



VIRTUAL GUIDED TOUR: RUSSIN / VORDYNIAK (OR BURDY)
FAMILIES

The Pioneer Generation

ABSTRACT

A tour of some of the points of special interest that relate to the lives lived and the resting places of this founding family for the Canadian branches of their legacy with (limited) background on their family heritage and information about their descendants.

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With a special focus on but not limited to the areas of the Rural Municipality of St Andrews in the Interlake region of Manitoba, CANADA

Virtual Guided Tour

Especially the Rural Municipalities of Rockwood and St Andrews in the Interlake Region of Manitoba

Also including places of interest in the Greater Winnipeg area

Russin – Vordyniak (or Burdy) Families

Purpose, Sources, and Acknowledgements

This document has been prepared as a means of passing along information about the pioneer generations of this family to their living descendants, other members of these families, and to their future descendants.

The stories told here leverage heavily:

- the family research done by the author, himself a descendant of a Russin son, in concert with other descendants on various branches of related family trees
- the 1982 and 2000 editions of the volume “Beyond the Gates of Lower Fort Garry” produced by “Volunteers in the Municipality of St. Andrews”
- the 1964 book “EARLY UKRAINIAN SETTLEMENTS IN CANADA 1895-1900” by “VLADIMIR J. KAYE”, sponsored by the Ukrainian Canadian Research Foundation
- the article “Ukrainian Settlements in Manitoba” taken from the book “Ukrainian Catholic Churches of Winnipeg Archeparchy, History of Ukrainian Catholic Churches in Canada, Volume 4” by Anna Maria Kowcz-Baran (Saskatoon, 1991)
- the 1977 book “Spruce Swamp and Stone - Gimli” by Michael Ewanchuk
- the book “The Interlake Beckoned - A History of Inwood and Surrounding Districts (A History of Inwood and Surrounding Districts” (date unknown) produced by the specially instantiated book committee
- the 1973(?) book “The Land in the Middle – Manitoba’s Interlake” produced at the request of the Manitoba Interlake Development Corporation
- the 1982 book “Rockwood Municipality - 100 years of history” produced by Rockwood Municipality History
- the 1981 book “Selkirk - The First Hundred Years” by Barry Potyondi
- the brochure “Winnipeg Beach - Moonlight Days” (date and publishers unknown)
- available public resources (especially the Manitoba Historical Society [MHS])
- information available on the “Find a Grave” service
- internet services (for maps and other enriching content)

Links to many of these are provided in the “[Additional resources](#)” section below.

Please note: The author intends to continue his research efforts. As a result, more or different information could come to hand. Also, the currently living people mentioned in these stories will have changes in their lives of interest to the reader. For that reason, you are asked to check often that you have [the latest version of this document](#), which the author will update from time to time.

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Organization and Scope

To provide some focus in this journey, which could have been laid out in many ways, the material is organized in categories:

- [Homesteads \(and notable familial residences\)](#)
- [Personal Histories](#)
- [Their Legacy](#)
- [Cemeteries and memorials](#)
- [Points of special interest](#)
- [Additional resources](#)

While the focus is without a doubt the area in and around Winnipeg, there is a small collection of points of special interest that relate to Peter Shmigelski (1919), son of Cassian (1868) and his wife Anastasia (née Dmytryk, 1878), who lost his life in the defense of freedom in the Second World War.

All of the information in this document that has a geographical nature has been captured at some level of detail in a [single custom map](#), available on the internet as a Google “My Maps” resource. It is intended as a visual guide to the proximity of the various locations mentioned below. In addition, more information and content are available directly in that resource as part of each “pin” for the locations described below.

The author has attempted to capture enough information here to provide a foundation for understanding the places that were vital parts of the lives of our shared ancestors. It in no way pretends to be an exhaustive account of their lives.

Links in this document take the reader to both specialized and public resources that are not well captured in this format without it becoming overwhelming. Of special note: the “virtual cemeteries” referenced below are maintained by the author and have a much greater scope than this group of families. They may give one a sense of the way the lives of our ancestors were connected that are otherwise not readily understood today.

As a means of providing a jumping off point for further exploration of the area and the family’s connections to it, the “Additional Resources” section lists but a few of the great collections and services out there that provide more insight into the history these people lived and the ways they made us who we are today.

Left out of this document, are details about other Interlake families (e.g., Cassian (1868) / Anastasia (née Dmytryk 1878) Shmigelski, Jan (1858) / Aniela (née Harasymowicz 1866) Tyszkowski, Piotr (1872) / Pauline (née Klinske 1873) Grzeskowiak "Covic", to say nothing of the vast network of Pasięka’s) that had a significant influence on the lives of these ancestors; people who may have been related in ways we do not understand and who spent many days socializing as well as assisting with the business of working a farm in the early 20th century. Nor does it explore in any detail the lives led by the many descendants and friends of these families who left the Interlake. That work is left for another day...

At the same time, there is no attempt made here to address family lore about other “Shmigelski” families or any who may have been related to Anastasia in the province at the time. There is a belief some of them may have been related, but the connections only get harder to make as time passes.

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Homesteads (and notable familial residences)

See the very much related [“MyMaps” resource](#) for a visual presentation of these locations and further details.

Family Homesteads:

- [Fred / Dokia Russin Homestead](#)

Entry application registered on November 20, 1901 for Homestead #96407

Title awarded on February 3, 1904

It seems the family spent only part of their time on the farm, choosing to be in the village of Winnipeg Beach for one of the census events in the years after their arrival (i.e., 1911)

This land was ceded to Fred’s son Peter upon his death and worked mostly by Peter’s wife Stella and, for a time, the Louis (1891) and Anastasia (née Russin; 1889) Tyszkowski family while Peter chose to pursue a business interest as a storekeeper, emulating his older brother John. The land remains in the family to this day (2020), as Peter’s children Edna and Steve live there.

There is a mystery about one “child”, an “Andrew”, who was recorded on the 1906 census, aged about 5 years old, who was vaguely known to at least some of his potential nieces and nephews but who never appears again (reliably) in any known records, though there are some voters lists from the 1940’s through the 1970’s that record the presence of an Andrew Russin in Winnipeg’s North End

- [Winnipeg Beach](#)

Then but a village that grew into a town, this was the centre of much of the social life of the area. Much of the Russin family, especially the older children and their descendants, made this their home for many years, operating businesses such as grocery and general stores as well as serving, through the generations, as Postmasters.

More specifically, John, then Peter served as postmaster for the town successively over decades, one of John’s sons, Ben, is known to have been a merchant, and by the 1940’s the Nettie and Louis Tyszkowski couple had moved their family into town, where Louis (and at least one of his sons, “Nap”, in partnership with his cousin, John’s son, Ben) had also taken up the life of a merchant. Ben, himself, eventually took up the role of Postmaster, as well.

This was also the home of the Grzeskowiak (aka "Covic") family, whose daughter Gertrude (“Gertie”) married John Russin

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Russin Children in the Interlake:

- [Louis \(1891\) / Nettie \(née Russin; 1889\) Tyszkowski homestead](#)

Near the homestead of the senior Tyszkowski couple, the young couple lived here for only a short time (perhaps a decade) after their marriage before taking up long-term residence in the Russin homestead with Anastasia's mother, brother, sister-in-law, and the children of both couples, all, of course, young cousins

- [Melnice School No. 1295](#)

Both John (1893) and Michael (1900) Russin taught at quite different times in the one-room school in this small town that has since disappeared

- [McMillan School No 1109](#)

Located on the parcel that was the Shmigelski homestead
Believed to have been an early appointment for Michael (1900), his time here may have led to his knowing and later marrying, the young Pawlina Shmigelski (1905)

- [North Polsen School No 1523](#)

Known to have taught here in 1922 and possibly again later, Stan Watowich (1928) recalls Michael being his teacher here in the years he walked from the Jachari Wojtowich (1877) homestead located on a neighbouring section, a bit more than a mile away (along the path!)

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Russin Children in Winnipeg, Manitoba:

- Homes and other abodes in Winnipeg for Michael (1900) and his wife Paulina (née Shmigelski, 1905) Russin

After his career as a schoolteacher, Michael moved to the city in 1942. Following the example of his brothers, for the next many years, he successively kept two stores, the first at York and Smith, the second at 268 Albany Ave. The couple retired to 118 Sinawik Bay before each spending the last few years of their lives in care; Pauline in the Holy Family Nursing Home and Michael (TBD); Her mother, Nellie, often stayed with them to look after Pauline after her major stroke in the 1940's and her subsequent related health problems

Family Homesteads of Spouses to the Russin Children:

- Jan (1858) / Aniela (née Harasymowicz, 1866) Tyszkowski Homestead

Near Malonton, MB, on an undetermined part of 33-18-2-E1 (50.588062, -97.264383); their son Ludwik "Louis" (1891) married Anastasia Russin (1889)

- [Cassian / Anastazia Shmigelski Homestead](#)

Near Komarno, MB, on NE-16-17-2-E1 (50.458333, -97.258364); family home to the Shmigelski children, including Paulina (1906), who married Michael

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Personal Stories

To allow everyone reading this document to gain further insight into the information gathered by the author about the main players in these stories, the senior couple, the pioneers, he used the available features in Ancestry to generate two versions of the information that service now holds for all of us. First, a “Life Story” for each of them is available in a file that is also available to download:

- [Teodor “Fred” Rusyn “Russin” \(1854-1918\)](#)
- His wife [Dokija \(née Vordyniak or Burdy, 1859-1936\) Russin](#)
Of note: references to sons “Michael (1888)” and “Martin (1895)” are ONLY drawn from a family history prepared by their grandson Fred Russin (1933). They appear in NO OTHER records.

Secondly, he has generated another document for each of them, a capture of their “profile” information. This view provides insight into both the “facts” about them and the sources that support them, currently:

- [Teodor “Fred” Rusyn “Russin” \(1854-1918\)](#)
- His wife [Dokija \(née Vordyniak or Burdy, 1859-1936\) Russin](#)

The reader is welcome to take advantage of the information and to offer any suggestions for missing material or corrections. All help is welcome!

Also, of note: the author has extensive information about many people related to these key players by direct descentance and by marriage. Within reason... **questions and requests are welcome!**

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Their Legacy

As readers are aware, the story of this families is on-going. This founding couple, whose children married and raised their own families, have since left us. However, their memory and their achievements live on in many ways through each of us.

One mark they have left, in most cases, is a memorial or grave marker in a cemetery. That has not always been the case and the locations of same have not all been found, but we can still create virtual memorials for them on services such as “Find a Grave”. That allows us to visit them, to think about them, to honour their memory, to recognize the way they shaped our own lives, while seated in a favorite spot, with a favorite beverage at hand...

As places to start such a nostalgic voyage of remembrance, the reader might want to consider the memorials for [Teodor “Fred”](#) and [Dokija](#).

The documents referenced here are the results of the family history research of the author. For errors and omissions, he accepts full blame. He is also open to all help in making the material better. He trusts you will find the journey they invoke to be a pleasant one.

While these documents offer a “point in time” view of our shared family history, they need not be static. With help and further research, they can be updated. This document will always refer to the most recent version available, so come back often and, please, make suggestions that will keep them up to date.

The first document is a simple list of descendants. It offers the reader a chance to explore the realm of the lives of great-uncles and great-aunts (and further back!) and their descendance; second cousins and beyond who may not have been known before looking at these materials:

- [Teodor “Fred” \(1854-1918\) and his wife Dokija \(née Vordyniak or Burdy, 1859-1936\)](#)

The second document is another list. This one represents the known (or explicitly unknown!) resting places of those who have gone before us. As the reader will see, the list goes far beyond the scope of the map offered in support of this document. There are graves and memorials in cemeteries all over North America, all marking the lives lived of our forebearers and worthy of our attention, at least, from time to time:

- [Teodor “Fred” \(1854-1918\) and his wife Dokija \(née Vordyniak or Burdy, 1859-1936\)](#)

As an additional way of seeing the ways these people’s legacies have grown, here are **Word Cloud** representations of the surnames of all the descendants in those lists:

- [Teodor “Fred” \(1854-1918\) and his wife Dokija \(née Vordyniak or Burdy, 1859-1936\)](#)

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Cemeteries and Memorials

See the [“MyMaps” resource](#) for a visual presentation of these locations and further details.

Each link associated with the cemeteries in the list below is to the author’s curated “virtual cemetery” for the yard in question. Each is meant to capture ALL the graves in the yard that are related to people in the author’s extensive family tree.

While many names will be familiar, others may evoke a sense of wonder... wondering about just how the reader might be related to that person. While not everyone is closely related, they are on the author’s tree for a reason and sometimes, that reason is both surprising and informative.

One thing the author has learned while compiling this information: We are ALL... cousins!

Author’s note:

If any reader is aware of the details of the final disposition of the remains of anyone missing from these lists, please get in touch. I welcome all help in making these resources as complete and accurate as humanly possible.

Note: In direct reference to the above comments, the “MyMaps” resource includes pins for some cemeteries in the area that are not in these lists. This was done to suggest to the reader that there are more relatives buried in the area than appear on our direct lines of heritage... We owe... SO MUCH!

South Interlake / RM’s of St Andrews, Rockwood, and Bifrost areas:

- [Gimli Cemetery, Gimli, MB](#)
Wolchuk and Zolondek; related by marriage
- [Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Cemetery, Winnipeg, Beach, MB](#)
Russin, Vordyniak, Grzeskowiak (Covic), Tyszkowski, Juzyk, Pemkowski, and many others by marriage
- [St. George Wakefield Anglican Cemetery, St Andrews, MB](#)
Russin, Walker, Brown, and many others by marriage
- [Saint John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery, Silver, MB](#)
Symynyshen (one married a Tyszkowski daughter), and others by marriage
- [Saint Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery, Saint-Andrews, MB](#)
Russin, Pasieka, Wishnowski, and others by marriage
- [Steinbach Heritage Cemetery, Steinbach, MB](#)
Tomko, Penner
- [Winnipeg Beach Community Cemetery, Saint-Andrews, MB](#)
Tyszkowski, Tomko (married a Tyszkowski daughter), and many others by marriage

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Greater Winnipeg and close suburbs area:

- [Glen Eden Cemetery, West St Paul](#)
Russin, Shmigelski, Dondo, and many others by marriage

Further afield:

- [Moose Nose Cemetery, Oakbank, MB](#)
Syntak; related by marriage
- [Victory Memorial Park, Surrey, BC](#)
Wolchuk; related by marriage

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Points of Special Interest

See the [“MyMaps” resource](#) for a visual presentation of these locations and further details.

These locations in Manitoba outside the Interlake are related to the teaching career of Michael Russin (1900), though the exact years in which he carried out his appointments are, in many cases, unclear

- [Vimy Ridge School No 1922](#)
Michael taught here from 1925 through 1935 and Paulina (1905) appears to have contributed to the school experience in some way, as well
- [Kerr School No 2204](#)
Little is known about his time here and the available information seems to contradict other background known to be more reliable
- [Garland School No 1374](#)
The Manitoba Teachers Society has records indicating his time here included being highly active in the local “Teachers Association” which predated the current union; again, the information about the timing of his appointments is unclear

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Additional Resources

A free and public website:

[This online resource](#) provides a way for anyone desiring a peek into the connections that make us all cousins to explore the full extent of the author's family tree.

The site gives access to the names and many facts about all the 17,900+ people for which he has information.

Feel free to explore! ESPECIALLY... the other lines of your own heritage that are not expressly discussed in the documents you will find there.

The author has worked to allow any living person on his tree to be able to show any living relative their (normally) 16 great-great-grandparents. In some cases, I have overachieved. In others, I have work left to do. I am hoping this will begin a collection of conversations that will help us ALL to understand the unexpected ways we are connected to people we may meet.

In addition, you will find there, links to "[Virtual Guided Tours](#)" for ancestors you may or may not share with the author.

Place name correspondences:

(No account required)

[FamilySearch Catalog Places Search](#)

This service offers a comprehensive collection of documents that are collated, among other ways, by the place names with which they are associated. It is a powerful tool for determining the current place name(s) associated with the ones we encounter on old documents.

Historical projects about and maps of Galicia:

(No accounts required)

[Forgotten Galicia](#)

Take special note of the collection of maps

[Gesher Galicia](#)

A project of the Jewish community; take special note of the collection of maps and the town name search

["Modern" Galicia \(via Google Maps\)](#)

A way to orient oneself to the approximate geography of the "lost kingdom" of Galicia

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Ancestry family trees:

(Ancestry account required)

(N.B., Viewing of some or all content may also require permission from the owner)

Of note: there are other family trees on Ancestry that provide in-depth information about other parts of the more distant relationships to other living relatives

[Rick Dondo \(1955\)'s main tree](#)

As of this writing, this tree contains information about more than 16500 people, with nearly 9800 photos and images, nearly 900 stories, and is supported by more than 28,100 records, with more than 46,000 unprocessed “discoveries” that could add depth to the stories these profiles tell about the people who went before us
the tree is “Public” on Ancestry and readily accessible; Ask if you want to see living people

[Brenda \(née Symynshen, 1954\)'s main tree](#)

Public; Ask if you want to see living people

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Publicly Available Records of significance:

[Steamship Palatia \(1894\)](#) (Norway Heritage)

[LAC Land Grant Entry for NE-2-17-3-E1](#) (Library and Archives Canada)

[Canada Census 1901 - "Rusin" family in St Andrews](#) (Library and Archives Canada)

[Canada Census 1906 - "Rusyn" family in Winnipeg Beach](#) (Library and Archives Canada)

[Canada Census 1911 - "Rosian" family in Winnipeg Beach](#) (Library and Archives Canada)

[Canada Census 1916 - "Russian" family in Winnipeg Beach](#) (Library and Archives Canada)

[Canada Census 1921 - Peter Russin family in Winnipeg Beach](#) (Library and Archives Canada)

[Canada Census 1921 - "Tyskosky" family in Kreuzberg](#) [Anastasia + Louis] (Library and Archives Canada)

[Canada Census 1926 - Peter Russin family in Winnipeg Beach](#) (Library and Archives Canada)

[Canada Census 1926 - "Loistyshki" family in St Andrews](#) [Anastasia + Louis] (Library and Archives Canada)

[Canada Census 1926 - John "Russian" family in Winnipeg Beach](#) (Library and Archives Canada)

[Canada Census 1926 - Michael Russin family in Pine River](#) (Library and Archives Canada)

[Manitoba Property Search service](#) (Government of MB; use 2 17 3E and NE)

[Former Galician precinct of origin](#) (Google Maps)

[Galicia \(Eastern Europe\)](#) (Wikipedia)

[Dominion Land Survey](#) (Wikipedia)

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Snapshot images of ancestral family trees:

*(N.B. these are drawn from Ancestry trees and offered as a reference;
The trees may change at any time when new information comes to hand,
so these snapshots may become obsolete or otherwise inaccurate)*

[Teodor “Fred” \(1854\) / Dokija \(Vordyniak or Burdy\) \(1859\)](#)

Of note here:

This tree includes a son named “Andrew” whose relationship to the couple is, yet, unclear to the author;

It also contains references to the two sons noted by their grandson Fred Russin (1933) in a family story published in the local history entitled “Beyond the Gates of Lower Fort Garry (1982)” (see below)

Manitoba Local Histories:

[“Ukrainian Settlements in Manitoba” \(article\)](#)

[“Rockwood Municipality - 100 years of history”](#)

[“The Interlake Beckoned - A History of Inwood and Surrounding Districts”](#)

[“Spruce, Swamp and Stone - A History of the Pioneer Ukrainian Settlements in the Gimli Area”](#)

[“Winnipeg Beach - Moonlight Days”](#)

[“Beyond the Gates of Lower Fort Garry \(1982\)”](#)

[“The Land in the Middle – Manitoba’s Interlake”](#)

[“Selkirk - The First Hundred Years”](#)

[Manitoba’s Municipal History; RM’s and Districts](#) (Manitoba Historical Society)

Many others via [the Digital Collections at the University of Manitoba](#)

Many others via [the Manitoba Historical Society](#)

Family photo albums online:

At this time, there are none to publish here, but all offers will be gladly received, and this document will be updated.

Check back often!