

**100 YEARS  
OF THE POLISH  
COMMUNITY IN WINDSOR**

**BIAŁY ORZEŁ W WINDSOR:  
THE POLISH EAGLE IN WINDSOR**



**Exhibition Sponsor**

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**Research source:**

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1908 – 2008 by Agata Rajski**

**Translation by Professor Frank Simpson**

Unless otherwise noted images in the exhibition also came from this manuscript







Plomien Theatre Group, Modern Dance, 2005, P13733



Plomien Theatre Group, Modern Dance, 2005, P13734





Council of Polish Alliance of Canada, 2007, P13720





Julcia and Louie Dussault, Happy Louie played at the Masonic Temple on Ouellette in the 1970s, P13665, Collection of Sophie Drab



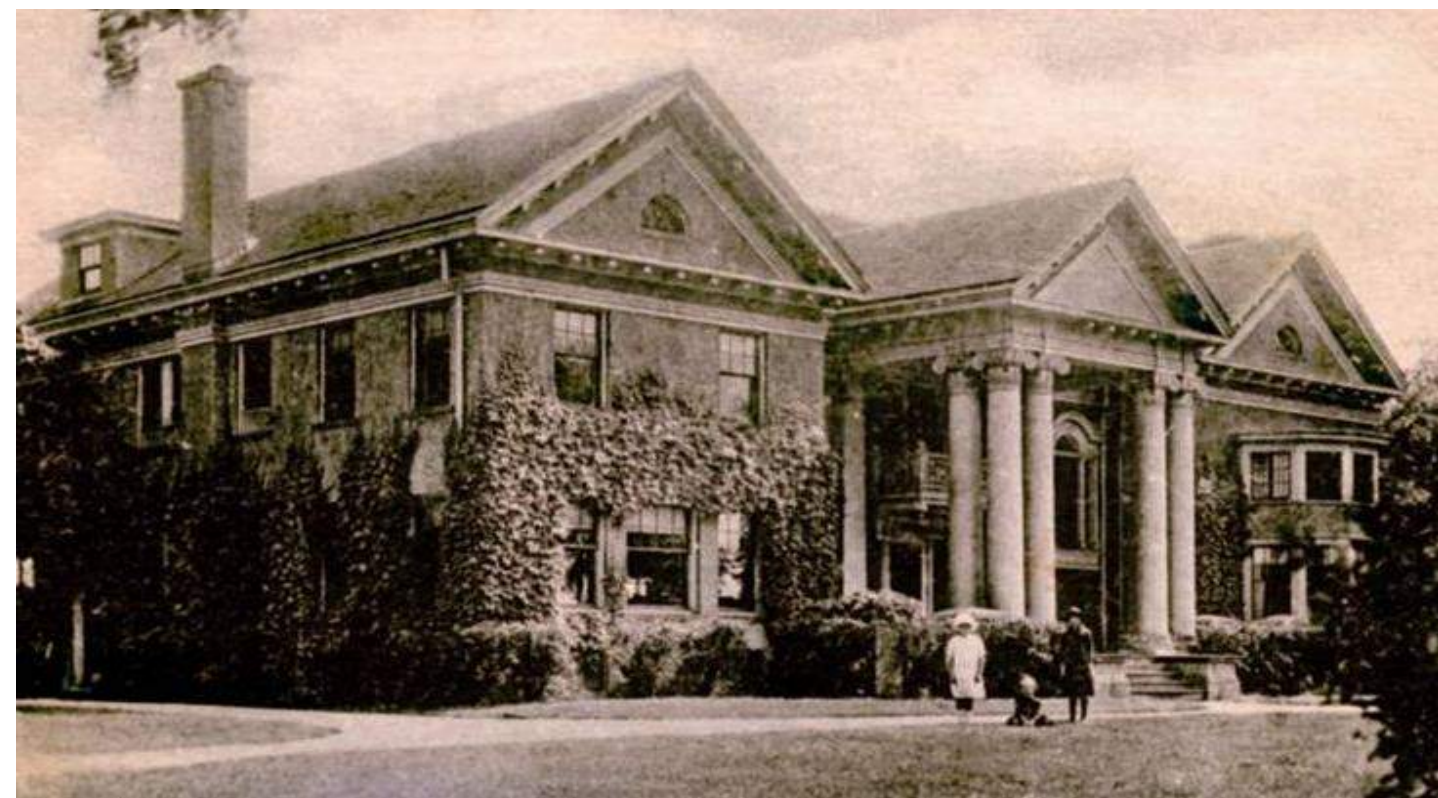
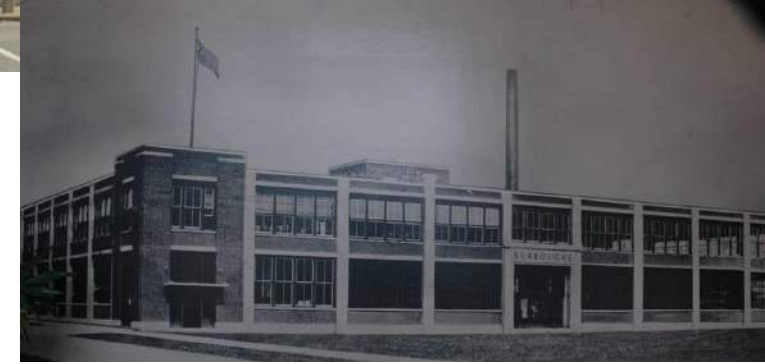
## Post 126 Polish Army Veterans Association

The interwar period saw the creation of numerous army congregations throughout towns and cities in Canada. The Polish Army Veterans Association was one of these groups formed completely of those from the Polish fronts of the First World War. The Association's conception in 1932 saw the group assemble in Dom Polski Hall and the basement of Holy Trinity Parish. The Association's functions included the promotion of Polish and Canadian culture, the teaching of Polish history, comradeship as well as social and financial assistance for veterans.

During the Second World War the Association assisted in the recruitment of Polish and Polish-Canadian soldiers in the local area. Due to the location of an official Polish recruiting station, the influence of Post 126 was particularly valuable. In 1946 the Women's Auxiliary was established that consisted of 33 women. Both the veterans and Women's Auxiliary became a part of the Canadian Legion in 1952 where they continued teaching new members and the local region of Polish culture while assisting veterans of the First and Second World Wars. While the group has decreased in size over the decades, initiatives to teach of the Polish war experience remain a priority. In past decades Post 126 has educated citizens regarding the massacre at Katyn, and erected a monument to Polish-Canadians who perished in the war that stands at Heavenly Rest Cemetery.



**Top:** Present-day site of former quarters of Polish Army, 2005, P13492  
**Right:** Quarters of Polish Army, 1941, P13489



**Top:** Henckel House, Headquarters of Polish Army, P13482

**Bottom:** Monument of the fallen soldiers, P13483



**Top:** Members of Youth Brigade in England, 1943, P13690

**Middle:** Soliders of Polish Armed Forces in front of Henckel House, 1942, P13487

**Bottom:** Group of Veterans at Holy Trinity Church, P13689





**Top left:** Veterans Association Group, 1946, P13625

**Bottom left:** Polish soldiers in barracks, 1942, P13626

**Right:** S & J Tuzin, P Zych, W W II, P13630

**Collection of Sophie Drab**





## Jerry Barycki

Jerry Barycki is among the most visibly active citizens of Windsor in the promotion of Polish culture. Jerry graduated from Warsaw Polytech and became an engineer upon his arrival in Canada in 1984. Shortly after Jerry came to Windsor he spared little time in immersing himself with projects such as Polonia Park, Holy Trinity Church, the twinning of Windsor with Lublin, Poland, organizing Polish Week in the city, serving as vice-president of the Canadian Polish Congress, contributing to the Polonia Centre, and participating within the International Relations Committee. Jerry volunteers much of his time to the success of these events and organizations and maintains his presence in Polonia's business community through the Polish Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor. As a supporter of Polish culture, business, and political initiatives, Jerry serves as a valuable ambassador between Windsor and Poland by strengthening the foundation of international relations between both regions.



### Clockwise from left:

Jerry Barycki, P 13783

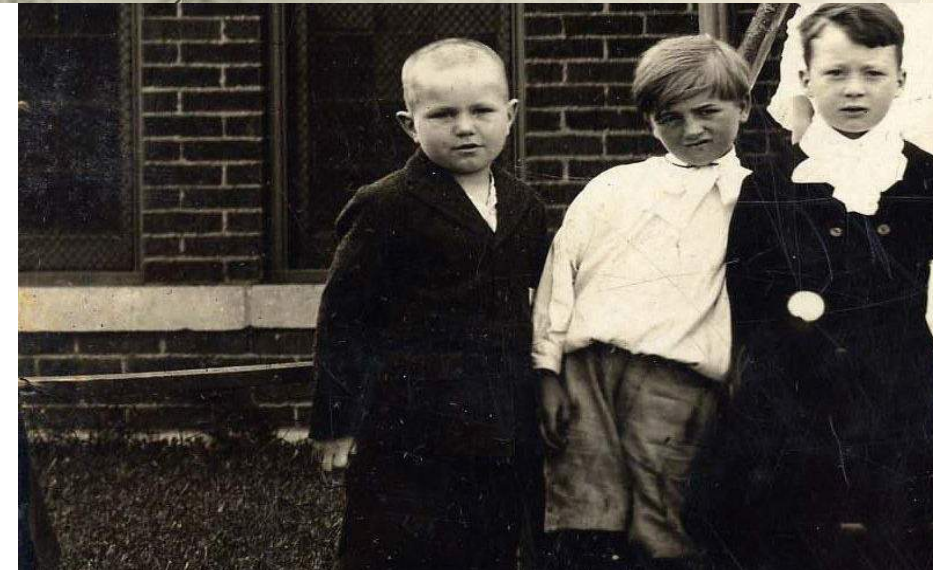
Presentation of award to Megan Street, University of Windsor student, 2002, P13784

Official launching of Polish Week 2006 events at City Hall, P13785

Meeting with Senate Marshal of Polish Republic, 2006, P13786







## Blak's Bakery

The high volume of Polish immigration during the solidarity era serves as the base for Windsor's Polonia in the present day. However Blak's Bakery on Langlois Avenue is the direct product of Polish immigration in the opening decades of the twentieth century. Peter and Elsie Blak's arrival from Poland in 1918 took them first to Rochester, New York and then eventually Windsor. Prior to their arrival in the city, Peter gained experience in the baking industry and eventually opened Blak's Bakery on Langlois where it still stands. The bakery prospered during the 1920s, extended help to those in need during the depression, and continued to provide free baked goods for Polish veterans during and after the Second World War. Blak's Bakery has spanned nearly nine decades and four generations. The business remains family-owned and the Blaks still undertake an active role in serving the public on a day to day basis as well as becoming local celebrities every Shrove Tuesday with the production of their famous punchkis.



**Top left:** Peter and Elsie Black with dog, P13569

**Bottom left:** Anthony Blak in front of the bakery, late 1920s, P13568

**Collection of Anthony Blak**

**Above:** Blak Family portrait, P13587

Anthony Blak First Communion 1930s, P13567

**Collection of Anthony Blak**

**Inset:** Bread coupon used during WWII, P13444



# The Polish-Canadian Business and Professional Association

The Polish-Canadian Business and Professional Association serves as a binding force between local Canadian and Polish businesses. Since the Association's establishment in 1996, the Association has created a foundation for business collaboration to strengthen the commercial and culture wealth Windsor possesses. In tandem with other organizations the Association has promoted various upstanding youth in the Polish community through financially supporting their artistic and academic ventures. The organization has been present in local politics which can be seen through the notable achievement of establishing Lublin, Poland as a twin city of Windsor. A Windsor trade mission was sent to Poland with the help of the Association which broadened opportunities for investment in Windsor on behalf of those in Lublin as well as Windsor investment in the city of Lublin. The Association has also succeeded in creating diplomatic arrangements such as agreements between St. Clair College and the Lublin School of Business. The Association serves as one of the primary organizers of Polish week in Windsor.



**Left top:**  
Business Dinner  
sponsors, 2007,  
P13702  
**Below:** Mayor  
MacCallion with  
business members,  
2006, P13697



**Right Top:**

Signing agreement Canada-  
Poland, 2002, P13696

**Below:** Business Dinner, 2003,  
P13703





## Businesses

Windsor Polonia has given birth to a number of large and small businesses that have sustained the Polish community as a whole. Whether these businesses take the form of a small yet savory establishment such as *Crossroads Restaurant*, or a local trucking industry so characteristic of Windsor such as *Gorski Bulk Transport*, Windsor's Polonia has widely contributed to all sectors of the city. Other small businesses such as *Blak's Bakery* have become a local staple for those with a sweet-tooth since the interwar era, while *Victoria Steel* has assisted in building Windsor's structures since the post-war economic boom.

The *European Market* serves the needs of Canadians and first generation immigrants as a central location for Polish and European foods. The market is located In *Wroclaw Court* which takes the form of a commercial shopping plaza. Its close proximity to Langlois Avenue and Ottawa street make the Plaza a center of business transactions and cultural preservation throughout Windsor's Polonia. A few blocks from Wroclaw Court sits the *Polish Parishes Credit Union* on Ottawa Street which assists in managing financial assets of Windsor's Polonia. The city's Polish establishments contribute strongly to the visible ethnic environment that serves as one of Windsor's most unique characteristics.

**Left:** Blak's Bakery, 2005, P13443

**Right:** Crossroads café, P13673

**Collection of the Ursuline Sisters**



**Right:** European Market Deli, P136711

**Collection of the Ursuline Sisters**

**Below:** European Market, P13472





## The Canadian Polish Congress

The Canadian Polish Congress was formed in 1944. Windsor was one of the urban centers granted a local branch within the Congress due to Polonia's strong presence in the city. The base of Congress operations were held at Dom Polski Hall [that became a focal point] for Polish culture and events. In 1957, the local branch participated in a Fund for Help of Poland which attempted to ease the burdens caused by the Second World War and the resulting Soviet occupation. In 1966 the Branch was dissolved because its membership had dwindled.

2001 marked the reincarnation of the Windsor branch which was supported by the Polish Social Club, Polish Canadian Business and Professional Association, The Polonia Centre, the Polish Alliance of Canada Group 20 and the Polish-Canadian Club in Chatham. The objectives of the Congress were to promote cooperation between Polish organizations in Canada, highlighting Polish contributions to Canadian society, providing assistance to Polish immigrants, and the teaching and promotion of Polish culture. The local branch has traveled beyond Ontario's borders to promote these objectives and has demonstrated support for Poland's desire to join the European Union.



## Polish Social Club

The Polish social Club was formed in 1951. Original membership mainly consisted of former WWII veterans in an effort to preserve Polish culture through community events. The activities of the club include lectures, film viewings, musical presentations and literary gatherings. Fund-raising activities are of strong importance to the club as they raise money to assist Polish cultural events. The club has purchased books for the University of Windsor and gives financial assistance to Windsor's Polish Language School. War veterans are highly regarded by the Polish Club as many of their events and members have ties to those who fought in the Second World War. This organization has also contributed financially on an international level through their contributions to the Catholic University in Lublin, the General Sikorski Institute and Museum in London, and the Institute for the Blind in Laski.

**Left:** Creation of Canadian Polish Congress in Windsor, 2001, P13748

**Right, top:** Meeting with Ambassador Professor B. Grezlonski, 1999, P13739

**Bottom:** Meeting with Ambassador RP Dr. P Dobrowolski, 2002, P13740







**Left, top to bottom:**  
 Carrousel Spinning display, P13687  
 Carrousel Easter display, P13685  
 Carrousel Harvest display, P13686  
**Collection of the Ursuline Sisters**



## Carrousel of Nations - Polish Village

In 1973, the Multicultural Council of Windsor was established. It was subsidized by the Federal and Provincial Governments. The objective of the newly-formed Council was the preservation and nurturing of national traditions and cultures, while at the same time learning about and respecting the cultures of other ethnic groups. In the framework of a multicultural festival, the Windsor Polonia has organized the “Polish Village” in each June since 1975. The Festival lasts three days and includes an exhibition of Polish cultural achievements, organized in the Dom Polski Hall, linked with performances by artistic groups and the tasting of Polish cuisine. The “Polish Village” enjoys great popularity, as evidenced by the crowds of participants. The organizer of the Festival is the Inter-organization Polonia Committee.



**Top:** Tasting of Polish cuisine during Carrousel of the Nations, 1997, P13724

**Bottom:** Exhibition during Polish Week, 2001, P13735





## St. Stanislaus and St. Casimir's Polish Parishes Credit Union

The St. Stanislaus and St. Casimir's Polish Parishes Credit Union was founded in Toronto during mid-1945. It is currently one of the largest Parish-based financial institutions in the world with twenty branches throughout Ontario. The Windsor branch was opened on Ottawa St. during June of 1991 thus providing those of Polish affiliation with the opportunity to establish chequing, savings and business accounts as well as investing for future gain through RRSPs. Through connections with other institutions such as the Church, the Credit Union is involved in many Polish community initiatives as well as cultural and social events.

Among its most notable initiatives is the creation of the Polish Studio television show that is aired out of Toronto into the local region. The show is news-oriented and airs on City TV on Saturday mornings. Despite the expansive involvement of the Credit Union in community affairs, its primary goals have not been substituted. The financial institution continues to assist and facilitate the financial well-being of Windsor Polonia through personal banking and its province wide business initiatives.



**Left:** Polish Credit Union, exterior, P13681

**Right, top to bottom:** Credit Union employees, P13683

Credit Union opening and presentation, P13684

Credit Union opening, 1991, P13682

**Collection of the Ursuline Sisters**





## White Eagle Press

The manufacturing sector has served as the centerpiece to Windsor's economy. White Eagle Press has been part of the city's manufacturing economy since 1959; and much like Windsor's ever-changing economic status, Eagle Press has adapted according to the supply and demand needed to sustain itself. The company was founded by Tadeusz (Ted) Polewski who was born in Hallerowo, Poland in 1930. After exile in Siberia and relocation to the Middle East, the Polewski family was reunified in England during the immediate post-war years. Shortly after, Ted immigrated to Canada where he married Emily Galajda in 1958. After working as a farm hand Ted did a time-study as an engineer where he worked primarily with steel products. In 1959 White Eagle Press was established which initially specialized in dies, tools, jigs and fixtures. As the 1960s and 1970s progressed emphasis was shifted to manufacturing involving the mechanical press. Despite the passing of Ted Polewski, Eagle Press remains family-operated as the Polewski children gained the experience needed through Engineering and Commerce degrees coupled with training from their father. White Eagle Press has continually changed locations because of steady expansion and has asserted itself as a pioneer in the use of press technology throughout the region.

### Clockwise from top:

White Eagle Tool and Die Co. Ltd., P13570

1970s - 1980s press, P13590

Polewski Family, P13593

White Eagle Press, P13589

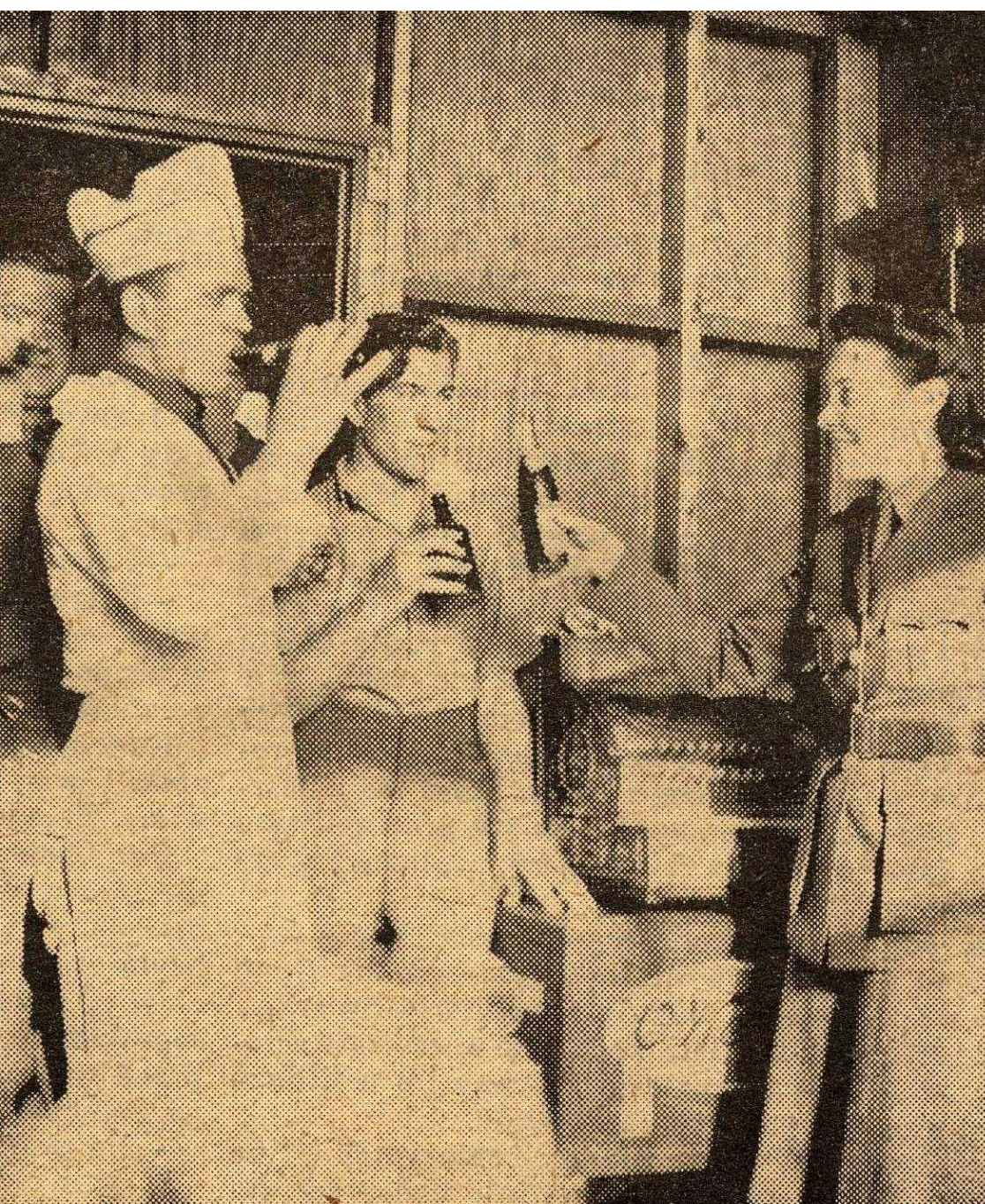
Tadeusz (Ted) Polewski, P13592

Polewski children in front of the business, P13571

**Collection of Mark Polewski**







**Clockwise from top left:**

Polish Riflemen P13285  
Field Practice of Polish Army, P13283  
Marching in Windsor, P13290

**Collection of Fighting Poland Newspaper**

Stone House where newspaper Fighting Poland was edited P13284  
Good Times in Polish Barracks, P13284

**Collection of Fighting Poland Newspaper**

## Fighting Poland

“Fighting Poland” was a newspaper printed between August 3rd 1941 and April 19th 1942 in the City of Windsor. Despite its short publication span, “Fighting Poland” serves as a window into the war effort on a local, Canadian and world-wide scale. Although nearly all newspapers of the war era are saturated with reports from various fronts, “Fighting Poland” is centered upon the military contributions of the Polish army in exile. The high volume of Polish text indicates the obvious target audience as Polish-Canadians. Windsor was one of the few Canadian cities to host a Polish Army recruiting station that drew men from various continents to the city. The presence of Polish recruiting may have served as justification for a Polish Press within Windsor’s borders and a catalyst for the short-lived yet rapidly-produced bi-weekly publication. The layout of the paper does not exclusively deal with the Polish contributions to the Second World War. The bilingual newspaper outlines the political developments, allied successes and axis defeats. Elements such as cartoon segments, updates on the Pacific theatre of conflict and the development of the Polish army in Canada widen the scope of “Fighting Poland” beyond the promotion of Polish nationalism.





## Gorski Bulk Transport Inc.

The name “Gorski” is one that is well known and respected throughout the Windsor and border city region. In a time when the volume of goods transported by truck outweighs train transport, the family-oriented business of Gorski Bulk Transport is assured steady business despite the city’s economic fluctuations.

Although Gorski Bulk Transport remains a family business, its humble beginnings are the work of its founder, Thad Gorski. Gorski was born in 1922 in Windsor. His father immigrated from Russian Poland in 1911. Despite being familiarized with the Polish community through attendance at Holy Trinity Church, the Gorski family moved to the Harrow area during the depression. Thad’s youth was spent in a Polish-speaking household attending English-speaking schools in Harrow. His ability to excel in mathematics led him to pursue an education that would train him as an engineer. At this time the Chrysler Corporation paid for Thad’s academic bills as they were in the process of training potential engineers to increase production for what was to be a six year war.

Thad ceased to work for Chrysler upon the end of the war as returning veterans and the economic transition out of wartime production created a reshuffling of the labor markets. It was at his next location of employment where the idea of a truck-transport business came into fruition. While working at the New York Central Railroad, Gorski observed that truck transport may be the mode of product transportation for the future. Not long after a payment was made to obtain a single truck. Thad then gave competitive prices for transport that obtained the business of Seagram’s and Hiram Walker to transport alcohol cross-county on the rapidly developing road system as opposed to the aged rails of the region.

Despite being well into retirement, Thad invests time into seed farming within the districts of Colchester and Harrow. The concept of a retirement home for those in Colchester is also in the brainstorming stages as Thad continues to take on ventures that benefit the communities of Essex County. The present-day Gorski Bulk Transport company remains under the management of the Gorski family as his four sons occupy various positions at the establishment in Oldcastle.



## GORSKI BULK TRANSPORT INC.



**Clockwise from top left:**

Joseph Gorski, P13423

Thad Gorski, P13421

Gorski Bulk Transport Ad, P13419

Gorski Tanker, P13420

**Collection of Thad Gorski**





## Joseph and Victoria Grabowski

Joseph (Josef) Grabowski was born in Poland in 1904 and served in the Polish Army briefly in the mid-1920s. He met and married Victoria Mazur (born 1905) around the same time. He decided to emigrant to Canada at age 23 traveling on the steamship, Empress of France, in 1927. Due to costs, he came here without Victoria. In December 1927, he arrived in Windsor, settling in Remington Park, where many other Eastern Europeans had settled. He was a carpenter by training so started to build homes in this area. He began to work in West Windsor, at Canadian Industries Limited (CIL), as a labourer, unloading ships. These ship were bringing in chemicals, for CIL. Joseph worked long and hard and was finally able to send for his wife Victoria, in 1930. She arrived by steamship in August of 1930. Their second son, Edward was born in 1931, the first son born in Poland in the late 1920s, having died in infancy. A third son, Gerald, was born in 1939.

The homes that Joseph built in Remington Park still stand today, along with a large structure on Hildegarde Street. This building was used as a Polish Hall. It was converted into a family home in the 1960s, and is presently used as apartments. Joseph was one of the first carpenters to have an electric table saw in the area, which allowed for much faster construction timetables.

A characteristic of Joseph's homes was elaborate woodwork; he liked to include a lot of decorative details in his homes, both on the interior and exterior. This decoration can be seen on the front sun-porch at the former family home which is located at 2660 Parent Boulevard, built in 1941. The rear garage has the same detail, unfortunately now covered up with siding. The interior boasts of elaborate coved ceilings in the kitchen and living room, with lighting medallions, and textured ceiling plaster, wall sconces in the living room, French doors to the kitchen, curved corner window and door casings throughout the first floor, and oak hardwood floors throughout.

The house immediately to the north of 2660 Parent Blvd. was actually the first family home; it sat on the present foundation of 2660, and was moved two lots north to its present site. Joseph, Victoria, and their sons Edward and Gerald moved into the new house at 2660 Parent Blvd. in 1941. Joseph fell ill not long after, and was diagnosed with, and died from, lung cancer in August of 1943. Victoria, suddenly widowed at age 38, had to go to work in order to pay the bills. She was previously a homemaker, taking care of the children and house. She re-married in 1944, to Walter Galik (another carpenter). They resided in her home until their respective deaths, he in 1967, she in 1987. The family home was sold in 1989.

Paul Grabowksi

**Top, left:** Josef Grabowski and friend, P13775

**Bottom, left:** Remington Park House built by Josef on the foundation of his earlier house, P13776

**Collection of the Grabowski Family**



**Right, top to bottom:**

Grabowskis and friends in Remington Park , P13774

Edward and friend in 1937 , P13772

Gerald and Edward Grabowski, 1944, P13777

Victoria Grabowski, mid-1940s, P13773





## Holy Trinity Church

Since the years of medieval Europe Churches have been the center of urban and rural communities. Despite the massive movement of people throughout Europe and eventually to North America since this period, the Church remains the center of not only faith but of civic participation and social events.

Holy Trinity includes these aspects that have been used in parishes worldwide for millennia. However the age of immigration in the nineteen and twentieth centuries prompted many churches to share not only a single faith but a dominant ethnicity. Holy Trinity Church was constructed in 1918 and consecrated in 1919. Previous to these years, early Polish citizens of Windsor had few places to worship due to language barriers and lack of institutions devoted to Polish integration. The lack of stable employment among many early Poles interfered with the possibility of church construction prior to 1918. As of 1915 there were approximately three hundred people of Polish ethnicity within Windsor. Their spiritual needs were served by Father Ralph Herbert Dignan of Immaculate Conception Church, an English speaking parish. However when the time came to administer the sacrament of confirmation, the language barrier became magnified. Father Dignan asked for help from the Bishop of London who eventually sent Father Andrzejewski to undertake the Church's obligation to the Polish people. Andrzejewski then realized a catholic parish was needed to accommodate the increasingly sizeable Polish population.

A door to door collection was initiated in 1916. Approximately two thousand dollars were collected. Although the sum was large for its time, it was not nearly enough to cover construction costs. A donation of land from a parishioner drastically cut the cost of the project. The church was completed in five months, just in time for the Easter mass of 1918, while the official consecration of the church did not occur until 1919. Since this time the church has expanded in membership which currently sits at roughly 1100 families. The church has also hosted some of the most decorated members of the Polish community such as Monsignor Wnuk and the Ursuline Sisters.



**Left and below:**  
Construction of Holy Trinity Church, 1917, P13465, P13463, P13466

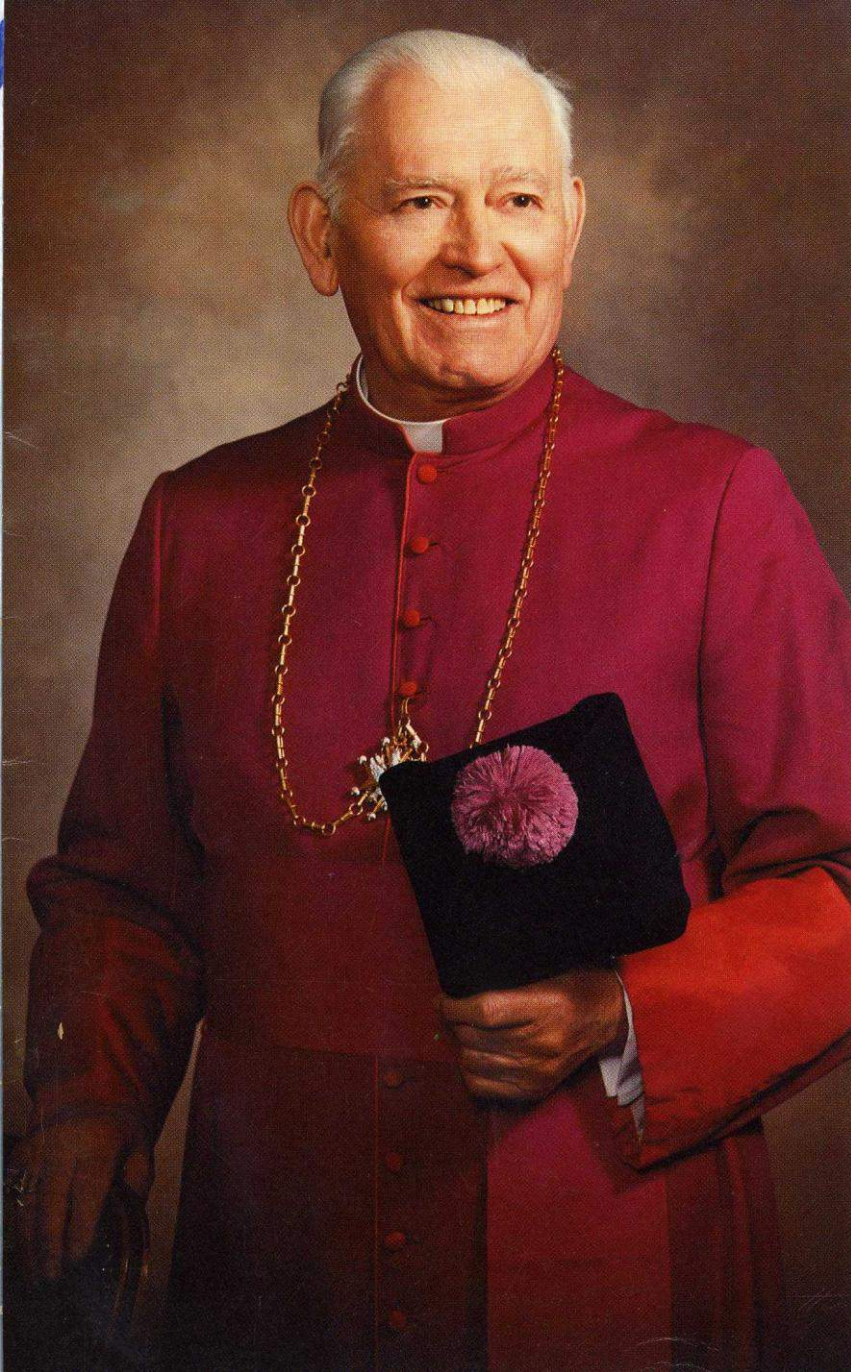


**Above:** Outdoor procession in front of Holy Trinity, 1932, P13607, **Collection of Holy Trinity**

**Right:** Church and presbytery, before enlargement, 2004, P13446







**Top left:** Monsignor Wnuk portrait, P13308, **Collection of Holy Trinity Church**

**Top middle:** Holy Trinity - Outdoor procession, P13606, **Collection of Holy Trinity Church**

**Bottom:** Holy Trinity Church, after extension, 2007, P13458,

**Top right:** Interior of church, 1955-1957, P13459

**Middle:** Catholic Women's League, P13736

**Bottom:** Flowers at monument to Pope John Paul II, on day of his death, 2005, P13453





# Immigration

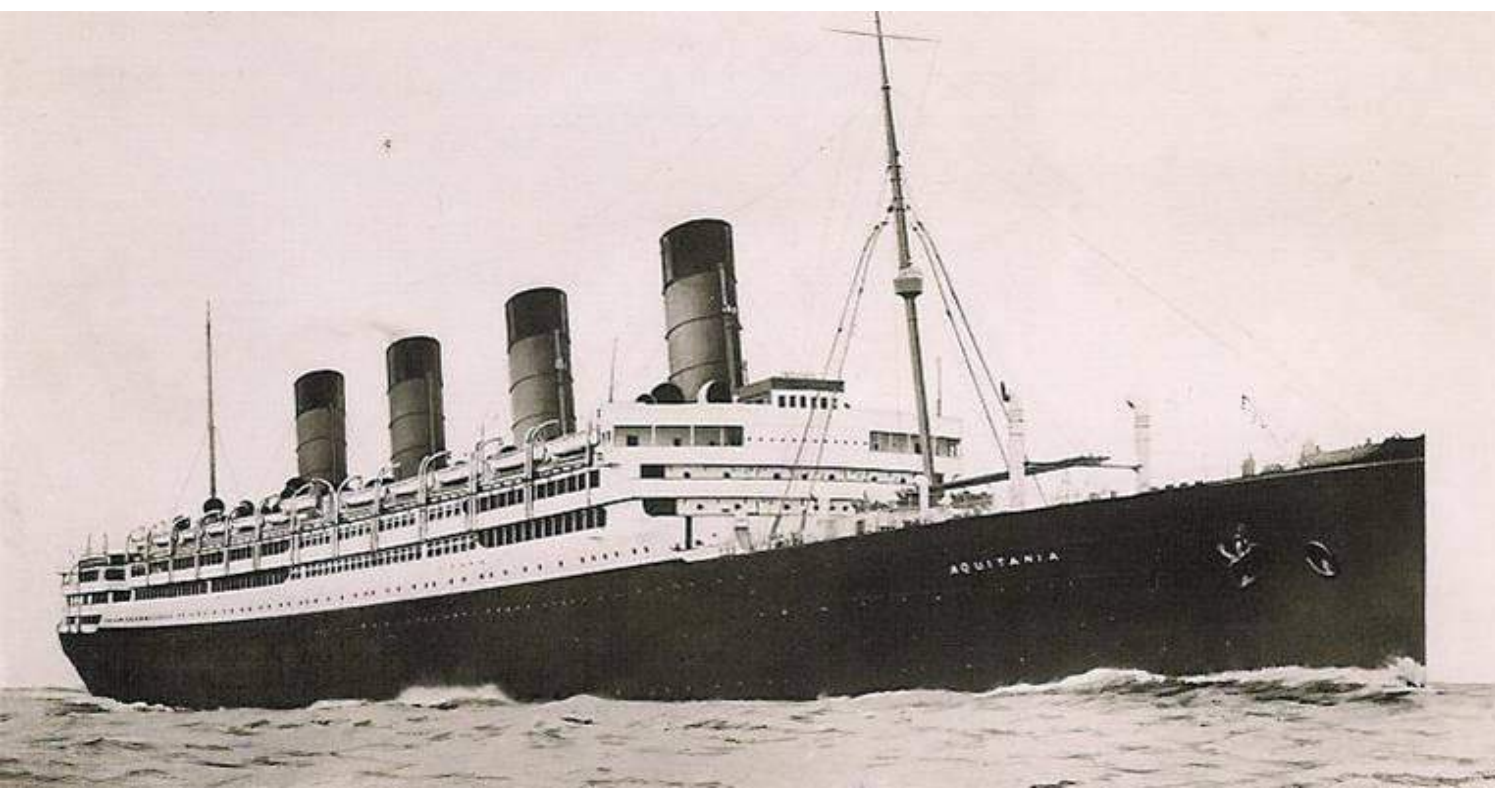
Polish immigration to Canada appeared in the form of three waves. These waves are of great complexity due to the political climate in Poland throughout the last 130 years. The most efficient way to display the three waves of immigration from Poland is to comb through documentation and assess whether or not the region discussed is within the modern-day Polish geographical borders.

The late 1850s saw Prussian oppression in the Kaszuby region of northern Poland that propelled emigration from the region. This event was the main catalyst for the development of the first Polish settlement in Canada which is known as Wilno and is also referred to as Barry's Bay. Not long after this northern settlement was established, immigration from Poland accelerated until the outbreak of the First World War. Unlike the proceeding two waves of immigration, the first wave Polish immigrants settled in the more western regions of Canada such as western Ontario and on into Manitoba which was at the time considered the Canadian frontier. The Canadian-Pacific Railway was built largely on the backs of immigrant workers which did not exclude the growing Polish population in sparsely populated western regions. The establishment of Alberta and Saskatchewan in the opening decade of the twentieth century further lured immigrants with the promise of land and agricultural labor.

With the end of the Great War came the reemergence of Poland as a sovereign nation. Despite gaining its long desired independence, the newly formed country was embroiled in a war with its newly formed adversary to the east known as the Soviet Union. The newly formed nations as a result of the war soon came into conflict with one another in 1919. Despite Polish victory, the end of the war in early 1921 prompted emigration due to fears of foreign threat and the growing pains of the Polish State. Due to the comparatively restrictive legislation on immigration policy set forth by the United States, Canada became a popular destination for Polish immigrants.

Unlike the first wave, the second wave of Polish immigrants (1921-1931) settled mainly within large urban areas. Despite the massive increase of population density within urban areas, Polish arrivals to Canada grew 10% annually. In light of this dissimilarity with the first wave of Polish arrivals, those of the second wave shared the common characteristics of bearing little education, professional work experience or wealth to assist in their transition from Polish to urban Canadian life.

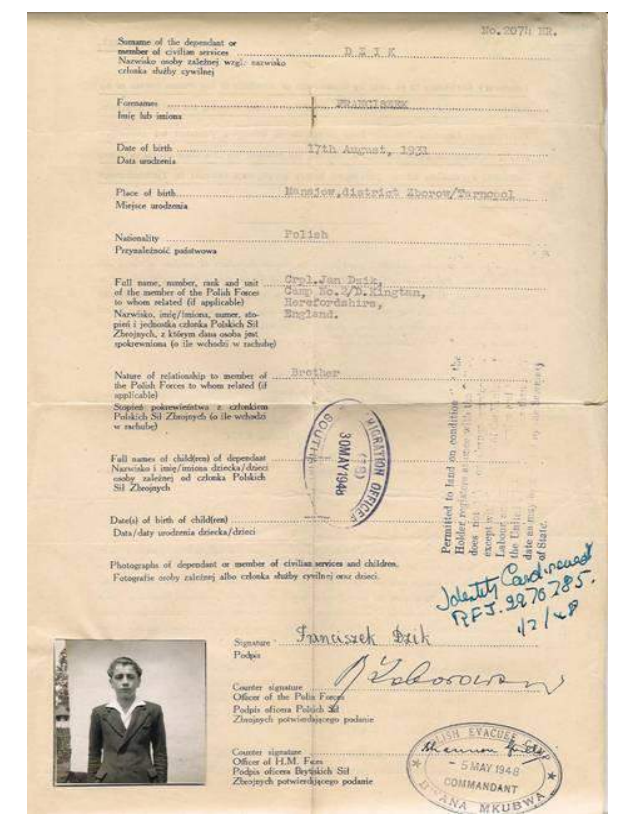
The third wave was, in many aspects, radically different from the previous two eras of Polish immigration. The third wave arrived between the years of 1946 and 1961. Despite the Soviet occupation of Poland in the immediate post-war years, the Polish arrivals from this fifteen year period was either more highly educated, or of a military background and therefore less likely to assimilate due to their intentions of bringing the concerns plaguing Poland to Canada. During this period approximately 60, 000 Poles arrived in Canada before Soviet oppression in Poland greatly obstructed immigration. The third wave came via England, West Germany, France and various other western European nations before reaching Canada. This indirect route to Canada was largely due to the tightening of the Polish border during the Soviet era.



**Left:** Ship Aquitania, 1949, P13469

**Right:** Identity card of refugee, 1939-1942, P13692

**Far right:** Authorization of travel to United Kingdom, 1948, P13691





## Windsor's Polish Community: 1908 - 2008

With one visit to the Carrousel of Nations a Windsorite would be instilled with an image of cultural plurality which has served as the foundation for Windsor since the turn of the century. One culture is that of Windsor's Polonia population. The first wave of Polish immigration to come to Windsor occurred in the first decade of the twentieth century. However there were early Polish immigrants in the city as of 1881. Aaron Meretsky, a Jew from Shtabin, Poland immigrated here followed by his wife Catherine from Gorset, making them the earliest Polish settlers.

According to legend, the first Christian family to settle here came in 1908 thus establishing 100 years of settlement. Immigration exploded at the turn of the twentieth century due to constant foreign domination of what was to become Poland in the years immediately following the First World War. The growth of industry further prompted Polish immigration to the local region during the 1920s when Windsor's prosperity became largely association with manufacturing and the automotive industry.

Much of Windsor's Polish population resides within the central region of the city along the streets of Langlois, Parent Ave., Ottawa St., Moy St. and Walker Rd. Like many ethnic neighborhoods, much of the Polish community has ties to the neighborhood's parish, the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church. The surrounding area consists of Polish-North American style delis, bakeries and restaurants that allow those of non-Polish lineage to become immersed in Polish hospitality and custom. Far from what would be considered the epicenter of Polish culture are the major industrial-contributing establishments such as Gorski Bulk Transport, Victoria Steel and Eagle Press within the Old Castle area. Much of the large Polish population in Windsor can be attributed to the American Polish settlements fringing the Great Lakes region. While much of the current Polish population in Windsor came as beneficiaries from the fall of the Soviet-dominated Eastern Block, the first Polish pioneers descended upon city with the same driving ambition as the initial French pioneers in the Detroit River region over three-hundred years ago. Much of Windsor's ethnically diverse population presents itself in the form of business, faith and various other organizations; however every citizen has an individual story to tell. The development of what has come to be known as Polonia Windsor can be credited to the individuals who worked toward establishing a community through linguistic and cultural preservation.



**Above:** 1945 Ford Strike, P13634

**Collection of Sophie Drab**

**Below:** Ford Automobile Plant, 2005, P13693



**Top left:**

Parishioners at newly constructed church, 1918, P13464

**Top right:**

Astrolabe monument in memory of Mikolaj Kopermik, Jackson Park, 2005, P13442





## Katarzyna Dziedzic

Katarzyna Dziedzic, a native of Wroclaw, Poland, has called Windsor her home since 1990, when she and her family immigrated to Canada from Germany. In 2002 Katarzyna successfully competed for the title of Miss Universe Western Ontario and had the immense pleasure of winning the title. She went on to win the crown for Miss International Canada in 2003, in Edmonton, Alberta. It was for the first time in 43 years of Canadian history that a woman of Polish descent became an ambassador of beauty for Canada and brought home the first Miss International Canada title to the beautiful city of roses, Windsor.

“As Miss International Canada my reign has been an exceptional one in which I have embraced many lands and many cultures. One of my most memorable experiences as Miss International Canada 2003 was being personally invited to the Vatican in Italy and having the honour of being blessed by the Pope, John Paul the 2nd.”

Miss Dziedzic was given the opportunity to represent Canada at the Miss International World 2003 pageant held in Tokyo, Japan.

“I represented the land of many cultures at the Miss International Pageant in Tokyo, Japan, where I experienced a once in a lifetime dream, and had the pleasure of meeting Ambassadors of beauty from all over the world, who now I can call friends.”

In addition, Miss Dziedzic represented Canada at the “Miss Polonia International 2004” pageant in Vienna, Austria, placing first runner up and once again leaving the international image of Canada as a country of many cultures, pride and beauty. She went on to compete at another world competition “Miss Global Queen in 2004” where she placed second runner up.

In August of 2003, Miss Dziedzic was recognized by the Polonia Global Fund, an organization that honours individuals who exemplify humanity at its best. In 2004 she was chosen as the spokesperson of the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County.

A former member of the Polish Girl Scouts (Harcerstwo), Miss Dzieczic is a strong believer in an individual’s ability to make a difference and she has always been fond of devoting time to helping her community. Over the years she has volunteered at many organizations including the Children’s Aid Society in Windsor, New Beginnings, Victim Witness Assistance Program, the Children’s Charity, Good Fellows, Hospice and the Art Gallery.

Miss Dziedzic has an Honours degree in Criminology and Sociology from the University of Windsor; she is currently working as an Account Manager at the Ambassador Duty Free while pursuing an additional degree from the University of Windsor. She continues to work as a model in Windsor, Montreal, Los Angeles and Miami. Miss Dziedzic wants to make a mark in the world; she is a dedicated hard worker who loves people and believes in the importance of ethical values and honesty.



**Left:** Katarzyna Dziedzic as Miss Canada in red Maple Leaf dress, P13668

**Top right:** Miss Canada with crown, P13669

**Bottom:** Miss Canada with sash, P13670

**Collection of Katarzyna Dziedzic**



## Walter “Killer” Kowalski

It is not unusual to hear local media boast of Windsor-grown talent who have reached the National Hockey League. Men such as Paul Maurice, Tie Domi, Kyle Wellwood and Ed Jovanovski are household names within the greater Windsor area. However it is rarely mentioned that one of the baby-boomers largest wrestling celebrities came from Windsor, Ontario.

Walter Kowalski was born October 13th, 1926 as a son to Polish immigrants. As a teenager and young adult, Wladek and his friends would make a routine of hitting the gym after working hours. Whether it was for health, leisure or confidence, it brought the attention of fighting promoter Bert Ruby. Unlike many wrestling desirables, the wrestling business came to Kowalski rather than having Kowalski going to the business. Kowalski and a friend would travel between Detroit and Sarnia for approximately a hundred dollars a fight; however, the travel and circus-like nature of the business prompted Kowalski's friend to return to Windsor for stable employment while Kowalski himself withdrew from academic commitments to pursue a career in the business.

Kowalski garnered a reputation as a wrestling villain but was not catapulted into fame until an unlikely wrestling accident in 1954. His name was changed from Walter to Wladek to give a more menacing, European sound. While in a match with Yukon Eric, Kowalski stomped his opponent's ear off. While it certainly looked barbaric, Yukon Eric sustained a prior injury that made him vulnerable to such injury. From this moment on, Wladek “Killer” Kowalski became one of the most ruthless villains in all of professional wrestling. Over the course of his thirty year career Kowalski has wrestled for the American Wrestling Association, the National Wrestling Association, the World Wrestling Federation and Stampede Wrestling, where he held the world championship with the tag-team championship. Upon retirement in 1977, Kowalski opened up the famed the Killer Kowalski Wrestling School that has trained famed wrestlers such as Hunter Hurst Helmsley, Chyna, Perry Saturn and Big John Studd.

The Kowalski School is often credited with helping young wrestling hopefuls gain a development contract with pro-wrestling corporations that now stretch beyond international borders. Kowalski himself has wrestled throughout the world in nations such as South Africa, Australia, Hong Kong and Malaysia and North America.



Walter Kowalski, P13074,  
**Collection of Marty Gervais**

**From the exhibit “My Town”  
A Marty Gervais  
Retrospective, 2007-08**



## Tomasz Kucharzewski 1968 – 2008

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at age 39, Tomasz Kucharzewski passed away. Born in Czestochowa, Poland on August 13<sup>th</sup> 1968, He started training Kyokushinkai in Poland at age 14. He studied at the Academy of Physical Education in Krakow where he was a member of the Karate Sport Club. He arrived in Canada in 1991 to join his parents and younger sister who had left Poland in 1987.

A great strong fighter in the ring and a very friendly, soft-hearted fellow outside of it. He was also a man of many interests with a love for history and literature.

More information: **[www. tomaszkucharzewski.com](http://www.tomaszkucharzewski.com)**

**Left to right:**  
Tomasz Kucharzewski,  
P13705, P13706, P13707  
**Collection of  
Kucharzewski Family**





## Kofer Family

In 1994 the Kofer family came to Windsor from Warsaw, Poland, hoping for an adventurous and prosperous life in this part of Canada. They were attracted by hot and humid summers and mild winters according to the guide book. Their family consisted of Renata and Darek and their children Alex, Jakub and Joanna. To start life here they opened a small restaurant and named it “Polish Restaurant Piast.” The restaurant had a website, which was created by her talented son Jakub, and was a place where Renata could write a bog about running a restaurant and also about life in Windsor.

Offered at the restaurant were hearty Polish dishes, a cozy atmosphere, classical music playing all day, nice paintings on the walls and many flowers everywhere. Family life was strongly influenced by the customers. All celebrations, family birthdays, customer engagements, even wedding parties were memorable. The restaurant had many sentimental customers who used to come for breakfast, lunch or dinner and listened to Chopin’s Mazurka, while staring at cars passing by on Wyandotte Street. Others were interested in Polish culture and history and while having a meal would talk to their hosts. Renata and Darek both cooked and served the always fresh, home cooked meals. Although it was not their learned profession, they were cooking and entertaining from the bottom of their hearts and it worked, customers just kept coming.

Jakub, around the age of thirteen became a member of the “Windsor Magic Circle.” He was constantly doing his magic tricks and would love to amuse people with them, and always got a good reaction from the crowd. Meanwhile, Alex, the oldest daughter married Irek and had a son who they named Kacper and later a daughter, Julia. In the first few years of his life, Kacper was placed in his rocking chair at the restaurant, where he would listen to music and fall asleep. This would allow Alex to help as a waitress. Jakub kept coming to Piast with his friends every day after school to have some perogies, which Joanna would always enjoy making.

Ten years passed by and that small, romantic place had been sold, simply because the children took different paths of life and it became too much work for Renata. Jakub got married to Nicole, they bought a house in Windsor and are both working, Jakub as a web developer and part time instructor at St. Clair College, Nicole as a registered massage therapist. Alex became an accountant and bought a house with her husband Irek, who works as a mechanic and they are raising their family in Windsor. Joanna graduated as a Child and Youth Worker, though she is currently having some time off in British Columbia, she will hopefully settle in Windsor as well. Renata and Darek live in downtown Windsor in a very old, charming house which has a great deal of character. Darek now works as a labourer and Renata stays home as a house wife. Both enjoy a simple family life, going to bars to dance on Saturdays, listening to the Windsor Symphony concerts and attending Polish Holy Trinity Church masses. A big attraction is the riverfront walk they take every day with their large dog Koby, where they sit and watch the ships pass by.



**Left:** Darek Kofer cooking, P13596



**Centre:** Two of the Kofer children in front of new restaurant, P13597

**Right:** Renata Kofer cooking, P13595

**Collection of Renata Kofer**





## Kornacki Family

**Paul Kornacki** was born in Ordow, Poland, April 15, 1888 and **Melania Kornacki** was born in Korcim, Poland, January 15, 1888. My dad came to Canada in 1920, from Poland settling in Port Arthur out west. He stayed there a couple of years (there was a ruling where immigrants had to help build the west), and after that he came to Windsor, finding a place to live on Drouillard Road. It was a basement apartment and he lived there for about five years to get established before he sent for his wife (my mother) and daughter (my sister, seven year old Sophie) to join him in Canada.

My dad went to the Bank of Montreal at the corner of Ottawa Street and Walker Road to speak to the bank manager about a bank loan. The bank manager said "Paul, I trust you" and he got his loan, despite the depression when no one had anything to lend.

My dad's goal was to buy property, and build a house and get his family out of the basement that he rented and that flooded after every rainstorm. He bought property on the corner of Westcott Road and Seminole Street and began to build his house with his many Windsor friends. The basement was dug out by hand, no machinery being used.

He travelled by ferry to his Ford Motor Company job in Detroit everyday, making \$5.00 a day working 10 hour days 6 days a week.

My dad built his house and a small store connected to it. Slowly over the next few years he added a gas station on an adjoining lot.

In 1930 he purchased two lots on the corner of Francois Road and Seminole Street to build a grocery store and parking lot.

**Edwin Kornacki**



**Clockwise from top left:**

Seminole Provision, P13710  
Outside Seminole Provision, P13709  
Pawel and Melania Kornacki, P13712  
Outside Seminole Provision, P13708

**Collection of Edwin Kornacki**



**Clockwise from top left:**

Pawel Kornacki, P13714  
Pawel and Melania Kornacki, wedding party, P13717  
Wedding of Pawel and Melania Kornacki, P13711  
Alex Garason milking cow, P13715  
Pawel and Melania Kornacki, P13713

**Collection of Edwin Kornacki**

## Alex Garason

Alex Garason was my mother's brother. He had a wife and two children and came to Windsor after the W.W. II. He was a cook in the army and also a page for a member of parliament in Russia. Uncle Alex had a picture of the Czar in his house and was told by the revolutionary soldiers to remove it. He refused and they took him away to a concentration camp in Siberia. His wife and children died during the Boleshvik War due to the extreme cold. He escaped Russia and went to Ukraine and stayed with his mother then went to Poland to work. When the Germans invaded Poland he escaped and went to England where he joined the Polish Army when England invaded Italy with the British and American armies. When the war was over he came to Windsor in 1947 or 1948, being sponsored by my dad.

Uncle Alex could not read or speak any English so went to night school to learn the language. He spoke French, Italian, Polish, Russian and Ukrainian so was eager to learn English. Slowly he did accomplish this too. He lived with us until he could afford his own property, which was a farm. He was very content to live on a farm even though he didn't have the luxuries of today or even a car. He grew his own vegetables, had fruit trees, chickens and a cow and raised bees to produce honey.



## Stolarski Family

My name is Konstanty Stolarski and I was born in Prusicko, Poland, on January 28, 1925. I was taken away from my family when I was 17 years old to work as a forced labourer for the German farmers in Germany. There I met Katarzyna Barbak who was born in Stanislawu “Wochenyes”, Poland and also worked as a forced labourer for the German farms.

We were married in June 1945 and had four children born in Germany:

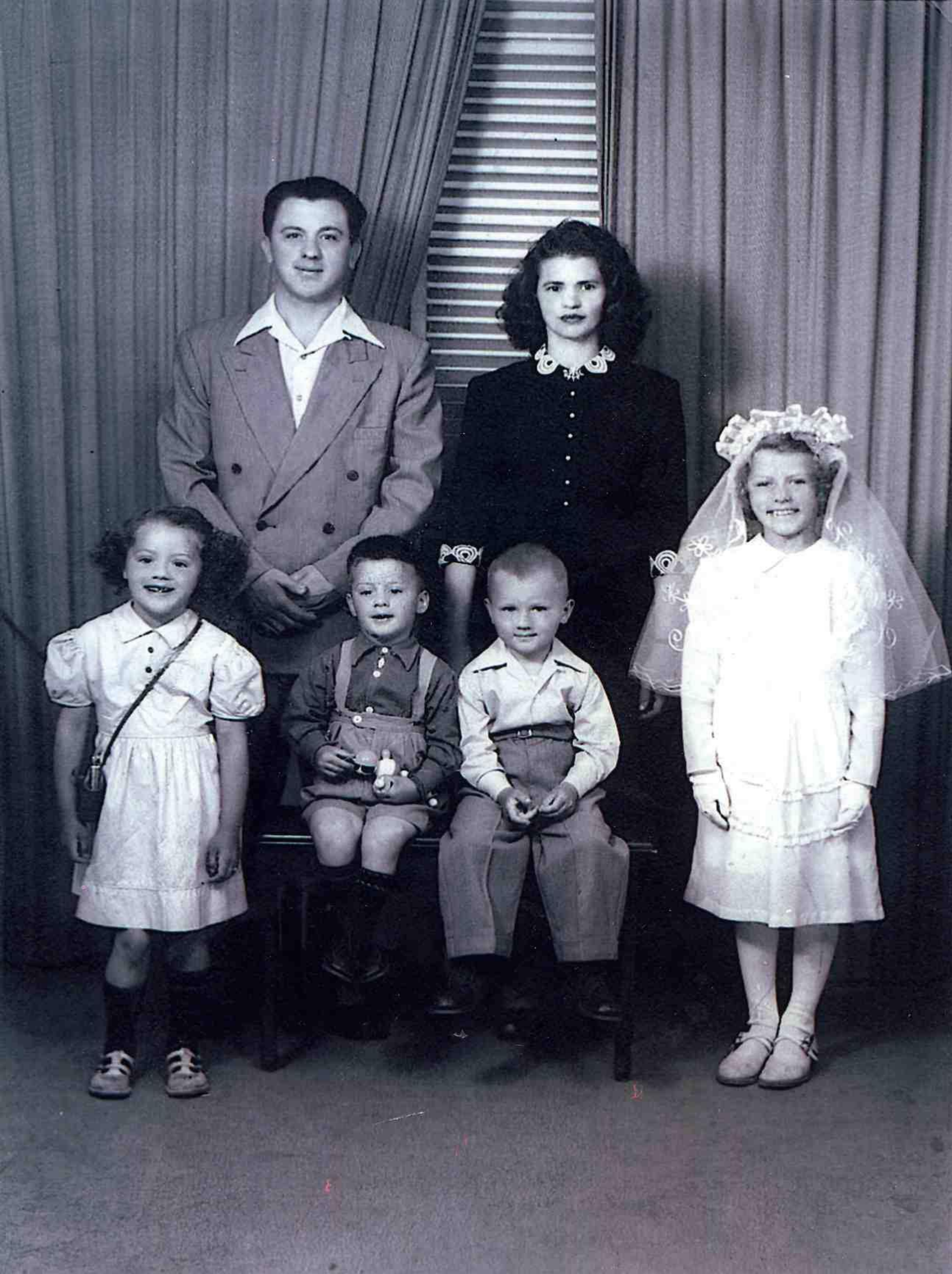
1<sup>st</sup> child – Krystyna – Stuttgart, Germany

2<sup>nd</sup> child – Regina – Stuttgart, Germany

3<sup>rd</sup> child – Roman – Sindelfingen, Germany

4<sup>th</sup> child – Zbigniew – Ulm, Germany

We immigrated to Canada in October 1950 arriving at the Port in Halifax, Nova Scotia. We lived in Valdor, Quebec and eventually moved to Windsor, Ontario, where we raised our family and one more child, a son, Richard.



### Photographs

**Left:** Krystyna Stolarski's First Communion, Stolarski Family, **clockwise from top left,** Konstanty, Katarzyna, Krystyna, Roman, Zbigniew and Regina, P13572

**Right:** Christine and Regina Stolarski P13664

**Collection of Christine Lacours**





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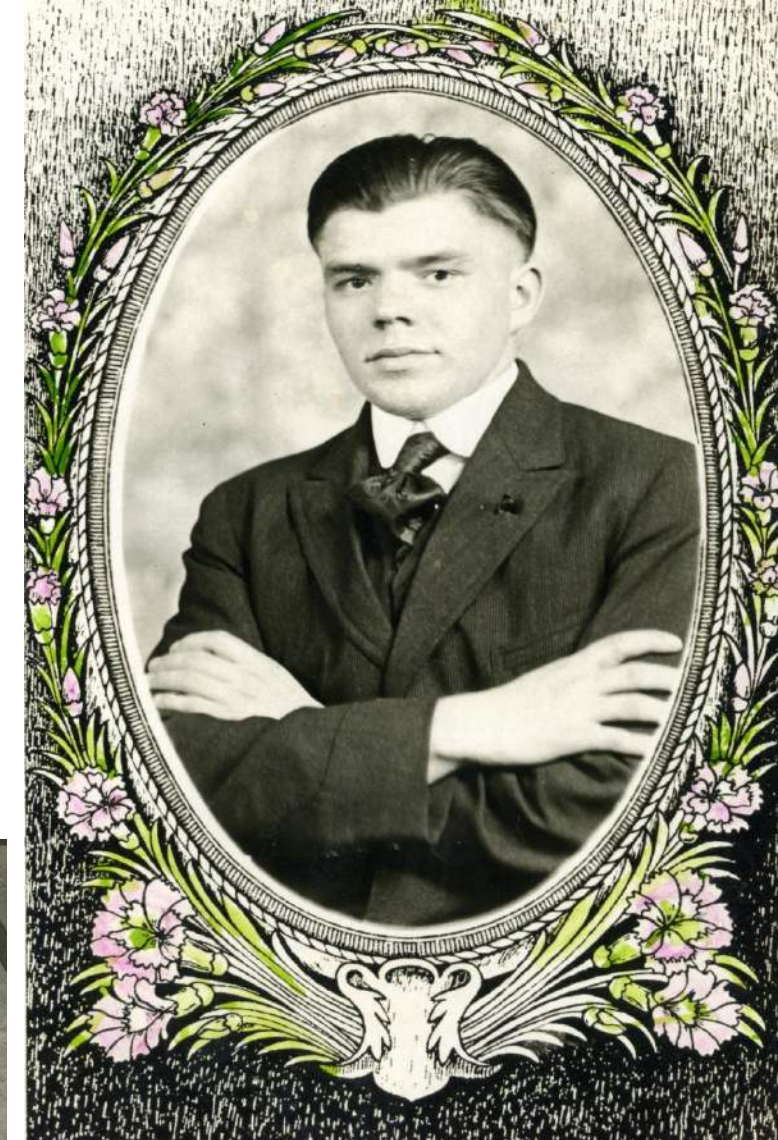
1. Exhibition Information
2. Immigration
3. Windsor's Polish Community, 1908-2008
4. Holy Trinity Church 1
5. Holy Trinity Church 2
6. Msgr. Wawrzyniec Wnuk
7. Ursuline Sisters
8. Polish School
9. Polish Peoples Home Association
10. Post 126 Polish Army Veterans Association 1
11. Post 126 Polish Army Veterans Association 2
12. Fighting Poland
13. Polish Alliance of Canada, Group 20
14. Canadian Polish Congress/Social Club
15. Polonia Sports Club
16. Walter "Killer" Kowalski/Kucharzewski
17. Tatry Dance Ensemble
18. Plomien Theatre Group
19. Polonia Park
20. Polonia Center (Windsor) Inc.
21. St. Stanislaus and St. Casimir's Polish Parishes Credit Union
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26. The Solidarity Era 1980-1992
27. Polish Presence at the University of Windsor
28. Businesses
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34. Hon. Paul Staniszewski
35. Maria Filarska
36. Katarzyna Dziedzic
37. Jerzy Barycki
38. Prime Minister Harper Celebrates Historic Milestone of the Polish Community in Canada, Ottawa – June 10, 2008
39. Acknowledgement
40. Brief History of the Polish Community in Windsor, 1908-2008 – short and long





## Lojewski Family

John Lojewski was born in Komosowka, Poland on June 15, 1897. He arrived in Manitoba from Poland in 1918 at the age of 21. Three years later he moved on and settled in Windsor, Ontario where he met and married his wife Blanche Mazurek. Blanche was born in Wadowicze, Poland, September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1904. John and Blanche were married on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1925 at Holy Trinity Catholic Church by Rev. Father John Andrzejewski. They had two children Richard (deceased) and Jeanette who resides in Windsor.



John was very active in the Polish Community and also was a very successful businessman along with his two brothers, Rudolph and Cazimar. John was a barber in Poland so his first venture in business was a barber shop on Drouillard Road. Next he opened a grocery store in Remington Park that was very successful during the depression years. He next opened two more stores on Howard Avenue: John's Deli and Remington Dry Goods store that his wife Blanche and daughter Jeanette managed, successfully. Rudolph opened Choice Market on Tecumseh Road East and specialized in meat and Polish sausage. Cazimar had a confectionary store in Remington Park and then opened the College Soda Bar specializing in cabbage rolls, perogies and other Polish dishes.



### Clockwise, from top left:

John Lojewski, a photograph postcard of him when he first arrived in Canada, P13643  
 Lojewski family, back row, left to right, Walter, John, Rudolph and Cazmir, front row, Blanche, Richard and May, centre, Jeanette, P13657  
 John Lojewski, a few years after arriving in Canada, P13644  
 Border Cities Polish Canadian Club, 1950, centre, Jan and Blanche Lojewski, P13646  
 Pani Bronislawa Lojewski, seated at the lower left, led tours of Windsor residents to Krakow, Poland 1956, P13649  
 Jeanette Lojewski on right with friend at Zwiazek Hall, 1950, P13652

Collection of Jeanette Lesperance





## Lublin, Poland Windsor's Twin City



Lublin is located in the far eastern region of modern Poland. The city came to prominence through its strategic location making it an ideal military headquarters in 1341. In 1392 Lublin became a center of trade between the newly formed Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries artistic patronage and religious reformation served to rapidly increase the population within Lublin's borders. The city suffered decline through the Northern Wars involving Sweden and Russia followed by the third partition of Poland leaving the Lublin region under Austrian rule and shortly after by Russian occupation.

1915 saw the end of Russian occupation. By 1918 the first government of independent Poland operated in Lublin for a short period of time. The city expanded into heavy industry and aviation production during the interwar years. Elite education institutions came into fruition and the Jewish community bloomed to constitute 40% of Lublin's population. The darkest days of Lublin occurred during the outbreak of WWII. German war plans nearly eradicated the entire Jewish population. The rest of the population was suppressed in an effort to create a Germanized city where ethnic German Poles were favored above all others. The advancement of Soviet armies led to the occupation of Lublin by communist forces. Shortly after the war Lublin became the capital of communist Poland before it was moved to Warsaw.

Despite the presence of occupying political forces, Lublin grew during the post-1945 years. The Fabryka Samochodów Ciężarowych car plant established a strong workforce that would eventually form a part of the foundation for the Solidarity movement in 1980. The industrial region in which Lublin is centered became fertile ground for the growth of worker protests against the Soviet regime that fell from power not long after the Solidarity movement came into fruition. Despite strong economic fluctuations in the last fifteen years, Lublin is a fusion between old and new in terms of architecture and customs while serving as a city strongly based on organized labor.



### Top left to bottom:

Windsor's Delegation in Lublin,  
2004, P13692

Water Fountain with Goat, an image  
associated with Lublin, P13700

Lublin Town Square, 2006, P13701

Lublin's business delegation in  
Windsor, 2005, P13705

Opening Lublin Street in Windsor,  
2004, P13694

Collection of Jerry Barycki





## Windsor-Lublin Partnership 2000 - 2008

### Chronology of Main Events

Windsor-Lublin business relations began in 1994, when Joe Ouellette, the owner of the Windsor firm Acrolab Ltd., which manufactures heating and cooling transfer systems, opened a manufacturing plant in Lublin, Poland. He was very active, together with our Association, in the creation and development of the present partnership between Windsor and Lublin. On February 26, 1999, the Polish Community of Windsor successfully petitioned the City of Windsor for a twinning agreement between Windsor and Lublin, Poland.

**June 26, 2000 (picture # 1)** An official Lublin delegation, led by the Mayor of Lublin, was invited to Windsor. The Windsor-Lublin Partnership Agreement was signed in Windsor by Andrzej Pruszkowski, the Mayor of Lublin, Helena Pietraszkiewicz, the Chair of the Lublin Council, Mike Hurst, the Mayor of Windsor, and June Cox, the Chair of the City of Windsor International Relations Committee.

**June 30, 2000** The Lublin delegation visited Polish Community locations in Windsor, such as Polonia Park, the Polish Language School, and the Holy Trinity Church, as well as St. Clair College. The Polish Community Luncheon to honor the Lublin delegation was held at Willistead Manor, in Windsor.

**April 25, 2001 (picture # 2)** An official Windsor delegation, led by Dave Cassivi, the Deputy Mayor of Windsor, was invited to Lublin. The Windsor-Lublin Partnership Agreement, Part 2, was signed in Lublin by Dave Cassivi, June Cox, Andrzej Pruszkowski and Helena Pietraszkiewicz. Members of our organization were in the Windsor delegation.

**September, 2002** The President of St. Clair College, Dr. John Strasser, and the Vice President, Innovation and Business Development, St. Clair College, Michael Vourakes, visited Lublin to explore the possibility of establishing partnership programs between St. Clair College, Windsor, and the Lublin Business School.

**November 17, 2002 (picture # 3)** The Reverend Professor Ted Zasepa, the President of the Lublin Business School, was invited to Windsor. He visited the University of Windsor and discussed issues of mutual interest with representatives of the University's Odette School of Business and Windsor International. Professor Zasepa and Michael Vourakes, St. Clair College, signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Lublin Business School and St. Clair College.

**November 17-23, 2002** Polish Week in Windsor 2002 included more than twenty events. The Polish newspaper *Zwiazkowiec* in Toronto named it "the best Polish event of 2002 in Canada". Lublin was in our thoughts during Polish Week. For example, Marcin Rusiniak, from the MBA program of the Lublin Business School, was in Windsor to complete his Canadian internship program, over a period of several weeks.

**May 30, 2003 (picture # 4)** A Canadian delegation, including the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray, the Chairman of the International Joint Commission, was invited to Lublin. The Rt. Hon. Herb Gray was awarded the title of Doctor, *honoris causa*, at the Catholic University of Lublin. Our Association and Jesse Flis, F.P., were involved in the process, leading to this award.

**November 14, 2003** Andrzej Pruszkowski, the Mayor of Lublin, was invited to Windsor and Toronto. He was the keynote speaker at the 9th Polish Canadian Business and Professional Society Dinner, on November 14, 2003, at the Caboto Hall in Windsor. He also participated in a Polish-Ukrainian forum with Dr. Jacek Junosza Kisielewski, the Consul General of Poland, and Dr. Ihor Lossovskyi, the Consul General of Ukraine, at the Consulate General of Poland in Toronto.

**June 12-18, 2004 (picture # 5)** Trade Team Windsor 2004, led by Dave Cassivi, the Deputy Mayor of Windsor, was invited to Lublin to participate in Canadian Trade Day and the Eastern Partenariat 2004. Our Association was part of this delegation.

**October 24-30, 2004** Polish Week in Windsor 2004 consisted of over a dozen events. Lublin also had an important part to play. For example, Lublin Street was officially named in Windsor.

**July 16-17, 2005** Lublin celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the "Solidarity" movement, which began in the Lublin area. Jerry Barycki, a member of City of Windsor International Relations Committee, was invited to Lublin to represent Windsor and the Canadian Polish Congress, Windsor-Chatham Branch.

**October 12-19, 2005 (picture # 6)** The Lublin Trade Mission 2005, including Ryszard Pasikowski, the Deputy Mayor of Lublin, visited Windsor, Toronto, and Erie, in the USA. They also took part in the 11th Polish Canadian Business and Professional Society Dinner, held at the Caboto Hall, Windsor, on October 14, 2005.

**July 19-25, 2006 (pictures # 7,8)** A Windsor delegation visited Lublin, led by Joe Comartin, the Member of Parliament for Windsor-Tecumseh.

**October 22-28, 2006** Polish Week in Windsor 2006 consisted of more than fifteen events. Lublin also had a role in the activities. Joe Comartin, MP, Windsor-Tecumseh, gave a presentation about his visit to Lublin.

**November 14, 15, 2008** A Lublin delegation, led by Adam Wasilewski, the Mayor of Lublin, was invited to celebrate one century of the Polish Community in Windsor, 1908-2008, during Polish Week in Windsor 2008.

Updated on June 1, 2008.



June 26, 2000 (picture # 1)  
April 25, 2001 (picture # 2)



November 17, 2002 (picture # 3)  
May 30, 2003 (picture # 4)  
June 12-18, 2004 (picture # 5)



October 12-19, 2005 (picture # 6)  
July 19-25, 2006 (pictures # 7,8)  
November 14, 15, 2008 (Picture #9)







### Maria Filarska

A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warszawa, her artistic work is exhibited in galleries in New York, Detroit and Windsor. The works of the artist enhance the Polish Village exhibition, organized during the festival of the nationalities, Carrousel of the Nations.

Outside of her artistic work, Maria Filarska participates on behalf of the local community. From 1985 she has worked selflessly in the Catholic Children's Aid Association and up to 1998, she did community work at hospice. For her volunteer work, in 1998 she received the Volunteer Service Award from the Ministry of Citizenship.

**Top:** Maria Filarska exhibit, P13674

**Right:** Maria Filarska working, P13666

**Collection of the Ursuline Sisters**





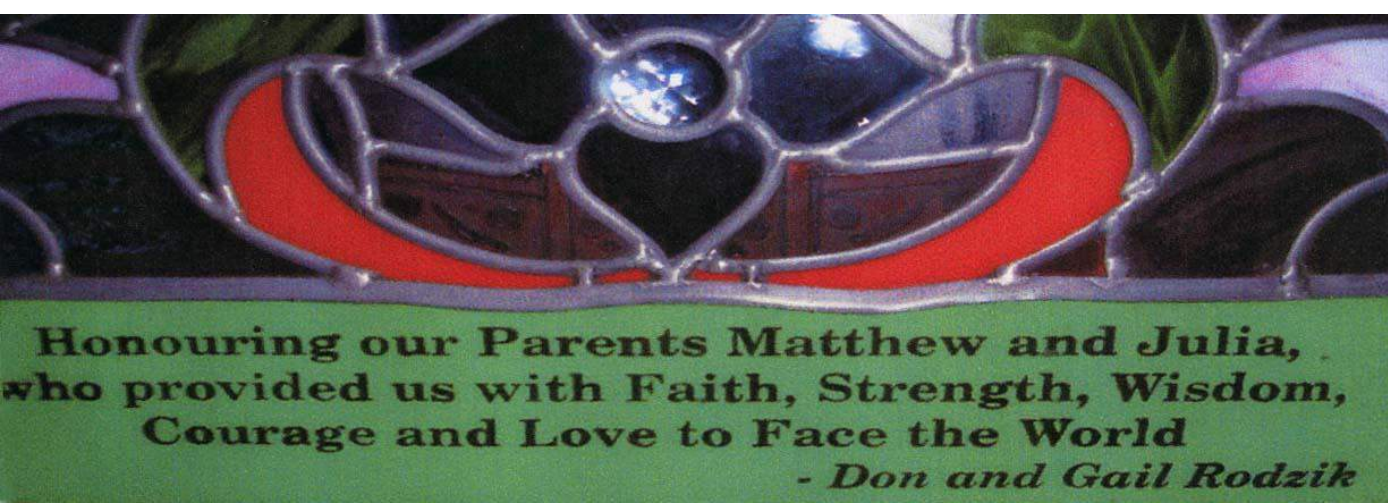


**Top left:** Narmco website image of Rodzik Family

**Middle:** Narmco website image of Narmco active ownership team

**Bottom:** Stained glass windows in Holy Trinity Polish Church donated by Don and Gail Rodzik in memory of Matthew and Julia Rodzik

### Collection of Rodzik Family

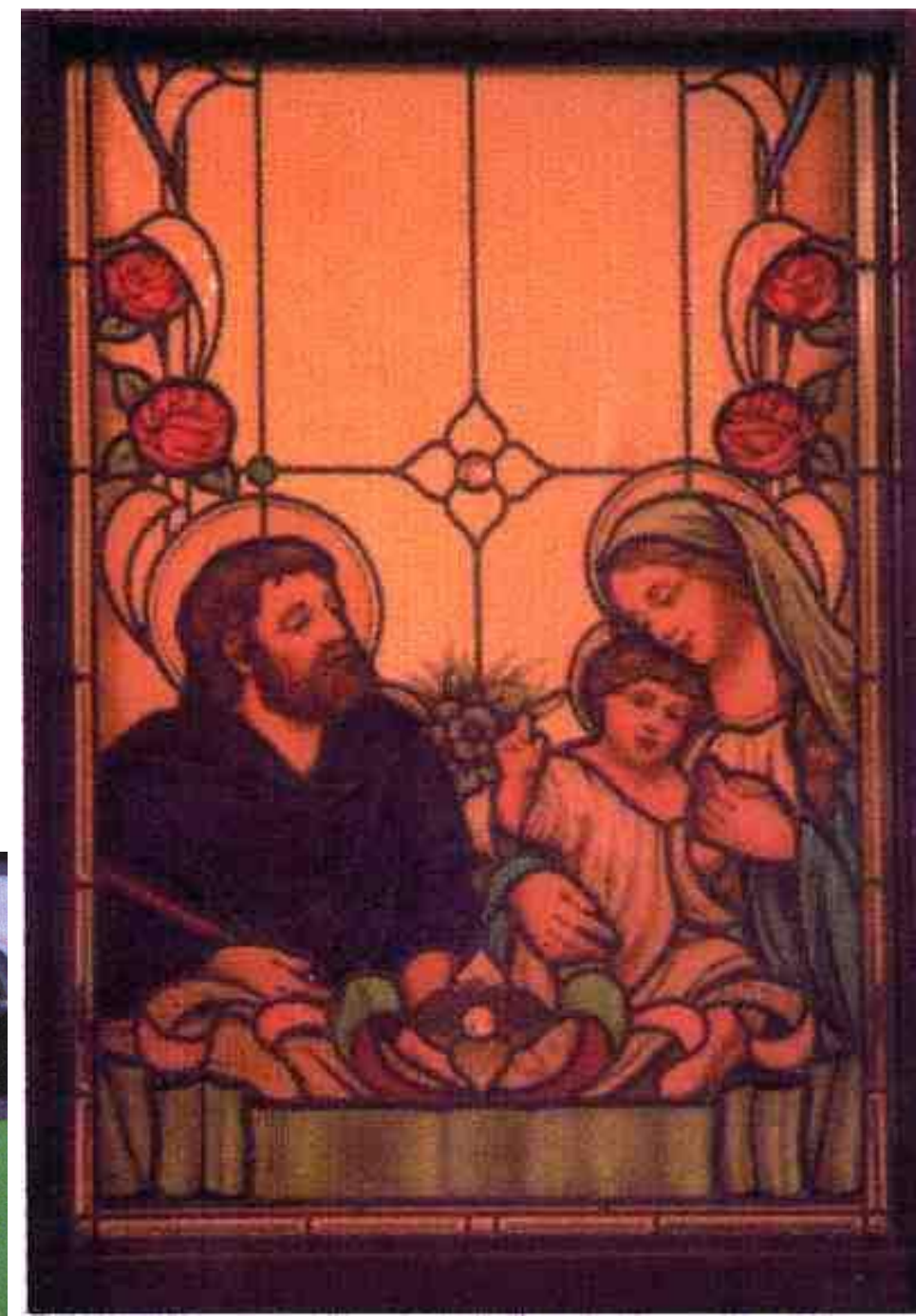


## Rodzik Family

The NARMCO Group is a leader in the Automotive Industry for Metal Stampings and Assemblies. NARMCO has supplied their customers with competitively priced, high quality and dependable metal stampings, assemblies, and coated products.

Founded in 1945 by Matthew Rodzik, this privately held Canadian company has grown from its original start of National Auto Radiator Manufacturing Company Limited into a family of 11 companies throughout Canada and the United States. In the beginning, replacement radiators were in short supply, and National responded by meeting the market demand and then advanced by expanding to produce fuel tanks, hood panels and their specialty, deep draw stampings including oil pans.

Since 1980, Matthew's sons Don and John Rodzik have provided leadership in the capacity of Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer. Today, along with a third generation management team in place, they have formed a team of working partners actively involved in the daily operations. This winning combination that breeds productivity, continuous improvements and quality in the work force will ensure the growth of the organization. The group has expanded to become a major full service supplier of Metal Stamped and Assembled automotive parts. They offer over a million square feet of manufacturing space with facilities strategically located to service all their customer's needs.





# Monsignor Wnuk

Monsignor Lawrence A. Wawrzyniec Wnuk was born in Witrogoszcz, Poland on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1908. His youth under a stable family structure imbued him with the love of God and the nation of Poland itself. Wnuk was ordained among fifty-one other deacons in 1933. He worked as an assistant in Inowroclaw and Gniezno until the outbreak of war in 1939. Wnuk transported dead and wounded soldiers away from the front and was eventually arrested by invading forces. In 1943 he was sent to Oświęcim-Brzezinka and later to Buchenwald through a death march involving 2000 prisoners of war.

Wnuk helped maintain faith in God during one of the most horrendous episodes in human history. He has been credited for the upkeep of faith when many could have turned away. After liberation, Wnuk began to conduct pastoral work in a camp for displaced people in Germany. In 1947 Wnuk became chief Chaplin of the Werl Prison in Germany and Chief Chaplin of those under the British zone of occupation. Not long after Wnuk was instructed by church authorities to work in North America. After a brief stay in Orchard Lake, Michigan, he assisted at a Polish parish named St. Ladislaus in Hamtramck. Six years after his arrival in North America, Fr. Wnuk was sent to Chatham to assist in the organization of the new parish of Our Lady of Victory.

Four years after his arrival in Chatham, Wnuk was assigned to Windsor by Bishop John Cody to oversee Holy Trinity Church and bridge the gap between established and recent Polish immigrants. Fr. Wnuk knew that it would take more than himself to bring together the community and church. As a result, his patient diplomatic communication with a communist-dominated Poland ushered in the arrival of the Ursuline Sisters in December of 1965. Along with Fr. Wnuk, the Ursuline sisters served as the bearers of faith and the force that encouraged Windsor's Polish community to gravitate towards the Church.

Fr. Wnuk was not one to be hesitant to look out for the general welfare of those in need. His skilled diplomacy and knowledge of German and English made it possible for him to assist Poles in obtaining war compensation, establishing contact with numerous Windsor ethnic groups and contributing to the Copernicus Fund at the University of Windsor, the Scholarship for the Catholic University of Lublin, The Polish Relief Fund, Polonia Park Housing Development, The Polonia Community Centre and the Stanley Grabowiecki Fund for the Church in Canada and Poland. Fr. Wnuk retired from his Parish duties in 1983 and passed away August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006. He now rests in Pniewy, Poland but remains one of the most decorated and cherished members of Windsor's Polish community.



### Clockwise:

Bogdan Wróblewski  
Oświęcim-Brzezinki nr.153-808  
Sachsenhausen nr.114-390

Monsignor Wnuk in a military uniform, P13305


Monsignor Wnuk with Herb  
Grey on Parliament Hill, 1994,  
P13738

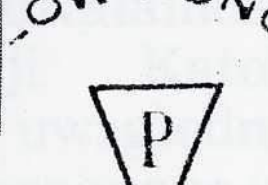
Wnuk with Pope John Paul II,  
P13304



Wnuk Prisoner  
of War Card,  
P13306

## Coelection of Holy Trinity Church





804

Podpis właściciela  
Signature of holder

Imię Wacław

Christian Name

Nazwisko Wiktor

Family Name

NN. Rejestracyjne w Obozach K. Z. 137808 - 6254

Registration number of Con. Camp

Data urodzenia 6.8.1908.

Birthdate

Miejsce urodzenia Witkowo

Birthplace

Podpisy wystawiających  
Signature of Presiding Association

**Polish Association**

**Former Political Prisoner in German**

**Conc. Camps**

T. Jankowski

Sekretarz  
Secretary

A. Okulski

Prezes  
President







**Left:** Moscicki Family Portrait, clockwise: John Moscicki, Katarayna, Yosef, Malivina and Phyllis, P13765

**Top right,** clockwise: Grandpa John Moscicki, Cris Moscicki, Eugeniusz Moscicki, Lou-Ann Grayce, Phyllis Grayce, July 1957, P13767

**Right:** John Moscicki holding a potato with wife to the left, November 1947. The Moscicki family endured an enforced stay in Europe during the second world war and Mr. Moscicki is commenting on the price of a single potato being the equivalent to two weeks of wages in Poland or Russia, P13766

**Collection of Phyllis Grayce**







**Clockwise from top left:** Stanley and Rose Grayce on their farm, July 1942, Maidstone, Ontario, P13768

Stanley and Rose Grayce with friends next to their first car, P13771

Stanley and Rose Grayce on their farm, working in field, 21 June 1942, P13770

**Collection of Charlie Grayce**





## Prime Minister Harper celebrates historic milestones of the Polish Community in Canada, Ottawa - June 10, 2008

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, joined by Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity Jason Kenney and Alberta Member of Parliament Blaine Calkins, chair of the Canada-Poland Parliamentary Friendship Group, met today with members of the Polish community to celebrate three important milestones in the history of Poles in Canada.

2008 marks the 150th anniversary of the first Polish settlement in Canada in the Kaszuby region west of Ottawa, the 100th anniversary of the birth of the thriving Polish Community in Windsor, and the 75th anniversary of the Canadian Polish Congress, the national voice of Canadians of Polish descent.

“These anniversaries remind us how much Polish Canadians – more than 800,000 strong today – have done to build our great country,” Prime Minister Harper said. “Polish Canadians have made their mark in every walk of Canadian life.” The Prime Minister noted that the Government and the Canadian Polish Congress have worked together on numerous initiatives to strengthen ties between Canada and Poland including:

The removal of visa requirements for visitors of Poland to Canada.

A Social Security Agreement allowing the portability of pensions from either country.

A Youth Mobility Agreement that will allow youth to work and study up to one year in our respective countries.

“I know the Canadian Polish Congress, and the Canada-Poland Parliamentary Friendship Group, have provided stalwart support for Poland during its years of transition,” Prime Minister Harper added. “Our Government wholeheartedly supports your efforts, and we thank you for everything you have done and are doing to advance Canada-Poland relations.”

**Left top to bottom:**  
Our youth with Prime Minister Steven Harper  
Windsor's delegation in front of display  
Jerry Barycki presenting the 100th Anniversary Gold Medal to the Prime Minister of Canada  
Jerry Barycki presenting the Polish Community in Windsor

**Right:** Windsor's delegation in front of the Parliament







**Left top:** Polish squadron with spitfire, P13741

**Left bottom:** Polish squadron 303 member and plane, P13742

**Above:** Polish Squadron, P13743

**Collection of Mr. J. Palimaka**





### No. 303 Polish Squadron

No. 303 “Kosciuszko” Polish Fighter Squadron was formed in Great Britain as part of an agreement between the Polish Government in exile and the United Kingdom on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1940. It became officially operational a few weeks later on August 31<sup>st</sup>. Kosciuszko Squadron is famous for claiming the highest number of enemy kills during the Battle of Britain of all fighter squadrons then in operation through September 1940. The squadron was disbanded in December 1946. It was named after the Polish and American hero General Tadeusz Kosciuszko.



**Above:** Polish squadron at Hethel airbase, P13744

**Left:** Polish veterans, 2004, P13745

**Collection of Mr. J Palimaka**



## Plomien Theatre Group

A primary showcase of a nation's culture throughout history has been its theatre. The preservation of Polish culture owes much gratitude to the Plomien Theatre-Vocal group of Windsor. Plomien, (meaning "flame") was established in 1995 to serve as a cultural promoter of Windsor's Polonia through the stage performances of Polish culture. The Plomien group was originally under the guidance of the Polish School and performed in the basement of Holy Trinity Church. The group has since adopted a number of locations for performance. Much like other cultural organizations promoting Polish culture, you can find Plomien performers at The "Carrousel of the Nations", Polish Week in Windsor, Harvest Festivals and Polish Day in Ontario Place (Toronto). The sustaining factor of Plomien that allows for its continued growth is the diverse forms of performance the group undertakes. The presence of song, dance, theatre and poetry allow for Windsor to view Polish culture in all spheres of the performance arts.



**Above:** Polish Vocal & Theatre Group Plomien, 10th Anniversary, P13699

**Bottom left:** Theatrical-Vocal Group Plomien performance at Dom Polski Hall, 2006, P13688

**Bottom right:** Group Plomien at 75th Anniversary celebration of Dom Polski Hall, 2000, P13698





# Polish Alliance of Canada, Group 20

The Polish Alliance Group is one of the largest Polonia organizations. Group 20 encompasses much of the Polish population throughout Essex County. Founded in the early 1920s, The Polish Alliance has since set out to preserve Polish culture and language. The promotion of self-help, social welfare and education served as the foundation for the Alliance. The Alliance promoted its values through its major publication, the *Alliancer*. The Polish Alliance has spawned related organizations such as the Polish Women's Circle and the Polish Alliance Youth Group to encourage the participation of all Polish-Canadians.



**Left:** Miss Polonia, 1954, P13632,

**Right:** Polish Alliance Youth Outing at Point Pelee, P13635

**Collection of Sophie Drab**



**Above:** Polish Alliance of Canada ladies committee, 1957, P13662

**Collection of Ryszard Rudyk**

**Right top:** Polish Alliance of Canada, 1948, P13661

**Below:** Polish Parade Float, 1985, P13659

**Right bottom:** Polish Alliance of Canada, September 1995, P13660

**Collection of Ryszard Rudyk**





## Polish Peoples Home Association

With the possible exception of Holy Trinity Church, The Polish Peoples Home Association is perhaps the largest facilitator of Polish culture in Windsor. The association produced the building where the association now resides known as the Dom Polski Hall. The association is the oldest and largest of the Polonia organizations in Windsor. Started in 1925, the Polish Peoples Home Association came into being within the walls of Holy Trinity Church. It was there that a committee was appointed to create an organization to facilitate Polish culture and assist with the integration of immigrants into Windsor life. The Dom Polski building was originally slated to be built at the intersection of Shepherd and Parent Avenues; however, this was soon changed to 1275 Langlois where it still stands today. The original building consisted of an upper floor with a reception hall and stage.

The economic crisis of the 1930s nearly forced the closure of Dom Polski, only to be spared by a donation from Windsor Mayor Arthur Reaume and association member Jan Kaniewski. In 1938 the building expanded through the modeling of the basement which now included a bar, library, kitchen and bowling alley. The expansion prompted the Polish School and dance groups to operate out of Dom Polski.

1941-42 saw Windsor host a Polish army recruiting station. Dom Polski then became a focal point of Polish soldier interaction and served to encourage Windsor Poles to enlist in the army. Post-WWII years saw an influx of Polish immigration that further increased the significance of the Dom Polski Hall. The Association has since hosted the development of the Tatry Dance Ensemble, Plomien Theatre and Vocal group, The Polish Village at Carrousel of the Nations and Polish Week in Windsor.



### Clockwise, from top left:

Members of the Polish Community with ceremonial flags Dom Polski Hall, 2006, P13450

Unveiling of commemorative plaque at Dom Polski Hall, 2006, P13445

Dom Polski class, 1946, P13627  
**Collection of Sophie Drab**

List of the first members of Polish People's Home Association in Windsor, ca 1925, P13460

Lista członków Stowarzyszenia Polskiego Domu Ludowego w Windsor Ont. Listownica w dniu 1/10 1925.	
1. Piotr Borek	1918
2. Jan Borek	1918
3. Jan Borek	1918
4. Jan Borek	1918
5. Jan Borek	1918
6. Jan Borek	1918
7. Jan Borek	1918
8. Jan Borek	1918
9. Jan Borek	1918
10. Jan Borek	1918
11. Jan Borek	1918
12. Jan Borek	1918
13. Jan Borek	1918
14. Jan Borek	1918
15. Jan Borek	1918
16. Jan Borek	1918
17. Jan Borek	1918
18. Jan Borek	1918
19. Jan Borek	1918
20. Jan Borek	1918
21. Jan Borek	1918
22. Jan Borek	1918
23. Jan Borek	1918
24. Jan Borek	1918
25. Jan Borek	1918







Polish textile display, Jackson Park, 1954, P13755, **Collection of Mrs. I. Rappe**





Costume Ball at Polish Hall 1961, P13756, **Collection of Mrs. I. Rappe**





Krakow panorama display at Jackson Park 1954, P13757, **Collection of Mrs. I. Rappe**





Art from Poland kiosk at Jackson Park, 1954, P13758, **Collection of Mrs. I. Rappe**



## Polonia Centre (Windsor) Inc.

Polonia Centre (Windsor) Inc. registered as a non-profit charitable organization in November 1978. The organization is mandated to participate in cultural, educational, charitable and sporting events, as well as to provide financial contributions to various not-for-profit organizations within the Polish community and the Canadian community.

Construction of the cultural centre began in April 1984 at a cost of 5.2 million and an official opening was held in September 1985. The Polonia Centre was originally located on Lauzon Parkway and Forest Glade Drive, however difficulties caused the closure of the building after a period of five years.

In 1996, The Polonia Centre Academic Awards Program was established to encourage and support the young people of our Polish community in their pursuit of higher education.

Polonia Centre (Windsor) Inc. contributes \$3500 annually towards the University of Windsor Leddy Library. The Windsor Public Library receives \$500 to \$1000 annually specifically for the purchase of books and journals about Poland and printed in the Polish and English language. To date, over \$400,000 has been contributed for the support of cultural, sporting, religious and humanitarian efforts with an additional \$50,000 committed to the Holy Trinity Church Renovation.

The Cultural Committee of Polonia Centre (Windsor) Inc. organizes many of the cultural events in our Polish community.

In 2002, Polonia Centre funded the creation of a website for and about the Polish Community in Windsor. It may be viewed at

[www.polonia.windsor.ca](http://www.polonia.windsor.ca).

As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we are determined to maintain our position as an integral member of the Polish Community of Windsor for many years to come.



### Clockwise from left:

Ground breaking, P13751  
Blessing the Polonia Centre, P13750  
**Kalinowski Family Collection**  
Annual donation to the University of Windsor Library, 2004, P13737  
The Board of Directors of Polonia Centre, 2008, P13719  
Polonia Centre, P13752  
**Kalinowski Family Collection**





## Polonia Park

The presence of an ethnic community is not only felt through linguistic diversity, religious affiliation or unique social customs, but through the physical structures these communities erect to promote and preserve their identity amongst a larger population. Polonia Park stands as a testament to the effort of Windsor's Polonia to upkeep the city's accommodating character to low-income residents.

Polonia Park was established in 1980. Upon completion, the complex consisted of 41 buildings and 342 apartments. However to fully explain why such a large scale project was undertaken, its origins must be further examined. As early as 1973, Monsignor Wnuk brought forth the need for housing to the attention of Windsor and the Polish community. The motives for the construction of Polonia Park are multiple if taken into historical context. The end of the 1970s and opening years of the 1980s was a stage of economic slowdown in the manufacturing economy which was strongly detrimental to Windsor. This occurrence harnessed Windsor's households to sustain a strong income thus prompting citizens to look for low-cost alternatives in housing. The political turmoil within Polish borders in Europe resulted in a wave of immigration in the midst of Soviet oppression. Upon arriving in Windsor, Polonia Park had the potential to serve as a first residence to accommodate Polish and non-Polish citizens during the economic hardships in both Canada and the Republic of Poland.

Polonia Park is not only a housing complex but a gesture on behalf of the Polonia to symbolize its good-natured ambition to give back to the City of Windsor. Polonia Park is located at 5085 South National Road where it stands not only as a complex of great value to the city, but also as a symbol of strong relations between the city's Polish community and the citizens of the City of Windsor.



**Clockwise, top to bottom:**

Opening Polonia Park, 1980, P13462

Polonia Park, 1990, P13747

The Board of Directors Polonia Park, 2004, P13749

Twentieth Anniversary of Polonia Park, 2000, P13726

Apartments in Polonia Park, 2005, P13441

Apartments at Villa Polonia, 2005, P13440





## The Solidarity Era (1980-1992)

The Solidarity movement led to the fourth major immigration wave from Poland to Canada. The Solidarity Union came into being within the Lenin shipyard of Poland. The union was the first non-communist labor organization in Eastern Europe during Soviet occupation. Within a year of its creation, Martial Law was imposed upon the Polish nation. Civil liberties were drastically cut and professionals were often purged from their positions.

This oppression fueled the ambition for a fair number of Polish citizens to emigrate from their nation upon the eventual removal of martial law. Unlike immigrants of the WWI and post-WWII eras, a high percentage of Solidarity-era immigrants possessed a strong education that allowed for an easier transition into Canadian society. The influx of Polish immigrants throughout the mid-1980s and early 1990s is felt in the Windsor community. Numerous law officials, teachers, engineers, health professionals, religious practitioners, academics and business entrepreneurs are direct products of the period of Solidarity immigration and come together preserve what is known today as Windsor's Polonia.

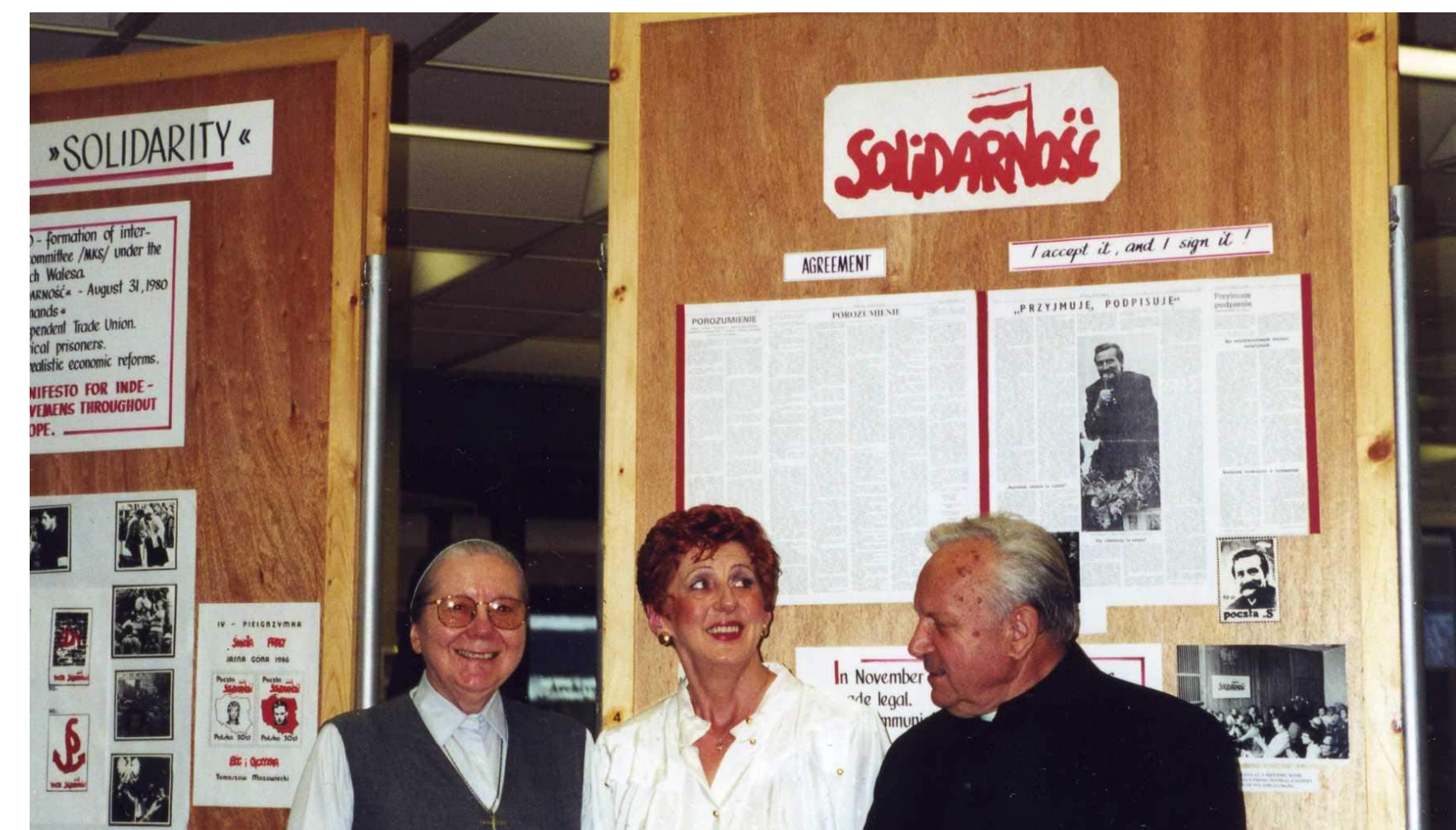


**Above:** Ursuline Sister staffing solidarity event, P13680

**Top, right:** Solidarity display, P13679

**Bottom, right:** Solidarity Event, P13678

**Collection of the Ursuline Sisters**





## Polonia Sports Club

The Polonia Sports Club came into being in 1953. The first major presence of sports in Polonia appeared in the form of the Polish Vets soccer team. Post 126 of the Polish Veterans Association largely funded the teams during the early period. However it was not until the era of Solidarity in the 1980 when increased immigration allowed for the resurgence of sports clubs in Polonia. The Club supported a number of sports including soccer, table tennis, skiing, and volleyball. There are approximately two hundred members involved in the activities offered by the Polonia Sports Club. There are a number of opportunities for different age groups within the club as well as ambitions to construct a hockey team further adding to a diverse array of sports offered. The club is largely supported by fellow Polonia organizations such as the Polish People's Home Association, Polish Canadian Alliance Group 20, Post 126 of the Polish Army Veterans Association, Polish Credit Union, the Carrousel Committee, and Polonia Park.

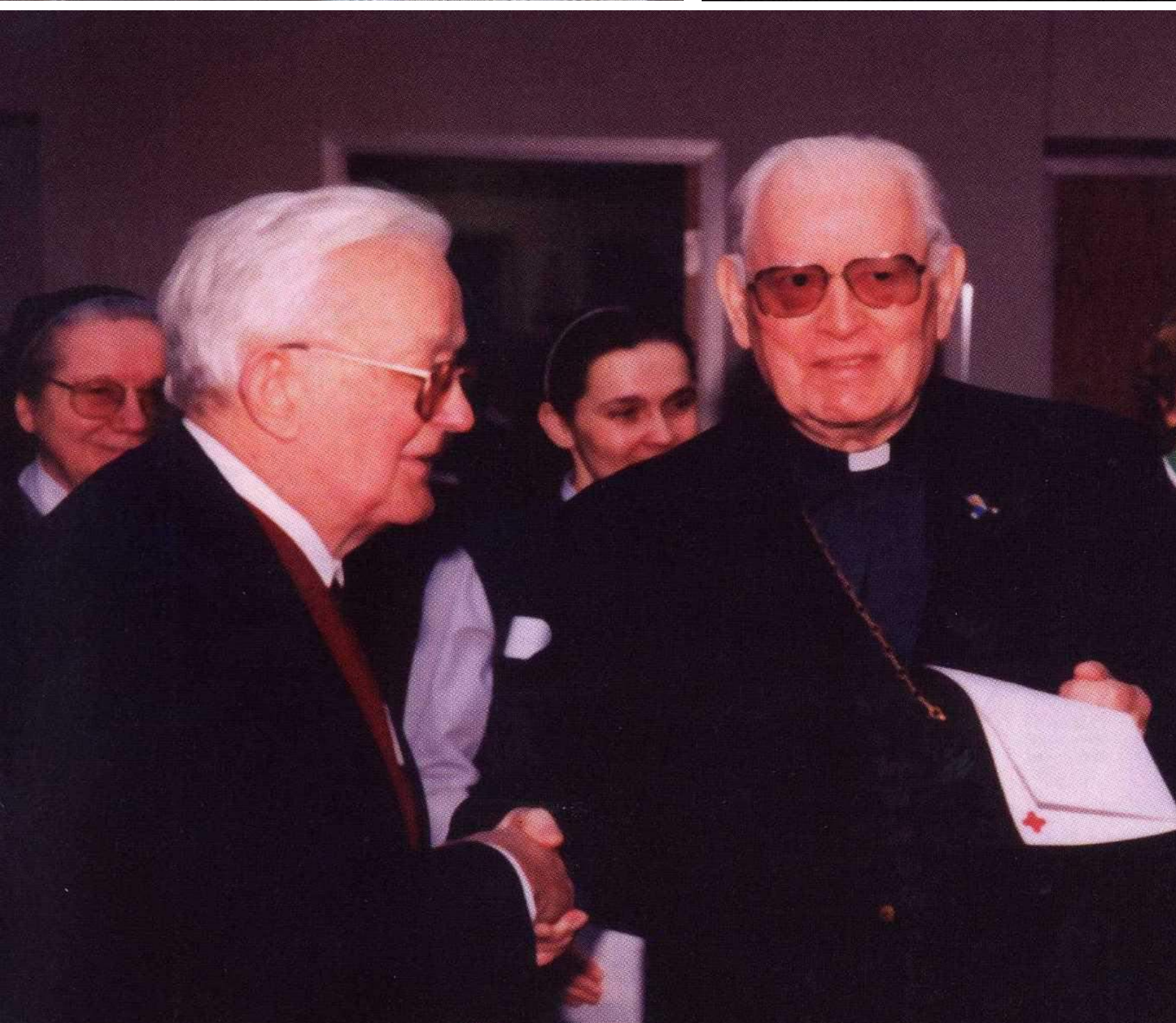


**Above:** Polish Vets, 1952, P13474



**Left:** Old-timers Soccer Team, 2002, P13722





## Hon. Paul I.B. Staniszewski

Paul Staniszewski is among one of the most long-standing and respected members of Windsor's Polonia. Paul was born in Montreal in 1925. His ambition in the legal profession led him to Toronto for training in law which was followed by his appointment as a judge to the Ontario court of Windsor in 1962. Due to health concerns Staniszewski went into retirement in 1992. Despite his absence from the legal realm, Staniszewski's presence in Windsor's Polonia has not gone unnoticed. As a proud Canadian of Polish heritage, his participation and support of Polish festivities within the local region merge to depict Staniszewski as a symbol of Polish-Canadian patriotism. His strong devotion to family as well as religious faith makes Paul Staniszewski an upstanding member of Windsor Polonia.

**From: "Memories of a Judge" by Paul Staniszewski**

**Left:** Father Wnuk and Justice Paul Staniszewski, P13313

**Collection of Paul Staniszewski**

**Top left to right:**

Paul and wife Tevis, P13318

Paul Hugging bust of himself, P13319

Staniszewski Road sign, P13316

**Collection of Paul Staniszewski**



## Tatry Dance Ensemble

The Tatry Dance Ensemble is vital to the culture of Windsor's Polonia. Formed in 1972, the Tatry Ensemble serves as an international cultural ambassador to represent a fusion of Polish and Canadian culture. With sixty-three members at its conception, the ensemble originally performed under the supervision of Galicja from Detroit. Today, the Ensemble is made up of approximately one hundred members in five groups organized by age. Performance attire and dance style represent numerous regions of Poland such as Łowicz, Lublin, and Rzeszów. Windsor is most likely to witness Tatry at numerous civic events such as Polish Week in Windsor, the "Carrousel of the Nations", the Freedom Festival in Chatham, the Folklore Festival in London and the Windsor Symphony Pop Series. Tatry has not failed to take the stage on an international scale. The ensemble has performed in New York, various locations in Michigan, Ottawa, and in the "World Festival of Polonia Folklore Groups" in Poland in 1993, 1999 and 2002.

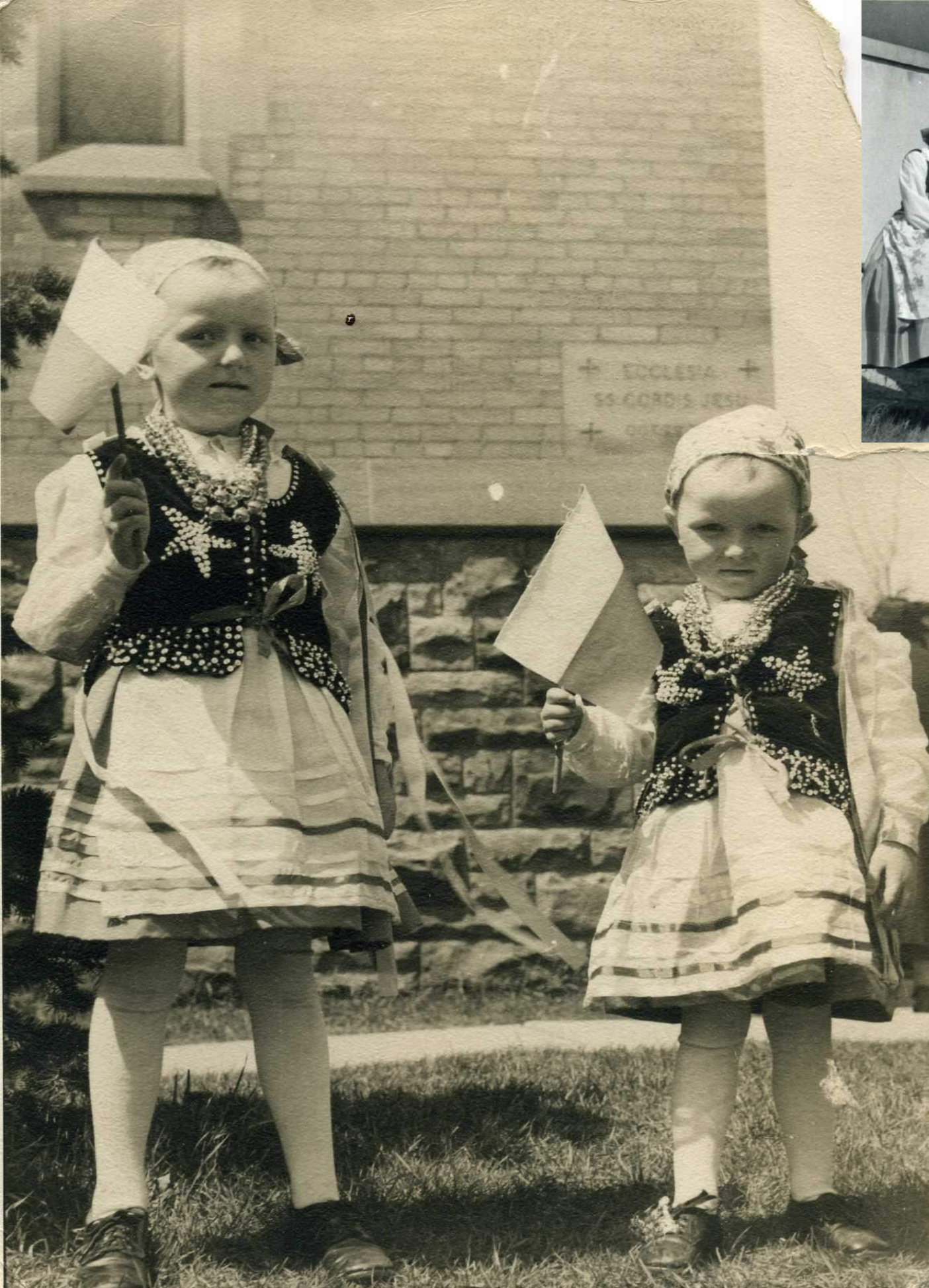


**Left:** Tatry Song and Dance Group in Rzeszów, Poland, 2002, P13486

**Right, top:** Performance by group Tatry during Folklorama 2006, P13484

**Right, bottom:** Tatry Song and Dance Group, 2000, P13728





**Clockwise from top left:**

Sophie and Bernice Tuzin, 1940, P13628

Sophie Drab & Bernice Dzik, 1950s, P13633

Young Tatrzy dancers, 1970s, P13639

Tatrzy concert, 1975, P13637

Tatrzy dancers, 1970s, P13629

**Centre:** Girls in Polish dress, 1954, P13631

**Collection of Sophie Drab**

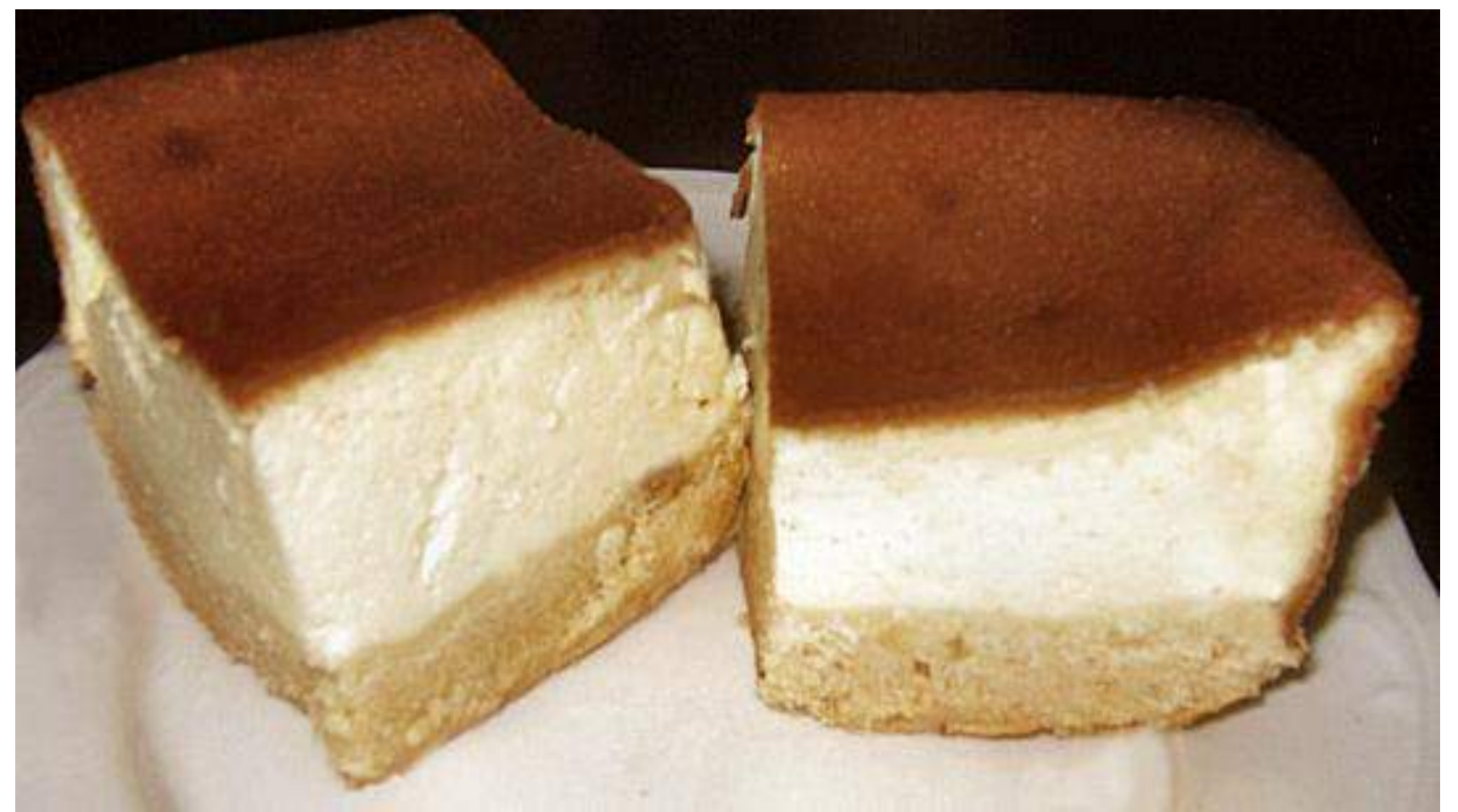






## Traditional Food

**Clockwise from top left:**  
Kotlet Schabowy (Polish Snitzel)  
Pierogi  
Sernik (Polish Cheesecake)  
Panczki (Shrove Tuesday donut)





## Polish Presence at The University of Windsor

The University of Windsor has recently supported the promotion of Polish Week in Windsor and has received funding from Polonia organizations to assist in purchasing books centered around Polish language and culture. There are numerous faculty of Polish heritage within the University. While the faculty may participate in Polonia's activities in varying degrees, those who have conducted their research at the University of Windsor have represented their diverse areas of expertise which has and will continue to contribute to the University of Windsor in the years to come.

### Current Faculty:

- Marta Aniolek, Department of Mechanical, Automotive and Materials Engineering
- Bożena Barbara Budkowska, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
- Jan Ciborowski, Department of Biological Sciences and Great Lakes Institute of Environmental Research (GLIER)
- Mieczysław Czajkowski, Department of Physics
- Frank Holuj, Department of Physics
- Wojciech Kasprzak, Department of Mechanical, Automotive and Materials Engineering
- Władysław Kędzierski, Department of Physics
- Lucjan Krause, Department of Physics (former Chair of Department and Dean of Faculty, 1959, 1980)
- Anna Lanoszka, Department of Political Science
- Barbara Niewitecka, Centre for Educational Development (as well as formerly Department of Physics)
- Zbigniew Pasek, Department of Industrial Engineering
- Maria Sawicki, Department of Biological Sciences
- Andrzej Sobiesiak, Department of Mechanical, Automotive and Materials Engineering
- Jerzy Hieronim Sokołowski, Department of Mechanical, Automotive and Materials Engineering
- Ewa Szalińska, Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research (GLIER)
- Christopher Wydrzyński, Faculty of Law
- Barbara Zieliński, Department of Biological Sciences



**Top:** Events of Polish Week 2006 at University of Windsor, P13782

**Bottom:** Caniel Wnukowski, 1999, P13718



### Former Faculty:

- Frank Borowicz, Faculty of Law
- Krystyna Budniak (Sister Magdalena), Department of German and Slavic Studies
- Vincent Casmere Chrypiński, Department of Political Science
- Zbigniew Marian Fallenbuchl, Department of Economics (Chair of Department and Dean of Faculty)
- Mateusz (Matteo) Glinski, School of Music (Director)
- Witold Kierkus, Department of Mechanical Engineering
- Edmund Kuffel, Department of Electrical Engineering (Chair of Department)
- Jan Tadeusz Łaba, Department of Civil Engineering
- Andrej Ożarowski, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
- Rev. Ronald Stanley Pazik, Department of Spanish and Italian Studies
- Matthias Casimir Perz, Department of Electrical Engineering
- Andrew Przekop, Department of German and Slavic Studies
- Zygmunt Francis Reif, Department of Mechanical Engineering
- Henryka Wolniewicz (Sister Urszula), Department of German and Slavic Studies



## Ursuline Sisters

The Ursuline Sisters are a Roman Catholic religious order that resides in close proximity to Holy Trinity Church on Langlois Ave. The Polish branch of the Ursuline order was founded in 1920 by Ursula Ledochowska; however, it was not until December of 1965 that ten sisters came as a result of Monsignor L.A. Wnuk's resilient efforts to assist new Polish Canadians and parishioners integrate into city life. It did not take long for the Ursuline sisters to move beyond their numerous duties within Holy Trinity church to youth development and education. While assisting ethnic and Canadian Polish populations within the community of Windsor itself, the sisters strive to preserve the language and culture of Poland among church members and the general public.

It is because of the presence of a Polish school in which the Ursuline Sisters have orchestrated displays that there remains a strong interest in the preservation of the Polish language. The local communities further benefit from the sisters' educational programs through the Ursuline Daycare Centre. Such an establishment accommodates the modern working family by allowing parents to place children under the care of a group so trusted in the Windsor community. The Ursuline Sisters have earned a presence within Windsor secondary schools to foster the quality of education and faith among young adults. The presence of the Sisters at all levels of education make them an irreplaceable element in the preservation of religious and Polish culture throughout the Windsor area. The Ursuline Sisters maintain traditional obligations through projecting catechesis and tending to the sick and needy. Although the first North American convent of the Ursuline order is within Windsor, the sisters have expanded through establishing convents in London and Ottawa. Internationally the sisters are recognized through convents and missionary work in Poland, France, Germany, Belarus, Tanzania, Argentina, Brazil, and The Philippines.

The efforts to project Polish culture are most visible in their continued participation in Windsor's "Carrousel of the Nations". Polish food, dance, and history are highlighted in this summer celebration. The Ursuline Sisters bind the Polish community together through their involvement in the religious, educational and cultural life of the community.



### Top to bottom:

Ursuline Group Portrait, P13575

First Christmas in Windsor, P13576

Ursuline sisters 1995, P13676

Ursuline Sisters Home, P13573

**Collection of the Ursuline Sisters**





**Left:** Polish Language School kids, 2007, P13725

**Right:** Polish Language School in Dom Polski Hall, 1948-1949, P13725



**Above:** Laureates of Recitation Competition, 1997, P13781



**Top:** Children of Polish Language School, 1995, P13779

**Middle:** Personnel of Polish Language School, 2006, P13780

**Bottom:** Sisters with children in Day Nursery, 1996, P13778



The Polish Language School was founded in 1925. Like many cultural organizations in Polonia, the school was first located in the basement of Holy Trinity Church. The school was then moved to Dom Polski Hall upon the building's completion. While classes remained small during the early decades of the school's operation, class sizes grew considerably after the Second World War. Despite relocation of the school, classes continued to operate under the patronage of Holy Trinity Parish. The Polish People's Home Association provided financial assets to the school as well as numerous other Polonia organizations. In 1962 the Polish Language School began to operate from St. Angela's School where classes were held during the weekends. A decade later a Polish language class was established at Brennan High School where courses could be taken for academic credit. In 1983 the Ontario government approved the teaching of Polish at various grade levels and the Polish School in Windsor became subsidized by the federal government. Donations cover the remaining costs of operations which allow for the Polish School to not only teach the language, but also promote Polish history and culture during ethnic holidays and local Polish events.

## Polish School



**Top right:** St. Angela's Polish class, P13636

**Bottom right:** Polish school nativity, 1974, P13642

**Collection of Sophie Drab**





## Victoria Steel

Victor Bas was born in 1929 within independent Poland. A portion of Victor's later childhood was spent in Russian exile in the province of Siberia upon the outbreak of war. The German invasion of the Soviet Union propelled Victor to join the Cadets where he served Poland as an occupational force in Palestine and the middle-east. Other members of the Bas family contributed to the war through hospital employment and military operations throughout Holland.

The end of the war resulted in a Soviet-dominated Poland which Victor did not return to. After service in the middle-east and England, the decision was made to come to Canada where he lived in Halifax, Montreal and Newfoundland before being offered employment in Flin Flon, Manitoba. However Victor ultimately declined this position and settled in Windsor in 1952. Since taking up residence in this year, Victor and the Bas family have assisted approximately fifty other Polish immigrants integrate into the city. While Polish remained the household language, Victor was self-taught in English like much of the immigrant population of his time. Victor was heavily involved within the Polish community. His residence on Niagara St. allowed for easy access to participation within Holy Trinity Church, the youth choir, The Dom Polski Centre and the Polonia Centre. Victor became involved with the trade of steel construction and shortly after started Victoria Steel in partnership with two other men. Despite the changing management in the early years of the company, efforts were made to insure the survival of Victoria Steel as a Polish business that prospered. Due to the region's dependency on automotive production, the need for steel supply remained consistent maintaining the stability of Victoria Steel. Victor retired in 1997 from the company yet Victoria Steel remains in family hands as his sons Andrew and Ronny participate in the upkeep and management of their father's establishment. Both sons along with daughter Victoria, were raised in Windsor and received a Polish-influenced education during their youth.

Throughout his long history in Windsor, Victor has participated in sports and leisure activities that allowed many of the city's ethnicities to mesh as a community. Events in the form of social traditions and religious ceremonies of Polish heritage are still attended by Victor and the Bas family until the present day.



**Top:** Victoria Steel, construction project, P13340

**Bottom:** Bas Family, P13588

**Collection of Victor Bas**