



Przyjaciel ludu Kaszubskiego

PRZĘJÔCÉŁ LUDU KASZËBSCZÉGÒ

(FRIEND OF THE KASHUBIAN PEOPLE)

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Kashubian Fisherman's Village on Lake Michigan from 1916 Saint Stanislaus, Milwaukee, Jubilee Book translated by Renata Stachowicz

There are about 90 families in the Parish of Saint Stanislaus, (Milwaukee, Wisconsin). They usually live on Jones Island. The Kashubs are one of the oldest Polish settlers in Milwaukee, and many of them were among the founders of Saint Stanislaus Parish. One of the very first Kashubs that settled on the island which was empty at that time was Antoni Kanski, widely known as the *Governor of Jones Island*. His friends gave him a souvenir—a cane with a silver handle that was engraved: “For the Governor of Jones Island, Friends.” Later on, a governor of the island was Jakub Muza who came to America from Puck, in 1872. The majority of the Islanders come from Kaszuby, in general.

Puck is a small town on the Puck Bay, part of the Baltic Sea. Many different nationalities live around the Baltic Sea, but only in West Prussia, west of the Vistula River live the Polish tribe called Kashubs. It is the only Polish shore, the only piece of land, by which, as a poet says Poland “has the free breath from the sea.” Poles, knowing the importance of this piece of land, land endangered by Germans, do everything in their might to prevent Kashubian people from Germanization. The Kashubian poet, Hieronim Derdowski, say sot without reason:

“There is no Kashuby without Poland,
And no Poland without Kashuby.”

This last statement shows how important the Polish shore of Kashuby is for the entire Polish country. If Kashuby were a German land, Poland would be cut off from the sea, and such access is indispensable for every country that wishes to develop.

The Polish fisherman of Jones Island come almost with no exception from the north part of Kashuby, from the Baltic shore, and specifically from the Hel Peninsula. This peninsula is about 30 English miles long, and contains such villages as Ceynowa, Kussfeld, Jastarnia and Borek. The arable land is sandy and almost never produces anything. Therefore, the villagers lived by fishing. It is very hard work, often life-threatening, but regardless of that, or maybe because of that, a Kashubian fisherman loves it all so much, and this love they brought along to the “promised land.”

Fishermen, who were brought by their fate to the shores of Lake Michigan, to Milwaukee, liked this area at the first sight and decided to stay and live here. The boundless waters of Lake Michigan reminded them of the uneasy waters of the Baltic where they grew up. Pretty soon, the new village was built on Jones Island that reminds on of the Kashubian villages on the shore of the Baltic Sea. The new settlers had to work long, however, to bring the village and the whole island up to the way it now looks.

Continued on page 7

STATEMENT OF MISSION

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

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President's Letter

Already we are starting our sixth year. Thank you all for your support.

The most exciting news is that we have been joined by Kamil Frymark, a student from Gdynia, Poland, who is our new webmaster. Kamil has begun to add new information which we hope will be of interest.

Renata and I send you Easter Greetings.

Blanche Krbechek

Editor's Letter

In this spring issue I would like to welcome our two new writers.....and welcome back Stanislaw Frymark from Kashuby, Poland. It is exciting to find out that more and more people are interested in our newsletter, and they want to share their knowledge and experience with KANA's subscribers. We are always looking for articles

I translated part of an article about beginning of the Kahsubs settling in Wisconsin. It will be continued in our next issue.

Please note that my email address has been changed. The new one is RSTACHOWICZ@MSN.COM and then again in the queries section. We put together very interesting material in this issue. Enjoy!

* * * * *

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What is The Kashub "Island" or "Wedge" in Poland ?

by ks. Aloysius Rekowski, CSSR

In this article let us study more closely that little wedge on Poland's map bordering on the Baltic Sea which we call Kaszuby or Kashubian Switzerland as it is sometimes called in Poland, not because of any high mountains, but because of its natural scenic beauty and its hundreds of lakes and rolling meadows. Except on its southern borders where you have the Carpathian Mountains, Poland is a very flat and agricultural country. Kaszuby is perhaps a little more rolling than most other parts of Poland and a delightful mixture of fields, meadows, forests, lakes, small rivers and canoe routes. The soil is generally sandy and, even though the annual rainfall is copious because of the proximity of the Baltic Sea, still most of the area can only grow such crops as rye, hay and potatoes. In some ways it is much more suitable for tourism than for farming.

The region (or province) of Europe between the Oder and the Vistula Rivers and bordering on the Baltic Sea has always been called Pomerania (Pomorze in Polish; Pommern in German) meaning "by the sea." The Kashubs inhabited Eastern Pomerania, sometimes called Pomorze Gdanskie. The section of Pomerania inhabited by the Kashubs was larger three, four hundred years ago but, in our times, consists of a wedge perhaps the size of Renfrew County, Ontario, running southwest of Gdansk down to the small city of Chojnice and then northwest close to the cities of Bytow and Slupsk and joining the Baltic Sea near the two lakes of Leba and Gardno.

In that little wedge there would be well over a million inhabitants. The vast majority would be concentrated in the Baltic tri-cities of Gdansk, Sopot and Gdynia. Gdansk, the largest, is a very old commercial port city at the estuary of the Vistula River where it empties into the huge bay of Gdansk. Between 1918 and 1939 Gdansk remained a free city still mainly dominated by German commercial interests. And so Poland, lacking any port which it could call unequivocally its own, decided to develop Gdynia. Gdynia, the port where the Polish passenger liner Stefan Batory has a berth when it plies between Montreal and Poland during the summer months, was originally a completely Kashub town. Along with Gdansk, and Szczecin further west on the Oder River, Gdynia today has developed into one of the three main ports of Poland. The tri-cities today have a very cosmopolitan, even though thoroughly Polish character. The sailors, dock-workers and ship-builders come from all over Poland. What percentage of their inhabitants would be of Kashub parentage is hard to say, perhaps as low as ten percent. But I feel sure that there were many "still stubborn" and independent-minded Kashubs among the first associates of Lech Walesa in those port cities where Solidarity was born.

The ethnic Kashub population two, three hundred years ago has been cited as totalling approximately four hundred thousand (400,000). Today in that wedge there may still dwell upwards of two hundred thousand Kashubs who still preserve some of the old traditions and who may still understand or speak the dialect, though for the most of them classical Polish is today the everyday language, at least outside their own homes.

The heart of Kaszuby would be around the cities (10 - 15 thousand) of Kartuzy and Kosciierzyna for the central and southern Kashubs and around the larger city of Wejherowo in the region adjacent to the peninsula of Hel for the northern Kashubs. Our middle-aged and older generation would feel very much at home among our cousins there, as I did during my two-week stay with them. Apart from the odd modern Polish expression, you would soon forget you are in Poland in the villages of Lipusz, Parchowo, Rekowo, Kalisz Kaszubski, as the Laskas, Palubickis, Peplinskis, Rekowskis, Turzynskis, Kulases etc. started conversing with you in everyday Kashub.

Father Aloysius Rekowski is a noted Kashubian scholar who has written over 100 articles on the subject of the Kashubs. His ancestors are from Lipusz and neighboring parishes in Poland.

c 1997, A Rekowski



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Farewell, Fiddler Joe

Joseph Ladislaus Peplinski 10 March 1910—21 February, 2002

by Blanche Krbechek

After 82 years the fiddle of Joesph Peplinski is silent. Just three weeks short of his 92nd birthday the music that first was heard played by a 9 year old boy at a wedding is no more. It was a short time ago that KANA sent congratulations to Joe and Evelyn on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary, January 30, 2000 (see newsletter Volume IV—Number 1).

An entire issue could easily be filled with the wonderful memories folks have of Fiddler Joe.

Here are a few:

"Joe donated his music to many charities even up to age 91. He was also active in Politics and served on the County Council."

"Joe had the foresight to preserve what he saw disappearing, i.e. the Kashub culture our ancestors brought. I was quite emotional when Joe died because I saw his quiet friendship so typically Kashub gone and also a chunk of our heritage lost forever."

"I do not recall the man criticizing anything, but I do recall his cheery spirit, sharp jokes and performances for charities which made him a precious commodity among humans."

"From the one occasion I met Fiddler Joe at his home during the Peplinski family reunion, I have fond memories of the warm relationship of parents and many children and grandchildren and the pleasure they derived making music together, on that evening only for the sake of making music. It was an honor to be a small part by joining the family making music."

Joseph Ladislaus Peplinski was born 10 March, 1910 in Hagarty Township, Renfrew County, Ontario to Frank Peplinski and his wife Anna (Cyr). Frank was born in Kruszyn, Lesno parish, Poland and died in Combermere, Renfrew County, Ontario. The grandfather of Fiddler Joe and the father of Frank was John Peplinski who also was born in Kruzyn and died in Renfrew County. John Peplinski and his wife Marianna Klopotek-Glowczewska came to Canada in 1866 with two sons, Frank and Stephan. The death of Fiddler Joe on 21 February, 2002, in Renfrew County left many sad hearts.

But, read on. . . His music is still with us.

Canadian Polish-Kashub Old Time Fiddle, a CD

by Blanche Krbechek

Fiddler Joe Peplinski was part of a project done entirely by the Canadian Polish/Kashubs of Renfrew County. Producers, art directors, master mixer, financial directors to musicians—all are Kashub. The musicians and creators of the compact disk donate all the proceeds of the recording to the Wilno Heritage Society. There are 31 tunes, the first 21 are old time Polish tunes that the ancestors brought from Poland in the 1800s and the last 10 tunes are old tunes played in the 40s and 50s. The CD is dedicated to the great fiddlers of the past including Joseph Kudzienski, Bronas Recoskie and Frank and John Mask with hopes that the newest generation of fiddlers who play on this CD will pass on their knowledge of the young fiddlers of today so that the great art in music will not be lost.

Do not miss the opportunity to hear Fiddler Joe, and all the others. The CD, *Canadian Polish-Kashub Old Time Fiddle*, is available from the Wilno Heritage Society. Wilno, Ontario K0J-2N0 \$18.00 in either Canadian or US funds, including shipping

More information: David Shulist info@wilno.org www.Wilno.org.



Kashubian National Symbols

by Stanislaw Frymark
translated by Renata Stachowicz

Think of Kaszubia. Think of the griffin. Think of the Hymn. Think of 'capital' cities. Think of the black and gold flag.

The Kashubian coat-of-arms is a black griffin with a crown, on a gold field. This emblem is also widely used as a coat-of-arms for many Kashubian and Pomeranian cities.

The griffin symbolizes nimbleness and quickness of the eagle and strength of the lion. From ancient Greek and Roman writings we know that the griffin is an animal with head, neck, claws, and wings of an eagle, and trunk, paws, and tail of a lion. The griffin, according to ancients, used to live in Ethiopia, Arabic countries, and India. Later on its image appeared, as a decoration, on the breast plate of the armor of Caesar, Kaligula, Marcus Aurelius, and on the helmet of Pallas Athena.

The griffin in its many variations has been in continual use on the seals and as a coat-of-arms on shields of the Kashubian princes since at least 1240.

Heronim Derdowski is the author of the Kashubian Anthem. The song first appeared as a march in his poem "*O Panu Czorlinskim...*" (see Volume I, issue 3 of the newsletter for both the Kashubian and an English translation of the Hymn.) In the mid-war period (between WWI and WWII), the song was proclaimed the Kashubian Anthem, and sung ever since with respect, in a standing position. The melody to the anthem was written by Feliks Nowowiejski.

Gdansk was always perceived by Kashubian people as the capital of Kashuby. Kashubian and Pomeranian Princes went to their 'final rest' at the Oliwa Cathedral. Gdansk used to be a main cultural and merchant center. However, Germanization of the free city of Gdansk, and then, after WWII, colonization of Kashuby area by citizens of East territories which had been lost after the War, made Kashubs a minority (however an active one) group in their own capital. Therefore, shortly after WWII, a beautiful and picturesquely situated city, Kartuzy, of the "Swiss Kashubia" region, was named the capital of Kashuby. Kartuzy is one of not many civil parishes where 100% of its citizens declare Kashubian roots, and the town exudes Kashubian culture. Meanwhile, Gdansk now has more of a European character with residual influence of the Hanseatic League days, and that's the culture the city represents.

The Kashubian national flag waves on the Kartuzy town square. Black and gold. Black on the top and gold on the bottom. Right next to it hangs a Polish flag, and another with the coat-of-arms of the city of Kartuzy, with a head of a griffin, designed by Aleksander Majkowski.

The borders of Kashuby are at the present time enclosed in a new Pomeranian District (*województwo*). From the south Kashuby is bordered by Chojnice; Bytow on the west; and Nowa Karczma on the east. The North border of Kashuby is formed by the Baltic Sea. In general in various parts of the Pomeranian District Kashubian population is little less than 50% of all citizens. This is true for Slupsk farthest on the west, and Tczew on the east.

The new Pomorski District considers its coat-of arms for the area to be a traditional Kashubian coat-of-arms—the black griffin with a crown on a yellow-gold field.

Think of Kaszubia and these symbols will come to mind.

Man of Iron, Leon Ostrowski, Wilno's First Blacksmith

by Shirley Mask Connolly

excerpted from *Pioneers in Canada's First Polish Settlement, Volume I*

Although a number of the Kashubian pioneers in the first Polish Canadian Settlement had forges and did their own smithing, Leon Ostrowski was Wilno's first "qualified" blacksmith, trained and licensed as a blacksmith in Poland.



...From the time of Leon Ostrowski's arrival in Canada in the early 1880s, he made his living as the main blacksmith of the first Polish Settlement. Although he did not live in what we know today as the village of Wilno (it did not exist back then), he operated his business not far from the first Wilno Church, the little log schoolhouse and next to one of Wilno's main carpenters and cabinet makers, John Kosloski/Kozłowski. The post office in Adam Prince's house and general store was only a twenty minute walk away. These five locations formed the nucleus of Wilno.

...Leon Ostrowski bought the north west corner of Joseph Pastwa's lot on March 23rd, 1885, just a month after he married Pastwa's daughter, Marianna. He paid \$40.00 for these thirty acres.

...John Pastway who married Josephine Machut/Mackwood, inherited the property after his father's death and sold his 170 acres to his brother-in-law, Leon Ostrowski....Leon Ostrowski added to his 200 acre holding when he purchased the 83 acres owned by the carpenter, John Kosloski,

who lived next door. This property contained a little lake.

...There was an old road alongside the lake, running from the Opeongo Road through Joseph Kombroskie's farm to the old church, St. Stanislaus Kostka. In the winter, sleighs would cross the ice and in the summer teams of horses would be tied alongside the water for a rest and a drink. This was not far from the famous "Bull's Run" located on the western end of the Polish Settlement on the Opeongo Road and named because of the steep incline where oftentimes the wagon or sleigh overtook the team pulling it. The horse was crucial to pioneer life and to Leon's trade, but before the pioneers acquired horses they used oxen.

...By the time Leon arrived in the settlement in the mid 1880s, most of the Polish pioneers had horses and there was a strong market for a qualified blacksmith...Leon also made shoes for oxen and sleigh runners...He died at age 63 in February, 1922.

Ed: **Leo Ostrowski** is a descendant of **Johann von Ostrowski**, born about 1749 in **Windorp, Lesno parish**, Poland. Johann is also a progenitor of the **Peplinski** family of Leelanau County, Michigan and of one **Peplinskie** families of Renfrew County, Ontario

Pioneers in Canada's First Polish Settlement also contains two other stories

- 1) The story of a remarkable woman, Rosalia Libera, an early weaver, (includes information on the Pecarski/Piekarski, Shalla/Szala, Shushack/Suszek and Luckasavitch/Lukaszewicz families) as well as Mrs. Norlock, also a weaver.
- 2) The story of horsepower and Roman Afelskie, a harnessmaker (Includes information on Bennie Afelskie, Vincent Strack).

Kashubian Fisherman's Village continued from the front page

Jones Island lies southeast from the center of the town. It is not an island in the full meaning of this word, but a peninsula, because a little stream that parted it on the east side from the main land became filled in some time ago. The name of 'island', however survives until today.

Before Wisconsin was settled by the white people, Jones Island which was called differently at that time, was used by fishermen as a temporary stopping point. Often, the Indian groups would arrive with their little boats and swim out onto the lake from the area that is now a days used by motor boats. Later on, the troubled waters of the lake would uncover Indian's graves and other relics which are now on display at the city museum.

Back in 1835, the island was still one great quagmire, where only three big trees grew. On the south and west the whole ground was covered by water, where Clinton Street and Greenfield Avenues are now.

South from the little pier people started to build cottages, and in a middle of the last century, [i.e. 1800s] white people built a lighthouse which would show the boats the way to the port. In 1815, a man name J.M. Jones built a naval construction workshop, but it was destroyed some 14 years later. From this Mr. Jones, Jones Island got its name. It was later changed by Poles to "Wyspa Jonasza". Another workshop was built in 1856, by a man named Alexander, but it was destroyed by a storm the same year.

After a few years, the fisherman built a sidewalk on the island. It was made of wooden foot bridges that rested on poles. There are a few of them left still today days. The whole northwest part of the island was still swampy at that time, with the exception of the middle, where house of Jakub Muza stands at the present. The ground had been elevated there by about 15 feet. Muza says that even the littlest storms would bring water along in front of every fisherman's cottage where there would be a boat fastened; just in case...

More of this translation will be in our next issue. Thanks to Deloris Cieslewicz who kindly sent us a copy of the 1916 Saint Stanislaus Jubilee Book originally in Polish, and arranged for permission to use it. it.

Man of Iron, continued from page 6

Pioneers in Canada's First Polish Settlement is available from Shirley Mask Connolly, 21 Granville Avenue; Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y-0M5; Canada. e-mail maskcon@magma.ca
\$18.00 in either Canadian or US funds., including shipping

Shirley Mask Connolly has also authored two other books about early Wilno and Barry's Bay, Ontario families.

The Shulist Story Book introduces the first three Shulist families who settled in the Wilno area. It includes the first Cyra, Dota, levair, Mackwood and Yandernoo families too.
\$14.00 in either Canadian or US funds, including shipping

The Piechowski Family Book introduces the first couple of generations of the Pecoskie family and includes the Glisinskie/Glyszynski family too.
\$10.00 in either Canadian or US funds, including shipping