



Przyjaciel ludu Kaszubskiego

(Friend of the Kashubian People)

Newsletter of the Kashubian Association of North America

-KANA-



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From the *Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego*

This translation is by William F. Hoffman and originally appeared in the Spring, 1999 issue of the *Bulletin of the Polish Genealogical Society of America*, pp. 14-16. It is reprinted with the author's permission. This work is a multi-volume Polish gazetteer, published 1880-1902, so the information give us a good snapshot of what places were like close to the time many of our ancestors were emigrating from Poland.

Kaszuby, in German *Kassuben*, *Kaschuben*, *Kaschubei*, in documents *Cassubia*, *Cassubitae*, the name of a region and people in West Prussia; it is not certain what the name comes from, whether from *kasanie hub* [fold, pleat] (a term still used for *fald*[fold, pleat], or from *kaszuby*, which in Pomerania means "fairly shallow water overgrown with high grass." At one time the clans of the Pomeranian princes came from the Kaszuby region. It was originally quite extensive, covering all of Pomerania that is now Germanized. In the mid 13th-century the princes of eastern Mecklenburg signed their names as "*duces Cassubitarum*" ["leaders" or "dukes" of *Cassubitae*]. Currently belonging to the Kaszuby region, however, is the northwestern portion of Chojnice *powiat**, almost all of Kościerzyna *powiat* (not counting an eastern band near Skarszewy, Zblewo, and Lubichowo), all of Kartusy and Wejherowo *powiat*s, and the northwestern part of Gdańsk *powiat*, and finally a few remnants in the Germanized districts of Bytów and Lębork. To the north Kaszuby extends to the Baltic Sea, the Bays of Puck and Gdańsk; to the east it borders on the territories of the Żuławiaks and Kociewiaks; to the south live the Borowiaks; and to the west lies Germanized Pomerania. There are no really large rivers or streams in Kaszuby; still the rivers and streams there are numerous and swift-running, issuing mostly from lakes. The more important are: the Brda, Czarna Woda (in its origins), Wierzyca, Wietcisa, Radunia, Słupa, Słupianka, Strzelniczka, Łeba, Czarna, Reda, Chylonia, Strzysza, and many others. Lakes are very numerous, including: Wdzydze, Sumińskie, Peplińskie, Wielskie Kościerskie, Raduńskie, Gowidlińskie, Żarnowskie, and others almost beyond counting. Stretching through the center of Kaszuby from east to west is the Ural-Baltic Ridge (German name *Ural-baltischer Landrücken*) with the highest elevations in the hills of the Szymbark area (1,020 m. above sea level). These hills divide Kaszuby into two parts, northern and southern.

The soil of southern Kaszuby is for the most part sandy, watery, and stony; only rare breaks entertain the eye with golden wheat and green meadows. Before there was a highway there, a well-off father bringing his son back from vacation in Chojnice would harness three spry steeds, and take along several spare ropes just in case, for in the sand one could not cover more than 21 km. in 5 hours, and the wheels often sank up to the axle in the loose element. The ordinary farm-owner considered such a trip too hard on his harness. So the poorer peasants would usually set out on foot. If it weren't for the lakes and their fish, the inhabitants would have to forsake their patches of sand, for the soil would not support them. Besides withered rye and small potatoes, the fields are covered at best only with white buckwheat, from which the Kaszub has his beloved porridge, which for him stands in for all other dishes. He may have some bread he's bought, and he entertains guests under his thatched roof only on holidays. (Continued on page 3)



Kaszubian Lake Area

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STATEMENT OF MISSION

The Kashubian Association Of North America exists to preserve and promote Kashubian cultural heritage in North America and provide and encourage exchange with Kashubes in Poland. In fulfilling this mission we hope to raise awareness of Kashubian ethnicity in North America, to stimulate an interest for all things Kashubian, and provide an educational exchange of information among all those interested in the subject of Kashubes.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Membership: \$15 per year in U.S. dollars; outside of U.S. use a postal money order payable in U.S. dollars. Make checks or money orders payable to the "Kashubian Association of North America". Back Issues: \$3 U.S. per issue; 4 for \$10 U.S. Send request to **KANA** at the address in the box. To submit articles or genealogical queries (free) for newsletter: Send to **Anne Kasuboski**, 1035 Division St., Green Bay, WI 54303 or e-mail: kasubosa@netnet.net. For address changes, send to **Ron Kiedrowski** at: Kiedski@aol.com or address in box. Send submissions to the KANARL Research list to Mary Gesicki at MaryGes@aol.com or address below.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

At the start of a new century, and a new millennium, we as Kaszubians have centuries of history and tradition to carry forward. And there will be growth (changes), too. Anne Kasuboski, who has been our faithful editor for the last two years has requested to leave the editorship position to devote more time to research and writing. Of course, I was sad to hear this since we have become good friends over the last few years. I suddenly realized that Anne has never been properly introduced. To correct the omission: Anne lives in Green Bay, Wisconsin, with her two frisky Shelties. She is head research librarian at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay campus. We congratulate her as she celebrates being part of their library staff for 20 years this February. A heartfelt thanks, Anne.

We are pleased to announce that the next issue will be edited by Renata Stachowicz who originally came from Poland. But more in the next issue, the beginning of our fourth year. Welcome, Renata.

As I am writing I just learned that Father Aloysius Rekowski, CSSR, of Saskatoon, Canada, an eminent Kaszubian scholar, has just undergone bypass surgery. We pray that God will be with him during his slow recovery.

I have been contacted by Glenn Meyer, who is forming a 'Kaszubian' discussion group at www.eGroups.com. Glenn is an American and has been 7 years in Poland, now studying at the University in Gdansk. Glenn can be reached via-e-mail at: glennski@underweb.net.

Please tell us about upcoming family reunions, and celebrations in areas which have strong Kaszubian ties. Are you planning a trip to Poland--tell us and perhaps you can meet others in Poland. . .maybe even at the Kaszubian Folk Festival the end of July and beginning of August. Contact me for details.

Blanche Krbechek, President

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As Blanche has mentioned, due to family and work commitments I have decided to step down from my post as editor. For an organization to thrive, it needs new ideas, and new voices. I feel it is time for a new voice--Renata's-- to serve as editor. I hope to still keep active in KANA, with a return to my research activities-- including my study of the Kashubes in Green Lake & Waushara Counties, WI., which I put on hold while serving as editor. I hope to continue contributing articles to KANA, as well as help with the development of our new Web site, which we feel is an important vehicle for promoting the Kashubian culture. Our new web site, currently under development, will be at: <http://www.ka-na.org> And please feel free to continue contacting me in the meantime--I look forward to working with Renata as we make this transition.

Anne Kasuboski, editor

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Small villages are rare here, too, with meager buildings, and they are usually located on water, on which the inhabitants go without care in their small canoes hollowed out of logs.

It is more cheerful in northern Kaszuby. The soil there, though cold, is more fertile, sometimes black, and is densely populated. Hills and valleys of all kinds make for variation. If we stand on some high point east or west, we have before us a landscape which other regions famed for their beauty might envy us. Dark forests usually enclose the field of view, in which green fields, lakes shining gold in the sun, narrow bands of small, swift-flowing rivers and brooks contrast with small villages, usually hidden on the water in valleys. This part is rightly called *Szwajcaria Kaszubska* [Swiss Kaszuby], namely, the beautifully situated vicinities of Wejherowo, Kartuzy, Żukowo, Chmielno, the Szymbark hills, Żarnowiec, Oliwa on the sea, etc. Alongside the large and medium-sized estates there are small farms here, the largest a hundred *mórgs**. But the peasant is comfortable, even affluent. In the forest it is no rarity to find wild boars rooting; when one emerges to feed on peas and oats, it is felled more often by the peasant's bullet than the forester's. Farther on, where the hills do not approach the sea, unfathomable peat bogs stretch from Oliwa almost to Puck, the source of a fair-sized profit. In the bay of Puck and the sea, and in the larger lakes, people work as fisherman. From there salmon, flounder, and eels are sent for fast-day meals to Toruń, Gdańsk, and Warsaw, and unsalted herring goes to nourish the natives. In the forest they gather mushrooms and berries, which they bring to town. They also burn coal and rework wood for farm use. But most often they work in the fields.

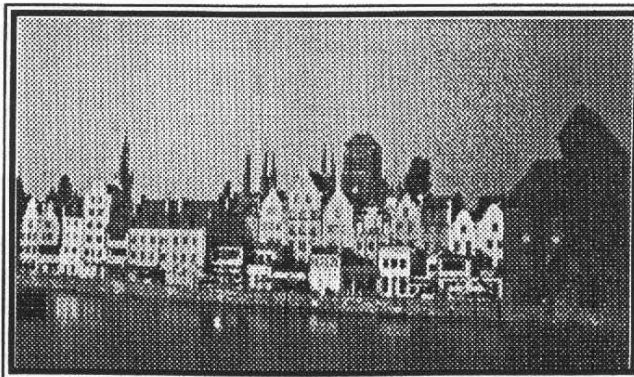
In form the Kaszub is not tall; he is bony, nimble, of rather fair complexion, usually with light-colored hair. The men's clothing consists of a long, pleated frock (of homespun), with firm calf's leather shoes, often tar-soaked, and pants, also of homespun, reaching down to their tops. Currently the most typical feature of every Kaszub's attire is a large cap (like the ones firemen wear), covering the back of the skull, and the ears with flaps; gray sheepskin is sewn on the front, and the inside is also lined with sheepskin. They used to wear a tall sheepskin cap with sort silk ribbons, usually yellow, on the back. Young Kaszub women also delight in warm homespun dresses with similar ribbons. In summer they wear on their heads a thin white scarf knotted under the chin—thus they are called *bialki* ["white ones"].

The Kaszub is jolly and free, and if he's been drinking, he would give his neighbor all he has. But when you get on his bad side, he is obstinate and uncompromising, which is the source of a proverb, "*Uparty jak kaszuba*" ["stubborn as a Kaszub"]. It is hard to find any real anger in him. Only one thing has ever gotten to him, and that was the Order of the Teutonic Knights; when a Kaszub wants to

revile someone in the coarsest of terms, he will shout at him "*Té Kómtorze!*" [You Knights commander!"] (he also calls the toad *komtur*). He receives guests cordially and treats them to whatever he can. Formerly at weddings and baptisms drinking-bouts were common; but now after the Jesuit fathers' missions, an exemplary sobriety and industry is the rule. This is a most pious people, they besiege the famous Wejherowo *kalwarye** by the thousands; they also make pilgrimages in hordes to more distant holy places such as in Łąki, Gietrzwałd, etc. Their churches are always overcrowded, although their parishes, like rural dioceses, are widely dispersed. The Kaszub is an avid learner, and many Kaszub sons are educated in *gimnazjums** in Wejherowo, Peplino, Chełmno, and Chojnice. In general the boys distinguish themselves in school with their persistent work, and quite often with their quick talent.

One can distinguish here three types of *szlachta*. The most ancient pure-blooded Pomeranian or Kaszub nobles, who can usually be recognized beforehand by their short surnames ending in -a, survive in fairly large numbers in the *powiat* of Kartuzy and in Pomerania, as far as to Słupsk. Among them were the families of Jarka, Pyrch, Wnuk, Janta, and many others. Their inheritances are not large. Another kind of nobles, the *zagonowa* [roughly equivalent to "yeoman" in English] are densely settled in Kartuzy and (northern) Chojnice *powiaty*, and come from the cavalry officer's aides who supposedly received arms under Jan III Sobieski at Vienna. The third kind consist of Polish families who moved to Prussia in large numbers in the 16th and 17th centuries, endowed with extraordinary privileges, especially exemption from the levy *en masse* beyond the borders of the country. The first and the third have become greatly Germanized. Among the towns, Kościerzyna has most preserved a Kaszub character; that is why it is called the capital of Kaszuby. Next comes Wejherowo, more

recently founded, which has recently become more Germanized. Other towns formerly Kaszub, such as Puck, Lębork, Bytów, Słupsk, Łeba, and to some extent Gdańsk, are now almost entirely Germanized.



Gdańsk, October 1996

To this point only one railway line crosses kaszuby, the Gdańsk-Słupsk line at Oliwa, Wejherowo, and Lębork. Currently they are building another, secondary one from Pszczółki to Skarszewy to Kościerzyna and Bytów. Efforts are also being made for a similar line from Żukowo to Kartusy, but so far prospects are not good. Highways are somewhat more densely located.

In order to get at least an approximate idea of the number of the Kaszub population, the best way is to look at the parishes in which Kaszubs live, for to be a Kaszub is to be a Catholic; in general there are few German Catholics among the Kaszubs. Kaszub is first and foremost the entire deanery of Puck, with the parishes of Jastarnia, Mechowo, Starzyn, Wejherowo, Góra, Oksywie (Chylonia), Puck, Rumia (Reda), Swarzewo, Strzelin, Tułowo, and Żarnowiec; the total of souls here is over 27,000. The second deanery, Kościerzyna, Kartusy, Chmielno, Goręcin (Kielpin), Gowidłino, Stare Grabowo (Reknica), Lipusz, Luzino, Parchowo, Sianowo, Sierakowice, Stężycza, Strzecz, Sulęcín; that is over 43,000 souls. Lębork deanery, with the parishes of Ugość, Bytowo, Niezabyszewo, Lębork, and Rozłazin, has over 6,000 souls. Scattered in other deaneries are the Kaszub parishes of Żukowo, Przodkowo, Maternia, Oliwa (partially), Kielno, Chwaszczyno, Kiszewa, Wiele, Leśno, Brusy, Borzyszkowy, for a total of over 43,000. So the whole Kaszub population totals about 120,000 souls, a number that would be rather too low than too high, inasmuch as the above reckoning is done according to diocesan summaries from 1867 (obviously after having discounted non-Kaszubs), and recently the numbers of the population have increased everywhere.

The Kaszub language differs significantly from contemporary Polish, although experts say that it is one of its most primeval forms. This language, like the whole people, is rapid and lively in nature. The accent usually falls on the syllable farthest from the end. The Kaszubs themselves divide themselves in terms of pronunciation into Lasaks and Beloks. The former, in the south near Kościerzyna, speak more firmly; the Beloks, near Wejherowo and Puck, cannot pronounce *f*. Considerable variety in pronunciation predominates in various towns. Medial *y* and other vowels are most often pronounced as *e*: *Peck* (Puck), *reba* (*ryba*, "fish"), *grepa* (*grupa*, "group"), *Słępsk* (Słupsk). Palatalization is almost totally unknown, so they say *czetac* (instead of *czytać*, "to read"), *cetka* (instead of *ciotka*, "aunt"), *pisac* (instead of *pisać*, "to write"). In endings they drop the *e* in *-ek*: *pask* (instead of *pasek*), *matk* (instead of *matek* from the word for "mother"), *ojc* (instead of *ojciec*, "father"). They have preserved the old dual in the forms *pójdma*, *pójwa* (instead of *pójdźmy*, *pójdźcie*, "let's [both] go, you [both] go"). They have also preserved many almost unknown terms, e.g. *czechob*, *czechel* (grave clothes), *gunia* (a garment of coarse material), *leż* (lie), *plesz* (tonsure), *pleszok* (priest), *plesze* (dots or eyes on potatoes), *nekać* (to drive cattle into the fields), *mołnia chlaszcze* or *chlasta* (a dry, glossy shine), etc. Despite all that, a Kaszub

understands a Pole very well, and reads Polish books (almost every one, because they study alone at home; at school they have long since been Germanized); they even take it ill if a Pole speaks to them *po "kaszebsku"* (in Kaszubian). They like to read Polish periodicals, especially when exhorted to do so by their pastors, most of whom, unfortunately, have been Germans, and not the best. In the single parish of Mechowo, with a not over-large population, they keep 78 copies of the rather heavily written *Pielgrzym*.

In recent times Kaszuby has become rather famous. First and foremost, Dr. Cejnowa began to collect anecdotes, proverbs (not always Kaszubian), songs (many flirtatious and almost unknown); they were printed in small brochures under the title *Skorb kaszebskije move [treasury of Kaszubian]*. In Poznań Rev. Gustaw Pobłocki published *Słownicek mowy kaszubskiej [A Small Dictionary of Kaszubian]*. A kind of Kaszubian epic was written by the well known Hieronim Derdowski, entitled *O panu Czorlińskim co do Puck po sece jachoł*, Toruń 1880. Also see the dissertation of Rev. Kujot in Wart, a collective work, Poznań 1874. A. Helfferding has also written a lot about Kaszuby. See his *Collected Works* (in Russian), Petersburg 1868-73, volume 3. Also Seidel, "Das Land und Volk der Kassuben" (*the Land and People of Kaszuby*), *Nue Preuss. Provinzialblätter*, 1852, vol. 48.

[Rev. Fankidejski, Volume 3, pp. 904-907]

Terms Requiring Explanation

Chelmno law: charter defining terms under which towns were incorporated in Prussia, Pomerania and Mazovia.

folwark: grange, large manorial farmstead.

German law: charter defining terms under which towns were incorporated, so called because they were usually modeled on the charters given such German cities as Magdeburg and Chelmno.

gimnazjum: secondary school or grammar school

grosz (plural *groszy*): an ancient Polish coin, less than a *grzywna* in value.

grzywna (plural *grzywny*): an ancient silver coin, worth several denarii, used in Poland and other countries of Europe.

kalwaria: literally "calvary," a complex of shrines or chapels commemorating Christ's Passion, generally on a hill, often with vast numbers of small crosses erected by the faithful in memory of deceased loved ones.

mórg or **morga:** unit of land measurement, also called **jutrznia**; according to Gerald Ortell's book on Polish parish records, in the Russian partition 1 mórg=1.388 acres, in the Prussian partition 1 mórg=0.631 acres, in Galicia 1 mórg=1.422 acres.

powiat: territorial administrative subdivision used in Poland since the 14th century, smaller than provinces but larger than *gminy* or *gromady*; abolished in 1975, reinstated, with new boundaries, in 1999.

scotus, skojec, skot: an ancient monetary unit, 1/24 of a *grzywna*; sort of like a penny.

sołtys: derived from and equivalent to German *Schultheiß* (later *Schultz*), a bailiff or village headman/mayor.

wiardunek: an ancient Polish coin, worth a quarter of a *grzywna*, also called a *ferdon*.

włoka: a unit of land measurement used in Poland, used more or less interchangeably with the term *kan*; it comes from the root in the verb *włóczyć*, "to drag, harrow," thus referring to a field with soil plowed and harrowed and ready for planting. The *włoka* was generally about 30 *mórgs*, but this can vary depending on what part of Poland and what time-frame one is concerned with. Generally 30 *mórgs* was considered a full-sized farm, big enough to support a family.

Droga Krzyzowa (Cross Roads) WIARA OJCOW ZYJEMY (The Faith of our Forefathers Keep Us)

By David Shulist and Martin Shulist

Editor's Note: This article is reprinted with the permission of Dave Shulist from the Wilno, Canada web site at: <http://www.wilno.com/html/crossroads.htm> For additional information, visit the Wilno web site.

When immigrants from Poland settled in the Wilno area, they brought with them not only a rich cultural heritage, but also a deep religious tradition. They settled in some very rugged land. Travel was very difficult – road conditions were poor and journeys were long. Those settlers longed for a place to worship. There was no Catholic church close by. The nearest church was in Brudenell, built in the 1860's. It was near impossible for the pioneers living near Paugh Lake to make it to church in Brudenell. And even those living closer found that the terrain, the weather and the distance hindered their ability to worship in church.

To satisfy their strong need to pray to Our Lord the settlers erected large wooden crosses at the intersections of main roads. This was a tradition they borrowed from the motherland. On Sundays and Holy Days the pioneers close to each intersection would gather at the crossroads and celebrate their Faith. These crosses were not used, however, for regular service. The prayer at the crosses was private prayer. Rosaries were recited and the appropriate Sunday litany was recited. The worship that occurred at the crossroads was a very special religious experience - different from attending church. Our forefathers here took nothing for granted. They had no communication, no reliable transportation and no secure income. Yet they were grateful for every step they took in life. And they thanked our Lord.

It became tradition to make the sign of the cross when one passed a cross at an intersection. Gentlemen would remove their hats also. And not only were the crosses a place of worship for our ancestors, but they were a stopping place for those making the long journey into town. It was a place for the pioneers to stop and thank the Lord that he saw them that far into a journey. It was also a place for settlers to meet and to plan (e.g., meeting to organize a barn raising, etc.) and to pass on information and the news of the day.

From the Opeongo Line where the first Polish pioneers settled, northward to the Hamlet of Wilno, and up to the Paugh Lake area you can still see some of these crosses; the symbol of how strong and how important faith was to our ancestors.

It has been noted that there were approximately 20 crosses erected originally in this area. With the exodus of the young from the farms in the 1950's, many of these crosses decayed and were never seen again. There are currently only 6 original pioneer crosses still standing in the Wilno hills and two modern crosses which were erected more recently. One of these modern crosses was erected by Fr. Wilowski in 1933 and stands proudly atop Shrine Hill.

It is important that our generation remember the hard lives our ancestors lived. It is important to resurrect the crosses of Wilno and with them the strong faith of our forefathers. Our enjoyment of this great land we live upon today is possible only because of the hard work and the strong faith of our pioneer ancestors. It was their faith in God that kept them going through difficult terrain and even-more difficult economic times. We must do what we can to keep that faith alive.

THE STRENGTH OF A PERSON LIES WITHIN THE STRENGTH OF THAT PERSON'S FAITH.