

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

October 2020 Vol. 7 No. 4
Our Seventh 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 January 1st and April 1st. 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/>

Facebook: Schenectady and Capital District Polish Heritage Facebook Group

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.

Poland, People, Passion – 3P Travel on YouTube

Enjoy a series of short, informative videos by Pawel Ciaptacz, the excellent guide who spent 12 days with us (PZB) last fall touring Galicia. He's also on Facebook.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00_POLyOXOk

Thanks to Bernice Izzo, Carole McCarthy and Martin Byster for help in editing this newsletter!

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CHURCH OF ST. ADALBERT 1903-1978; Crane Street Hill, 550 Lansing Street, Schenectady, NY 12303; (Jubilee Book)

<https://liturgicalcenter.org/media/parish-files/alb-1.2.pdf>

Thanks to Louise Pasko Carlini for providing information on the electronic link to this online book which gives details of St. Adalbert's founding and first 75 years.

POLISH MEMORABILIA: Picture and Ring

By Carole McCarthy

One of my family treasures, left to me by my mother, who was born and raised in Schenectady, is a large photograph that includes her father, Joseph Tys, at a convention in Syracuse, NY (Fig 2a & 2b). He is one of over 100 people of men (including several priests) and women in this 20"x 8" photo, on the front steps of what appears to be a church. In the upper left hand corner of the picture, printed on the picture, is written (as I read it): SEJM UNJI POLE. w. AMER. Ink., 16-20 Sierp. 1942 Syracuse, NY. The Google translation of the Polish reads: "Parliament of the Union of Poles in America, Inc. Aug. 16-20, 1942 Syracuse, NY". Because I read one letter as an 'E' instead of an 'S', on the word POL., I got the incorrect translation of the organization that finally got straightened out with the help of the Polish Museum of America (PMA). Like many of our family treasures from our ancestors, this large photo remained rolled up in a drawer for many years.



Fig. 1 Mystery ring

Recently, while going through an old jewelry box of my mother's, I found a 10K gold ring, pictured above. It has the Polish eagle insignia on a red field and a crown with a cross on top; the letters under the crown read * U * P *. It is a large ring, making me think it belonged to my grandfather Tys. I wondered if there was a connection between the large photograph and the ring since the *U * P * could stand for the Union of Poles in America. From an internet search, I found the history of the fraternal organization called Union of Poles in America. There were actually two organizations by that name, one started in 1894 and one in 1898, both out of Cleveland, Ohio. In May of 1939 the two groups merged under one leadership and under the patronage of Our Lady of Czestochowa. In 2004, the Union of Poles became a division of the Polish National Alliance. Their website is www.UnionOfPoles.com. In preparing this article, I emailed the Union of Poles, through

POLISH MEMORABILIA: Picture and Ring

By Carole McCarthy

their website, attaching the picture of the ring. I asked if the ring was from the Union of Poles in America. I never got a response.

More internet research led me to another Polish fraternal organization called the Polish Union of America. Its history is different from the Union of Poles in America. Both organizations started in the last quarter of the 19th century but the Polish Union originated in western NY. Initially I didn't look at this organization because the ring has *U*P* on it not *P*U* however I came to realize that the *U*P* could stand for the Polish Union name written in Polish: Unia Polska w. Ameryce. When I emailed the Polish Union of America through their website at www.Polishunion.com, with the picture of the ring, a very nice person wrote back, "That is our emblem of the Polish Union of America". I was thrilled to get a response let alone identify the correct organization the ring represents.

I still didn't verify that the ring and the picture were connected. I wanted to be sure. I found another website called the Polish Roman Catholic Union Association. I contacted them through their website www.PRCUA.org about the ring and picture and they sent my inquiry on to the PMA. The historian at the Polish Museum of America was very helpful. He translated the picture as follows:

I am reading the script as "SEJM UNII POLS w AMER. Ink"

Which leads to SEJM UNII POLSKIEJ w AMERYCE

*Which translates to Convention of the Polish Union in America. 16-20 August 1942
Syracuse, NY*

*Union of Poles in America would be SEJM UNII POLAKÓW w AMERYCE, or
SEJM UNII POLAK w AMER or something similar. Poles and Poland being two
different words.*

Hope that solves that mystery.

Yeah! The convention was the Polish Union in America, same as the ring. Perhaps my grandfather purchased the ring at that convention in 1942!

POLISH MEMORABILIA: Picture and Ring

By Carole McCarthy

Below is the left half of the 20" x 8" picture of the 1942 Polish Union of America Convention with my grandfather, Joseph Tys, standing in the third row from top, at the far left, as I have noted. From pictures of churches in Syracuse I am guessing that the group picture was taken on the steps of St. Matthew's Church at 229 West Yates St., East Syracuse, NY.



Fig. 2a

POLISH MEMORABILIA: Picture and Ring By Carole McCarthy

Below is the right half of the 1942 Polish Union of America Convention picture. Let me know if you recognize any of your ancestors!



Fig. 2b

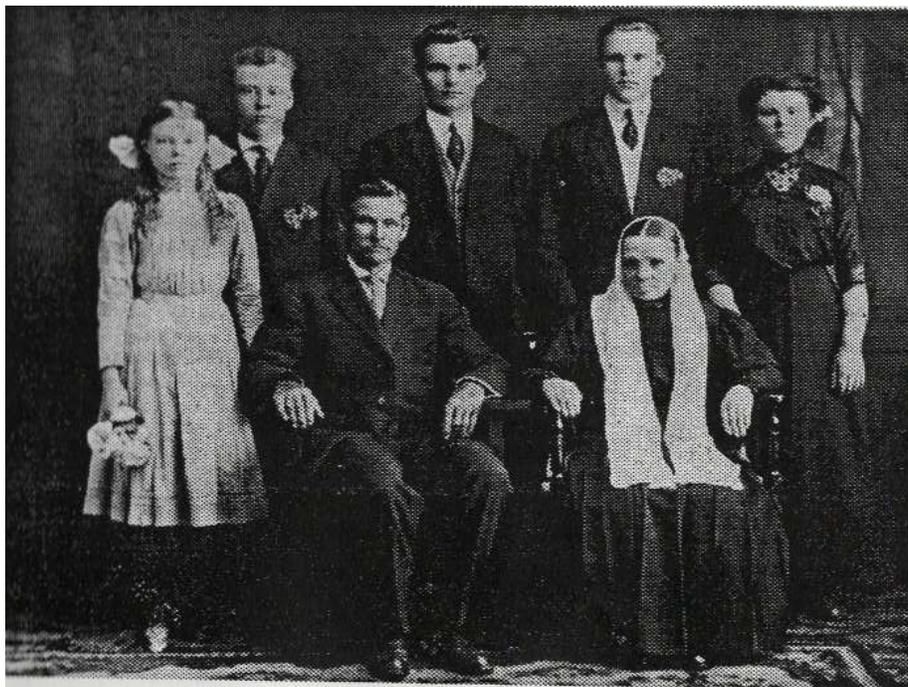
THE TSAR'S GUARD

Phyllis Zych Budka

My Mother, Sophie Korycinski Zych, used to tell me about childhood summers spent on her maternal grandparents' Cordell Road farm in Colonie, just east of Schenectady. Her grandparents, Michael and Anna Szymanska Gzys, arrived in the US in 1911 with children Casimir, Victoria (my Grandmother), and Anna. They followed older sons Joseph and Alexander, who had arrived earlier and purchased the small farm for the family.



Fig. 1 Note found with passport.



Michael and Anna Gzys with children; Anna,¹⁸ Casimir, Joseph, Alexander, and Victoria

Fig. 2 Gzys family ~ 1911 "The Korycinski-Gzys Family History – Across Many Lands." Jane Korycinski Smith 1993

THE TSAR'S GUARD Phyllis Zych Budka



Fig. 3 Anna and Michael Gzyms with grandson Peter Korycinski at their farm on Cordell Rd. ~1941.

Much of this family story is thanks to the lifelong work of my first cousin, Jane Korycinski Smith, collected and documented in her 1993 publication, "The Korycinski-Gzyms Family History – Across Many Lands." Remarkably, our branch of the Gzyms family has never lost touch with the Andrew Gzyms branch, Michael's brother in Poland. It is Andrew's descendant, now living in New Zealand, who sheltered my Granddaughter during the pandemic earlier this year, as documented in the last newsletter.

In the late 1980s, I interviewed my Babcia Victoria Korycinska (1893 – 1996), asking her about life in the Russian Sector of Poland. She was ~17 years old when she arrived in Schenectady. Babcia recounted that her Father, Michal, was retired from the Tsar's guards and a blacksmith in the area of Bopty, now Lithuania, where she was born. She recalls walking the train tracks with her siblings to pick up pieces of coal for her Father's smithy. She remembers gold hidden under the floor boards.

My Mother, Sophie, told me that her Grandmother Anna Szymanska Gzyms (1858 – 1942) smoked a pipe at the advice of her doctor because she had borne 5 children. Anna

THE TSAR'S GUARD

Phyllis Zych Budka

died just before I was born. Somewhere in a family album is a picture of my Great Grandfather Michal holding me. Michal (1852 – 1943) died the year after I was born.

The letter below, taken from the same family history book, is from Halina Wesolowska Oleksiak, granddaughter of Andrew Gzyms, translated by my Mother Sophie Korycinski Zych in 1982. Halina and Sophie were second cousins. Their mothers, the daughters of Andrew and Michael, were both named Victoria Gzyms. A tribute to Britain's Queen Victoria at the time of their births?

On my first visit to Poland in 1999, Halina's son, Chris Oleksiak, drove me to the family gravesite somewhere in northern Poland. I was surprised to see the spelling of family names on tombstones as Gesims, not Gzyms.

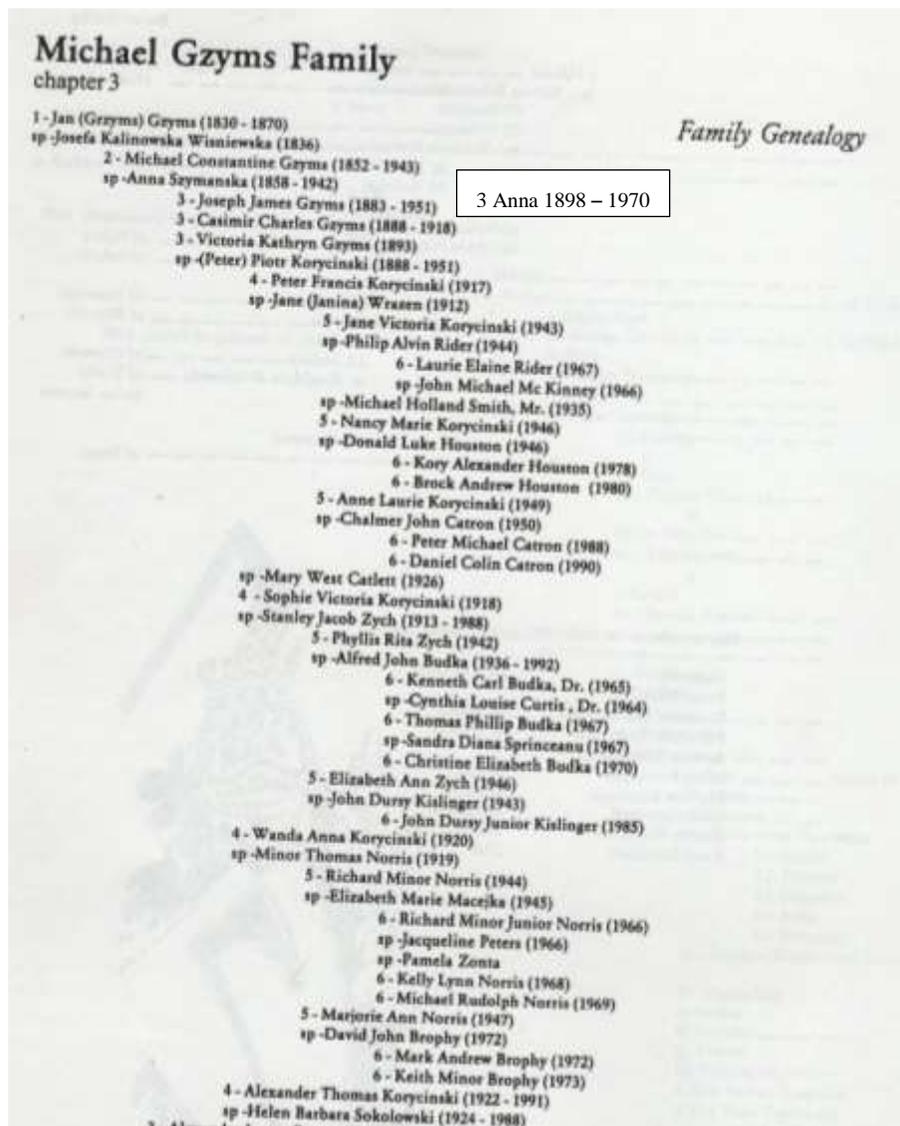


Fig. 4a Michael Gzyms Family, "The Korycinski-Gzyms Family History – Across Many Lands" Jane Korycinski Smith 1993.

THE TSAR'S GUARD

Phyllis Zych Budka

2 - Andrew Grzmys Gzmys (1857- ?)
 sp -Apolonia Sosnowska (1855 - ?)
 3 - Victoria Gzmys (1886 - 1981)
 sp - Szczepan Wesolowski, Sir (1879 - 1945)
 4 - Maria Wesolowska (1907)
 sp -Kazimierz Wieslaw Tylkowski, Sir (1909 - 1958)
 5 - Zosie Tylkowski (1939)
 sp -Tomasz Konarski, Sir (1936)
 6 - Miciek Konarski (1975)
 sp -Maximillion Kaluzny (1907)
 4 - Wlodzimierz Wesolowski (1910)
 sp -Franciszka Wojtasek
 5 - Zbigniew Wesolowski (1939)
 sp -?????????
 6 - Tom Wesolowski (1970)
 5 - Hanna Wesolowska (1942)
 sp -Wojciech Nadarkiewicz
 6 - Lesler Nadarkiewicz (1972 - 1990)
 4 - Halina Wesolowska (1912)
 sp -Stanislaw Oleksiak (1922)
 5 - Krzysztof Oleksiak (1948)
 sp -Wiesia Malinowska (1948)
 6 - Agata Oliksiak
 6 - Tomasz Oleksiak (1978)
 5 - Ruza Oleksiak (1949)
 sp -Roman Klyz
 6 - Justyna Ann Klyz (1977)
 6 - Anna Klyz (1980)
 5 - Joanna Oleksiak (1951)
 sp -Andrew Lisik (1955)
 6 - Wojciech Lisik (1985)
 4 - Jan Wesolowski (1913 - 1978)
 sp -Czeslawa Dzikowska
 5 - Jerzy Wesokowski
 5 - Wladek Wesolowski
 sp -Genia Wesolowska
 5 - Zofia Wesolowska
 5 - Urszula Wesokowska
 sp -Tadeusz Dobrowolski
 4 - Stanislaw Wesolowski (1917)
 sp -Jolanta Beutler
 3 - Wladyslaw Gzmys
 3 - Maria Gzmys
 3 - Antoni Gzmys

Fig. 4b Andrew Gzmys Family, “The Korycinski-Gzmys Family History – Across Many Lands” Jane Korycinski Smith 1993.

Michael was born in 1852 in the village of Polwiosek Stary near Ślesin. The translated village name still causes a smile: “The old half of the village.” The Wikipedia piece below helps explain how Michael and Andrew, from what is now again Poland, ended up working for the Russian Tsar.

From Wikipedia:

Ślesin is a town in Konin County, Greater Poland Voivodeship, Poland, with 3,324 inhabitants (2004). In partitioned Poland it belonged to the Russian-controlled Congress Kingdom from 1815; it returned to Poland when the country regained its independence in 1918.

THE TSAR'S GUARD

Phyllis Zych Budka

GZYMS Family History – from letter received by Sophie V. Zych from Halina Wesolowska Oleksiak 11-08-82

GZYMS NAME – originally spelled GESIMS (GSIMS)

Andrew Gzyms brother of Michael Gzyms (Our grandfathers – ie Halina's Grandfather Andrew, Sophie's Grandfather Michael)

Our grandfathers from their mother's side were of German Colonistic and Evangelistic Descent. Their father was John Gesims, who married Josephine Wisniewska (a Polish Roman-Catholic). They had 2 sons: Andrew Gesims and Michael Gesims. Both were raised as Roman-Catholics.

Both brothers served as Guards in the Tsar's Army and Andrew also taught school children the Polish language. They spoke three languages – Polish, German and Russian. Their father, John Gesims was a "Rolnik" (Possibly a land owner); and they lived in Polwiosek Stary near Ślesin.

Andrew Gzym's wife was Apolonia (Pola) Sosnowska from Bialoruska [Belarus]. Andrew was a deep sea fisherman who sold fish. He was musically inclined, led a choir, which performed at affairs and weddings.

Both Andrew and Michael were very tall of stature, very well respected in the community and always willing to help others.

Andrew Gzyms had just one child, a daughter, who was named Victoria Gzyms. She married Mr. Wesolowski, who was a teacher and church organist. Andrew and Victoria had five children, one of whom is Halina Wesolowska Oleksiak.

PANI KATARZYNA KORNACKA
Part 18- The Fifties (Sentimental Journey)
Martin Byster

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

Doris Day

Gonna take a sentimental journey;
Gonna set my heart at ease.
Gonna make a sentimental journey;
To renew old memories.

Got my bag, got my reservation;
Spent each dime I could afford.
Like a child in wild anticipation;
Long to hear that all aboard.

“Pani Katarzyna Kornacka”, the story told, reaches its climax in the Fifties.



Schenectady County celebrated its sesquicentennial in 1959. Over those 150 years the City of Schenectady was a growing community. From a port at the eastern terminus of the navigable Mohawk River, dockside on the Erie Canal, and a center for the manufacture of railroad and electric equipment in the Mohawk River Valley the city along the south bank of the Mohawk grew to proclaim it “Lights and Hauls the World”.

The first Polish ... [in Schenectady] settled on Veeder Avenue, Van Guysling Avenue, South Center Street (Broadway to State Street), Edison Avenue, Weaver Street, and Millard Street. In 1875, nine Polish families were residing here; by 1880, 21; and by the 1890's, 196.

By 1890, a second Polish ...[neighborhood] was established on Ferry, Green, Liberty, North College, Front, Lower State, Dock (alongside the present Erie Boulevard), lower Union, Jefferson, and Monroe Streets¹. Many Poles were attracted to Schenectady by the availability of land for farming, good wages coupled with a demand for labor by the General Electric Company (originally Edison Machine Works) and the American Locomotive Company (originally the Schenectady Locomotive Works –

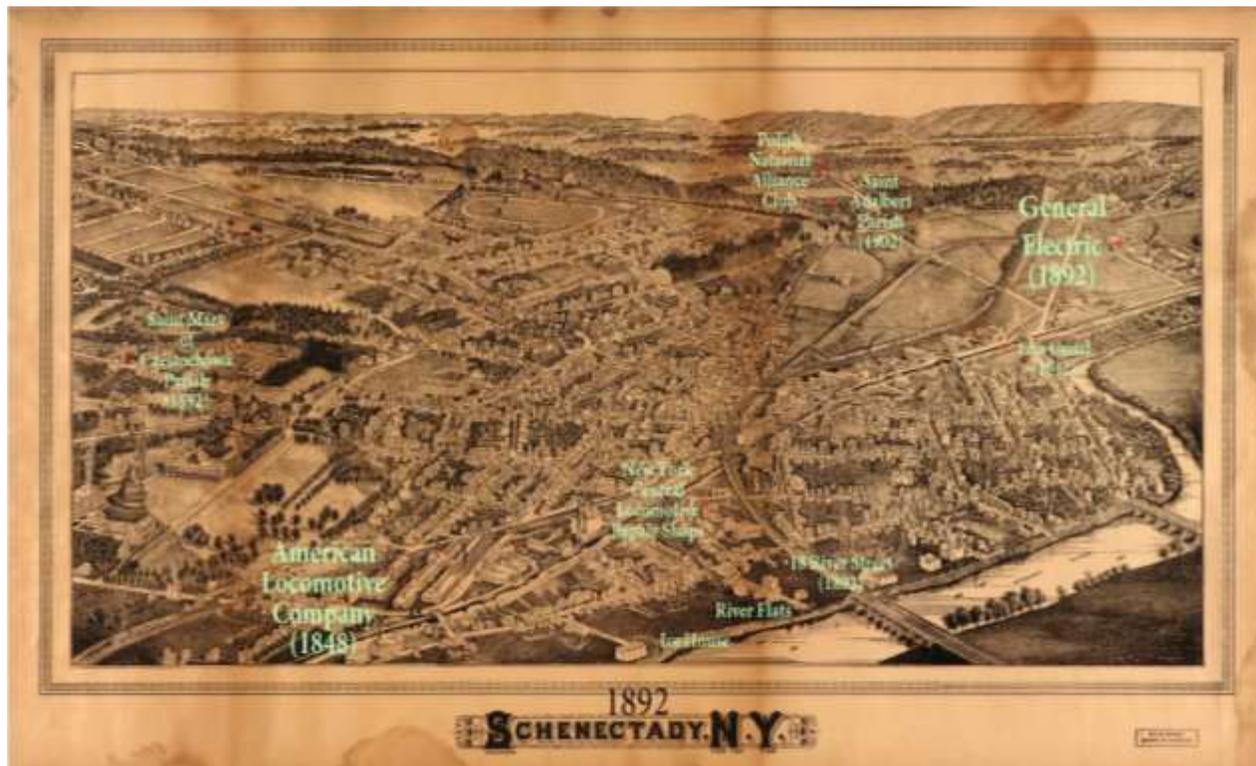
¹ Jefferson, Monroe, together with Madison Street were in the 3rd Ward with River Street and Mohawk Avenue whose real estate development in the early 1890s had only just begun. Katie's house at 18 River Street was built for Charles Ernst in the late 1880s.

PANI KATARZYNA KORNAKKA

Part 18- The Fifties (Sentimental Journey)

Martin Byster

popularly known as Big Shop). With this increase in Polish inhabitants, the Church of St. Mary was established in 1892 to provide a suitable place for worship. At this time, there was a wholesale shift to the Sixth Ward which included Columbia Street, Eastern Avenue, Prospect Street, and Windsor Terrace, while later arrivals settled the lower part of the Second Ward which included Carrie Street, Foster Avenue, Hattie Street, and vicinity².



Polish culture: food³, language, customs, Roman Catholic religion, and work ethic survived with the first generation of Americans of Polish descent but waned in the second generation to be eventually eclipsed by local culture and reduced employment opportunities.

Pierogi (dumplings)⁴, kluski (egg noodles), kapusta (cabbage), golabki (stuffed cabbage)⁵, chrusciki (cookie, Bow Ties)⁶, paczki (donuts)⁷; babka (sweet bread)⁸ are Polish words for Polish food and deserts; few, if any, survive after the first generation.

² CHURCH OF ST. ADALBERT 1903-1978; Crane Street Hill, 550 Lansing Street, Schenectady, NY 12303; (Jubilee Book)

³ See Appendix A for an abridged listing of recipes from parishioners of Saint Mary of Czestochowa Church in Schenectady, NY

⁴ Pierogi: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/109914/pierogi-polish-dumplings/>

⁵ Cabbage rolls: <https://www.food.com/recipe/golabki-polish-cabbage-rolls-297235>

⁶ Angel wings: <https://polishhousewife.com/chrusciki-chrusty-faworki-angel-wings/>

⁷ Donuts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kW9x5KFyvxY>

⁸ Babka: <https://www.thespruceeats.com/easter-babka-recipe-polish-wielkanocna-1135728>

PANI KATARZYNA KORNACKA
Part 18- The Fifties (Sentimental Journey)
Martin Byster

There were two important holidays, Wigilia (Christmas Eve)⁹ and Wielkanoc (Easter Sunday), which Katie, with her immediate family, celebrated in the Polish tradition with the help of her daughters into the early 50's until all were married, settled in their own homes and would invite her to their own celebration. However, Katie felt most at ease and satisfied to be in charge and invite her entire family back to what was once to her their home on River Street.

Katie with Felix lived on the second floor of their own home¹⁰. Her oldest daughter Pauline, my mother with my father, my sister and I lived on the first floor in the 50's and shared in these celebrations. As the decade continued, soon the growing second generation out-grew what room there was, both upstairs and downstairs.

Wigilia

Wigilia is a family gathering. Those attending exchange wishes¹¹ for health and happiness for each other in the coming New Year¹² while offering a piece of oplatek (wafer) as a symbol of their mutual friendship and commitment. Katie usually had Oplatek from the organist¹³ of Saint Mary of Czestochowa Church on Eastern Avenue who made the rounds which made oplatki available to all parishioners. To his advantage he also received compensation in appreciation for his music with what he collected for the wafers he brought. The evening meal begins at the expected appearance of the first star.

Katie's traditional meal featured fish, usually fried smelt, marynowane śledzie (pickled herring) in cream sauce, pierogi with cheese, kapusta kiszona (sauerkraut) with re constituted dried mushrooms, kartofle (potatoes)¹⁴ mashed, squash, and green beans with babka and chrusciki for dessert and hot coffee to drink.

Wielkanoc

For most Catholics Easter¹⁵ Sunday, Wielkanoc, is one of the most important Christian holidays; Swiecoka is the preparation the Saturday before. A table is laid out with the finest linen table cloth with food to be blessed by the parish priest¹⁶ who then took the opportunity to briefly chat with his parishioners. Katie usually together with one or two of her

⁹ Katie's family observed 12 days of Christmas. On the last day, the Epiphany or the Three Kings (Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar) were remembered by writing their initials inside above the exterior doors and sprinkling incense on a burning piece of charcoal.

¹⁰ The house at 18 River Street, is probably built for Charles Ernst and his wife Mary in 1892 the year they purchased the property.

¹¹ Wish: Merry Christmas (Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia)

¹² Wish: Happy New Year (Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku)

¹³ Mister. Joseph Anthus,

¹⁴ The Polish word commonly used for potatoes is "ziemniaki" but Katie used the Dutch word "kartofle" which she may have learned on her occasional shopping trips to Lidzbark a historical town located within the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, in northern Poland which was then in Prussia and north of Parlin where Katie lived before coming to her new home in Schenectady.

¹⁵ Wish: Happy Easter (Wesołych Świąt Wielkanocnych)

¹⁶ Reverend Michael W Zakens

PANI KATARZYNA KORNACKA
Part 18- The Fifties (Sentimental Journey)
Martin Byster

daughters put a large ham on the table ringed with kielbasa with decorations of parsley sprigs and colored hard-boiled eggs

(Pisanki). On the linen with the ham was babka, chrusciki, a Paschal lamb made of butter, horseradish, salt, pepper all to be blessed, a complete setting for the first meal Easter morning on returning home after early mass at the parish church.

*The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky,
No higher than the soul is high.

The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;

The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.*

— Edna St. Vincent Millay, *Renascence and Other Poems*

“Podaj cie”
[I will give you]
-- **Pani Katarzyna Kornacka**

To Be Continued

PANI KATARZYNA KORNACKA

Part 18- The Fifties (Sentimental Journey)

Martin Byster

Appendix Recipes

BABKA
(Polish Sweet Bread)

For 8 loaves:

<p>¾ to 1 lb. butter 1 qt. milk ¼ c. sugar 4 tsp. salt 1 tsp. grated orange rind 8 egg yolks + 4 whole eggs or 8 or 9 whole eggs</p>	<p>1½ pkg. white raisins ¼ c. warm water 6 Tbsp. sugar 4 yeast cakes or 4 pkg. dry yeast 1 jigger brandy or rye (if desired) Approx. 14 to 15 c. flour</p>
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For 2 loaves:

<p>¼ lb. butter 1 c. milk ¼ c. sugar 1 tsp. salt ¼ tsp. grated orange rind 2 egg yolks + 1 whole egg or 2 whole eggs</p>	<p>About ½ pkg. raisins ¼ c. warm water 1½ Tbsp. sugar 1 yeast cake or 1 pkg. dry yeast Dash of brandy or rye (if desired) Approx. 3½ c. flour</p>
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Soak raisins in hot water until they look puffy; drain and cool. This can be done even a day ahead of time. When ready to use, dredge in flour. Scald milk. Add to butter which has been placed in a bowl. Add sugar and salt and stir until sugar is dissolved. Let cool. Meanwhile, beat eggs until thick. Into ¼ cup warm water, add sugar and the yeast.

Use electric mixer. Add about 2 or 3 cups of flour to milk mixture and beat until smooth. Add more flour if mixture seems thin. Add beaten eggs, yeast mixture, grated orange rind, and brandy. Beat until mixed fairly well, then keep adding flour and beating smooth as long as your mixer can take it - so you don't burn out the motor.

Add the raisins and mix by hand, adding more flour so the dough is neither too sticky nor too heavy. Dough is mixed properly when it keeps coming off the spoon you are mixing with or when it seems to make snapping noise when you are mixing it by hand.

Let rise in a warm place until double in bulk, approximately 2 hours. Place dough in bread pans with spoon or you can place on floured board and knead quickly into loaves. Let rise in pans until double in bulk, approximately 1 to 1½ hours. Bake in a 350° oven for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until golden brown.

Helena B. Potrowski

DOUGHNUTS
(Paczki)

<p>1 yeast cake 1 pt. milk, scalded and cooled 4 yolks and 1 whole egg ½ c. sugar ¼ lb. butter</p>	<p>½ tsp. vanilla Grated rind of ½ orange or lemon About 7 c. flour 1 tsp. salt</p>
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Dissolve yeast in lukewarm milk. Add 2 cups flour. Let stand in warm place about ½ hour, then beat eggs, sugar, vanilla, grated rind of orange or lemon, and scant teaspoon of salt until light. Add this to the sponge. Melt butter and add this to the sponge. Add 5 cups flour. Cover and allow to rise for about 1 hour or until double in bulk. When light, turn on floured board and pat with hands till dough is ½ inch thick. Cut with doughnut cutter; cover and let rise again until light. Drop in deep hot fat and fry till done.

The Stanek Family

BOW TIES
(Chrusciki)

<p>5 egg yolks ½ tsp. salt 3 Tbsp. powdered sugar</p>	<p>5 tsp. sour cream 2½ c. flour 1 Tbsp. whiskey or rum</p>
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Add salt to egg yolks and beat until thick and lemon-colored. Add sugar and flavoring and continue to beat. Add sour cream and flour alternately and mix well. Knead on floured board until dough blisters. Cut in half, roll very thin and cut into strips about 4 inches long. Sit each piece in center and pull one end through the slit. Deep-fry in hot shortening until lightly browned. Drain on absorbent paper and sprinkle with confectioners' sugar.

C.L.

GOLABKI

<p>1 large head cabbage, steamed 3 lb. pork, veal, ground steak, ground together Salt and pepper to taste 1 tsp. baking powder ½ c. cooked rice 2 strips fatback 2 eggs</p>	<p>2 slices onions, sauteed until golden brown ½ c. lukewarm water 3 cans tomato soup 2 cloves garlic 2 or 3 bouillon cubes (George Washington Aces)</p>
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Meat mixture: Mix together ground meat, eggs, rice, baking powder, salt, and pepper; mix well.

Cut up 2 strips of fatback in tiny pieces. Saute fatback and onions until golden brown. Add water, soup, and garlic. Add 2 or 3 beef bouillon cubes. Simmer 10 minutes.

Steam cabbage leaves. Wrap leaves around meat mixture. When all cabbage and meat mixture are gone, pour soup mixture over top. Simmer on top of stove 45 to 60 minutes. Serve hot.

Sophie Glowicki

