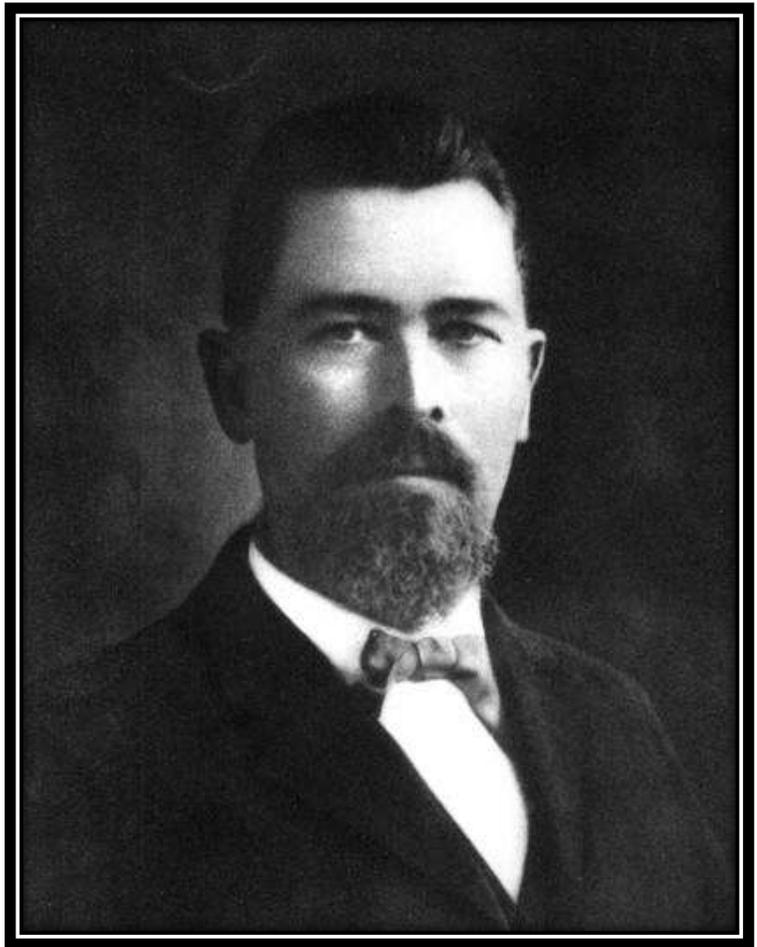


Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria

Visitor Experience, #15 in Series
“If ever we had a ‘Polish Layperson Hall of Fame,’ Peter Kiolbassa (shown right) would be number one,” said Bishop John Yanta during his research of this person!

Area 5 of the Polish Heritage Center will feature “Panna Maria’s Gifts to Chicago.” So many times, it is easy for us who reside in Texas to think of ourselves as isolated from the larger Polish immigration that took place here in America. For so many, the topic of major Polish populations here in America first brings to mind those legendary centers like Chicago, Illinois, New York state, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Michigan, or Wisconsin, etc. Even though you who have been following this newsletter know that Panna Maria was the **FIRST**



Peter Kiolbassa

permanent Polish settlement in America, we are by no means separated from the rest of history. This is the amazing story of what is best described as one of *Panna Maria’s Gifts to Chicago...Peter Kiolbassa!*

The following pages about **Peter Kiolbassa** were provided by **Janet Dawson Ebrom** who noted that Bishop Yanta has always expressed his respect and admiration for this gifted young man who came to Texas with his family from Silesia.

Baptism Record of Peter Kielbassa

Św. Mikołaja [St. Nicholas] in Świbie, Silesia

No.	Geburtsort und Taufstag des Tauflings. 1838	Vor- und Zuname des Tauflings.	Vor- und Zuname nebst Stand des Vaters.	Vorname der Mutter und wo für eine Geborene sie sp.	Geburtsstag des Tauflings.	Geschlecht				Vor- und Zuname der Eltern.	Stand der Taufzeugen.	Wohnort.	Bemerkungen.
						knaben	knaben	knaben	knaben				
102.	Schwibien 16 Juli	Franzka Glowa	Franz Glowa Gutmann	Maria Cudak	12 Juli			1		Karl Maria Paulina Bock Maria Janysek	Gutmann Gutmann Gutmann	Schwibien	
103.	Schwibien 24 Juli	Maria		Josephina Janysek Knyf.	29 Juli			1		Michl Schula Joseph Kulk Mathana Knyf	Knyf Knyf Knyf	Schwibien	
104.	Dombrowka 7 August	Maria		Livia Horiolek	7 August			1		Franz Kozubek Agatha Schula Michl Knyf	Gutmann Knyf Knyf	Dombrowka	
105.	Schwibien 30 August	Rosalia Badura	Anta Badura Lina	Madlona Glogowski	7 August			1		Joseph Pffel Maria Janysek Michl Knyf	Gutmann Gutmann Knyf	Schwibien	
106.	Schwibien 9 September	Franz Panch	Clement Panch Pfanzwitzer	Carolina Paulica	6 September	1				Michl Schula Maria Knyf Maria Knyf	Knyf Gutmann Gutmann	Schwibien	
107.	Dombrowka 20 September	Thekla Susanna Nade	Simon Nade Pispa	Franciska Kozielek	20 September			1		Franz Knyf Catharina Panch Joseph Knyf	Knyf Gutmann Gutmann	Dombrowka	
108.	Schwibien 30 Septbr	Michl Knappig	Paul Knappig Gutmann	Ana Szpanik	31 Septbr	1				Johann Knyf Julia Knyf Maria Knyf	Knyf Knyf Knyf	Schwibien	
109.	Schwibien 30 Septbr	Franciska Langhammer	Andreas Langhammer Gutmann	Sophia Nade	29 September			1		Johann Knyf Rosalia Langhammer Petra Maria	Knyf Knyf Knyf	Schwibien	
110.	Schwibien 14 October	Peter Kielbassa	Stanislaus Kielbassa Gutmann	Franzka Burda	14 October	1				Franz Knyf Joseph Knyf	Gutmann Gutmann	Schwibien	

Entry #110 [directly above] reveals the Baptism of **Peter Kielbassa** in Schwibien [Świbie] on 14 October 1838. His parents' names are shown as **Stanislaus Kielbassa** and **Franzka Burda** with Peter's birth date documented as 13 October 1838.

This baptismal record is noted in the first *Silesian Profiles* book on page 65 along with Peter's siblings' Baptisms. As original immigrants to Texas, **Stanislaus and Franzka Kielbassa / Kiobassa**, were professionally profiled by the *Silesian Profiles* committee using primary documents from Poland and Texas.*

Other families from Świbie who settled in Texas in the 1800s were: **Badura, Burda, Janysek, John, Koczorek, Kozub, Lipok, Stanuś, Szczepanik, Zielonka, and Zienć**; also from the Św. Mikołaja parish in Świbie were the **Sekula** and **Zientek** families who lived in Dąbrówka.

**Silesian Profiles: Polish Immigration to Texas in the 1850s* by Janet Dawson Ebram, Chairperson, John Warren Beard, Katherine Korus Beard, Cheryl Lynn Highley, and Mary Ann Moczygemba Watson, 1999.

The Handbook of Chicago Biography

Edited by John J. Flinn.

The Standard Guide Company

Chicago 1893

KIOLBASSA, PETER. - Born in the village of Schwieben, Silesia, Prussia. Son of **Stanislas** and **Franciska (Burda) Kiolbassa**. Parents of Polish nationality. Father was a prominent man in the affairs of his native country; was a member of the first German parliament from 1848 to 1849. Subject of sketch came to the United States with his parents Dec. 2, 1854. He had been educated in his native village, but attended business college in San Antonio, Texas, after arrival in this country. Commenced business life as a clerk, and later taught school at Panna Maria, Texas. After coming to Chicago he engaged in the real estate and fire insurance business, and has been highly successful. Was secretary to the chief of police in this city during 1872 and 1873; elected to the house of representatives of Illinois in 1877, and was elected city treasurer of Chicago in 1891. During the war he enlisted as a private and soon became a corporal and first sergeant of Company D, 16th Illinois Cavalry Volunteers, and later was captain of the 6th U. S. Colored Cavalry, and served from Feb. 9, 1863, to April 19, 1866. Is a Roman Catholic. Was married in 1865 to **Miss Paulina Dzewior**, and has one child, now **Mrs. Rosa Kwasigroch**.

Note: *Spelling corrections made for reprinting article which was published in 1893; later research documented the family's year of U.S. arrival in 1855.*

Teacher in Panna Maria

In his 1936 book, *The First Polish Colonies of America in Texas*, **Rev. Edward J. Dworaczyk**, noted that the first school in Panna Maria was dedicated on May 15, 1868 (page 42). He further explained, "With the departure of **Father Bakanowski**, **Father Felix [Zwiradowski]**, with the assistance of **Peter Kiolbassa** from Chicago who **took Mr. Warenski's** place as teacher June 1, 1870, and other local professional talent, carried on the educational system" (page 46).

1870 Karnes County Census

Peter Kiolbassa was recorded in the 1870 Karnes County, Texas, census as a Language Teacher, but the enumerator misspelled his name as: "**P. Kelboso**," age 31; along with his wife, **Paulena**, age 22; and their two children: **Paulena**, age 3, and **Frank**, age 1, both born in Illinois (stamped page 15).

Family Ties in San Antonio, Texas

Peter Kiolbassa's older brother **Thomas** was married to **Anna Yanta**. They were charter members of St. Michael Catholic Church in the Polish Quarter of San Antonio, Texas. **Thomas Kiolbassa** was a successful businessman, retail grocer, and City of San Antonio Alderman.

St. Stanislaus Kostka Church

Chicago, Illinois

St. Stanislaus Kostka Church at the southeast corner of Noble St. and Evergreen Ave. was the first Polish parish established in Chicago.

In February 1864, **Rev. Leopold Moczygema**, BM came to Chicago to hear the Easter confessions of Polish Catholics. About 1864, the St. Stanislaus Kostka Benevolent Society was formed. This group became the moving force behind the organization of a Polish parish.

During this period [1866-1869] **Peter Kiolbassa**, the leader of the St. Stanislaus Kostka Society, and **Rev. Joseph P. Roles**, pastor of Holy Name Church, were corresponding with the Resurrectionist Fathers in Rome in an attempt to secure Polish-speaking priests.

[Source: Polish Genealogical Society of America - pgsa.org]



Photo from: <http://ststanschurch.org/>

By 1897, St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish was the largest parish in the United States with 8,000 families, totaling 40,000 people. There were twelve Masses each Sunday: six Masses in the upper church and another six Masses in the lower church. St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish is considered the mother church of the many Polish parishes founded by Fr. Vincent Barzynski, C.R., during his pastorate from 1874-1899. [Source: <http://ststanschurch.org/>]

Naród Polski -- June 28, 1905

Death of Peter Kiolbassa

Peter Kiolbassa, one of our most prominent countrymen, not only among the Poles in Chicago, but throughout America, died on June 23rd, an upright and courageous citizen, who will be forever an honor to our name in this country, who will also remain a model for all, an impeccable, honest, energetic worker, a man of good will, a faithful Catholic and a genuine, true Pole.

Peter Kiolbassa, was born in the year 1837 in the village of Świbie in Śląsk (Silesia), a son of people of the soil; he came to America with his parents in the year 1855 and settled in the town of Virgin Mary [Panna Maria] in Texas, where just one year before (1854) there was organized the first Polish parish in America. **Mr. Kiolbassa**, soon making himself acquainted with local conditions, began to educate himself enthusiastically in the English and Spanish languages, knowing already Polish and German. He was a clerk for some time in the city of Piedras Negras. Then, after passing a teacher's examination, he was the first Polish teacher and an organist in the first Polish school in Virgin Mary [Panna Maria]. After the outbreak of the Civil War in 1862, he enlisted in the Confederate Army, and served one year in the Cavalry, but after being taken prisoner in one of the battles, he passed over early to the Union Army, where he received in turn the rank of sergeant, sergeant major, officer and captain, in which capacity he served to the end of the war, until 1866, taking part in all the major engagements. After the war, **Mr. Kiolbassa** joined the police force in Chicago as an adherent of the Republican Party, but when this party seemed to become more and more anti-Catholic and an enemy of the emigrants from Europe, **Mr. Kiolbassa** went over to the Democratic camp with which he remained without change to the end of his career and life. In the year 1867 he was a sergeant and secretary to the Chief of Police, but after two years he left for the place of his former residence in Texas, where he was once more a school teacher and organist.

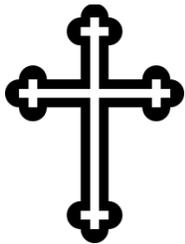
After his return to Chicago, he again served on the police force, and after two years he received an appointment to the Customs department, in which he remained for 16 years, during which time he served two years in the Illinois State Legislature. In 1891 he was nominated and elected treasurer of the city of Chicago, and held this high office with an honor to himself and his fellow countrymen. He endeared himself to the city by turning over tens of thousands of dollars in interest, which his predecessors always kept for themselves by which act he gave a fine example of his unselfishness.

During the whole span of his life **Mr. Kiolbassa** was alderman, supervisor, building commissioner and commissioner of public works, at which position he remained until his death. These wide and very extensive public activities did not hinder **Mr. Kiolbassa** from taking a lively and energetic action in the affairs of his fellow countrymen that is in the interest of the

Polish population in Chicago. On the contrary, the late **Mr. Kiolbassa** was active everywhere and worked in every field. He was one of the organizers of the St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish, (oldest Polish Parish in the City of Chicago); he was a member, and for some time president of the Polish Roman Catholic Union. He belonged to the Polish National Alliance, and everywhere he was helpful and accommodating, and everywhere respected and trusted. To his countrymen he was accommodating, at their service and truly friendly. He helped many financially and with advice, so that he was loved by all and his popularity not only amongst the Poles but in the entire city or Chicago was extraordinary. As a Pole - patriot, charitable and sincere, he was also an ardent and devout Catholic. As such he died after a long and very painful illness.

The late **Peter Kiolbassa** passes from the field of our social endeavors as a doer "Bene Meritus" - well deserving, so that his demise is lamented by our entire Polish-American immigration which will preserve him in its grateful memory. This memory will be the most beautiful monument for the one who died on this earth, far away from his Fatherland.

May he rest in Peace.



Note: The above obituary appears as it was written in 1905 with only spelling edits in its translation from Polish. His year of birth as 1837 was incorrect as evidenced by his Baptism record in 1838.

“Naród Polski” ISSN 0027-7894 **“POLISH NATION”** is the *Official Publication of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America.*

Peter Kiolbassa

1838 - 1905

was laid to rest in

Saint Adalbert Catholic Cemetery

Niles, Cook County, Illinois

Bishop Yanta honored in Panna Maria

BY CAROL BAASS SOWA

TODAY'S CATHOLIC



Photo courtesy of Carol Baass Sowa – *Today's Catholic*

SAN ANTONIO • It was another historic first in Panna Maria when **Bishop Emeritus John W. Yanta** was honored there with the first Lifetime Achievement Award from the Polish American Council of Texas (PACT) on Nov. 19. The bishop's ancestors were among the Polish immigrants who arrived in Panna Maria on Dec. 24, 1854, founding the first Polish settlement in North America. Bishop Yanta was the founder and first president of PACT, which seeks to further knowledge of Polish culture and events and facilitate networking among Polish-American groups in Texas.

Ceremonies began that morning with speeches and introductions outside the doors of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, just a stone's throw from the historic oak tree beneath which the original settlers celebrated midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.

Jim Mazurkiewicz, president of PACT, introduced Bishop Yanta as “the father of this organization” and talked briefly of the early Polish immigrants, noting they were farmers, ranchers and agriculturalists. Prior to 1880, Texas had the largest number of Polish settlements and parishes in the United States, Mazurkiewicz said, with Poles having been “a big part of the fabric of Texas history,” including participation in the battles of San Jacinto, Goliad and Gonzales.

Vice President **Elaine Mazurek Stephens** spoke of PACT being the fulfillment of Bishop Yanta's longtime dream of the various Polish groups uniting to create a vibrant spirit of Polonia in Texas. “We just can't thank him enough for that,” she said. “He is not only our founder, but he is our inspiration, the love of our life and he prays for us every day.”

Father Wieslaw Iwaniec, pastor of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church and a native of Poland, called Panna Maria “a special place of spiritual pilgrimage,” which is visited by Polish people from near and far. Many return on Nov. 1 to honor their ancestors buried in the church cemetery, he said.

Second Vice President **Piotr Przybylski** introduced various groups who had traveled from Houston to attend, including the Wawel Dance Group and children from the Polish School of Houston. He noted people had come from many regions that day to unite in celebrating Polish Independence Day, which officially took place Nov. 11.

Youth Vice President **Colton Cunov**, who serves as president of the Texas A&M Polish Association, gave additional history on the early Polish immigrants, relating that Panna Maria's St. Joseph School, now a museum, was the first Polish school in America, founded in 1868 to preserve Polish identity in a new generation. “Texas Polonia is alive and well,” he said, including among young people today. Cunov's special “Polish Aggies” T-shirt met with hearty approval.

Singing of the United States and Polish national anthems was followed by a parade on foot around the church and grounds to the dining hall, marching under banners and placards of various organizations, towns and areas of Texas. Some sang the traditional Polish song of celebration, *Sto Lat (May You Live A Hundred Years)*, as they marched.

At the hall, Mazurkiewicz noted that PACT's bestowing its first Polish Texan Lifetime Achievement Award on Bishop Yanta was "honoring one of our own, where it all began: in Texas, here in Panna Maria in 1854." The award was established to honor an individual whose accomplishments had significantly impacted Texas Polonia by promoting and propagating Polish culture and heritage in Texas. There are more than 228,000 Texans of Polish descent today, Mazurkiewicz said, making it the second largest ethnic group in the state. He then shared highlights of the bishop's life.

Bishop Yanta, whose grandmother was born under the historic Panna Maria oak tree, was born in nearby Runge on Oct. 2, 1931, to **John Andrew Yanta** and **Mary Magdalene Pollok**. Ordained a priest in 1956, he was consecrated a bishop in Panna Maria in 1994 and became the seventh bishop of Amarillo in 1997. "He has been a servant leader in every sense of the word throughout his career," said Mazurkiewicz, "and has been most passionate about his faith and his heritage."

A champion of many causes and a visionary of many ideas, Bishop Yanta was recognized with the Cardinal von Galen Award for courageous pro-life leadership and with the Catholic Television of San Antonio Leadership in Media Award for his role as founder and first executive director of CTSA. Founder and first president of the national Polish American Priests Association, he was general chair of their first convention, as well as being founder and first president of PACT, serving five terms. He has been a longtime supporter of migrant workers, coordinated Pope John Paul II's visit with Panna Maria parishioners, led the first tour of Silesian Polish Texans to their forefathers' homeland in Poland and was general chairman of the Father Leopold Moczygemba Centennial.

Currently, Bishop Yanta serves as chairman of the board and president of the Panna Maria Heritage Center, whose partial construction was visible across from the church. As a research center and museum, it is intended to be a bridge between Poland and the United States, Silesia and Texas, and people of Polish descent throughout the United States.

The presence of Poles in America dates back to Jamestown in 1608, said Mazurkiewicz, and there is evidence that suggests Christopher Columbus may have been the son of an exiled Polish king. Noting the strong history of the Polish people in Texas and the United States, he expressed PACT's pride in their Polish ancestors who shaped America and their special pride in the accomplishments of Bishop Yanta.

Accepting the award, the bishop responded, "I share this, first, with God himself." He also credited those present with having been an inspiration to him. He observed that his interest in family history and Polish culture came later in life, while attending a

seminar in Chicago. After that, he studied in New York and in Poland to learn more. *(Notation: The first year, I studied under the auspices of the Kosciusko Foundation of New York at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. I studied a second year at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań with the University of Kansas.)*

A second presentation was made to Bishop Yanta **by Elenora Dugosh Goodley**, on behalf of the city and county of Bandera. Known as the official “Cowboy Capital of the World,” Bandera is also home to a significant Polish community and St. Stanislaus Church. The bishop was presented with a cowboy hat and a certificate proclaiming him an honorary Bandera cowboy, which led to his revealing he had ridden horses since the age of five at the family farm, which later became a ranch and, while a seminarian, helped round up and vaccinate cattle for his father.

Attendees then posed in front of the church for a group photo which will be placed in the archives of Poland and attended a Mass celebrated by Bishop Yanta, assisted by Father Iwaniec, and **Father Thaddeus Tabak, SDS**.

In his homily, Bishop Yanta said: “I dream of Panna Maria as a place where people can come one day to get away from the hustle and bustle and the noise of the cities.” The church will draw them closer to God and the Blessed Mother. The Heritage Center, once completed, will affirm in them the customs, beliefs and values of the Silesian Polish settlers. “Thank you for being here,” he said. “Let us continue to dream.”

I AM BACK IN CIRCULATION!

I had an emergency and went to ICU with a foot infection on December 9th. I struggled for many days. Thanks to all of you for your masses, rosaries, and many devotions. I went to rehab January 3rd. I am taking different exercises to strengthen my muscles. I am hoping I will be at home soon, but I will have 24 hour care in the meantime. I appreciate your many masses and prayers offered for me. Thank you. May God bless all of you abundantly.

Thank You!

Thank you so much for the latest gifts from **Margret Warzecha Wollny** and **Mary Rutkowski**. All gifts are important and truly appreciated. And with this in mind, the enclosed remit envelope is provided for your convenience to help support the Polish Heritage Center project. Please reflect, pray, and give till it feels GOOD!



38th Week of Construction and going strong!



Just about ready to open, the field office, or also known as “*Bishop’s Budka*,” across from the church. Come and visit our new office in Panna Maria and have a cup of coffee or coke!

God Bless each of you in this New Year!

Bishop John W. Yanta