



# Przjaciół Lodu Kaszubskiego

## PRZĘJÓCÉŁ LĚDU KASZĚBSCZÉGO

(FRIEND OF THE KASHUBIAN PEOPLE)

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### A TRIP TO THE LAND OF MY ANCESTORS

by Ronald Kiedrowski

After years of thinking about a trip to Poland / Kashubia, we were finally ready to make the trip this year. I had discussed my trip several times over the years with Blanche Krbechek (I have been a member of KANA for years) and Stanislaus Frymark. This was our year to make the trip.

Last year I had obtained from Stanislaus Frymark, CD's of my family's records from Niezabyszewo (Damsdorf) Parish. Mr. Frymark has CD's of many Kashubian Parishes. This is where most of my family's records were located. My father Albert Kiedrowski (1895-1985) (Webster, SD -Devils Lake, ND) and I were born in the United States. My grandfather Carl von Kiedrowski (1865-1935) was baptized in Niezabyszewo (died in Sherwood, ND). My great-grandfather Joseph von Kiedrowski (1825-1888) was baptized, married and buried in Niezabyszewo Parish. My great-grandmother Josephine Durawa (1831-1907) was born and married in Niezabyszewo, and died at Lake Lenore, SK. My great-great-grandfather Joseph von Kiedrowski (1791-1867) was possibly baptized but was married and buried in Niezabyszewo parish (He may have been born in Piaszno parish). I believe Great-great-grandmother Magdalena Von Wnuk Lipinski (1798-1840) was born, married and buried in Niezabyszewo.

My family seemed to have lived in Plotowo (Platenheim) or Plotoko (Klein Platenheim) a neighboring village. The great-great-grandfather may have been from Piaszno (another neighboring village). In all the Niezabyszewo records Joseph von Kiedrowski the elder is listed as a colonist indicating that he was not from Niezabyszewo. I need more research here. These villages are all near Kiedrowice, which is our namesake village.

Other Kashubian family lines I am researching are: my grandfather Frank Krzebetkowski\*[(1839-1912) (born Zbychowo, married in Puck, buried Sherwood, ND)]; Grandmother Mary Karsznia 1847-1918 (born Polchowo married Puck, buried Outlook, MT); Great uncle Joseph Piechowski (1854-1939) (born Warsaw? died Browns Valley MN; Great uncle Valentine Kwasniewski (1850-1909) (born Czarnylas died Grenville SD); Great granduncle Martin Gawin, (1836-?) (Born Niezabyszewo, married Niezabyszewo) and great grandaunt Augustina Grunow (1847-1915) (born, married, died Niezabyszewo).

(\* Editor's note: Occasionally this name has been confused with Trzebiatowski. The two are definitely not the same and are even from different regions of Kaszuba. It is a good example of how Kaszubian names can easily be mistaken.)

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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 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 in and provide an educational exchange of everything relating to Kashubia and the Kashubs.

**President's and Editor's Letter**

Too much was happening in my life after my return from Poland last fall. We are trying to catch up with the newsletters and thank you for your continued interest and patience.

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Blanche and Renata

*Blanche + Renata*

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**KAofNA@yahoo.com**

**Blanche Krbecek**, President, Membership,  
and submissions to the genealogical research list  
2041 Orkla Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55427

763.545.7107 e-mail **bkrbecek@att.net**

**Renata Stachowicz**, Editor

13909 Raven Street NW; Andover, MN 55304

e-mail **RSTACHOWICZ@MSN.COM**

**Kamil Frymark**, Webmaster

e-mail **kamilfrymark@wp.pl**

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The preceding information gives the background as to why I wanted to visit Poland and more importantly Kashubia. Stanislaus (Stanley) Frymark picked us up at Gdansk airport. It was a pleasant hour and half drive to Castle Zaborski, his home and guest house. It had been a long day, but we planned our stay this same evening.

Day one was to visit the land of my ancestors. With Stanley as our guide and translator we visited all the villages of my family (Niezabyszewo, Plotowo, Plotoko, Piaszno, Kiedrowice, Bytow and other villages). In these villages aside from driving around, we visited the churches and graveyards. My camera was always busy. I have many pictures of tombstones and grave sites of possible relatives yet to be identified. Kiedrowski, Durawa, (Durowo) and Wnuk Lipinski were in great numbers. I have many hours/days of work yet to be completed as I organize and study all the information collected.

We had lunch at Zamek restaurant at Castle Bytow, a great old picturesque 13th century Teutonic castle with towers and halls. The castle had a fine restaurant and we enjoyed a meal to remember. (Pictures of the great lunch plates were taken).

Day two was a drive through many of the same villages, but to see the countryside and the workings and businesses of Kashubia. We visited the Lubiana China Showroom and factory. The finest porcelain to be found is made here including pieces with traditional Kashubian designs. Coffee cups from here are now used in the kitchen of the Ronald Kiedrowski household. The historic Necel Ceramika Kaszubska pottery factory was another highlight of the day. Viewing the owner and employees making hand made pottery, visiting the pottery museum and factory, and visiting the kiln and sales shop was important. A small water pitcher from Ceramika Kaszubska is now part of the Kiedrowski kitchen. We visited several Kashubian folk, gift and artifact shops. This gave us a greater appreciation of our past. We had lunch at another picturesque Kashubian restaurant. The food was very good.

*Continued on page 4*

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### **Niezabyszewo**

by Jarosław Ellwart  
(from Tourist Guide Kashubia)

Niezabyszewo (Damsdorf) lies 6 km from the town of Bytów, to the south on the route to Miastko, and was in pre-war times one of the westernmost Kaszubian villages. The first reference to it goes back to 1355 and a parish was established there in 1393. In the time of Frederick the Great, the village was settled by colonizers from other parts of Germany. With the assistance of the state, sheep-rearing was introduced and attempts made to develop weaving. Niezabyszewo also used to be a well-known center for pottery, tiles and drainage pipework, as well as utility ceramics being fired there. In the XIX<sup>th</sup> century the priests in Niezabyszewo were celebrated for the services they rendered in furthering a sense of Polish identity among the local Kaszubians. Unfortunately, however, the majority of Kaszubian families moved to Poland during the inter-war years. The massive stone church was built in 1857 in the neo-Gothic style. Inside, the baroque altar, transferred from the previous place of worship, the XIX<sup>th</sup> century pulpit and the organ, which is over a century old, deserve attention.

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On day three we took a day trip to Gdansk. We saw the old port, the crane, beautifully restored city center, Neptune Fountain, the Fahrenheit Monument and many grand gates (Green Gate, Holy Ghost Gate, St. John's gate and Upland Gate) of the city. It was fantastic to see all the sites. The Basilica of the Blessed Virgin Mary was a highlight. Many more photos were taken for my "Land of My Ancestors" DVD. (It was a rainy day so will need to return, stay in Gdansk and ask Stanley to come and be our guide translator for a couple of days).

We went to the Kashubian Ethnographic Park Museum on day four. This is a must see for anyone visiting Kashubia. The wonderful preservation and restoration of buildings from all over Kashubia is a project which shows more than a century of history. I especially enjoyed seeing buildings from villages of my other relatives. (One building was from Piechowice, namesake village of my great uncle Piechowski family. Also a building is being preserved with donations from the Lew Kiedrowski family. (We are not related as yet but great to see the family name.)

The park, the first outdoor museum in Poland, has many buildings and houses dating from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries and restored and preserved with great detail as to how life would have been in different periods of history. There were also many other buildings including: a school house, barns, windmills, lumber mill, and churches restored and decorated in great detail. The manor and peasant houses have been restored with great detail as to period furnishing.

This is a must see for anyone visiting Kashubia.

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### **Plotowo (Platenheim) and Plotówko (Klein Platenheim)**

by Jarosław Ellwart  
(from Tourist Guide Kashubia)

Plotowo (Platenheim) and Plotówko (Klein Platenheim) are situated between Niezabyszewo and Rekowo. During the inter-war years this was an enclave of Polish culture. There was a Polish school, and in 1935 a Polish harvest festival was celebrated for the Bytów Powiat. Jan Styp-Rekowski was a champion of Polishness in this area and was known to the Germans as the Polenkönig, "the Polish King." After the outbreak of war, Styp-Rekowski paid the ultimate price for his espousal of the Polish cause. Two of his sons died in concentration camps and the Polenkönig himself, after coming through the hell of Dachau, died in 1942. The school in Plotowo now houses the Polish School Museum, which is open in the summer from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The old Styp-Rekowski graves may be seen in the local cemetery.

*Kiedrowski continued from page 5*

After the Park and Museum we visited an archaeology reserve near Lesno. This area has burial mounds from when the Goth's and Gepid's lived in the area. (with burials dating back to the late Bronze Age.) These mounds are now in a forest. Each mound is or was surrounded by stones.

In closing, I would say that four days were not adequate to see and research Kashubia. I will be planning another trip to stay at Castle Zaborski. I have much more to see and learn. The time was too short. There are a number of places in Kashubia that I still need to explore. My Kashubian relatives who are Krzebetkowski's and Karchnia's are from northern Kashubia. We did not have time to visit these areas. We also did not have time to visit the namesake town of my grand uncle Piechowice.

Stanley changed from a computer contact in Poland to a Kashubian friend. I now know why Blanche Krbechek enjoys visiting each year. His hospitality was exceptional. We had relaxing dinners and evenings, enjoying the surrounds at his Castle Zaborski. We had great breakfast and dinner conversations about life, travels, of our host Stanley and history of the Kashubia area.

For all of us who have the desire to explore our Kashubian roots, I highly recommend a visit to Castle Zaborski (Zamek Zaborski). For additional information, you all need to visit Stanley's website at [ZamekZaborski@yahoo.com](mailto:ZamekZaborski@yahoo.com)

Ron Kiedrowski can be reached at [kiedski@gmail.com](mailto:kiedski@gmail.com)

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### **Piaszno (Franzwalde)**

by Jarosław Ellwart  
(from Tourist Guide Kashubia)

Piaszno (Franzwalde) lies 3 km south of Tuchomie. In the 1990s an open-air museum, art gallery and sculpture park were set up there on the private premises of Andrzej Piwarski and Barbara Ur-Piwerska. Apart from Rekowo, the small settlement of Piaszno is the highest situated village in the Bytów lands. Just less than 2 km to the south-east is the height of Siemierzycka Góra, which stands at 252 m above sea level. In Piaszno itself, the highest point is Góra Lemana to the south of the village. On the very road that leads to it, a beautiful view of the Tuchomie area opens out. The real revelation, however, is the panorama from the viewing tower. This huge wooden construction was built by the owner of the land, Klemens Leman. Slightly further on along the cycle track past his farm there is a stone circle and several burial mounds.