

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

July 2018 Vol. 5 No. 3  
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.

Please share your family history, help pass on the (electronic) word. The next deadlines are October 1st and January 1st. 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!**

## Table of Contents

Title	Author	Page
Seeking Family Connections	Phyllis Zych Budka	2
Ogonowski Tells of Early Polish Settlers Outlines Contributions To Life of City in Talk Before County Historical Society Schenectady Gazette May 19, 1943	Submitted by John Urbanski	3
The Search for Early Generations of the Urbanski Family from Poland to Schenectady in the 1800s	John Urbanski, Grandson	7
DNA (Ancestry) vs DNA (23andMe)	Phyllis Zych Budka	11
Spit, Spit, Spit	Bernice Izzo	14
Poles Recount Tale of Great Jan Sobieski The Schenectady Gazette Sep 9 1933	Submitted by Brianna Jolie	15
Pani Katarzyna Kornacka Part 13 – The Forties (continued)	Martin Byster	18

**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

**Ogonowski Tells of Early Polish Settlers  
Outlines Contributions To Life of City in Talk Before County Historical  
Society**

Schenectady Gazette May 19, 1943

Phyllis's note: The article below was sent by John Urbanski, whose grandfather John Urbanski was one of the early Polish settlers in Schenectady. See John's article below and his earlier submission in the April 2016 issue of this newsletter (Vol. 3 No. 2).

Contributions of the Polish to world civilization, to the building of the United States and to Schenectady and vicinity were outlined last night by Thaddeus S. Ogonowski, local attorney, in an address before the Schenectady County Historical society in the society rooms, 13 Union street.

Mr. Ogonowski briefly traced the history of Poland from its birth as a free nation through the present war, the military, educational and scientific contributions of Poles to the United States and the settlement in Schenectady of this racial group.

## Ogonowski Tells of Early Polish Settlers Outlines Contributions To Life of City in Talk Before County Historical Society

Schenectady Gazette May 19, 1943

Most of the early Polish settlers in Schenectady did not come directly from Europe but from other parts of the United States, Mr. Ogonowski said. Many of these early settlers later left Schenectady to make their homes in different parts of the country. The first permanent Polish settlers in Schenectady lived on Veeder avenue. Later, they resided in two large multiple family houses on Liberty street between Lafayette and Barrett streets. The section came to be known as Little Castle Garden because it was somewhat of a receiving and clearing

house for immigrants. Another settlement was in Glenville and consisted of five brick houses north of Washington avenue, Scotia. Two of the houses are still standing. Others of the early Poles to come to Schenectady lived on Railroad, Water and Ferry streets and on Cottage row.

John Lansing Zabriskie, who was living in Schenectady as early as 1792, was one of the group which petitioned for the founding of Union college. He was graduated from the college in 1797 and was the first graduate giving Schenectady as his address.

**Ogonowski Tells of Early Polish Settlers  
Outlines Contributions To Life of City in Talk Before County Historical  
Society**

Schenectady Gazette May 19, 1943

The first Pole to settle permanently in Schenectady, according to Mr Ogonowski, was Ludwig Gapczynski who arrived here in 1866 from New York city following service in the Civil war. He operated a tailor shop on Veeder avenue and later a grocery store on Railroad street and then on Ferry street. Surrogate Edward D. Cutler appointed him guardian for boys who were too young to qualify for service in the armed forces. His son, Charles, was born here May 10, 1889, the first recorded birth in a Polish family in Schenectady.

## Ogonowski Tells of Early Polish Settlers Outlines Contributions To Life of City in Talk Before County Historical Society

Schenectady Gazette May 19, 1943

Other early Polish settlers included John Bohanski, Peter Kazyaka, John Urbanski, Mrs. Maryanna Kwiatkowski, John B. Wiczehski, Roman Frankowski, Ignacy Dobrocinski, Albert Kakulski, Anthony Konieczka, Albert Konieczny, Wawrzyniec Rybarczyk, Michael Kubiak, Michael Malowicz, Stanislaw Kowalski and families bearing the last names of Augustyniak, Norek, Dzikowski, Bandosz, Tarka, Karasiewicz, Kalinowski, Krasucki, Liberski, Lislecki, Czarkowski, Bucholski, Lupka, Biezonski, Lewandowski, Cichy, Penichter, Szalwinski, Homle, Obalski, Bielawa, Zaremba, Bieganski, Ligocki, Malkiewicz, Paczkowski, Nojanowski, Wisniewski and others.

Some of these original settlers are still living in Schenectady. Mr. Ogonowski said that the Polish population of the city now is approximately 18,000. He outlined the various churches and other institutions in the city which have been founded by Poles as well as the contributions of the group to the business, professional and social life of the community.

# The Search for Early Generations of the Urbanski Family from Poland to Schenectady in the 1800s

John Urbanski, Grandson

In 2014, I shared in this newsletter, my knowledge and recollections of the first two generations of the Urbanski family in Schenectady. The earlier of the two generations was that of my Grandparents John and Stanisława (Wozniak) Urbanski, Fig. 1, who immigrated to the US from Prussia in the mid-1880s. The second generation consisted of their twelve children. The youngest of those twelve children was my Father, Edmund Urbanski who was born in 1911 and died in 2004. I was born at the tail of the third generation in 1953, so the span of the three generations from my Grandparents to me is uncommonly long.



Fig. 1: John and Stanisława Urbanski Circa 1918

My knowledge of my family history came primarily from listening to stories told by my Aunts, Uncles, and Father when they gathered in the family house on Vale Place on Sunday afternoons. At the time, it was the 1960s and I was in elementary school and middle school. I would join them in the living room of the family home since my immediate family lived on the second floor of the house that was originally purchased by my Grandparents. My Aunt Helen and Uncle Lou occupied the first-floor flat which is where my Grandparents last lived. At times, a total of four or five Aunts and Uncles would gather to visit and reminisce over earlier times. I would listen to their stories with interest, particularly when they talked about how things had changed since the time of their youth and how they had fun growing up in their first house on Front St. whose back yard bordered the Mohawk River. I would hear, among other things, how in their youth (about 100 years ago now), they had to walk to school or to work, how they worked on an ice delivery truck before refrigeration, had no telephone, cooked and heated the house by coal and wood, how they erected a crystal radio set antenna in the backyard in the mid-1920s and listened to local broadcasts, raised chickens and grew many vegetables for food, and had a summer kitchen at the back of the house so that additional heat from the cooking stove would not be added to the main house in summer. There were likely many more stories told of family, good times, and the early years of my Grandparents immigration to Schenectady that, unfortunately, are now lost to me with the passing of time and the passing of those relatives who told them.

# **The Search for Early Generations of the Urbanski Family from Poland to Schenectady in the 1800s**

John Urbanski, Grandson

At times I wondered what brought my Polish Grandparents to Schenectady. I know from family conversations that their early life was hard living in German controlled Prussia in the 1870s and 1880s following a forced partition of Poland. I assume they immigrated to the US in the mid 1880s because there were job opportunities in the area (even before the start of the GE Company), and they might have known some folks from their Polish region province of Poznan, who were already here. However, until recently, there were only a few other facts that I recalled about my Grandparents:

- 1) they were married in St. Joseph's Church Schenectady in 1886,
- 2) they first lived in Scotia, then at 6 North St. Schenectady, based on their listing in the 1887 Schenectady City Directory, and then at 229 Front St. for approximately 35 years starting in the early 1890s,
- 3) my Grandfather first worked for the Westinghouse Farm Machinery Co which was located near the entrance of the present GE Company, and
- 4) both my Grandfather and Grandmother had siblings who also emigrated in the approximate time frame and lived in Schenectady. My Father recalled that my Grandmother, Stanisława Wozniak, immigrated to Schenectady with three younger siblings: Rosa, Joseph, and Vincent. He mentioned that their father died in Poland. This made me wonder if friends or relatives then brought them to Schenectady.

Recently, I've used available records and internet resources to gain additional information on my Grandparents, and additionally found information on earlier generations of Urbanskis in Schenectady and also in Poland. In this search, a key piece of information was obtained from marriage records maintained by St. Joseph's Church in Schenectady. Knowing that my Grandparents were married in this church, I found their marriage information from a typed alphabetical list that was published by the church from original records. A copy of the typed St. Joseph's church records is also in the Schenectady Historical Society library. The entry for my Grandparents marriage in 1886 revealed not only the date of their marriage but also their Polish home town (Wylatowo) and the names of their parents (i.e., my Great-Grandparents from both sides including the maiden names \*of the women). I was astonished by this find since all this information is important but was previously unknown to me. This record is shown in Fig. 2.

## The Search for Early Generations of the Urbanski Family from Poland to Schenectady in the 1800s

John Urbanski, Grandson

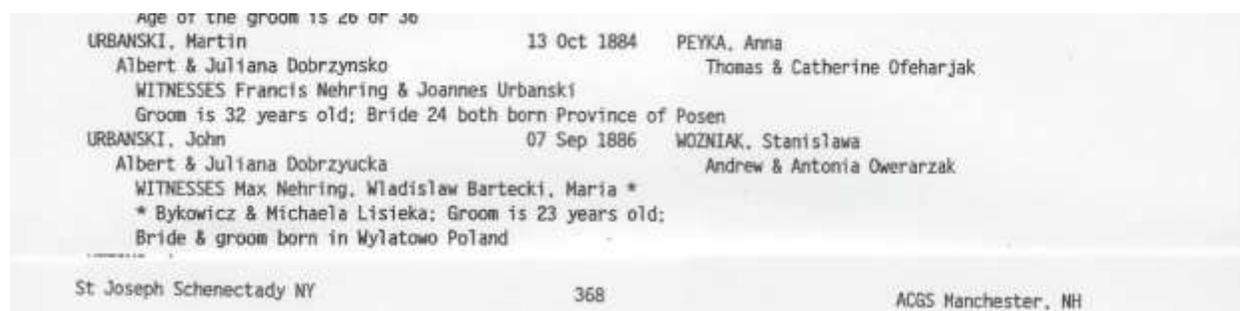


Fig. 2: St. Joseph Church Marriage Record for Urbanski

Included in Figure 2, was the marriage of a brother of my Grandfather, Marcin Urbanski, who was previously unknown to me (his relationship to my Grandfather is verified by noting that the parents of both grooms are the same). In addition, that marriage entry lists a Joannes Urbanski as a witness at his brother's wedding in 1884 which might have been my Grandfather. If so, it puts a later bound on the year that my Grandfather could have arrived in Schenectady. Note, a 1943 Schenectady Gazette article (Ed. Note: See article above) that summarizes a talk given by local lawyer Ted Ogonowski on early Polish settlers in Schenectady, cites my Grandfather, John Urbanski, as one of the early Polish settlers.

Ancestry.com with its US Census records, NY State Census records, and NY ship arrival records has greatly expanded my knowledge of my Grandparents. For example, the 1900 US Census records show that my Great-Grandmother Julianna Urbanski also immigrated to the US and was living with my Grandparents on Front St. The census indicates she was born in 1820 and had eight children, four of which were living in 1900. I am aware of three of those four children: my Grandfather John, brother Marcin who was married in Schenectady in 1884 and another brother Andrew who, according to entries in the Schenectady City Directory, lived with my Grandparents on North St and for a time on Front St. However, I did not know of the fourth living sibling at that time

The internet contains a site where church and civil records from the Poznan region of Poland are being digitized and which are searchable. This effort is called the Poznan Project and the site resides at: [www.poznan-project.psnc.pl](http://www.poznan-project.psnc.pl). To date, only marriage records have been digitized from available records spanning the 1700s and into the 1900s. By searching the name Urbanski within a geographical radius of 20km about the home town of Wylatowo, I found the marriage of my Great-Grandparents (Albert Urbanski and Julianna Dobrzynska) in 1851 in the town of Kwieciszewo which is located approximately 7 km east of Wylatowo, Fig. 3. Although this entry was only one of a multitude of Urbanski marriages listed from the 1800s, I am confident that these are my relatives because the names of this bride and groom match those of my Grandfather's parents provided in the St Joseph's church record, as shown in Figure 2.

# The Search for Early Generations of the Urbanski Family from Poland to Schenectady in the 1800s

John Urbanski, Grandson



Fig. 3: Record of Great Grandparents Wedding and Earlier Marriage of Great Grandmother

Other significant marriage records were found through further interrogation of the Poznan Project web site and ship arrival records in Ancestry.com:

- 1) The marriage record for my Great Grandparents Albert Urbanski and Julianna Dobzynska noted that Julianna was a widow whose married name was Kubiak.
- 2) Julianna was previously married to Marcin Kubiak in 1844, as also found in the Poznan marriage listing, Fig. 3.
- 3) NY ship arrival records in Ancestry.com list a John Urbanski (possibly my Grandfather) arriving in August 1883 from Hamburg on the ship SILESIA. Also similar records show a Marcin Urbanski (a known older brother) arriving in May 1883 from Bremen on the ship OHIO. While I have not confirmed that these men are in fact my relatives, their arrival dates are consistent with John Urbanski being a wedding witness at Marcin Urbanski's wedding in St. Joseph's church in Schenectady in 1884, as documented in Figure 2.
- 4) Most importantly, my Grandfather's other brother, Andrew, married a widow in Prussia in 1879 whose maiden name was Antonia Owczarzak and whose prior married name was Wozniak. The marriage occurred in the Prussian town of Trzemeszno (approximately 11 km south-west of Urbanski home-town of Wylatowo). It came as a shock to me that Antonia Owczarzak is also listed in the St. Joseph's marriage record as my Grandmother's mother. This means that my Grandmother was very likely a step-niece of my Grandfather through the marriage of his older brother to a widow who had children. Among these children, the oldest was my Grandmother who, coincidentally, was my Grandfather's approximate age. This helps explain why my Grandmother's family came to Schenectady. Further:

## **The Search for Early Generations of the Urbanski Family from Poland to Schenectady in the 1800s**

John Urbanski, Grandson

- a. NY ship arrival records in Ancestry.com show Andrew and Antonia Urbanski arriving in March 1884 from Bremen on the ship MAIN. Included in the passenger listing were four children that were previously known to me as the Wozniak children: Stanisława (my Grandmother), Rosa, Joseph, and Vincent. Also listed was a two year old baby of Andrew and Antonia, named Stanislaw, who my Father knew as his cousin in Schenectady. All traveled under the last name Urbanski, even though the children retained the last name Wozniak in Schenectady.

From this recent search of my family roots using available records and internet sites, it has been rewarding for me to have learned of additional members of the Urbanski family who comprised earlier generations, to have learned of my Grandparent's immigration dates, and to have learned how and why my Grandmother Stanisława Wozniak joined the Urbanskis in Schenectady and ultimately married my Grandfather John Urbanski in Schenectady in 1886. To date, I have not found the names of all my family members, known to have immigrated to the US, in the ship arrival archives from the 1880s. My search is continuing and in addition to on-line resources, I also have recently reviewed a microfilm of the original church records from the Wylatowo area of Poland, containing the marriages, births, and deaths recorded by the church in the 1800s. This microfilm was made available through a loan from the Latter Day Saints collection from the greater Mogilno Poland diocese which includes Wylatowo and the surrounding areas. This one microfilm contained only limited information that I can reasonably believe is related to my family. However, I have yet to obtain and review the other available microfilms for the surrounding towns, identified above, where other family member marriages have occurred.

## Ancestry DNA Test vs 23andMe DNA Test

Phyllis Zych Budka

Several times this winter, I was surprised to hear friends express doubts about the validity of a DNA test. Others wondered how useful such a test would be to genealogy research. It made me realize why I was willing to believe my 2015 Ancestry results: I already knew where my grandparents were born. The only rather big surprise was the 5% attributed to Great Britain. I later learned that this could possibly be attributed to the persecution of Catholics long ago in that region, which made sense to me.

I was willing to let Ancestry use my name and email to connect with others who shared similar DNA results and could possibly be related. As I scanned a long list of potential 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> cousins, I saw one email address containing the surname of a known distant cousin. This process turned up just a few contacts who were interested in communicating with me, but I value each one.

A friend advised that the 23andMe test provides a relatively finer breakdown than Ancestry, so I did that test; in contrast with Ancestry, this test involves swabbing each cheek with a Q-tip kind of thing. (Ancestry is advertising that they give a more detailed DNA result now.) Once again, I allowed them to use my email to connect with potential matches.

A comparison of my results is below. My conclusions: HMMM – I guess I still have some credibility to explain my interest in Eastern Europe.

On the subject of usefulness to genealogy research, as I write this, just yesterday I was contacted by a woman in Connecticut who is a potential DNA match. She supplied surnames of her ancestors who came to the US; they weren't familiar. After a few back and forths, we determined that her connection was on my maternal grandparent's side – ie, today's Lithuania.

My Polish relatives in Lithuania have a MyHeritage genealogy tree to which I have contributed. And there were the names my CT contact had supplied! We are indeed related in a direction that is new to me: my maternal great grandmother. Wow!

# Ancestry DNA Test vs 23andMe DNA Test

Phyllis Zych Budka

## Ancestry DNA results Sept. 2015



Europe East 91%

Great Britain 5%

Finland Northwest Russia 2%

Europe West 2%

## 23andMe / My Heritage DNA Results June 2018



# Spit, Spit, Spit

## Bernice Izzo

Recently, when Ancestry had a sale on their DNA test, I decided it was time to do it. I bought the kit on line and within a couple of days, there was a white box in my mail box. After a couple of days of looking at it, I decided it was time to open and figure out how to do it. After putting the tube together, I started to spit. They tell you that it is only 1/4 of a teaspoon but it seemed to take forever to fill the tube. I finally finished spitting. I put the blue disinfectant in the tube and put it back in the box. Now I was excited, so I took it post office immediately.

According to the instructions, it would take six to eight weeks to get the results. About two weeks later, I received an email with the results.

Ireland/Scotland/Wales	32%
* Munster, Ireland	
Europe East	18%
Iberian Peninsula	12%
Europe South	12%
Great Britain	11%
Scandinavia	5%
Low Confidence Regions	
Europe West	4%
European Jewish	1%

The good news was, they had actually pin pointed a province in Ireland where my relatives came from. Until this point, I never knew where. They actually pin pointed it to Cork, Ireland. I was thrilled, but when I looked at places like the Iberian Peninsula and Scandinavia, I was baffled. So I started checking the ancient history of regions I did recognize. The history of the Munster Province explained a lot. It had been invaded by the Vikings, Great Britain invaded Ireland to overthrow the Vikings, then the Spanish went into Ireland to throw out the British. So I guess this means we have been around for a while. But when you look at the whole picture, I am just a genuine mutt.

*Editor's note: Do you have a DNA story to share? Please let us know!*

# Poles Recount Tale of Great Jan Sobieski

## The Schenectady Gazette Sep 9 1933

This article was submitted by Brianna Jolie, who kindly transcribed it. See below for easy to read text.

### Poles Recount Tale of Great Jan Sobieski

Poland's Citizen King With  
Army of 100,000 Beat  
Off Turks' Siege  
250 Years Ago

In trim cottages of Mont Pleasant; in fourth story flats along the railroad, in farmhouses of Clifton Park tonight, toasts will be drunk in the memory of a great man. The sides then will set in back in arm-chairs and recall the stories of Jan Sobieski, Poland's citizen king—liberator of Christendom.

Two hundred and 50 years ago today Sobieski with a force of 100,000 Poles, Lithuanians and Austrians lifted the siege of Vienna and turned the triumphant march across central Europe of Kara Mustapha and 200,000 Turkish warriors to a shattering rout.

Celebration of the victory has already been held at Vienna. Poles intend that definite effort was made to sustain the glory rightfully belonging to their king. Special services will be held in Warsaw and Krakow before midnight. Local observance will be confined to fire-side stories and toasts until November when part of the annual observance of the November uprising may be given over to a memorial of Sobieski.

Many of the local Polish-Americans rightfully claim descent from the 10,000 Hussars and infantrymen who marched from Krakow in mid-August, 1683. There had been difficulties, even in Sobieski's home. His wife, Marie Casimir, was French and an adventuress. Louis XIV, arch enemy of the Hapsburgs, used her as a political tool to delay the start of the expedition.

his people.

#### Sobieski's Plan

The Duke of Lorraine tenaciously held Vienna with a force of 20,000 men as he sent frantic appeals to Poland. For 53 days King John III (Sobieski) tried in vain to obtain the necessary funds for his campaign from the nobles. In the end he marched without them. Some reports state that he had 10,000 men. Others say 30,000.

Germanic forces joined him during the march. He arrived with approximately 80,000 men. The main attack on the Turks began on the morning of September 12. In accordance with King John's plan, the German infantry in the left wing, preceded by artillery, forced the Turks from forest and other hiding places into the open. Thereupon, Sobieski hurled his cavalry, the famous Hussars, from the right wing against the Turkish cavalry. The attack was furious and decisive. The ponderous weight of the Hussars in heavy armor, with their incomparable trust in their leader and their ability as swordsmen made the charge irresistible. When night came the enemy was dispersed and fleeing, panic-stricken.

"All the artillery, all the Moslem camp and its unaccountable riches have fallen into our hands," Sobieski wrote on the 13th. "It is impossible to describe in detail all the refinements of luxury that the Vizier had gathered in his tents. There are baths, gardens with fountains, even a parrot. The Vizier himself was closely pursued but escaped."

#### Story Told Locally

Little known details of the story were told yesterday by Mrs. Casimir Ogonowski and daughter, Theresa, of 902 Michigan avenue. Mr. and Mrs. Ogonowski and family were in Poland three years ago. From Warsaw, one afternoon, they journeyed to Willanow, summer home of Sobieski. Count Branicki, present owner of the palace, is a friend of the family and has spent a fortune in efforts to restore the place to late 17th century appearance.

Pictures, literature and a piece of bark of the great 600-year-old tree in the garden of the palace were brought home by the Ogonowskis. Last summer Miss Ogonowski toured Poland alone and visited several of the palaces and buildings venerated because of their connection with Sobieski.

Kara Mustapha and his army, according to Miss Ogonowski, sought to make Austria and central Europe a province of the Turkish empire and to replace the cross of St. Stephen's and possibly St. Peter's by the crescent.

The Polish king was descended of a line of warriors. He received early training in France and in 1667, seven years before he was elected ruler, he turned back a smaller invasion by the Turks. His fearlessness against the Turks was unequalled by any military leader of Europe at the time. His training methods for the Polish Hussars and knowledge of Turkish methods of warfare are the other reasons for the complete faith placed in him by his people.

Sobieski's Plan

escaped.

#### Symbol to Pope

It is estimated that 13,000 fell at the battle. Ten thousand were Turks. Three thousand were Christians, of whom 1,000 were Poles.

To the Pope, King John sent as a symbol of victory, the great standard of Mahomet with the following message, "Venimus, vidimus et Deus Vicit."

The victory won, Leopold of Austria and his court made haste to forget the debt they owed the Poles. Their actions toward Sobieski and his followers were little short of churlish. The Poles were even refused forage for their horses.

After a glorious career, Sobieski's last years were filled with disappointment. Corruption took possession of Polish political life. His attempts at reform were unsuccessful. He died, June 17, 1696, and with his death, according to many, ended the glory of old Poland.

So, today, the old men sit by their firesides telling the tale to those who are American born. And in the red and brown gleamings, Jan Sobieski rides again.

## **Poles Recount Tale of Great Jan Sobieski**

### **The Schenectady Gazette Sep 9 1933**

#### *Poland's Citizen King With Army of 100,000 Beat Off Turks' Seige 250 Years Ago*

In trim cottages of Mont Pleasant; In fourth story flats along the railroad, in farmhouses of Clifton Park tonight toasts will be drunk to the memory of a great man. The elders then will settle back in armchairs and re-tell the stories of Jan Sobieski, Poland's citizen king-liberator of Christendom.

Two hundred and 50 years ago today Sobieski with a force of 100,000 Poles, Lithuanians and Austrians lifted the siege of Vienna and turned the triumphant march across central Europe of Kara Mustapha and 300,000 Turkish warriors to a disorderly rout.

Celebration of the victory has already been held at Vienna. Poles contend that definite effort was made to subdue the glory rightfully belonging to their king. Special services will be held in Warsaw and Krakow before nightfall. Local observance will be confined to fireside stories and toasts until November when part of the annual observance of the November uprising may be given over to a memoriam of Sobieski.

Many of the local Polish-Americans rightfully claim descent from the 30,000 Hussars and infantrymen who marched from Krakow in mid-August, 1683. There had been difficulties, even in Sobieski's home. His wife, Marie Casimire, was French and an adventuress. Louis XIV, arch enemy of the Hapsburgs, used her as a political tool to delay the start of the expedition.

#### Story Told Locally

Little known details of the story were told yesterday by Mrs. Casimir Ogonowski and daughter, Theresa, of 902 Michigan avenue. Mr. and Mrs. Ogonowski and family were in Poland three years ago. From Warsaw, one afternoon, they journeyed to Wilanow, summer home of Sobieski. Count Branicki, present owner of the palace, is a friend of the family and has spent a fortune in efforts to restore the place to late 17th century appearance.

Pictures, literature and a piece of bark of the great 600-year-old tree in the garden of the palace were brought home by the Ogonowskis. Last summer Miss Ogonowski toured Poland alone and visited several of the palaces and buildings venerated because of their connection with Sobieski.

Kara Mustapha and his army, according to Miss Ogonowski, sought to make Austria and central Europe a province of the Turkish empire and to replace the cross of St. Stephen's and possibly St. Peter's by the crescent.

The Polish king was descended of a line of warriors. He received early training in France and in 1667, seven years before he was elected ruler, he turned back a smaller invasion by the Turks. His fearlessness against the Turks was unequaled by any military leader of Europe at the time. His training methods for the Polish Hussars and knowledge of Turkish methods of warfare are the other reasons for the complete faith placed in him by his people.

#### Sobieski's Plan

The Duke of Lorraine tenaciously held Vienna with a force of 20,000 men as he sent frantic appeals to Poland. For 58 days King John III (Sobieski) tried in vain to obtain the

## **Poles Recount Tale of Great Jan Sobieski**

The Schenectady Gazette Sep 9 1933

necessary funds for his campaign from the nobles. In the end he marched without them. Some reports state that he had 10,000 men. Others say 30,000.

Germanic forces joined him during the march. He arrived with approximately 80,000 men. The main attack on the Turks began on the morning of September 12. In accordance with King John's plan, the German Infantry in the left wing preceded by artillery, forced the Turks from forest and other hiding places into the open. Thereupon Sobieski hurried his cavalry, the famous Hussars, from the right wing against the Turkish cavalry. The attack was furious and decisive. The ponderous weight of the Hussars in heavy armor, with their incomparable trust in their leader and their ability as swordsmen made the charge irresistible. When night came the enemy was dispersed and fleeing, panic-stricken.

"All the artillery, all the Moslem camp and its unaccountable riches have fallen into our hands." Sobieski wrote on the 13<sup>th</sup>. "It is impossible to describe in detail all the refinements of luxury that the Vizier had gathered in his tents. There are baths, gardens with fountains, even a parrot. The Vizier himself was closely pursued but escaped."

Symbol to Pope

It is estimated that 13,000 fell at the battle. Ten thousand were Turks. Three thousand were Christians, of whom 1,000 were Poles.

To the Pope, King John sent as a symbol of victory, the great standard of Mohamet with the following message, "Venimus, vidimus et Deus Vicit." [Ed: We came, we saw and God won]

The victory won, Leopold of Austria and his court made haste to forget the debt they owed the Poles. Their actions toward Sobieski and his followers were little short of churlish. The Poles were even refused forage for their horses.

After a glorious career, Sobieski's last years were filled with disappointment. Corruption took possession of Polish political life. His attempts at reform were unsuccessful. He died June 17, 1696, and with his death according to many, ended the glory of old Poland.

So, today, the old men sit by their firesides telling the tale to those who are American born. And in the red and brown gleamings, Jan Sobieski rides again. "

# PANI KATARZYNA KORNAKKA

## Part 13 – The Forties (continued)

### Martin Byster



Fig. 1: New York Times, September 2, 1945

### Family

Katie's grandsons and granddaughters, second generation Americans born in the 40s, Martin Byster (b:1941), Cynthia Zakriski (b:1944), and Katherine Byster (b:1949) initially lived at 18 River Street. Grandson Paul Kornacki (b:1942) lived on Ingersoll Avenue and grandson Gregory Symanski (b:1949), lived on Prospect Street.



Figure 2: Gregory Symanski

Katie's extended family in the early 20s all lived within walking distance<sup>1</sup> of each other, within the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wards of Schenectady. As the first generation came of age, some departed to find good fortune in other places. Those who lived in Schenectady through the 40's prospered and those who came back after serving in the military during WWII returned without debilitating injuries. Grandmother Katie remained at home doing the housework, keeping a garden and doing laundry for a number of families residing in the GE Realty Plot<sup>2</sup>. Grandfather Feliks for the war effort worked at the American Locomotive Company (ALCO) in the Tank Shop where military tanks were manufactured<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Note: The Rybickis on Alexander Street lived furthest about 1.5 miles from the Kornackis on River Street. A long walk however I recall my mother Pauline, Janet and Gertrude one afternoon pushing me in a "Taylor-Tot" stroller over the Western Gateway, thru Scotia, Sunnyside Rd, across Freeman's Bridge to Alexander St. returning along Maxon Rd and Front St. back home.

<sup>2</sup> The General Electric Realty Plot, often referred to locally as the GE Realty Plot, GE Plots or just The Plot, is a residential neighborhood in Schenectady ...an area of approximately 90 acres just east of Union College. ...[Wikipedia](#)

<sup>3</sup> Note: 1940c ALCO Tank Shop [Bldg. 70]: ALCO...produce[d] a M3 "General Lee" tank...also...the M4 "General Sherman" tank. ...and...a tank destroyer, the M7, "The Priest" ...equipped with a 105 mm howitzer...[with] a range of seven miles...proved crucial in defeating the German Army in the battle of El Alamein in Egypt, in November 1942. ...<https://salutetofreedom.org/ny.html>

# PANI KATARZYNA KORNACKA

## Part 13 – The Forties (continued)

### Martin Byster



Figure 3: 1943 Tax Return<sup>5</sup>

Katie's daughters Josephine, Janet<sup>4</sup>, and Gertrude spent much of the 40's away at nursing school. Josephine and Janet graduated from Mount Sinai Hospital Training School in New York City and Gertrude from Saint Mary's Hospital School of Nursing in Amsterdam, NY. After graduation they lived in other cities but eventually returned to take residence in their own apartments in Schenectady. Janet and Gertrude; married later in the 50's

All Katie's children were married at Saint Mary's Church in Schenectady; the first five grandchildren were born in Schenectady.

Both Josephine and Vicki were married in 1943. Josephine with Bernie lived first at University Place then later with Gregory at Prospect Street in Schenectady; Vicki with Joe Z and Cindy lived temporarily at River Street until Vicki's husband completed his military service in the US Navy and restored a home in Glenville. Joe and Grace with Pauly first lived at Ingersoll Avenue in Schenectady then moved to Upper Union Street in Niskayuna.

Pauline, Ben and Marty resided on the 1st floor apartment at River Street for the entire decade. Ben Byster<sup>6,7</sup> worked at the General Electric Company (GE) and in the latter part of the decade was a Sheetmetal Worker in Bldg. 73. During the war he did work in the course of GE developing a jet engine for the military. The work he did may have been for a group of GE engineers called the "Hush Hush Boys" who designed new parts for the engine, redesigned others, tested the engine and delivered a top-secret working prototype called I-A in 1942<sup>8</sup>. Pauline worked for the American Laundry at their facility on Green Street during the day and after supper helped remove laundry that Katie set out earlier in the day, from the 2nd floor, on a line to dry which was then ironed, folded, and placed, ever so gently, in a wicker laundry basket to be returned to its owner.

Joe Kornacki was employed as a Tool Maker at GE. During the war he worked with the development US Navy Gun Directors, sophisticated mechanical analog computers which predated today's shipboard digital computers<sup>9</sup>. Grace's employment was not researched.

<sup>4</sup> Note: Janet was age 13 in 1940 not 18 as reported in Part 11

<sup>5</sup> Note: Total reported income, \$4,144.49 is slightly less than \$80.00/week or \$2.00/hr.

<sup>6</sup> Note: Early in the decade the FBI did a background check after which he and his brother Eddie, who also worked for GE, needed to resolve the various spelling of the family name and correct the record to spell the name as it is today "Byster".

<sup>7</sup> Note: Among some of the spellings in the earlier records: "Bystryk", "Bystry"

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ge.com/reports/last-hush-hush-boys-joseph-sorota-helped-build-first-u-s-jet-engine-dies-96/>

<sup>9</sup> The US Navy's need included the development of some heavy machine-gun directors. Contracts for development were awarded to Ford Instrument for the Gun Director Mark 45, to General Electric for the Mark 46, and to Arma for the Mark 47 (the Mark 46 and 47 never reached production. ---<http://web.mit.edu/STS.035/www/PDFs/Newell.pdf>

# PANI KATARZYNA KORNACKA Part 13 – The Forties (continued)

## Martin Byster

Early in the decade, Bernie Symanski, Joe Z, and Vicki were also GE employees. Bernie may have worked with Industrial Control, Vicki with Radio Tubes and Joe Z in the Pattern Shop, however this record is anecdotal and uncertain. Josephine first worked for Doctor Edmond Colby. Later (c.1947) Bernie, with Josephine, opened Advanced Bakery on Windsor Terrace. Josephine subsequently (c.1948) accepted a nursing position with Saint Clare's Hospital at Schenectady.

Janet assisted Doctor Thomas Adnolfi in Schenectady at the close of 1949. All three nurses eventually worked at Saint Clare's.



Figure 4: Advertisement <sup>10</sup>

The war years brought victory to the nation and prosperity to the family. The men and women abroad won the war and those at home covered the cost paying a Victory Tax<sup>11</sup> on earnings and purchasing bonds with their savings.



Figure 5 (left): War Bond Envelope

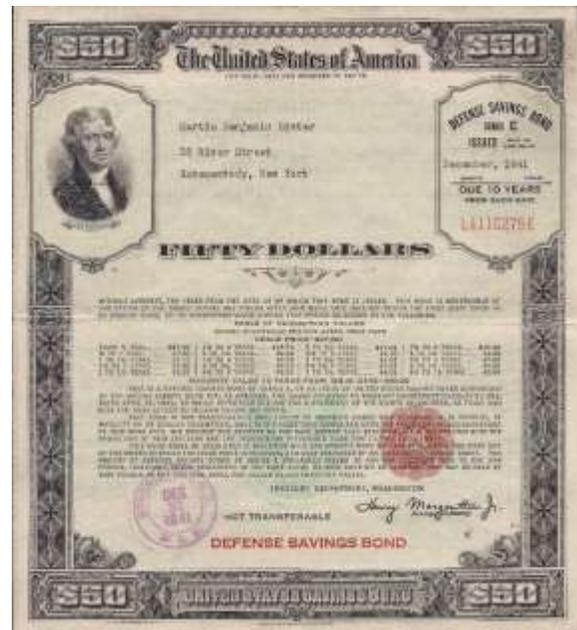


Figure 6 (right): Fifty Dollar Defense Savings (WAR) Bond

<sup>10</sup> 1947; Pamietnik, Zloty Jubileusz Parafji Matki Boskiej Czestochowskiej; p.45 Note: Complimentary advertisement celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Saint Mary's Church Parish.

<sup>11</sup> See above Figure 3; 1943 Tax Return, Line 19," Victory Tax"

PANI KATARZYNA KORNACKA  
Part 13 – The Forties (continued)

Martin Byster

Homestead<sup>12</sup>

**Picture 1:** South side yard of 18 River Street from the backyard looking east. Gate to street is open. Fence is for a large garden maintained by the neighborhood Italian families.



Picture 1: 1940

Picture 2: 1940

**Picture 2:** Grace Kornacki with her bridesmaids<sup>13</sup> in attendance in the backyard. The back porch is backdrop; the gate to the street is closed. **Picture 3:** Grace with Joe holding Pauly in backyard; 16 River Street is backdrop. **Picture 4:** Looking north; Marty in Taylor Tot; River Street backdrop; Mohawk River behind levee<sup>14</sup> at end of street. **Picture 5:** Janet, Marty, Gert; at top of levee; river is backdrop.



Picture 3: 1942



Picture 4: 1942



Picture 5: 1943

<sup>12</sup> Note: In the 40's the perspective changes from here forward on life at 18 River Street. Martin Byster who lived there continuously for 20 years now adds his personal observations and recollection to what has been anecdotal, archival pictures and written records. What is particularly noteworthy is the absence of photographs in the record of Katarzyna Kornacki.

<sup>13</sup> Note: Grace, Janet, Pauline and Vicky

<sup>14</sup> Note: The "levee" is an elevated railroad siding from ALCO west to the New York Central railroad main line. After this levee was in place cellars continued to flood when the water-table rose with the flood elevation of the river but the homestead was not again inundated with flood waters until 2011 following the passing of tropical storm (once hurricane) Irene.

PANI KATARZYNA KORNACKA  
Part 13 – The Forties (continued)

Martin Byster



**Picture 6:** Marty, Feliks Kornacki at Ingersoll Avenue. Sunday was always a day of rest for Feliks. Mass was on Marty's itinerary but it was not always on his grandfather's. What was on both their itineraries this day in '45 however was a walk to Riverside Park. Feliks would talk to his friends while Marty entertained himself in the park. The picture shows river water that periodically flooded Ingersoll in winter but could not flood River Street protected by the levee to ALCO. Water may have seeped into the cellar at 18 River but as it came it went, by itself.

Picture 6: 1945

**Picture 7:** Marty (5), Cindy (2) & Pauly (4); the trellis, flowers and fence backdrop replaced an old shed. The Kornacki family was fairly secure financially, perhaps prosperous, to replace the old shed and back porch. Except for Josephine, Janet, and Gertrude in nursing school, every adult in the household was gainfully employed.

**Picture 8<sup>15</sup>:** Ben & Hedy Wheat (cousins) Ben & Pauline; new back porch backdrop.



Picture 7: 1946



Picture 8: 1947



Picture 9: 1949

**Picture 9:** Joe Z, Cindy, Marty; Joe Z<sup>16</sup>, home from the Navy, took on homestead work with others in the Katie's immediate family, back drop is landscaped back yard.

[to be continued]

<sup>15</sup> Note: The new back porch needs a fresh coat of paint which from examining the record may have been completed in 1948.

<sup>16</sup> Note: Joseph Zakriski (Joe Z) had an artistic genius in working with wood perhaps brought out in his service with the Civil Conservation Corps (CCC).