

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

January 2022 Vol. 9 No. 1
Our Ninth Year!

Dear Reader,

We are currently in semi-yearly publication as we continue to discover, document and digitally reserve genealogy, stories and pictures of Schenectady County's Eastern European immigrants. Have we gathered all the family stories, captured all the family pictures, remembered all those who were dear to us, connected our mutual heritages? Probably not. So, rather than discontinue our efforts completely, the editors decided to revert to fewer yearly issues in the hopes that you, Reader, might still want to contribute an article or two.

Please share your family history, help pass on the (electronic) word. The our deadlines are January 1st and July 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/>

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

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Phyllis's Note:

How's your Polish? Since February I've been attending a weekly Polish class on Zoom, sponsored by the Polish American Foundation of Connecticut, taught by Pani Jola S. My motivation came from the fact that I've been volunteer mentoring several people in Poland and Lithuania to improve their English. Each needs English for his / her job. So I thought that I should recall that process myself.

Teacher Pani Jola is a native Pole, trained in teaching Polish. On the rare occasions when I had the courage to attempt Polish on my trips to Poland, I did so without grammar, using the vocabulary of a 5 year old. Pani Jola has yet to convince me that I will ever be comfortable with the instrumental case, but her modern teaching methods have helped me identify the many holes in my ancient, haphazard Polish background.


The Polish American Foundation
Polish Language School for Adults

Beginner Class part 1 via ZOOM: Starts Tuesday, January 11, 2022
Class is twice a week for 5 weeks
6-7:15 PM EST via Zoom. 5 session is \$99.
Discounted rate for Polish American Foundation members \$89

Beginner Class part 2 On ZOOM: Three class times available
Class is once a week for 10 weeks. Each 10-week session is \$99
Tuesday 6-7:15 ET with Pan Aleks starting February 15, 2022
Thursday 5-6:15 ET with Pani Iwona starting February 17, 2022
Friday 5-6:15 with Pani Ela starting February 18, 2022

Year two class part 2 On ZOOM: Class starts Wednesday, January 12, 2022
6-7:15 PM EST via Zoom. 10-week session is \$160.

Year three class part 2 On ZOOM: Class starts Monday, February 14, 2022
6-7:15 PM EST via Zoom. 10-week session is \$200.



For more information contact: dorenaw@paf-ct.org
Polish American Foundation of Connecticut
www.PAF-CT.org

What A Surprise

Gail Demcsak

Genealogy is a puzzle, a very complex one, which leads you to places you never knew and people and events that you never expected. This is one of those stories.

When my father died in 1991, my mother gave me a large packet of documents I never knew existed. Enclosed were things like original naturalization certificates for all 4 grandparents, birth / baptism certificate for one grandmother, marriage certificates for both sets and a military passport of sorts for my paternal grandfather from his home country with dates and places where he was stationed, plus so much more. That is for another story. My grandparents were all from southeastern Poland, so a lot of information was in other languages of the time they lived there. What was I to do with all this information? I was curious but knew nothing about researching my roots – not to mention computers. So, I made copies for my brother and cousins and put mine away, hoping one of them might know something I didn't. We never heard stories of the "old country" or where my grandparents were born, lived, or even about their parents and siblings.

In 2015 I became more curious and signed up for an Ancestry account. With no plan in mind, I started plugging names and dates into the computer. One of my documents was a 1942 letter from the US Department of Justice, which handled immigration and naturalization at the time. My maternal grandmother was seeking to become naturalized. The letter contained her arrival date, port of entry, as well as the ship name. I searched and searched, but who knew there would be so many variations in the spelling of a 4-letter surname. Eventually I found it with a misspelling.

My grandmother, Mary Zych, arrived in Baltimore on 2 March 1905 with a younger brother Wojciech. They went to a brother-in-law, Joseph Galik, in Schenectady, NY. I knew her sister Katarzyna and that there were some brothers, but this meant she had another sister; Joseph's wife was Antonina. The rest of the siblings also went to Schenectady and for the most part stayed. I learned that Mary lived there until 1911, when she went to New Jersey and married Stephen Tatka, my grandfather. They remained in north Jersey most of their lives, with a couple of unexplained additions. Their first child, Albert, was born in Asbury Park, NJ in 1912. I have found no evidence of a residence there. My mother was born 15 May 1914 in Schenectady; again I have no idea why. The last 2 girls were born in Newark.

My mother was always known as Anne with a middle initial G. The New York State Birth Index lists her as Sophia Tatka but her Baptism certificate of 17 May 1914 from St Adalbert Church, Schenectady, lists her as Anna Sophia Tatka. When asked, she told me that her father liked the name and wanted all his daughters to be called Sophia. To my knowledge, she never used the name and yes, her next sister was Sophia.

Fast forward to me as a child about 10 years old, playing in her mother's jewelry box. I came upon an old-fashioned diamond ring that I never saw my mother wear. Curious, I asked about it and she said she was engaged to someone before my father. Again, I asked and was told that she was not allowed to marry him because he was not Polish, but Italian. End of subject. Several years after joining Ancestry, I received a hint for a Marriage License Index for a Sophia Tatka and Ralph Cardamone in Manhattan on 23 September 1936. I was confused because I knew my mother's sister, known as Sue, was married to her husband in 1939. Looking more closely, I noticed the birth date and place were my mother's, not her sister's. My grandfather's name was also listed.

What A Surprise **Gail Demcsak**

Naturally, questions started swirling through my head. How could this be? She married my father in July 1940 in Garfield, NJ in the Catholic Church. Did they get a license but not get married? Before long, my search found the Marriage Index date and place which was the same. I realized that I had both the license and certificate numbers, so I sent my money to New York City Department of Records asking for the certificate. A few weeks later, I had it (Fig. 1). My mother had filled out much of the certificate. I recognized her handwriting. She had used her birth name, Sophia Anne Tatka, as found on her birth certificate, and they did get married! The witnesses were not names I knew.

Groom Ralph Cardamone was born in Portland, Maine in 1914. He was a vaudeville actor and musician living in a hotel in New York City and was indeed Italian. His parents and older brother were born in Italy. So, how and where did they even meet? My mother was never an adventurous person, always low keyed and probably “the good girl”. I could not imagine her getting up that Monday morning to travel into NYC alone to get married. I asked two of my older cousins if they knew anything about this. One said maybe; the other said yes she knew; her father told her. The youngest sister used to play the guitar and he would play the banjo with her. Maybe they took her along? And why didn't they tell me?

I checked the April 1940 Federal Census and Sophia Anne was back home living with her parents and youngest sister, listed as single but first marriage at age 22. It adds up. I envisioned my grandmother saying, “Annie you get back home!” and tearing up the marriage certificate. Nope. More research told me that Ralph died in 1942. She would have been a widow at age 27. And what about her marriage to my dad in July 1940?

About 2 years later, I was scanning through Newspapers.com for nothing in particular when a headline caught my eye. It was about an East Paterson woman being granted an annulment (Fig. 2a and b).

Ralph had tuberculosis but denied it and refused to be examined. Sophia insisted, and he was diagnosed 14 Nov 1936, but he refused the x ray. She left him 10 Jan 1937 as soon as she learned his condition and filed for an annulment. A court order on 8 Dec 1938 for him to answer her petition was ignored, and the annulment was granted 16 Dec 1938 on the basis of fraud. She was now free to marry in the Catholic Church.

Ralph was a patient in Will Rogers Memorial Hospital in Saranac Lake, NY when he died 2 March 1942. He was 27.

I was asked how I felt about this. At first I felt very sad for her, that someone she loved had lied to her. As I researched Ralph, I discovered that he must have been a confused and possibly unstable young man. Had they stayed married, I would not be here. Also, I wonder how much my father knew? I have so many questions for her.

What A Surprise
Gail Demcsak

2.5

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF RECORDS
RECEIVED
STATE OF NEW YORK
CERTIFICATE AND RECORD OF MARRIAGE
No. of Certificate
27151

(Groom) Ralph Cardamone and (Bride) Sophie Ann Tatka
(Please print)

Groom's Residence <u>Hotel Chateaufort, N.Y.C.</u>	Bride's Residence <u>165 Marchant St. Schenectady, N.Y.</u>
Age <u>29</u>	Age <u>27</u>
Color <u>white</u>	Color <u>white</u>
Single, Widowed, or Divorced <u>single</u>	Single, Widowed, or Divorced <u>single</u>
Occupation <u>Handicrafts Dept.</u>	Married, Single, or Widowed <u>single</u>
Birthplace <u>Portland, Maine</u>	Birthplace <u>Schenectady, N.Y.</u>
Father's Name <u>Salvatore</u>	Father's Name <u>Stephen</u>
Mother's Maiden Name <u>Louise Ferrado</u>	Mother's Maiden Name <u>Mary Zych</u>
Number of Groom's Marriages <u>1st</u>	Number of Bride's Marriages <u>1st</u>

I hereby certify that the above-named groom and bride were joined in Marriage by me, in accordance with the Laws of the State of New York, at Municipal Building (Street), in the Borough of Manhattan City of New York, this SEP 23 1936 (Date), in the presence of

Signature of person performing the Ceremony: Thomas J. Barry
DEPUTY CITY CLERK
Official Station: ANNADALE, N. Y.

Witnesses to the Marriage: Sam T. ...
F. J. McLaughlin

Fig. 1 Marriage Record of Sophie Ann Tatka and Ralph Cardamone

East Paterson Woman Granted An Annulment

Sofia Tatka Cardamone
Says Spouse Lied
About Illness

Saying that her husband was guilty of misrepresentation in denying tuberculous infection at the time of their marriage, Mrs. Sofia A. O. Tatka of 165 Meritts avenue, East Paterson, yesterday won an annulment of her marriage to Ralph P. Cardamone, an artist using the name of Eddie Dowd, who is now a patient at the Will Rogers Memorial hospital, Saratoga Lake.

Sitting in Bergen County County Chambers at Hackensack, Advisory Master N. Demarest Campbell granted a preliminary decree after the petitioner said her husband had told her he was not infected with the disease when they were married Sept. 23, 1936, and that she left him Jan. 16, 1937, as soon as she learned definitely of his illness.

Dr. Alphonse DeMauro of Paterson testified that he examined Cardamone Nov. 18, 1936, and found definite indications of tuberculosis, but that Cardamone refused to return for an X-ray examination and said he knew he did not have the disease but came to the doctor only at his wife's insistence.

They have no children. Herman H. Moskowitz of Paterson appeared as Mrs. Tatka's witness.

Annulment of Sophia Tatka and Ralph Cardamone

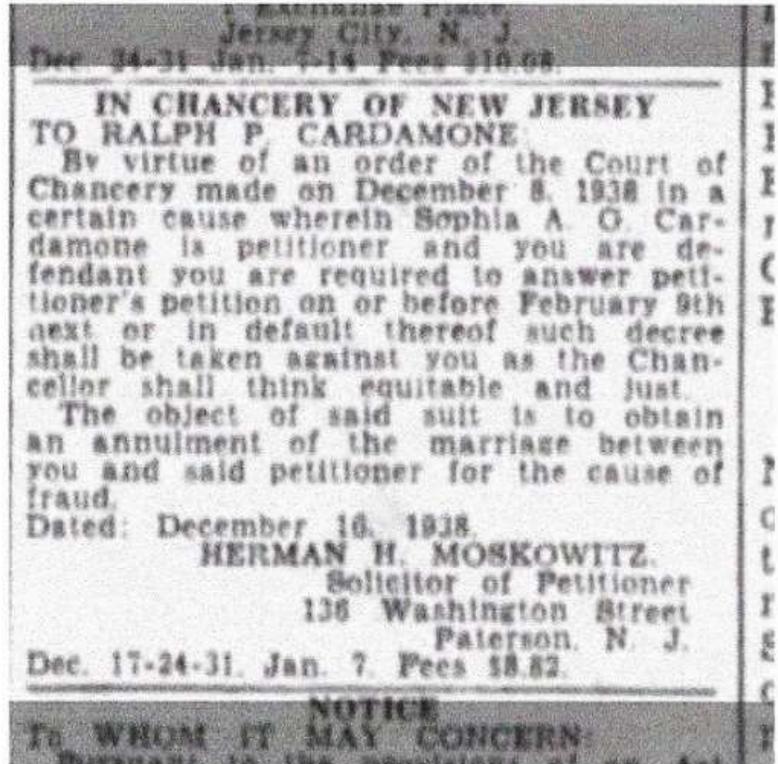
29 Mar 1939 The Morning Call, Paterson, NJ

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Fig. 2a

What A Surprise
Gail Demcsak

Court order for annulment



 **Date:** 24 Dec 1938

 **Place:** Hackensack, New Jersey

Fig. 2b

Car Talk - Dating a Picture Carole McCarthy

Some people say a picture is worth a thousand words. Pictures can tell us about our ancestors. What can we learn from the picture of a car?

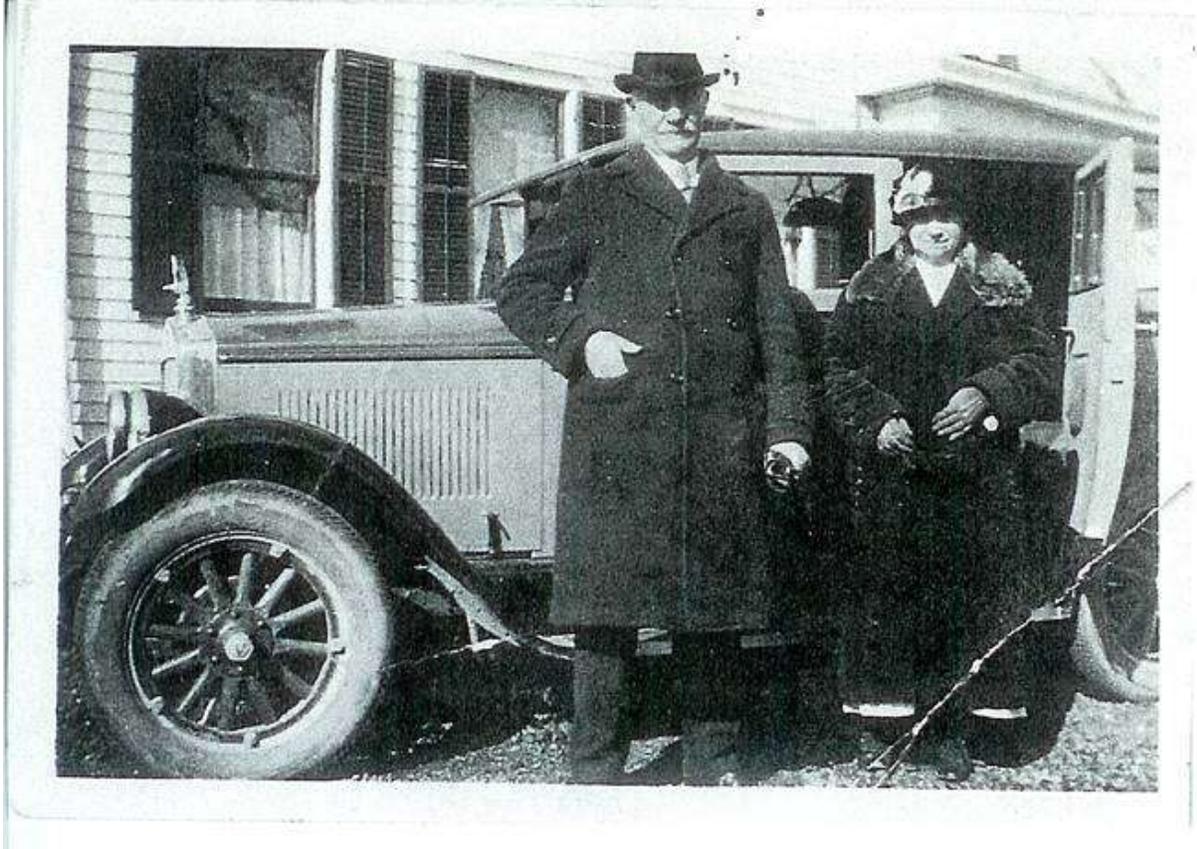


Fig. 1 Great Grandparents Walenty and Józefa Gliniecki

I was thrilled when I received a copy of this picture (Fig. 1) from a cousin, several years ago. It is a picture of my great grandparents. Unfortunately, there was no date on the picture, so I did not know how old my great grandparents were in this picture. I have a picture of my great grandparents in 1902 and 1921 (if labeled correctly) and they look older in this picture. I loved this picture and enjoyed seeing my great grandparents in their older years, but it enticed me to learn more. I wanted to know when it was taken so I could determine their ages at the time the picture was taken.

My great grandfather, Valentinus 'Walenty' (a.k.a. William) Gliniecki was born in Kluczewo, Samter, Wielkopolska, Poland in 1863 and my great grandmother Józefa (a.k.a. Josephine) Bamber was born in Gaj, Samter, Wielkopolska, Poland in 1864. My great grandmother died in 1944 and my great grandfather died in 1951. I was too young to remember them.

My cousin, who has the original picture, could not give me any more information about my great grandparents' ages or any information about the car in the picture. He told me he was a toddler in the late 30s, and he does not remember this particular car.

Car Talk - Dating a Picture

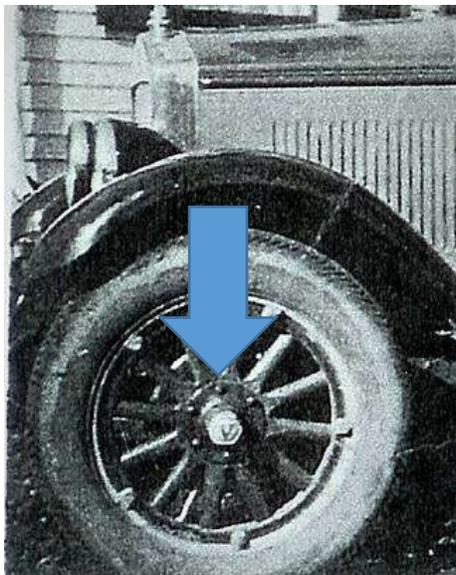
Carole McCarthy

I thought I could determine the year the picture was taken by identifying the year the car was made. That turned out not to be an easy task. I first saw the eagle ornament on the radiator and thought that would be an easy way to ID the car. However, back in the 20's and 30's people would put their own ornaments on the radiator cap to give the car a personal look. I saw the wooden spokes and the 'V' on the hubcap and thought that would help to ID the car. I contacted several antique car museums and the best guess that several had was a 1927 Plymouth. Here is a picture that I got on line of a restored 1927 Plymouth (Fig. 2). Low and behold it was located in Warsaw Poland!



Fig 2 1927 Plymouth

It looked like a good possibility except it didn't have a 'V' on the hubcaps. But maybe the 'V' was a personal touch also?? Without any progress in identifying the car, I dropped the quest for several years. Recently, we were in South Bend, IN, the home of the Studebaker



Museum. The person that we were with said she had a friend at the museum that knows 'everything' about cars. So I took the opportunity to send the picture of my great grandparents in front of the unknown car and the next day I received a message that said they believe it is a Velie. I have heard of Ford, Chevrolet and Plymouth cars but never a Velie. So I went on line and found a website for the Velie Car Registry. I emailed them the picture and the president of the Velie Registry immediately wrote back, "The car appears to be a 1927 model 50. It could be the larger model 60. It is hard to tell for sure. The 1928 models looked very similar but they used a different hubcap. Velie used the "V" hubcap from 1922 through 1927." The 'V' on the hubcap was the clincher for me!

Fig. 3 The clue! V for Velie on the hubcap.

Car Talk - Dating a Picture

Carole McCarthy

I had already requested information from the Schenectady County Historical Society on car dealers in Schenectady from 1925- 1929. A very nice volunteer did the research and found that in 1925-1926 there were ~50 car dealers in Schenectady County including a Velie dealership at Bedford Road Garage. In 1926-1927 there were 45 dealerships including a Velie, P.V. Becker. 1927-1928 there were 45 dealerships but none with the Velie name. In 1928-1929 there were 35 dealerships including Velie, Sagers Auto. In 1929-1930 there were 29 dealerships but none with the Velie name. America was in the Great Depression starting in October 1929.

I had never heard of the Velie car before but I learned that Willard Velie, who started the manufacturing of the Velie car, was the maternal grandson of John Deere and he had worked for the John Deere Plough Co. until he was in his 30s when he started the Velie Motor Company. The cars were manufactured from 1908 to 1928 in Moline IL. So maybe great grandfather William heard about these cars from his John Deere dealer?? You see, he had a 63 acre farm in Niskayuna from 1913-1951.

Based on this information, Great Grandfather probably bought the car anytime between 1927 and 1929 when he would have been 64, 65 or 66 years old and my great grandmother would have been one year younger. Excited with the information I had found, I shared with my cousins. The cousin who initially gave me the picture said that Great Grandfather may have bought a Velie for one of his sons but he never drove one. "The only thing great Grandfather drove were horses!!" The picture certainly didn't tell me that!!

The only son, unmarried, living at home, from 1927-1929 would have been my uncle Vincent, the father of the cousin who gave me the picture. He would have been only 19 years old in 1927. Did my great grandfather buy him a Velie for his 21st birthday in 1929? This was the start of the Great Depression so very unlikely; however farmers were not affected by the depression as much as others. Farmers grew all their own food and had animals for meat and eggs. Perhaps someone needed money because of the depression and sold the Velie to great grandfather for a fraction of what it was worth. Then again, maybe a friend owned the car and the friend happened to drive into their driveway that day (probably Sunday since they are all dressed up) and the photo was snapped for remembrance. Vincent was the one who owned the camera. The photo has led me in many directions and now I have more questions than before, but I have narrowed their ages to 64-66 and that is what I was trying to determine.

Car Talk - Dating a Picture
Carole McCarthy



Fig. 4 Great Grandfather William Gliniecki and one of his two horses in 1938

ROOTS - Part 20
TUESDAY, 01/07/1569 - FRIDAY, 02/26/1892
Martin Byster

Katarzyna [Katie] Kornacka, my grandmother, as born on Friday, February 26th, 1892. I was born two generations some 50 years later on November 11th, 1941. Her roots, her homeland, as she related them to me, my mother and aunts date back three generations to 1807 in an area within the Kingdom of Poland near what is today the small villages of Parlin, Lutocin, Elzbiecin, Felcyn, and the town of Biezun in Żuromin County, Masovian Voivodeship, in east-central Poland about 25 miles south of Lidzbark and what was then near the border with Prussia.

The First Polish (Nobles') Republic [Union of Lublin] 1569-1795¹

Poland had independence as the First Polish Republic of the Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1569-1795). The Polish Constitution of May 3rd, 1791 was condemned by noble Polish landowners and Russian influence in the Polish parliament. Despite the efforts of Kosciusko and Pulaski, Poland lost its independence divided among its three neighboring autocratic states, Austria, Prussia and Russia.

With the third partition of Poland in 1795 its lands were entirely divided, to Russia west of Warsaw, to Austria east and south of Warsaw, and to Prussia east and north of Warsaw. Poland was where lands of three empires met at Warsaw. Katie's homeland was annexed within Prussia.

The Grand Duchy of Warsaw [French Protectorate] 1807-1813²

The Grand Duchy of Warsaw created in 1807 with a Napoleonic Constitution returned Katie's homeland with the lands which had been annexed by Prussia in the third and final partition of the Republic of Poland.

The Kingdom of Poland [within the Russian Empire] 1815-1916³

In 1815, The Kingdom of Poland (1815-1916) was established within the Russian Empire. The Second Polish Republic, November 11, 1918 was a self-declared independence under Josef Pilsudski, himself an autocrat, secured by the force

Katie was well aware of her roots and their history through ties with her extended family.

¹ 1989; Pogonowski, Iwo Cyprian; *Poland A Historical Atlas, Revised edition, pp. 20, 101, 105*

² *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 152, 161

³ 1989; Pogonowski, pp. 24

ROOTS - Part 20
TUESDAY, 01/07/1569 - FRIDAY, 02/26/1892
Martin Byster

brn: 1807 ca. Marcin Budzich
mar: 1832 ca. Martin Budzich-Katarzyna unkn
dau: 1832 ca. Marianna Budzich
mar: 1857 ca. Marianna Budzich-John Dobies
dau: 1857 ca. Apolonia Dobies
mar: 1882 ca. Apolonia Dobies-Adam Borek
dau: 1882 ca. Marianna Borek
dau: 1892: Katarzyna Borek
dau: 188 ca. Anna Borek
dau: 1884 ca. Franczyska Borek
son: 1901 Stanislaw Borek

ROOTS - Part 20
TUESDAY, 01/07/1569 - FRIDAY, 02/26/1892
Martin Byster

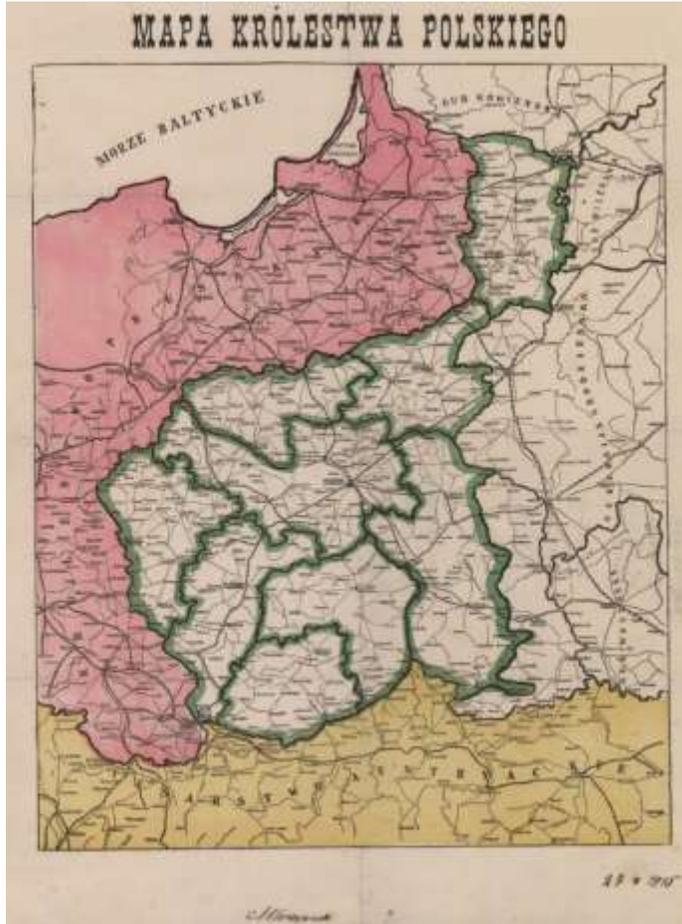


Figure 1: Kingdom of Poland, 1915⁴

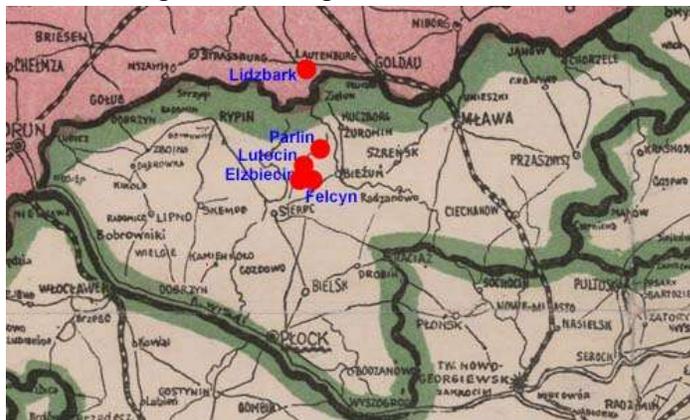


Figure 2: Annotated for places: Lidzbark, Parlin, Lutocin, Elzbiecin, and Felcyn with which my grandmother Katarzyna Kornacka was familiar in 1911 when she departed for America.

⁴ [the kingdom of Poland 1915 - Bing](#)

ROOTS - Part 20
TUESDAY, 01/07/1569 - FRIDAY, 02/26/1892
Martin Byster



Figure 3: Katie's Birth Certificate⁵

Katie Borek was born in Parlin and lived there with her mother Apolonia and father Adam, three sisters, one brother and her maternal grandmother Marianna. Marianna's father, Martin Budzich, was a wealthy land owner near Elzbiecin with three sons and two daughters. Two sons and one daughter took their share of their father's legacy, sold the land and moved on to Germany. The remaining daughter Marianna, Apolonia's mother, married John Dobies and moved from her father's manor house to Parlin together with her younger brother Matthew. It appears that both Katie's mother, grandmother and uncle Mathew may have had among them a share of land from Martin's legacy.

The history of Katie's homeland fills out and extends the stories she told; stories and history with nobles and serfs.

⁵ The name entered as the mother is not Apolonia Dobies who Katie confirmed many times is her mother's name. This entry on the certificate has not been explained.