

## Kashubes in Chicago

by Richard F. Warmowski

I have read much about emigration from the Kashub area of Europe to Ontario, Canada and to Central Wisconsin. I read with interest the descriptions of the farms and towns which the Kashubes have created in Canada. The mention of Kashubs settling in Chicago, Illinois USA is hard to find, however.

Hoping to get some mention of the many Kashubes that emigrated to the cities in the USA, I have taken 50 surnames from the records of the church in Sierakowice (woj. Kartuzy) where my father was christened and checked to see if the same names appear in Chicago, where our family settled. The name of the Sierakowice church is Sw. Marcin. The parishioners came from the surrounding countryside of this village which was half way between Gdańsk and Słupsk—sort of the center of Kashubia.

The parish population in 1818 was 32 inhabitants. By 1867 there were 281 inhabitants and it grew to 682 inhabitants by 1904. I feel that 50 is a good sample of surnames from the 1880s in which I have information. In checking the sources with which I am familiar on the internet, I was able to determine that out of the 50 surnames I had chosen, 40 of them were mentioned in Chicago, in the early XXth Century.

A little more background on Kashubes in Chicago should include the information that the third Polish parish established on the north side of Chicago was Saint Josaphat. The organizers of this parish were Kashubes who emigrated from under Prussian domination. They wanted a parish of their own because of language. Saint Josaphat was founded in 1883 with help from the pastor of Saint Stanislaw Kostka. In 1889, the Rev. Francis Lange became pastor of Saint Josaphat. Father Lange was Kashub, born in Domatow, Poland in 1857. He was educated at Saint Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, WI and at Saint Mary Seminary in Baltimore, MD.

Through his efforts and with the help of his parishioners, a beautiful church was dedicated on June 8, 1902. As described in the *New World*, at that time, it was the first Catholic Church edifice in the United States erected according to American plans of architecture. It is absolutely fireproof and constructed with steel beams and columns.

In 1885, The Sisters of The Holy Family of Nazareth, an order founded in Poland in 1875, established their first United States Mission in Saint Josaphat Parish. By 1896 they were teaching the 324 children enrolled in the parish school.

The first group of names that follow is the group of which I found mention of those surnames in the sources I was able to check on the internet. There actually are 42 surnames in the first group because I believe that two of the names are the same except for the double letter in both cases. This was a German way of spelling that was common. They used double letters in the names KUPER and FORMELA. I have found both spellings in the United States also.

**Baranowski, Bigus, Brzeski, Bulczak, Czaja, Dawidowski, Dekowski, Dulak, Formela, Formella, Gorski, Gosz, Klawikowski, Kleina, Konkol or Kąkol, Kropidlowski, Kuper, Kupper, Kuberna, Labuda, Lasa, Lilla, Lipski, Mrozewski, Pawelczyk, Piotrowski, Plotka, Pobsipski, Puzdrowski, Rameczyk, Sela, Skierka, Treder, Walkus, Warmowski, Wawrzyniec, Went, Wenta, Wiczowski, Wozniak, Wrobel, Zabrowski.**

In this next list are the names I did not find in my search of the Chicago sources.  
**Daleki, Gilmeister, Grotka, Kling, Liegert, Marszk, Meina, Misk, Sobisz, Wyerkowski.**

I did find a **Sobieszewski** in Chicago. Gilmeister is mentioned in an *Anthology of Kashub Polish Family Names in Poland, Canada, USA* by Father Aloysius Rekowski, as being common in the Stevens Point area of Wisconsin. Other names on that list that also appear in Chicago are: **Brzeski, Wantoch and Peplinski.**

It may not be a very scientific survey, but I do believe it shows a good number of Kashubes immigrated to the city of Chicago, and I would expect the same for many of the cities in the United States. In the cities they would have assimilated much faster than in the rural areas.

Sources: LSD films of the church records of Sw. Marcin Church in Sierakowice, Poland. 534110, 534111 & 1618609

Internetography: [www.psga.org](http://www.psga.org)

(databases of death notices and marriage indices): [www.psga.org/kashub.htm](http://www.psga.org/kashub.htm)

[www.stjosaphat.com/church.htm](http://www.stjosaphat.com/church.htm); <http://sierakowice.webpart.pl/HistoriiLegenda.html>