

Letters From Travels - Listy z Podrozy

by Jan Hieronim Derdowski, printed in *Wiarus* newspaper, 1890 #27-30

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Letter from Berlin, Wisconsin

This town is on the Fox River. It is similar to Berlin in Germany. The Polish people have lived here for 25 years and there are 300 families now.

The first people who came to this town were Andrzej Ebertowski from Kaszuba and Jozef Bilawski from Borow. Some of the people who came they became quite rich and one of them is J.F. Brzeski (selling clothes), Hipolit Kitowski (a very good tailor, making clothes), Antoni Bronk and August Mlynski (grocery and some imported products), S.J. Chojnacki worked for *Wiarus*. Feliks Lukaszewicz and Tomasz Gierlowski had a saloon and they were very rich.

They had an Alderman, Antoni Bronk from Kaszuba. He was so proud of himself that he wore a star that he wore even at home. Usually there is enough work and money in the town but unfortunately right now the bank C.A. Matter went bankrupt. Some people lost their money and interestingly this bank went bankrupt but Williams Company went bankrupt too. (The farmers took their products there, Williams sold them and then the farmers were paid.) Maybe this happened because God was very sad because the Polish people divided themselves into two groups. Kaszubi people and those who came from Poznan. They divided themselves and each group had its own church. Same religion, same priest, but different churches so they don't have to be together. It happened about 1885 (the division). At this time there were 6000 people in the town and it would be enough for one church. The town is on the border of 2 different dioceses and so one church belongs to one diocese and the other to the other diocese. Kaszubian people built their church of wood but the other church that they all had belonged to together was destroyed by the people of Poznan and in this place they built a new one made of brick. But when the brick church was built they had some loans so they were in debt. The only possibility to pay this debt would be to join the Kaszubs to have only one church. Some man said "he likes Polish people but when there are two Polish people in the town, there is one too much." Both churches wrote letters to the Bishop complaining about each other. But there is still hope. Young people from Poland they like girls from Kaszubian area and the man who played the piano in the Poznan Church, Teofil Olszewski, he married a Kaszubian girl "Cemanowne." They were an example.

Letter Describing Travels in 1890, Describing Michigan

When the train station was built in Michigan the Company that built the train station built barracks for the people who worked to help the people to have some housing to bring people to the area. Only one of ten working has a family with him. The rest has a family in some other town and they earn money and then go home for a while. They work in the coal mines. Many letters were went back and forth. Polish people from Bessemer, Ironwood and Hurley they have quite enough money. It is okay with them.

In Bessemer, there is a man, Kulasiewicz from Koscierzyna who has quite a lot of money and he owns some buildings. In Ironwood, Jan Drazkowski from Wiele, he is very rich and he was in America only for five years. In Hurley, Wisconsin, Jozef Zynda is the richest. But unfortunately there is no church in those three town.

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