

PROJECT TO DISCOVER  
 SCHENECTADY **COUNTY'S** EASTERN EUROPEAN ROOTS  
 NEWSLETTER

January 2015 Vol. 2 No. 1

Happy New Year!

Our objective is to discover, document and digitally preserve genealogy, stories, and pictures of Schenectady County's Eastern European immigrants. We're on our way, but we need each of you to share family history, help pass the (electronic) word.

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We need your stories! The next deadline is April 1<sup>st</sup>. Future deadlines will be July 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>. To submit your family story, pictures, etc, e-mail Phyllis Zych Budka: [abudka@nycap.rr.com](mailto:abudka@nycap.rr.com) Without your stories, there can be no newsletter.

To be added to the newsletter e-mail list, contact Phyllis.

## Our Polish Heritage: A Tree That Blossoms We're On the Internet!

Thanks to Janice Thompson, Producer and Host of "The Janice Thompson Show," and the Schenectady Access Cable Council, ([www.schenectadyaccess.org](http://www.schenectadyaccess.org)), on September 18, 7 members of our Project community were filmed sharing information and memories of our Polish heritage. To view the results of our efforts, Google: polish heritage a tree that blossoms.

You can see the programs at any time on YouTube:

### Our Polish Heritage: A Tree That Blossoms - Part ... - YouTube



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-Scg-cOZhA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-Scg-cOZhA)

6 days ago - Uploaded by Schenectady Access Cable Council

Our Polish Heritage: A Tree That Blossoms - Part 2 - Janice Thompson Show, The. Schenectady Access Cable ...

### Our Polish Heritage: A Tree That Blossoms - Part ... - YouTube



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4cW\\_7IYE7M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4cW_7IYE7M)

7 days ago - Uploaded by Schenectady Access Cable Council

Our Polish Heritage: A Tree That Blossoms - Part 1 - Janice Thompson Show, The. Schenectady Access Cable ...

Looking for descendants of the Thomas and Margaret Pławenski family of Schenectady/Saratoga Counties. They immigrated to Schenectady with my Great Grandparents, the Glinieckis, in 1889 from Kluczewo, Poland. Their children on the ship's manifest were Michena 11 yrs., Stan 9 yrs., Art 3yrs, and Frances 9months. Would like to compare stories of their trip to Schenectady through the ports of Castle Garden, NY and Boston. Please Email [cmc11@prodigy.net](mailto:cmc11@prodigy.net)

Carole (Gliniecki-Tys) Groncki-McCarthy

The following pages contain small family histories sent in response to our request for photos of significant family events. Kudos to John Urbanski, Craig Siulinski and Marjorie Norris Brophy for sharing their families with us! John's album contains many group pictures with many unidentified people. If YOU, Reader, recognize others in these photos, please contact John Urbanski at [jaurbanski@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jaurbanski@nycap.rr.com)

Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Group Photos that Include the Off-Spring of Polish Immigrant  
Parents: John and Stanislawa Urbanski

**By John Urbanski**

John Urbanski and Stanislawa Wozniak came to the US in the mid-1880s and were married in St. Joseph's Church, Schenectady, in 1886. They had 12 children between 1888 and 1911. The following group photos include five of their adult off-spring. The earliest photo was taken in 1908 and includes the oldest daughters (Katherine and Maryanne) and the last was taken in 1951 at the wedding of their youngest son ( and my Father) Edmund.



Fig. 1 St. Mary's / Polish Youth Group Outing. Photo back labeled "Hoff's Farm 5/31/1908". Daughter Katherine Urbanski sitting 2<sup>nd</sup> from right (with hat, 2<sup>nd</sup> row from back) and daughter Maryanne Urbanski sitting in front of Katherine (with dark top)

If can identify others in these photos, please contact John Urbanski at [jaurbanski@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jaurbanski@nycap.rr.com)

Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Group Photos that Include the Off-Spring of Polish Immigrant  
Parents: John and Stanislaw Urbanski

By John Urbanski



Fig. 2 St. Mary's / Polish Youth Group Outing c1909. Daughter Maryanne Urbanski (1890-1909) standing 3<sup>rd</sup> from right.



Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Group Photos that Include the Off-Spring of Polish Immigrant  
Parents: John and Stanislaw Urbanski

**By John Urbanski**



Fig. 3 Maryanne Urbanski (1890-1909) (front row, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left) class picture St Mary's  
c1908

Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Group Photos that Include the Off-Spring of Polish Immigrant  
Parents: John and Stanislaw Urbanski

**By John Urbanski**



Fig. 4 Wedding of oldest daughter, Katherine Urbanski (1888-1934) and Andrew Malewicz(1881-1964), on 5/28/1910

Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Group Photos that Include the Off-Spring of Polish Immigrant  
Parents: John and Stanislawa Urbanski

**By John Urbanski**



Fig. 5 Wedding of oldest son, Stephen Urbanski (1891-1973) and Elizabeth Nejman, on September 9, 1918.



Fig. 6 GE Quarter Century Group 4/21/1919. Wire and Cable Department, John Urbanski (1866-1941) 3<sup>rd</sup> row far right.

Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Group Photos that Include the Off-Spring of Polish Immigrant  
Parents: John and Stanislawa Urbanski

**By John Urbanski**



Fig. 7 Daughter Helen Urbanski (1901-1983) 2nd from left with John Sobieski (left) and his 1924 Buick Touring Car



Fig. 8 Daughter Helen Urbanski (1901-1983) engagement to John Sobieski, 1926



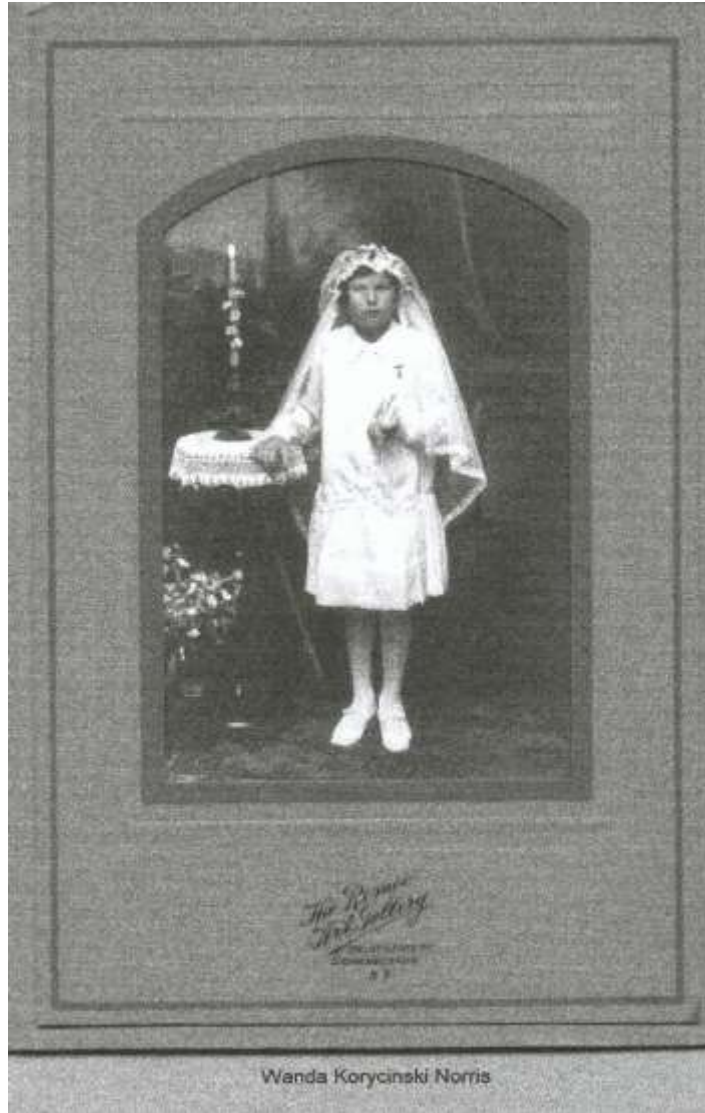
Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Group Photos that Include the Off-Spring of Polish Immigrant  
Parents: John and Stanislawa Urbanski

**By John Urbanski**



Fig. 9 Wedding of Youngest Son, Edmund (1911-2004), and Angeline Urbanski (1925-1992) on 5/20/1951. Mother of the Groom Stanislawa Urbanski (1866-1961) on left and Mother of the Bride Josephine Borini (1905-1995)

**Wanda Korycinska Norris  
By Marjorie Norris Brophy**



First Holy Communion Date – about 1927

## The Szulinskis of Schenectady Part 2: Discovering the Ancestral Villages By Craig Siulinski

In Part 1: "Finding a Lost Great Uncle" (Sept. 2013 Vol. 1 No. 4), the highlight of a research trip to Schenectady in 2013 came from meeting Jacki and Stephanie, my two lost second cousins and granddaughters of my great uncle, Walter M. Szulinski. I was excited to learn that they were both interested to know more about our mutual great grandparents, and one of them had a keen interest in researching genealogy herself.



Former residence of Walter and Anna Szulinski at 2989 St. Michael's Lane

The primary goal of my trip was to discover the ancestral villages of my Polish great grandparents. The searching involved lots of leg work, including visits to churches, cemeteries, former residences and city government offices. As mentioned in Part 1, the death records of my great grandparents obtained from the city hall did not provide the names of their ancestral villages. This fact caused me to visit one more parish office that hot summer weekend before driving back to Massachusetts. Ultimately, this visit tipped the balance between a limited finding and an exciting discovery. Before I share that discovery, a little background will show the full circle of a passionate genealogist.

### The Pretoria

ADD TO YOUR ELLIS ISLAND FILE

Associated Passenger	Date of Arrival
Szulinsky, Bronislaw	May 19, 1901



Source: Liberty Ellis Foundation

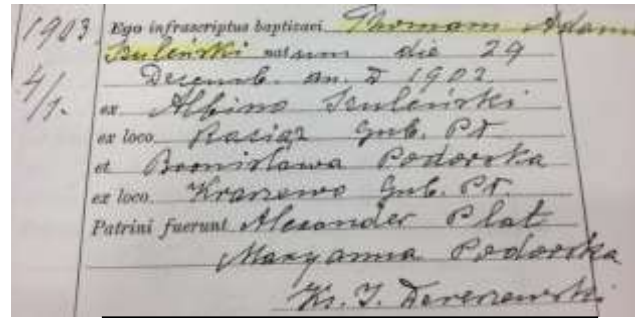
Genealogy searches often begin with either a census record or a ship's manifest; true in this case as well. Several years ago, through diligent research done at the *California Genealogical Society* in Oakland, CA, and with the help of my friend and genealogy colleague, Jerry McGovern, I learned of the fourteen day Atlantic crossing of my paternal great grandparents, Bronislaw and Albin Szulinski (later anglicized to Bessie and Albert). In Hamburg, Germany, they embarked on the *Pretoria* destined for a new life in New York on May 5, 1901. A little research on Polish history pointed to the likely reason for their trip. The country was involved in an extended period of poverty in the 1890s which caused a mass emigration. Bronislaw and Albin may have simply wanted to emigrate for a better life in America. Notice the one letter variation of the surnames (Szulinski and Siulinski). The name change appears to have been brought about by my grandfather, Adam T. Siulinski, before or at the time of his Maine marriage in 1928.

Obtaining the records of immigrant ancestors *after* emigration is a far less complicated endeavor than obtaining them generations later due to the obvious reasons of distance and language barriers. When I *am* able to make the ancestral trip to my family's Polish homeland, I will need to know exactly where to go. Thus, I never gave up my quest to

## The Szulinskis of Schenectady Part 2: Discovering the Ancestral Villages

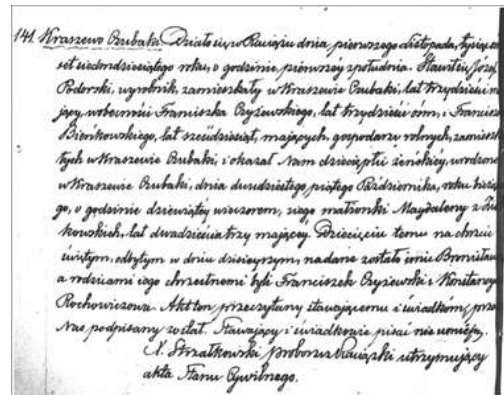
### By Craig Siulinski

discover where Bronislawa and Albin came from in Poland. Hearing my grandfather talk about his upbringing, I understood his family to have been devout Catholics, so I focused my research on the two Polish-connected Catholic churches in Schenectady: St. Adalbert's and St. Mary's. The parish office at St. Adalbert's provided the burial locations and causes of death for Albin and two of his sons, Walter and Joseph, but did not offer any information related to places of origin in Poland.



Adam Szulinski's 1903 Baptismal record

The other Catholic parish office I visited is where I struck gold in the form of a sacramental record. St. Mary's Church had since closed so it was a challenge to find the location of where the records were being stored. After being rerouted a few times from one office to another, I found the right place and the right person to talk to. Kudos to Debbie May at the Church of St. John the Evangelist who did the Szulinski lookups for me. A few months after my Schenectady visit, an envelope arrived in my mailbox containing a copy of the sacramental record of my grandfather's baptism (see image), and which happened to reveal the names of the ancestral villages of both Bronislawa and Albin!



Baptism record of Bronislawa (Podorski) Szulinski

Having discovered these Polish place names, I ordered birth and marriage microfilms from the Family History Library in Salt Lake City specific to the areas shown on the baptism. A few weeks later, I was searching through rolls of microfilm trying to find the birth and marriage records of Bronislawa and Albin. So far, I have found Bronislawa's birth record from 1870, and what a find that is; there is nothing more pleasing to a genealogist than finding original records.

All the time, travel and effort was well worth acquiring the knowledge of my immigrant ancestors' places of origin. I look forward to the day I will visit these towns in Poland. When I do make the trip, I expect to be as fortunate as I was with Jacki and Stephanie, to meet more Szulinski family members. Minimally though, I am certain to find more exciting discoveries!



Google map image of Kraszewo Czubaki, Polish ancestral homeland of Bronislawa Szulinski showing the close proximity to Warsaw. My grandfather had always said his parents were from Warsaw

Correction from Part 1: On page four, I stated that Bessie and Albert bought a small house on



## The Szulinskis of Schenectady Part 2: Discovering the Ancestral Villages

### By Craig Siulinski

St. Michael's Lane. I am not certain who bought the house, but Walter and his wife, Anna, lived there not Bessie and Albert. Thanks to Jacki for pointing this out.

To read more about my family, see the Siulinski blog link is found at <http://jackandpauline.blogspot.com>

### Great Uncle Joe's 78 rpm Records Phyllis Zych Budka

Several years ago, as my grandmother's home was being dismantled, I was asked if I wanted a box of Great Uncle Joe Gzys's 78rpm records from Babcia Korycinska's attic. As the oldest grandchild and reluctant family historian, I said Yes. The wooden box had lived in the attic for 50 plus years, was in fragile condition, and the records were moldy, yucky. The box spent a few more years on my porch.

Joseph Gzys, Babcia's brother, my great uncle, never married and lived down the street from us on Fifth Avenue in Mont Pleasant. He was born in Boply, the Russian partition, today's Lithuania, of ethnic Polish parents and came to Schenectady early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Back to the yucky records and fragile wooden box. On the inside box cover was a torn and barely legible handwritten list of record titles. I could decipher the words "Polski," "Russkie," and several English titles. I occasionally looked for someone to digitize 78 rpm records, almost despairing of ever finding him or her. At long last, I found Ian Primus!

Thanks to Ian's patience and skill, I can now listen to Uncle Joe's music on my computer, CD player, or wherever there's a capable digital device. Many of the 77 rescued songs are very familiar and a part of my growing up years (See Table 1). Thanks to Joe Thatcher, my daughter's father-in-law, whose skill and patience rescued the box and patched together the record list, I can see Uncle Joe's handwriting and now have the early 20<sup>th</sup> century equivalent of a blank CD. Thanks to Ian and Joe T, I feel a sense of satisfaction in preserving not only a piece of family history, but also part of our shared Polish heritage.

To have your old 78 rpm records digitized at \$5 per record, contact Ian Primus at [ian.primus518@gmail.com](mailto:ian.primus518@gmail.com)



**Table 1: A Few of the Digitized 78s**

Orkiestra S. Lewicza	Bajka	White Eagle
Orkiestra S. Lewicza	Maniu! Ach, Daze Buzi Raz (Maniu! Kiss Me Only Once)	White Eagle
Frank Wojnarowski	Hupaj, Siupaj	Dana
Frank Wojnarowski	Swiece Miesiac (The Moon is Shining)	Dana
Frank Wojnarowski	Goral	Dana
Frank Wojnarowski	Wolf, Wolf	Dana

A Tree That Blossoms – Additional Information  
By Bernice Izzo

After listening to our show, “A Tree That Blossoms,” I realized I needed to give you this information in writing. I know many of you want to research your family history and writing down all the stuff I spoke about would be mind boggling. So here it goes and I have some additional hints.

The first thing I would do is to go to the Schenectady County Public Library Web Site ([SCPL.org](http://SCPL.org)). Under research section, there is section about Genealogy. Among the lists posted there are lists from the Schenectady County Historical Society stating the Naturalization papers and folders of newspaper clips they have in their files. If you find your family listed, make a trip to the Historical Society to see the documents. The Schenectady County Historical Society is located at 32 Washington Ave. The documents are located in the Gremms-Doolittle Library at the back of the building. They have microfiche of the Naturalization papers which will give you lots of information about when your relatives came and where they come from. While you are there, make sure you look at the City directories to see where they lived in this area. My relatives lived a number of places before they moved to Pauling Street.

If the naturalization papers are not there, they may be located at the County Court House which is located at 612 State Street.

While you are in the neighborhood, make a stop at the Central branch of the Library. You can use Ancestry.com to look up, for instance, census information, passenger ship listing and social security death records. You can also use the microfilm of the Schenectady papers to look up obituaries, wedding announcements, etc.

If you are interested in getting copies of birth, death and wedding certificates, walk around the corner to City Hall (105 Jay Street) and visit the City Clerk’s office. These certificates will tell you a person’s parents, cause of death, where they were born etc. I have always found out one thing I did not know. So I feel it is worth it.

If you still want more information, these two sites I found very helpful , Fulton historical newspapers project which are scanned copies of many New York State newspapers at [www.fultonhistory.com](http://www.fultonhistory.com). I have found obituaries, legal notices and even some sports reports concerning my relatives. It gives you an idea of what they did once they were here.

The other web site is FEEFHS, the foundation of East European Family History Studies ([feefhs.org](http://feefhs.org)). It has links to all the countries in Eastern Europe. There is a lot of information about Poland and links to a number of data bases. The one which was the most helpful to me was the Poznan Project. It lists the weddings recorded in the Poznan area. The first time I looked, I found my great grandfather and grandmother’s Church marriage record. The second time I looked, I found the civil records for my uncle and my great grandparents. This gave me the names of their parents ( my great great

grandparents.) The third time I looked, I found my great great grandparents' church record. What I am trying to say is, keep checking because they keep adding to it. By the way, Carole McCarthy and I found out that we are related!

There are also sites like Root-web, family history etc. These take you just so far before you run into Ancestry.com and they ask you for money. My suggestion is that you take the two weeks for free. If you are really good, you can do a whole lot in two weeks. Even if you decide to buy it, pay for the smallest amount you can. You will run out of information you can look up. I hope people who are interested try to do their family history. It is fun, really.

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**Schenectady County Historical Society Exhibit Will Feature Schenectady's Immigrant Heritage – Including OURS! – Opens January 10th**

Humans are always on the move. We seek new opportunities and face challenges as we adapt to changes in the world around us. For thousands of immigrants, Schenectady County offered its own opportunities and challenges. *Boomtown: Immigration, Technology, and Urban Schenectady* explores why people immigrate, and the unprecedented impact of immigration and technology on urban Schenectady." Opens January 10<sup>th</sup>!



Please visit the exhibit and let the folks at the SCHS know that you are part of "The Project to Discover Schenectady County's Eastern European Roots!"

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**The Polish Genealogy Source**

<http://polishroots.com>

GenDobry, the e-mail newsletter of PolishRoots  
Contents of the Dec. 31, 2014 Issue:  
Sending Payment to the State Archives  
Letters to the Editor  
PolishOrigins Kingdom of Poland Tour  
Web Cams in Poland  
Upcoming Events  
More Useful Web Addresses  
You May Reprint Articles



Take a look! There's a long list of past GenDobry issues for download – a treasure chest of useful information.