

Family Movies

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By aunt Felicia; 1945 - 1949

Notes by Pete Gwozdz

5 Aug 2017, Last Update

Here is the link to the mp4 file of the movies:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0pWJJDHCmbtVG12bF9qM003b1k/view?usp=sharing>

You can play the movies directly from that Google Drive link, or you can download the file for storage on your computer.

Introduction

My aunt Felicia (Ciocia Phil) made these movies. My aunt Virginia (Ciocia Winkie) had them converted to a VHS tape. I had my copy of the tape converted into an mp4 file, which my grandson Aaron loaded onto his Google Drive, providing that link.

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Highlights

- 2:37 means that item starts at the 2 minutes 37 seconds point in the FamilyMovies.mp4 file
- 0:00 Gwozdz Home on East Road, playing in the snow. Winter of 1946-1947
 - 1:40 West Road. Joan, Ceil, Felicia on horses
 - 2:37 Gwozdz Home. Lawn, with Uncle Joe. Rosalie, Helen, & me. Mom briefly. December 1946
 - 3:22 Mt Greylock. Cohoes cousins, descendants of Piotr's brother Jozef, much older, had already passed away
 - 3:53 Visiting the Mizpah farm, Fales Road, Cheshire, home of a different Jozef Gwozdz - Piotr's 1st cousin
 - 4:38 Gwozdz home. Me on trike & throwing the wood. Probably fall of '47
 - 5:20 Gwozdz home. Another day, because different clothing
 - 5:56 Tom Murphy a baby (born Nov 1946) so this must be spring 1947. New Jersey. His Mom Cassie
 - 7:42 Windsor Jamb's Pond. I don't recognize anyone, could be Felicia's friends, or girl scouts?
 - 8:20 Gwozdz Home with cats & wagon. Summer '47
 - 10:00 1947 Virginia's graduation from Cooley Dickinson
 - 10:50 At the garden plot next to the cemetery.
 - 11:05 Mt Greylock with Banas cousins from Michigan. Probably be Fall of 1947.
 - 11:50 Back to NJ; Cassie with Tom, who's a little older. Probably 1948.
 - 12:05 Helen & Roman Armata wedding. Back to 23 Apr '46
 - 15:49 "THE END" sign. Probably means everything since 12:05 is the wedding??
 - 16:01 Rybaltkowski wedding, according to the voice-over, but probably not
 - 16:40 Wedding no snow, same church.
 - 17:54 Another wedding, snow.
 - 18:50 Wedding, no snow. Mary & Theodore Stefanski. 31 May 1948 (date from my genealogy)
 - 20:05 Winter on Summer Street.
 - 20:30 New York City. Apparently up in a building. I bet this is the top of the Empire State Building
 - 20:53 Wedding Cecilia & Joseph Olsztyn. 28 Dec 1948 (date from my genealogy). Ceil sister of my father
 - 22:15 Harvest at Cheshire farm
 - 22:37 Baptism of Mary Armata, born 23 Feb 1948
 - 22:47 Dad with Rosalie & Helen (consistent with Mary's birth date)
 - 22:56 East Road. Fall of 1947
 - 24:25 Cassie & Tom
 - 26:40 East Road. My sister Frances is a baby
 - 31:45 East Road with aunt Joan; Rosalie, Helen, Peter, Paul
 - 32:20 Back to color. East Road, hot summer day with aunt Cassie & Tom
 - 45:33 Ed Rybaltowski wedding; Jul 1947
 - 47:04 Silver wedding for Mary (born Gwozdz) and Vincent Rybaltowski
 - 63:36 East Road. Hot day.
 - 63:50 Gwozdz House on East Road, Christmas 1949

Detailed Contents and Notes

- 2:37 means that item starts at the 2 minutes 37 seconds point in the FamilyMovies.mp4 file
- 0:00 Gwozdz Home on East Road, Winter Snow. I'm fairly certain that's Stanley my Dad at the start. One or two kids with him.
 - 0:26 Joan & her father Piotr (my grandfather Piotr) for 7 seconds. Joan comes out of the door (102 Summer Street) to the stairs going up above the store (104 Summer Street); in the last second Joan is at the door to the store.
 - 0:33 Back to East Road, Snow. Rosalie, Helen, & me (Peter). Helen with pom-pom on her hat. Brief appearance by Felicia (Phil) and by Mom. I think this is out of order, because I seem to be about 2 years old (born Nov 1944), which means winter of 1946-1947. I'm certainly older than only 1 plus a month or two. February 1946 might be possible, but that seems inconsistent with how well I'm walking. I'm puzzled by who is with Dad in the first clip - seems to be too old for Rosalie or Helen. Also, in that first clip, I don't see the hats that Rosalie and Helen are wearing in this clip. Maybe the first clip is a different day, perhaps a different year, or perhaps an older child was visiting? Those first 2 very short clips might be loose film fragments of film that were played for the start of the VHS tape.
 - 1:40 Change from B&W to color
 - 1:40 West Road. Joan, Ceil, Felicia on horses.
 - 2:37 Gwozdz Home. Lawn, with Uncle Joe. Rosalie, Helen, & me. Mom briefly. Virginia's voice-over says "probably '45". This must be December, maybe Oct or Nov or Jan 1946. Here, I am obviously close to 1 year old, barely walking. **This is the oldest clip I have confidently dated so far.**
 - 3:13 Swimming for a few seconds
 - 3:22 Mt Greylock. Cohoes cousins. Descendants of Piotr's brother Jozef, much older, who had already passed away. Tom Rybaltkowski visited me and could not identify the individuals with any confidence.
 - 3:53 Visiting the Mizpah farm, Fales Road, Cheshire, home of a different Jozef Gwozdz - Piotr's 1st cousin, so those are Dad's & Felicia's 2nd cousins, although Virginia calls one of them "uncle Stanley" because he's a lot older.
 - 4:38 Gwozdz home. Me on trike & throwing the wood. Probably fall of '47.
 - 5:20 Gwozdz home. Another day, because different clothing.
 - 5:56 Dad moving furniture.
 - 6:21 Tom Murphy a baby (born Nov 1946) so this must be spring 1947. New Jersey. His Mom Cassie. That's the same house where Dad moved in the furniture. "Cassie" is Dad's sister (baptismal name Kazimiera, feminine form for Kazimierz)
 - 7:42 Windsor Jambs Pond. I don't recognize anyone, could be Felicia's friends, or girl scouts?
 - 8:20 Gwozdz Home with cats & wagon. I take the wagon from Paul (born Mar '46) and he's walking fine, so this must be late summer '47. 9:10 Bill Wesolowski is there on the bench.
 - 9:40 "Mom's plants" (Virginia's Mom, my grandmother). Summer Street, my grandparents' home above the store. The final street scene is from the outdoor 2nd floor porch balcony, one of the places my grandmother kept potted plants.
 - 10:00 1947 Virginia's graduation from Cooley Dickinson
 - 10:50 At the garden plot next to the cemetery.
 - 11:05 Mt Greylock with Banas cousins from Michigan. Felicia (not the movie maker) Banas married "Myslakowski", a name barely audible in the voice-over. Felicia & Anna are twin sisters of my grandmother Bronislawa Banas. Notes from Joe Armata: "Could the two older women be the twins, Felicia and Anna? Anna moved to Michigan too and married Iwanski. If this is 1948ish, they'd be 55 years old, do they look that age? They sure do look alike to me, just one is stouter, and if one traveled back to Adams I'm sure she'd invite the other to come, you know how twins are! Could the little kids be Rosalie/Helen/Peter/Paul? On the other hand, the young man and woman could be Felicia M's children Matt, born 1922, and Wanda, born 1920, with their kids who were born 1950 and later - but in that case, Felicia M couldn't be there as she died in 1951." I (Pete) don't see my parents in this clip, although yes, that is the 4 of us walking with two ladies who must be Virginia's cousins from Michigan. Paul looks the same age as 8:20, so this is probably be Fall of 1947.
 - 11:50 Back to NJ; Cassie with Tom, who's a little older. Probably 1948.
 - 12:05 Helen & Roman Armata wedding. Back to 23 Apr '46. This wedding looks like B&W, but maybe it's a color film badly faded? Tom Murphy was born only 7 months after this wedding, so these clips are not exactly in order of time.

- 13:30 Dancing in the snow; back to good color. Not clear if this is a scene from the wedding, or a short clip of loose film added by Smith when he made the tape.
- 13:50 A wedding. I can't understand the names on the voice-over. It sounds like "Roman and Helen's wedding", so apparently this is a second film clip of the same wedding, but I'm not sure.
- 14:51 Sign April 23, 1946; Helen & Roman Armata
- 15:49 "THE END" sign. Probably means everything since 12:05 is the Armata wedding??
- 15:57 sign "AND SO THEY WERE MARRIED"
- 16:01 Rybaltkowski wedding, according to the voice-over. Tom Rybaltkowski cannot identify the couple. This is St. Stanislaus church in Adams - evidence that this is not Rybaltkowski of Cohoes. Compare the scenes just outside the church, bride & groom, 14:00 vs 16:07: these are both the same church but different people. This 16:01 wedding has snow.
- 16:40 Wedding no snow, same church.
- 17:54 Another wedding, snow.
- 18:50 Wedding, no snow. Mary & Theodore Stefanski. 31 May 1948 (date from my genealogy). Mary is a daughter of Jozef Gwozdz of Cheshire.
- 19:15 Ice Skating. Voice-over says "Blackington I think." We had Balicki distant cousins (my Banas grandmother's grandmother was Rozalia Balicka) who lived in Blackington, but I have never made contact with them.
- 20:05 Winter on Summer Street.
- 20:15 Rosalie, Helen, and me
- 20:13 New York City. Apparently up in a building. I bet this is the top of the Empire State Building.
- 20:53 Wedding Cecilia & Joseph Olsztyn. 28 Dec 1948 (date from my genealogy). Ceil sister of my father.
- 21:08 Church procession
- 21:46 Ceil dancing. Sure looks like shortly after her wedding!
- 22:15 Harvest at Cheshire farm
- 22:37 Baptism of Mary, per voice-over. Armata, I presume, Mary born 23 Feb 1948.
- 22:47 Dad with Rosalie & Helen (consistent with Mary's birth date)
- 22:56 East Road. Rosalie & Helen walking hand in hand; dancing. 23:23 Mom pushing carriage; must be Frances in there (born 22 Jul 1947) making this the following fall; Paul walking in front. 3 of us making bubbles; Paul and me; I don't recognize girl in red. Paul and I have red hats, which I remember well.
- 23:57 Paul with chickens (not Peter).
- 24:25 Cassie & Tom, who is walking fine.
- 26:40 East Road. Frances is a baby. 27:18 Rosalie & Fran with rabbit. 27:34 Marching: Rosalie, Helen, Peter, Paul, Frances with Ceil; notice that Ceil is wearing the same white T shirt and black shorts as in her dancing scene at 21:46. 28:39 Babcia Bronislawa Banas
- 29:03 Annual school picnic in May; we called it "Majufka" - I'm not sure how to spell it.
- 29:46 "St. Stanislaus School Graduation 1947 or maybe 1948 Kindergarten Graduation.
- 30:04 Halloween. 30:48 back to B&W
- 31:45 East Road with aunt Joan; Rosalie, Helen, Peter, Paul
- 32:20 Back to color. East Road, hot summer day with aunt Cassie & Tom. Paul wearing a red beanie with propeller, which I remember well.
- 33:35 B&W Girl scouts at Windsor Jambs. 38:39 sign: "TROOPS 254 & 1254". Felicia was a girl scouts leader. 38:50 back to color
- 42:44 Sign "THE END AUGUST 1946". It's blurred; might be 1948?? This must be the end of a 9 minute film clip at Windsor Jambs
- 42:59 Kindergarten recess
- 44:25 Truck load of girl scouts. Running & swimming
- 45:33 Ed Rybaltowski wedding; Jul 1947. Tom Rybaltkowski verified this during his 2017 visit with me.
- 47:04 Silver wedding for Mary (born Gwozdz) and Vincent Rybaltkowski. Was this during the same visit as the wedding of their son Edmond?
- 48:09 Sign: Felicia Training in Chicago July 6 to 16, 1946. Not much voice-over during this 6 minute clip - it's not of much interest to us. The voice-over quality suddenly becomes very weak: 47:58 glitch in music sound for a few seconds - might be the cause. 48:20 is the last instance of clear voice-over. 48:42 is the first instance of barely audible voice-over. For all the remainder of the movies the voice-over is weak. The music is fine, so this sound problem did not happen when the mp4 file was made.
- 54:36 Procession, including "Children of Mary"

- 58:54 Pulaski Day Parade in NYC. October '46. 60:46 aunt Joan (Joanna, who married Bodzioch in 1950, which is after last of the films)
- 60:47 Adams Parade; Joan again
- 61:05 Convent visit?
- 63:36 East Road. Hot day.
- 63:50 Christmas Manger at Gwozdz House; sign saying Gwozdz House, Christmas 1949; Santa comes; kids enter; opening presents; Fran (born July 1947) is walking well. **This is the youngest clip I have confidently dated so far.**
- 67:13 End of movies

Technical Discussions

History. I remember these movies because my aunt Felicia played them quite often during the 1950's at our home. I do not remember what date she started taking them; I do not know exactly when and why she stopped; from my identification of specific clips (see the Notes above) they seem to be dated late 1945 to Christmas 1949.

I remember when my aunt Virginia had these tapes converted to VHS tape. She distributed copies to family. I still have my copy in a box in the cellar. It has a label in my handwriting with the date 9/8/91, so that must be close to the day I received my copy. In 2017 Joe Armata, in an email, reported: "Barb thinks the original films were destroyed when Jimmy Smith transferred them to VHS tape." Barb is Joe's sister. I remember "Smith Studio" on many family wedding photos - that was our local photographer. If any of these details are not quite right, let me know. Does anyone else still have their copy of the tape? By email, Sally Munn, Virginia's daughter, informed me by email that she does not have the original film, so yes, it probably was destroyed; more discussion about this below.

I no longer have a VHS player. I had my tape copy converted to the mp4 file that is now available for download. I found on line several services that do this conversion; I selected a lady who does it from her home because she is conveniently located right at an exit from the freeway. She told me later by phone that my tape broke while she was converting. She knows a man who fixes tapes, so she brought it to him to be spliced, then she fast forwarded to the end and rewound to assure it was OK before making the mp4 file on the 2nd attempt. She finished 7/21/17. I should get a VHS player to make sure everything from the tape was captured in the file - unless one of you readers does this for us using your copy of the tape and lets me know.

My grandson Aaron uploaded the file to his Google Drive on 7/24, on which day I distributed the link by mass email. Joe Armata pointed out a bug, and I ran into other bugs; on 7/28/17 I distributed the current link and it seems to be working fine; let me know if you have a problem.

Backup. Please download the file. Our lesson with the movie films and tapes: These things might be lost or go bad over the decades, so the more people have copies of the mp4 file the more likely someone's copy will still work 25 years from now when technology change again forces a change of format. Don't count on me for 25 more years.

To remember easily how to get here. If you want to show someone the Family Movies and don't have the link: All you need to remember is my web site: www.gwozdz.org; look for my link to "Family Movies", which opens up this file as a pdf; click on the link at the top of the page.

Help Improve these Notes. I started this FamilyMoviesNotes document in Word on 25 Jul 2017. I'll continuously edit it and keep the current version at my web site. If you are planning to study the movies, ask me for my master Word document, so you can edit these Notes with "Track Changes" on, and send me your edited document for merging with my master.

Thumb Drive. It's not trivial to make a copy of FamilyMovies.mp4 on a thumb drive, but I encourage people to make multiple thumb drive copies, because I expect some thumb drives to have problems over decades of storage. I failed in my first attempts because the file size, 4.6 GB, does not work with the default format of thumb drives. The "allocation unit size" is too small (size of memory saved in chunks). With the format window, look for a choice for allocation size and try a size near the middle of the range - not too small - not too large. It takes a couple hours to copy the file to a thumb drive. When finished with the format & copying, spot check to make sure all 67 minutes are there (see Notes, above, for what should be there).

Does the 2017 mp4 file include all the film footage made by Felicia? No. Rosalie tells me she remembers very well Felicia showing these movies. From time to time, up to a foot of film at the start would get ragged so Phil would just cut it off, Rosalie distinctly remembers. So we know there are missing beginnings to many if not all the film reels. Rosalie remembers very well a clip with Rosalie & Helen wearing those hats with pom-poms on top; Helen removed Rosalie's pom-pom; that scene is not in the mp4.

I'm thinking perhaps the original film broke in many places when Jim Smith was doing the conversion from film to VHS. He may have spliced some breaks, which is one explanation for the occasional jumps in the images that we see. However, there might have been short sections of film that were loose when Virginia brought the film reels to him. Maybe also short sections broke off and got mixed up while he was splicing. In my Notes for the 0:33 clip I mention that the previous first 2 short clips might be loose film fragments that were played for the start of the VHS tape. There are quite a few other very short scenes that seem out of context with the clips before and after.

So yes, stuff is missing. It's very possible Felicia lost a full reel over the years. Two people informed me by email that they loaned out their VHS tape of these movies and never got it back - maybe Felicia loaned out one of her reels and it's sitting today in someone's attic.

All those people. There are a lot of Adams people throughout these movies. Their grandchildren would love to see those particular clips. Mention this to grandchildren of Adams folks. Particularly grandchildren of girl scouts - maybe a few of Felicia's girls scouts are still alive and might remember diving off the dam that day at Windsor Jambs.

“We're processing this video. Please check back later”. That Google Drive message has a valid use - it may take a few hours for the Google Drive computers to “process” a new movie. “Process” means prepare those small images and pointers used for jumping around in the file. The file itself is not changed - the computer keeps the pointers in it's own files. The processing is complete for our file FamilyMovies.mp4.

I got this message when I used a copy of Aaron's link in an html file on my web page. I did not get this message when I copied Aaron's link to a doc file or when I made a pdf file.

I Googled that message and found discussions about it going back to 2012! It shows up as a message for many different problems. It's strange that Google has not fixed this.

I don't fully understand how to get around that problem with links from html files. I just kept changing things until it went away. The link at my web site uses a pdf file of this document, and the link seems to work fine. Let me know if you have this problem (or any problem viewing or downloading the movies) and I'll try working on it again.