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First to Milwaukee, and Then Onward to Other Parts of the Midwest An Introduction to the Histories of the Michigan Parishes of Holy Cross and Saint Rita by Blanche Krbecek

Holy Rosary in Isadore (Cedar), and Saint Rita in Maple City, Leelanau County, Michigan were the final residences of many Kashubes who came from the southern part of Kaszubia in the 1870s and 1880s.

First these immigrants were in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and were part of the parish of Saint Stanislaus. In this parish there were also immigrants from the Poznan region of Poland which is a little south of Kaszubia. As could be expected, with a common language a marriage between a Kashube and a Poznani did occur. Within a decade, many of the Kashubes left to form their own church, Saint Hedwig, in Milwaukee. Many surnames of these early immigrants are still to be found in the Milwaukee area.

This can be a guide, but only a guide and not proof positive, that if one's ancestors remained in the parish of Saint Stanislaus more than likely they had come from the region of Poznan and if one's ancestors also appear in the parish records of Saint Hedwig probably, or possibly, they came from the Kaszuby region.

Many left the Milwaukee area to seek their fortunes in other parts of Wisconsin, in Minnesota, in Michigan, in North Dakota and elsewhere in the midwestern part of the United States. There was also travel to Canada, to Renfrew County, where relatives of some of the immigrants has settled.

This is the story of my family: first they appear in the records of Saint Stanislaus, then they left and helped form Saint Hedwig. Later they left Milwaukee and headed north looking for farmland in Wisconsin. The land was all taken and they found nothing. Somehow they crossed Lake Michigan and landed on North Manitou Island, Michigan. Family stories claim that from there they walked across the ice with their one cow and their cast iron cook stove to the Leelanau Peninsula where they homesteaded.

Both Kashubes and Poznani settled in Leelanau County. The language is a combination of Kashube words and Polish words. It is a language spoken 125 years ago, a language that has changed very little over the decades and still spoken by some of the older folk. My family, too, became a combination of Kashube and Poznani through marriage.

The following stories of Holy Rosary and Saint Rita are stories of these immigrants, many of whom left Milwaukee and eventually settled in Leelanau County, Michigan.