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Bajgier Family Papers

1903-1999

3 boxes (0.75 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 400



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Joseph Michael Bajgier was born in Odrzykon, Poland, in 1903, the youngest of three sons in a farming family. Educated only through the third grade, Joseph served as a young man in the First Air Division of the Polish Army before following his older brother, Frank, to the United States in 1927. Settling in Chicopee, Massachusetts, with its large and active Polish community, Bajgier began work as a slaughterer of pigs for a meat processing company, but within a few years, he had saved enough money to purchase a small grocery store in Longmeadow, Massachusetts. Around 1935, he returned to Chicopee and purchased a grocery and deli, Bell Market, that his family ran for thirty-six years. Bajgier was deeply involved in the local Polish community as a member of the Polish National Alliance, the Holy Name Society of St. Stanislaus Parish, and the Polish Veterans of World War II. He and his wife Martha (Misiaszek) had two sons, Casimir and Edward.

The Bajgier Family Papers document the lives of a Polish-American family in Chicopee, Massachusetts, from the time of immigration through the 1970s. The core of the collection surrounds the life of Joseph Bajgier, and includes a number of documents and a diary from the time of his emigration in 1927, a fascinating series of letters from relatives in Turaszowka, Poland, before and after the Second World War, and several photographs of the family and their business in Chicopee.

Background on Bajgier Family

Joseph Michael Bajgier was born on March 13, 1903, in the village of Odrzykon, Poland, near the city of Krasno. He was the youngest of three sons of Michal and Agnieszka (Szafran) Bajgier. Joseph's father died when Joseph was three years old and his mother and oldest brother, Janek, brought him up. Joseph attended school until the third grade and had to leave in order to help on the family farm.

He joined the First Air Division of the Polish military in 1924 and served for three years. In 1927, he received sponsorship to immigrate to the United States from his other brother, Frank, who had already settled in Chicopee, Massachusetts. Joseph arrived at Ellis Island on November 4, 1927 and quickly settled into an apartment in Chicopee with two other Polish immigrants. Joseph met his future wife, Martha Misiasek, at a dance at the local Polish National Alliance, and they married on May 12, 1930. They eventually had two sons, Casmir and Edward.

Joseph's first job in the United States was with H.L. Handy, a meat processing company, where he slaughtered pigs. Eventually, Bajgier saved enough money to start a small grocery store in Longmeadow, Massachusetts. Around 1935 Bajgier moved back to Chicopee, opening a grocery store and Polish deli, Bell Market, which he and Martha ran for thirty-six years.

He was also very involved in the Polish community in Chicopee as a member of the Polish National Alliance, St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr's Parish, and the Polish Veterans of World War II. He remained in contact with the Bajgiers left behind in Poland, especially his brother, Janek, both before and after World War II. Joseph and the rest of the family visited the Polish Bajgiers twice during his life.

Joseph Bajgier died in Chicopee on June 20, 1995, at the age of 93, after suffering a stroke. His wife followed him a few years later on March 24, 1999.

Scope of collection

The Bajgier Family Papers are comprised mainly of correspondence and photographs about the Bajgier family. The correspondence consists largely of letters sent from Joseph Bajgier's brother, Janek, from Poland, to Joseph. These letters extend from Joseph's departure from Poland in 1927 to Janek's death in the mid-1960s. The photographs comprise a timeline from Joseph's life in Poland to his children's lives and marriages. Personal documents from Joseph Bajgier are also present, including documents from his time in Poland and a small biography of the Bajgier family with a strong focus on Joseph.

Also included in the collection are materials related to Polish-American life in Chicopee, Massachusetts, including documents from Polish-American clubs like the Polish National Alliance, the Polish Women's Civic Club, and the Polish Veterans of World War II (SPK). A small group of materials from the Polish-American St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr's Parish is present as well.

Inventory

Bajgier, Joseph: Biography

1999 Nov

Box 1: 1

Bajgier, Joseph: Birth Certificate (Polish)

1903 Mar

Box 1: 2

Bajgier, Joseph: Copy of Birth Certificate (Polish)

1927 Aug

Box 1: 3

Bajgier, Joseph: Diary (Polish)

1927 Nov

Box 1: 4

Bajgier, Joseph: Military Identification Booklet (Polish)

ca. 1924-1927

Box 1: 5

Bajgier, Joseph: Military Identification Card (Polish)

1924

Box 1: 6

Bajgier, Joseph: Military Instructions and Travel Rules (Polish)
ca. 1924-1927
Box 1: 7

Bajgier, Joseph: Polish Veterans of World War II (SPK) Honorary Awards and Medals (Polish)
1980-1981 Mar
Box 1: 8

Bajgier, Joseph: Polish Emigrant Passport (Polish)
1927 Aug
Box 1: 9

Bajgier, Joseph: Polish Passport (Polish)
1927 Oct
Box 1: 10

Bajgier, Joseph: Social Security Statement of Earnings Request
1964 Mar
Box 1: 11

Beret with Polish Eagle Patch and Star Pin
undated
Box 3

Chicopee Herald Weekly Newspaper
1983 Dec
Box 1: 12

Correspondence: Bajgier Family (Poland)
1930 May
Box 1: 13

Correspondence: Bajgier, Frank
1927 Oct
Box 1: 14

Correspondence: Bajgier, Janek
1928 Jan-1934 Jul
Box 1: 15

Correspondence: Bajgier, Janek
1934 Aug-1945 Nov
Box 1: 16

Correspondence: Bajgier, Janek
1961 May
Box 1: 17

Correspondence: Bajgier, Janek
1983 Nov-1984 Mar
Box 1: 18

Correspondence: Bajgier (Styś), Karolina
1963 Feb
Box 1: 19

Correspondence: Pelczar, Thaddeus
ca. 1961
Box 1: 20

Falski, Marjan: First Reading Book for Children (Polish)
1931
Box 3

Family Tree (Bajgier)
undated
Box 1: 21

Flight Cap with Polish Eagle
undated
Box 3

"Knight of the Immaculate" Magazine: Calendar (Polish)
1986
Box 1: 22

Millennium of Poland: Booklet (Polish and English)
1960 May

Box 1: 23
Millennium of Poland: Committee Member Ribbon
ca. 1960

Box 1: 24
Photographs
ca. 1925-1930

Box 1: 25
Photographs
1937-1949

Box 1: 26
Photographs
1952-1958

Box 1: 27
Photographs
1961 Jul-1972 May

Box 1: 28
Photographs
1980-1991 Jun

Box 1: 29
Photographs
undated

Box 1: 30
Photographs: Ocean Liners
1958, undated

Box 1: 31
Photographs: Polish Soldier (Unidentified)
undated

Box 1: 32
"Polish-American and Proud" Bumper Sticker
undated

Box 1: 33
Polish National Alliance (PNA): Calendar
1982

Box 1: 34
Polish National Alliance (PNA): Insurance Pamphlet - Christmas Themed
ca. 1980

Box 1: 35
Polish Veterans of World War II (SPK): "Combatant in America" Quarterlies (Polish)
1973 Jun-1980 Jun

Box 1: 36
Polish Veterans of World War II (SPK): "Combatant in America" Quarterlies (Polish)
1981 Jun-1995 Dec

Box 1: 37
Polish Veterans of World War II (SPK): Pins and Medals
undated

Box 3
Polish Women's Civic Club By-Laws Booklet
undated

Box 1: 38
Ration Books
1942 May-1946 Aug

Box 2: 1
St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr's Parish: Bajgier Family Parishioner ID Card
ca. 1957

Box 2: 2
St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr's Parish: Centennial Book
1991

Box 2: 3
St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr's Parish: Centennial Book

1991
Box 2: 4
St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr's Parish: Centennial Postcard
1991
Box 2: 5
St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr's Parish: Diamond Jubilee Book
1966
Box 2: 6
St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr's Parish: Missalettes
1986 May
Box 2: 7
St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr's Parish: Rosary Society By-Laws and Induction Certificate
ca. 1984
Box 2: 8
Sehn, Jan: Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp Book (Polish)
1956
Box 2: 9
Vinyl: "Poland Is Not Yet Lost" by Fitelberg, Grzegorz and "Rota" by Various Artists
undated
Box 2: 10
Vinyl: "Poprawiny" by Humeniuk, Pawlo
ca. 1927
Box 2: 11
Vinyl: "Sprzedana Kanapa" and "Rozmowa Pijanego z Księżycem" by Michalski, Michal
ca. 1917
Box 2: 12
Vinyl: "True Dreams Waltz" and "Polka from Modlina" by Baczkowski Rural Orchestra
ca. 1929
Box 2: 13
Vinyl: "U fotografa" and "Anegdoty" by Piotrkowiak, T.
ca. 1915
Box 2: 14
Vinyl: "Zapytania Historyczne" and "Handlarz" by Nowak, J. and Nowacki, I.
Box 2: 15
World War II Bayonet (Handle not original)
ca. 1939-1945
Box 3

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Languages:

English, Polish

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Search terms

Subjects

Bajgier, Joseph Michael
Chicopee (Mass.)
Chicopee (Mass.)--Social life and customs
Polish Americans--Massachusetts
World War, 1939-1945

Contributors

Bajgier Family [[main entry](#)]

Genres and formats

Correspondence
Photographs



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