

BLAZOWA



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BLAZOWA'S Past and Present *News and Historical Notes*

Compiled by the Municipal and Communal Library in Blazowa



Blazowa 1940s. On the right, in the background, is the public school building.

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Panorama of Blazowa 1940s.



Magdalena Kowalska-Cheffey

News from Blazowa

The start of the year is a time for reporting meetings for various groups and organizations. The Volunteer Fire

Department serves our community daily, and from these reports, we learn how much they contribute to our neighborhoods.

The Senior Club „Pogodna Jesień” (“Sunny Autumn”) is very active in Blazowa. It serves as a gathering place for seniors to socialize and gain valuable knowledge to help protect them from becoming victims of various

frauds. Recently, club members met with police officers and representatives from the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS), who shared helpful information with them.

In January, we celebrated Grandmother’s Day and Grandfather’s Day, focusing on love, respect, and cherished memories. Children in kindergartens and schools prepared special performances to express their gratitude for the love, support, and warm hugs associated with their grandparents.

Commemorative ceremonies were held in the Podkarpacie region from 20 January to 30 as part of International Holocaust Remembrance Day.



In 27 locations across the region, we paid tribute to the Jewish residents of our cities, towns and villages who perished during the Holocaust.

On 7 March, the library held an author’s meeting with Wiesław Hop, a writer from the Podkarpacie region known for his general fiction and crime novels, mostly set in the Bieszczady Mountains.

Alan Chuchla, a student at the Music School in Blazowa, won first place in Vienna’s 40th International Accordion Competition. Congratulations!

Magdalena Kowalska-Cheffey



The Senior Club „Pogodna Jesień”.



The Music School in Blazowa.





On 7 March, the library held an author's meeting with Wiesław Hop.



Historical Group „To Save From Obscurity”.



The Volunteer Fire Department serves our community daily - pictured is the team from Lecka.

Blazowa Informal Historical Group: One Year Later



Jakub Heller

On 19 March 2024, the Blazowa Informal Historical Group „To Save

Among the stories we shared was a recollection of the Blazowa Post Office as remembered by Jadwiga Chuchla. Additionally, Magda wrote a brief piece about the Atlas family, who lived in the building that later became a police station. There were stories about roadside crosses and shrines. Anna Gellermann began sharing family stories about Father Kwiatkowski, while Marta Wójcik recalled the connections between the Jews of Rzeszow and Blazowa. We recently celebrated

the opportunity to present our group on Polish Radio Rzeszow, where we encouraged listeners to take action to preserve local history from being forgotten. This year, we also started publishing an online English-language supplement to „Kurier Błazowski” titled „Blazowa’s Past and Present”. We have received positive feedback indicating that our work is being read and well-received by those searching for their family roots in Blazowa.

What are our plans for this year? We will continue to collect and develop historical materials related to our region. We will highlight the profiles of famous and distinguished individuals



Initial organisational meeting.



From Obscurity” was established. Our goal is to collect, preserve, and share the achievements of our ancestors, particularly with the younger generation. This initiative aims to help them learn about the region’s history and the people who shaped it. On 12 April, we had our initial organizational meeting. The first year of our activities has passed quickly, and we have been very busy.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day, hosting guests from Israel and the USA. Last year, we received permission to carry out cleanup work at the Jewish cemetery in Blazowa. We keep you informed about all our activities through „Kurier Błazowski” and our social media.

duals associated with the Blazowa area. Our library has several historical

We compiled the history of the brickyard in Blazowa. We displayed old photographs from our region during the May Day picnic at Wilczak.

Additionally, we had



May Day picnic at Wilczak.



Jakub and Magda at Polish Radio Rzeszow.



During Museum Night at the library.

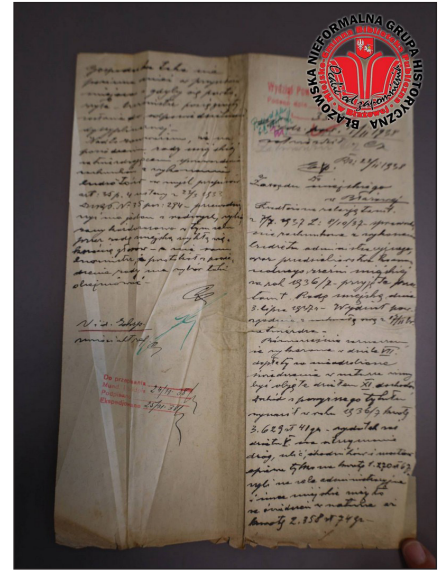
events planned, and we will continue the Jewish cemetery cleanup. We are delighted that new individuals passionate about regional history are joining our group, as they will undoubtedly contribute to our efforts.

We invite anyone interested in sharing a captivating story to contact us so we can help preserve it from being forgotten.

On behalf of the group
Jakub Heller



Czeslawa Szydełko talked about Jewish dishes during the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.



Municipal and Communal Public Library in Blazowa

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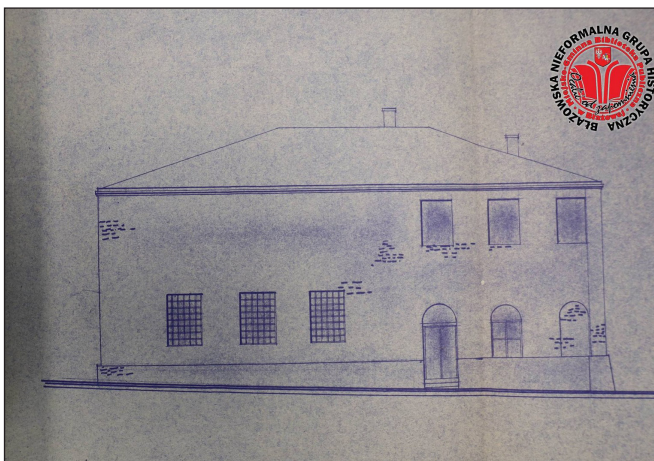
International HOLOCAUST Remembrance Day

Marta Wójcik: Rajsze - following in the footsteps of Jewish residents of Rzeszów

Tamar and Szmuel Halpern (Israel): The Galician roots of the Halpern family

Jeffrey Cymbler (USA): Jeffrey Cymbler's Galician roots

Sally Mizroch (USA): Sally Mizroch's Galician roots



We have accomplished a lot already, but we also have ambitious plans for this year.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2025

PODKARPACIE

This year, the International Holocaust Remembrance Day celebrations took place in Podkarpacie for the seventeenth time. The commemorations began on 20 January and ended on 30 January, spanning 10 days and occurring in 27 locations throughout the region. During this period, we paid tribute to the Jewish residents of our cities, towns, and villages who perished during the Holocaust. We recalled the fate of the Jewish communities that once thrived among us, contributing to the history, culture, and economy of the Republic of Poland.

Władysław Ortyl, the Marshal of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, and Konrad Fijołek, the President of the City of Rzeszów, held the honorary patronage over the celebrations. The main organizers included the Institute of National Remembrance Rzeszów Branch and the University of Rzeszów. Special recognition goes to Professor Władysław Wierzbieniec, who has organized the celebrations since 2008. This year was no exception, as he continued to devote significant effort to the events.

WIELOPOLE SKRZYNSKIE

Wielopole Skrzynskie is primarily known today as the birthplace of Tadeusz Kantor, who was a painter, director, stage designer, and art theoretician. The building that once served as the rectory, where Kantor was born

in June 1915, now houses the Centre for Documentation and History of the Region Tadeusz Kantor Museum, known as Kantorowka.

Before World War II, Wielopole Skrzynskie had a significant Jewish community. Poles and Jews coexisted harmoniously, with their cultures interwoven, as symbolized by the town's market square. Kantor's work reflects this blending of cultures, particularly



Samuel Halpern recites kaddish for the dead.

in his most famous plays: „Wielopole, Wielopole” and „The Dead Class.”

On 21 January, I traveled to Wielopole to participate in the celebrations. My primary role was serving as an interpreter. Still, it also provided a chance to meet some of the descendants

of the Subcarpathian Jews we were set to host at our library the next day: Sally Mizroch from the United States and Tamar and Shmuel Halpern from Israel.

The ceremony began with local authorities laying flowers at the Jewish cemetery in Wielopole. This site is significant because, on 30 June 1942, the Germans murdered several dozen elderly and disabled Jews there, deporting the remaining community members to the ghetto in Ropczyce and subsequently to the extermination camp in Belzec. The cemetery itself was almost completely destroyed during the war, and the matzevot (Jewish tombstones) were used to construct a pavement by order of the occupiers. To this day, only a few matzevot and their fragments have been recovered, and they are now placed around a plaque commemorating the Jews of Wielopole, forming a sort of lapidarium. Here, Shmuel recited Kaddish for the deceased. I couldn't help but reflect on how fortunate we are that the Jewish cemetery in Blazowa survived with a significant number of matzevot intact.

The main highlight of the celebrations was a popular science session held at the Municipal Cultural and Recreation Centre. This session featured presentations by Professor Waław Wierzbieniec, who discussed „Culture and Customs of Galician Jews: Are They the Same as in Wielopole



Participants and organizers of the event in Wielopole.

Skrzynskie?” and by Mariola Świętoń, who presented „Wielopole Skrzynskie as Remembered by Former Residents.” Additionally, stories were shared by Sally Mizroch and Shmuel Halpern, focusing on the experiences of their families during the Holocaust and in the years following World War II. Local students actively participated in large numbers, which delighted the foreign guests. These meetings foster hope that future generations will engage in empathetic dialogue.

Tamar, Shmuel's wife, shared a heartfelt reflection on Holocaust survivors living in Israel today:

„As of May 2024 (Holocaust Day in Israel), 133,360 Holocaust survivors are living in Israel. Every day, 45 of them pass away.

About 40,000 of them are non-Europeans – some of them were born in Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Algeria. They suffered from various harassment and restrictions under the Nazi occupation, and many of them were sent to forced labor camps. The others are Iraqi Jews who were exposed to the Farhud riots in Baghdad in early June 1941.

The Holocaust survivors living with us today were children during the Holocaust. About 96% were children under 18, born after 1928. The average age of Holocaust survivors today is 87. The oldest Holocaust survivor is a 111-year-old woman born in Tunisia. The youngest are about 78 years old and were born about nine months after the war's end. 61% of them are women.

The horrors of the 7 October 2023 brought back past traumas for many, re-experiencing anxiety and fear and uprooting them from their homes. One Holocaust survivor, Mr Moshe Raidler, was brutally murdered at the age of 91, along with his caregiver, in his home on Kibbutz Holit. Many Holocaust survivors found themselves once again in the cycle of disaster and mourning when they lost children or grandchildren who were murdered or kidnapped, or soldiers who fell in the battles.

We volunteer in a project called „Now is the Time”, a national initiative to alleviate loneliness among Holocaust survivors. Over 6,500 volunteers come to a weekly social gathering in the homes of survivors”.

While in Wielopole, it was impossible not to visit Kantorowka, where the rooms are dedicated not only to Tadeusz Kantor and his ties to Wielopole but also to the town's history, the local church, former residents, and their daily lives. During our visit, preparations were underway for the opening of the exhibition „Samaritans from Markowa.” We had the opportunity to take a peek at Arkadiusz Andrejkow's poignant wooden boards, created from preserved photographs taken by Jozef Ulma.

RADIO RZESZOW

On 22 January, late in the morning, at the invitation of editor Adam Głaczyński, Jakub Heller and I participated in the „Tu i Teraz” („Here and Now”) broadcast on Polish Radio Rzeszow. We talked about the activities of our Informal Historical Group

„To Save From Obscurity,” which is associated with the Blazowa Library. Our focus was on efforts to highlight the region's rich heritage and preserve the history of the Blazowa Jews from being forgotten. The time flew by thanks to editor Głaczyński's warm and cordial personality, and we hardly noticed that we were on live radio. Our radio morning set the tone for the entire day, dedicated to commemorating the Blazowa Jewish community.

BLAZOWA

During the same time, our foreign guests were joined by Jeffrey Cymbler from the United States, another descendant of Subcarpathian Jews who survived the Holocaust. Sally, Tamar, Shmuel, and Jeffrey spent the morning in an educational and heart-warming meeting with the students of the Blazowa School Complex.

In the afternoon, Jakub and I met our guests to visit the Jewish cemetery together. We took the same route that Jewish funeral processions likely used years ago. This allowed us to discuss the history of the Blazowa Jews while admiring the town's panorama and listening to Kuba's stories about the places we passed. The visit to the cemetery was a meaningful experience for our guests, who appreciated the cleaning work we had already done. Thanks to our efforts, entering the cemetery and accessing most tombstones was easy.

The way back to the library allowed us to show those places in the town we knew were connected to the Jews of Blazowa. The place where the



At the Blazowa Jewish cemetery.

synagogue and mikveh used to be, the Atlas tenement house, the Blazowa market square, where the Planty park is today... And, of course, the library itself, whose cellars and parts of the walls still conceal echoes of the austeria (a Jewish inn) that used to be there.

That evening, languages, stories, and memories came together in the crowded reading room of our library. Our guests later remarked that they were pleasantly surprised by the warm and cordial welcome, the genuine attention given to their stories, and the delicious feast prepared for them. Even the dishes on the table sparked conversations about how their mothers made similar meals.

Marta Wójcik took us on a journey through the history of Jewish Rzeszow, revealing a panorama of a city that we think we know but can still rediscover. The highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the stories shared by our guests, descendants of Jews from Podkarpacie. Their ancestors survived the Holocaust, and they often return to Poland to talk about

their roots and honor those who perished in the Shoah.

Shmuel Halpern is connected to the nearby town of Dynow.

„His mother, Beila-Hava, was born in 1914 in Dynow, the eldest of a family with five other sons: Zvi, Pinchas, Mendel, Yosef and Mordechai. Their mother, Dvora-Gittel, died of illness in 1929. Beila-Hava was like a mother to them.

When the Nazis invaded, they all fled across the San River and wandered to distant Siberia. There, the father, Shmuel and his two children, Mendel and Mordechai,

survived. His entire family was killed by the Germans, either in the ghetto or in Belzec. He, too, went through many hardships and reached Uzbekistan. There, he met Beila, who was 21 years younger than him and the same age as his eldest daughter.

They married, and their daughter Estera was born in Tashkent. Rachelle and Shmuel were born in Szczecin, where they grew up and were educated.

In 1968 they were forced to leave Poland and moved to the United States, where Beila's two brothers, Pinchas and Yosef, were already living.”

Tamar Halpern, whose family comes from Dortmund, shared with



Sally Mizroch

died of hunger and cold. The rest of the children continued to wander south and reached Uzbekistan.

Shmuel's father was born in Lubaczow. Before the war, he had a wife and seven children. When the war broke out, he stayed in Lviv and thus



Samuel Halpern

us the story of the „journey to the roots” she took with her family. In Dortmund, in front of the house at Bruckstrasse 44, a ceremony took place to place the so-called Stolperstein, or „memory stones” in the pavement. Each Stolperstein is shaped like a paving stone with a brass plaque bearing the name and surname of the commemorated victim of Nazism, their date of birth and death, and information about their fate. The Stolperstein are placed at the last address a person lived at of their own free will and thus could call home.

Tamar shared with us the words that were spoken during the ceremony in Dortmund:

„We are standing today in front of the house where our family used to



At the meeting organized by the Blazow library, the historical outline was presented by director Anna Heller.

live at the beginning of the 20th century:

Sigfried Dannenbaum – our grandfather and great-grandfather.

His wife Herta Dannenbaum (nee Kamnitzer) – our grandmother and great-grandmother.

Rosa Dannenbaum – Sigfried's unmarried sister – our father's beloved aunt.

Unfortunately, we never had the chance to meet any of them.

Also used to live here:

Ruven Dannenbaum – our beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

His brother Max Dannenbaum – our beloved uncle, also father, grandfather and great-grandfather to Lene, Simon, Louise and her children.

Of the five inhabitants of this house, only two survived the horrific Holocaust:

Our father, Ruven, immigrated to Israel in 1936, thus escaping the disaster. In Israel, he married Esther Borovitz, and we were born – along with seven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. Our parents lived their entire lives since their Aliyah in Kibbutz Sarid.

His brother, Max, was too young to leave and remained with his parents and Aunt Rosa until early October 1939, when he managed to escape to Denmark, where he worked on a farm for several years. On October 1st, 1943, the Germans extradited him and sent him to Theresienstadt, where he survived until liberation in mid-April 1945. After the war, Max returned to Denmark, where he married

and set up a family—one daughter, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Aunt Rosa lived in this house until December 1939. She then fled to Belgium and intended to travel to America but was denied permission, arrested in Belgium, transferred to France, and from there taken to Auschwitz, never to return. Siegfried and Herta lived in this house until April 1942, when they were taken to Zamosc, Poland, and never returned.

From this house, hundreds of letters were sent to Ruven in Israel between 1936 and 1942. The letters, all written in German and in Herta's beautiful handwriting, were only found by us in recent years. With the help of Rolf Fischer, a small portion of them were translated, revealing their warm connection, deep concern, and great love for their son. The parents tried to find a way to immigrate to Israel and hoped to reunite with our father, even seeking his help, but were unable to do so.

We have come from Israel: Ruven Dannenbaum's three children – Boaz with his son Eitan, Ilana with her daughter Shiri, and Tamar with her husband Shmuel and daughter Leeat. And from Denmark, Max Dannenbaum's daughter Lene with her son Simon.

We are all here to remember our grandparents, whom we never had the chance to meet and to promise that we will never forget them.”

Sally Mizroch talked about her Polish-Lithuanian roots, focusing on family members who emigrated to the

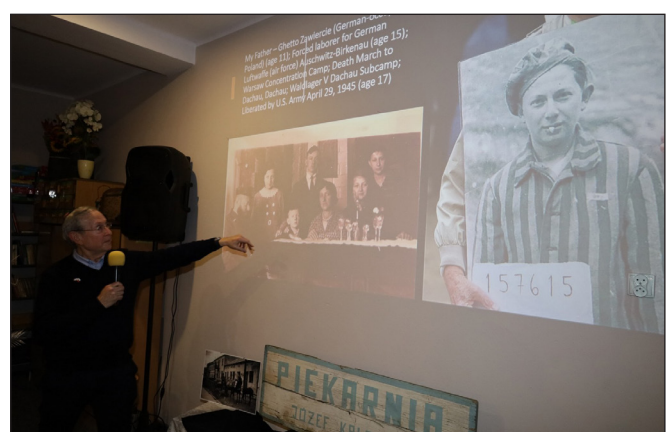
United States at the turn of the 20th century, thus escaping the Holocaust. She also spoke about those who remained in Lithuania and Poland and tragically perished in the Holocaust. What struck me most in Sally's story was her emphasis on the fact that her ancestors who stayed in Poland did so not because they had no other choice but because they felt a deep connection to their Polish identity, loved their homeland, and wanted to share in its fate. Her ancestors fought for Poland's independence; this was their home, and they did not want to leave. No one could have imagined that just a few years later, entire nations would face brutal destruction at the hands of the Nazi regime.

Jeffrey's story was one of the most fascinating stories I've encountered—judging by the reactions, it seems others felt the same. It had everything: a lasting school friendship, escapes and hiding, good deeds that returned in abundance, and carefully concealed family secrets. It also beautifully illustrated the theme of Poles saving Jews, specifically the tale of a Polish Catholic family that rescued Jeffrey's mother and grandparents during the Holocaust. His grandmother, Mina, had a close school friend named Rószka. Many years later, during World War II, Mina and Rószka's lives would intertwine again.

In October 1942, the Nadel family escaped from a forced labor camp in Trzcieniec, a small village along the Lviv-Przemysl railway line, now located in Ukraine. After hiding in the forest for a while, they eventually



Tamar Halpern



Jeffrey Cymbler

reached the Michał and Rozalia (Róska) Kopacz farm in Lacka Wola. Despite having four small children of their own, the youngest of whom was only two years old, the Kopacz family chose to help the Nadels. They provided shelter to a group of eight Jews, which included Jeffrey's grandparents and their three children, one of whom was his mother, just nine years old at the time.

The Kopacz farm was located less than 50 km from Markowa. Although they knew what fate befell the Ulma family for helping Jews, for 22 months... 670 days... 16,080 hours... 964,800 minutes, their home was a shelter for their old school friend and her family.

One of the fundamental concepts in Judaism is Hakarat Hatov, which means recognizing and showing gratitude for the good deeds that one does for others. In this spirit, Jeffrey encouraged his uncle Naftali, the last survivor of the group, to apply to the Yad Vashem Institute for the Righteous Among the Nations title for Rozalia and Michał Kopacz, as well as Father Zygmunt Dziedziak, the parish priest for Trzciniec and Lacka Wola. The application process took three years, and the titles were finally awarded on 18 October 2022.

A beautiful complement to this story is the search for the descendants of the Kopacz family and their fate. It turned out that their youngest son, Wojciech, was still alive. Seeing the photos of his meeting with Naftali brought tears to my eyes, and I'm sure I wasn't alone in that reaction. There is also a poignant letter written by Mina in 1964 to Michał Kopacz, in which she expressed,

„May G-d never let me forget what you did for me and for my family.” In September 2023, four generations of the Nadel family and three generations of the Kopacz family met in Jerusalem, once again embodying the truth that „whoever saves one life, it is as if he has saved the entire world.”

The evening we spent with our guests, from nearby Rzeszow and distant United States and Israel, was filled with beautiful experiences that are difficult to summarise in just a few sentences. These memories will remain with us for a long time, adding more pieces to our joint Polish-Jewish-Blazowa mosaic.

RZESZOW

Over ten days in the Podkarpacie region, numerous meetings, lectures, and commemorative events took place throughout Rzeszow. These activities highlighted the history and experiences of those who called this city, known as Rajsze in Yiddish, their home until World War II.

On 24 January, Kuba and I visited the State Archives in Rzeszow to listen to the lecture by Aaron Halberstam, a graduate of the rabbinical school in Jerusalem and a passionate enthusiast of Jewish history and heritage. Aaron has a particular interest in the history of Hasidic dynasties in Galicia and the religious life of Jews during the inter-war years and the war period; Blazowa is familiar territory for him. Recently, he has focused on those communities whose registry books have not survived the test of time. Like us, he often turns to school journals, which are frequently one of the few remaining sources of personal data for these communities.

Aaron took us on an incredible journey into the world of Hasidic Jews, exploring their history and everyday life. We listened attentively as he described a world that seems distant, often closed off and inaccessible, yet simultaneously

fascinating. His lecture helped us better understand the life of the Blazowa Hasidim and their daily experiences before the Holocaust. Aaron also highlighted why the Hasidic communities were nearly annihilated during that time: their distinctiveness set them apart from their Polish neighbors, and their limited knowledge of the Polish language made them easy targets. Unlike assimilated Jews, they found it extremely challenging to hide and survive on the Aryan side.

A few days later, on 28 January, we returned to Rzeszow, visiting the Provincial and Municipal Public Library for a lecture by Marta Wojcik titled „Pre-war Jewish Shops and Businesses in Rzeszow.” We represented our library at the event with our director, Anna Heller. Knowing Marta's reputation as a captivating storyteller, we were not surprised to find the room filled.

During her presentation, Marta evoked Rzeszow, which no longer exists but whose traces are still hidden among the city's modern buildings. She illustrated her narrative using a combination of pre-war photographs of Jewish shops and contemporary images of the exact locations. She wove together family names and stories, showcasing distinguished gentlemen and elegant ladies from the past who appeared in the photographs.

Marta's account of Rzeszow is intricately connected to our history in Blazowa, mainly because the well-known Rzeszow entrepreneur Ascher Silber also owned an estate in Blazowa, where his family spent time before the war. We were genuinely delighted to share that evening with Marta.

We tried to actively participate in as many commemorations in Podkarpacie as possible while fulfilling our professional responsibilities. We were pleased to offer our assistance, but equally important to us were the opportunities to learn something new, connect with interesting individuals, and honor the memory of our former Jewish neighbors who were brutally murdered during the Holocaust.

Magdalena Kowalska-Cheffey



Exhibition at the Blazowa Library.

Old photos tell their story...

Photos taken with traditional techniques using an old bellows camera are unique and one of a kind. Nothing can be improved or retouched in this process.

Today, taking a selfie and striking a pout has become a necessity. After that, we post the photo on Facebook. But what's the purpose of all this? It's to let friends see, to show off, brag, and exist in the social sphere.

Often, these images are enhanced using various effects in a software program. You can take a photo of yourself with devil horns or reindeer antlers, a Santa hat, or any other fun accessory—"perfect" for the holiday spirit. After the holidays, you can snap a sweet picture of yourself wearing a crown or funky glasses... And because the software automatically enhances your appearance, your eyes suddenly look bigger and more

captivating. It can do whatever you want – isn't that just awesome? (Slight touch of irony intended!)

Most people take photos with their phones, and it's easy to see why. Technology is constantly advancing, and as a result, most pictures end up stored on phones, computers, or external drives. Unfortunately, few of these photos will remain accessible in 50 or 100 years. What will future generations look at when CDs become obsolete and hard drives fail? The answer is a traditional photo album. History shows that physical photos can stand the test of time if they are properly stored and not relegated to a basement or attic. A well-maintained photo album can be enjoyed by many generations to come.

It is also crucial to describe the photos correctly. Including the date can be particularly helpful for providing



context, allowing us to see how places and fashions change over time.

In this instalment of our old photography series, I am excited to present photos from the album of the late Jan Graboś, who was a long-time president of GS in Blazowa and a valued colleague on our editorial team.

As always, I encourage anyone who wishes to share their own photos or memories to contact me.

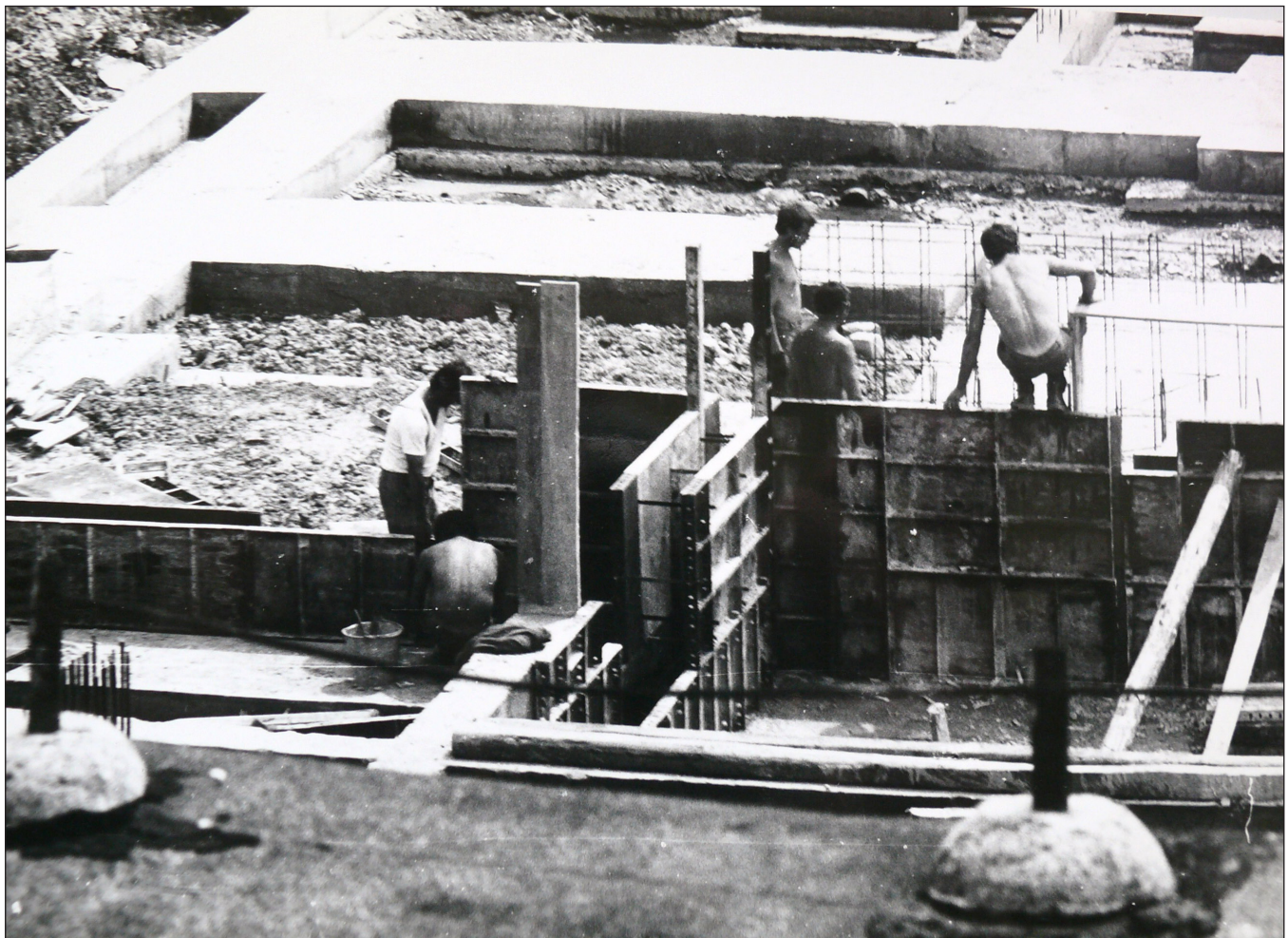
Additionally, I invite everyone to visit our website, www.biblioteka.blazowa.net, and our Facebook page, „Blazowa in Old and Contemporary Photography,” where we have gathered approximately 7,000 photos. You can also view various thematic films about our region there.

Jakub Heller





Construction work.





The grand opening of the Commercial House in Blazowa.





The first supermarket in Blazowa.

Catechist priest Father Ignacy Bocheński (1889-1955)



I have been collecting and processing old photographs related to the Błażowa region for the past fifteen years. My collection includes seven thousand photographs, many of which capture various church ceremonies featuring Father Ignacy Bocheński. While compiling a list of historical articles published in the „Kurier Błażowski,” I discovered several mentions of Father Bocheński. Additionally, while sorting through materials in the State Archives in Rzeszów, I noticed that his name frequently appeared in school registers. This underscores the importance of recognizing the contributions of this remarkable catechist from Błażowa.

on 1 July 1923. Eight months later, on 1 February 1924, he was officially nominated as a permanent catechist.

From 1927 to 1932, he served as the deputy head of the Primary School in Błażowa. He earned the

Father Ignacy Bocheński was born on 14 November 1889 in Wolica Piaskowa, which is part of the parish of Sędziszów Małopolski, located in the Ropczyce district. He was the third of eight children born to Stefan and Helena Kułak. After completing elementary school in Sędziszów, he attended the gymnasium in Rzeszów for eight years, from 1902 to 1910. From 1912 to 1916, he studied theology at the Higher Seminary in Przemyśl. On 30 April 1916, saint Bishop Józef Sebastian Pelczar ordained him as a priest in the local cathedral, alongside 36 of his colleagues. On 1 May 1916, the Bishop's Curia assigned Father Ignacy to serve as a vicar cooperator in

the parish of Zgłobień. He spent five years in this large parish, working under the guidance of three successive parish priests. On 16 August 1921, he was transferred to the parish of Błażowa, which had around 11,000 members at that time. This parish included the town and village of Błażowa with its hamlets, and three villages: Białka, Kąkolówka, and Lecka. The parish priest was Fr. Edward Glatzel, and the first cooperator was Fr. Józef Borcz.



Rev. Ignatius Bochenski circa 1922.

Initially, Fr. Ignacy was a vicar for the first two years. Motivated by his interest in education, he applied for the role of catechist at the local primary school. After winning the competition for this position, he was appointed as a temporary catechist

authority and respect of his colleagues and effectively balanced his administrative duties with his teaching and educational responsibilities. Additionally, he worked as a catechist in the Błażowa parish for 30 years until 31 August 1953, when the communist authorities forced him into retirement.

In the final years of his life, until he became seriously ill with cancer, he actively assisted the parish priest, Józef Kruczek, in his pastoral work as much as he could. He also generously shared his catechetical experience with young priests, including two vicars, Fr. Stanisław Szczepański and Fr. Jan Mierzwa, who were newly ordained and assigned to Błażowa.

The diocesan church authorities recognized his tireless work and awarded him the honorary title of canon (Expositorii Canonialis) in 1930. Eleven years later, in 1941, during World War II, he received the privilege of wearing a rochet

Entry in one of the school registers.

and mantelletta (Latin abbreviation R.M.).

A sudden and severe cancer illness took a heavy toll on his body. He passed away on 24 April 1955, and his funeral was held on 27 April in Błażowa. Father Ignacy was laid to rest in a grave near the eternal resting place of Father Leon Kwiatkowski.

In „Kurier Błażowski”, Issue no. 89 the late Michał Kryczko recalls:

I first arrived in Błażowa during the German occupation in July 1940. I temporarily lived in the forest district building, specifically in the private rooms that belonged to my father—after nearly two months in Błażowa, my father, who was the district forester, sent me for an internship in the Hadle Szklarskie forest administration area. From mid-1942, I served as a forest ranger in the Hermanowa forests. A year later, I was transferred to the Kąkolówka forest administration region.

Following the „Storm” action, I became the district forester in that region, which was part of the Pruchnik Forest District.

Over four years, I frequently visited Błażowa, particularly from September 1942 to the end of June 1943. During this time, I attended a course for reserve infantry officer cadets. Due to the secretive nature of these stays, I could not make many visits and did not see even my father. However, when passing the rectory, I would stop to pay my respects to Father Michał Pilipiec. Thanks to his recommendation, I was accepted into the Union of Armed Struggle (ZWZ) at the beginning of November 1944.

Due to Father Pilipiec's trust and kindness, I was introduced to Father Ignacy Bocheński. This opportunity allowed me to learn more about him and gather biographical information. However, Father Dr Hab. Jan Twardy later detailed much of

the biographical data and events related to Father Bocheński in his article „Father Ignacy Bocheński (1889-1955), a long-time catechist in Błażowa,” which was published in „Kurier Błażowski”, Issue No. 82 (March/April 2005, p. 37).

In my conversations with Fr. M. Pilipiec, I learned that Fr. I. Bocheński was transferred to the parish of St. Martin in Błażowa at the beginning of the second half of 1921, shortly after Poland regained its independence. He had previously served a five-year internship as a vicar. His role in Błażowa was to support Fr. Edward Glatzel and, through pastoral ministry, to improve and strengthen the faith of the Roman Catholic community in Błażowa, as well as in the neighbouring areas of Białka, Lecka, and Kąkolówka. At that time, the 32-year-old priest Fr. I. Bocheński brought with him a considerable amount of experience:



Blazowa 1934.

– Life-related experiences shaped his understanding of spirituality. Growing up in a large family and guided by his parents, especially his mother, he engaged in prayerful conversations with the Lord God. Through these interactions, he learned to appreciate God's infinite perfection. He developed a deep sense of adoration and unwavering trust in His infallibility.

– From the teachings he received in primary and secondary school, he absorbed as much knowledge as possible. Driven by a growing confidence in his intellect and a deepening love for God, an irresistible desire began to stir within him. He felt compelled to embark on the challenging and often turbulent journey toward the radiant heights of the Kingdom of God.

The voice of destiny guided the young gymnasium graduate, I. Bocheński, to pursue higher education at the Seminary in Przemyśl. He was an intelligent and diligent student, completing his studies on schedule, i.e. on 30 April 1916. He was ordained as a priest by one of the most esteemed bishops of the Przemyśl Diocese, Bishop Józef Sebastian Pelczar. The following day after his ordination, he received a referral to the Zgłobien parish, where he would serve as an auxiliary vicar to the local parish priest.

The second and, as it later turned out, the last church community where Fr. I. Bocheński would serve in an auxiliary capacity was the parish of Błażowa. After five years of experience, he overcame the anxiety common among novices who seek



Rev. Bochenski in Krynica.

to please God, their superiors, and the parish community by carrying out their humble duties to the best of their ability.

During that period, Fr. I. Bocheński recognized a strong inclination towards religious education, particularly for schoolchildren, youth,

and occasionally, the elderly. He viewed these inclinations as a divine mission. After joining the priestly ministry in the Błażowa parish and affirming his passion for catechetics, he decided to enhance his education by preparing for the entrance exams in subjects relevant to catechesis.

After two years of dedicated and thorough further education, he took the entrance exam and passed it with surprisingly good results. As a result, he was appointed as the deputy catechist at the Błażowa primary school on a trial basis. He began his catechetical duties in the 1923/1924 school year. To meet the educational and instructional requirements, he meticulously prepared for his classes. Additionally, before he began his religion lessons, he celebrated Holy Mass at the side altar of St. Joseph in the Błażowa church, which held a special place in his heart.

Fr. I. Bocheński's role as a religious educator for schoolchildren quickly proved to be an excellent fit for his priestly ministry. His natural talents, which were nurtured and developed during his seminary studies, inspired him to pursue teaching and educational initiatives.

Father I. Bocheński was well-built and presented himself impeccably; he was very handsome. His facial features conveyed a sense of ideological spirituality, true strength of character, moral integrity, kindness, and balance. His eyes radiated courage and genuine warmth. He was part of a small group of teachers who often smiled, deriving joy and pleasure from teaching and the positive results achieved by their students.

Sadness occasionally crossed his face, but only when encountering adults who violated moral and social norms. He approached the mischievous behaviour of children with admirable gentleness and persuasion. He educated them by showcasing the beauty of life through faith, praise, and fair assessment of their intellectual development. He treated his pupils with a caring, fatherly tenderness, and they responded with



First Holy Communion in Błażowa.

exemplary behaviour and visible affection.

Father Bocheński's activity did not end with catechism. Rena Brzęk-Piszczowa mentions his involvement in other areas of intellectualization of the Błazowa community in her book „Błazowa Then and Now”:

-P. 114: „Work with the youth was carried out by the organization Teatr i Chór Ludowy (Theatre and Folk Choir) founded in Błazowa in 1922 by Father Ignacy Bocheński, and later renamed the Catholic Youth Association. It taught modern management methods, creating opportunities for its members to learn songs together, read books, go on sightseeing trips, or prepare plays”.

-P. 108: „It is worth mentioning that in 1927, under the leadership of

Father Ignacy Bocheński, the institution was transformed into a seven-grade school”.

-P. 109: The establishment of a seven-grade school in Błazowa was celebrated by local artistic groups led by Father I. Bocheński, who purchased 180 books for the school library using funds raised from their performances. „In 1932, Marian Jaszczuk took over the position of school principal, a role held by Father I. Bocheński for seven years”>(* Not for 7, but for 5 years: 1932-1927=5)

-P. 166.: Clandestine teaching: „groups of several children learned history, geography, and the Polish language under the supervision of Konstancja Pliszkowa, Zofia Wenclow, Stanisława Małodobra, Father

Ignacy Bocheński, Stanisław Dydus, and others.”

-P. 170.: „A safe place for study (during the occupation – note by M.K.) was the homes of Władysław and Jan Woźniak, Zofia Wenclow née Początek, Stanisław Sapyta, Stanisław Jacheć, Tomasz Górak, the apartment of Father I. Bocheński.”

-P. 199-200: The meeting held on 31 July 1944 was led by Stanisław Sapyta, the organizer of the Peasant Battalions (BCH) in the area. After the war, he became a representative of the people's government in the district. The meeting gathered several individuals, including two members of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR): Stanisław Marczak, a locksmith, and Stanisław Dudys, a teacher. Also present were Father Ignacy Bocheński, a social activist and organizer of artistic life in the town, and Władysław Pleśniak, a PPR sympathizer and farmer.

(It is worth noting that Father Canon Ignacy Bocheński did not take on any administrative or social roles within the authorities that were subordinate to the Soviet regime, which operated under its military, police, and political supervision. (Note by M.K.)

It is important to note that the author, Rena Brzęk-Piszczowa, cites descriptions of events from Father I. Bocheński's notebook in footnotes on six occasions (pages 20, 39, 48, 91, 92, and 106). Unfortunately, I was unable to access this notebook.

Gabriel Brzęk's autobiographical work „From Błazowa to the Sources of Knowledge „ contains several important pieces of information about Father I. Bocheński.

-P. 23: „The Catholic Youth Association operated efficiently under Father Ignacy Bocheński. It taught modern farming methods on experimental plots, introduced reading, cultivated songs and recitation, and organized sightseeing trips.”

-P. 24: “The first radio sets in Błazowa appeared around 1926. Father I. Bocheński also owned a battery-powered radio set.”



First Holy Communion - 1940s.



First Holy Communion in Blazowa - 27 May 1951..

–P. 25: Caption under the photo: „Błażowa 1924. Youth performance of „Kościuszko at Raclawice”, directed by Father I. Bocheński and Mr. Walenty Jenke”.

–P. 26: The photo description reads: „Amateur theatre group from Błażowa, directed by Father Ignacy Bocheński. The author is the second person from the left, 1925.”

–P. 28: „The patriotic spirit of the nation within the parish was upheld primarily through personal example by two remarkable individuals: the courageous later chaplain of the ZWZ-AK Rzeszów District, Fr. Michał Pilipiec, and the distinguished catechist priest, Ignacy Bocheński who, even though already ill, was notable in promoting culture.”

Two additional observations can be made about the quote: Firstly, Father I. Bocheński's health indeed deteriorated visibly in 1942. During the occupation, he was treated by Dr. Kazimierz Rzyński and Dr. Józef Mucha. However, the priest preferred herbal therapy and a practical approach of walking barefoot on clear summer mornings across the dew-covered meadow grasses between his house and the church grounds. His illness led to a reduction in the scope of his educational duties. The catechism classes for the children of Białka, Lecka, and Wilczak were taken over by Father M.

Pilipiec, after overcoming several challenges to obtain the necessary consent from the Schulrat.

In February 1942, Lieutenant Józef Lutak, the commandant of the Błażowa ZWZ-AK Branch, was arrested by the Gestapo after a confidential tip-off. However, through



some miraculous means, he managed to convince the Gestapo officers interrogating him that he was not the Lutak they were looking for. Fearing another arrest, he returned home unnoticed for a limited time. That year, his wife gave birth to their second son, Jacek. Due to his heightened responsibilities and fears of being captured again, Lieutenant Lutak was forced to change

his residence. At the same time, his wife and children stayed at their previous address.

They lived in a two-story, multi-apartment house with several tenants, including Father I. Bocheński, a friend of the Lutak family. Despite his illness, Father Bocheński felt obligated to provide the struggling family with material assistance. He received an honorary award from the Chapter of the Przemyśl Diocese for his educational and socio-cultural contributions, which were mentioned in articles in „Kurier Błażowski”, Issue No. 82 (March/April 2005).

However, this does not mean that all aspects of Father I. Bocheński's life and work have been fully explored. Rena Brzęk-Piszczowa's research suggests that many facts in Father Bocheński's notebook could not be published due to censorship, meaning that crucial details of his story remain untold.

As mentioned in the introduction, I arrived in Błażowa in mid-summer of 1940. Despite my short stay, which lasted about two months, I occasionally visited the town afterwards. While there, I mostly interacted with the gymnasium, high school, and post-secondary school students living in the area. These young people were well-educated and deeply rooted in their faith, demonstrating a strong love for God and their country. They were students of the beloved catechist, Canon Ignacy Bocheński.

During the occupation's hardships, these youths, alongside regular and reserve soldiers, formed the backbone of the armed wing of the resistance movement. They had been hardened by difficult living conditions, work, and study.

The youth welcomed me warmly. As we got to know each other better, this kindness developed into genuine camaraderie and, in some cases, even close friendships. In one of the published photos, photographer Franciszek Sowa captured thirty individuals. The majority of them soon joined the ranks of the underground



Rev. Ignacy Bochenki 1929-30.

armed forces, specifically the Home Army, the most numerous and courageous force in the territories occupied by Nazi Germany. Thanks to the energetic and experienced commanders of the Błazowa Home Army Outpost, codenamed „BUK”—Capt. Józef Lutak pseudonym „Orzeł Południa” [Eagle of the South-MKC] and, from September 1942, Capt. Józef Maciołek, pseudonym „Żuraw” [Crane – MKC]—the covert activities of the Błazowa soldiers were highly regarded by the Rzeszów Home Army District Command. Several aspects contributed to this recognition, the most important of which were:

- military training and clandestine teaching (led by Dr. Gabriel Brzęk, pseudonym „Dewajtis”);

- acquiring weapons (through combat, airdrops and purchases);
- engaging in combat sabotage and diversion operations;
- participating in the „Burza” („Storm”) action;
- after the so-called liberation, being involved in the Home Army resistance movement.

The achievements of the Błazowa conspirators can be attributed to the deeply rooted spirit of the catechetical teachings of Father Ignacy Bocheński, coupled with the dedicated priestly service and heroic actions of Father Captain Michał Pilipiec. Despite the oppressive requirements imposed by the occupiers in the form of grain and livestock quotas, and despite facing deadly threats,

the people of the Błazowa Land emerged as leaders in providing comprehensive assistance to soldiers and politicians in danger. Many of these individuals had been expelled from Polish lands annexed into the Third Reich after 1939.

Residents assisted impoverished military families, the Jewish population, and prisoners from penal institutions and concentration camps, sharing what they could as gifts from God. The immense and noble sacrifice made by the town's residents and villages in the Dynowsko-Strzyżowskie Foothills stemmed primarily from their love for God and their neighbours. This profound sentiment was beautifully captured by Andrzej Czajkowski, who paraphrased the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians:

Oh, if I could speak the words of men and angels,

but was without love,

I would resemble ringing church bells,

but was like a cymbal in the sound of its emptiness.

Without it – the most ardent faith is incomplete.

Without it – the science is impure and blind.

Without it – a prophecy is like an empty cup.

Without it – I am a blind man who seeks in vain.

Father Ignacy Bocheński served in Błazowa for 34 years—2 years as a vicar, 30 years as a school catechist, and nearly 2 years as a retiree. Of his 39 years in the priesthood, he dedicated 34 years to the Błazowa parish.

In upcoming issues, we will highlight the profiles of former priests, teachers, and individuals associated with Błazowa. These people have left a lasting impact on our history, contributed to the cultural life of our community, and helped build our town. I hope this will be an engaging and necessary history lesson, especially for our younger generation.



Rev. Ignacy Bochenki and Rev. Joseph Kruczek - first Holy Communion in Blazowa.

Józio The Legionnaire



On the centenary of the death of JÓZEF BĘBEN

While researching my family genealogy, particularly a branch connected to Błażowa, I discovered extensive



Plaque on the grave in Błażowa.

information about Józef Bęben's family. Many publicly available accounts



Józef Bęben's funeral. Błażowa, July 1917

contain inaccuracies regarding his biography, and I would like to share accurate information with the readers of „Kurier Błażowski.” This infor-



A card from Józio to his aunt Katarzyna.

mation is derived from vital records, accounts from living family members, and documents provided by Mr. Jacek Kaszyński and Dr. Małgorzata Kutrzeba.

Józef Bęben, affectionately known in family accounts as „Józio,” was born on 10 March 1897 in Błażowa Dolna no. 495. His father, Michał Bęben, lived from 1865 to 1947. Michał was the son of Marcin Bęben (1835-1885) and Marianna

(Maria) Rybka (1844-1926). Michał Bęben had seven siblings:

1. Józefa Bęben (1863-1911): Her husband was Jan Rybka, the son of Józef and Zofia Litra. They had five children and lived at Błażowa no. 217.
2. Wojciech Bęben (1869-1910): A priest who changed his surname to Błażewski on 4 June 1890. From 1903 to 1910, he served as the parish priest in Rzepiennik Biskupi.

3. Tomasz Bęben (1872-1918): He died unmarried.

4. Kazimierz Bęben (1874-1954): His first wife was Jadwiga Sobczyk, the daughter of Wojciech. They had three children and lived at Błażowa no. 653. His second wife was Antonina Sobczyk, the daughter of Jan. They had two sons and continue to reside at no. 653.

5. Katarzyna Bęben (1876-1943): She was an instructor at the Women's Home Work School in Zakopane-Kuźnica from 1907 to 1916 and did not start a family.

6. Wiktor Bęben (1881-1975): A teacher who changed his surname to Błażewski on 21 July 1906. He was married to Bolesława Buś from

Gorlice, who was also a teacher. They had five children and lived in Świlcza.

7. Zofia Bęben (1884-1933): She was married to Franciszek Ślęczka, the son of Jan. They had five sons and resided in Błazowa, at no. 925.

Michał Bęben was married twice.



Katarzyna Bęben (1876-1943), aunt of Józio Bęben.

His first wife was Anna Kustra (1877-1911), the daughter of Stanisław and Ludwika Pociask. Their oldest child was Józef (Józio) Bęben (1897-1917). The younger children were:

– Tomasz Bęben (1900-1972): His wife was Aniela Pleśniak, daughter of Walenty and Katarzyna Początek. They had three children and lived



On the left is the tombstone of Maria Bęben, née Rybka, created in 1926 by Rzeszów stonemason Tadeusz Janik.

in Błazowa no. 589. Their daughter Elżbieta Bęben-Gibuła (1929-2002), a teacher, initiated the construction of a tombstone at the burial site of her uncle, the legionnaire Józef Bęben.

– Czesława Bęben (1903-1978): Her husband was Stefan Rębacz from Świlcza. They had three children.

– Wiktor Bęben (1904-1918): He



Maria Rybka-Bęben (1844-1926), wife of Marcin Bęben (1835-1885), grandmother of Józef.

died at the age of fourteen.

– Ignacy Bęben (1906-1939): A Salesian priest who changed his surname to Błazewski on 5 March 1929. He was murdered by the Germans in Piaśnica Wielka near Wejherowo.

Michał Bęben's second wife was Julia Śnieżek (1892-1963) from Gwoźnica. Michał married her eight years after Anna's death. The children from this union were:

– Anna Bęben (1920-2007): Her husband was Grzegorz Andrzej Patroński. They had no children.

– Marianna Bęben (1922-1949): She died in a hospital in Warsaw and is buried in Bródno.

– Wiktor Antoni Bęben (1924-2014): He changed his surname to Błazewski on 18 November 1949. He and his wife, Zofia Kromka, raised four children. Zofia lives in Kraków-Tyniec.

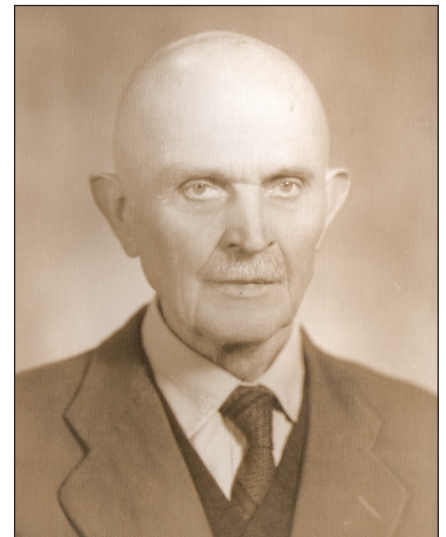
– Jan Andrzej Bęben (1925-2006): His wife is Albina Pociask, daughter

of Marcin. They raised four children. Albina lives in Rzeszów.

– Wiktoria Helena Bęben (1927-): Her husband is the late Ryszard Dziurzyński. They raised three children. Wiktoria lives in Rzeszów.



Józef (Józio) Bęben was one of the few children from Błazowa at that time to attend the Imperial-Royal gymnasium in Rzeszów. At the age of 14, he lost his mother. After her death, despite facing difficult con-



Wiktor Błazewski (1881-1975), teacher, social activist.

ditions, he continued his education. He was financially supported by his father's sister, Katarzyna Bęben, who worked as an instructor at the Women's Home Work School in Kuźnice. He had a strong emotional attachment to her, as evidenced by their preserved correspondence. In letters to

his aunt Katarzyna, Józio reveals his sensitive nature and is highly critical of himself, often feeling he does not adequately express gratitude for the support he receives. In one letter, he wrote, „The fact that I write too little, or that I express too little gratitude to my benefactors, can be attributed to



Elżbieta Bęben-Gibuła, Kęłtowo near Lębork, 12 August 2002.

negligence or something similar. But I am not that selfish, and I understand perfectly well that if the world were like that, I would have died long ago in the first place, as what motives would guide all those who help me live?” His challenging situation at school is reflected in another letter, where he stated, „I did not take advantage of the holidays at all. I only managed to find the time to mend and patch my clothes, which I had already torn up completely, including my cape and underwear.”

As a fourth-year gymnasium student in 1914, he joined the Polish Legions alongside about a dozen young people from Błażowa, Lecka, and Piątkowa. The hardships of war quickly took a toll on the frail young man's health. In a postcard dated 25 April 1916, he wrote that he had been in a hospital in Oświęcim since 1 April. A few days later, in a message dated 9 May, he wrote to his aunt Katarzyna that he had been transferred to a hospital in Moravská Ostrava: „The doctors examined me thoroughly and found weakness in

my chest and terribly bad blood. The doctor told me that I must eat a lot and well.”

At the beginning of 1917, he sent a letter to his aunt Katarzyna, dated 11 January 1917, with the message: „I am a war invalid, and when I return home, I will receive military assistance. It will supposedly be sorted out by mid-April at the latest.” Unfortunately, he did not enjoy this for long, as he passed away in his family home in Błażowa on 22 July 1917 after returning from the military hospital. His funeral became a patriotic manifestation. At his grave, the parish priest, Edward Glatzel, delivered a solemn speech, and Józef was bid farewell with the soldier's song, „In the dark grave sleep forever...”

In the memoirs of Gabriel Brzęk, featured in the book „From Błażowa to the Sources of Knowledge,” published by Wydawnictwo Lubelskie in 1992, there is a description related to the formation of the Legions. It states: „In this tense atmosphere, amid the imminent threat of an invasion by Russian troops expected in a matter of weeks, a significant surge of patriotism occurred in Błażowa. On 7 August, in response to a call from Józef Piłsudski, a group of about a dozen young people left Błażowa to join the Polish Legions being formed in Kraków. They were:

gymnasium student Władysław Adam from Mokłuczka,

gymnasium student Józef Bęben from Błażowa Dolna,

[Jagiellonian University] law student Antoni Brzęk from Błażowa Town,

gymnasium graduate Antoni Bukała from Błażowa Town,

gymnasium graduate Wojciech Chuchla from Błażowa Górna,

gardener Chuchla from Lecka, gymnasium student Albin Grażyński from Błażowa Town,

chimney sweeper's apprentice Władysław Heggenberger from Błażowa Town,

gymnasium student Antoni Kiszka from Piątkowa,

gymnasium student Józef Kruczek I from Błażowa Dolna,

locksmith Józef Kruczek II from Błażowa Dolna, gymnasium student Tadeusz Przepis from Błażowa Town, gymnasium student Józef Rybka from Błażowa Liwośka, farmer Stanisław Sieńko from Błażowa (above the old cemetery), farmer Andrzej Sowa from Błażowa Górna, farmer Jan Warzybok from Błażowa Dolna.”

Is their subsequent fate known?

Compiled by

Barbara Walów-Wais, great-granddaughter of Jan Bęben (1829-1901), brother of Marcin Bęben (1835-1885).

„Kurier Błażowski”, Issue no155

Did you know that...

In 1887, the village of Kąkolówka had 119 different craftsmen among its 426 farms, with a notable number of carpenters and builders of wooden houses. Three carpenters, in particular, excelled at making high-quality wooden hoops for various farm containers, including barrels, watering cans, butter churns, putnies [putnia – container used for fruit collection, MKC], buckets, pails, and quarters [ćwierć – a container used in the past to measure the volume of loose solids (cereals), MKC].

A butter churn made with these wooden hoops, along with some original wooden hoops, was donated in 1993 to the regional Museum being established in Błażowa by Emil Wróbel from Kąkolówka-Nawsie and his sister Genowefa Hus from Kąkolówka-Nowiny.

Tadeusz Woźniak (Based on the „Country Book”, donated to the Museum in Rzeszów)

Postcards from the Past

– The Jews of Błazowa part I



Editor's note: Gabriel Brzęk (born 25 May 1908 in Blazowa; died 29 October 2002 in Lublin) was a Polish zoologist and historian of science specializing in zoology, the history of zoology in Poland, hydrobiology, and water reclamation. He served as a soldier in the Home Army with the rank of lieutenant. He was awarded the Knight of the Silver Cross of the Order of Virtuti Militari.

Gabriel Brzęk spent ten years of his childhood in Blazowa and continued to visit the town for holidays until 1939. His depiction of the Jewish community in Blazowa is one of the very few eyewitness accounts from that time.

Inspired by Danuta Heller's article published in the previous issue of „Kurier Błazowski”, I would like to share my memories of the Jewish community of Błazowa. I encountered

them almost daily during my youth, especially at school and in local shops. They often visited my family home as sellers of veal or poultry considered ritually unclean. In the summer, they loved currants and gooseberries planted in our orchard, which they believed to be effective remedies for colds and lung conditions. During holidays at my family home, I also had the chance to observe their customs and admire their profound devotion

to traditions that have been upheld for over three thousand years.

During the interwar period, Błazowa and its surrounding hamlets had a population of 5,330, which included approximately 1,500 Jews. The Jewish community mainly resided in the town centre, where they engaged primarily in lawful trade but also peddling, with only a few families involved in crafts such as tailoring, tin-smithing, and

watchmaking. They lived a largely isolated life within their own community. However, due to their long history of coexistence with the Polish population in Błazowa and the tra-



Mordechai Mass on his Bar Mitzvah Day

gic extermination they faced at the hands of the Nazis during World War II, I wish to honour and remember their legacy.

The Jewish community primarily lived a very frugal life, eating and dressing modestly while residing in cramped, unsanitary conditions. This led to rampant tuberculosis, scabies, and other infectious diseases.

The mortality rate among children was exceedingly high, particularly within the working class. Only a handful of Jewish families, like the Fussmans and Reichs—who became wealthy by selling alcohol and lending money to peasants at high interest—managed to thrive. Also, families that owned large fabric shops, such as the Neiss and Schlaggers, were among the few who lived abundantly.

The Jews were ostensibly God-fearing, diligently observing long-standing religious and metaphysical traditions. They expressed their devotion to the Lord God through simplified



Blazhowa Jew coming out of the mikvah.

rituals that included singing and, at times, dancing that approached ecstasy. The older generation, referred to as the Hasidim, resisted the progressive and emancipatory social movements embraced by the younger generation, labelling them „misigine,” which translates to crazy. Despite their seemingly limited education, they possessed a specific reasoning that often proved remarkably accurate, giving them an advantage over the Poles.

For six days a week, the Hasidim spoke Yiddish, a language that combined various linguistic elements, mainly German. On Saturdays, they spoke Hebrew, the language of the Bible, which has survived for three thousand years. Progressive Jews, in addition to using jargon, also spoke Polish to varying degrees of fluency, with the most progressive individuals having a good command of the language. Typically, their education ended after a few grades, and it was less common for them to complete the full seven grades of the school in Błazowa. Except for Sunia Neiss, Błazowa did not produce a single Jewish graduate from high school.

The Jews of Błazowa had their synagogue, or prayer house, located on today's J. Piłsudskiego Street, where a hospital now stands. They prayed fervently every Sabbath, which lasted from Friday evening until Saturday evening. Women were allowed to attend services in the synagogue only after marriage, and they prayed separately from men on the balcony. Inside the synagogue, an ornate cabinet held the Holy Scripture, known as the Torah, which was written on parchment in Hebrew.

Wealthier Jews possessed, although more modest, prayer books (Rodał)

made of parchment and rolled like Roman folios. They brought these to the synagogue for Sabbath prayers. Because they prayed individually rather than collectively, the noise in this temple was immense and could be heard outside, provoking ridicule



In the background is the church in Błazowa.

from Catholic troublemakers.

Boys from Hasidic families started their education at age five or six in institutions called heders, which were maintained by Jewish religious communities known as kahals. In Błazowa, a heder was on today's J. Piłsudskiego Street in a ground-floor tenement house on the left side. These were small, dirty two-room spaces where at least a dozen people learned aloud in Yiddish, including reading, writing, prayers, and religious songs. Under the guidance of their mentor, who held a stick, each person sang and read individually, creating a great noise that could be heard in the street despite the closed windows.

At the age of seven, or possibly a year or two later, Jewish parents

would send their children to the school in Błazowa. In 1919, the school had five grades and later expanded to seven. From 1916 to 1918, as a third and fourth grader, I formed friendships at school with Jewish children.

Jewish children exhibited significant talent, particularly in arithmetic and memorization of various subjects. They were diligent and held books and school supplies in high regard. However, their handwriting was messy, and they handled their notebooks carelessly. They had no skill in drawing, and they didn't enjoy gymnastics. They separated themselves from us due to language, religious, and cultural differences, forming a distinct and noisy group in the class. They sometimes regarded themselves as inferior to us Catholics. We didn't flock to them either because they were often dirty and smelled of onion and garlic, their national delicacy. They were occasionally affected by lice and scabies. We frequently joked about their language mistakes, accents, and customs. We believed the most significant punishment doled out by a teacher was moving a naughty boy from a Catholic bench to

a Jewish one. It is interesting to note that Jewish children, after completing a few grades of primary school, often referred to as public school, frequently stopped their education after finishing the fourth or, at most, the fifth grade. Despite their talents, they would stay home with their parents to train to run a family business. Although we teased them at school and sometimes painfully tugged at their sidelocks, today, we feel compassion for them because of the tragedy their nation has endured. As a result, we remember them with a sense of nostalgia. We feel their absence from the landscape of Błazowa!

Among the students from the Błazowa school, one classmate stands out in my memory: Abraham Wallas. He

was exceptionally talented, particularly in calculations. He could solve math problems directly from memory



Mass family in Blazowa.

without the aid of pencil and paper. When I returned to Błazowa for holidays as a student, he often asked me about various biological topics and the progress related to the concept of a „perpetual motion machine”, a device that could operate indefinitely without an energy source. Some physical and mechanical ideas seemed to

be forming in his mind, leaving him restless. Unfortunately, towards the end of the interwar period, he reportedly fell ill; his attendance declined, and he eventually disappeared from Błazowa.

Towards the end of the interwar period, a group of stylishly dressed Jewish youths could be seen in Błazowa, whom the older generation called „Grojce puryc.” Among them were several attractive and fashionable „daughters of Israel,” whose clothing and hairstyles were styled by movie stars. Notable among these girls were the two Neiss sisters, Schlagerrówna, Guzikówna, and, most importantly, the two Silber sisters, who were daughters of the estate owner and were visiting from

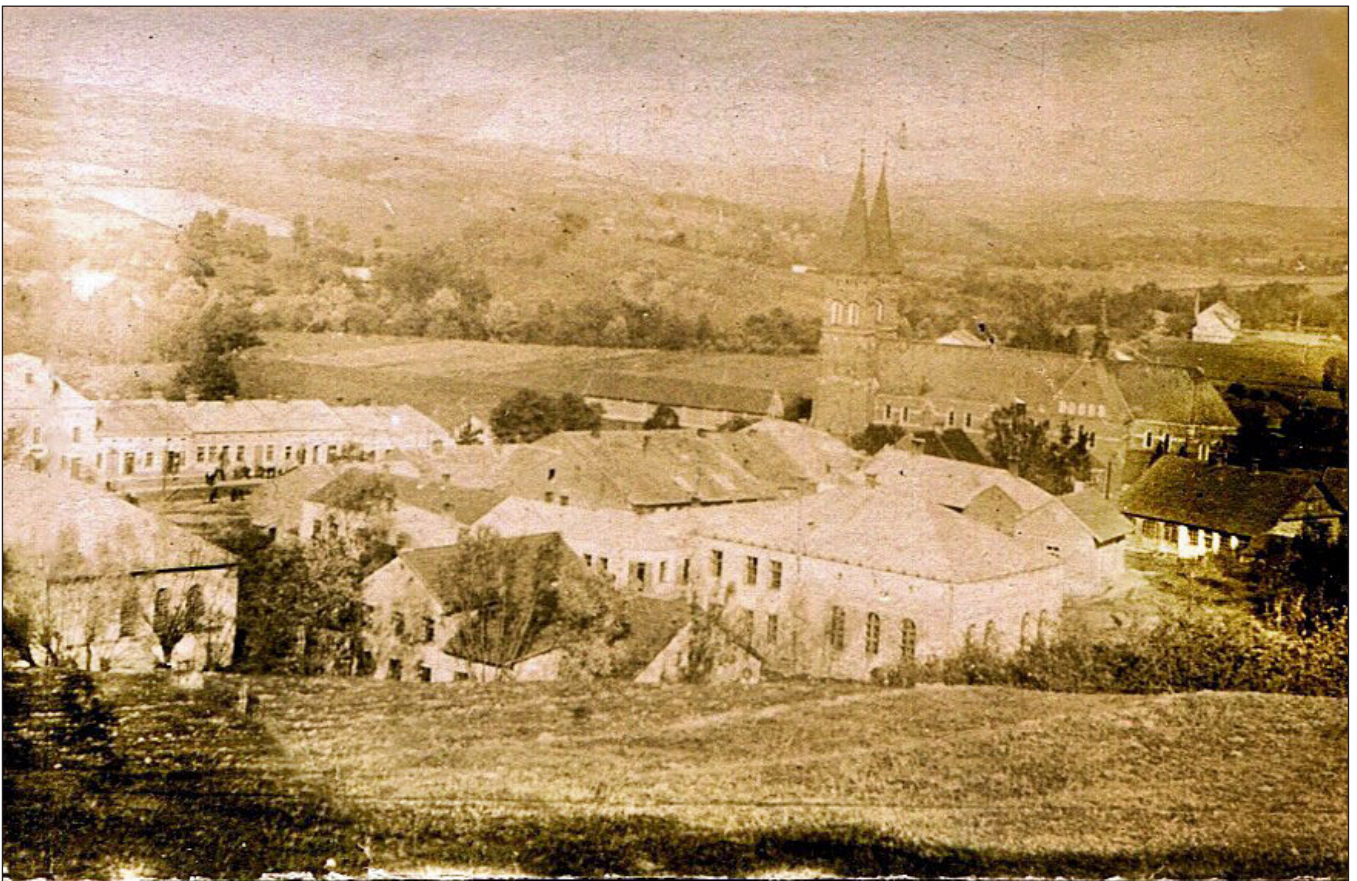
Rzeszów for vacation. Although they were bound by tribal customs and maintained a certain distance from the local students who were also on vacation, they intrigued us, and this piqued their pride. The older Jewish community did not permit their youth to engage closely with their Catholic peers.

I observed various religious rites of the Błazowa Jews, such as their weddings, funerals, and holidays. I will discuss these observations further in the next issue of *Kurier Błazowski*.

Gabriel Brzęk
„Kurier Błazowski”,
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In the next issue, we will present another part of the story of Blazow's Jews. There is so little left of so many. A very illustrative place in Blazowa that reminds us of its former inhabitants is the Jewish cemetery. It is worth visiting it and moving our thoughts to the times when Blazowa was inhabited by Jews. This place makes us reflect and reflect on the passing time.

Jakub Heller



Panorama of Blazowa overlooking the synagogue.

Tales from years gone by. Part 1 – Gloria victis

We recently celebrated the 162nd anniversary of the outbreak of the January Uprising. On this occasion,



The graves of Jakub (Jakob) and Franciszka Wójcik.

I would like to honour my great-great-grandfather, Jakub Wójcik, who left Galicia to participate



Jakub and Franciszka née Kwiatkowska, with their daughters Aniela Anna and Maria Zofia, Aniela's husband Józef and their three children.

in the Uprising. Born in 1821, Jakub owned a small farm called Widacz in Falejówka. When the Uprising began, he was already an adult, raising three of his four children with his wife, Franciszka, in a small larch manor. Their daughter Aniela, my future great-great-grandmother, was



less than a year old.

What must it have been like for Jakub to leave everything behind and venture into the unknown on a frosty January night? How do you think Franciszka felt, sending her husband off into a world fraught with danger while she remained alone with three small children to care for, along with the upcoming planting, haymaking, and harvest? Those were difficult times, and we can only hope we never face such heartbreaking decisions.

Fortunately, Jakub returned home safely, and they went on to have another daughter, Maria Zofia. Sadly, he did not live to see Poland's independence, passing away on 29 January 1891.

Recently, we marked the 134th anniversary of his death. By a stroke of luck, we managed to locate both Jakub's and Franciszka's graves and restore the rusty plaques that had been lying neglected amidst garbage and undergrowth.

The oldest photograph I have features Jakub and Franciszka (née Kwiatkowska), along with their daughters Aniela Anna and Maria Zofia, Aniela's husband, Józef, and their three children. They are all looking quite solemn in the picture.

At the end of the 19th century, Franciszka's brother, Wincenty Kwiatkowski, came to Błażowa. At that time, he was already in his sixties and decided to make significant life changes. Wincenty owned a mill and sawmill in Humniska, near Brzozów. He was born and raised there but left his land behind and never returned, even after his death. He is buried in the cemetery in Błażowa.

When his eldest son, Leon, requested that he manage the church property in Błażowa, Wincenty passed the farm to his second oldest son, Franciszek, who was not yet thirty. According to Stanisław Koczela's book, „The Centenary of the St. Martin's Parish Church in Błażowa,” the parish's farm was extensive, comprising 140 acres of land and meadows (approximately 56 hectares), 56 acres of forest (around 22 hectares), and various farm animals, which meant there was a significant amount of work to be done. Thus, Wincenty and his wife, Anna, settled in Błażowa permanently, supporting their eldest son, Leon, in what became a challenging and significant undertaking for him—what one might call his life's work that continues to benefit the residents of Błażowa, all *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. Many of you, dear readers, have probably already guessed who the continuation of this story will be about. I invite you to look for it in the next issue of „Kurier Błażowski.”

Anna Gellermann

Informal Historical Group „To Save from Obscurity” presents: Blazowa Land is full of secrets – roadside crosses and shrines

Roadside crosses are a distinctive feature of the Polish landscape. They serve as an interesting aspect of folklore and convey a much deeper message. Traditionally, they were erected for specific occasions.

When traveling around Poland, particularly in small towns or villages, you will come across many symbols



of faith created by local residents, often in the form of chapels or crosses. These structures result from joint efforts by private benefactors or entire

communities. Typically, their creators remain anonymous, as is the case with much of Polish folk art.

Roadside crosses are never placed by chance; they are positioned



in significant locations near local churches or the village's centre. They

can also be found on the outskirts of settlements to mark boundaries or at crossroads to bid farewell to travelers. Many were erected on battlefields to honor the fallen or in places where remains were discovered. Frequently, these crosses were built after uprisings, following the passage of an army, or in response to plagues. They often express gratitude for favors received, such as healing from illness or protection during war or natural disasters. Additionally, some were put up as an act of penance for sins.

Shrines and crosses found along paths leading to forests or at the edges of fields also served as landmarks, especially at a time when GPS technology did not exist.

Each cross or shrine commemorates a significant event from the past. During the Middle Ages, a simple stone cross was often erected by a murderer who, in exchange for their release from prison, committed to covering the victim's burial costs, raising the victim's children, and providing financial compensation to the family. These crosses frequently feature symbols such as a knife, sword, crossbow, or bow.

The simple stone crosses had a more profound significance. People believed that if someone died unexpectedly—such as from a lightning strike or murder—and no cross or shrine was erected at the location of their death, their soul would be unable to find peace.

The cross often symbolizes the villagers' piety and pride. Older residents frequently remove their hats, bow and make the sign of the cross as a gesture of respect when passing by a chapel or cross. Many traditional customs have survived to this day. Just as they did centuries ago, residents gather at the chapels for communal



The crosses stand in Blazowa Dolna „Walantówka”.

prayer or singing, particularly during May, which is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Today, crosses continue to be erected at the sites of car accidents. This custom serves as a testament to both the past and the present. We should cherish these symbols of memory and faith, which can be found along Polish roads and fields and hidden in our forests.

On 5 February, my friend Zbyszek and I visited the site where an old concrete cross stands. A new metal cross has also been placed next to it. The area is well-maintained and easily accessible, indicating someone cares for it. A large Linden tree is growing there, which was planted to commemorate something or someone.

The crosses are located in Nowy Borek, along the road from Blazowa Dolna, known as „Walantówka,” on a hill by the so-called road to „Liwoska.” We learned two stories from the locals regarding this place. One story suggests that the cross marks the spot where a man, returning from forced labor after the war, was murdered. The other story claims that a deceased child was buried there.

The mystery surrounding this place can be unraveled. If anyone has more information about why this site is commemorated, please contact the Blazowa Library.

As we returned, the setting sun provided a stunning backdrop as we gazed at a truncated, almost flat hill on the left side of the road to

Królka. The locals have called this spot „Grodzisko” for many years. Legend has it that a hillfort once stood there a long time ago. I plan to explore this site, and I want to thank my friend Zbyszek for the trip and for highlighting these fascinating places.

If you are aware of similar locations in Blazowa Land and would like to share your insights, we warmly invite you to contact our group. Cicero once said, „History is the witness of the times, the light of truth, the life of memory, the teacher of life, the messenger of antiquity.” That's why it is crucial to nurture and preserve our history.

On behalf of the group
Jakub Heller



A site referred to by locals as „Grodzisko.”

The „Mójka” Nature Reserve

During this year's vacation, I visited my hometown of Kąkolówka. My name is Marian, and I currently live in Silesia. While the Silesian region is developing, my memories always bring me back to the Podkarpacie region and my village. I hadn't visited in almost ten years, and in that time, so

much has changed. People have aged, and some have passed away. A beautiful nature reserve has been established here. Although there isn't much information about this place online, it is truly captivating.

On 25 July 1997, the Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural



Resources, and Forestry established the „Mójka” Nature Reserve, which covers an area of 265.56 hectares. The reserve is located within the beech and fir forests of Kąkolówka. Its purpose is to protect the forest ecosystem



Protected Landscape Area (OCHK).

This area's fauna is fascinating, particularly the European beaver, a pro-

of them being under strict protection. Among the notable plants are the common twayblade, spotted and broad-leaf orchids, two-leaf squill, deer fern, lesser butterfly orchid, stag's horn clubmoss, interrupted

and the European beaver that inhabits the area, serving both scientific and landscape conservation goals. The reserve also includes two tourist trails:

The Deer Trail is designed for those who enjoy long walks through the forest. It takes visitors through ravines and alongside streams to the so-called „Wandering Stone”, located on the border of the village of Wyręby.

„The „Beaver Trail” is a gentle route primarily designed for children and school youth. Along the way, you will encounter 14 educational boards that provide insights into natural and ecological topics. This trail is situated within the Hyżnieńsko-Gwoźnicki

minent species. Other notable species include the three-toed woodpecker, bullfinch, spruce crossbill, spotted salamander, mountain toad, slowworm, and the common sand lizard. Occasionally, you might also spot a black stork within the reserve.

In the „Mójka” reserve, there is a remarkable variety of flora, comprising approximately 340 plant species, of which 24 are protected— with 18



clubmoss, northern firmoss, autumn crocus, and the European bladder-nut. In the ground cover, you can also find species such as snowdrops, deer fern, and European wild ginger.

This nature reserve is well worth a visit. I recommend it to everyone as I continue to promote Podkarpatcie.





A chapel located at the crossroads leading to Blazowa Wilczak.