

# *Polish Immigration*



*Policeman Frank Bartczak in 1936*



*Viola Kaminski standing in front of her home  
at 4390 East 71st Street*

# Polish Immigration

by Laura Nicklas Hine

**John Kaminski** — John Kaminski was born May 31, 1868 in Poland. He married Josephine Ksiazkowski in 1892 in Cleveland. She was born in Poland in 1872. They had seven children: Theodore, Viola (married Charles Podolski), Walter, Joseph, Louis, Theresa (married Joseph Cebula), and Florence (married Walter Hazel). The 1910 Census showed that John was a saloon keeper. The saloon was located at 4390 East 71st Street, where the parking lot to Benjamin-Moore Paint was located. John died in 1926, and Josephine kept operating the saloon/restaurant. The 1940 Census shows that Walter Attewell was living at the same address and was a restaurant owner and bar keeper. Josephine Kaminski died in 1956, and both she and husband John are buried at St. Mary's Cemetery in Cuyahoga Heights.

**Charles Baracz** — Jan (John) Charles Baracz was born November 27, 1878 in the Galicia province of Austria, now part of Poland. His parents were Jan and Annie Niezgodna Baracz. He came to America on September 1, 1901. His brother Stanislaus "Stanley," sister Marianna "Mary," and her husband John Balough came to Cleveland the following year. Jan married Anna Skowron, born in Cleveland. Sometime between September 14, 1912, when he filed his naturalization papers, and the 1920 Census, he Americanized his name from Jan to John.

John and Anna had eleven children: Frances, Sophie, Andrew, Aloiza "Albert," Stanley, Theodore, Henry, Gertrude, Raymond, Rose, and Stephen. They were all born in the family home on Grant Avenue in what is now Cuyahoga Heights. John and Anna lived most of their married life on Grant Avenue. His World War I registration card lists their address as #5 Grant, later 7004 Grant Avenue. John worked at the steel mill in Newburgh Heights. He was a wire drawer in the mill for 37 years. John died March 4, 1940, and Anna on December 18, 1961. They are both buried at Calvary Cemetery.

Daughter, Frances Baracz, was born February 5, 1905 in the family home on Grant Avenue. Frances was a nun in the Felician Order of Sisters of Saint Felix, a Polish order founded in Warsaw. She was known as Sister Mary Elizabeth and was a school teacher. For a short time, she taught at Saint Adalbert in Berea, but lived and taught in Michigan most of her life. She died in 1995 in Livonia, Michigan.

Daughter, Sophie Baracz, was born in 1908 in Newburgh Heights. She married Michael Macko. They had one son who died at age seven. Sophie and Michael lived in the Broadway area of Cleveland. She died in 1972, and he in 1975.

Son, Andrew Baracz, was born November 17, 1909 in Newburgh Heights. Andrew married Sophia Chwalinski, daughter of Lawrence and Frances Swiatkowski Chwalinski. They had two girls, Barbara and Sandra. Andrew worked for Hauserman for a short time, then General Electric Supply Division for 26 years. He was a member of the Alliance of Poles in America for 35 years and was one of the organization's directors from 1941 to 1968. Andrew and Sophia lived in Brooklyn Heights for 46 years. He helped to organize the Little League in Brooklyn Heights, served as baseball commissioner and coached Little League there in the

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1950s. Sophia was a housewife and worked for the Lakewood Bakery which was later called the Davis Bakery. Andrew died in 1996 and Sophia in 2004.

Son, Albert Baracz, was born September 11, 1911, in Newburgh Heights. Al married Dolores Kolakowski and they had two sons: Ronald and Douglas. Al lived in Brooklyn Heights and Cuyahoga Heights. He was a janitor at the school and worked at his brother's greenhouse in Brooklyn Heights. He died in 1983 and she in 1990.

Son, Stanley Baracz, was born January 8, 1913 in Newburgh Heights. He married Harriet Lowiec. They had two children: June and Stephen. Stanley and Harriet lived on Grant Avenue. He worked in the steel mill and was a village councilman during Mayor Kennedy's term. Stanley died in 1994 and Harriet in 2005.

Son, Theodore Baracz, was born May 4, 1914 in Newburgh Heights. He married Lois Orth, daughter of Edwin and Paula Czarnetskion Orth. The Orth's lived at 907 East Schaaf Road in Brooklyn Heights. Ted and Lois had three children: Margaret; Paul; and Jerome. Ted and Lois lived on Schaaf Road where they owned the Baracz's Greenhouse. During the summer, they also had a large vegetable stand at the greenhouse. Ted died in 1995.

Son, Henry Baracz, was born March 22, 1917 in Newburgh Heights. He was in the Army during World War II, stationed in Texas. Henry married Bernice Karpowicz and they had three children: Ralph; Henry; and Aurelia. Henry worked at Harris-Seybold. He lived in Cleveland and Brooklyn Heights. Henry died in 1990 and Bernice in 1972.

Daughter, Gertrude Baracz, was born August 13, 1918 in the family home on Grant Avenue in Cuyahoga Heights. She married Fred Casavecchia, son of Silvio and Annina Vincenti Casavecchia. Gertrude lived her whole life in the village on Grant Avenue and East 71st Street. She was a housewife and worked in the elementary school cafeteria. Fred worked in the steel mill. They had a son David. Gertrude died in 1991, and Freddie in 2015.

Son, Raymond Baracz, was born September 10, 1920 in the family home on Grant Avenue in Cuyahoga Heights. He was in the Army during World War II, stationed in Texas. Ray was a very good baseball pitcher and right after the war he was drafted by the Cleveland Indians farm team, but he turned it down because he wanted to marry Dorothy Slivka. Ray and Dorothy had a daughter, Linda. Linda was the first person to have a successful kidney graft from her mother at the Cleveland Clinic, but it only worked for a few days. She received a second kidney, and it too failed. She died in 1964. Ray worked at Harris-Seybold both before and after World War II. He lived in Parma and Brooklyn Heights. Ray died in 1980.

Daughter, Rose Baracz, was born December 11, 1921 in the family home on Grant Avenue. She married Harry Pellini, son of Joseph and Rose Magistrelli Pellini. Rose and Harry had a daughter, Yvonne. Rose was a housewife and one of the elementary school cleaning ladies. Harry worked for what is now Park-Ohio, formerly Park Drop Forge and Ohio Crankshaft before they merged. He also repaired cars as a part-time job. Rose and Harry were both born in the village and lived most of their married life on East 71st Street. Rose died in 1995 and Harry in 1994.

Son, Stephen Baracz, was born July 29, 1924 in the family home on Grant Avenue. Steve was a Marine during World War II. He was in the Battle of Guadalcanal from August 7, 1942 through February 9, 1943. Japan took over the island and was building an airstrip there. The island was close to Australia and control

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of it would protect them from a Japanese invasion. During this battle, the U.S. lost 1,042 marines and 550 army soldiers, but Japan lost over 25,000 men. Steve was in the Battle of Iwo Jima, another major battle. This island was close to Japan and had two airstrips. The Allies wanted control of it for a number of reasons. The U.S. attacked on February 19, 1945 and the battle ended March 26, 1945. A total of 6,821 marines and 900 sailors died, plus 20,000 Japanese soldiers. Stephen was listed in the Ohio Soldiers records as having been wounded. Mayor Gerdon offered the returning soldiers jobs in the village and Steve became a fireman. He married Bernadette Grucza and they had four children: Carmela, Richard, Christine, and James. Steve died in 1985 and Bernadette in 2006.

John and Anna Baracz had eleven children, 19 grandchildren, 37 great-grandchildren, and 35 great-great-grandchildren. Only two of the grandchildren remained in the village: Barbara Baracz Nichols, married to Ken Nichols, and James Baracz.

**Martin Kaczmarek** — Martin Joseph and Michaelina Lewandowski Kaczmarek, and their two oldest children, were born in Poland. They came to America in 1900, eight years after Martin's older brother arrived in America and settled in the Slavic Village area of Cleveland. Martin and Michaelina had five children: Stanislaw (Stanley); Pelagia (Pauline); Wladislaus (Walter); Edward; and Bernard. The family moved to Cuyahoga Heights in the early 1920s.

Walter, attended South High School because there was no high school in the village. Walter worked on farms in Brooklyn Heights and joined a traveling carnival in his youth. Walter married Wladyslawa Charlotte Lottie, daughter of Stanley and Nathli Janicki Borkowski, on August 4, 1931 in Saints Peter and Paul Church in Garfield Heights. They had two daughters: Phyllis who married Andrew Baumgardner, and Mary Lou who married Alan Kalish. Their grandchildren were: Marlene Kalish, Stephanie Volek, Mark Baumgardner, Jennifer Spears, Lisa Ocheltree, Richard Kalish, and James Baumgardner.

When the village fire department was started in the late 1920s, Walter was one of the first firemen. During World War II, his duties included being a Civil Defense Warden. He trained workers in firefighting techniques at the larger plants in the area. During this time, workers were expected to fight fires if their plants were bombed. He also helped train the Newburgh Heights Fire Department in 1942. Walter was ahead of the times, encouraging his men to stay physically fit and mentally alert. He was a member of our fire department for 38 years and was chief from 1964 to 1968. Walter was an active member of the Ohio Firefighters Association and the Cleveland and Ohio Fire Chief's Association.

During the early 1950s, Walter and Ed Koran started a building and remodeling business. They built and remodeled many homes in and around Cuyahoga Heights.

Walter was a member of the village Men's Club and Lottie was in the Women's Club. They were both members of our Senior Citizens and AARP of Garfield Heights. They lived almost all of their married life in the village, and many years on Bletch Court. Walter and Lottie were married over 71 years before Walter's death on October 17, 2002, and Lottie's death on November 22, 2002.

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This house was located on the grass-covered lot to the left of the Smosarski house.

*Baracz House at 7004 Grant Avenue (Razed)*



*Christopher Smosarski House  
at 6930 Grant Avenue*

*St. Mary's Cemetery*



*The Bartczak House at 7134 Dressler Court*

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Bernard “Bernie” was Martin and Michaelina’s youngest child. He married Sophie Wesolowski and they had four children: Ronnie, David, Diane, and Larry. Sophie was a homemaker. Bernie was elected Willow Township Constable during the time Bill Gerdon was Mayor. Constables worked with the Justice of the Peace serving court papers and evicting people. Bernie helped the Village Marshal, Delbert Davis, when needed. Later, he worked as a machinist in a tool shop.

**John Kruzel** — John Kruzel was born July 18, 1857 in Poland. He came to Cleveland in 1884 and lived in the Slavic Village area. He married Mary Remaroyk, born May 1863 in Poland. He worked as a roller in the Rolling Mill. John and Mary had six children: Andrew, Rose Bon, Mary Clemencia, Frances, Joseph, and John, Jr.

Their first son, Andrew, was born September 10, 1884 in Cleveland. He married Julia Wisniewski, daughter of Frank and Ludwika Merholtz Wisniewski. Julia was born in August, 1888 in Dalan, Poland. They had eight children: Heromin, Raymond, Helen Snyder, Edwin, Harriet Harrington, Kenneth, Dorothy Bartczak, and Robert. Andrew was a welder for both the Cleveland Reduction company and a barrel manufacturing company. The family moved to East 71st Street in Cuyahoga Heights sometime during the 1920s. Their oldest son, Heromin, died at age four.

Kenneth served in the Army during World War II and was killed in action July 31, 1943. His name is on the Fort William McKinley Monument in Manila, in the Philippines.

Dorothy is the only child that stayed in the village. Dorothy Julia Kruzel was born December 24, 1920. She married Frank Vincent Bartczak, son of Simon J. and Rozalia “Rose” Skarzyczky Bartczak. They had two daughters: Barbara and Carol Dolega.

**Symon J. Bartcszewicz** — Symon J. Bartcszewicz (later Bartczak) was born March 24, 1886 in Wies Dmoslaw, Poland. He emigrated to America, landing in Baltimore, Maryland, on November 20, 1909 on the ship *SS Main*. He changed his name to Simon Bartczak in 1910.

Simon married Rozalia “Rose” Skarzyczky in September of 1910 in Cleveland. She was born August 25, 1888 in Poland. Simon and Rose had eight children: Thaddeus “Ted,” Clara, Florence, Frank, Simon P., Aloysius “Al,” Steven, and Leonard. Simon was a reel operator at the steel mill.

The family sponsored many Polish immigrants desiring to come to America. They let them live with them until they were able to afford their own housing. Sometime before 1920, the family moved to East 49th Street in Cuyahoga Heights. Their son Steven died at age seven.

Four members of the family served during World War II. Florence was in the Women’s Army Corps as a surveyor; Simon in the Army; Al in the Navy; and Leonard in the Marine Corps. Leonard was killed in action on April 15, 1945, during Operation Iceberg, also known as the Battle of Okinawa. Over 12,000 Allies were killed in the battle, most of the soldier deaths were Americans.

Frank did not go into the service because he was a policeman and was needed at home to protect the village. Frank Vincent Bartczak was born April 3, 1916 in Cleveland. He was a Golden Gloves boxer during the 1930s and was well known in the area as a good softball league pitcher.

Frank married Dorothy Julia Kruzel. Frank and Dorothy had two daughters and three grandchildren.

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Frank and Dorothy lived on Dressler Court in the house they had built in the late 1950s. Frank joined the police department on November 26, 1936, and he became police chief on August 1, 1960, when the first Chief, William Baur, retired. Frank Bartczak retired February 28, 1967. Barb Bartczak is the only member of these two families that still lives in the village and resides in the house her parents built on Dressler Court.

### **Saint Mary's Cemetery**

There is but one cemetery in the Village of Cuyahoga Heights. Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, located at 6700 Lansing Avenue in Cleveland, was established on May 3, 1894, by Reverend Anton F. Kolaszewski. He was the former pastor at St. Stanislaus Church. Immaculate Heart of Mary served an ever increasing number of Poles in the city's Warszawa district. This church founded St. Mary's Cemetery in 1894 for their parishioners, but it grew to accept those who were not members of that parish as well. Burial records can be searched online at: <https://www.clecem.org>.

### **Norbert Chase's reflections on his father, Stanley Chase and St. Mary's Cemetery**

Stanley Chase Czechowski, pronounced Cha-husky, was a member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish on Lansing Avenue in Cleveland, Ohio. He was a committee member that collected donations at masses and served at parish functions. Through this group, he was given the opportunity to serve as caretaker for the cemetery in Cuyahoga Heights in 1932.

Stanley cut grass, dug foundations for the monuments, and dug most of the graves from the rear circle to the start of the south section and middle section. He did this with a pick, shovels, and crow bar, all by hand. The grave sites were approximately four foot by six foot and five foot deep. On occasions, when people did not want to buy more lots, he would have to dig extra deep holes to allow children to be buried on top of their parents.

Before concrete vaults were used, burials placed the caskets in wooden pine boxes. In time, these boxes rotted and caused depressions in the site, which had to be restored to the original height. The pine boxes were lowered by hand into the grave, but when the concrete boxes came along, lowering devices were made to place them in the site. Caskets were placed on triple strap lowering devices and lowered onto grave boxes after services were done and people had left. Companies who provided the boxes were on hand to deliver, lower the box without the lid, and seal the boxes. Stanley would then fill the site with dirt removed from the hole, to a foot and a half crowned, to permit the site to settle in time and then leveled for the final condition.

Stanley was an excellent craftsman. He also dug graves in all kinds of weather and never complained or whimpered. Today machines are used to dig the hole and cover it. My older brother, Bob, and I had to help, but mostly when dad had to dig the extra deep holes. We had to clear the dirt that he would throw out of the hole.

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The original home at the cemetery was an interesting wooden home situated off the main drive to the first road on the right, which led to a three-car garage, and the fence line was to the rear of the garage and onto a huge field. There were restrooms to the left of the garage for visitors to use. I had to occasionally hose down the interior, which was a playground for flies and spiders. Each room was all wood with a single hole for dispensing procedures. To the left and rear, a little distance away, was a huge gully that went north all the way to the rear of the Domzalski property. This gully has been filled and new sections made available for grave sites.

Along this gully line about 250 feet was a home on the rim owned by the Heckers. It was in this home that Irma Nobili, sister and daughter of the Dominic Nobili family of Bletch Court, was murdered by her intended husband, Oscar Paolucci, on April 27, 1936. He was listed as having died on January 10, 1991, in Lorain, Ohio, where he had been in the Lima State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. The caretaker's home was moved from 4760 to 4712 East 71st Street north of the Hecker home which became the home of the Martin Malek family.

The caretaker's home had a front stairway which was never used to exit on the south side of the home. The stairway led to two bedrooms, the one overlooking the front yard on East 71st Street, was Ester's while Bob and I shared a large room off the hallway. There was a doorway to a huge attic that overlooked the west side of the yard. It also had a stairway to a substantial bathroom on the first floor. There was a long hallway to a dining room on the first floor, and to the right was a comfortable living room. Off the dining room was the master bedroom, which had an unused porch and entrance. To the south of the dining room was a large kitchen, and to the right was a spare room. South of the kitchen was a generous room and pantry with a hallway to the large bathroom. The basement had an entrance from the backyard shed with a huge stone stairway which led through a small room to the main finished basement which was primarily under the front half of the home. The south portion of the basement was not entirely dug out, but rather just resting on huge stones and the ground. There was a stairway that went up to the dining room and below the front staircase. When the home was moved to the site of what was a gas station, a full basement was dug, and the home was bricked and relocated next to the Hecker home.

At that time, the home was made into a two-family home. The front portion was the caretaker's section. The front entrances had new steps. The north door was the office, and what was the original master bedroom became the kitchen. The dining room was the same, except the door to the old kitchen was sealed by a new wall. The wall was removed from the south stairway and the living room was enlarged. The stairway off the dining room to the basement remained the same, as well as the bedrooms and bath upstairs. The back portion of the home had a porch with an entrance to the living room, replacing the old kitchen, and a bedroom off the living room. The new kitchen was part of the old pantry with a bath in the middle, and the bedroom replaced the old bathroom. The stairway to the attic was eliminated. The stairway to the basement was created off the old pantry, and the door eliminated from outside.

Originally there was a six-foot brick wall on both sides of the main entrance of the cemetery. The pedestrian and main gates were closed at night. This wall was removed when the house was moved, and presently the entire old home site area is now filled with grave sites. We had apple and cherry trees on the north border and elderberry bushes on the south fence next to the Miller property.

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### **Conclusion**

In bringing this section to a close, our Historic Committee has learned about the area when it was part of Newburgh Township, the early settlers, the newcomers, the history and growth of the village, and industry in the village. It's very safe to say that the Village of Cuyahoga Heights has enjoyed great success from 1918 to 1950. They prospered, built a new village hall in 1935 and a school in 1938. By 1950, the farms in the village were almost gone and a new era was coming into existence. Most of the people living in the village in 1950 were descendants of the Italians and Poles that came from 1900 to 1950, but there were many more to come!

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