us.



This is your sharable public link. Once you share it, anybody can use it to access this summary of your results.

Estimate

- **Eastern Europe & Russia** 36% >
 - Northeast Poland
 - Northeast Poland & Southwest Lithuania
- **Germanic Europe** 28% >
- **Baltics** 17% >
 - Lithuania
 - South Lithuania
- **Sweden & Denmark** 14% >

See your DNA Story over time
Ethnicity 1700 1725 >

We were told by my eldest Polish Aunt, that our Grandfather had changed his name, when he came to America. I found that not to be true. His name was Albin Ksavier Rudzejewski-Kolupailo.

Ksaverie was his Father's name. I thought Rudzejewski would have been his Mother's maiden name. But records proved that wrong. He dropped the Rudzejewski name. I was searching for Albin Kolupailo on the Ship's Manifest. I could not find it. I mentioned this to a helper at the Family search library. She found him with Rudzejewski, and Kolupailo spelled with a C. The eldest Aunt had told me about the Rudzejewski name, and had written out the pronunciation. I looked at his name on the Naturalization papers, and he signed Albin Kolupailo.

One of my sisters ran into a man that told her that Kolupailo, in Lithuanian means "to dig a hole"

Polish Proverb

Co kraj, to obyczaj

Literal translation: "Every country has its customs."
 English equivalent: "Different strokes for different folks."

People have different preferences, customs, and beliefs. Remember this proverb next time you feel surprised that something is being done differently than you're used to.

Benton County & Polish Migration—Marie Przynski

Central Minnesota boasted the largest concentration of rural Polish settlements, even though they were scattered throughout the state. Before Minnesota became a state, Benton County was one of the original nine counties established by the Territorial government. It was acknowledged as being organized in 1849. Originally much larger, it was reduced in size between 1856–1860. The county was named after Senator Thomas Benton who worked tirelessly to enact the Homestead Act, and encouraging settlement across the territory.

The county was originally settled by the Sioux and Chippewa Indian Tribes. Explorer Zebulon Pike would write of Benton County in his exploration journals that the “grand rapids” (Sauk Rapids) were difficult, as well as the Watab rapids further upstream. He described the water as “clear”, and noted the immense droves of wildlife.

Polish immigrants and their descendants settled in Minnesota in both urban and rural communities. There are distinct migration waves from the 1850s to 2004. By the 1870s, Polish communities had formed in rural central Minnesota, many organized and supported through chain migration.

It is acknowledged that most Poles who settled in rural Minnesota came from the Prussian or German-controlled western partition. Many were among the earliest Polish settlers in America, arriving well before the majority of their compatriots in the 1890–1910s. Although some left Poland for political reasons, most were seeking better opportunities than available in Poland.

It is noted that the Prussian government made no serious attempts to suppress culture and language until Bismarck came into power. Suppression of Polish language and culture was then required. Bismarck also believed that the Pope was a threat, and the Catholic faith was also suppressed. This mandate, with poor economic times, along with communications from Father Pierz lauding the great things in Central Minnesota, allowed for a sizeable amount of Polish immigrants, not only to America, but to Benton County.

The first known settlers to locate in Watab was David Gilman, who established a trading post there. The most predominant population was German at that time. The second largest nationality in the county are the Polish. “Alberta Colony” was promoted by several prominent Poles in Chicago. It grew quickly after 1877. The area, around the community of Gilman, is still the most recognizable of the county’s ethnic communities. The church of Saints Peter and Paul in Gilman is a highly visible architectural landmark of Polish influence in the community. It has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Nearby, in late 1878, several Polish Lutheran families set up a community in Sauk Rapids. Even the St. Paul and Manitoba Railroad support Polish communities and actively sought out potential settlers also. Newspapers of the latter 1800s referred to the Polish immigrants as “Polanders.”

The Benton County Historical Society and Museum, Sauk Rapids, depicts the story of the development of Benton County through the use of artifacts, pictures, and printed materials. Truly worth a visit.

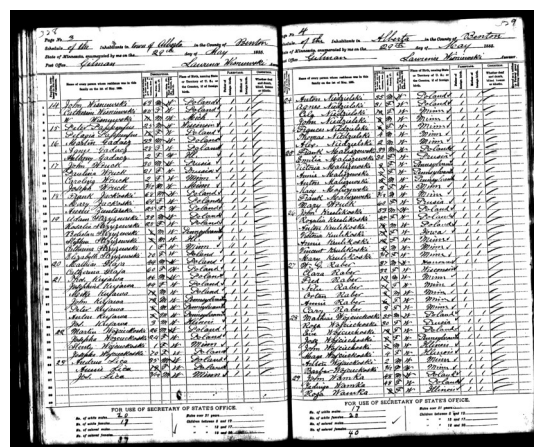
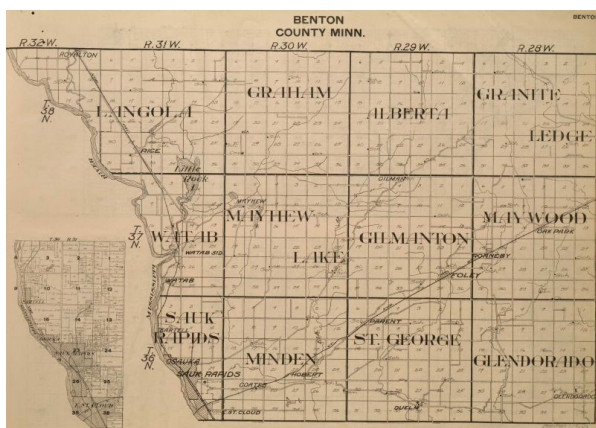


Photograph
provided by
Benton County
Historical Society.

Map provided
from Wikipedia

Benton County had four great Polish settlements: Duelm, Sauk Rapids, Foley, and Gilman. Ludwik Jurek, writing in June 1880, remarked that twelve years ago he bought a farm of 240 acres in Duelm. He offered forty acres for a church. At this time about 30 families who had settled some years ago were living in Duelm; now, 125 more families bought land, because the railroad company was selling it at three to five dollars an acre. Always in search of good land, the Polish farmer encouraged others to move westwardly over the State. (Polish Settlements in MN 1860-1900, Sister M. Teresa, O.S.F.)

Since the creation of the first Polish community in 1858, Polish immigrants and their descendants find new and diverse ways to make Minnesota home.



Plat map and census photo obtained from Benton County website

National Digital Archives in Poland

Szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl – Search the Archives | NAC



The National Digital Archives are one of three central archives of the state archive network in Poland. They were established in 2008 as a result of the transformation of the Archives of Audiovisual Records into an institution being a response to the advancement of the technology of recording and providing access to date.

They have digitalized materials from state archives across Poland; built IT systems and infrastructure aimed at collecting and providing access to the information, collect, store, maintain and process photographs, films and sound recordings, and make it all available.



Dolina Adult Dancers—Come kick up your heels

Practice—Tuesdays 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm
Contact Dolina for location—Dolina.mn@dolina.org

Come to rehearsal and check it out

Following the Thread: Exploring the Origin of Kashubian Embroidery

Nicole Foss

Embroidery (decorative designs made by needlework) has flourished throughout Poland in a variety of styles and colors. From the bold *parzenica* (heart-shaped patterns) of Podhale, to the red and black geometricized motifs of the Kurpie region, to the distinctive seven-color palette of Kashubia, Polish embroidery takes many forms. This essay explores the origins of Kashubia's traditional embroidery.

One of the most recognizable and beloved handicrafts of Kashubia is its embroidery. Richly embroidered floral motifs are worked in red, yellow, green three shades of blue, and black on white cloth. Up until the nineteenth century, women also wore dark-colored caps embroidered with gold and silver threads. Embroidery can be found on traditional clothing for both men and women, as well as household linens.

Embroidery is a craft nearly as old as the production of textiles. It is believed to have originated as a way to join or repair pieces of cloth or leather, and evolved into embellishment of the fabric's surve for decorative purposes. One of the earliest examples was clothing stitched with thousands of ivory beads found in a 30,000-year-old burial in Russia. Early examples can be found throughout the world, including in China, Egypt, the Middle East, Europe, and the Mediterranean.

In Europe, Embroidery was initially used primarily to decorate ecclesiastical items, though soon after the Renaissance it spread in popularity and practice. By the sixteenth century, guilds were formed in countries such as England for professional male embroiderers. Religious orders practice the craft as well. Monasteries and convents supplied churches and the local nobility with embroidered works. They often used patterns designed by professional embroiders, although over time a collection of motifs accumulated and was shared across monasteries and convents.

Among the non-professional and laypeople of the Middle Ages, needlework was an important part of young women's education. Nearly all girls were taught basic sewing techniques. The education of those in the peasantry or working class usually ended there, allowing them to produce and repair clothing and household textiles for their families. Girls of the gentry and nobility went on to learn more advanced decorative stitching. According to Melinda Watt, chair of the Art Institute of Chicago's Textile Department, "High praise was given to those young women who excelled in embroidery; it was seen as an indicator of their piety and diligence."

By the fourteen century religious orders in Poland and other parts of Europe had begun to establish needlework schools for local girls, and in some instances, boys as well. By this time, Christian missions had been in Poland since around the year 1000 AD, following the baptism of Mieszko I in 966 AD. The Norbertines, who were brought to Żukowo in the thirteenth century by Duke Meswin I, taught a style of embroidery there that is credited with giving rise to what is today the most widely recognized for of Kashubian embroidery. This is characterized by a strong emphasis on stylized botanical motifs worked in the seven colors mentioned above. Over time, the seven colors have come to have the following symbolic associations for the Kashubian people:

- * Yellow represents the grain of the fields and the sands of the coastline
- * Green represents the wooded forests
- * Light blue represents the sky
- * Royal blue represents the region's many lakes
- * Navy blue represents the deep waters of the Baltic Sea, and
- * Red represents the patriotic blood shed for the nation

A folktale provides one explanation for how these colors were chosen. The tale goes that several hundred years ago, Prince Świętopełk of Pomerania ordered a tablecloth and napkins to be embroidered by the Norbertine convent in Żukowo in preparation for a special feast. He asked only that the embroidery be very beautiful to impress his guests, who were royalty from the Baltic coast. Radosława, the most talented embroideress in the convent, was chosen for the work,

which she had a week to complete. While she reflected on her task, she was visited several times by a white dove, who each time brought her a colorful item: a blue cornflower, red rose and cheery, a white daisy, and a piece of amber. On his last visit, the dove pointed out the rainbow outside her window, and suggested she draw on these shapes and colors to please the prince, his guests, and all people (adapted from Maria-Teresa Hopkins's story in *StorySave 2014 Quiltbook* by *Storytellers of Canada*).

The floral motifs found in Kashubian embroidery today include both native plants, such as cornflowers and forget-me-nots, and those which were introduced to the region, such as tulips and pomegranates. Several of the motifs originated further west, in countries such as France, Italy, and England, where botanical atlases were a popular source of inspiration. Middle Eastern influences can be found as well. By the seventeenth century, pattern books were being published in Germany, Italy, England, and France and made their way to Poland. Convents also welcomed sisters from other countries, who introduced needlework designs

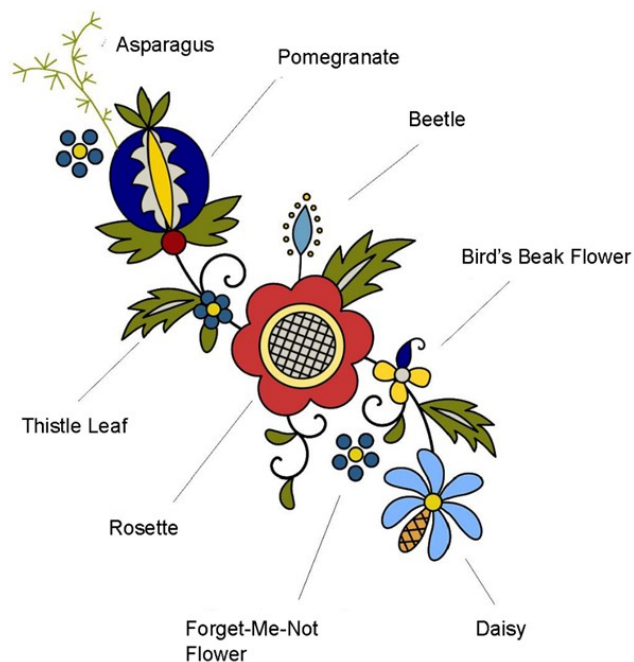


Illustration: common motifs from Kashubian embroidery (adapted by N. Foss)

In addition to the Żukowo school, other convent embroidery schools in Kashubia included the Tuchola school, the Wejherowo school, and the Puck school. Embroidery from each of these schools can be distinguished by the predominant colors, and in some cases the motifs employed. Embroidery from the Tuchola school was executed in shades of yellow, orange, and amber. Wejherowo school embroidery favored the colors red and yellow, and featured dahlias, chrysanthemums, lilac leaves, and cowberries. Embroidery from the Puck school was done in various shades of blue, and included stylized designs of sea holly, nets, and waves

Following the suppression and dissolution of the Norbertine convent in Żukowo in 1834, local women in the area continued the tradition of embroidery that they had been taught, passing the skills and designs down through the generations. The best known of these is Marianna Okoniewska, one of the last students of the Żukowo convent school, who taught her granddaughters Zofia and Jadwiga Ptach. Zofia and Jadwiga in turn co-founded of the Żukowska School of Kashubian Embroidery in the 1930s. Another Kashubian embroidery school was started by Teodora Gulgowska in Wdzydze in the early 20th century as a program in Teodora and her husband Izydor's Village Museum, which taught Kashubian traditional handicrafts. Today, there are several skilled embroiderers continuing this practice, which developed over several hundred years and drew inspiration from local beauty and cultures near and far.

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To Left—17th -18th century embroidery by the Norbertine Sisters (Courtesy of the Muzeum Diecezjalne w Pelplinie), images on right and below are Kashubian embroidery images from Wikipedia and other Polish websites.



Patron Saint of Pierogi—St. Hyacinth

One of the major miracles attributed to Hyacinth came about during a Mongol attack on Kiev. As the friars prepared to flee the invading forces, Hyacinth went to save the ciborium containing the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle in the monastery chapel, when he heard the voice of Mary, the mother of Jesus, asking him to take her, too.

Hyacinth lifted the large, stone statue of Mary, as well as the ciborium. He was easily able to carry both, despite the fact that the statue weighed far more than he could normally lift. Thus, he saved them both. For this reason, he is usually shown holding a monstrance (though they did not come into use until several centuries later) and a statue of Mary.



The Polish exclamation *Święty Jacku z pierogami!* ("St. Hyacinth and his pierogi!") is an old-time saying, a call for help in some hopeless circumstance. It has derived from two legends. One of them is about his visit on July 13, 1238, to Kościelec. During his visit, a hailstorm broke out, destroying crops and leaving people with the terrible prospect of poverty and famine. Hyacinth told them to pray. The next day, the crops were miraculously restored. The people then treated Hyacinth to pierogi made from those crops as a token of gratitude. The second legend mentions Hyacinth feeding people with pierogi during a famine caused by the Mongol invasion of 1241.

Hyacinth was canonized on 17 April 1594 and his memorial day is celebrated on this day. He is the patron saint of those in danger of drowning and weight lifting, and the patron saint of Lithuania.



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CALENDAR

June–Czerwiec

03–Slavic Soul with Slawomir Cichor. Concert at 11:00 am, Westminster Presbyterian Church Sanctuary, 1200 Marquette Avenue Minneapolis.

04–Amelia Kowalewska in Concert, Holy Cross Church, at 11:30 am. Free event, short concert .

09–11 – Milwaukee Polish Fest, hosted by the Polish Center of Wisconsin.
See <http://www.polishfest.org> for schedule.

14–US National Archives–Genealogy Series–Planning, Techniques, and Strategies for Preserving Family Collections and Stories–online–1:00 pm to 2:00 pm EST (12:00 pm to 1:00 pm CST) – Learn how professionals preserve records with surveys to create a plan, use archival techniques, and select storage strategies

14– Jamala, “Like a Bird Tour” – Ukrainian singer/songwriter on tour. Veterans Memorial Amphitheater, 3700 Monterey Drive, St. Louis Park, MN–tickets at <https://discoverstlouispark.com/events/jamala-like-a-bird-tour/j>

21–Noc Kupaly (Midsummer’s Eve) – Polish Cultural Museum, Morrison Annex, Winona, MN. For more information, 507-454-3431 or info@polishmuseumwinona.org

24–Virtual Family History and Genealogy Expo, sponsored by Family Search, 10:00 am–4:30 pm. Sessions will cover the extensive, free resources available online at [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) and answer your questions. For information/registration, see <https://ighr.gagensociety.org/familysearch-expo/>

July–Lipiec

04–Have a great Independence Day

20–23 – 44th Annual Pulaski Polka Days, Pulaski, WI. See <https://pulaskipolkadays.com> for info.

22–Sacred Heart Polish Fest, 11:00 am–6:00 pm–Polka music, Polish food/beverages, raffles and games. Additional info, contact Fr. John Kutek at revjohnkutek@yahoo.com.

31–Deadline for PACIM Polanie and Rog Endowment Scholarship Programs. See www.pacim.org for additional details/instructions.

August–Sierpień

01–Moment of Silence in honor of Warsaw Uprising, 10:00 am CDT

05–06 Slavic Experience 2023–Please note new location–West End Festival Site, 5376 Gamble Drive, St. Louis Park, MN. Additional information at <https://slavicexperience.com>

11–12 (2nd Weekend of August)–52nd annual Ivanhoe (MN) Kielbasa Days–softball, polish sausage and other ethnic foods, fireworks, parade and evening entertainment–family friendly event

14–PACIM Annual Picnic. See www.pacim.org for details.

15–PGSMN Newsletter article submission deadline. We welcome all your input.

18–19 – Midwest Genealogy Foundation, sponsored by the MN Genealogical Society are offering a two day program This institute-style short course will prepare students to follow ancestor’ migrations to and through the Midwest–learn about major migration patterns, and documents–gain better understanding of where ancestors paused or stopped where they did. This two day course offers 10 hours of classroom instruction, and is limited to 35 students to allow for discussion and hands-on-exercises. For complete course description, curriculum and faculty, see <https://mngs.org/midwest-migration-institute>.

24–Labor Day–the MN Genealogical Society will be at the MN State Fair. Their booth will be staffed with volunteers from MGS & Branches. Check out their booth. See mngs.org for details.

31–Polish American Journal Foundation Scholarship application closes today. See www.polamjournal.com for additional information. Two scholarships available.

Smok's Corner—Marie Przynski

Minnesota never ceases to delight—from the belief that winter would never leave, to glorious spring days. As we race into the warmer days, it's time to renew the ancestry discovery journey. Searching the various pathways to locate Family stories. Trying hard not to forget to document, document, document. Facebook allows me to share my findings with other family members, and talk about what we learned from our parents or research.

During the search, I have found innumerable resources and research opportunities (made available through various websites, webinars, and even social media avenues.) Most importantly, getting with other family members and sharing our stories.

The new treasure nugget was finding that great grandfather Antoni was not from Czersk as originally thought. He's actually from Będźmierowice, Będźmirowice, Poland, which is under the governing administrative district of Czersk. The village is approximately 7 kilometers east of Czersk. Of course an online visit to the village—and although its described as small, it has a grid pattern, fire and police departments and various modern amenities. I continue the search, and look for more documentation.

In the 1772 Prussian Land Records (under Frederick the Great), I discovered my maternal fifth great grandfather owned land –

Niedzielski, Michel Czersck Tuchel 181,13125#78 6042 2487 831
(Last Name, First, Town, Governing Office, Section number, Film page, Register number)

The great news is that in 2006, the microfilms, etc. were digitized and given to the Germans from Russia Heritage Society in Bismarck, ND. Emails have been sent off, to secure additional information. I might have to do a road trip to Bismarck and check it out. Information received is that these records also cover the number of adult males, the wife, number of boys, number of girls, and even include hired workers—more avenues to explore.

For those map nerds, check out Pilot.pl—you can obtained the coordinates for any place in Poland, right down to addresses.

Another interesting site is WorldCat.org and its genealogy section (see below).

A big thank you to the attendees at the PGSMN May meeting. I shared bits and pieces of Polish culture, music, Kashubian embroidery, Polish pottery—Boleslawiec, Kashubian and fine porcelain, wooden plates, Polish street art and more. I also brought to the meeting, several pieces for attendees to look at. Mostly I received positive feedback and I appreciate your comments.

The Polish journey continues.



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Save the Date—October 14th, 2023 Today is history. Live it, save it, share it. The 2023 Fall PGSMN outstate conference along with the Morrison County Historical Society is slated for Saturday, October 14th in Little Falls, Minnesota.



Researching Your Polish Roots - Jay Biedny
Now available on YouTube

Jay Biedny, a long-time member and past president of the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota, presents a review of records in America and Europe that can help you search for your Polish American roots. Anyone climbing their family tree will benefit from this review of techniques.



August 1, A moment of silence

Every year, at 5 p.m. (10 am US CDT) on August 1st, to mark the anniversary of the Warsaw Rising (WWII), alarm sirens are heard on the streets of Warsaw. The city comes to a halt. In holding a minute of silence, Warsaw residents pay tribute to the fallen insurgents and those who survived.

The PGSMN Newsletter is a publication of the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota, a branch of the Minnesota Genealogical Society, and a 501(c)(3) organization per the United States IRS rules. It is published quarterly—Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter.