

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

July 2017 Vol. 4 No. 3
Our Fourth 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 for 2017 October 1st and January 1st 2018. To submit your family story, pictures, etc., e-mail Phyllis Zych Budka: 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 American Historical Association Link (PAHA)

Dr. Maja Trochimczyk, webmaster of the PAHA website, added a link to our Project Newsletter archive on the "Schenectady Digital History Archive."

From the PAHA Home Page at

<http://www.polishamericanstudies.org/>

Click on "Resources" then "Lists of Resources."

Thank you, Maja!

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/>

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.

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

Thanks again to Bernice Izzo for compiling the 10/15 - 4/17 newsletter index sent in a 2nd e-mail!

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Save the Date!

Church of Saint Adalbert Dozynki - Polish Harvest Festival

Sunday October 15, 2017



10:30 am Mass Followed by Traditional bread, salt & wine greeting at the parish center

Free Admission

12 noon - 5:00 pm - Polish menu & baked goods (take out available)

3:00 - 7:00 pm - Romanowski Brothers Polka Band

Throughout the afternoon:

Church tour

50 / 50

Genealogy

Collectibles

Cultural Exhibits

Children's game room

Raffle

Grandma's Attic Flea Market

Searching My Roots Gail Bochenek Demcsak, Crofton, MD



Fig. 1a Tatka family c 1925-27- L to R: Sue, Anne (my mother), Mary Zych (my grandmother), Mary, Stephen (my grandfather), Albert



Fig. 1b Walek Zyck family: c early 1950s - L to R: Kathrine Zych Beltowski (Mary's sister), Helen Galick McCormack (John Galick's daughter), Konegunda Zych (Walenty's wife), John McCormack, Walenty (Walek) Zych Mary's brother, Mary Zych Tatka (Grandmother)

My name is Gail Bochenek Demcsak. I was born in Paterson NJ in 1945 to Walter Bochenek and Anne Tatka Bochenek. I have one brother, Walter, who is 3 years older. My grandparents were all from southern Poland and immigrated to the USA between 1899 and 1905. Growing up we did not hear a lot about our grandparents' siblings or families. My father's father died when I was 2 and his mother spoke little to no English. The adults always spoke Polish to our grandparents and often to each other. I think my mother and her sisters would gossip in Polish. For the most part my generation was not taught the language.

When my father died in 1991, my mother gave me a packet of documents and papers pertaining to all four of my grandparents. It was quite a find, including baptismal and marriage certificates, a military passport of sorts, written in German and Polish for my father's father, and best of all 4 original certificates of citizenship and naturalization for them. Another item of interest was an official document, written in Hungarian, for the sale of land from my maternal great grandfather to my grandfather. He had moved back to Poland to farm after living in NJ for 17 years. I made copies of it all for my brother and cousins and stored away the originals.

About 2 ½ years ago I decided to see if I could find out more about my ancestors. Unfortunately, my parents and all their siblings were gone and my brother and cousins had less information than I had, so I would have to rely on our memories. I did have some facts, so how hard could it be, especially since I expected that the names were somewhat unique.

Searching My Roots Gail Bochenek Demcsak, Crofton, MD

First a bit about my ancestors.

My father Walter Bochenek (1914-1991) the 3rd youngest of 8, was born in Passaic, NJ to Andrew Bochenek (1874-1947) from Giedlarowa. His parents were Antoni Bochenek and Regina Czapla (sp?) . Andrew immigrated in 1902 with Thomas Bochenek, who may have been his cousin. I have yet to find siblings or anything more about my great grandparents.

Frances Buczek (1884-1959) was from Cholewiana Gora. Her parents were Joannes Buczek and Anna Pirog. Her grandparents were Sebastian Buczek and Agnelis Koc ; Ignatii Pirog and Catherine (surname unknown). Frances immigrated in 1899, with Frances Koc, who I suspect was her cousin. I have also found a man that I believe to be her brother. We grew up knowing his children as my father's cousins. I have found nothing further about my great grandparents, other than to assume they did not immigrate.

For this writing I am focusing on my mother's family. In particular the Zych family.

My mother Anne Tatka Bochenek (1914-2001) was born in Schenectady, NY to Stephen Tatka (1886-1965) from Niedzica and Mary Zych (1884-1959) from Nowy Targ. She was baptized 2 days later at St Adalbert's Church. One of her sponsors was Jacob Rekucki, also from Nowy Targ. No further mention has ever been made of him. Anne had an older brother Albert and 2 younger sisters, Sophie (Sue) and Mary who were all born in NJ. It is unknown why my mother was born in Schenectady, since they were living in NJ.

My grandfather Stephen's parents were Martin Tatka (~1865 -??) who immigrated ~ 1890 and lived in Hibernia, NJ where he worked in an iron mine. Kunnigunda (surname unknown) arrived NY 1 Mar 1905 with Stephen and Rozalia (1900 -??), to join husband and father Martin. John was born 1906 in NJ. In 1907 all but Stephen returned to Poland to farm. John later returned to US in 1924 where he married and lived with his wife Mary (Jandura) and children Anne, John and Albert in Hibernia, NJ. We visited occasionally when I was a child.



Fig. 2 Mary Zych Tatka's Naturalization Certificate

Searching My Roots

Gail Bochenek Demcsak, Crofton, MD

Grandmother Mary Zych. I knew that my grandmother Mary went to Schenectady and had several brothers who lived there, but did not know their names. I had heard the Polish “nicknames” during conversations between my parents and grandparents. One of my documents was a paper from Immigration and Naturalization Service saying that Mary arrived in Baltimore 2 March 1905 on SS. Chemnitz from Bremen. I thought it would be easy to find her with that much information. It took me over a year to find the passenger list. I had already found her sister, Katherine, whom I had met and brother Walenty from Nowy Targ and both were going to a brother in law, Jozef Galik (1866-1956 Nowy Targ) in Schenectady. Brother Jan was going to brother Walenty. With surname misspelled, I finally found Mary had arrived with Wojciech from Nowy Targ, destination brother in law Jozef Galik .There had to be another sister, but who? There was no mention of parents either.

Jozef Galik arrived NY 1 April 1902 with 3 young boys, Jan (1892), Franciszek (1896) and Stanislaw (Steve 1899). Who was his wife?

Mary Zych's Siblings

Antonina Zych Galick (12 Jan 1876 – 18 Nov 1959). Her records all say she immigrated 1902 but she was not listed on the manifest with Jozef and the boys. His said his destination was wife Antonina, Foster Ave, Schenectady. I could not find anything about her arrival, probably with infant Mary (1901 - 1996). Their children: John, Frank, Steve and Mary were born in Nowy Targ. Anthony (Tony), Josephine, Michael and Lewis were born in Schenectady. Antonina's obituary said she was survived by her brothers Albert and Walter, both of Schenectady. I was unable to find any information about a brother Walter, or their parents.

Walenty (William 14 Feb 1878-Oct 1965). Arrived NY 22 Apr 1903. Married Konegunda (Suzi) Gryzlak and stayed in Schenectady until his death. Children : Frank, Sadie, John, Walter and Josephine.

Kathryn Zych Beltowski (28 Nov 1879-July 1964). Arrived ~ 1904. I could not find accurate passenger records. She married Albert Beltowski (Nowy Targ), date unknown, and lived in Schenectady until after his death. She then moved to Detroit ~1930 with children Anna, Albina (Mabel) and John. We visited them in Detroit when I was young. John moved to Florida in retirement, living an hour or so from my parents. I was in touch with him until his death in 1995.

Jan Zych (~1881) Arrived NY 13 Dec 1906 from Nowy Targ. Destination brother Walenty, 123 Center St, Schenectady. No further information.

Wojciech (Albert 26 Apr 1886-Feb 1967). Arrived with Mary 2 Mar 1905. Married Sophia Karpenski in 1911. She was 23, twice widowed and had 3 children by the 2 previous husbands: Stanislaw (Sadie) and Helen Dobkowski, and Thadeus Predel. Their children together are Eugene, Otilia, Zenobia and Adelaide. When I found the registration for Wojciech and Sophia's marriage, his parents were listed as Frank Zych and Victoria Watychowicz. I found my great grandparents!! I also learned that Adelaide had married and moved to Annapolis, MD, where she died in 2003. I have lived near Annapolis since 1996; I could have known her!

In 1910 Grandmother Mary was still in Schenectady, living with and working for a patent attorney, John F Bartlett, his wife and 2 young children. On 2 Jul 1911 in NJ, she married

Searching My Roots

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my grandfather Stephen Tatka. Her brother Albert was a sponsor for them. I do not know how they met, or if they knew each other previously. After they married they lived for the most part in Bergen and Passaic Counties, NJ. Mary died 1 Nov 1959, coincidentally Antonina died 18 Nov 1959.

Finding Phyllis

Early in my search I just Googled the surname Zych and surprisingly found a Phyllis Zych Budka whose father's family came from Nowy Targ and lived in Schenectady. Her collection showed many of the people who arrived from Nowy Targ and listed some of the names I had seen in City Directories. I wondered if they were people I had not found, or relatives. Her newsletter was informative and very encouraging - with regard to contacting her. Quite some time later, I did email her with information about myself and ancestors. Knowing she was born and raised in Schenectady, I thought she might have insight into a possible connection between our families. Her reply was that the families did live near each other or at the same address and she felt confident there was a link a couple of generations back. She was also familiar with some of the other names I gave her. We continued to trade information via email and finally decided to talk on the phone. Learning a bit more about each other, we were surprised at how much we had in common. She also helped me with planning my research, since I had just blindly jumped in with both feet.

Another connection

One day Phyllis sent me a file with the petition, declaration and oath of citizenship for Walenty Zych, my great uncle. After I added it to my Ancestry tree, a young woman commented that he was her great great grandfather. His daughter Sadie was her great grandmother and Sadie's daughter Henrietta is her grandmother, known as Harriet. She is still alive and living in Schenectady but is in ill health. This young woman is Christine Munoz, who is my 2nd cousin twice removed. We continue to share information.

Extended family

I also had been in contact with another woman, Elaine Blodgett, whose husband is related to Helen Galick, John's daughter, via her husband John Mc Cormack. She posted a picture of Joseph and Antonina, which I recognized.

The Galick family is large, a lot of children who had a lot of children. My mother talked of them, especially "Uncle" John and his wife Mary – the mink farmers in VT. Uncle John is in fact her first cousin, about 20 years older than she. They were a family of farmers, Joseph was a dairy farmer. In 1920 they moved from the Glenville area to a larger farm of over 1000 acres, in West Haven, VT, that eventually became almost 2000 acres. Very remote, they literally lived off the land, growing and making whatever they needed. All sorts of creatures inhabited the property. Initially there was no electricity or plumbing in the house. It was just across Lake Champlain from Whitehall, NY. There was no road until about 1935 when Steve and Tony decided to build it themselves. Joseph continued with dairy farming and John became a mink farmer. Everything they needed was on the farm; if they couldn't buy it, the brothers built it. The children attended school in Whitehall, NY, getting there by boat along with the milk that was delivered to Whitehall for sale. As the families grew, some of the subsequent generations continued to live and work on the farm.

Searching My Roots

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My parents visited the farm when I was a child. I have no memory of being there when I was 2. My brother visited in the late 60s and mid 70s, staying in the farmhouse with John and Mary. He met Steve and Tony and hunted with John's son Bill and Bill Jr. I did meet John and Mary when they came to NJ to visit my grandmother.

Getting on in years, in 1989 Steve and Tony decided to sell the farm to a Conservancy so it would not be developed. It now comprises about half of the Helen W. Bruckner Nature Preserve at Bald Mountain. It lies at the extreme southern edge of West Haven, a few miles from the junction of Routes 4 and 9A in Whitehall.

Meeting Phyllis

I am fascinated with these families not just because they are related but because of those with whom I have come in contact. My husband and I had a planned trip to New England in early June and decided to extend it into NY and VT so I could meet my contacts. When I mentioned it to Phyllis, she immediately suggested we stay with her and I accepted. It just felt right. I was able to arrange to meet with Christine and Elaine as well. So I knew I would also be able to see the farm. When we arrived at Phyllis's house, it seemed as though I was going to visit an old friend that I had not seen in a long time. As we talked about ourselves, families and interests, my husband said "I think I am in the Twilight Zone. You two are so similar it is eerie." We took it as a compliment.

The next day Phyllis gave me a grand tour of Schenectady, including St Adalbert Church and all the addresses I had where the relatives had lived. All the houses still seem to exist. That afternoon, Christine came to visit bearing more information. She had been to the cemetery and found the gravesites of several of the relatives, and gave me pictures. I had an old one, c. early to mid 1950s, of my grandmother Mary, with, likely, her sister Katherine, a couple about Mary's age, and a younger couple. My mother had written "Walek and family, Schenectady" on the back. I knew Walek was short for Walter. Could this be the brother Walter? Christine confirmed that the man was Walenty and one of the other women was his wife Konegunda (Suzi). The family evidently called him Walter, and he had a son named Walter. The young couple was Helen Galick, John's daughter and her husband John McCormack. Christine left me with other pictures of the family, including her great grandmother, grandmother and mother, plus lots of new information for my tree. Not only had I met some relatives, but also made new friends.

There is still much to learn. I will continue researching and try to connect with some of those who are still alive. Hopefully I will find more people who are as interested in ancestry research as the women I have already met. There are more Zychs to be found, related? Maybe not. Many live in other parts of New England. Not to mention the other branches of my tree. I also want to know if my grandparents' families knew each other before they immigrated.

But that is another story.

Next Issue: The Galick Farm

Phyllis's Note: To quote a Facebook caption under a smiling picture of a local relative and her Lithuanian cousin, "From 4th cousins to best friends," Gail, her husband and I are now new friends with a very special relationship. While genealogy quests are challenging and rewarding, living relatives are more fun than dead ones!

A Saint Adalbert Scrapbook 1941-1950 Part 2
Compiled By Henrietta Beczak Budka
Comments by Phyllis Zych Budka

My husband, Alfred (Freddy, Fredziu, Al) John Budka (1936-1992), and I grew up in Schenectady's Mont Pleasant / St. Adalbert's Polish-American Church and school (K-8) community. Al was 6 years ahead of me in school, so I didn't really know him until my college days. Al was an only child, the son of Henrietta (Beczak) and Walter Budka. The scrapbook, compiled by Henrietta with comments in her beautiful handwriting (Palmer method), is a remarkably complete history of Al's K-8 St. Adalbert years.

The scrapbook illustrates that our lives were centered around church and school events and holidays. Its pages are fragile, crumbling. I will share some pages in each newsletter. Some readers may recognize names and faces from our shared past.

A Baranek (Lamb) in the Christmas Play 1942
St. Adalbert's School – 3rd Floor Stage



Part 9 – Pictures from My Family Album Martin Byster



Fig. 1: 1930s-1940s Kodak Vigilant Junior Six 20 Folding Camera¹

There is significant addition in the available Kornacki family record beginning in the late 20's that continues thru the 1930s into the 1940s, picture albums. Pictures collected by the family increased significantly in the 1930s. They were taken, organized and kept in albums in a way which today seems typical of the '30s, since long forgotten or lost to the vernacular with today's technology.

Pauline, my mother was a proud owner of a Kodak Six 20 camera. She contributed many of the pictures in the family albums having taken them herself or which she collected from her local extended family the Dobies, Kornackis, Rybickis, friends and neighbors. The albums tended by my mother are carefully labeled in her own handwriting, white on black or black on white.

The pictures in these albums² tell a story seemingly at odds with the struggle Pani Katarzyna (Katie) Kornacki and her family faced in the "Dirty Thirties".

In 1930 Katie and Feliks were perhaps financially in the best position they would be over the next 10 years. They struggled however as their position continued to decline to bottom out in 1940 before it dramatically recovered in 1941³.

In retrospect, in light of how the mortgage on the home and property was finally satisfied, the Kornackis were in difficulty the day they over confidently mortgaged their home to a bond to repay a \$2300 loan at 6% over 5 years⁴. Despite making interest payments semi-annually and one payment on principle, at the start of 1928, half way through the term of the loan they still owed 86% of principle. On the date full payment on principle was due, they owed \$1610. Off the record, their neighbors⁵ who made the loan apparently either agreed to extend repayment over 15 years and as it was finally resolved, longer into 1941.

¹ NOTE: Many of the pictures from the 1920s and '30s in the Kornacki family album may have been taken by my mother Pauline Kornacki, including those some of my father Benjamin Byster, before they were married. The camera is in my (Martin Byster) personal collection as are those in the family albums

² NOTE: Four albums are in the possession of Martin Byster. Two of the four albums are full with pictures; some had pictures removed. One album appears to be Pauline Kornacki's personal album. The remaining two albums have blank pages which may not have been filled and pages from which pictures were removed.

³ Pani Katarzyna Kornacka, Part 8, Fig 2; Receipts: Final principle and interest payments on a \$2300 mortgage bond

⁴ Pani Katarzyna Kornacka, Part 6, Fig 4; : Deed Loan and Mortgage for the Purchase of 18 River Street, September 2, 1925

⁵ Pani Katarzyna Kornacka, Part 6; Fig. 4; Deed, Loan, Mortgage for the Purchase of 18 River Street, September 2, 1925

Part 9 – Pictures from My Family Album Martin Byster

Katie's mother Apolonia (Dobies) Borek passed away in 1931⁶. Feliks and his brother Jan with him in the US lost their oldest brother, Antoni, who passed away in 1937⁷.

Times were changing too. The "Thirties" began with president Herbert Hoover and ended with Franklin Roosevelt. In 1930 the US economy was in the Great Depression from which it had recovered in 1939, at odds with the fortunes of the Kornackis. The top two floors of the Edison Hotel, where Katie first worked, were demolished in 1935⁸. Rexford Park, to which my mom and her friends rode the trolley, in the '20s was closed in 1931 and razed in 1933. The trolley bridge over the Mohawk River near the Park was dismantled in 1942.⁹ Prohibition ended in 1933. Republic of Poland \$50 gold bond interest coupons (Figure 2) were not redeemed after 1936¹⁰. Germany invaded Poland in 1939.



Fig. 2: Coupon, Annual Interest, \$1.50 on The Republic of Poland \$50 Gold Bond

The pictures in the albums reflect the good times, the good times as the Kornacki family matured to take its place and accept its responsibilities among first generation native Americans before a gathering storm over Europe.

⁶ Anecdotally to Martin Byster from Katie Kornacki

⁷ Letter from Feliks' family in Poland announcing the death of Antoni held in the personal files of Martin Byster

⁸ 1976; Hart, L.; Schenectady's Golden Era, 1880-1930, 3rd Printing Revised Edition; p.302

⁹ Ibid., pp.44, 55

¹⁰ Note: The semi-annual interest coupons of the Republic of Poland, 1920, 20 year, 6%, \$50 US Dollar Gold Bond for 1937, 1938, and 1939 are still attached to the bonds held in the personal files of Martin Byster with additional documents referring to the registration (1949) and settlements (1975) for these bonds.

**Part 9 – Pictures from My Family Album
Martin Byster**



**Fig. 3:
1931
Genevieve & Gertrude Kornacki
18 River Street
Confirmation¹¹**



**Fig. 4:
1931
Pauline Kornacki
18 River Street
In Contemplation**



**Fig. 5:
1931
Josephine Jankowski
& Bernice Lencewicz
16-18 River Street**



**Fig.6:
1933
Joseph Kornacki
w/ Friend**



Fig.7: 1934 Janet Kornacki (upper left) & Caroline Sawicki (upper right) at Graduation - St Mary's School

¹¹ Note: Genevieve Kornacki, later Mrs. Donald Reed



**Fig.8:
1934
Victoria & Gertrude Kornacki
18 River Street**



**Fig. 9:
1934
Victoria Kornacki
Saint Mary's School
Graduation**



Fig. 10 1934 Victoria Kornacki - Saint Mary's School Graduation



**Fig. 11: 1938 Josephine Kornacki Mount Sinai Nursing School NYC
(TO BE CONTINUED)**

Appendix A

Family Group Sheet for FELIKS (FELIX) KORNACKI

Husband: FELIKS (FELIX) KORNACKI	
Birth:	23 Mar 1887 in PARAFIA MLODZIESZYN, POLAND
Death:	26 Feb 1954 in SCHENECTADY, NY
Burial:	SAINT MARY of CZESTOCHOWACEMETERY; SCHENECTADY, NY
Marriage:	07 Jun 1913 in ST. MARY'S, SCHENECTADY, NY
Father:	ANDRZEJ KORNACKI
Mother:	TEOFILA WRZESINSKA
Wife: KATARZYNA (KATHERINE - "KATIE") BOREK	
Birth:	26 Feb 1892 in PARLIN, ELZBIECIN, POLAND
Death:	04 Mar 1993 in SCHENECTADY, NY (5:50AM)
Burial:	SAINT MARY of CZESTOCHOWACEMETERY; SCHENECTADY, NY
Father:	ADAM BOREK
Mother:	APOLONIA DOBIES
Children:	
1 F	Name: APOLONIA (PAULINE-PAUL) THERESA KORNACKI Birth: 12 Mar 1914 in SCHENECTADY, NY (at Home) Death: 03 Feb 1994 in SCHENECTADY, NY (3:00AM) Marriage: 21 Nov 1936 in ST. MARY'S, SCHENECTADY, NY Spouse: BRONISLAUS (BENJAMIN-BEN-BENNY) JOSEPH BYSTER
2 M	Name: JOSEF (JOSEPH-JOE) STANLEY KORNACKI Birth: 08 Apr 1916 in SCHENECTADY, NY Death: 17 Dec 1987 in SCHENECTADY, NY Marriage: 29 Sep 1940 in ST. MARY'S, SCHENECTADY, NY Spouse: GRACE ELIZABETH MATTHEWS
3 F	Name: JOSEPHINE KATHERINE KORNACKI Birth: 19 Mar 1919 in SCHENECTADY, NY Death: 28 Dec 1997 in SCHENECTADY, NY Marriage: 05 Jun 1948 in ST. MARY'S, SCHENECTADY, NY Spouse: BERNARD ANTHONY (SZYMANSKI) SYMANSKI
4 F	Name: WICTORIA (VICTORIA-VICKY) KORNACKI Birth: 19 Jun 1921 in SCHENECTADY, NY Death: 03 Mar 2006 in SCENECTADY, NY Marriage: 14 Nov 1943 in ST. MARY'S; SCHENECTADY, NY Spouse: JOSEPH (ZAKRZEWSKI) ZAKRISKI
5 F	Name: GENOWEFA (GENEVIEVE-JANET) PATRICIA KORNACKI Birth: 22 Jun 1922 in SCHENECTADY, NY Death: 05 Dec 1981 in KENSINGTON, MD Marriage: Feb 1951 in ST. MARY'S; SCHENECTADY, NY Spouse: DONALD ENDICOTT (Sr) REED
6 F	Name: GERTRUDA (GERTRUDE-GERT) KORNACKI Birth: 04 Mar 1929 in SCHENECTADY, NY Marriage: 11 Feb 1950 in ST. MARY'S; SCHENECTADY, NY Spouse: ROBERT H BARRY

TO BE CONTINUED