

Revised March 9, 2003

## **HISTORY OF ANTON PAPIERNIAK FAMILY**

By Robert Wojtal

Based on my research, I can tell the following story of my grandfather Anton Papierniak's past:

Anton and his family lived for at least a century and probably very much longer--several centuries-- in two small villages within 2 miles of each other. The village where Anton was born and lived was called Bednarskie, Poland. The number of the building or lot where he was born and lived was "94 Bednarskie". The village where Anton's father was born and where his grandfather lived and died was called Pogorzyna, Poland. In the Lipinki church records the building or lot where Anton's father was born and grandfather lived was described as "Poposlwa" under the village Pogorzyna. However, Poposlwa may not be a building or lot, instead it may be a subdivision of Pogorzyna or it may be a tiny village nearby. In any event, Bednarskie and Pogorzyna are small villages at the foot of the Carpathian mountains and the particular mountain range in the Carpathian mountains is called the Biskd Niski, a mountain range of low mountains not exceeding 3000 feet.

Anton was born and lived in house number 94 in Bednarskie with his father, Jacobus, his mother, Marianna, his brothers Peter (Petrus), Joseph (Josephus), Frank (Franciscus) and John (Joannes), his sister, Magdalena, and a step sister Catharina and perhaps other siblings.

Anton's father and mother lived in the village of Bednarskie that was within 1 to 3 miles of three other villages that belonged to the same Catholic Parish called Lipinki. These three other villages were Lipinki (sometimes spelled Lipniki), Wojtola (sometimes spelled Woytola), and Pogorzyna (sometimes spelled Pagorzyna or Pagozyna). The Papierniak families lived in several of these villages and they married men and women from families in these villages. In November 1840 for the first time in the church records, I find that a Papierniak begins to live in Bednarskie. The church records show that in November 1840 Anton's father Jacobus began living in Bednarskie with his first wife Anna. After 1848, frequently the church records refer to Bednarskie as the village where the Papierniaks were born, married and died.

I note that the Polish Church records that I reviewed, beginning in 1826, only listed Lipinki, Wojtola and Pogorzyna as villages in the Parish but not the village of Bednarskie. It may be that the parishioners in Bednarskie were treated in the Church records as belonging to the village of Pogorzyna. About 1848 the Church frequently (but not always) treated Bednarskie as a separate village from Pogorzyna in its annual records. All of these villages appear on my map of Poland which has a scale of 1:300,000. Only Lipniki (Lipinki) appears on another map of Poland I have of 1:800,000.

Anton lived in a land that was formerly Poland which, since 1773, became part of Austria. It was part of the Austrian partition called Galicia. The remainder of Poland was divided between Prussia and Russia. There was no Poland as such from 1773 until 1918.

The oldest direct ancestor of Anton Papierniak that I found, is Blasius (sometimes described as Blasii in church records), Anton's great grandfather. Blasius Papierniak and his wife Regina were born in 1771 and 1768, respectively, and died in 1835 and 1848, respectively. They lived in the village of Pagorzyna, Poland. Their "Nrus Domus", as I previously stated was "Poposlwa".

Blasius and Regina had at least 4 children: Jacobus (born 1813), Thomas (born 1819), Joannes (born 1826) and Marianna (born 1830). Jacobus is Anton Papierniak's father. In November 1840 and thereafter, Jacobus and his wife lived in Bednarskie, house number 94. Jacobus' brother, Thomas, and his wife Catherine, and their 6 children, also lived at the same address, house number 94, in Bednarskie, Poland. Joannes and his wife Maria, with their 9 children, lived in house number 111 in Bednarskie.

Jacobus Papierniak married Anna Kosulak in 1835 when he was 22 years old and Anna 24 years old (based on their church record of marriage). They had a daughter Catharina born in 1840. Anna died in 1858, age 47 (the church records says she was 50 at death).

One month after Anna dies, Jacobus marries Marianna Knopik. Jacobus is 45 years old and Marianna is 18 years old, although her marriage bans and her subsequent marriage record states she is 27. I know that she is 18 years old because the church records of her birth states that she was born in 1840. Interestingly the church record of their marriage bans states he is 48 years old and the later church record of his marriage says he is 32. Since I do not have his birth record, I have used as his birth date the year 1813 since that was the date given in the church records of Jacobus' first marriage, when he had no reason to fudge his birth date. They have 6 children, at least: Peter (born May 18, 1859), Joseph (born March 16, 1862), Frank (born December 3, 1865), John (born December 24, 1868), Anton (born May 4, 1871), and Magdelene (born 1880). Polish Catholic church records verify each one of these birth dates except Magdelene's. I make this point since the Papierniaks in their statements to the U.S. census takers, in their applications for U.S. citizenship and other documents, provided birth dates different from the dates given in the church records. I know Frank was illiterate (1900 census) and I believe that Peter and John were also illiterate. Anton and Julia Papierniak claimed they were literate in some language and could speak English (1900 census). In any event, since they all probably relied on their memory for their birth dates, I have taken the church records as the correct one.

In my review of the church records, all of the Papierniaks were identified as residents of the village or as farmers or gardeners.

Why did Anton Papierniak (and all of his brothers and sisters) immigrate to the United States in 1884 and thereafter? I suggest that the reasons are: (1) they were poor; (2) they

had little opportunity to make a living or to be successful for they had little or no opportunity to get an education or skills except farming; and the area they farmed was increasingly smaller each year since, if they owned the land, it probably was subdivided amongst the increasing number of family members as the years went by; (4) they were crowded into the house #94 in Bednarskie with not only Jacobus' family but with Jacobus' brother Thomas (who had 6 children) and perhaps the families of other siblings; and (5) they may have been oppressed by the Austrian government; and (6) and probably were concerned with being conscripted by the Austrian military. This is of course speculative. There may have been other reasons.

To give a picture of the Austrian Galicia in which they lived, I turn to Norman Davis history of Poland: "God's Playground a History of Poland" Volume II, pages 141-145.

"...[For almost a century in Galicia, the Austrian] state intervened in every sphere of social and political life....Taxation rose steeply above former Polish levels, bringing hardship to those least able to support it, especially the peasants. The Army played a prominent role in public affairs providing a privileged career for the sons of the nobility and demanding compulsory military service from the peasants. The imperial bureaucracy was numerous, powerful, hierarchical, and notoriously formal. In Galicia, it was staffed largely by immigrant Germans and Czechs. The police system was well developed. Surveillance and harassment of unreliable elements was accompanied by close liaison with the police forces of Russia and Prussia. The frontiers, whose most exposed sections ran across the Galician plain to the north of the Carpathians, were heavily garrisoned. The Censorship left little to the imagination. Although in this Catholic Empire the traditional Marian cult was encouraged, the Emperor's Galician subjects were instructed to redirect their prayers from the Virgin Mary, Queen of Poland to the Virgin Mary, Queen of Galicia...."

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"Economically, ...[Galicia] was one of the most backward areas of the [Austrian] Empire. It had few resources to satisfy the needs of a population, whose numbers rose from 4.8 million in 1822 to 7.3 million in 1910, in proportion to their impoverishment.

"Galician society was unbalanced in the extreme. A handful of aristocratic families...lived in style from start to finish. Yet the vast majority of the population were indigent peasants. In 1887, the peasantry still composed 81 per cent of the population, and most of them were still illiterate. For them, it was almost academic whether serfdom existed, as it did to 1848, or whether it did not. In economic terms they saw no noticeable improvement in their condition. Yet the landowners themselves could hardly be described as a prosperous class.... The emergence of a viable class of landed small holders and tenants was constantly delayed by the traditional division of family plots among children, and by the deleterious effects of chronic overpopulation.

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"Economic, social, national, cultural, and political factors combined to aggravate the poverty in which most of the people lived....A well-informed analyst, writing in 1887, contrived to demonstrate that rural overpopulation in Galicia had outstripped that in all other parts of Europe, and was approaching levels prevalent in China and India.

According to his study... some 50,000 people were dying each year as a result of near-starvation conditions.... Of all the three partitions, Galicia had the highest birth-rate and the highest death-rate, together with the lowest rate of demographic growth and the lowest level of life-expectancy. Galicia was in a worse predicament than Ireland at the start of the potato famine....Galicia could fairly claim to be the poorest province in Europe.

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“For many peasant families, emigration offered the sole chance of survival.”

Anton, 13 years old, boarded the ship “Moravia” in Hamburg, Germany on March 12, 1884, and arrived in New York on March 27, 1884. He was with his mother Marianna (44 years old) and his sister Magdalene (4 years old). Accompanying them were his brother Peter Papierniak (25 years old), Peter’s wife, Agatha (20 years old), and their child Marie (a baby). They claimed that they were from Austria. (Data obtained from Ship’s Passenger list “Moravia” and Hamburg Port Passenger list (Microfilm 0473083 of Latter Day Saints Files and Peter’s church baptism record). John Papierniak (16 years old), Anton’s brother, also arrived in New York in 1884 (according to the 1900 census), but not on the ship Moravia.

Jacobus (who is Marianna’s husband and Anton’s father) did not come to America in 1884. I believe he was then alive since on the ship’s manifest in 1884 Marianna claims she is married (and not a widow). In 1884, Jacobus was 71 years old and Marianna 44 years old. I do not know why he stayed in Austria/Poland at the same time his wife and most of his children leave for the United States. (Frank does not immigrate until later in 1887 and I do not know when Joseph immigrated). In 1905, Marianna claims that she is a widow (1905 Wisconsin Census).

After arriving at the port of New York, Peter then went to Grassy Point, Rockland County, New York, and lived there with his family until some time in 1890. (Grassy Point is now called Stony Point). (This location is based on land records subsequently discussed in this document). Peter had four children born in New York and he therefore must have lived there for at least four more years (data acquired from 1920 U.S. census of Wisconsin where Peter claims his children were born in N.Y.). I do not know if Marianna, his mother, and Anton, also went with Peter to Grassy Point but they probably did so since Peter (in 1884 was then 25 years old) was the eldest and only mature male. Anton was then only 13 years old.

I understand but cannot verify that Anton subsequently worked in Pennsylvania sorting slate from coal for a period of time. (Information based on discussion with Anton’s youngest son Tony).

It is probable that Anton then went to Cleveland, Ohio. I deduce that he went to Cleveland, since he married a 17 (or according to Julia, 18) year old girl, Julia Galinski, from Cleveland at a later time. It is my thought that he had to meet her at this time or in Grassy Point, New York, unless it was an arranged marriage.

In 1890, Peter Papierniak (31 years old) is found in Withee, Wisconsin purchasing land North of Thorp, Wisconsin in the Thorp Township. John Papierniak (22 years old) Peter's brother, then appears on the scene. On the same day Peter purchases his parcel of land, John also purchases land very close to Peter's land in Withee Township in the same section of land. Both contracts for the purchase of land state that Peter and John are from "Grassy Point of Rockland County, New York". The land purchased was privately owned and not owned by the U.S. Government. (This information based on the records (Grantee land records) in Clark County Courthouse and the U.S. census).

It is possible that Anton Papierniak was with Peter and John in Wisconsin in 1890 or soon thereafter joined them. There is some evidence that Anton came to Thorp for the first time in 1891. (A Thorp Courier article of July 15, 1943, states that Anton first came to Thorp in 1891). In addition, in 1892 (when Anton was 21 years old) he signs a sworn statement in Clark County Wisconsin renouncing his allegiance to the Austrian Emperor. This is a first step toward applying for U.S. Citizenship. The point is that in 1892 I have clear evidence that Anton is in Wisconsin.

It is probable that Anton worked for Peter and John at that time and worked on their farms in Thorp Township.

In July 1893, Anton traveled to Cleveland Ohio and married Julia Galinski in St. Stanislaus Church. The entry in the log by the priest who performed the ceremony states that Anton was 22 years old and Julia 18 years old.

It is probable that Anton and Julia then returned to Clark County Wisconsin and Anton continued to work for Peter and John on their farms.

In 1896 Anton purchased 40 acres of land in Section 20 in Withee Township. This parcel of land is, I estimate, within 1 and 1/4 miles East of Peter's and John's farms in Thorp Township. In the same year 1896, Anton's older brother Frank Papierniak purchased land 1/4 mile North of Anton's land. Frank and his family immigrated to the U.S. in 1887. (Information about Frank obtained from the 1900 U.S. census, and in the 1896 and 1905 Grantee land index of Clark County.) In short, in 1896 through 1900 there were four Papierniak brothers who owned four separate pieces of farm land within 1 and 1/4 miles of each other. They were born and immigrated to the U.S. in the following years:

Christian Name	Born	Immigrated to U.S.
Peter	May 18, 1859	1884
Frank	December 3, 1865	1887
John	December 24, 1868	1884
Anton	May 4, 1871	1884

On February 9, 1901 John Papierniak, age 33, dies (St. Hedwig's records provide his date of death but his headstone in St. Hedwig's cemetery suggests that he was 34) and

leaves his widow Katherine (“Kate” as she described herself in a deed of land). His will is in the Clark County Probate Office.

In 1905 Anton’s mother, Marianna, is identified as living with Anton and Julia and that she was a widow (1905 Wisconsin census); and in that same year Marianna dies (Marianna’s date of death is on her headstone in St. Hedwig’s cemetery).

In the Wisconsin 1905 census, a Joseph Papierniak and his family are found living closely to Anton’s farm. Apparently Joseph does not own the land he lives on. Joseph is Anton’s older brother who was born on March 16, 1862.

On July 28, 1906, Anton became a citizen of the United States by order of the Judge of the Circuit Court, Clark County, Wisconsin.

In 1908 Anton and Julia purchased 80 acres adjacent to their property in Section 20. They subsequently built a brick house on the high ground, with two small stained glass windows facing the road that you can see today (July 2000). The story is that Anton brought those windows from Cleveland (Story from Buddy Papierniak who was told the story by his father, Louis Papierniak). The directions to this farm are: From Thorp go North on Highway 73 for about 1.5 miles. Turn right on Center Avenue; then turn right on Spur Ave. The first farmhouse on the right is Anton’s farmhouse.

In addition to farming, Anton worked for the Cirkel Heading Mill for twenty years. He “fired” for that Mill. (Thorp Courier article July 15, 1943). The Mill probably made wooden heads for barrels and Anton probably started the fires in the steam boilers each morning to provide power for the steam driven saws. The Mill was located in the Town of Thorp, in the same block as Anton’s home.

In 1927 Anton Papierniak and Julia retired from farming and moved to a home they built in the village of Thorp, Wisconsin. (Based on recollection of Tony, Anton’s youngest son. Tony believes that the Thorp Courier article of July 15, 1943 is in error in claiming that the year was 1925.

In 1929 the U.S. stock market crashed and the Thorp Bank, with Anton’s savings, went bankrupt. It is obvious that Anton had substantial other assets outside of the bank for he remained retired until about 1941 when he again worked a farm for several years. He acquired the farm from a farmer who was unable to continue payment of monies owed Anton and who voluntarily turned over the farm to Anton.

The children of Anton and Julia are:

<b>Name (Married Name)</b>	<b>Born</b>	<b>Died</b>
John Papierniak	March 25, 1895	December 16, 1971
Louis Papierniak	August 19, 1897	December 5, 1975
Marie Wojtalewicz	September 24, 1899	October 22, 1978
Anna Borysiewicz	March 23, 1901	

Josephine Pabich	January 10, 1905	January 27, 2000
Frances Swansen	September 6, 1908	
Helen Hollub	November 11, 1910	
Frank Papierniak	May 24, 1913	
Anton Papierniak	July 22, 1915	2002

As to the derivation of the name Papierniak, John Hoffman in his book “Polish Surnames, Origins and Meanings” suggests that the stem “Papier” comes from the word paper and gives as an example the name “Papiernik”. The suffix “niak” probably means maker, that is, a Papierniak was a paper maker.

In 1992, a survey was conducted of Polish surnames in current use in Poland. It is a 10 volume set edited by Kazimierz Rymut and published in 1992. I found it in the Library of Congress. With respect to the name Papierniak there were 172 persons (or families) in Poland. 88 were located in the province of Katowickie, 7 in the province of Warszawa, 8 in the province of Bydogoskie and 19 in the province of Krosnienskie. The village of Bednarskie is in the province of Krosnienskie.

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