

# BLĄŻEJOWSKI

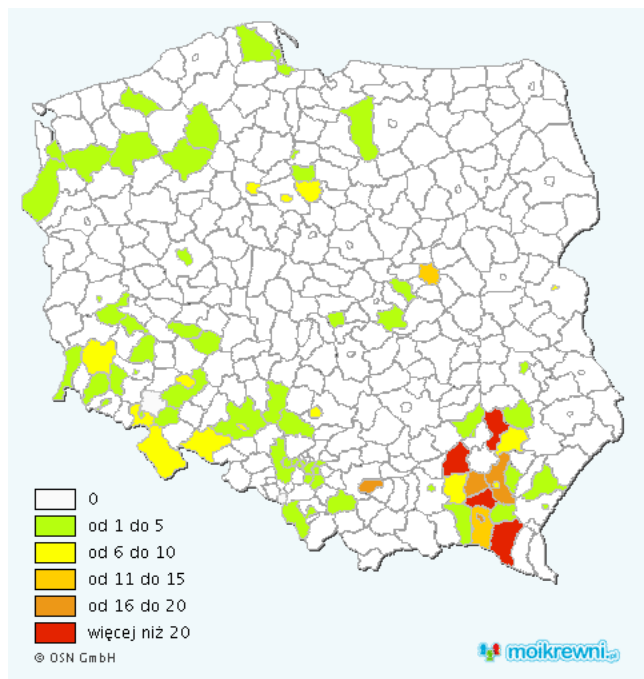
Requested by Patricia B. Yocum: “My ancestors came from Kozuchów SW of Rzeszów on the Wisłok River.”

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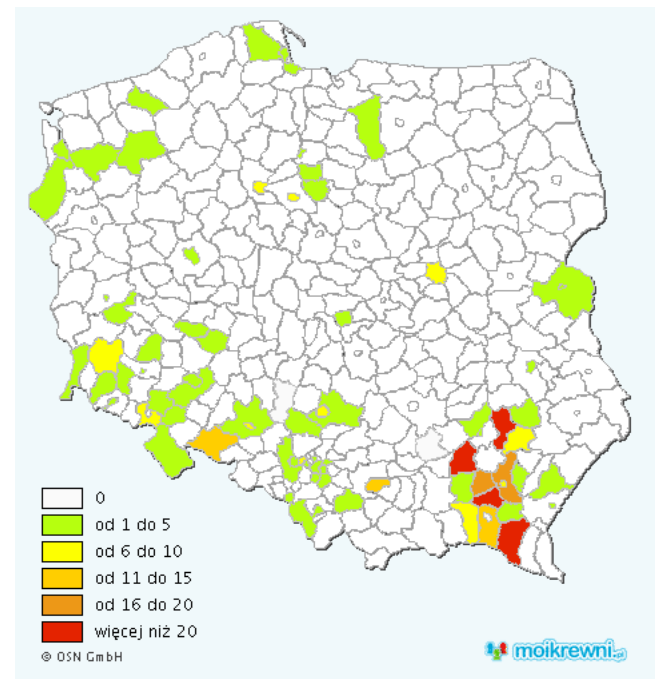
In Polish this name is pronounced roughly “b’wah-zhay-OFF-skee.” Data available at the Moikrewni web site shows 467 Polish citizens going by the masculine form of this name (<http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/kompletny/b%25C5%2582a%25C5%25BCejowski.html>) and 508 going by the feminine form *Błażejowska* (<http://www.moikrewni.pl/mapa/kompletny/b%25C5%2582a%25C5%25BCejowska.html>). The accompanying maps (reproduced below) tell us this name shows up most often, though not exclusively, in southeastern Poland. Kozuchów is in Strzyżów county (of Podkarpackie province), and the data available on the Moikrewni site shows that Strzyżów county had the highest numbers for these names, 62 for the masculine form, 61 for the feminine. So your ancestors came from the general area in Poland where this name is most common.

Professor Rymut mentions this name in his book *Nazwiska Polaków* [The Surnames of Poles]. He says the form *Błażejowski* appears in Polish records as early as 1514. He says it is a variant of the surname *Błażejewski*, which appears as early as 1478. That form is more common—Moikrewni shows 2,397 Polish citizens named *Błażejewski* and 2,555 named *Błażejewska*. Those forms with *-ewski* tend to show up more often in central and western Poland, which is not surprising. We often find, as a rule, that surnames in the form *X-owski* are more common in the southeastern part of Poland, whereas the corresponding forms *X-ewski* are more common in the west. This is due to old regional pronunciation tendencies; they are not evident in modern Polish, but back centuries ago, when surnames were forming, they were observable.

Either way, the surname refers to the name of a place the family was connected with at some point centuries ago, a place with a name beginning *Błażejow-* or *Błażejew-*. Those place names, in turn, come



Map showing the distribution of the feminine form **Błażejowska** as of 2002.



Map showing the distribution of the surname **Błażejowski** as of 2002.

from the given name *Błażej*, the Polish version of the first name we know as *Blaise*. That name has never been terribly popular among English-speaking people, but older Catholics may remember when the priest used to bless parishioners throats with crossed candles, invoking St. Blaise to protect them from throat diseases and problems. *Błażejew-* or *Błażejow-* means basically “of Blaise.” So a settlement or village named *Błażejewo* was “[place/village/settlement] of Blaise.” A *Błażejowice* was “[place] of the son(s) of Blaise.”

Rymut specifically mentions the village of Błażejowice, in Biała Rawska district of Łódzkie province, as one place with which research has connected this surname. That does not necessarily mean, however, that all Błażejowskis and Błażejowskis came from that village. The modern Polish map site <http://mapa.szukacz.pl/> shows more than 15 places in Poland with names such as *Błażejowice*, *Błażejewo*, and *Błażejów*; and theoretically, this surname could refer to any of them. None of them are really close to the Kozuchów area; the Błażejowice in Łódzkie province is about the same distance away as the Błażejowice in Gliwice county of Śląskie province.

So, as is often the case, the surname alone does not tell us for sure which place a given Błażejowski family came from. Only research into the family history might clarify that.

I should add that surnames in the form *X-ewski* or *X-owski* can mean “of the kin of X,” especially in cases where the X part is from a popular first name. So *Błażejowski* could have started out meaning simply “of the kin of Blaise.” More likely it meant “one from the place of Blaise,” and referred to one of those villages I mentioned with names derived from *Błażej*. But we can’t rule out the other possibility. The surname Błażejowski/ Błażejewski speaks to a connection of some sort with a personal named *Błażej*—but without more details we cannot tell whether that was the name of an ancestor, or simply the name of a person for whom a settlement or village was named.

Finally, it’s unwise to assume that a Błażejowski is related to a Błażejowski. It’s also unwise to assume he is not. Given the variability of Polish name forms in old records, it is certainly possible the same person might be called Błażejowski in one record, Błażejowski in another. On the other hand, it is also possible a family named Błażejowski took pride in the fact that they used a less common variant of the name, and they may have insisted on spelling it that way. So don’t assume anything—but keep all possibilities in the back of your mind. Above all, don’t reject a possible connection just because the name spellings differ. If everything else matches up, be flexible about the surname.