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Lesinski-Rusin Family Collection

Digital

ca.1906-1925

2 boxes (1 linear foot)

Call no.: MS 131



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Polish immigrants Jan Lesinski and his wife Weronika (Rusin) settled in Easthampton, Massachusetts, in 1909 and worked in the textile mills there for decades. Married in 1922, the couple raised a son and daughter in their home on Franklin Street. Weronika Lesinski died in Northampton in 1961, her husband following twelve years later.

The Lesinski and Rusin family collection reflect the lives of an average working-class Polish family from Easthampton, Mass., during the early twentieth century. Numerous family photographs document important occasions for the families, such as

baptisms, first communions, and weddings, and the photographic postcards and commercial postcards document their relationships, interests, and travel.

See similar SCUA collections:

Family

Immigration and ethnicity

Massachusetts (West)

Photographs

Poland and Polish Americans

Background on Lesinski family

Born in Jednorozec, Poland, on June 21, 1887, the son of Franciszka and Maryan Lesinski, Jan Lesinski emigrated to the United States in April 1909. After a short stay in Northampton, he relocated southward to the New City district of Easthampton and then to the adjacent mill district south of the Lower Mill Pond, working in the city's textile mills as a weaver or braider and spending many years at United Elastic.

In 1922, Lesinski married Weronika Rusin (1889-1961), the daughter of Ignacy and Anna (Winiarz) Rusin from Tuszyna, a village that was then part of Austro-Hungarian Galicia. Like Jan, Weronika arrived in Easthampton in 1909, although an older sister, Apolonia, had emigrated there three years previously and was already working as an operative in the mills. Apolonia married a textile weaver, Joseph Szewczyk, in 1911, raising a large family.

By the end of the 1920s, Jan and Weronika were living at 45 Franklin Street in the heart of one of Easthampton's Polish American neighborhoods, situated directly across the street from the school for Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish. They occasionally Americanized their names to John and Veronica; Apolonia appears to have gone by the name Victoria. Weronika Lesinski died in Northampton in 1961, aged 71, with John dying in Williamsburg in November 1973.



Nun and two girls at first communion

Scope of collection

The Lesinski and Rusin family collection reflects the lives of an average working-class Polish family from Easthampton, Mass., during the early twentieth century. Although primarily studio portraits, the photographs document important moments in the lives of the Lesinski and Rusin families, from first communions to weddings, and the photographic and commercial postcards document their relationships, interests, and travel. The collection also includes a handful of Polish-language publications, including a Polish-English dictionary, arithmetic book, child's reader, and a copy of the Constitution of the St. Kazimierz benevolent society in Turners Falls.

Most of the postcards in the collection were addressed to Weronika Rusin prior to her marriage, with only a handful from later years. Weronika's most frequent correspondents included her sister Sophie (also spelled Zofia and Sofie) -- who did not emigrate and who wrote both in Polish and German from Bucharest, Krakow, Tarnow, and other locations -- and a friend Ignacy Skarpetowski, who served in Maine in the Coast Artillery Corps during the First World War.

Inventory

Photographs

ca.1906-1935

Communion photographs

ca.1910-1915

3 mounted silver prints

Box 1: 1

Girls receiving instruction from a nun

ca.1915

1 toned silver print

Box 1: 2

Lesinki and Deptula portraits

ca.1915-1935

3 gelatin silver prints

Box 1: 3

Niemic, M. (photographer). Studio portrait of woman

ca.1920

1 gelatin silver print

Box 1: 4

Niedzieta Studio (photographer). Wedding party

ca.1915

1 mounted silver print

Box 1: 5

Unidentified studio portraits

ca.1905-1920

3 mounted silver prints

Box 1: 6

Unidentified wedding portraits

ca.1910-1920

4 mounted silver prints

Box 1: 7

Wanda Szewczyk Cialek and brother John

1916

1 mounted silver print

Box 1: 8

W. J. Cady (photographer). Family portrait, with man in military uniform

ca.1915

1 mounted silver print

Box 1: 9

W. J. Cady (photographer). Wedding portraits

ca.1920

4 mounted silver prints

Box 1: 10

Real photo postcards

ca.1910-1925

Double portraits

ca.1915-1925

13 real photo postcards

Box 1: 11

Double portraits, weddings

ca.1915-1925

15 real photo postcards

Box 1: 12

Group portraits

ca.1915-1925

14 real photo postcards

Box 1: 13

Group portraits

ca.1915-1925

8 real photo postcards

Box 1: 14

Portraits of men

ca.1915-1925

8 real photo postcards

Box 1: 15

Portraits of men

ca.1910-1925

9 real photo postcards

Box 1: 16

Portraits of women

ca.1915-1925

15 real photo postcards

Box 1: 17

Portraits of children

ca.1915-1925

3 real photo postcards

Box 1: 18

World War I

ca.1916-1918

9 real photo postcards

Box 1: 19

Commercial postcards

ca.1906-1923

Birthdays

1911-1923

17 items

Box 2: 1

Christmas

1908-1921

38 items

Box 2: 2

Courting and gag

1911-1916

17 items

Box 2: 3

Easter

1911-1921

24 items

Box 2: 4

Greetings

1910-1922

19 items

Box 2: 5

Miscellaneous

1908-1918

13 items

Box 2: 6

Religious and holidays

1912-1916

17 items

Box 2: 7

Views, European

1911-1921

16 items

Box 2: 8

Views, United States

1914-1923

19 items

Box 2: 9

Other material

ca.1908-1923

Documents (copies): including birth certificate and passport for Jan Lesinski

1887-1909

5 items

Box 2: 10

Cyryła, S. M.: *Moja pierwsza książeczka*. Niles, Ill. : St. Hedwig's Printer

1940

Box 1
Konstytucja Towarzystwa Sw. Kazimierza Grupa 1625 Z.N.P., Turners Falls, Mass.. Adams, Mass. : White Eagle Printing Co.
1931
Box 1
Najpraktyczniejszy nauczyciel polsko-angielski. Chicago : Wydane Nakladem
ca.1915
Box 1
Ownership inscription on ffep: "Mr. John Lesinski, 1916."

Szwajkarta, Stanisława: *Arytmetyka.* Chicago
1914
Box 1

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Mary Ryan, June 1990.

Digitized content

Selected images have been digitized are available to [view online through Credo](#).

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Search terms

Subjects

Easthampton (Mass.)--Photographs
Lesinski, Jan
Lesinski, Weronika Rusin
Polish Americans--Massachusetts--Easthampton--Photographs
Rusin, Sophie
Skarpetowski, Ignacy
World War, 1914-1918--Photographs

Contributors

Lesinski family [main entry]

Genres and formats

Photographic postcards
Photographs
Postcards

Link to similar SCUA collections

Family
Immigration and ethnicity
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Poland and Polish Americans



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