

Marian Marzynski
MARRIED TO A NOBLEWOMAN

1.

The one thing I knew: Miss **Grażyna Jankowska**, who on March 9, 1963, in Branicki Palace, the seat of the Warsaw Civil Registry Office, I entered into a marriage, was a noblewoman.



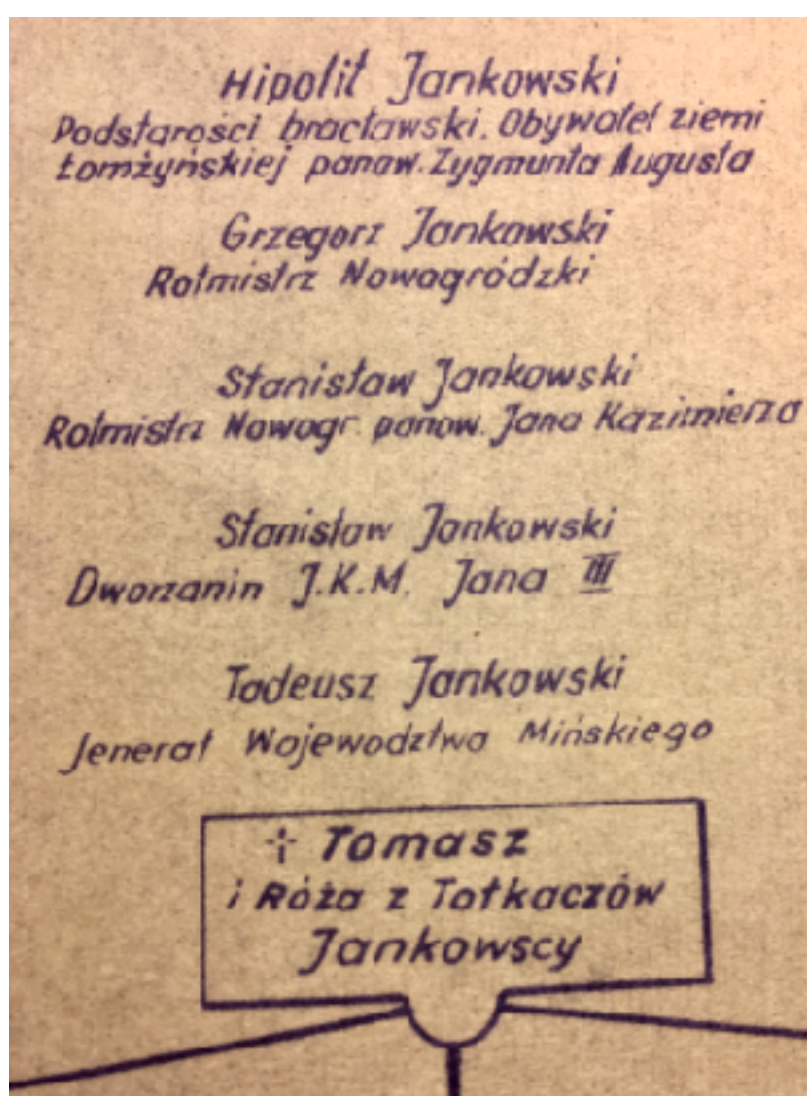
Years later, just before our emigration to the United States, we received her family tree, drawn up by her father - **Alfred Jankowski**. The Jankowski family noble coat of arms was *Ogończyk*.



I have a passion for scribbling, but where does this inscription in the image of the coat of arms of my noble Grażyna come from? : *Wola Profecka near Puławy*. After many years of conscious oblivion, the name of this village suddenly came back to me. It was there, after escaping from the Warsaw Ghetto, my father, Borys (later called Bolek) **Kuszner**, was murdered. Was there no other paper on which to write it down?

Our combined Polish-Jewish families come from the **Kuszners**, who had a bakery in *Stołpce*, the **Hermans** who had a printing house and traded in wines and vodkas in *Łęczyca*, the **Przedborski's** who were land owners, the **Marzyński's** who owned a toy store in Pabianice, home of my stepfather's parents , the **Jankowski's** whose head of household was the Tsar's forest inspector and her mother's **Mackiewicz** family which was displaced to Siberia after the January Uprising against the Tzar, in 1863.

Grażyna recently opened two boxes of family papers and photos, something she had rarely looked at before now. Her guidance was the Jankowski noble family tree calligraphed by her father:



In his journeys to Poland in 1656, the French writer and poet Charles Ogier describes the Polish nobility as follows:

When reading the Gospels, the nobility often take their sabers out. Some nobles give foreigners their sabers to kiss. It happens that for atonement for their sins a Nobleman listens to the Mass in his full armor and with his saber raised or lying on the cross. During the Mass, when the priest lifts the host of the Body of the Lord upwards to heaven, the lips, forehead, cheeks and breasts beat strongly and his head hits the ground. It is also a rule of the day that he must slap his head in church or tear his hair out when confessing his sins?

From other readings I have also learned that the Polish nobility came out of medieval chivalry. It was divided into four parts: nobility, middle-class nobility, parochial nobility, and gray nobility. The latter, although did not

have legal privileges, they could vote in the All-Nobility Parliament. By shouting in Latin: "liberum veto!" each had a veto power.



Noble garments: *Żupan*, long linen or cloth dress with wide sleeves, fastened from the neck to the waist. *Haidawers*, wide trousers made of cloth, tied with a string at the waist, worn under *Delia's żupan* - a large cape, often with a fur collar worn during cold weather. The less wealthy nobility wore sheepskin coats. Fur hats were always worn, even while eating. Bird feathers were used to decorate their hats. The original hairstyle: hair shaved in a bowl cut over the ears and on the back of the head, with a short fringe combed smoothly forward. The shaved hair was accompanied by a bushy mustache, considered a weapon against foreigners and treated as a national symbol. The nobility symbolized the "virtuous citizen" and the "exemplary Christian", and had traits of good-naturedness, hospitality and love of food and drink, which were often not true. Some of them were self-confident, intolerant and backward rowdies.

According to Grażyna's father **Alfred Jankowski** (1904-1984), the noble roots of the Jankowski tree date back to the second half of the 16th century. A nobleman of the *Ogończyk* coat of arms, **Hipolit Jankowski**, was Deputy Chief of the Country of Braclaw during the reign of **King Zygmunt II August**, the last of the Jagiellonians dynasty, below.



The King's funeral in 1572 was the largest royal mourning rite in Poland's history. If the Vice Chief Jankowski had participated in this funeral of the King, he would witness this:

The procession formed in Kleparz. There were 30 marchers covered with garlands, 30 horses under silk rugs and 30 country ensigns in armor covered with black cloth. At the head were students, followed by religious functionaries and vicars, canons, doctors, masters and the entire Krakow Academy. The abbots, bishops and 600 poor people dressed in mourning cloths followed; then the ensigns of different regions and the royal court. In front of the cart with the coffin, there were: a crown swordfish carrying a sword, a Sandomierz Governor with a royal apple, a Kraków Governor with a scepter, and a crown. Jerzy Mniszek rode his horse and fell to the ground next to the King's casket. Jan Firlej broke the marshal's staff, and Walenty Dembiński broke the crown seals. With the sound of bells and songs mourning, the coffin with the body of the last Jagiellon was lowered into the grave.

Next mentioned in the tree are: **Grzegorz Jankowski** and his son **Stanislaw Jankowski**, both military heads of the town of Nowogródek in Eastern Poland. Both were courtiers of King Jan II Kazimierz Waza (reign: 1648 - 1668), the son of Konstancja née Habsburg. The king suffered depression manifested from pride and notorious resentment. He relinquished the field of activity to his energetic wife from France, Ludwika Maria, described by the nobility as "a perverse and clever lady", make all the decisions. He was already the sixth king (after Henryk Walezy, Anna Jagielonka, Stefan Batory and Zygmunt III and IV Waza), elected by the Polish nobility



King Jan II

(8-10% of the population) that gathered in the Masovian fields, first with a crowd of 100,000, and finally decreasing to several thousand. I can imagine **Stanisław Jankowski**, representing the noble citizens of Nowogródek, who camped out for weeks in Praga near Warsaw, below.



Did the Jankowski's take part in the constant disputes of the nobility, magnates and clergy about how to elect a king? By a simple majority or unanimously? What could a candidate for king be able to "arrange" for Poland through his family ties in Western Europe?

Stanislaw Jankowski also appears at the court of King Jan III Sobieski (1674 - 1696). married to Marie Casimir Louise de le Grange d'Arquien, who defeated the Turks at Vienna, and in the words of the Pope , saved Christianity, but at the end of his life he suffered from obesity, dying at the age of 64.



King Jan III Sobieski

We are only 6 years away from the previous king, so **Stanisław Jankowski** probably kept his royal post. What could such a courtier do? (Today we would say: employee of the presidential palace.) Could a nobleman at the royal court be used for physical labor, or was he entitled to something more?

Another long break in the pedigree, until **Tadeusz Jankowski**, General of the Minsk Province appears. His son was **Tomasz Jankowski**.

On the internet Grażyna found out that someone is researching her family. He was **Jacek Jankowski**, her distant. cousin. She wrote him the following:

Dear Jacek, I am the daughter of Alfred Jankowski and Zofia née Mackiewicz. I have the Jankowski lineage from the 16th century and many photos, but it is difficult for me to recognize them. Grażyna.

*“Dear Grażyna, you’ve come to the right place; I am up to my ears in the Jankowski genealogy. Here are the portraits of our common great-great-grandfathers, a nobleman and a noblewoman, **Józef and Emilia Okołów** (1802-1879).*



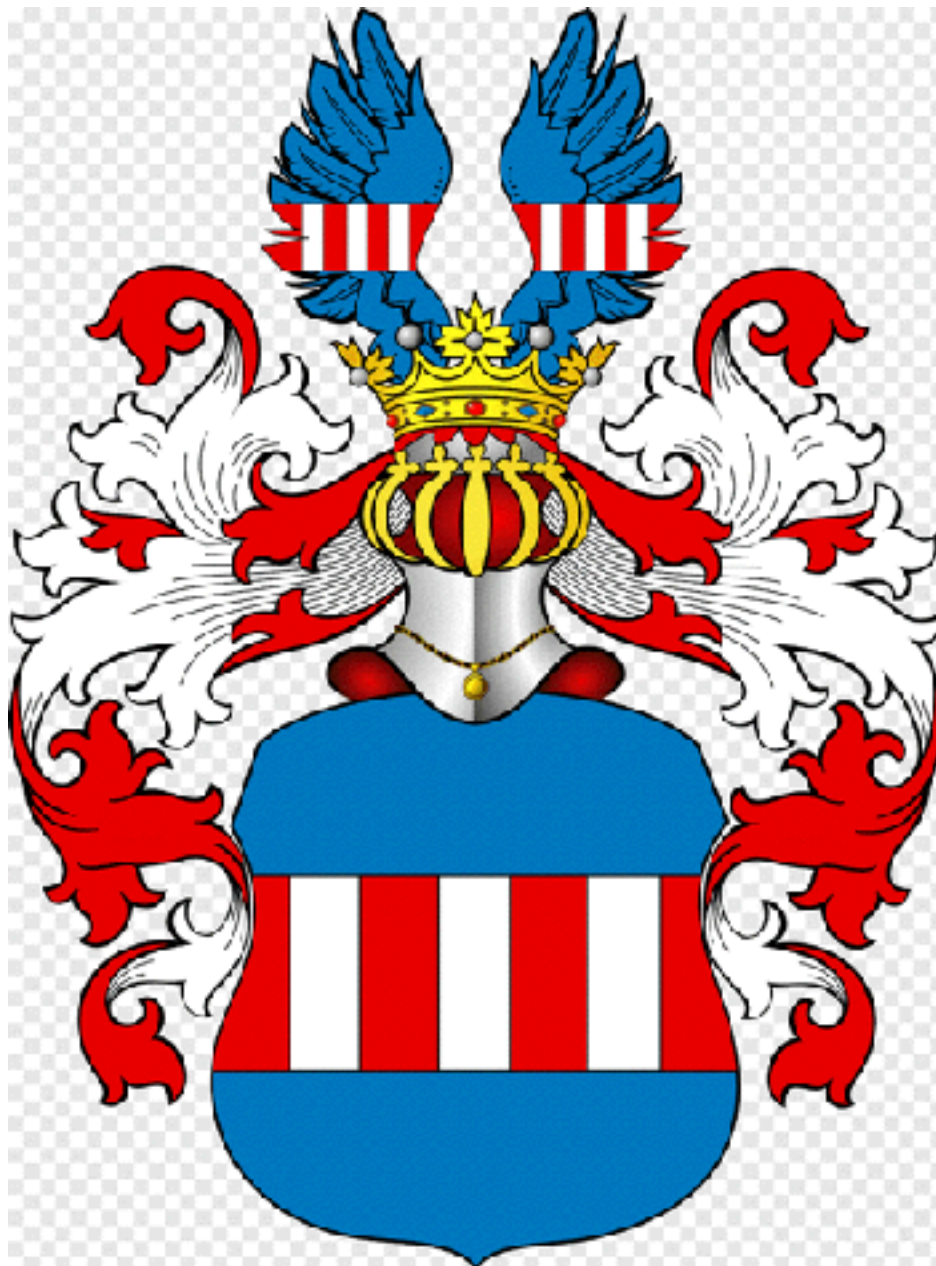
They had twin daughters Maria and Ewelina, Maria married my great-grandfather **Napoleon Jankowski** , Ewelina your great —grandfather **Bartłomiej Jankowski** in the tsarist military uniform.



The brothers were sons of **Tomasz Jankowski**, shown in the family's tree. Your great-grandfather **Bartłomiej Jankowski** was the most prolific in the history of our family. He had twelve children: daughters **Maria, Emilia, Ewelina** and **Leonia** and sons: your grandfather **Witalis, Bohdan, Władysław, Antoni, Robert, Adolf, Leopold** and **Jan Czesław**.

I have something for you from the Russian military archives: **Jan Czesław Jankowski**, here on photo from 1889, was an older brother of your grandpa **Witalis Jankowski**. He was born on August 2, 1863 in Nowe Dorochy, Bobrujsk county. As an infant, he was exiled from Poland to Russia with his parents, your great-grandparents **Bartłomiej** and **Ewelina Jankowski**. In 1885 he went to Moscow to finish his surveying studies, then was sent to work on the Persian border. He tried to enlist in the army of the 1st Polish Corps, but was not accepted due to his large family and old age. He was arrested during his illegal return to Poland. He settled in Vilnius, but did not live to see Poland's independence.





Grażyna does not know the pedigree of **Klemens Mackiewicz**, her maternal grandfather, but she remembers the stories about their *Ślepowron* coat of arms, *above*.

This meant that the **Mackiewicz** family's noble origins came from Lithuania, then part of Poland. **Klemens Mackiewicz** can be traced back to a family of exiles after the January 1863 Uprising against the Tsar. Among its participants was a priest **Antoni Mackiewicz**, and his father **Tadeusz Mackiewicz**, a parochial nobleman from *Cytowiany* in Lithuania. **Antoni Mackiewicz**, *below*, was born in 1826, entered the seminary in *Wornie* in 1850 and became a famous *Vilnius* preacher.



In 1863 he initiated the January Uprising in Lithuania. Leading 250 volunteers, he set off to the Krakow Primeval Forest. They were attacked by the Russians near *Magiany*. Even though most of the peasants were not skilled in combat and subsequently deserted the battlefield, Father Mackiewicz and his volunteers were victorious. Then, leading 120 insurgents, Father Mackiewicz joined up with 2,500 soldiers of the *Zielona Forest* unit. Here he commanded the 3rd battalion, taking part in the march on *Kurlands*. The march ended with a defeat at *Sznurkiszki*. Gathering up the survivors, Father Mackiewicz joined up with another unit where they won a battle at *Cytowiany*. Sadly they then headed for *Żognity*, where Father Mackiewicz's band of insurgents lost the battle. At

the end of November 1863, he had armed 272 partisans.. Unfortunately and his band were defeated. Father Mackiewicz disbanded his unit and ordered them to report in the spring of 1864. His plans were to go to France. As he was crossing the *Niemen River* , the Russian gendarmes arrested him and on December 28, 1863. sentenced him to death by hanging. It is suspected that his companions he was travelled with, betrayed him.



Stanisław Masłowski, a Polish painter, depicts the scene of a Noble insurgent's arrest.

It is possible that a brother or a cousin of priest **Antoni Mackiewicz**, also took part in the 1863 January Uprising. We believe that he was Grażyna's great-grandfather, who had been exiled to Siberia with his wife and his

child **Klemens Mackiewicz** born 1860 who was Grażyna's grandfather. We know from Grażyna's mother, that **Aniela Karpowicz** was 20 in 1900, when she married 40-year-old **Klemens Mackiewicz**.



Among the names of the Vilnius nobility collected from church birth certificates, there are apart from the **Mackiewicz** family (Vilnius, 1841-1906), the **Karpowicz** family (Vilnius 1807-1898). Thus, Grażyna is a noblewoman on her mother's side too.



Christmas Eve at the house of Polish Siberian exiles by a painter Jacek Malczewski.

The **Mackiewicz** family lived in a village near *Chelyabinsk* and they worked as carpenters. Just before their planned return to Poland (after Poland gained independence in **1918**), their exile had its tragic end.

*Najdroższa Maturo,
Zmarła dn. 14 lipca 1921.
we czwartek o g. 8 wiecz.
w Chelabinsku na Syberji.*

On the back of this photo there is a note from Grażyna's mother: *Dearest Mummy died on July 14, 1921, on Thursday at 8 p.m. in Chelyabinsk, Siberia.*



Grandma Aniela, 40, as it is in a Russian custom, is lying in an open coffin.



Grażyna's mother said that the trip to Poland lasted several months. To learn more about the exiles' return to Poland, I turned to *Przedwiośnie*, a classic Polish novel by Stefan Żeromski. The novel describes the journey of Cezary Baryka and his father Seweryn, who during his Russian exile dreamed about *Glass Houses* in independent Poland.

... They had no more cash. They looked like beggars. They took turns waiting in front of the Polish office for news about the train. In Bolshevik offices, they were treated harshly, although the old one boasted of his revolutionary views. They couldn't do anything.

... And behold, in the silence of the night, the train, a huge dark gray mass, rolled into the station and stopped with frosty windows and doors. Ancient icicles hung

like shag and wool. The wagons were loaded with people who carried the entire legacy of their long lives. The driver of the train knew it, and he stood and stood steadfast in the most isolated area, an hour, two, five, ten, fifteen, twenty. Passengers begged him to go, to which the driver stated that he had to repair the engine and he did it until someone from the passengers walked around the train and collected a fee for the repairs. Those who did not have any value would give wedding rings, currency exchange, watches, even shoes and frock coats. When the sum of items satisfied the driver's ambitions, the repair was over, the train whistled, huffed, rattled, sometimes slower and faster, moving to the next mysterious point in the field, for another repair.

...The supplies ran out and broke, the cold teased, the sick groaned, the children cried, people fell into a dull numbness, and the good engineer smoked his cigarette sitting on the steps of the machine and sang folk songs. Baryka's father could not stand the murderous journey and died during one of the stops. Cezary Baryka returned to Poland alone

... He entered Poland, the country of his parents. After torment, crushing and lack of air in the train compartments, he stretched out his hands to the unknown land, to his freedom. There was a small river flowing there, meandering in steep banks among the lowlands. She tried to cover with her faint colors this disgusting spectacle, which against her background full of immortal beauty, people spread out: a Polish-Jewish town. Cezary looked with gloomy eyes at the boggy streets, full of clumsy puddles, at houses of various forms and degrees of external constipation, pigsties and puddles, at burnt rubble. "Where are your glass houses? he thought as he trudged on. "Where are your glass houses?"

The last Siberian photo below: Grażyna's grandfather **Klemens Mackiewicz** with sons **Teodor** and **Henryk**. It was 1921. Two sons and three daughters of the widowed **Klemens Mackiewicz** arrived in Vilnius.



The fourth daughter of Klementyna, instead of Poland, left for Kazakhstan, where her fiancé was waiting for her. No trace of her was found. Here is her picture.



Some time later, an unknown sister Mackiewicz was shot on the street in Vilnius by a man in love with her, whom she did not want to marry.

When they left Siberia, Grażyna's mother, **Zofia Mackiewicz**, was 12 years old. This is how she looked at 18, in Vilnius, in 1927.



2

Łęczyca , a small town near *Łódź*, connects all three my Jewish families: the **Hermans**, the **Przedborskis** and the **Kushner**. Here is my mother in *Łęczyca* age 18, in 1923.



In 1804, **Szum Herman** founded in *Łęczycza* a wine and vodka store and a printing house. After Herman's death in 1863, my great-grandmother **Salomea Herman** inherited the businesses. She married her cousin **Salomon** and they had four children including my grandmother **Justyna Herman**, who was born in 1885. She married my grandfather **Henryk Przedborski** They had 4 children: a son **Samuel**, and three daughters: **Franciszka Matylida** and **Bronisława**, my future mother.

Mirka Chwat, a friend of our families who lives in Tel-Aviv wrote me the following letter:

*From Łęczycza I remember that your great-grandmother, Mrs. **Salomea Hermanowa**, was family's doyen. We used to call her Grandma. She was a widow and lived with her children. She was tall, slim, with blue eyes and a pleasant smile. She moved very elegantly and she was an extremely good, helpful, boundlessly loving mother. The apartment was beautiful filled with old furniture, sofas covered with plush fabric flowers, an imposing mirror, and a sitting room with furniture upholstered in maroon plush fabric. There was a large kitchen, on the left there was a table with a balcony, then a bedroom, then the office of Mr. **Henryk Przedborski**, Justyna's husband, who could not stop reading books. He was very handsome, good-natured pleasant fat man who wore an mustache and smoke a cigar. He was not least interested in the store he ran. Your mother Bronka, was the prettiest, kindest, most full of optimism and of she beamed with an inner radiation. As a young girl she was in love with **Bolek Kushner**. They always walked together. Then they moved to Warsaw where you were born. They called you **Maryś**. When I went to see you, you had such audacity that as soon as Bronka put you on the couch, you pissed on me.*

In 1930 **Bronka Przedborska**, bellow, married my future father **Bolesław Kushner** born in *Łęczycza* in 1906.





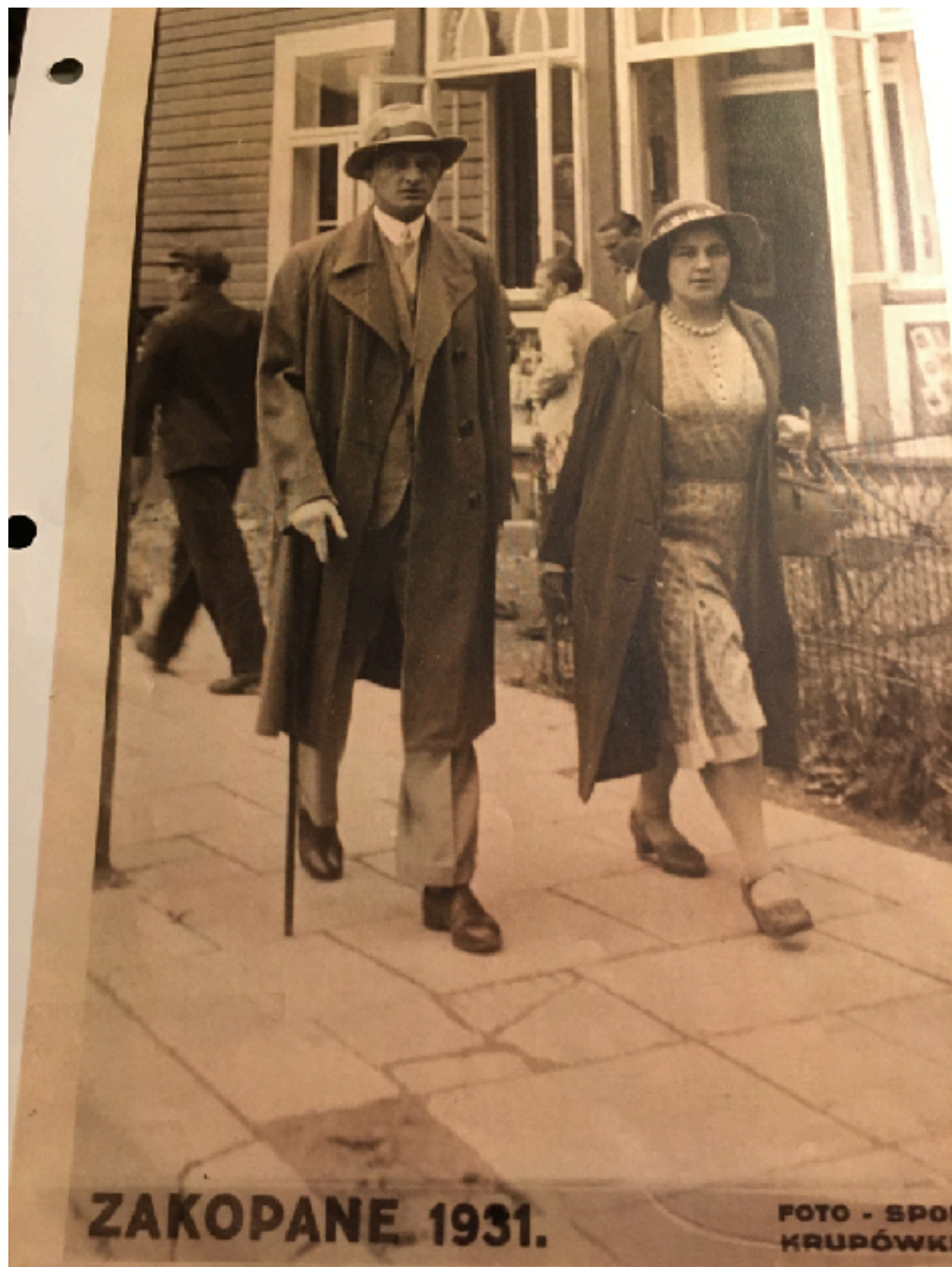
His father **Mosze Kushner** was born in the town of *Stołpcy* in n **1871**. He opened a dentist's office in the market square in *Łęczycza* in **1899**. My grandfather **Moshe Kushner** and his wife **Salomea Czasowszczyk** in addition to my fathers had a daughter, **Sonia** and son **Aleksander**, *below*. He established a dental practice in a nearby town of *Ozorków*.



Aleksander married my mothers sister **Matylda Przedborska**, *below*.



The **Kushner** daughter **Sonya** went to Warsaw to study dentistry and married a a teacher from Lublin, **Stefan Wlekliński**, a “goy”, *below*.



ZAKOPANE 1931.

**FOTO - SPOL
KRUPÓWKI**

That was the first, but not the last *mesalliance* (“wrong union” in French), an intermarriage in our family.. Despite the support of her brothers, the Kushners "renounced" their daughter after marrying a Christian. Amid complaints about her intolerant parents, Sonia accused her father of having forced her to become, in his footsteps, a dentist, a profession she hated. After Stefan's death in Auschwitz, Sonia (Zosia) gave her daughter to the care of the Wlekliński family, for whom her marriage with Stefan was also a *misalliance*. Zosia survived the Holocaust hiding on the "Aryan" side in Warsaw. Her daughter Irenka was brought up Catholic. After the war, in order to better develop a relationship with her daughter, my aunt Zosia was baptized. However, this did not improve the tension between the daughter and her mother, for whom being Jewish was a life curse.



Franuchna Przedborska (above), my mother's sister, went to Warsaw to study history and was also in a “wrong union”, but unlike the religious **Kushners**, the **Przedborski** family was secular and they didn't object to her marriage.



Samuel Przedborski, brother of my mother and Franciszka Przedborska, his sister. Łęczycza, 1927.

In her book *A Family's History of Anxiety*, my cousin **Agata Tuszyńska** wrote the following::

*They used to say in Łęczycza “they were beautiful Przedborski sisters”. They wore bows in their hair, played the piano, and knew how to embroider and cook. Bronka liked to deal with the kitchen Franuchna was busy with music and reading. She wanted to be a teacher. She enrolled at the University of Warsaw. She started working in an office headed by **Aleksander Majewski**. His store became the nucleus of a multi-store chain. He invited her to a nightclub called “Adria” for her first glass of champagne. The was*

her first declaration of love and her first night with a man. She was 30 years old.. He was two years older. On Sunday mornings, he drove up on his English motorcycle to her house, to whisk her off on canoeing trips. She couldn't ever imagine her sister Bronka with an oar in her hand, her brother Samuel on a bicycle or her brothers-in-law on a motorcycle seat. They got married in 1937. When the war broke out, Franuchna was four months pregnant. When she was about to give birth, signs appeared in cafes prohibiting Jews from entering. She had a husband - a Pole whom she trusted immensely. His words meant more than the Nazi ordinances. She called her sister, my mother, in the ghetto every day. "How are you, what do you need?"

On the night of September 14, 1939, the Germans seized Łęczyca. People dragged the dentist Kuszner to the market. He was known as wealthy Jew who was supposed to have gold. A German soldier gunned him down in one shot. Grandma Salomea died a few days later of a heart attack. A year earlier, my grandfather Henryk Przedborski died a natural death. In 1941, grandmother Justyna Przedborska and great-grandmother Salomea, widow of Salomon Herman, moved to Warsaw to live with us. They both did not survive the ghetto. My mother's sister Matylda and her eight-month-old son Henryk were also murdered in Treblinka.

My cousin Henryk Kuszner in the Warsaw ghetto

The letter from our family friend in Tel-Aviv continued:

From all over the world I don't know if there still exist even a hundred Jews from Łeczyca. There is one I know of Rachel here in Tel Aviv in a mental institution. I know also of a relative of mine, the grandson of my grandmother's stepson. During the war, the Jewish cemetery in Łeczyca was destroyed by the Germans and the road from the station to the market square was lined with tombstones from this cemetery. In 1946, I walked on these stones from the station. The last time I was in Łeczyca with you and your mother was in 1966. We went to Tumaska Street to visit a teacher, Bronka's friend, and she told us that one day at school her children told her: "Ma'am, we saw two Indians. They were dressed in black. They wore hats and spoke in Polish ". As it turned out, Rabbi Frenkel, who came from Łeczyca, visited his hometown in 1963 and walked around the city with his fellow rabbi. And since the children had never seen a Jew, they told their teacher that they had met Indians.