The Kasperowicz Family History

By

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A GUIDE TO PRONOUNCIATION

ENGLISH OR ANGLICIZED	AUTHENTIC POLISH
Agatha or Aggie	Agata or Adzia
Anna	Anna or Jinja
Arkady	Arkadjusz
Belarus	Bialoru
borovik	borowik
Bruno	Bronislaw Buds
Budslav	law
Commonwealth	Rzeczpospolita
Dolhinovo	Dolhinovo
Dubashinski	Dubaszynski
Francis	Franciszek
Frances	Franciszka
Jadviga (Hedwig)	Jadwiga or Jadzia
John	Jan (yahn)
Joseph	Jozef (youzef)
Kasperovich	Kasperowicz
Krivichi (Belarusian)	Krzywicze
kulak (literally fist in Russian)	
Lithuania	Litwa (Litva)
Mleczko (Mlechko)	Mleczko
Onoshki	Onoszki
Parafyanovo	Parafjanowo
Poland	Polska
Sielicki (Syelitski)	Sielicki
Sloboda	Sloboda
Sosnovshchina (Russian)	
Sosnovshchizna	Sosnowszczyzna
Vilejka (Vileyka)	Wilejka
Vilno	Wilno
Vilnius (Lithuanian)	
Vilenshchizna	Wilenszczyzna
Warsaw	Warszawa (Varshava)

THE JOZEF AND ANNA KASPEROWICZ FAMILY CHRONOLOGY

Date Of Birth	Date of Death	Date of Event	Explanation
1870	1948		Jozef Kasperowicz Sr. Onoshki, Russia
1872	1952		Anna(Zyzniewski)Kasperowicz - Dolhinov Russia
		1892	Jozef and Anna married - Dolhinovo
1893			First child did not survive.
Jan.1, 1894	May 16, 1974		Joseph Anthony Kasperowicz Jr. Onoshki Russia
Feb.22, 1898	Apr.17, 1990		Barbara Kasperowicz - Onoshki, Russia
		1901 - 1902	Jozef Sr. emigrated to America.
Oct.15, 1902	Feb. 25, 1983		Genevieve(Ciurlik)Kasperowicz - Onoshki,Russia
		1903	Anna and infant Genevieve visit Jozef in America
		1903 - 1904	All return to Russia
1904	1945		Frank Kasperowicz - Onoshki, Russia
1905	July 1, 1989		John Kasperowicz
		1905 - 1907	The Kasperowicz family moved from Onoshki to Sosnovschina.
		1908	Jozef Sr, emigrated to U.S. a second time.
lug.17, 1908	1977		Mary Kasperowicz(Czechowicz) Sosnov-sehchina, Russia
		Sep.13,1910	Joseph Kasperowicz Jr. emigrated to the U.S.
		1910	Barbara Kasperowicz emigrated to U.S.
		1911 - 1912	Jozef Sr. returned to Russia.
Tan.20, 1913			Agatha Kasperowicz (Sturycz) Sosnovshchina, Russia
Tan.20, 1913	June 26,1972		Anna (Kasperowicz)Kozak - Sosnovsh-china, Russia
		Aug.14,1913	Barbara Kasperowicz entered Notre Dame Convent (Sister M. Alba).
		June 6,1930	Joseph Kasperowicz Jr. ordained to priesthood.
		Oct. 8,1937	Agatha Kasperowicz emigrated to U.S.
		May 1, 1943	Agatha Kasperowicz and Stanley Sturycz married in Cudahy, Wis.

To the Memory of Jozef and Anna (Zyzniewski) Kasperowicz

1870 - 1948 1872 - 1952

The Parents of My Spouse
Agatha Elizabeth (Kasperowicz) Sturycz

A Personal Note

The 20th century has all but slipped away since Aggie's and my parents set foot on American soil. As a first generation American, the role of a connecting link to our European forebears has become increasingly a part of my consciousness, especially during these latter years.

A confluence of events has brought the subject of ancestral origins into sharper focus, beginning with a journey to the Soviet Union in the spring of 1983. The subsequent meeting with relatives, of whom I had been barely aware, resulted in a continuing correspondence ever since. Also the close relationship with Aggie's immigrant cousins, the Mleczko's, added yet another dimension, that of hearing first-hand accounts of their experiences in pre-World War II Poland and under the Soviets.

Then as late as 1996, my interest in ancestral history received a notable boost, when by pure chance several scholarly works on eastern Poland became available to me. Their author. Franciszek Sielicki, is a native of the same region as that of our parents. His knowledgeable discourse on the region had cast for me a new light on our parental origins.

The resulting insights obtained from the above mentioned sources and others, seemed worthwhile to be noted and passed on. Acquiring knowledge about our forebears and of the tenor of their era is laudable for its own sake, but one could also argue that a generation that knows nothing of its predecessors,

is less equipped psychologically and perhaps spiritually to understand its own destiny. It seems reasonable to conclude that a generation connected to its ancestors through knowledge of their history, renders itself a service.

The ensuing account, though it deals mainly with Aggie's family, is also the story of my parents' origins, differing only in the fact that Aggie's parents returned to Russia. It's remarkable that both of our parents' ancestors lived within **a few miles of** each other. Though my parents never met Aggie's parents, they were good friends with their son, Rev Joseph Kasperowicz who came to be addressed as Fr, Joe within the family.

Attempting something of this sort reveals from the start one's failure to have been at least more curious instead of oblivious to the myriad of questions one ought to have asked; when people who had the answers were alive and would have gladly shed light on matters that must now be speculated about.

The topic of Josef's and Anna's sojourn in America, though known to me by hearsay since childhood, never was discussed by Aggie and her brother. Given the troubled times before and after WW II, and the regretted lack of inquisitiveness on my part, much valued knowledge of that segment of Aggie's family history is forever lost. In the mid-nineties however, we began speculating on the subject. Soon through clues and logic, we drew the conclusion that her parents were in Kenosha during some part of 1903 and 1904. After abandoning coal mine work, they came to Kenosha, a place known to them back in Dolhinov. Guided by an old city map and the photo's logo, we visited the location on 59th street and 6th avenue. Fortunately for us they felt a need to make a record of their fleeting presence in Kenosha.

THE KASPEROWICZ FAMILY. It was not my good fortune to ever meet Aggie's father Josef Sr. or her mother Anna, or sister Genevieve who died two months before we arrived on our visit to the Soviet Union, nor brother Frank, sister Mary or Aggie's twin sister Anna. Her brother Rev. Joseph knew me in my infancy, later I met him in 1924 and again in 1930 after his ordination to the priesthood. Her oldest sister Barbara (Sister M. Alba) who joined the Order of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, I met for the first time in 1940. During our visit to the Soviet Union in 1983, I met her brother John, who at 78 years of age showed signs of a heart condition. He died on July 1, 1989, leaving Aggie as the sole survivor of the Josef and Anna Kasperowicz family.

THE LAND OF OUR FOREBEARS. The region that Aggie's and my parents claimed as their homeland is presently in the Republic of Belarus. Due however to the region's more than 600 years of continuous Polish culture, our heritage is both, Polish and Catholic.

THE TOWNS OF DOLHINOVO, KRIVICHI AND BUDSLAV. That which characterizes the region in a special way are three towns: Dolhinovo the most ancient and of most probable Lithuanian origin; Krivichi founded in the 12th century by Krivichans, a tribe of East Slays who previously had established the principality of Polotsk, and Budslav, settled by Polish Bernardine monks in the early 1500's. Because of their Lithuanian, East Slav and Polish origins, the towns and their immediate and surrounding territory, serve as a microcosm of what the natives refer to as "Vilenshchizna"(Land oz.' the Province of Vilno). It is within the close proximity of these three towns that Aggie's and my parents lived. A map of the region reveals the curious if accidental locations of the towns as points of a triangle app. 15 km, apart and generally located 140 km. east of Vilno (Vilnius) and 90 km. north of Minsk.

Jozef and Anna Kasperowicz, the parents of Agatha (Kasperowicz) Sturycz, photographed in the Kenosha studio of Harry S. Brown on Main & South Sts. Except for this photograph, we would have no knowledge of their residing in Kenosha. Our failure to have made inquiries of Aggie's brother, Rev. Joseph and of her uncle Ignace Zyzniewski during their lifetime, denied us precious details about her father's first sojourn in America as a coal miner, as well as her mother's coming to the U.S., presumably to a mining town in Pennsylvania and of their subsequent decision to come to Kenosha.

A Glance at early history of the LAND 02 OUR FORBEARS

Once early in the 14th century, Gedymin (Gedyminas) (1275-1341), the Grand Duke of Lithuania, while hunting for bison, accompanied by a large entourage, found himself in a primeval wilderness near the confluence of the Vilia and Vilenka rivers; a site that lent itself geographically and topographically to the requirements of a fortified city. Of note is the fact that the river Vilia's source lies in a generally eastward direction, a distance of at least 150 km., and reaching into the region from which our parents and their foe-bears originate.

Undoubtedly, the rising of the city of Vilnius(Vilno.in Polish) out of a wilderness constituted a great event in the history of Lithuania, but an even more decisive turning point occurred when the grandson of Gedymin, Grand Duke Jagiello(Jogaila)(1351-1434) married Jadwiga (1374-1399) Queen of Poland in 1386, thus joining the two countries in a dynastic union for the next 186 years, followed by another 226 years as partners in a Commonwealth. The union effected Lithuania's emergence out of idolatry, the last of European nations to accept Christianity.

Centuries before 1000A.D., East Slays and the indigenous Baltic people, the Lithuanians, coexisted as neighbors rather amicably. At first Lithuanians came under Slav domination, but by the 13th century, gained ascendency over the East Slays, the former Kievan Rus. In the process however, Lithuanians were assimilated into the higher culture of the Rus and by the 16th century had become integrated into an evolved Byelorussian ethnic identity, as distinguished from Ukrainian.

Since the joining of Poland and Lithuania in 1386, Polish influence spread to the populace of the Vilno region, as evidenced by the acceptance of the Polish language and the Catholic faith.

Nevertheless, the Lithuanian and Byelorussian cultures continued to endure. Due to war and Soviet Russian hegemony from 1939 to 1991, the use of the Polish language has for the first time in 600 years, gone into decline. Only the cousins of our first generation Americans living in Belarus are still in command of spoken and written Polish. Since 1991, the Vilno region has become part of the independent republics of Lithuania and Belarus.

The Vilno region's ethnic and religious diversity includes groups of Islamic Tartars whose progenitors were invited by Grand Duke Vi-told to settle in the Lithuanian Grand Duchy in recognition of military service rendered. In the 13th century their ancestors participated in the Mongol invasion of the Kievan Rus, Poland and Hungary, following which, Moscovy was held in vassalage by the Mongols until 1452.

During the 15th and 16th centuries the Jewish population increased

- by an influx of Jewish tradesmen and merchants. Their relations with other groups remained harmonious and stable until the latter part of the 19th century, when Jews began to be singled out for repression. Persecution was nothing new to the Jews; their history in Europe demonstrates their ability to survive but nothing prepared them for what awaited them in the twentieth century.

Except for an urban and educated class, the bulk of the population in the Vilno region lived in villages, engaged in subsistence farming as have our forebears from time immemorial and through the several centuries of serfdom. Since its abolition in 1861, the former serfs continued to extract an existence from small land holdings always in the hope of acquiring a few more hectares. With the dawn of the 20th century, the peasant population of the Vilno region as did many - others in eastern Europe, looked to America and emigration for a solution. One such

was Aggie's father, Jozef Kasperowicz, who twice worked in the United States and returned to buy land. The majority came to America and settled permanently as did our parents, Michael Sturycz and Sofia Lagutko. They left behind them a homeland and a thousand-year-old culture, chiefly for economic improvement.

THE REGION'S EARLY HISTORY IN BRIEF. Its earliest inhabitants were Baltic tribes and East Slays. By the mid-13th century, the Baits, facing annihilation by the German Order of Teutonic Knights, coalesced and became the dominant power in the region, to be known as the Lithuanian Grand Duchy. Its control extended over the territory of the former Kievan Rus,(circa 800 to 1150 A,D.), or what is today Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and western Russia. The conquering Lithuanians were however a minority governing a mostly autonomous Slav people. Not having a written form of their own language, the Lithuanians adopted the idiom of the East Slays, a form of Ruthenian as the official language of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy. It was not unnatural for them to do so, since in the preceding centuries under the hegemony of the Kievan Rus, Lithuanians had been assimilating the higher Slav culture and language as well.

THE POLISH - LITHUANIAN COEXISTENCE. To counter a renewed threat from the Teutonic Knights in the west and Moscovite incursion from the east, the Lithuanians sought a dynastic alliance with Poland. In 1386, the Polish Queen Jadwig4 married the Grand Duke Jagiello on condition that he and his nation convert to Christianity of the Roman Catholic rite. The Vilno region being central to the Lithuanian Grand Duchy, our own heritage of the Catholic faith and of Polish culture can be traced back to that moment in history.

In the course of the next 183 years it became apparent to the Grand Duchy that holding its borders intact would require an even closer union with Poland. In the Union of Lublin of 1569, the Lithuanian Grand Duchy joined with Poland in establishing the First Polish Commonwealth.

Author's footnote: It is not certain whether the bison of antiquity (European bison) is the same as existed in the 14th century, nevertheless the bison mentioned in the legend, had to be extraordinary, since as records would indicate, Gedymin ordered his horns to be inlaid with gold and instead of a cup, used them at banquets; so highly valued was the relic in the princely household that his nephew, Duke Vitold considered it a worthy gift when he offered it to Emperor Sigismund as a memorial of the gathering of monarchs and attended by the emperor in the city of Sluck (Slutsk) (in today's Belarus).

On the subject of the Ostra Brama(East Gate), the shrine of Our Lady of Mercy in **the** City of Vilnius in Lithuania.

To the Polish and Lithuanian inhabitants of the Vilno Region, the Our Lady of Mercy shrine has always been an important part of their legacy. An authentic version of the shrine's history has yet to be looked into; the matter became intriguing only since coming upon the legend on the founding of Vilnius, in recent years (1990's). Pictures of the Our Lady of Mercy icon that I had seen in early childhood caused me to wonder about the symbolic interpretation of what appeared to be the moon at the base of the image. In 1994 brother Joe brought back from his visit to Vilno and the shrine actual photographs which reveal a pair of horns mounted on a free standing base at the foot of the icon. Are these the horns of the legend? Though it cannot be said for certain, yet there is an inclination to believe, pending further research, that an historically important national relic of Lithuania and of the Vilno region in particular, would have found its way to as fitting a place of honor as at the foot of an icon honoring Our Lady of Mercy and in a city founded by the great Lithuanian ruler, Gedymin. Whereas the horns may remind the populace of an idolatrous past, the icon serves to recall Lithuania's conversion to Christianity.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? The terms White Russia, Byelorussia and other variations have been replaced by a name closer to its ethnic meaning, that of Belarus, to coincide with its declaration of independence.

Bela, pronounced "Byela", denotes "white". Characteristic qualities of the people or even its native landscape might have suggested the name, but its purpose is mainly to differentiate Belarusians from Ukrainians and other sub groups of Ruthenian origin. The former reference to Russia is replaced by "rus", and seems to imply, short of an official explanation, a return to the historical nuance of the name "Rus", as in Kievan Rus, who in fact were the precursors of Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians.

POLAND'S DISAPPEARANCE FROM THE MAP OF EUROPE. When the last Polish Jagiellon Sigismund II Augustus, 1548-72 died without an heir, Polish noblemen were determined to henceforth elect their monarchs, intent as they were in keeping their king on a short leash.

Over the next two centuries the Polish Sejm (Saym) or parliament, consisting exclusively of Polish noblemen, failed for various less than honorable reasons to provide for a strong and unified national defense; whereas Poland's neighboring powers, Russia, Prussia and Austria were led by militaristic minded despots' intent on acquiring Polish territory. Unable to stem aggression, Poland underwent three partitions, in 1772,1793 and the last in 1795 eliminated Poland from Europe's map. Eastern Poland, the land of our forebears found itself under Russian domination for the next 123 years.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE DOLHINOV - KRIVICHI - BUDSLAV REGION

(Otherwise referred to as Vilenshchizna (Wilenszczyzna)
(Land of Vilno)

Prior to 1386 was Dart of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy.

From 1386 to 1569 the Poland - Lithuania dynastic union.

" 1569 to 1795 the First Polish Commonwealth.

" 1795 to 1918 the Russian Empire.

" 1918 to 1939 the Second Polish Commonwealth.
(Rzeczpospolita)

" Sep. 17, 1939 to June 22, 1941, occupied by Soviet Union.

" June 22, 1941 to July 26, 1944, " " Germany.

" July 26, 1944 to Aug. 25, 1991, annexed to the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

" Aug. 25, 1991 and currently, is part of the Republic of Belarus.

SWS 7/19/98

SERFDOM IN THE POLISH COMMONWEALTH AND IN RUSSIA. During the 16th century, serfdom became even more entrenched in Poland when growing grain for export to western Europe became highly profitable for magnates of large estates. During the same century the peasants of Russia were enserfed in a system dictated by military expediency. All serfs were bound to the land they tilled, i.e. were not allowed to seek other opportunities at the risk of cruel punishment. For the land, serfs tilled and lived on, they paid the landlord a share of their crops and were obligated to furnish a set amount of free labor to the manor. The serfs seldom saw themselves as equitably treated. A lingering sense of injustice carried over into 20th century socialistic ideology, that played itself out in future revolutionary politics. Serfdom ended· in 1861, just nine years prior to the birth of Jozef Kas-perowicz Sr.

MISGUIDED LAND REFORM. After three centuries of serfdom the emancipated serfs believed they were entitled to more land than the ensuing land reform assigned to them. From "Three Who Made A Revolution" by Bertram D. Wolfe: "Each communal village had re-ceived the entire area of land allotted to its members as a com-munal holding under a system of collective responsibility for the redemptive payments of all its members:"

The system failed to inspire a sense of ownership that would have encouraged improvement of the land, nor was it conducive to efficient farming. Nevertheless, the communal approach continued into the 20th century. But from 1907 to 1914, Russia did embark on a true land reform that would have established proprietorship of farmsteads on the western model. Unfortunately for the future of Russia, World War I prevented the completion of the program.

It was during this period prior to *WW* I that Jozef embarked on his own solution to land reform. It entailed taking advantage of an unprecedented opportunity that emigration to America had to of-fer, that of acquiring capital with which to establish himself on his own farmstead.

EMIGRATION, THE KEY TO CHANGE. Had there not been a war, it still would have taken another decade or more before Russia's agricultural system would have changed to individual farms. In the meantime, peasant farmers continued to struggle on small tracts of land, barely if at all able to produce a surplus. Without industries, employment was limited to farm labor at ridiculously low wages. The borderline self-sufficiency of peasant farmers approached critical limits.

Then beginning about 1890, the Vilno region came alive when word began to spread about emigration to America. Poles had been emigrating since the mid-1800's from territories under Prussian and Austrian occupation. Now finally, Poles from Russian occupied Poland were about to emigrate in large numbers.

Steamship companies interested in continuing a steady flow of immigrants to America, recruited agents from among the educated class, such as Jewish innkeepers, postmasters, administrative clerks of villages and towns, school teachers, even members of the clergy, to sell steamship fare on the spot. They made themselves very available and with stories of getting rich in America encouraged prospective emigrants by offering them advice and information.

One reliable source cites the cost of a journey to America as 200 rubles or $;100, ;50 of which was needed to show immigration authorities before being released from the port of entry in lieu of train fare to their destination. Many received "prepaid" from relatives already abroad. Others borrowed from relatives and friends or even from loan sharks at high interest rates, unhesitatingly encumbering property of relatives as collateral.

To the young and unfettered, emigration posed an exciting and promising alternative. Young men approaching military draft age needed no better motive to leave the country. To most it was an economic necessity to seek opportunity elsewhere. To some, however, emigration served as a means to obtain capital, to return and to buy the land they dreamed of having. They imagined no better way of life, Apparently Josef thought along these lines.

Jozef and Anna elope. By 1890, Jozef at 20 years of age might very well have contemplated emigration, but from what we, know, it was more than a decade later that Jozef set out for America. The question arises, why not sooner than later. One plausible reason is suggested in the light of what Aggie's mother confided to her on the circumstances of her marriage.

As Aggie remembered, her mother at about 18 years of age learned that a suitor was about to propose marriage to her, approached the whole notion by ingratiating himself to his prospective father-in-law by sharing with libations brought along for the purpose. When Anna's father began arguing the suitor's cause, she realized that nothing short of drastic action would save her from an undesired marriage. She saw enough of intemperance to resolve never to marry anyone who did not share her disdain for drunkenness.

In a society such as theirs, Anna's friendship with Jozef would hardly have gone unnoticed by her father. Jozef's diminutive stature probably did not measure up to his choice of a son-in-law. But Anna knew her mind and decided to counter her father's misplaced authority by removing herself from his jurisdiction. One night when the Zyzniewski household had been safely asleep, Anna wisely avoiding unbarring the only door, exited through a window in her section of the house. There Jozef as co-conspirator stood by ready to help her extricate herself to the outside. We don't know the season, or whether they walked or rode to Jozef's village of Onoshki. They arranged to be married at their parish church in Dolhinovo, probably in 1892. We can only surmise that Anna received the traditional parental blessing following a reconciliation with her father. Her mother, very likely was part of the conspiracy.

It was not unusual for a bride to live under the same roof of the bridegroom's parents. Nor was it odd for the bride to play a subservient role in the household. Nevertheless, the arrangement benefited both parties. The newlyweds needed shelter to begin a a new cycle in their lives, while the parents depended on the support of their son in their declining years.

We don't know how many brothers and sisters of Jozef still lived in the same dwelling. Living in close quarters fit the normal pattern in their world of minimal requirements. In that same humble abode Jozef and Anna began raising a family. Their first born child did not survive. Born to them in 1894 was a son Joseph Anthony, followed by Barbara in 1898.

BOUND FOR AMERICA. At age 32, Jozef had saved and or borrowed the necessary 200 or so rubles, consulted a readily available steamship ticket agent and had issued to him ship and train fare to America. The first leg of the journey necessitated a horse and wagon conveyance that also accommodated a large traveler's trunk of the type then in vogue, without which no one travelled abroad. Perhaps some relative chauffeured him the 20 or so kilometers from the village of Onoshki to the rail station at Krivichi. From there the shortest land route would lead to the port of Hamburg or one of the other ports of Germany. My mother travelled to Vilno and to the port of Libau in today's Latvia, where she boarded the S.S. Czar of the Russian-American Line. My father, being liable to serve in the Russian army could not obtain a passport, chose a clandestine border crossing across the Russian-Austrian border and sailed out of Rotterdam. Agents for steamship companies facilitated illegal boundary crossings by giving emigrants advice as long as they had the price of a ship and train fare once they got across the border. The actual crossing of the Russian-Austrian border could involve being fired upon by the Russians.

We have information that when Jozef left Russia, presumably in spring of 1902, Anna was expecting a third child, who would be born in her father's absence and named Genevieve. We also know that Jozef found work as a coal miner, but strongly doubt that he deliberately chose that line of work.

It's been noted that Poles were profiled as coal miners by American immigration officials. The demand for coal ever on the increase made mining companies the more eager to hire cheap labor.

Immigration officials became instrumental to a significant degree in directing Polish peasants to mining towns. The fact that coal mining paid almost twice the factory wage of perhaps $2.50 per day as compared $1.00 or $1.35 per day in a factory, was obviously a great incentive. During the time frame between 1898 to 1916 a work week constituted 60 hours. That alone is indicative of the meaning of hard work. There is reason to believe that Jozef's first destination was Kenosha but was sidetracked when coal mining was suggested.

Jozef found plenty of company with fellow countrymen who had been similarly introduced into the coal fields. In fact, Polish communities of coal miners arose all over Pennsylvania. Wherever Poles settled; they organized parish schools and churches. Jozef being a very religious person, found that being in America did not deny him the solace of attending a Sunday Polish high Mass that resembled the liturgy in his own home church in Dolhinovo.

ANNA DECIDES TO SEE FOR HERSELF. It could have been the spring of 1903. Jozef had been in America for just over a year. What it was that made it urgent, or so it seems, for Anna to join her husband is unclear or even if Jozef expected her. But Anna with the dare she exhibited when confronted with an unwanted marriage, sought out an agent, and with money sent by her husband, she bought rail and ship's passage. Having arranged for Joseph age 9 and Barbara age 5 to be cared for by a relative, she retraced her husband’s journey to America.

Depending on how long she had to wait in port, plus the travel time by rail and ship, it would have added up to more than two weeks of caring for an infant out of a suitcase. Yet she was not an exception, there were many others in similar circumstances, which proved the adage that misery loves company. They all had before them the ordeal of anxiety during quarantine aboard ship prior to disembarking followed by the tumultuous funneling past doctors searching for physical and mental defects.

Other officials were making sure that potentially indigent persons or anarchists were not slipping through. The New York stage for all this activity went by the misnomer, "Castle Garden", actually a giant hall for processing immigrants. Not every immigrant came through New York and the "Castle Garden," But for those who did, it remained etched in their memories. My mother mentioned " Kaselgardya" often, but only when talk began of restoring this famous gateway to America did I learn its true spelling.

Of the time that Anna spent with Jozef in a mining town, we know only what she related to Aggie. She told of a mine accident that brought grieving women to hold a vigil at the mine entrance from which they finally brought out dead and injured miners. Profoundly disturbed by the tragedy, she urged Jozef to quit coal mining and move to Kenosha. They were living out of their trunks, moving only required the transfer of their baggage to the rail station, no doubt by hiring a horse and wagon.

Very recently we discovered that in fact they did come to Kenosha. An original photograph that had been tucked away amidst Aggie's personal effects finally surfaced. The photograph's logo identifies the studio of Harry S. Brown, located on Main and South Streets (6th Ave. and 59th St.) in Kenosha. It’s the first piece of positive evidence that they both resided for a short time in Kenosha and before they returned to Russia in 1903 or 1904.

It is quite likely that Jozef and Anna knew about Kenosha before either of them left Russia. Awareness of Kenosha's reputation as a bustling industrial town with plenty of job opportunities had to have spread in the Dolhinovo area. My father's uncle, Victor Haikowicz, born in 1859 was an early immigrant to Kenosha and the reason why my father joined him here is one example. The other logical explanation why so many from the Vilno region chose the Midwest could again point to ship owners who were in a position to know of the rapid expansion of Midwest industry. Hence it was in their interest to exploit an untapped supply of passengers from eastern Europe.

A POLISH CHURCH IN KENOSHA. The Polish community decided they needed a church of their own. By 1902 they had organized a congregation and had a church built on a donated lot next to the Chicago and Northwestern railroad, situated on the north edge of town. on Division St., also Burlington Road, today's Washington Rd. They named it after a Polish prince and saint, St. Casimir. At this writing it is the last year to carry that name. If it survives the changeover it will be called St. Elizabeth. Undoubtedly, Jozef and Anna attended Sunday Mass there as Jozef would later with son and daughter between 1910 and 1912.

KENOSHA, A TOWN OF INDUSTRY. The population of Kenosha in 1910 had doubled since 1900 to 21,121 residents. The leading manufacturers were, Simmons Mfg. - mattresses and beds, Allen Sons Tannery leather harnesses, T.B. Jeffries - automobiles, and eight others produced such wares as (In order of number employed); underwear, brass products, wagons, cigars, springs, and plumbing supplies. Kenosha in 1910 was all of 75 years in existence. Factory workers averaged from 6 to 10 dollars a week, board and room cost a single person 4 dollars per week. Saving 200 dollars in a year would be possible only at above average wages, that is if only food and rent were the only expenses.

TO STAY OR RETURN? In which of the above mentioned industries did Jozef work, we have only logic to rely on. I often heard, my mother remark, "One could always get a job at the tannery." The tanning of leather implies a work environment that in some of its aspects could be downright repugnant. But Jozef faced a problem of supporting a family of three, sending something to cover the needs of Joseph and Barbara in Russia. It was unthinkable to fritter any of the dearly earned savings from the coal mining. He needed to take a job immediately no matter how disagreeable. Should they decide to stay in America, there would be time to look for better work. But after working some months in a factory, presumably the tannery, he must have made up his mind that working the soil was a great deal more suited to him. Add to that the stress of a strange language and culture--- only the option to return remained.

Fortunately for us, they took the trouble to be photographed in the aforementioned studio. For some presumably practical reason they chose not to appear with their infant daughter Genevieve. Little did they realize then how valued that portrait would become.

Truly, a case can be made, that Jozef had one purpose in mind in coming to America, to find the means that would purchase for him the farmstead he had visualized long ago, that portion of a former manorial estate that went by the name of Sosnovshchina, translated---The Pines".

REARRANGING THE LANDSCAPE. Sometime after their return to Onoshki, one of the first items on Jozef's agenda had to be paying a visit to Pan (Palm, rhyme w/on) Dubashinski. The title Pan was used in the old days, but since, Pan in respectful Polish culture is the equivalent of "Mr". Pan Dubashinski owned a former manorial estate, and was in the process of liquidating portions of it. Its location lay within the precinct of Dolhinovo, as did the village of Onoshki. Awareness to the opportunity to buy this land could have been on Jozef's mind before he set out for America.

It doesn't seem likely that he brought more than $500. from America. It seems like a small sum but in rubles that would equal 1000 or more. For that day it had to be a considerable sum, but whatever it was, it sufficed to buy land and forest for himself, his sons and daughters. You could say it was a flat economy. But the resulting deflation created a buyer's paradise. By the same token a farmer had to sell grain and produce at giveaway prices. Nevertheless, the dream of owning a completely independent piece of land, finally became a reality.

During the next five years or less Jozef and Anna found the strength, energy and enthusiasm to move to new land, build on it new structures, while maintaining their crop yield, caring for livestock and performing a myriad of chores, that taken together comprised a marvel of achievement. During that time were born to them sons, Frank in 1904 and John in 1905.

Their accomplishment strengthens the theory that Jozef never intended to settle in America. To have done what he did, had to be the fulfillment of an idea and of a desire instilled in him since his youth. Ironically his action of establishing a proprietary farmstead coincided with the Russian governmental policy during the same period. From 1907 to 1914, Russia had embarked on a true land reform implementing individual farmsteads on the western model. Unfortunately for Russia's future, World War I precluded the completion of the program. Instead the Communist takeover of Russia in 1917 resulted in an agricultural system even more backward than during the era of serfdom itself ---it was called collectivization.

Taken in 1932, the father of Agatha(Kasperowicz) Sturycz, Jozef Kasperowicz. Age 62.

Her mother Anna(Zyzniewski) Kasperowicz. Age 60.

ONOSHKI VILLAGE. The strip of land, originally allotted in the post serfdom land reform, and the house and plot in the village of Onoshki, Jozef transferred to a relative, perhaps in return he received much needed help in the giant task of moving and getting established in Sosnc[i])vshchina. (Sosnovshchizna in Polish)

It comes to mind that his brother-in-law Ignace Mleczko, an accomplished carpenter and craftsman, would certainly have been hired by Jozef in the erection of all the new structures on the new farmstead. The son of Ignace, Walter Mleczko, also a carpenter and cabinet maker, and Aggie's maternal cousin, came to live with us in 1950, having been taken prisoner by the Soviets in 1941, was amnestied to join the Polish Second Corps and fought in Italy against the Germans.(See Odyssey)

MEMORIES OF HOME. Aggie recalls the homestead that her father brought to completion five years before she was born.Their house constructed of logs and covered by a thatched straw roof, stood surrouded by woods of birch, spruce„and other species of trees, where she especially found joy in hunting for a variety of beri, ries and best of all, delighted in seeking out a favorite mushroom they called "borovik,(bor alludes to coniferous trees).The borovik supplemented as well as enhanced their simple peasant quisine because of its rich flavor and taste.

About 100 meters from their home in a grove of birch trees, near a stream, stood the "banya", Russian for bathhouse, "lazhnya" in Polish. The distancing of it from their dwelling was a precaution against spread of fire to other buildings, since the banya also had a fireplace. In those days' roofs were still covered with thatched straw. For that reason, Aggie's father spaced all his structures since moving to the new farmstead, unlike the previous traditional grouping of dwelling with the sheds.

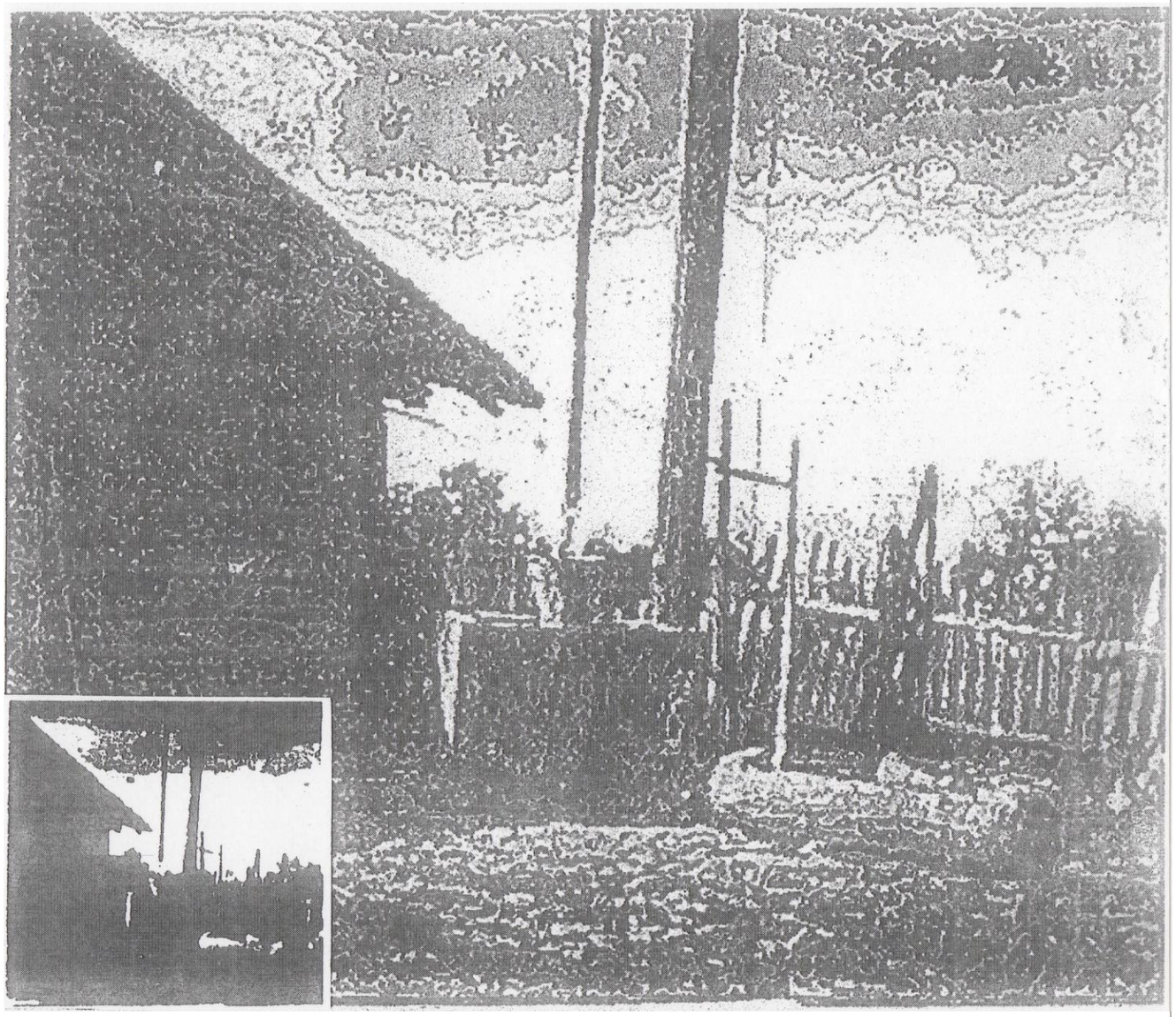
The concept of the banya had been around since time immemorial. During our visit to the Soviet Union, I saw a newly constructed banya by a cousin of mine who lived in the same village as did my father before he emigrated in 1912.

From among the many personal papers left by Fr. Joe, a lone 2X2inch snapshot remained without context. Taken against a bright background, the resulting dark silhouette offered no clue; it seemed pointless o keep it.

While speculating about it, Jean offered to enlarge it on her computer. Details became surprisingly identifiable, enabling Aggie to recall that indeed her father had hewn an animal drinking trough out of log.

The photographer had to be Fr. Joe when as a theology student in Vilno, Poland in 1926 he visited his parents. He was an early box camera enthusiast.

By the time he visited his family again two years after His ordination in 1930, the well's system for drawing water changed to a winch type



It’s been a happy coincidence To have preserved the only photograph of the Kasperowicz homestead, built about 1906 on newly acquired land with money earned in America from about 1901 to 1904.

Pressed for time, we hurriedly entered the church during a devotion in progress, took several slide shots without a flash, walked around to the rear,where a cemetery came into view, never suspecting that my uncle Arkady Lagutko was at that moment participating in the devotion,

We hurried on to the village of Onoshki where he lived and were told by Mary his wife that he is in church. He knew we would be passing through but expected us to stay the night which we could not.

The church's history dates back to its first simple wood structure built in 1553. It had to be replaced in 1704 but again of wood. In 1853 the present church had its beginning by a fortuitous chain of events one might call Providential. In 1842, a priest by name of Joseph Lwowicz (Lvovich) (1794—1857), a man of distinguished character and intellectual abilities, a teacher of mathematics and a scholar came into disfavor of the Russian Imperial authorities for activities in church affairs not in synch with the oppressive governmental church policy. For that he drew a threeyear sentence in exile.

Upon his return to freedom he was relegated to serve as pastor to the backwater of the Vilno region, the Dolhinov parish church. The 138-year-old wooden church reflected the destitute conditions of the local peasantry.

The following episode had been recorded by a contemporary writer, Vincent Pol by name, as related to him by friends.

Returning from banishment, homeward bound in 1842, Thomas Zan passed through Dolhinov but first tried entering the church to offer prayers of thanksgiving and found the church closed. A sexton appeared however, opened the church door, then went to the pastor and told him about the stranger in the church.

Father Lwowicz decided to see for himself, met the stranger leaving the church. They looked at each other, then threw themselves into each other's embrace. The priest and Zan, compatriots in exile, rejoiced at their reunion. Continuing their tour of the church, Zan turned to his friend and said: "Are people so indifferent here that they would tolerate their church to remain in disrepair?" Fr. Lwowicz explained that his people are so poor that he hadn’t the heart to ask for donations.

"Listen my brother, Zan told the priest, accept this gold snuff box, I'm convinced that God attaches blessings to it and start building a new church!" While exiled to Orenburg, (south of the Urals Range) Zan discovered gold, told of his find to a Russian entrepreneur also a friend′ of Poles in exile. The Russian ordered the first batch of mined gold go towards making a snuff box which he then gave to Zan in gratitude. Fr. Lwowicz accepted, the gift, then said to Zan: "Now you haven’t enough to buy a piece of bread, here, take this gold piece and buy yourself a village, its income will afford you a place to rest your head."

The story spread through the region. After some preparation, Fr. Lwowicz succeeded in getting the church under a roof for the time being. And Zan, indeed bought himself a village with the priest's gold piece. Dolhinov gained a reputation as did the pastoral skills of Fr. Lwowicz. He was loved by all who came in contact with him. He died on Dec. 2,1857, four years after he had begun work on the new church.

The history of the other splendid churches in that immediate region such as in Parafianov, my father's birthplace, (Michael Sturycz) or in Budslav where my mother belonged (Sofia Lagutko Sturycz) also dated back to the beginning of the 15th century as simple timber structures; logically so, in a country that was then a forest wilderness.

It is ironic that in a country where poverty prevailed over the centuries, churches were built of no less splendor than in the West. One answer is that endowments by wealthy personages were forthcoming and that labor was exceedingly cheap.

Before the 15th century, people of that region, namely the Lithuanians, had little if any contact with Christianity even though the encroaching East Slays had by the 11th century introduced the Orthodox or eastern branch of Christianity to the area. Teutonic pressure from the west however made it necessary for a union of Poles and Lithuanians under one monarchy in 1386 and from there on the Catholic faith and Polish culture had preference with the heathen Lithuanians; who after the 15th century first became Belarusianized and in turn Polonized.

Thus in brief, the Dolhinov, Parafianov, Budslav and many other churches in the area of lesser note embodied the history, religion and culture, backwater that it was on the eastern periphery of the Vilno region, otherwise known as "Vilenshchizna".

There was beside the fireplace and benches along the available wall space, a vessel for water, at one time made of wood, the version that I saw was an oil drum cut about in half. Heated stones were placed in it and covered with water. The resulting steam was what made the banya effective. The heated water was scooped up with appropriate utensils as needed and poured over oneself or another. The wood floor planks were spaced to allow excess water to escape. The participants used the benches to leisurely soak in the steamy warmth, while administering to themselves and to each other a mild form of flagellation by the use of birch tree boughs of proper size. Additional steam could be had by sprinkling the heated stone work of the fireplace.

Primitive as the method may seem, it afforded untold generations a method to cleanliness and invigoration. City folk, since the post war Soviet era in Belarus, living in high rise apartment buildings do have bath tubs in very unsophisticated bathrooms and they are convenient and time saving, but they'll never measure up to a good old fashioned cleansing ritual of the banya.

The water supply came from a well in the courtyard. There livestock came to drink from a trough that Aggie's father had fashioned from a log. Water was drawn by means of a winch and bucket. Further to the rear a barn accommodated the livestock in their separate stalls, the cows, horses, a few sheep, pigs and chickens. The latter had freedom to roam. Aggie told of a hen that hatched a brood of chicks in the nearby woods, and one day, to her mother's surprise, led them into the courtyard.

Added to the semi-circle of farm structures stood a barn for hay and straw, another for grain storage and cured meats and finally a threshing shed. To one side of the house and sheds an ample garden shared space with a broad expanse of pasture. Along the path leading to the house and courtyard from the road, Aggie'§ father had planted an orchard of apple and pear trees. In it he kept beehives.

Honey production for home use had its place, but also as a cash crop. And an abundance of beeswax too assured a supply of the much preferred component of candle-making, the other being tallow. Another method to produce light in centuries past was the use of splinters of resinous pine, that when vertically anchored and lit, produced light of last resort, certainly not as effectively or with the versatility of a beeswax candle. The people of that period and those who preceded them depended on the practice of frugality to see them through. Aggie recalls her father digging out tree stumps and splitting them to reduce the need to cut trees for winter fuel.

In 1983 on our visit to the Soviet Union, Aggie's only surviving brother, John, visibly a man marked by life under the Soviets, warned her not to bother searching out her former home and birthplace. "Nothing is left of it," he told her. Due to restrictions on our movements there was little if any hope that either of us would visit our parents' villages. Unexpectedly, by the efforts of Aggie's nephew, Anton Kasperowicz, I did get to see my father's village, but for lack of time and inconvenience to our chauffeur, were unable to seek out Sosndvshchina, Aggie's place of birth, even though we passed through Dolhinovo and were only minutes away. Perhaps for the better, her last impressions of her home and her family remain with her. Her brother John knew the value of happy memories.

A SECOND EMIGRATION FOR JOZEF. In 1908, Jozef at 38 years of age and Anna at 36 had accomplished a near miracle in advancing their status from post serfs to western type, albeit small farmers. It was the result of unbelievably hard work and sacrifice plus the seed money brought from America.

Meanwhile emigration from their region continued at an increasing pace. Jozef and Anna began to contemplate the merits of emigration for their son Joseph and daughter Barbara. Joseph might already have had aspirations to the priesthood, but only by working and studying in America could that wish be realized.

But immigration of minors to America required a parent residing there to act as sponsor and provider. Obviously, it remained for Jozef to visit America once more.

That he indeed emigrated in 1988 a second time is corroborated by his granddaughter, Anna Gleb, whose home we visited in 1983. She wrote in 1998 from Belarus that from her mother she learned (Mary, sister of Aggie) that Jozef her grandfather left for America while her grandmother was expecting Mary her mother, who was born August 17, 1908.

Having already lived in Kenosha in 1903-1904, leads one to conclude that Jozef came straight to Kenosha intending to bring his Children to what he must have considered a good place for them to find jobs and a future. Reenforcing that determination would have been Kenosha's established community of Polish immigrants consisting of many from the Dolhinovo region. Furthermore, he could have felt more secure in finding employment where he was previously employe4 presumably at the Allen Sons Tannery. The pay was not what it was in the coal mine, but at least Anna need not worry about mine accidents. It would appear that by the summer of 1910 he would have saved enough to send for his son and daughter. For some reason they came to Kenosha separately, Joseph arrived September 16,1910 and Barbara shortly thereafter. Her mother entrusted her 12-year-old daughter to travel with fellow villagers also going to Kenosha.

We know little of their life together. Jozef arranged with a family named Krupski, with whom they may have been boarding, to act as guardians of his children before he left for Russia. But before departing, the trio visited a photographer's parlor, probably the same as in 1903, and fortunately we have a portrait that documents their living together in Kenosha.

By no later than early spring of 1912 and perhaps somewhat earlier, Jozef took leave of his children. No doubt, it was a trying time for Jozef. Barbara had reminisced to her sister nuns that her father had been "sorely disappointed" at the time of their parting. Perhaps he did wonder about the wisdom of bringing his children to America, now that he had to leave them to shift for themselves at as tender an age as theirs in an environment without any security but their ability to work. Joseph was probably not his chief concern; he was known to have worked for Frost Mfg. Co. But Barbara was still a young child; a father's concern can well be understood.

The last occasion of being together would have been the station platform of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. Although the alternate rail service to Chicago was the North Shore Electric Railway, the Northwestern connected at the Union Station in Chicago for convenient and probable transfer to the Pennsylvania Railroad to the east. There on the platform they exchanged embraces and each wondered if it was the last time they would see each other. In Joseph's cas9$_1$ there would be two or three visits, for Barbara, it was the final parting. A little more than a year later, brother and sister would find separate paths that led them both to a life dedicated to religious careers.

HOME SWEET HOME. After more than three years of absence from family, home and country, Jozef returned to wife and children who had grown almost beyond mutual recognition, and for the first time saw his youngest daughter Mary, more than three years old.

No one could accuse Jozef of not living an intense life. When emigration became a possibility, he was confronted with two options, both involved emigration. Go to America and stay, or with money saved make a new beginning in the land of his birth. It seems the latter conclusion prevailed once he experienced America and realized life there was no panacea, the work was not satisfying and the language too high a hurdle for a middle aged person to overcome.

Coming home had to be rewarding especially since acquiring the farmstead, a life's pattern was emerging much along the lines that he had contemplated, perhaps since the days of his youth. Home at last, and being a faithfully religious man, no doubt, but that he was thankful to God for a life fully lived. And if he brought back only meager savings if any, he reconciled himself to whatever the future would bring; concentrated on doing what he always loved, being near his family, farming the land, caring for livestock, tending his bees and leaving the rest to take care of itself, or more aptly put, "leave all in God's hands."

A YEAR OF NOTE. Jozef had reached the age of 42, Anna 40, when on January 20, 1913 they became parents of twin girls whom they named Agatha and Anna. Just as the oldest son received his father's name, their youngest daughter, if by minutes, they named after her mother. The ages of the other children at home were Genevieve 11, Frank 8, John 7, and Mary 5.

A NUN IN THE FAMILY. Barbara Kasperowicz, born on February 22, 1898, received no formal schooling in Russia. Sometime after her arrival in Kenosha, she was enrolled in a public school. A diminutive figure as an adult, at 13 she was smaller than average girls her age. That and her inability to speak English gave some of her classmates with abusive tendencies the license to single her out for abuse, a rather barbaric form of it by throwing stones at her. Thoroughly traumatized, Barbara refused to attend school. Instead, most likely with the help of a friend, found employment in a hosiery factory. There she worked until her acceptance to the convent in August of 1913. (Federal Child Labor Laws were not enacted until 1916)

While attending Sunday Mass at Saint Casimir church, she observed the nuns at Mass who taught at St. Casimir parochial school. She asked a lady parishioner for advice on how she could join that Order of nuns. She received the necessary guidance and left for the Motherhouse in August of 1913. In August of 1915, she was received into the Order of School Sisters of Notre Dame as Novice Mary Alba. She made her final vows in July of 1922.

In the convent she received an elementary education and learned to speak and write in English and all but forgot her Polish language. She worked for 60 years at various missions. She did all sorts of housekeeping tasks beginning with janitorial, food preparation, laundering, mangling and ironing, etc. She was known for diligence and perfection in the execution of her tasks. She was a believer in prayer and made it her life's preoccupation. She knew what she wanted to do with her life and nothing could deter her from fulfilling all her obligations.

In 1973 came retirement, but she remained active until the last two years of her life when illness confined her to a bed. She died at 92 years of age on April 17, 1990, and lies buried in the southwest corner of the Notre Dame Visitation Convent cemetery in Elm Grove, Wisconsin. May God reward her for a selfless life, we pray.

A RECAPITULATION of Sister Mary Alba's Life's History

Born and baptized Barbara Kasperowicz in Russia		Feb.22,1898
Emigrated to America		1910
Worked at Kenosha Hosiery sometime after 1910 to 1913		
Entered School Sisters of Notre Dame Convent		Aug,14,1913
Madison Mission, 1 year		1914
Received	Aug.4,	1915
Milwaukee Mother House 1915 to 1917		
Professed		July 26,1917
Final Vows		July 22,1922
St. Anthony, Chicago		1917 - 1935
St. Ann's, Milwaukee		1935 - 1939
St. Mary, West Bend		1939 - 1949
Chippewa Falls		1949 - 1950
St. Mary, Menasha		1950 - 1975
Visitation Cnvent, Elm Grove		1975 - 1987
Visitation Hospital,"		1987 - 1990
Died	Apri117,	1990

Became American citizen in 1945

THE FIRST WORLD WAR Beginning on June 28,1914, all of Europe whether directly or indirectly, became embroiled in a war that henceforth would be referred to as World War I. It was fought on two fronts, the western in France and Belgium, and the eastern, mainly in Russia. The principal adversaries on this front were Russians fighting the Germans, the Austrians and their allies. The front stretched from Riga in the north on the Baltic Sea southward through the Vilno region to the Black Sea, a distance of 1125 miles (1800 km).

My parents, Michael and Sofia (Lagutko) Sturycz immigrated here in 1912, just in time to have spared themselves living in a war zone. No doubt the fate of kinsfolk they left behind concerned them, they could only hope and pray that somehow they would survive, which turned out to be the case. Their life here had its own pattern to follow, like earning a living and midway into the war, getting married and starting a family. The war remained something distant, and except for an American short but vital intervention. in 1917-18, the war had no great effect on civilians in the U.S.

Oddly enough our direct connection to that war comes to us through Aggie's recollections of her childhood years from about the time that she was 4 to 7 years old. That which she remembered and a sampling of testimonials noted by author Fraciszek Sielicki help in some small measure to impart a sense of that time and place.

The map of the Eastern Front (1914-18) shows the Dolhinovo-Budslav-Krivichi region within the corridor that separated Russian from German armies. After the initial Russian setback in Prussia, the war settled into a more or less static front. After December 1915 it included Dolhinovo and surrounding territory in which the Germans were quite active, and for much of the time in control. In one action they shelled Dolhinovo and set its center aflame.

GLIMPSES OF LIFE ON THE GERMAN-RUSSIAN FRONT. Pitched battles and artillery duels required civilians to leave the vicinity if time permitted. Often the villagers were reluctant to leave, knowing they would face starvation away from home. Then they resorted to living in dugouts in adjacent forests where they would stock grain for themselves and oats for their horses, which they took along while the cows they put out to seek pasture for themselves. Some who sought refuge in another town ran out of food and indeed faced starvation. Where Russians controlled an area, caches of grain were brought in to stave off hunger,

The prolonged periods without access to cleansing themselves and their clothing soon brought on infestation of lice which in' turn spread the dreaded typhus. Dietary deficiencies and polluted water were responsible for attacks of dysentery and influenza.

Aggie mentioned how her father absented himself for weeks during a typhus epidemic, attending helpless victims and burying the dead. Apparently he had built up an immunity at one point in his life that allowed him such close contact with diseased people. Aggie's mother would place changes of clothing outside the premises of their home, perhaps at their banya, where her father then boiled the clothes he wore and had a much needed bath.

A very young girl separated from her family for some necessary reason wrote later of her experience in seeking shelter with other refugees from an impending battle, how she observed from a rise in the distance the Germans digging in in anticipation of a Russian infantry attack. She related how the Russians with fixed bayonets marched in step with martial music, and taking casualties with a shout of "Urah" took out the German first line of

trenches. This was still certainly old fashioned warfare.

Sudden appearances of troops, be they Russian or German, aroused in the peasant farmers the fear of requisition of their meager food supplies. Oats for horses was always in demand since it was a war largely dependent on horses.

There is no doubt that the war in that sector of the Vilno region was severe. On a front more than a thousand miles long, people suffered in various degrees, some escaped the worst hardships, others bore the brunt of it. Most of what happened was never recorded. As far as our immediate families were concerned, in spite of deplorable conditions, deaths directly attributable to the war, were not a subject I heard talked about.

In October of 1917, a new phase in the war occurred when the Bolshevik Party seized control from the Russian Provisional Government. The Bolsheviks sought to make peace with Germany and its allies at any price, anxious as they were to deal with their own civil war. It rather fitted in with Germany's desire to end the two front war in order to concentrate all its efforts against France, Britain and the United States, on the western front. Nevertheless, the Germans demanded and received a vast part of western Russia as the price for peace. In March of 1918 the Brest—Litovsk Treaty was signed by Germany and Austria with the new Communist regime of Russia, to become known as the Soviet Union.

REMINISCENCES OF A CHILDHOOD IN A WAR ZONE. The Russian front opposite the Germans was beginning to deteriorate even before the Bolsheviks came to power, mostly due to their propaganda efforts in urging soldiers to desert the front. Drifters began showing up in the countryside. By the spring of 1918, Aggie was five years old. She remembers a soldier showing up at their household and demanding the key to their storeroom where grain and cured meats were kept. Her father's lack of enthusiasm in responding to the soldier's demand earned him a fell blow of the soldier's rifle butt. Aggie

looked on aghast, and, in the confusion that followed she had fetched the key and handed it to the soldier. Later her father marveled how she could have known where the key was hidden and how she could have reached it with such dispatch. Aggie herself draws a blank on what she did, perhaps the shock of seeing her father abused propelled her to act on pure impulse. She recalls coming down with a fever as a result of the encounter.

On another occasion, it was probably the fall of 1920 when Red Army troops were returning from their defeat at Warsaw, a soldier appeared at the Kasperowicz household notwithstanding that it stood in an out of the way locality. Aggie's mother had cooked potatoes for the pigs and had them cooling in the vestibule. The soldier asked for a share of the potatoes, and when Aggie's mother obliged, the soldier began gorging himself on an otherwise unappetizing meal. Obviously starved but a decent fellow to have asked for food. Aggie remembers as she observed the spectacle, she wondered why her mother had not offered the soldier some bread. Testimonials similar to this in that same area were documented by author F. Sielicki.

Horses were so indispensable to the peasant farmers that whenever a likelihood of requisition threatened, they hid their steeds in the forest. On one occasion that Aggie recalled, her father told her two brothers Frank and John, ages 14 and 13, to hide the horses. (one third of the region is forest) The boys must have hurried off without taking sufficient food along. Hunger soon prompted them to look for a potato patch but having found it were discovered by an alert peasant farmer. Ravenously hungry, they headed for home.

THE REVIVAL OF THE POLISH COMMONWEALTH. The capitulation of Germany and Austria to the Allied Powers on November 18, 1918 became the first day of independence for the Second Polish Commonwealth. It was the precise moment for which Marshal Joseph Pilsudski and his Polish Legions were poised to exploit. They promptly occupied the former German positions which approximated the territory held by the First Polish Commonwealth about 125 years previously. Marshal Pilsudski, ill-advisedly occupied the Ukrainian capital of Kiev, with the idea of establishing and independent Ukraine allied to Poland. The Bolshevik leaders of a newly organized Red Army read this as aggression and proceeded to drive the Polish Legions westward to Warsaw, a distance of app. 480km. (300) miles. The Poles, encircled by Red Armies were offered the most humiliating peace terms. It was a do or die situation for the Poles. They chose to break out at a point 100km. (60Miles) southwest of Warsaw, attacked the Red Army's flank and rear and that allowed the main body of Polish Legions to route the Bolsheviks eastward until the Vilno region was recaptured as well as the city of Vilno. On March 18,1921 the Peace Treaty of Riga brought the Polish-Bolshevik War to an end, and the Dolhinovo-Budslav-Krivichi region became the easternmost salient of Poland.

POST WORLD WAR I EASTERN POLAND, 1918 - 1939. The eastern part of the Polish Commonwealth has been often referred to as the "borderlands." In Polish classical literature these eastern lands are mentioned as "Litva", i.e. Lithuania and otherwise alluded to as Belarus. With respect to location within the Commonwealth, "borderlands" is indeed an appropriate description. But the name also suggests a connotation of other characteristics which historically are as important as location itself. The contributing factors of character to the region were the minorities, the largest of which were Belarusians, followed by Lithuanians, Jews and Tartars representing four faiths; the Orthodox, Catholic, Hebrew and Moslem respectively. Their histories of origin of which Lithuanian and Belarusian are the oldest; gave the region its differentiation from western Poland.

With the return of independence in 1918, after 123 years of Russian domination, the Polish culture and language regained its former prominence in the “bordelands" as in the previous 400 years before 1795.

BUILDING A NATION AND A COUNTRY. With peace achieved following the Polish-Bolshevik War of 1919-20, one of the first shortcomings needing a solution was the lack of schools, teachers and text-books. Civic minded intellectuals led a varied field of activities from elementary to technical education, sports, spirituality, theater and the popular sharpshooter’s clubs for boys and girls from 17 to 21 years of age. Traditional dance circles and choirs were encouraged and organized. The teachers of eastern Poland held the theme of religion and patriotism in high regard. The chief centers of culture being the schools, teachers engaged students in putting on plays in towns and villages. Trade and technical schools were also established. National and religious festivals especially, were enthusiastically observed by the populace.

To the discredit and shortsightedness of the Polish government, Belarusian children were not provided the same access to middle school education. Accounting for this policy was the government's intent to polonize the Belarusians. The fact that the Polish minority once suffered that same fate under Russian rule remained a lesson unlearned.

This was also the time that Aggie and her twin sister attended school in Dolhinovo, a little more than a half hour's walk from where they lived. According to Aggie, they attended sporadically. Deep snow and extremely cold weather kept them home, but strangely they often suffered from illness. Rising from bed often brought on dizziness and nausea. They had never heard of carbon monoxide nor for that matter did we here back then, but no doubt they were adversely affected by it. It could have been due to a crack in the fireplace or a faulty damper adjustment. Nevertheless, Aggie learned to read and write well and learned: the basic arithmetic, which was more than her mother's generation of girls could say.

THE WAVE OF MARXISM, A SIGN OF THE TIMES. Poland's history of serfdom tainted even the new and reformed Polish regime in the eyes of struggling peasants and townspeople. With the onset of a Marxist Russian regime in 1917, there existed an element of enthusiastic individuals and groups in Poland, and for that matter in Europe and America, that deemed communism to be the way to equality and plentitude.

When word of Stalin's cruelly enforced policy of collectivization began filtering in from across the nearby Polish-Soviet border, those who looked to the Bolshevik revolution with hope and anticipation, suddenly realized that their own brand of hardship was preferable to the madness being perpetrated in the Soviet Union, beginning in the late 1920's and early 1930's.

Yet an undercurrent of resentment toward vestiges of the old class system remained ingrained among peasantry and townspeople, right up to WW II. Marxist propagandists made it their favorite theme in Poland and in Russia. Feelings about it I heard best expressed by Walter Mleczko, once a Soviet prisoner who experienced life in the Soviet Union, and no friend of communism, once jokingly remarked: "One good the Soviets did, when once and for all they did away with the notion of "nobility" as a class."

ANOTHER VIEW ON LIFE IN POLAND DURING THE 1920's AND 30's. A letter written to us in December of 1938 by my maternal uncle, Jan Lagutko, then residing in Warsaw, Poland, sheds further light on the conditions in Poland in the period between the two world wars. I corresponded with him briefly, but since his last letter in 1938, we heard no more of him. We surmised that he died in the fall of Warsaw to the Germans. At my specific request in 1996 to my only surviving maternal uncle, Arkady Lagutko age 91, for knowledge of his brother Jan, he surprisingly supplied facts heretofore unknown to us.

Uncle Jan Lagutko was born in 1900. As a youth of 19, he together with Arkady age 14 were pasturing their horses, when soldiers appeared. There is reason to assume that they were members of Marshal Pilsudski's Polish Legions on a recruiting mission. Without explanation Jan handed the bridle to Arkady and went with the soldiers without saying goodbye to his mother or anyone. Later the family did indeed learn that Jan was serving with the Polish Legions.

When the Polish-Bolshevik War ended at the end of 1920, Jan returned to his family in the Village of Sloboda and helped brothers Zygmunt and Arkady rebuild their burned out house. Jan had an ambition to do something other than farming. He emigrated to Paris, France on a work permit and learned there the machinist trade.

Apparently he had a predilection to socialism, a trend in those days. It is interesting to note that the commander of the Polish Legions, Marshal Joseph Pilsudski was an ardent socialist.in his youth, gave it up to dedicate himself to the cause of Polish nationalism and independence.

Socialism for many meant accepting Marxist economic theories. We know now that Jan was already an active Communist Party cell member while living in Paris. His work permit expired and he returned to Warsaw. He looked in vain for employment, had health problems even became destitute to the point of starvation. Then in 1938 his fortunes changed for the better, and no longer in wants lived decently, but no mention of employment.

When the Bolshevik Party brought communism To Russia in 1917, they anticipated a world revolution in the aftermath of the World War and the subsequent chaos. But revolution came and stayed mainly in Russia. The Soviet government then established the Commintern International, which directed and supported subversive communist cells in many countries of the "capitalistic" West.

Though Jan never acknowledged affiliation with the Commintern, obviously for reasons of his own and his group's security, the improvement in his state of affairs could logically be attributed only to the Moscow connected source of income.

In that last letter of December 1938 he described life in Poland rather accurately, despite the communist bias to see things in capitalist countries at their worst. He wrote:

" Though in poor health, I remain cheerful, I'm not without money, always enough for daily bread and am enjoying the company of "colleagues"(quotation marks mine), men and women with whom I spend quite pleasant moments as we work together for the good of society, while giving moral support to each other. I have a decent place to live in and am well dressed; in a word I lack for nothing. But I'm very saddened that not all have it as good. There are people who live in basements, 2 and 3 families to a room and not very large. Others live in barracks or empty factory buildings, together young and old, singles of both sexes and married couples. There are those whose roof is the sky with no assurance of a regular meal. Neither have they adequate winter clothing. described for you some of what I have seen in the city, now a few words about village life.

Life in villages differs, especially in our eastern part of the country. There people have less shortages and are better able to survive because they have their own potatoes, bread, linen for clothing and bast from linden trees from which to weave footwear. However, where a better Quality ₒf clothing is concerned, for young people, such as a suit for a young man or a dress and coat for a young girl, it would require the liquidation of a small farm.

There are households that have forgotten the sweetness of sugar, or the taste of tea, had not used it for years because of unaffordable prices.

For lighting they used small kerosene lamps or resort to resinous pine splinters to substitute for candles. Some cannot afford salt and do without. In a word they live primitively but are very religious. Each year Polish youth from all corners of Poland come to Warsaw carrying banners depicting the Blessed Virgin of Chenstohovo or the Madonna of Ostra Brama (East Gate) of Vilno, or some other Madonna or saint." End of quote.

Though we heard no more of Jan after 1938, thanks to his brother Arkady we learned that after Poland's defeat, he returned to his native village of Sloboda, a man unrecognizable due to the ordeal of Warsaw's seige and capitulation. His survival depended on eating horseflesh and water found in shell craters. He had to traverse app, a:150 miles (240 km.) of German controlled territory to reach the Soviet border, during which time getting arrested meant an immediate death sentence; the Nazis dealt severely with communists. Having reached Soviet territory, app. another 300 miles (480 km) lay before him to Sloboda.

Upon reporting to the local Soviet authorities (a Soviet requirement of all non-residents entering a district), Jan gained immediate respect when identification showed him to be a Party member and as one having a mechanical background. They appointed him to take charge of the tractor repair station and the grain mill in Budslay. Returning from an inspection tour, Jan retired to the hayloft for the night, having first instructed his mother (my grandmother Frances) to wake him in the morning. The next day her efforts to rouse him failed; he had lost consciousness and hours later died. The year in all likelihood was 1940.

Letters received from kinsfolk during the 1930's indicated their striving to acquire more land. They would have appreciated help from us but the 1930's were difficult years in America, my father had no steady work from 1929 to 1934. Their pleas had to go unheeded.

In Poland as in pre-revolutionary Russia, peasant farmers operated on the outdated system based on village and communal sharing of cultivated land and pasture. The war prevented land reform in Russia but in the post-war years, the Polish government redistributed land into individual proprietorship. In that regard, thanks to Jozef Kasperowicz's own initiative, their family had a head start having had acquired and worked their individual farmstead since before 1908. By all appearances the Kasperowicz family fared to a degree perhaps above the average and judged by former standards, they could be said to have become mildly prosperous.

A SON IN THE PRIESTHOOD. The first son of eight children was born to Jozef and Anna Kasperowicz on January 1, 1894 in the village of Onoshki, Pronince of Vilno. They named him Joseph Anthony. It would seem that Joseph had an early aspiration to become a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, but it being Russia, and his parents without means, acquiring an education could only be a dream. Of those times my father, a contemporary of Joseph, used to say: "I had three winters of schooling:" Girls were fortunate if they learned to read from itinerant teachers, who for room and board visited villages teaching children to read and write from old Polish prayer books. The prayers children had already memorized, prepared them to associate sound with printed words.

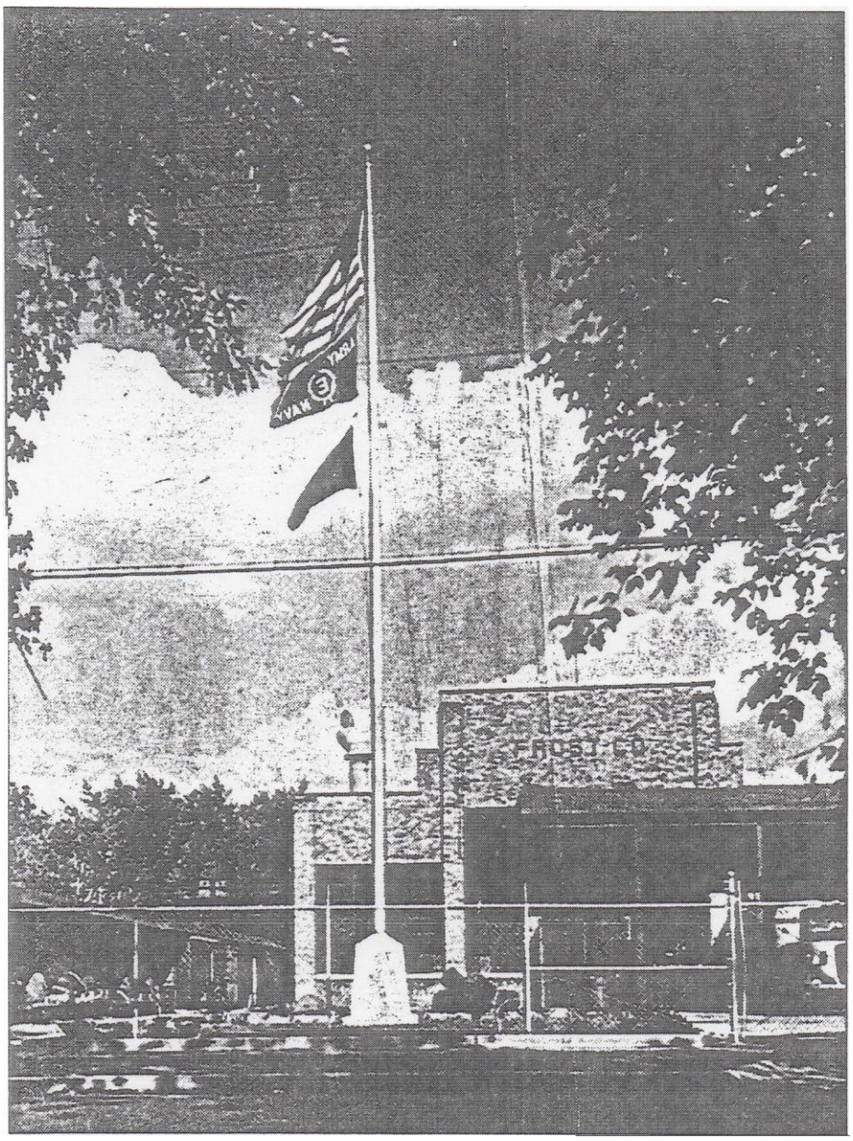
Jozef's father expressly emigrated to America a second time in 1908 to be able to send for Joseph age 16 and Barbara age 12. Child labor laws had not yet been enacted, so Joseph it was said, worked at Frost Manufacturing Co. and throughout his student years during summer breaks that way earning enough to pay for tuition, room and board. Knowing him, he had to be the kind of worker the firm had no qualms in rehiring him each time. Frugality was such a virtue with him that even with modest means he accomplished much.

From what can be deduced from records, in the years 1913 to 1918 he attended a Polish minor seminary of St. Bonaventure in Sturtevant, Wis. In July of 1918, at age 24 the local draft board required him to report for military duty. In six months the war with Germany was over, and he was discharged on January 17, 1919. For the next two years it was back to factory work, to accumulate savings in anticipation of entering a seminary.

In 1921 he began studies at a Polish college and seminary of St. Bonaventure in Pulaski, Wisconsin. Further studies led him to English speaking seminaries for two years where he encountered problems with his inability to master the English language.

Joseph Anthony Kasperowicz approaching his 17th birthday, taken sometime after he and his sister Barbara arrived in Kenosha in the fall of 1910.

During his student years, Joseph could always depend on finding employment at the Frost Co. The factory was in existence only 8 years when Joseph immigrated to Kenosha. The high demand for brass plumbing fixtures for many years to come resulted in available part—time jobs for students



The Frost Co.

The exterior of **the Frost Company, where it was located on 14th Avenue** until it closed **in 1997. Established by Walter J. Frost and his father Charles** N. Frost in **1902, Frost** Manufacturing Co. produced brass plumbing fixtures,

In the interim he even attended theology courses over two non-consecutive years at the University of Stefan Batory in Vilno, Poland. Ended his seminary training at Sacred Heart Seminary at Orchard Lake, Michigan. There he received Holy Orders on June. 6, 1930.

The word "odyssey" might begin to describe the tribulations borne by a man with the kind of singleness of purpose that Joseph the student had. I have examined the surviving records and only one conclusion comes to mind, that he had the same tenacity of his father, to achieve, when every step of the way presented a mountain to climb.

On March 7,1931 Rev. Joseph received his first assignment, as assistant pastor at St. Alexander Church in Milwaukee, Wis. While there he took a well-deserved leave of absence to visit his family in Poland, arriving on May 25,1932.

Upon his return, was appointed as assistant pastor to his home parish of St. Casimir in Kenosha, Wisconsin. on September 13,1932. At the time and for long afterward no one except his closest friends knew that he was the first priest to come out of St. Casimir parish. Following him fourteen other priest-sons of the parish have emerged. At this writing, 1999 is the last year of St. Casimir parish existence.

On October 12,1938 he became assistant pastor at St. Adelbert in Milwaukee. He was one of four priests serving that large congregation. While there, *WW* II began in September of 1939 and in 1944, we learned that eastern Poland was partitioned off to become part of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. We were stunned but Fr. Joe was devastated. Of all the tribulations that he ever endured on the road to becoming a priest, nothing compared with the grief over the loss of his country of origin. It was not just a - case of eastern Poland returning to Russian hegemony, this time around, it had to do with communism and its effect on his aged parents and siblings.

Besides the work usually associated with priestly functions, he was also involved with youth of the parish putting on stage plays and supervising a roller skate ink in the basement of the church. There were Sunday afternoons that Aggie and I kept him company in a raucous atmosphere of loud music and bouncing echoes of children's voices on roller skates, hardly conducive to conversation. We probably did not realize how lonely he really was and worried about his parents and the rest overrun by the Soviets, as they were. As an alumnus he was ever grateful to Orchard Lake Seminary, he arranged annual fund raising events, the proceeds of which he sent to the seminary.

After I returned from service, he visited us regularly and often. Our growing children, still tots then, were a great joy to him. He witnessed the growth of John, Jean and Rita from infants to adulthood, providing us great support during those very lean years. In 1947 with his financial help I began building our first dwelling at 3600-16th Ave. Working on it in the evenings, in about a year we moved into a shell of a house, incomplete inside and out.

Fr. Joe, not of robust health, after ten years in a busy place like St. Adelbert's, reached a point which we now recognize as burnout and asked for semi-retirement. For the next nine years he served only as chaplain to an Order of school sisters. His visits to us became much more frequent, and looking back, one could say, those were the best years of his life. He always found something that needed painting such as storm windows or pipes in the basement or whatever other manual task that presented itself. Most of all he enjoyed the children. It helped to fill the void created by the loss of eastern Poland and with it all hope of retiring there some day.

Father Joe's retirement status did not deny him the candidacy for the next pastor ship that would open up. That day came on January 23,1957, when he was appointed pastor of Holy Family Church in Cudahy, Wis., where he had served as assistant pastor for five years.

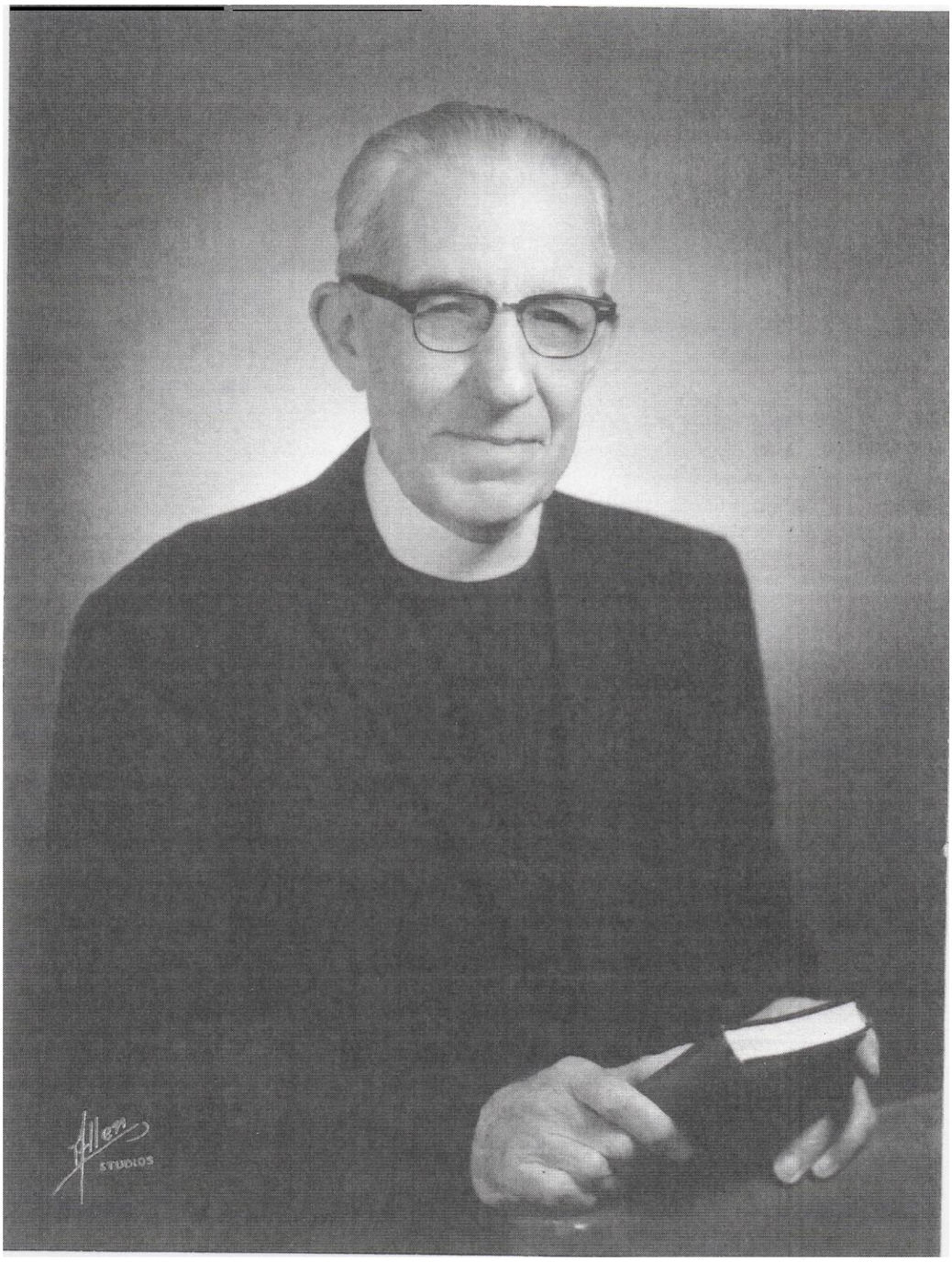
At Holy Family as in most Catholic parishes a parochial school served an important function in educating the children of the parish in their own special way. The task of building a new school confronted Fr. Joe soon after taking charge of the parish. The city had issued a condemnation notice on the old school because of structural shortcomings. Fr. Joe met the challenge characteristically, head on, certain in the knowledge that no other option existed but to build. Some controversy ensued, putting Fr. Joe on the defensive. Nevertheless, the school was built, a large debt incurred plus headaches for Fr. Joe to arrange financing which proved to be a worrisome problem, but soluble. Because prices continued to rise, his promptness was vindicated.

_ Monsignor Kierstein, pastor of St. Casimir church approached Fr. Joe about whether I would be interested in buying from him land that he had personally purchased to insure the availability of a future site of a new church on the north side. The archbishop had rejected the idea, so he was offering it to me at cost. But I had no money. Fr. Joe advanced it and in 1955 I was building the first house on a 36 lot subdivision. To him therefore Aggie and I owe everything we ever had.

I would be remiss not to mention his faithful service as chaplain to the Polish Veterans who fought in the Italian peninsula of the Battle of Cassino fame. They identified with him and appreciated him, like them he too was an immigrant and he in turn understood how they hoped for a free Poland and their frustration with the communist takeover of their country of origin.

All through the years and up to his illness in 1970 when he suffered a stroke, he visited us regularly. In the four debilitating years that followed he spent his wakeful hours in a wheel chair. The first two years he lived at the Camillus Nursing Home for priests. The last two years in a Kenosha nursing home in our neighborhood. It was a trying time and especially for him which he accepted without complaint.

On May 16,1974 after our visit with him the day before, he died in the early morning hours. He was buried from St. Casimir Church and was interned in St. Casimir Cemetery in Kenosha, where many of his contemporaries and fellow immigrants had found their last place of repose. God grant rest to all their souls.

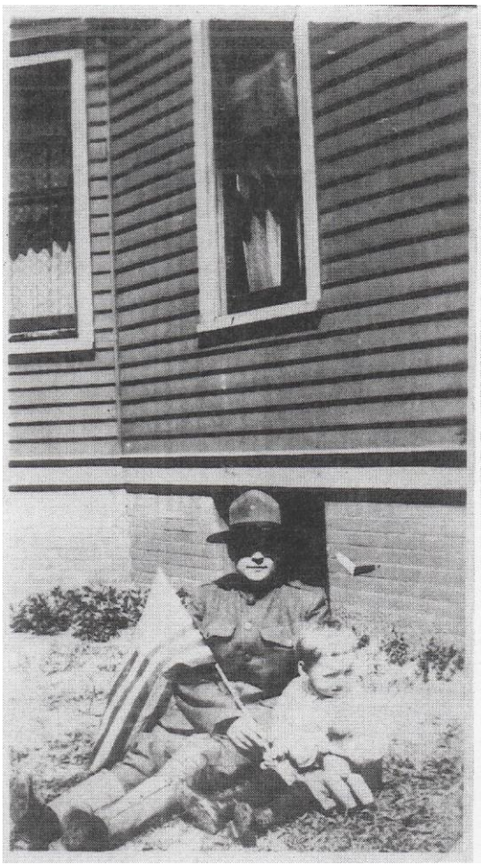


A RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY. Of the eight Kasperowicz children, the youngest were twin girls, Aggie and Anna and unmarried, Although Anna was betrothed. The parents felt confident that should Aggie join her brother and sister in America, her future come what might, would fare better than if she stayed in Poland. For Aggie's part, she dreaded the thought of separation. Having known nothing other than the secluded life in their family village, she could visualize nothing beyond it.

After months of paper work initiated and followed through by her brother Fr, Joseph in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Aggie prepared herself for the dreaded day of parting with parents, siblings and extended family, all of whom she dearly loved. The thought that she might never see them again, troubled her. When that day finally arrived, only she and her parents knew the depth of what they felt at that moment of imminent separation.

The first leg of the journey began by horse and wagon in the company of Anna and her fiancée to the rail station at Krivichi app. 14km. distant. The train route would take her through Molodechno to Grodno and straight to Warsaw. A change of trains completed the overland journey to the newly constructed Polish port of Gdynia where she boarded the motorship "Pilsudski". In six uneventful days she arrived in New York. A tag attached to her clothing indicating her destination, guided officials to place her on a train to Chicago and again to Milwaukee where her brother waited to meet her. The date was October 8,1937.

Within the month Aggie and I would meet for the first time. Prior to that moment I knew nothing of her existence. It happened later that October at the end of a workday at the American Brass Co. where my father and I worked. We returned home on our Model T Ford and observed a 1936 green Chevrolet sedan parked in front of our home, which actually faced an alley. (continued on page 40) •



The year was 1919. Joseph Anthony had been discharged from the army in January of that year. Whatever was the occasion, Julia Zyzniewski (Kuczynski), apparently intrigued by Joseph's uniform, donned it and happened to be handy for the occasion to become a part of the fun. My mother Sofia and Julia were exceptionally good friends, which accounts for Julia being my godmother. Julia and Joseph were maternal first cousins.

Rev. Joseph or Father Joe as he came to be called, had come to visit my parents whom he had known since immigration days, and ever since had been good friends, sharing as they did the same heritage of the Dolhinovo-Budslav-Krivichi region. It follows that he knew me since my infancy. In 1924 he visited us on several occasions as a seminary student, and later when he became assistant pastor at our church of St. Casimir. But this time he brought with him his very attractive and vivacious youngest sister, just arrived from Poland. Granted, I immediately felt drawn to her but did not envision anything beyond acquaintanceship. We were barely out of an economic world depression that began in the fall of 1929. That same month I lost my job and the following month my father lost his.

Some months later Aggie began working for Cudahy Packing Co. in the town where she lived of Cudahy, Wis. She boarded with a very kind family of Andrew and Sally Kapustanczek and their three children, Mabel, Gilbert and Mildred. They had limited living spate, yet they accommodated Aggie and treated her as a member of the family.

It was in May of 1938 that 'Fr. Joe was instrumental in getting me a job at the same plant where Aggie worked. It was the only way to get a job. For the next 16 months I worked there and boarded with a family at $8 per week. I believe the starting pay was 44 cents an hour, but too often the hours per week were less than 40.

That my friendship with Aggie would blossom into romance should not have been surprising, given that our backgrounds had so much in common despite the disparity of where we were born. But without minimal economic security, rushing into wedlock seemed unwise. As it turned out, we were overtaken by events, the first of which was my induction into military service.

WORLD WAR II. It was the 1st of September of 1939 when I sat down to breakfast in my landlady s kitchen and we listened to news over the radio that Germany and Poland were at war. Tensions had been building for weeks. Poland's refusal to meet German demands resulted in aggression by the Third Reich. My landlady, of German ethnic background, and a decent matron, offered no opinion that would express any concern over Germany's attack on Poland. We remained silent, each aware that we were on opposite sides of an emotional issue. At the plant, Germans and Poles eyed each other uncomfortably but avoided rash words or actions. Our Polish foreman, tried valiantly to convince himself and us Poles that the Germans would soon be repulsed.

By September 17, after fierce resistance, Poles had to abandon Warsaw. They sought to organize a new defense line in eastern Poland but were met by invading Soviets, who by previous agreement with Germany timed their attack with the fall of the Polish capitol. Poles numbering 226,000 were taken prisoners by the Soviets; of this number 14,736 Polish officers that included some civilians were summarily executed by order of the Soviet Politburo in March of 1940 in the Katyn forest near Smolensk, U.S.S.R. The crime however would not come to light until 1943.

During the next 1 year and 9 months Sep.17,1939 to June 22, 1941, the Soviets will have deported 1i million Poles from eastern Poland. A reign of terror gripped the countryside as the NKVD , (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) paid midnight visits to all former civilian officials down to the lowest rank; gave them 20 minutes to take along what they could carry, with their families, carted them off to railheads, loaded and shipped them in sealed overcrowded freight cars regardless of extreme heat or cold, to Siberia, Kazakhstan and the Altajski Kraj, there to work on collective farms, mines, railroads, forests and other forced labor. All our kinsfolk on both sides of our families were spared deportation with exception of Walter Mleczko (Aggie's maternal cousin) whom the Soviets arrested and imprisoned in June of 1941.

Then in August of 1941 amnestied him and all Polish prisoners, due to a policy of recognizing Poles as allies in the war against the Nazis. Furthermore, the Poles were allowed to join the Second Polish Corps being organized in the south of Russia. Due however to Soviet inability to fully arm and supply the Polish Second Corps, Stalin was prevailed upon to allow the Corps to leave Russia under the jurisdiction of the British. But by far the greatest bulk of Polish deportees, for various reasons, never made it out of Russia again. The Corps went on to fight the Germans on the Italian peninsula. (See Odyssey)

WESTERN EUROPE'S DARKEST HOUR. On June 22,1940, France capitulated to the Germans and the rest of western Europe would soon come under German control. The Germans next attempted to subdue England solely by air bombardment and failed despite inflicting a great loss of life and property on the British. In America a growing concern for the future of Europe and its own security in the face of an all-powerful Germany, moved the government to institute a national lottery to determine the order in which men would be inducted into military service. I drew a low number placing me in an early contingent to leave Kenosha for basic training. Just before I left, Aggie and I became engaged, to be married, only God knew when.

MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR.At the time of our wedding, two years had elapsed since my induction into the army. Of that time, I served 14 months in the south Pacific. Soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, our anti-aircraft battery stationed in Camp Davis N. Carolina was transported by rail on a week's journey to San Francisco, California. On Jan.31 1942 we boarded the S.S. President Taylor and zig-zagged for two weeks across the Pacific to an island 2 degrees below the equator, named Canton. The atoll served as a refueling air base. After 10 months of near 120 degrees' days, free however from feeling any heat from the Japanese, the few of us not yet transferred, boarded a ship bound for the famous island of Oahu.

While there only four months I learned that my name was on a cadre list slated for the U.S. Until that moment, any thought of marriage hinged on war's end and my survival. In response to my proposal of marriage during the anticipated twenty-day furlough, Aggie readily consented in her next letter; 52 years had passed since first we met. On May 1, 1943 we exchanged vows in Holy Family church in Cudahy, Wisconsin Fr. Joe serving there as assistant pastor, officiated. Two days later I was heading back to the reality of army life at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Aggie joined me in nearby El Paso the following August. We lived in a dilapidated, cockroach infested hotel room at $14.50 a month. To fill in her time during my absences, she took a job sewing uniforms. Then about April of 1944 my unit and others were transferred into infantry at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas. Aggie with barely two months away before giving birth to twins, followed with five other wives cramped into one automobile. Living quarters in Fort Smith were unavailable, plus my highly unpredictable future all argued for Aggie to go live with my parents. I applied for and received a week's leave to accompanier to Kenosha. While still at Camp Chaffee, a telegram informed me that I had become a father of a boy and girl, John and Jean. As all fathers must experience, it was a moment of inexplicable elation, but dampened by the prospect of an indeterminable separation.

After six weeks of infantry training, Fort Meade, Maryland, and also a port of embarkation to France, beckoned us. After a week, all below the rank of sergeant were plucked out and sent as replacements of men lost since the Normandy invasion. While still at Ft. Bliss I accepted a promotion to sergeant even though I was comfortable doing carpenter work as a corporal. The small difference in pay was however important.

Two hundred of us sergeants were sent back to Texas at Camp Hood for advanced infantry training followed by promotion to a newly instituted rank of "technical sergeants" and put in charge of training a continuing flow of inductees despite victory in Europe on May 9, 1945.

THE GERMAN OCCUPATION OF EASTERN POLAND. On June 22,1941, Germany having become the master of western Europe and western Poland, yet unable to humble England, embarked on a war with the largest of Slav nations when it unleashed its seemingly invincible armies against the Soviet Union on a 1000-mile front.

My maternal uncle Arkady Lagutko reminisced in a recent letter how they received the news of Germany's invasion. The letter was written in 1996 at 91 years of age, the only survivor of both our parents' generation. Quote "It was on a Sunday in the town of Dolhinovo as people emerged from church services, they noticed a speaker's stand had been put in place. A crowd began to gather in anticipation of something important to be announced. A comrade official approached the podium and proclaimed: It’s no secret, we are at war! The German snout of a swine is burrowing into the Soviet Union!" End of quote.

Due to German-Soviet collusion to divide Poland between them, the people of eastern Poland were not informed by the Soviets of the horrors perpetrated by the Germans in western Poland. At the news of German invasion of the Soviet Union, the people of eastern Poland saw instead the Germans as liberators after almost two years of Soviet occupation, tyranny and terror.

By Wednesday the German vanguard appeared. Aggie's niece upon my request recently wrote of what she recalled of those disturbing times as a child. Quote: "The German columns entered our territory soon after war had been announced. God certainly lived with us. Some soldiers asked for food but were otherwise. non-belligerent toward us. But in Doihinovo where many Jews lived and owned, shops, the Germans destroyed everything of theirs, such a dislike they had for them. Jews were herded into barns and set on fire, the poor ones. Thirty kilometers from us, witnesses told of a huge pit that was dug into which executed Jews were thrown and covered with earth. Those who saw the burial site observed the earth moving over the mass grave. I write this with trembling hand. May God grant never to see it’s like or war again." End quote.

AFTER SOVIETS, GERMANS LOOK GOOD. Compared to the Soviet, the German occupation approached the tolerable. They did not interfere with land ownership, property or production provided the required taxes were paid. Which as noted by testimonials were not excessive. Irreconcilable however was the German genocidal policy toward Jews that could not ever encourage any trust in the Germans. Except for isolated acts of courage in the protection of Jews at the risk of being shot, the general populace, being themselves subject to various administrative restraints could do nothing to alleviate the Jewish predicament. Yet it was the Germans who removed the Soviet terror. On that score it was a plus.

What complicated life for the occupying German force, and more so for the populace were partisan bands purporting to fight Germans, but actually were able only to intimidate and plunder helpless peasant farmers. The partisans were for the most part "kolhoznik0 (collective farm workers) from across the Soviet-Polish border nearby, who having been collectivized since the early 1930's lived in abject poverty. Making forays into former Polish territory revealed to them, that by their own standards, the peasants in Poland had become rich; which only whetted their appetite for plunder. They became the bane of the populace throughout the former eastern Poland. The Germans were: not all that affected until the last two years of warfare when the advancing Soviets took strict control of partisans; who then began an effective harassment of the retreating Germans.

Anna Mleczko, a former resident of Dolhinovo recllected for us her personal disdain for partisans, an opinion that was shared by many in testimonials recorded by author Franciszek Sielicki. She described how the partisans set her house on fire with her family in it. Her husband Walter, having been previously arrested and deported by the Soviets, she found herself alone to care for two very young daughters and Walter's aged parents. Her home destroyed, her brother offered her shelter: F. Sielicki cited just such an incident, that might very well have been one and the same.

(continued on page 47)

Walter and Anna Mleczko

Reunited at last after 17 years of involuntary separation, Anna joined Walter her husband (Aggie's maternal Cousin) in 1958. Walter had immigrated earlier in 1950 from England to Kenosha. The reunion came about because Anna declared Polish citizenship, that gave her the right of repatriation from the Soviet Union to Poland. She could not have left earlier while Walter's parents were still living and in her care, nevertheless she beat the deadline. As Polish citizens, she and her daughter Helen were eligible to join Walter in America. An older daughter, Romualda, had no choice but to remain with her husband and children in the Soviet Union.,

Anna's life during that long absence of her husband is a story in itself, only briefly touched upon here. Alone, she coped with a myriad of tasks and hardships during Soviet, then German occupations and followed by the return of the Soviets. Never free of anxiety but constantly endeavoring to provide and protect her children with some help from her father-in-law while he was still able. Besides working in the sovkhoz she planted and harvested her garden and kept a cow. She was even harassed because Walter did not return. One arrest by the Soviets lasted Walter his lifetime. She truly was an example of courage and resourcefulness despite adversity.

Walter began his odyssey of troubles when in June of 1941 on his way to work, he was accosted and imprisoned by an armed Soviet agent without ever knowing what was the charge against him. He was deported deep into Russia, amnestied in August and began a trek to southern Russia where he joined a Polish force being assembled and recognized by the Soviets as an ally, Through the circuitous route of the Near East, he landed with his unit of the Second Polish Corps in Italy and fought Germans until war's end. England became his home for four years and since, the United States.

They had much to tell each other and much of that we heard as well0It served to build our appreciation 'of that which Walter and Anna had experienced, each in a world apart.

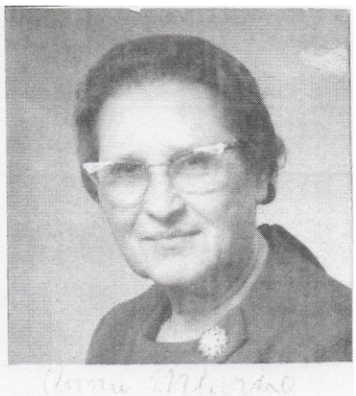
Aggie's and my association with Walter and Anna could not have been closer. In 1966 they contracted me to build them a house while they visited Poland, one of their several trips there. Walter and I did many projects together of carpentry and cabinet making, his trade from youth. Walter retired from a factory job where he did carpentry. After only ten years of retirement, it was on Christmas Eve of 1980, he and Anna went to midnight Mass at St. Casimir, and before the Mass began, Walter died of a heart attack at age 75. Born in 1905, both were natives of Dolhinovo in what was then Russia. Anna lived to see her daughter Romualda come to visit her twice from the Soviet Union. Anna died also of a heart attack on August 27, 1992 at age 87.

Because of the plunder and even wanton murder, the populace acquired a deep loathing of the partisans, Aggie's niece wrote of her childhood experience: "We hid our cow and calf in a straw stack, but the partisans found them and with everything else they could lay their hands on, absconded."

When the Germans began a general retreat their repression grew. Persecution of Polish priests often ended with imprisonment or execution. One example was Father Wieczorek, pastor of my father's former church in Parafyanovo, who faced a firing squad in 1941.

Many teenage youths of both sexes were transported to Germany as slave labor e.g., _idward Mleczko,Anton Apanasewicz, my uncle Arkady's second wife Mary and a mass of others; to work on farms, in factories, mines and doing every other conceivable labor.

In July of 1944, victorious Soviet armies approached the Vilno region while continuing to drive the Germans westward on a wide front. The populace of the former eastern Poland with a feeling of dread and. apprehension awaited the return of the Soviets. Their first experience with communism from 1939 to 1941 justified that fear. They saw the beginning of collectivization then, they could expect its full implementation and all that implied. It would mean conforming to a way of life for which they felt a visceral abhorrence; contrary to all they held dear, and indeed it was an attempt to change the nature of man.



THE OUTRAGE OF COLLECTIVIZATION. _____ Since 1928 to the early 1930's, the Soviets had forcibly implemented collectivization in the Soviet Union, but not without opposition, especially in Ukraine. There lay the best soil in all of the S.U. Because of that fact? Ukrainian peasant farmers had achieved a more solid prosperity, having survived the expropriations of War Communism from 1918 to 1922 and thereafter the taxes under the New Economic Policy-and they still maintained a satisfactory level of prosperity. But that did not fit in with the Communist Party objective, i.e. the destruction of capitalism, of which the "kulak" (meaning fist, a pejorative describing a prosperous peasant farmer) was its only remaining exponent in the S.U. Dekulakization became a watchword of the Party. Its chief advocate, Joseph Stalin, (Iosif Visarionovich Dzhugashvili) the most absolute and cruel ruler in Russian history, was determined to remove the last vestige of capitalism from Soviet soil at all costs.

When Ukrainian peasant farmers rose in rebellion against collectivization, Stalin entrusted Nikita Krushchev (an Ukrainian) with the task of dekulakization of Ukraine. Krushchev, in one of the great ruthless acts of all time, embarked on a campaign of starvation, summary executions and mass deportations to the outer reaches of Siberia. The will of Stalin and the Communist Party prevailed, and complete collectivization was achieved. The greatest blunder in history became the underpinning principle of Soviet agriculture.

During the first occupation of eastern Poland by the Soviets from 1939 to 1941, it is unclear to what extent collectivization occurred. We know of the mass r deportations and the witch hunt for kulaks. Beginning with Sep.17,1939, Soviet agents began a campaign against kulaks by organizing the poorest peasants into committees, empowering them to. define who the kulaks were what and how much to expropriate. It was part of the initial propaganda ploy to show the Soviets as champions of the "oppressed". Farmers who hired help on a regular basis were targeted as exploiters and therefore candidates for deportation.

* An old letter from Aggie niece reveals that implementation of all out collectivization began. as of January 1953,

We don't know what circumstances served to spare the Kasperowicz family from deportation, the kulak profile might well have been theirs. Nevertheless, they did not escape expropriation of all their land with exception 40/100 of a hectare for a private garden alongside their home. The wooded area that Jozef conserved and cherished did not survive for long after the Soviets made their appearance. A period of anarchy gave license to plunder. To protest would have been foolhardy, survival depended on quiet acquiescence.

A PERSONAL VIEW OF THE KOLHOZ. Since our trip to the Soviet Union in 1983, I had been corresponding with Aggie's nephew, Anton Kasperowicz. In 1998 upon my request he briefly described the transition from the private to the collective system of farming. from his third generation point of view. He wrote: "I remember how our parents lived in the early years. They worked for themselves, acquired a little of something and by their own efforts improved their situation. Then came the communist regime and with it, collectivization. They took all that we had and we became destitute as did the entire countryside. We worked in the kolhoz" (collective farm) from morning till night on the premise of being paid at year's end. The year ended but there was nothing with which to pay us. We were deceived. That state of affairs continued until the kolhoz or sovkhoz began to bring in a surplus, (Sovkhoz replaced the kolhoz. Whereas the kolhoz paid its members out of surplus, if indeed there was one after expenses, the sovkhoz paid its workers by day labor), a system still in effect. Anton and his wife have long since found employment in industry.

He continues: "Recently it’s become possible to lease land or acquire it by redemptive arrangement. But the question remains, how to work the land? Machinery is beyond anyone's means to buy and is available only to the sovkhozes. Pu.el is also unobtainable. Altogether it’s a questionable proposition. But enough of these mind numbing puzzles that lend themselves neither to reason or remedy." End of quote.

The Soviet Union's failure to produce adequate harvests over the sixty years of collective experimentation contributed to its eventual collapse. The dilemmas defined by Anton, to find an alternative to the sovkhoz, seems at least for the present generation of political leaders an insurmountable hurdle, in both, Russia and Belarus®

PEACE WITHOUT JOY. The European phase of the "Great Patriotic War"designated as such by the Communist Party, but known in the West as World War II, came to an end on May 9, 1945. Anxiously we awaited news of our relatives, and when the first letters arrived we learned that they were among the"living", but no details. Due to the strict censorship, nothing of what they endured for almost two years under Soviets, three years of German occupation or of their experiences since the Soviets returned 9 did they dare mention.A complaint or criticism expressed in a letter could result in a knock on the door by an NKVD team. All during the cold war years, ties with America were viewed with suspicion by Soviet authorities. Since 1991 with the independence of Belarus, censorship is no longer a problem.

Eventually we learned much of what happened there from Anna Mleczko who became repatriated to Poland and subsequently immigrated to the U.S.in 1958. Her account of experiences from 1939 enabled us, short of being there ourselves, to understand more fully the plight of people living in eastern Poland since the begining of W W II.

RELIGION SURVIVED IN THE SOVIET UNION. Churches remained open but not all. Priests were not always available. In places like my father's church in Parafyanovo, the church was used as a warehouse. In such instances people simply stopped going to church because of difficulty to attend another a good distance away. Where a church remained open as in Dolhinovo, a priest was unavailable. My uncle Arkady was known for leading a congregation in a devotional prayer.

The general attitude of authorities was officially anti-religious. The youth especially were vulnerable to ridicule of religion despite parental efforts to maintain contact with the church and the sacraments. There were examples of youth participating in acts of church vandalism with impunity. Churches generally fell into disrepair. Since 1991 however, religion has gained back its importance.The Parafyanovo church has been refurbished and so have the others with less damage. New churches are being built from meager funds and personal effort. The resurgence of religion in Belarus approaches the miraculous. Very recent letters speak of pilgrimages from long distances,even from Russia, to churches of centuries old reknown, as in the case of the church in Budslav with its famous icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Many who were born after WW II have converted from atheism to the faith of their forebears whether Catholic or Orthodox.Happily the Polish Catholic minority is enjoying a climate of tolerance as citizens of Belarus,

Budslav became the famous venue for a shrine visited by pilgrims near and far. The present church built in 1783 was preceded by one built in 1643 (still in existence)and in 1500 by the original wood structure that gained reknown as the "buda" or shed. Its fame (slava) spread when miracles were attributed to the Virgin Mary whose icon was placed in the shrine. The church attracts immense crowds every July 2nd on the feast of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary, which is also the name of the church. It was and still is the Lagutko family parish church.

The church of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary, colloquially referred to as the "Budslayski Church"; on July 2,1993 was invested with the title of Minor Basilica of the Virgin Mary. It is also the home parish church of the Lagutko family.

IN CONCLUSION. If Jozef and Anna with other family members had not been collectivized during the Soviet occupation of 1939-41, that fate awaited them at war's end. Jozef at 75 years of age and Anna at 73, looked on as all that they had achieved since they returned from America in 1903-04, ceased to exist.

To have had land and property expropriated, to have been forced to give up a way of life dear to them, and worse to have lost basic freedom itself, had to be nothing less than crushing. From their ancient culture and religion they learned to accept misfortune, while believing they could have been spared a fate even worse. Which might have been the case had anyone of their family been deported to somewhere like Kazakhstan or Siberia,

Nothing remained but to find a way to survive, even if it meant joining the detested kolhoz. We will never know all the sorry details of the years that followed for Jozef and Anna,their grown children and grandchildren. It certainly was not natural for them to switch from working their own land to laboring in a collective environment, where the link between work and reward was hypothetical rather than real. As in truth it turned out to be.

With some grand and great grandchildren, the Soviets succeeded in molding them along the lines of their bizarre ideology. In 1983 we met a grandson and a great grandson of Jozef and Anna. They were products of Soviet schools and had become true believers in the Soviet system. It bordered on the surreal when they urged me to tell Americans the good news of Soviet success.

The great grandson in 1990 had the opportunity to find temporary work in Poland. Though a communist state at the time, Poles enjoyed religious freedom and the Communist Party did not monopolize quite to the extent it did in the Soviet Union. So for the first time he saw people going in mass to church. That intrigued him and led to his conversion from atheism. He began writing us in self-taught Polish and never resorted too Russian again.

He truly felt betrayed by the Soviets, at one point returned his Party membership card. On his return to Belarus, he began participating in the construction of a church in his city of Zhodzino. and began raising his daughter and son as members of a new and growing Christian community. God's ways are indeed inscrutable.

As for Jozef and Anna, they remained where they were and worked to the extent they could at their age on the 40/100 of a hectare that was allotted to them. They had help and support from their son John and the other children and grandchildren. In their predicament they knew, come what might, all that was important to them was inner peace and that came only with their trust in God.

Sometime in the late fall of 1948, Jozef at 78 years of age, in what turned out to be his last gesture of staying engaged in the everyday demands of living, went out into the chill air to where a cow belonging to Genevieve their widowed daughter, had strayed into the muddy edge of the nearby stream and was unable to extricate itself. Jozef went to its rescue and in freeing the cow submitted himself to undue exertion and fatigue. Shortly thereafter became seriously ill, probably of pneumonia and as a result, died. In four years hence, Anna followed her husband of 56 years to eternity at the age of 80. God grant them and all the deceased members of their family everlasting light and peace!

When word reached Fr. Joe of his father's death, he asked Aggie and me with our children, John and Jean age 4and Rita age 2 to participate with him in a Eucharist in which he presided for the repose of the soul of his father and all the faithful departed. Sister M. Alba(Barbara) having been released from the convent for the occasion also attended. The same ritual was repeated when word reached us of Anna's passing away. It was fitting and proper for us to have joined spiritually with grieving kinsfolk abroad in observing the loss of a loving patriarch and matriarch.

A TRADITION UPHELD. Six months into the German occupation of caster Poland, Aggie received a letter dated December 24, 1941, in which her parents had sent their blessings on the occasion of our engagement to be married. They had learned about it from Fr. Joe sometime after my induction into the army in May of 1941. At the time that Aggie received the letter, I was on my way to the South Pacific.

A BELATED ACQUAINTANCESHIP. Not having known Aggie's parents personally, the writing of this account has for the first time enabled me to establish what amounts to a spiritual and belated relationship with them. It began recently with a cursory attempt to construct a chronology of Aggie's family. Once begun, the idea mushroomed into examining the origins of her forebears and mine. The preceding narrative became the result.

Thanks to Aggie's reminiscences during our daily walks in the nearby woods, stories about her parents and home life in Poland came to the surface that might otherwise had never been mentioned. Other facts of historical value were obtained from recently acquired printed matter quite by chance, without which a proper context could not have been established. Another source of information could only have been derived through connections with immigrant relatives and lastly through correspondence with kin living in pre-war eastern Poland, who subsequently became citizens of the Soviet Union, and since 1991, of Belarus.

The above account, it is hoped, will provide a connecting thread to those of our progeny who may at one time or another wonder how and when it all happened...

Completed this 8th day of August 1999, Stanley W. Sturycz
Kenosha, Wisconsin

Christmas Day
2001

Strange that I should revisit and old but precious letter, preserved these many years, filed away to be translated at-some future date. It was written by Aggie's father at age 71 on Christmas Eve of 1941, sixty years ago to the day!

He wrote in self-taught Polish with a sprinkling of endemic Belarusian dialect. The region of Aggie's parents, the former eastern Poland (1918-1939) from which she emigrated in October of 1937, had come under Soviet control on September 17,1939. For the next year and nine months the region’s populace experienced what Russians had been enduring since the coming of Stalin to power by the late 1920's and during the 1930's, that of unrelenting terror.

On June 22, 1941, Germans invaded the Soviet Union to the great relief of people in eastern Poland. Six months into German occupation, Jozef Kasperowicz wrote to his daughter residing in Cudahy, Wis. In the letter he conveyed parental approval and blessing to my future spouse. It was a matter of tradition. At that point in time, German occupation had about it the aspect of permanence and most importantly, unlike the Soviets, passed for being benign. Perhaps that is why Aggie's father felt upbeat enough about the future to invite daughter and her husband to return to homeland on the promise to bequeath her with a homestead.

The foregoing is a translation of that letter from Jozef Kasperowicz (1870-1948) and Anna his wife (1872-1952) to their daughter Agatha with reference also to their priest son Joseph.

A letter from Jozef and Anna Kasperowicz to their daughter Agatha.

Praised be Jesus Christ! The year of 1941 24th day of December.

Dear daughter, we received your letter on Christmas Day (1941) and were gladdened to learn of your health and wellbeing. We thank you for remembering us and mutually send our parental blessings; may God bless you. We congratulate you with the Birthday of the Christ Child and with the New Year. We wish you happiness, good health and that we may mutually expect to converse if only through letters; and God willing, to see another year.

We wish to inform you that so far, thanks be to God we are alive and well, the future remains in God's hands. Just now a man who worked for us last year, dropped in to inquire if we would hire him again in the spring. We told him that it was our intention. The past harvest though fair, failed to meet our expectations due to a dry summer.

All of us, your sisters and brothers, their children and our relatives send their greetings and kind regards, wishing you happiness in the New Year. Joseph wrote that your fiancé has been called to military service and that on his return in the spring, you hope to be married. I trust you will not forget us and we for our part give approval and impart to you both our blessing. God love you. Though it be from far away we bestow our kisses and love.

Last summer we received two letters from you. Joseph informed us that you both had received two letters from us. Without delay I responded with two letters. Did you receive them?

And now my child when that day of your nuptials arrives, we your father and mother send you our parental blessing, in the name of the Fath9 Son and Holy Spirit, and may God help you to respect and hold in esteem this sacrament and in all that you do.

Should you ever decide to return, our homestead of 9 hectares, a horse and a cow await your ownership. And now, our bride-to-be, for the moment, we bid you farewell. Love and kisses.

P.S. Dear child, we congratulate you with the feast day of Saint Agatha your patron; may she always be a comfort to you, as in life so too at the hour of death.

Polish version of the same letter.

Niech bgdzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus! 1941 roku 24—go grudnia

Kochane dziecko, List otrzymali na Bole Narodzenie. Bardzo ucieszyli si uslyszyc o waszym dobrym zdrowiu i powodzeniu. Dzigkujemy wam ze wy nas nie zapominacie, kochane dziatki. Wzajemnie zasylamy wam rodzicielskie blogoslawieAstwo take niech was BOg blogoslawi. Winszujemy ze irviqtem Narodzonego Dziecia,tka i z Nowym Rokiem . Zyczymy wam wszystkim wesolego powodzenia i milego zdrowia, wzajemnie doczekac drugiego i choc przez listy porozmawia6 z woli Bolej.

A teraz donoszq wam ze dotychczas, dzieki Bogu, my Zywy i zdrowi; a dalej jak Bog da. Pastuch byl, teraz poszedl, ale prosil ,Zeby jego znow wzieli, to mote znow weZmim, bo mo'Ze ora, na Zyto i kartofla. Dobrze rodzilo, jarzyna to slabo, bo suche bylo lato.

Od wszystkich wzajemnie uszanowanie i ukion siOstr i braci z dzieCmi; Zycza,, warn wesolego powodzenia w Nowym Roku, take od krewnych pozdrowienia.

JOzef pisal latem Ze Adzi narzeczony pOjdzie do wOjska. Jak powrOci na wiosnq to niech sobie siq Zeniq. Moe bqdat pamietac rodzicow, pozwalamy, ojciec i matka, zegnamy i blogoslawimy. Zostancie z Bogiem; ealujemy was, kochamy zaocznie.

•

Kochana dziecko Agatka, chociaz nie otrzymalem od ciebie listu, choc z opoznicniem, winszujemy swiqtem Narodzenia Dzieci;tka Jezus, a 1,7,k77'. Nowym Rokiem, szczgAciem weselic siq z Bogiem. Latem otrzymalem dwa listy od ciebie i od Jozefa, ze wy od nas otrzymali wiqc znow w prqd, kosci do was dwa listy poslalem. Czy otrzymali?

A teraz kochana dziecko, kiedy doczekacie tego czasu, to my oboje wzajemnie, ojciec i matka zasylamy rodzicielskie blogoslawienstwo i ;'zegnamy ias, z woli Boej szanowac ten sakrament. Zyczymy wam wszelkiego powodzenia a najwiqcej milego zdrowia; take niech was b6g poblogoslawi w czem od 1.3oga

Kiedy mono bqdzie przyjechac, to dla ciebie pozostanie 9 hektarow, zrebie krowa. Ateraz maladaja,nic wiqcej. Kochamy i caiujemy.

Kochana dziecko, winszujemy z dniem uroczysto6ci Sw, Agaty1 patronki twojej; niech ona bqdzie pociecha, jak w yciu tak I w godzinq smierci.