

PROJECT TO DISCOVER  
SCHENECTADY **COUNTY'S** EASTERN EUROPEAN ROOTS  
NEWSLETTER

April 2018 Vol. 5 No. 2  
Our Fifth Year!

Our objective continues to be to discover, document and digitally preserve genealogy, stories, and pictures of Schenectady County's Eastern European immigrants. Welcome to the many people who visited our table at St. Adalbert's Dozynki Festival and are now newsletter subscribers. We hope you will SOON add your family stories!

Please share your family history, help pass on the (electronic) word. The next deadlines are July 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>. To submit your family story, pictures, etc., e-mail Phyllis Zych Budka: [abudka@nycap.rr.com](mailto:abudka@nycap.rr.com). Without your stories, there can be no newsletter. To be added to the newsletter e-mail list, contact Phyllis.

**The Schenectady Digital History Archive** To find our newsletters on-line:  
<http://www.schenectadyhistory.org/resources/eer/>

**Polish Genealogical Society of America (PGSA)**

Thanks to William F. Hoffman, PGSA newsletter editor, for printing our Table of Contents and contact information in "Rodziny" the PGSA newsletter. PGSA Home Page is found at  
<http://pgsa.org/>

**Polish Origins –**

<https://polishorigins.com/>

Website allows one to enter surnames and places of interest; a good website.

**Facebook: Schenectady Polish Heritage Facebook Group**

Thanks to Brianna Jolie (Guckemus) for starting this Facebook group. It's described as a "closed group" which only means that you can request membership and an "administrator" will give you permission.

**Preserving Memories of ALCO**

The people who worked for ALCO possess some of the most valuable resources for historians and the community. The ALCO Historical and Technical Society is looking for former employees of ALCO, or their family members, to lend their voice to the oral history of ALCO and Schenectady. To participate, call Jim Cesare, Museum Director, at (716) 238-3768.

<http://www.ahts.org/index.php/museum/oral-history-project/>

**Thanks to Bernice Izzo and Carole McCarthy for their help in editing this newsletter!**

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**Seeking Family Connections** – To be included in the next newsletter, please send your information request to [Phyllis.abudka@nycap.rr.com](mailto:Phyllis.abudka@nycap.rr.com)

Your Name	Your e-mail	Family Surnames of Interest	Villages Voivodeship (Province) and also the Powiat (county) and Gimma (city) (if known) of Interest

### Genealogy Jamming Craig Siulinski

Newsletter contributor and genealogy enthusiast Craig Siulinski (Sept. 2014 Vol. 1 No. 4, January 2015 Vol. 2 No. 1) shares the link to his blogspot, “Genealogy Jamming,” below:

<http://genealogyjamming.blogspot.com/>

This summer, Craig is offering a (for fee) on-line class titled “Write Your Life Stories.” For more information, see the link below:

<https://sharinglegacies.com/online-class-summer-2018/>

## DNA Connections

### Edited by Phyllis Zych Budka

Phyllis: Our request in the last issue to share DNA results was answered by a newsletter reader. She writes,

My Ancestry DNA results are:

Europe East 78%,

Scandinavia 12%

Trace Regions: Ireland 3%, Finland/Northwest Russia 2%, Europe West 2%, Iberian Peninsula 2%, and Great Britain 1%

The reason I'm writing is regarding your *The Archaeology in My Spit* piece. I would like to provide my DNA results (I have tested with both Ancestry.com and MyHeritage).

...But since my Polish paternal grandparents are from the same area as your paternal grandparents, I thought you might be interested.

I did Ancestry first, then decided to test my 93 year-old mother who is 100% Czech. I have gone back in the records many generations on both her maternal and paternal lines (early to mid-1700s, all in one small area of the region of Eastern Bohemia. I chose MyHeritage (MH) for her test because it involves a cheek swab/scraping (easier for the elderly) and because many Czech people have trees on MH. Once I had her results, I was then tempted to test myself with MH (rather than upload my Ancestry results to MH) to see how my results from the two compared (and to help me sort out potential Polish line matches). The issue with MH is their database is quite new and small, but growing (supposedly 1 million so far).

Just for comparison:

My MyHeritage DNA results are:

East Europe 67.7% [East European 60.7%, Balkan 7.0%]

North and West Europe 32.3% [English 13.6%, Irish-Scottish-Welsh 9.4%, and North & West European 9.3%]

My mother's MyHeritage DNA results are:

North and West Europe 43.9% [Scandinavian 37.5%, British and Irish 6.4%]

South Europe 35.4% [Italian 34.2%, Iberian 1.2%]

East Europe 20.7% [East European 20.7%] - I would have expected this to be the highest percentage for her!!!

-----  
Carole McCarthy, newsletter editor, sent the following:

In the last issue of the newsletter you asked people to send in their origin results from DNA testing. When I read that, I was just going to write back quickly to say I am 100% Eastern European because that is what I remember from my results of 2 years ago. However, I am glad I hesitated. I was thinking that I should go on the FTM site to double check and to see if I have any additional matches. Well it is a good thing that I checked. I don't think I read it incorrectly back 2 years ago, it did say 100% EE, but now they seem to be refining their results. Here is what it shows now:

98% East Europe

## **DNA Connections**

### **Edited by Phyllis Zych Budka**

Trace

<2% South East Europe

<1% South Central African

<1% Central Asia

I then clicked on the information button for the less than sign( < ) and it says "A trace percentage indicates a very small amount of shared DNA in common with the corresponding population. In some cases this minor percentage could be attributed to background noise." Have you seen your results refined?

Then I saw all these names that are supposedly matches to me and chose the possible 2nd-3rd cousin with a Polish name and emailed her. She is Polish, but Polish name is her husbands. She was born in Poland and has been in the US for 11 years. She has Tys ancestry. Her great grandmother was the sister of my grandfather Joseph Tys from Witkowice, Podkarparkie, Poland! How about that! I am hoping to learn more about exactly where the Tys house was located in Witkowice when my grandfather was born in 1878.

## A Small Mystery Phyllis Zych Budka

I found these documents among my Father's papers and have no idea how or why they got there. My Father, Stanley Zych, went to Poland in 1936 and made a brief stop in Nowy Targ, Poland, where his parents were born. He spent several weeks at a Polish Boy Scout camp in Slask, southern Poland. These papers date just after that trip.

The "story" is about Bronislawa Mrugala, daughter of Jacob Mrugala and Zofia Klocek.

Below Ship's Manifest Bremen May 20, 1914

Information from [www.ellisland.org](http://www.ellisland.org)

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES										
ALL ALIENS, in whatever class they travel, MUST file this form and the special or commanding officer of each vessel carrying such passengers										
Prussia May 20 1914										
No.	NAME	AGE	SEX	STATUS	PLACE OF BIRTH	EDUCATION	RELIGION	TRADE, OCCUPATION, OR BUSINESS	PREVIOUS RESIDENCE	FINAL DESTINATION
1	Stanislaw Czubernat	28	M	Single	Nowy Targ, Galicia, Austria	None	Catholic	None	None	Nowy Targ, Galicia, Austria
2	Jakob Luberdowicz	28	M	Single	Nowy Targ, Galicia, Austria	None	Catholic	None	None	Nowy Targ, Galicia, Austria
3	Zofia Klocek	17	F	Single	Nowy Targ, Galicia, Austria	None	Catholic	None	None	Nowy Targ, Galicia, Austria
4	Katarzyna Klocek	17	F	Single	Nowy Targ, Galicia, Austria	None	Catholic	None	None	Nowy Targ, Galicia, Austria
5	Andrzej Sienka	28	M	Single	Nowy Targ, Galicia, Austria	None	Catholic	None	None	Nowy Targ, Galicia, Austria

The 5 people listed are all from Nowy Targ, then the part of Austria called Galicia. They are Stanislaw Czubernat, Jakob Luberdowicz, Zofia Klocek, Katarzyna Klocek and Andrzej Sienka.

For this story, the focus is on Zofia Klocek, who was 17. The final destination of the Klocek cousins is listed as their Uncle Jan Podkanowicz on Monroe Street in Schenectady, NY.

(As an aside, after I prepared this story for the newsletter, yet another coincidence occurred; see the next story.)

STATES IMMIGRATION OFFICER AT PORT OF ARRIVAL										
When first arrived at this port in the immigration office. This Card is to be for the use of STEWARD PASSENGERS ONLY.										
Arriving at Port of New York May 20 1914										
No.	NAME	AGE	SEX	STATUS	PLACE OF BIRTH	EDUCATION	RELIGION	TRADE, OCCUPATION, OR BUSINESS	PREVIOUS RESIDENCE	FINAL DESTINATION
1	Zofia Klocek	17	F	Single	Nowy Targ, Galicia, Austria	None	Catholic	None	None	Schenectady, NY

The next document is a Certificate of Birth, from the State of Illinois, dated October 17, 1917, for the girl born to Jacob Mrugala (PB – a surname common even today in Nowy Targ) and Zofia Klocek, the young woman listed on the ship's manifest above.

# A Small Mystery Phyllis Zych Budka

1934 REVISION  
V.S. No. 1  
187134  
IM 525-1-3-31

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
Department of Public Health—Division of Vital Statistics

**CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH**

ORIGINAL

1. PLACE OF BIRTH  
County of \_\_\_\_\_ Precinct \_\_\_\_\_  
City or Village \_\_\_\_\_  
Street and Number \_\_\_\_\_

2. RESIDENCE OF MOTHER AT BIRTH  
County \_\_\_\_\_  
City or Village \_\_\_\_\_  
Street and Number \_\_\_\_\_

3. SEX OF CHILD  
1. Sex of child: **FEMALE**  
2. Time, Tenth or other of birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
3. Position in order of birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
4. Premature: **L**  
5. Legit: **L**  
6. Date of birth: **October 17, 1917, 17**

4. Full name of father: **JACOB MARGALA**  
5. Full name of mother: **ZOFIA KLOCEK**

15. Residence (street, city or village, State): \_\_\_\_\_  
16. P. O. address: \_\_\_\_\_  
17. City or Village: \_\_\_\_\_  
18. State: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Color of eyes: \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Color of hair: \_\_\_\_\_  
21. Birth date or place: \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Birth date or place: \_\_\_\_\_

23. Trade, profession, or occupation of mother: \_\_\_\_\_  
24. Industry or business in which mother was doing work: \_\_\_\_\_

25. Trade, profession, or occupation of father: \_\_\_\_\_  
26. Industry or business in which father was doing work: \_\_\_\_\_

27. Number of children of the mother (at present and born and including the child): \_\_\_\_\_  
28. What treatment was given child's eyes at birth: \_\_\_\_\_

29. Signature of attending physician or midwife: \_\_\_\_\_  
30. Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
31. Date Certificate Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

32. Date when filed from a registration report: \_\_\_\_\_

33. M. D. Address: \_\_\_\_\_

34. Date of filing: \_\_\_\_\_

35. Date of filing: \_\_\_\_\_

36. Date of filing: \_\_\_\_\_

37. Date of filing: \_\_\_\_\_

38. Date of filing: \_\_\_\_\_

39. Date of filing: \_\_\_\_\_

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96. Date of filing: \_\_\_\_\_

97. Date of filing: \_\_\_\_\_

98. Date of filing: \_\_\_\_\_

99. Date of filing: \_\_\_\_\_

100. Date of filing: \_\_\_\_\_

U. S. GOVERNMENT  
OFFICE AND CONSUL AT LAW  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

January 20, 1919.

Department of Labor,  
Immigration Bureau,  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

The above named was born in the City of Chicago, Ill. in 1917. Her father, a citizen of Poland, returned from the United States to Poland in 1916 accompanied by his wife and two children including the above named.

The young lady is now nineteen years of age and is desirous of re-establishing her residence in this country. A certain relative of the family of means and ability being willing to accept her.

I would appreciate if you could kindly advise me concerning regulations covering her case.

Yours very truly,  
J. J. [Signature]

RECEIVED  
JAN 25 1919  
MAIL ROOM

## A Small Mystery Phyllis Zych Budka

January 20, 1937 IN RE Bronislawa Mrugala

Text:

The above named was born in the city of Chicago, Ill. In 1917. Her father, a citizen of Poland, returned from the United States to Poland in 1929 accompanied by his (word left out) and two children including the above named.

The young lady is now nineteen years of age and is desirous of re-establishing her residence in this country. A certain relative of the family of means and ability being willing to accept her.

I would appreciate if you would kindly advise me concerning regulations covering her case.

T.S.Ogonowski (PB: A well known area lawyer of Polish descent)

*Bronislawa Mrugala*  
*Oct. 22nd, 1937*  
*1103 N. Hermitage Ave.*

BOARD OF HEALTH  
CITY OF CHICAGO  
HERMAN J. SUNDESEN, M.D., PRESIDENT.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LOCATING AND ESTABLISHING BIRTH RECORDS.

1. Reports of birth are filed in the office of the registration district in which birth occurs, and inquiries concerning them should be addressed to the Local Registrar of the City, Town or Village in which the birth occurred.
2. Applications for copies of records of children born in Chicago, Illinois, should be sent to the Chicago Board of Health, Room 707, City Hall, and should contain the following information:
  - (a) Full name of child as given at time of birth
  - (b) Exact date of birth
  - (c) The place of birth (address or hospital)
  - (d) The names of parents (if possible)
3. For a record of birth which occurred prior to January 1, 1916, application should be sent to the County Clerk, Room 233, County Building, Chicago, Illinois. If no record can be found in that office, apply to the board of health for a further search.
4. If the record of birth is not found in the office of the County Clerk or in the files of the Board of Health, a record can be established by the following procedure:
  - (a) Have the physician or midwife who attended at the birth file a certificate of birth (State form V. S. No. 1) with the Board of Health.
  - (b) If the attending physician or midwife has since died or left the city and cannot be located, the father or mother may register the child's birth by a duly notarized affidavit (State form V.S.No.12), setting forth the facts, and by filling out a certificate of birth (State form V. S. No. 1) to accompany the affidavit. Every item in the certificate must be filled out (as indicated) correctly and completely AS OF DATE OF BIRTH OF THE CHILD. Item 23 must be signed by the affiant in place of the attending physician or midwife, entering below the signature the relationship to the child.
5. FEES: When births are registered by affidavit, the law requires that a fee of 35 cents shall be paid. There is also a legal fee of 50 cents for each certified copy of any record issued, resistance to be made by money order payable to the city collector of Chicago - stamps not accepted.

End of story, so far!

AND THEN, the next story unfolded:....

## More Nowy Targ Connections – More Cousins! Edited by Phyllis Zych Budka

The following unfolded recently as Jeff Brozyna, a frequent newsletter contributor, introduced Gail Demcsak, Claudia Stanek and me, to Peter Reiter:

Email from Jeff Brozyna: “Dear Phyllis, Gail and Christine,

I wish to introduce you to Pete Reiter.... He is an Ancestry.com DNA cousin of mine (and therefore, of yours) through Schenectady/Polish/Watychowicz Family connections. He and I have been exchanging information over these past weeks and I am giving you his contact info with his permission in the spirit of making additional discoveries. Pete has DNA connections to Watychowicz family members in Nowy Targ as well as other Polish families in Schenectady.

Pete has an excellent Ancestry.com family tree site of over 2500 people. Phyllis, I believe you mentioned to me that some of your Zych family knew members of Pete's Podkanowicz family in Schenectady. Of course your Grandfather Zych had Watychowicz blood from ancestors in Nowy Targ (I think it was Jane and Agaty born about 1800).

Gail and Christine, I believe your earliest known Watychowicz ancestor was Victoria Watychowicz born about 1850. My earliest known Watychowicz ancestor was Franciszka M. Watychowicz born in 1810. **All 5 of us are related** but we don't have a name for our common ancestor(s). Perhaps we can figure that out someday.

As Phyllis and I have discussed, her Grandfather Zych was almost certainly a cousin of my Great grandmother Katherine Rajska Brozyna through Watychowicz and Wielkiewicz in Nowy Targ. We also base this on substantial circumstantial evidence.

I am certain Pete would love to hear more about the mini-migration of Poles from Nowy Targ to Schenectady. Pete has done research in Nowy Targ and I believe he still has a local connection in that city that might be of assistance with records on occasion.

So, I encourage you all to communicate with each other and perhaps we can expand our knowledge together!

Best wishes,

Jeff”

(Edited by PB) Pete (who lives in New Jersey) writes:

Hello Everyone!

....I can share my tree with anyone one of you, let me know.

....My maternal grandmother was born and raised in Schenectady, her parents emigrated from Nowy Targ. My mother always took me every summer to Schenectady to visit my grandmother's siblings who all settled there (my grandmother moved to NYC when she married). Her brother and sister were so very nice to me during my visits to Schenectady, I have many fond memories of my visits in the 1970s. They took me to the Baseball HOF (Hall of Fame), Howe Caverns, Fort Ticonderoga and Frontier Town.

## **More Nowy Targ Connections – More Cousins!**

### **Edited by Phyllis Zych Budka**

They all grew up on Monroe St, her sister lived on Howard St and her brother lived on McClellan St. They all went to St Mary's and are all buried there.

Their parents emigrated from Nowy Targ. My great-grandfather was born there and his wife was born in Ludzmierz. I have been to both places twice. The family church in Nowy Targ was St Catherine's, I have been there twice. I met the archivist of St Catherine's when I visited and he gave me lots of useful info and let me photocopy pages from the manuscripts.

Jan Podkanowicz on your list there is my great-grandfather. You don't have anything filled in for him, I can fill in all of those gaps if you wish.

Their family name somehow got changed to Potkanowicz (with a 't'), we have no idea why.

My grandmother's siblings who stayed in Schenectady were John Potkanowicz (and wife Vera who both lived on McClellan) and Sophie (Potkanowicz) Stankiewicz and husband Walter who both lived on Howard St. The last time I visited Schenectady I met someone who remembered John, he supposedly was very popular and played multiple musical instruments and tuned pianos for people. He was also very active in the local Polish-American society. I don't suppose anyone here would have heard of them?

No one knows (not even my mother) why they chose Schenectady to settle. If anyone knows that, I would be grateful. Were they just following the herd?

I do remember from my childhood visits that Schenectady had a large Polish population, St Mary's Cemetery is filled with Polish headstones.

And yes, I do have one Watychowicz (Jan married to Marianna) in my tree, discovered by the archivist at St Mary's, they are listed as the parents of one Andrzej Watychowicz on his baptism record, he was baptized at St Catherine's. I know nothing more about these people than that one document, which I have in electronic form. I could always reach out to my NT contact to have the archivist look for me. It seems we have a common Watychowicz ancestor that is still unknown?

Pete

Phyllis responds:

Hi Pete,

I knew your great uncle John Potkanowicz; he was a family friend and, as I recall, he sometimes worked for my father in his small business, Stan Welding Supplies, located in our garage. I also knew that John played the piano, tho I don't think I ever heard him play.

Why Schenectady? Jobs! The GE and American Locomotive Co were young and growing companies. My Zych grandfather came sometime in the late 1890s.

Spelling: In Slavic languages (Polish, Russian), a d before a k is pronounced as a t....

The name Podkan is the original name first documented in Nowy Targ annals in 1593.

Regards,

Phyllis Zych Budka

## **More Nowy Targ Connections – More Cousins!** **Edited by Phyllis Zych Budka**

Pete writes:

Hi Phyllis, thanks for the reply. You knew my Uncle John?? That's great. He was very very kind to me, my mother always said he considered me his grandson because he had no children.

Thanks for that other info. I'd love to be able to trace the Podkanowicz line back that far, but would probably be impossible.

Pete

Jeff writes:

I think I have the correct John Potkanowicz (the piano tuner, WWII vet). He took a fascinating trip to Communist Poland to walk in the steps of Chopin in 1960. The Gazette reported it in detail, included quite a bit about life of his relatives under Communism. He did a series of slide shows-lectures on the trip in the early 1960s. I read it on [Fultonhistory.com](http://Fultonhistory.com). He was dedicated to classical music and worked to bring many performers to Schenectady-Union College based on my reading.

Jeff

Pete writes:

Yes that's him! He loved classical music, and loved Chopin. He taught me how to play piano. He was so proud to be Polish. He was a very kind hearted man, I loved him dearly. He died in 1988.

Phyllis: At this point, I asked to share this with our newsletter readers.

Jeff writes:

I think it would be good to do so as it would hopefully inspire other people to network and make discoveries together. Of course it would be a GREAT story if we ever could figure out exactly who our common ancestor(s) were but that would have to be a story for another day.

I am currently in on-going communication with about a dozen "ancestry cousins" with whom we share information, encouragement and that all important oral history on a fairly regular basis over a period of years. About half the people I approach initially respond, half do not. Some provide information briefly and then go dark. However, some become long time partners in discovery!

Jeff

**My Polish Grandmother's West Prussian Roots:  
The Amsterdam-Schenectady Connection  
Jeff Brozyna**

The experiences of Polish immigrants in Schenectady in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries were far more diverse than we can imagine. This was due, in part, to the fact that the nation we call Poland was actually several provinces or principalities within three powerful European Empires in those days. The majority of Poles who immigrated to Schenectady came from the central area around Warsaw or the Eastern provinces which were part of the Russian Empire. Those from the south were generally from around Krakow in the Austrian Empire's province of Galicia. Poles who migrated from what is now northern, western or south western Poland formerly lived in the German provinces of East Prussia, West Prussia and Silesia. All Poles generally shared a common language, religion (Roman Catholicism), many customs and the common experience of being treated like second-class citizens in their homeland. They all sought, or were forced by circumstances to seek, a better life in the United States. However, this regionalization back in Poland resulted in differences between Poles in dialect, some customs and dress, mannerisms, and expectations from civil authorities. Therefore, it was not uncommon for "German", "Russian" and "Austrian" Poles in Schenectady to maintain a degree of distrust in each other. This was especially prevalent among the first generation of immigrants.

In previous editions of this publication (July 2016, April 2017), I have written about my Brozyna and Rajska ancestors. My great grandfather, John Brozyna, was born in tiny Nowy Zmigrod in Galicia in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains. As an orphan, his prospects were bleak, so he came to America in 1891 and joined three cousins in the Pennsylvania coal fields near Hazleton. There he met Katherine Rajska, an orphan from Nowy Targ, whom he married in 1895. They joined two of her brothers at the coal mines in Indiana County, Pennsylvania, where my grandfather Joseph Brozyna was born in 1898. By 1899 they found greener pastures in Schenectady where John Brozyna worked as a machinist with the General Electric Company (GE). About 1920, my grandfather saw an attractive young gal named Leola Wtodarczak at a dance. He walked over and asked her to dance. She declined but he told her she had to dance because if he went back and sat down his buddies would laugh at him and he wasn't going to put up with that! So, a romance between the plainspoken German-Polish gal and the assertive Austrian-Polish guy began!

How did my Grandmother Leola's family get to Schenectady in the first place? Her mother was Apolonia Skrzynecki (spelled several different ways) who was born in Drzymkowo, a tiny village in West Prussia, near the village of Lobedau (Kr. Briesen) where she was baptized on 29 June 1882. Her parents were Antoni Skrzyniecki (Fig. 2) (apparently his preferred spelling) and Julia Dymienska (a/k/a Demski). What caused them to come to America with baby Apolonia in their arms in 1883 is uncertain. It must have been lack of economic opportunity. I can't verify Antoni's parents' names with certainty and the only thing I know about Julia's parents are their names: Joseph and Johanna. Upon arrival, the Skrzynecki Family (as it is typically spelled today) headed straight for Amsterdam, NY where they could find emotional support among the city's Polish population and employment in the broom-making or carpet industries. Great grandmother Apolonia was the eldest child in a rapidly expanding family. However, disaster struck in 1901 when Julia died of Tuberculosis (Consumption).

**My Polish Grandmother's West Prussian Roots:  
The Amsterdam-Schenectady Connection  
Jeff Brozyna**



Fig. 1 My Great grandfather Frank Wtodarczak, his wife Apolonia and my Grandmother (Baby) Leola photographed in 1903. I believe that is Apolonia's sister Lorretta Ellen "Nellie" Skrzynecki with them."



Fig. 2 My Great, great grandfather Antoni Skrzynecki with his son Peter in 1903.

I have a family photo of the Skrzynecki Family taken in 1903. People didn't smile for photos in those days but that is not the only reason for the somber tone. Without a doubt, the children (Apolonia, Edna, Frank, Leon, Loretta, Julia, Jim, Peter and Louis) were still heartbroken over the loss of their mother, Julia. She had not lived to see my grandmother, Baby Leola, who was her first grandchild. Antoni and his new wife, Agnes, were no doubt wondering if they could pull the family through the difficulties of the coming years. My Great grandfather Francis (Frank) Wtodarczak stood next to Apolonia and Baby Leola (Fig. 1) and wondered what the future held in Schenectady after their marriage there in 1902. It was a time of change and challenge for everyone.

Frank Wtodarczak was born in 1883 in Luciny, a tiny agricultural village southeast of the city of Poznan in West Prussia. His father Michael died when Frank was only three, leaving his mother, Catherine (Katarzyna) Kazyaka, destitute. Frank's older sister Mary and brother Thomas were sent to America in the care of friends and relatives as Catherine could not support them. How lonely Frank must have felt after their departure! Fortunately, Frank and Catherine were befriended by a young widower, John Skotarczak, who married Catherine in 1890. By 1892 they were bound for New York City and arrived in Schenectady where John got work as a boilermaker at the locomotive works. In the years

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to come, Catherine and John had a family of young sons of their own (Stephen, Joseph and Jack). Frank seems to have been close to his step-father and three half-brothers. John died in 1918 and Catherine lived in Schenectady until she passed in 1933. The marriage to John Skotarczak had given her a second family and the move to Schenectady had provided economic salvation.



Fig. 3 The blended Skotarczak-Wtodarczak Family about 1898. My Great, great grandmother Catherine Wtodarczak Skotarczak is seated and my Great grandfather Frank Wtodarczak is standing at our far right with his brother Thomas. Catherine and John Skotarczak's young sons Stephen and Joseph are in the front and John's daughter Maryanna is standing at our far left. (Permission to use photo kindly granted by Lisa Knight.)

Frank Wtodarczak began a half-century career at GE (eventually as a machinist) prior to the time of his marriage to Apolonia Skrzynecki. Their marriage service took place at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Schenectady which many of the German-Poles attended. Frank provided free labor during some of the church's construction projects. Although in a new city and in a new home at 629 Blaine St., Apolonia could visit Amsterdam with relative ease. The NY Central train was costly, but most immigrants traveled on one of the crowded trollies between the two cities. Some people even lived in one city and worked in the other. (Grandfather Joe Brozyna told me decades later that when he played baseball all around the Schenectady area in the early 1920s, the trollies

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made travel fairly easy.) Years later, Apolonia's younger sister Julia married Ralph Guerra and lived on Broadway in Bellevue until her death in 1966. Another girl with West Prussian ancestors, Catherine Brozdowska of Amsterdam, married Frank's brother Thomas Wtodarczak in 1900. They also lived on Blaine St, right next door to Frank and Apolonia. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Poles were moving freely between Amsterdam and Schenectady to fill desirable industrial jobs (Fig 4a, b).



Fig. 4a Frank and Apolonia Wtodarczak, probably late 1920s.



Fig. 4b Frank and Apolonia Wtodarczak with extended family, fishing on the Mohawk River, probably late 1920s.

Frank and Apolonia were blessed with five healthy children. My Grandmother Leola was born in 1902, Florence in 1904, Dorothy in 1908, Francis J. (Frank) in 1909 and George in 1911. All the children helped the family economically. The girls were required to leave high school by 9<sup>th</sup> grade and work as shop girls in Schenectady where Leola and Florence learned a basic sense of ladies' fashion. The boys obtained factory work and trade skills as soon as they could.

Now we resume the story of my grandparents at the dance. Joe Brozyna went home and announced he met the girl of his dreams. Sometime later, he told his parents he and Leola were going to get married, and then everything "hit the fan" as he related the story to me decades later. Joe's parents, John and Katherine Rajski Brozyna were against the marriage! They insisted that a choice of bride was THEIR CHOICE, just like in the old country. They had a girl in Amsterdam picked out for Joe and it wasn't one of those German-Poles! They had strange customs, went to the wrong church and those German people in the north had martyred St. Adalbert! Joe was told he should marry a nice girl from Galicia. Joe told them in America he was free to decide whom he married and stormed out! The marriage with Leola went ahead. (Fig. 5) John Brozyna might have

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gotten used to the idea. Katherine never did. Grandma Leola told me Katherine Brozyna was always cold to her. On the other hand, the Wtodarczaks apparently accepted Joe Brozyna without complaint.



Fig. 5 Leola and Joseph Brozyna wedding 1923, maid of honor Florence Wtodarczak, best man Anthony Goska.

So, the decades went by. Antoni (now called Anthony) Skrzyniecki worked in the Amsterdam mills all his life and passed away in his Amsterdam home in 1944. Only three of his ten children permanently left the Amsterdam-Schenectady area. Old Frank's brother Thomas Wtodarczak worked as a machinist with GE for 35 years and died at a relatively early age in 1934. He and Catherine Brozdowska had three children. Frank's sister Mary wed Edward Tomec in 1895. They Americanized the name to Tomac and had four children. Their son Edmund Tomac was an early member of the South Beach Association cabin community on Lake George which my grandparents co-founded. Mary

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ran a successful tavern after Edward's death. Mary then married Joseph Lesnieski and later attended my first birthday party in Schenectady. She died in 1957.

By all accounts, Great grandmother Apolonia was a kind and gentle soul. She loved to grow roses and poppies, bake and cook. However, she developed chronic health problems in the late 1930s and 1940s and died in 1945. Old Frank Wtodarczak retired in 1948. He was always an active man who took frequent walks and maintained ties in the old neighborhood. He was a member of the Polish-American Bands and the GE 50 Year Club. I remember him at my 8<sup>th</sup> birthday party: kind face, white hair, dapper dresser. He suffered a stroke in 1962 and passed away at Great Aunt Florence's house despite the attentive care provided by his extended family. Florence Wtodarczak married Anthony Goska from Amsterdam who eventually owned a successful tavern on Curry Road in Rotterdam. They had three children. Florence lived to be almost 98 years old. Dorothy married Victor Price. She was vice president of Price Dairy in Saratoga Springs. She died in 1994. The younger Frank married Stella Warzala. He lived to be 100, she died at 99. Their children can always be proud of Frank's service in the Navy in WWII. (When he was young, my son met Frank and he thought his Navy tattoos were awesome!) Brother George Americanized his name to Wodarzak and married Sylvia Jubek. He died suddenly at age 45 in 1956. Except for George, these siblings experienced impressive longevity!



Fig. 6 The extended Wtodarczak Family including the children's spouses at Grandma Leola's Birthday Party (receiving gift at center), December, 1940. Photo taken by Joe Brozyna

My grandparents Leola (Fig. 6) and Joe Brozyna owned and ran successful retail meat businesses and later Joe was store manager for Central Market (Golub Corporation) in Bellevue. I take pride in the fact Leola was a leader in the Business and Professional Women's Club and Draper High School PTA for many years. They did a good job preparing their boys (my father Harold and Uncle Paul) for business careers. They also taught me a lot, for that matter. My grandparents worshiped at St. Adalbert's because Joe Brozyna would always get his way. He died at age 80 in 1978. Leola died at age 96 in

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early 1999. Except for winters in Florida, they remained in the Schenectady area for the rest of their lives.

My ancestors constitute a small sample size. However, I note that my ancestors of German-Polish blood gravitated to factory jobs. My ancestors of Austrian-Polish heritage started family businesses as soon as they could - the dream of so many Poles in their region. What all my Polish ancestors had in common was pride in their Polish ancestry, love for their new country and dedication to hard work. (Some of the other descendants of these Wtodarczaks and Skrzyneckis still live locally and it is my hope that over time they too will share their wonderful stories and memories with our readers.) As the decades passed, these regional distinctions among Poles faded into obscurity here in The United States. However, these distinctions form a useful framework for understanding the attitudes of our ancestors just after their arrival in this country.

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- Special thanks to Kathy Skrzynecki, David Sobanski and the late Leola Ruzzo for all the information they provided me over the years and for their encouragement.

## Things the Eastern European Roots Newsletter Community Should Be Proud Of Bernice Izzo

As we brainstormed what we wanted the Eastern European Newsletter group to do, we decided we would like some history written by our members. At that point, there was nothing. We wanted something for future generations to read and to know how their relatives came to America and how they lived and worked in this area. If we did not do it now, this history would disappear because the generation that remembers is getting older and will no longer be with us. After four years, we have 20 newsletters filled with your great stories. We now have written history which was missing from the Historical Society and each of those newsletters has been digitized and can be accessed from the Historical Society web site and the Schenectady County Library's web site at <http://www.schenectadyhistory.org/resources/eer/index.html>

From these newsletters, we have compiled a large list of names associated with the Eastern European people who settled in this area.

We have found and met relatives we never knew existed. It was a trip for me to realize that Carole McCarthy, a woman I met at the first meeting, was related to me. And her farm, which she inherited from her Polish relatives, was part of my childhood. As a child, we always went for rides past the farm. I met cousin, Laura, who was able to give me information about part of the family that I could not locate anywhere.

We have raised our awareness of Eastern European history, especially the division of Poland and the fact that Poland did not exist for 123 years.

One of the best things is having a booth at the St. Adalbert's Dozynki (Harvest) Festival. I love meeting everyone who walks into the school building and says, "Oh this was my 8th grade." When they ask questions or tell me stories, it is one of the highlights of the year.

The Dozynki Festival led to another great event, the taping of the show about Schenectady's Eastern European heritage on CACC-TV. The group of women who did the show were connected in so many ways that I had never seen in other groups, all connected with their Polish History.

## About Our Family

### Susan Glowacki Luccini and Mary Glowacki Cummings

Our Paternal Great-Grand-father, Albert Glowacki, was born 1862 in Poland and immigrated in 1894 to Schenectady; he died May 8, 1926. Two brothers remained in Poland.

Our Great-Grand-mother, Josephine Deluski Regaliewski, was born 1867 in Poland and immigrated to Schenectady; she died in 1941. They had three sons, Edward born 1893, Anthony born 1887 and Stanley born 1900.

Grand-father-Anthony Glowacki, who changed his name to Glover, was born 1887 in Saponik, Poland, and died 1949.

Grand-mother, Barbara Olzenski, was born 1887 and immigrated from Poland to Amsterdam, NY in 1902; she died in 1946.

Our father, John Anthony Glowacki was born September 15, 1910 in Amsterdam, NY. He changed his name from Glover back to Glowacki. He died May 7, 1962. He owned Craig Heating and Air Conditioning for over 20 years. He gave jobs to several people who might otherwise have had trouble finding work, such as ex-convicts and young fathers. He cared about young people and let them know that they could count on him. When he went to his first PNA meeting, he was immediately elected secretary. Since he couldn't speak Polish, our mother had to translate his notes.

Our mother was a partner to her husband both in business and in the home. She was an unselfish and willing caregiver to her father, her mother, her sister, and, of course, her children.

Our Maternal-Grand-father, Stanley Juniak, was born in Poland in 1885 and immigrated from Russia to Schenectady and died in 1957. He had one brother, John Juniak, who lived in Detroit, MI.

Grand-mother Anna Czyzyk was born in Poland in 1885 and immigrated from Russia to Schenectady; it is thought that she was from Krakow; she died in 1970.

Our Mother, Sally (Stanislova) Juniak, was born in 1905 in Schenectady and died in 1994. She was the eldest of three sisters. Helen (1908-1981), the middle sister, married Conrad Kuchay and had two children, Conrad and Alice. Her youngest sister Charlotte (1909-1974) never married.

Our grandmother, Anna Czyzyk Juniak, told us that she immigrated to the United States at fourteen. No other immediate family members were with her, but we suppose that she had friends and relatives in the US. She told us about an Old Country tradition. On a special night in January or February, a single woman would go into a darkened room holding a candle. She would stand in front of the mirror and say her full name three times. Then the face of her future husband would appear in the mirror. My grandmother did this and saw my grandfather's image before she had ever met him. When they did meet, she, of course, recognized him.

Our grandfather, Stanley Juniak, was one of the founders of St. Adalbert's Church and was recording secretary of the Adalbert's Society for many years. He was also on the original board of directors, which promoted the building of the PNA Hall. He worked at GE for 46 years.

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For a time, our grandmother worked as a matron in a primary school. Her daughter Charlotte worked as the head secretary at Mont Pleasant High School for several decades where she was known to staff and students as a cheerful and helpful support as well as the model of efficiency. Finally, both of her granddaughters, Susan Luccini and Mary Cummings, were teachers in the Schenectady School System. The American Dream!

Pani Katarzyna Kornacka  
Part 12 – The Forties  
Martin Byster



Fig. 1: New York Times: US at War with both Germany and Japan, December 11, 1941<sup>1</sup>

The 30s, closed with Katie and Feliks Kornacki, having concern for their family in Poland to endure and survive a war with Germany and with the US declaring war on Germany and Japan, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor<sup>2</sup>, have additional concern over the consequences for the family in the US which had only recently completed its progeny of first-generation Americans<sup>3</sup>.

In the forties Katie's sister Mary's sons<sup>4</sup> Frank, Walter and William Rybicki served in the Navy and her cousin Anthony's son William Dobies served in the Army. In Katie's family, her oldest daughter Pauline, my mother, married<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Byster in 1936, her son



Figure 2: Joseph Kornacki & Grace Matthews Wedding<sup>7</sup> 9/29/1940

Joseph married Grace Matthews in 1940, her daughters, Victoria married Joseph Zakrsewski [later, Zakriski] and Josephine married Bernard Szymanski [later, Symanski] both 1943. Daughters Josephine<sup>6</sup>, Janet and Gertrude finished nursing school. Each and every member of this extended family appears to have been gainfully employed through most if not the entire decade.

<sup>1</sup> <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/1211.html>

<sup>2</sup> Byster, Martin; PANI KATARZYNA KORNACKA, Part 11- A New Generation; pp.4&5

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 1, 3, 5, & 6

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.3

<sup>5</sup> Byster, Martin; PANI KATARZYNA KORNACKA, Part 8- The Dirty Thirties; p.4

<sup>6</sup> Byster, Martin; PANI KATARZYNA KORNACKA, Part 9- The Dirty Thirties continued; p.4, Fig. 11

<sup>7</sup> NOTE: The Wedding Party, L to R, Chester Rybicki, Victoria Kornacki, Pauline Byster, Joseph and Grace Kornacki, Bernard Szymanski, Janet Kornacki, Billie Rybicki.

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Figure 3: Bernard Symanski & Josephine Kornacki Wedding<sup>8</sup> 06/05/1943



Figure 4: Joseph Zakriski & Victoria Kornacki Wedding<sup>9</sup> 11/14/1943

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<sup>8</sup> NOTE: The Wedding Party, L to R, Gertrude Kornacki, Sylvia Symanski, Louis Symanski, Victoria Kornacki, Bernard and Josephine Symanski, Feliks Kornacki, Grace Kornacki, and Janet Kornacki. [Side bar: Victoria's last name is given as "Zakriski" in the announcement of a local paper. The Zakriski's may have been married earlier and only celebrated their marriage on 11/14/1943 to accommodate Mr. Zakriski's military obligations. See footnote 8]

<sup>9</sup> NOTE: The Wedding Party, L to R, Joseph Kornacki, Pauline Byster, Joseph and Victoria Zakriski, Feliks Kornacki, Janet Kornacki, and Gertrude Kornacki

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The Forties had their good times. Katie and Feliks welcomed the Bysters, the Matthews, the Symanskis and the Zakriskis as part of their extended family. Of the four new members, Victoria's spouse Joseph Zakriski saw service in the US Navy.

Four second-generation Americans, Katie's grandsons and granddaughters were born: Martin Byster (1941), Paul Kornacki (1942), Cynthia Zakriski (1944), and Katherine Byster (1949), not shown.



Figure 5: Martin Byster<sup>10</sup>



Figure 6: Paul Kornacki<sup>11</sup>



Figure 7: Cynthia Zakriski<sup>12</sup>



Figure 8: Marty<sup>13</sup>, Cindy and Pauly;  
18 River Street, Schenectady, NY (1946c.)<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Photograph by Joseph Zakriski

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> White Studio, Schenectady, NY

<sup>13</sup> Marty is proudly wearing a sailor hat his Uncle Joe Zakriski gave him

<sup>14</sup> Zakriski

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Figure 9: Katherine Byster<sup>15</sup> with Katherine (Katie)<sup>16</sup> Kornacki her namesake (1950c.)

The Forties  
to be continued

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<sup>15</sup> At the time of this writing (April, 2018) an earlier picture of Kathy Byster is not available.

<sup>16</sup> In the vernacular of the family, pronounced by Feliks, “KD”; referred to as “Babcia” (bob-cha), grandma by the grandchildren