Benedict Kocinski and Agnes Kapelak

Compiled by Michael E. Byczek
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Benedict (Benedykt) Kocinski and Agnes (Agnieszka) Kapelak were married in 1788 at the Catholic Church located in Bytoń. Benedict was living in Stary Radziejów within the Radziejów Catholic Parish. Agnes was living in the village of Bytoń where the church was located for the Bytoń Parish.

Agnes was the daughter of Adlabert (Wojciech) and Regina Kapelak. Their surname was also spelled Kapela and Kopela. Her mother's maiden name is unknown. It is unclear where Agnes was born since her baptism record has not been found. Online access to digitized records is not available for the mid-1770s, which is when Agnes was most likely born. An accurate estimate for her year of birth is 1772. Several of her siblings were born in the Bytoń Parish before and after the gap of inaccessible records. The 1822 marriage record listed Agnes as 50 years old, suggesting a birth around 1772. However, her 1842 death record listed her as 90 years old, which would suggest a birth around 1752. Neither age can be independently verified because her baptism record has not been located. The age from the death record could be a translation error or overestimation.

An accurate estimate for when Benedict was born is 1762. His parents and place of birth are unknown. The surname Kocinski was spelled with multiple variations including Kuciński and Kocyński.

Benedict Kocinski and Agnes Kapelak had four known children. There were probably more children, since there were large gaps in their ages. The family is only known to have lived in Stary Radziejow.

Child	Birth	Notes
Michael (Michał)	About 1789	Died in 1792 (Baptism not found)
Thomas (Tomasz)	About 1798	Identified as Benedict's son, but baptism not found
Marianna	1803	
Valentine (Walenty)	1808	

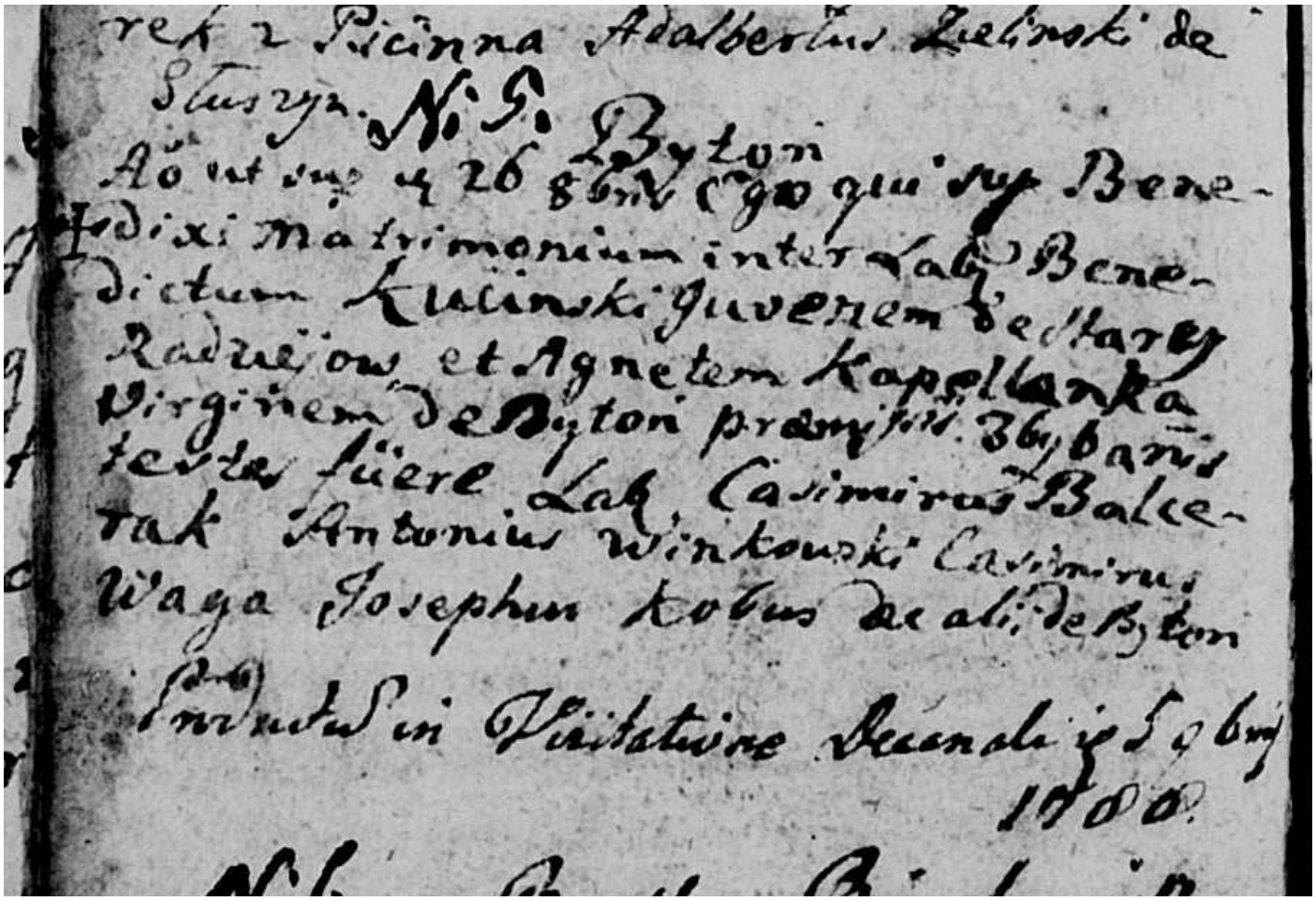
Their son Valentine Kocinski married Elizabeth (Elżbieta) Lasocki in 1828 at the Catholic Church located in Piotrkow Kujawski. They are Michael E. Byczek's 4x-great-grandparents.

Benedict Kocinski passed away in 1822 while living in Stary Radziejów. The death record provided an estimated year of birth as 1762. This is the only known reference to his age.

Agnes (Kapelak) Kocinski married Lawrence (Wawrzyniec) Majorowicz later the same year, also in Radziejów. It appears to have been Lawrence's first marriage, even though he was 46 years old. He was born in 1776. His parents were Benedict (Benedykt) and Constance (Konstancja) Majorowicz. The baptism extract submitted to the church for the wedding appears to show that he was born in the Sadlno Parish of the Greater Poland Voivodeship. Agnes was listed as 50 years old (estimated year of birth as 1772). If her age was accurate, it was probably unlikely that they had any children.

Unfortunately, it appears that the church only required proof that Agnes Kocinski was a widow through a verified copy of Benedict Kocinski's death record. Since Lawrence had never been married, he was required to provide a baptism extract. Digitized church records have three supporting documents for the 1822 marriage: (1) Lawrence's baptism extract, (2) Benedict Kocinski's death record, and (3) guardianship verification for Valentine Kocinski, who was still a minor. It is unknown whether Agnes also provided a baptism extract, or whether the death record was sufficient.

Lawrence Majorowicz passed away in 1831 in Stary Radziejów. Agnes (Kapelak) Majorowicz passed away in 1842, also in Stary Radziejów. Her death record was recorded as Agnes Kocinski instead of Agnes Majorowicz. Furthermore, the identity of her second husband was not listed in the death record. The omission of Lawrence Majorowicz from Agnes's death record may reflect the way the informants or registrar chose to identify her. Her first marriage and the Kocinski family remained central to her family identity, particularly because her son Valentine was one of the informants. However, the precise reason for using Kocinski rather than Majorowicz cannot be established from the record.



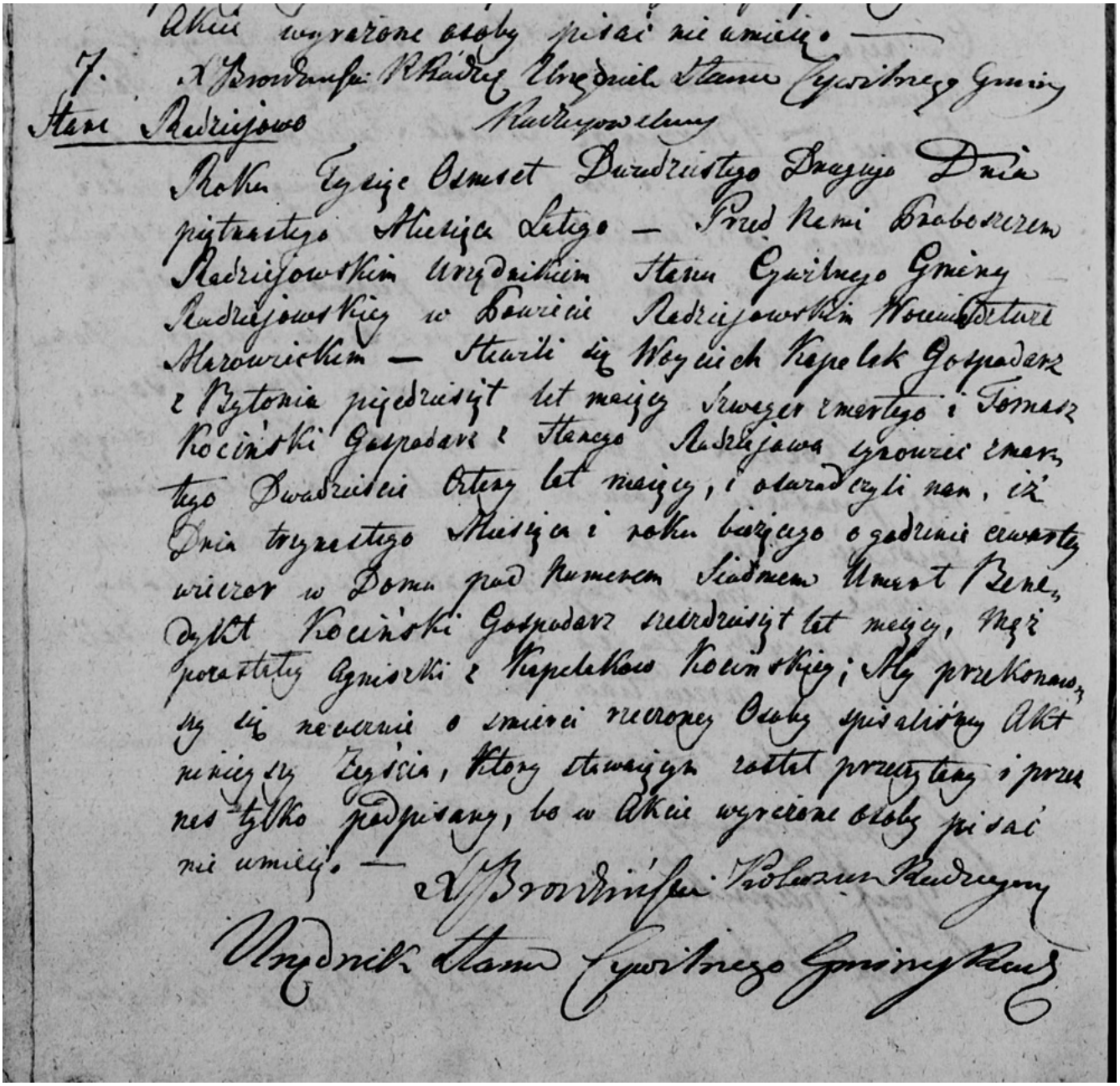
1788 Marriage of Benedict Kocinski and Agnes Kapelak
Bytoń (Bytoń)

2. English Translation

Byton.

In the year of the Lord 1788, on the 26th of October. I, [the priest] who am above, blessed the marriage between the laboring **Benedykt Kuciński**, a single young man from Stary Radziejów, and **Agnieszka Kapellanka**, a maiden from Byton, after the publication of three banns. Witnesses were the laboring **Kazimierz Balcerak**, **Antoni Winkowski**, **Kazimierz Waga**, and **Józef Kotus**, all from Byton. 1 copy.jpg

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1822 Death for Benedict Kocinski
Stary Radziejów (Radziejów)

Adalbert Kapelak, from Bytoń, was a witness and was identified as Benedict's "brother-in-law"

2. English Translation

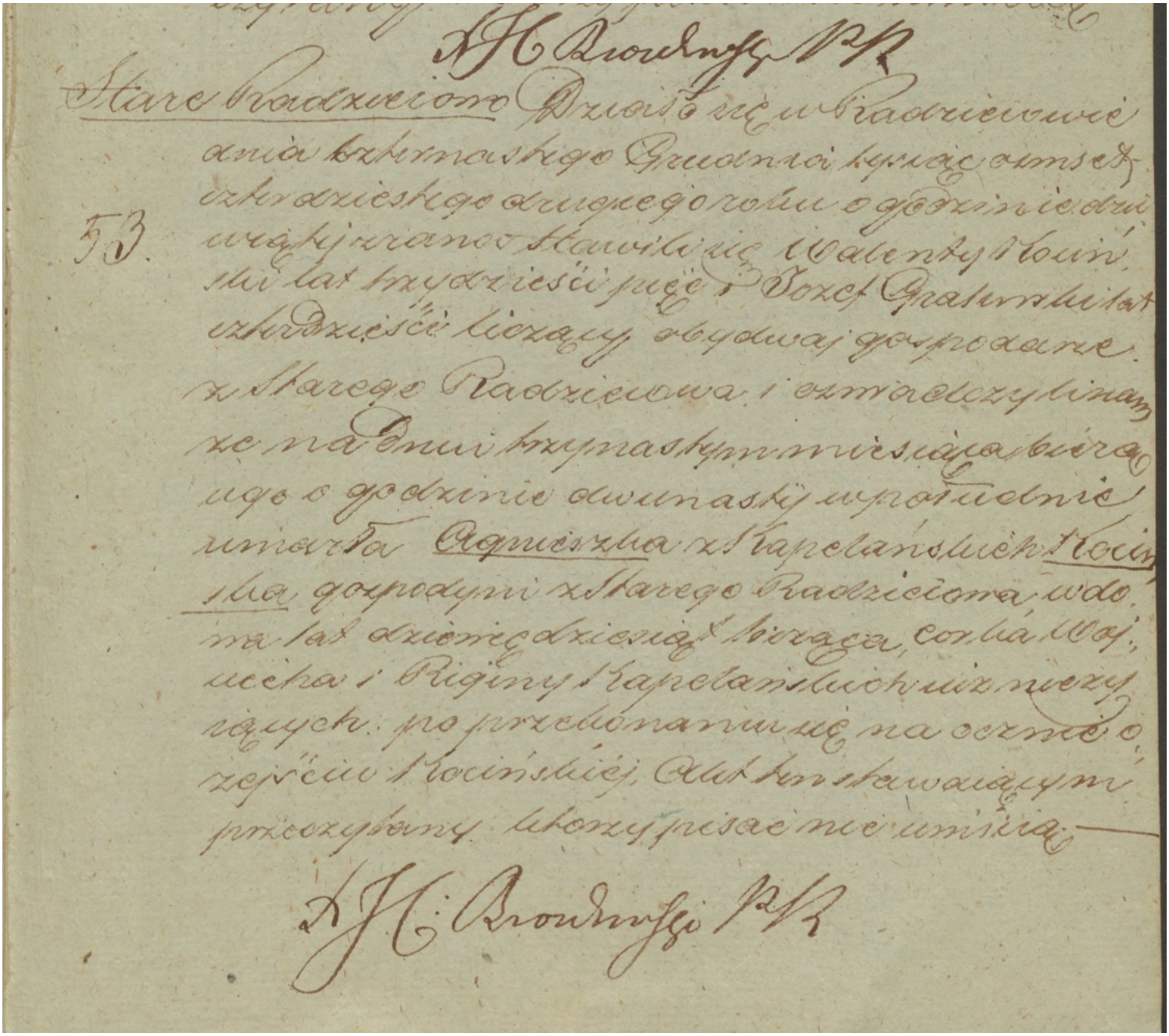
No. 7. Stary Radziejów.

In the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two, on the fifteenth day of the month of February. Before Us, the Pastor of Radziejów, Civil Registrar of the Radziejów Municipality in the Radziejów District, in the Masovian Voivodeship – appeared **Wojciech Kapelek**, farmer from Byton, 50 years of age, brother-in-law of the deceased, and **Tomasz Kociński**, farmer from Stary Radziejów, son of the deceased, 24 years of age, and stated to us that on the thirtieth day of the month and current year at four o'clock in the evening, in the house under number seven, died **Benedykt Kociński**, farmer, 60 years of age, surviving husband of Agnieszka née Kapelek Kocińska [Kociński]; having visually ascertained the death of the said person, we drew up this death record, which was read to the declarants and signed by Us only, because the persons expressed in the act do not know how to write.

Rev. Broudziński, Pastor of Radziejów, Civil Registrar of the Radziejów Municipality.

2 copy.jpg

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1842 Death of Agnes (Kapelak) Kocinski
Stary Radziejów (Radziejów)

The death record identified Agnes as the widow “Agnes Kocinski” with a maiden name of Kapelak.
Valentine Kocinski was a witness.

It appears that widowed women were sometimes identified through her first husband and not subsequent married names.

2. English Translation

Stare Radziejów

No. 53

Took place in Radziejów on the fourteenth day of December in the year one thousand eight hundred and forty-two at nine o'clock in the morning. Appeared **Walenty Kociński**, thirty-five years of age, and **Józef Gralinowski**, forty years of age, both farmers from Stary Radziejów, and declared to us that on the thirteenth day of the current month at twelve o'clock noon died **Agnieszka née Kapelański Kocińska**, housewife from Stary Radziejów, widow, ninety years of age, daughter of the late Wojciech and Regina née Kapelański; having visually ascertained the death of Kocińska, this Act was read to the declarants, who do not know how to write.

Rev. J. Broudziński, Pastor 71_232_0_-_17_113738109 ...

AI translation (Google Gemini)

Looking closely at the 1842 death record, the omission of her second husband, Wawrzyniec Majorowicz (who died in 1831), comes down to standard Polish civil registration practices (*stan cywilny*) and how clerical informants reported a deceased person's status.

Here is why Wawrzyniec wasn't mentioned in the closing death act:

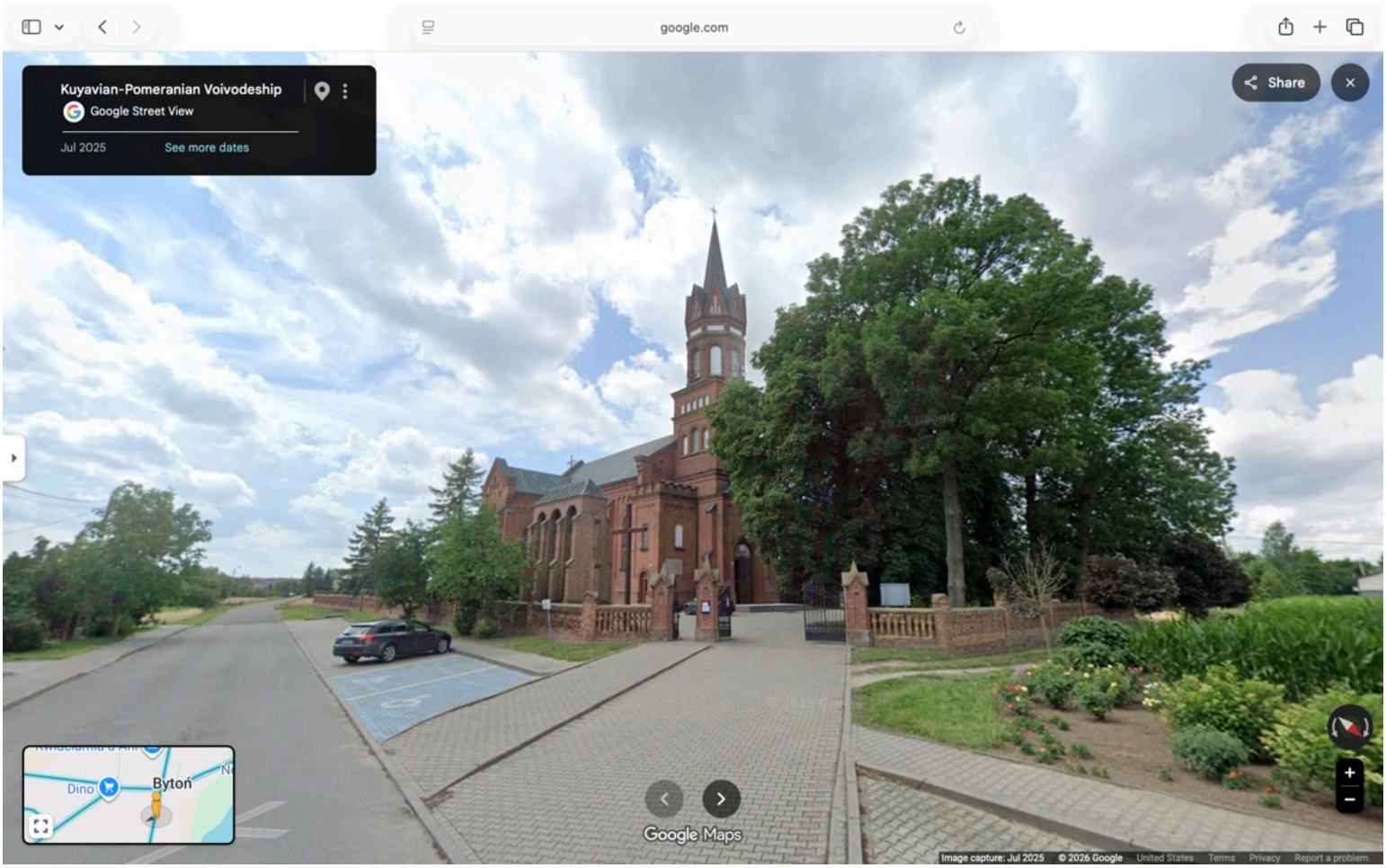
1. **Focus on the Patrilineal / Primary Identifying Marriage:**
   In 19th-century civil acts, a widow's primary identity in official death registrations was frequently tied back to her *first* or primary married household name, or she was simply identified broadly as a "widow" (*wdowa*). Since Benedykt Kociński was the father of her children (including Walenty, who stood as the informant) and the patriarch with whom she spent decades building the Stary Radziejów household, the clerk recorded her under the Kociński surname.
2. **The Informant's Perspective:**
   The act states that her son, **Walenty Kociński** (aged 35), and Józef Gralinowski appeared as the witnesses/informants. As her son from her first marriage, Walenty naturally identified her primarily through her relation to his father and her long-standing presence as the matriarch of the Kociński home in Stary Radziejów, rather than highlighting her subsequent, shorter marriage to Wawrzyniec Majorowicz that had ended a decade earlier.
3. **Clerical Shorthand for Widows:**
   Once a woman outlived multiple husbands, priests and civil registrars often simplified the death entry by listing her maiden name and her first/primary married name (in this case, *Agnieszka z Kapelańskich Kocińska*) and designating her simply as a widow (*wdowa*) without appending every subsequent marital history, especially since Wawrzyniec Majorowicz had passed away eleven years prior in 1831.

AI-assisted analysis (Google Gemini) that explains why Lawrence Majorowicz may not have been listed in the death record



Present-day Catholic Church in Radziejów

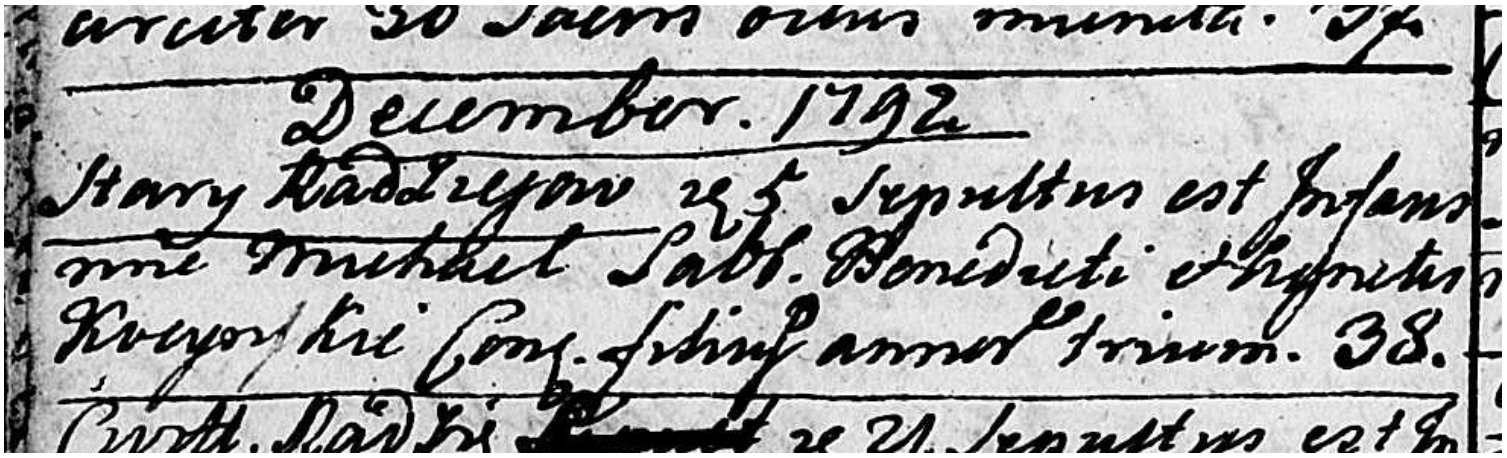
Wniebowzięcia Najświętszej Maryi Panny
Source: Google Maps (Street View)



Present-day Catholic Church in Bytoń
Source: Google Maps (Street View)

Children of Benedict Kocinski and Agnes Kapelak

Representative documents are shown below.


December. 1792
Stary Radziejow 25 Sepultus est Infans
me Michael Sabb. Benedicti et Agnetis
Kwaczyńskie Conj. filius annor trium. 38.

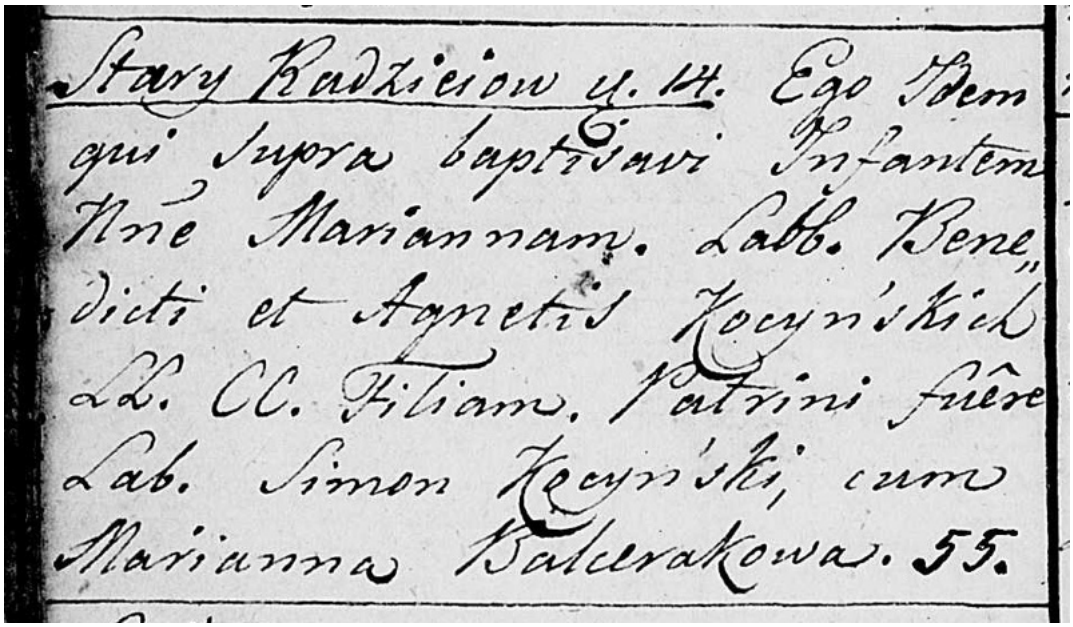
1792 Death of Michael Kocinski
Stary Radziejów (Radziejów)

2. English Translation

December 1792

Stary Radziejów, [date] 5 [December 1792]. Was buried an infant named **Michał (Michael)**, son of the laboring spouses **Benedykt and Agnieszka Kuczyński [Kociński]**, three years of age. 38.

AI translation (Google Gemini)

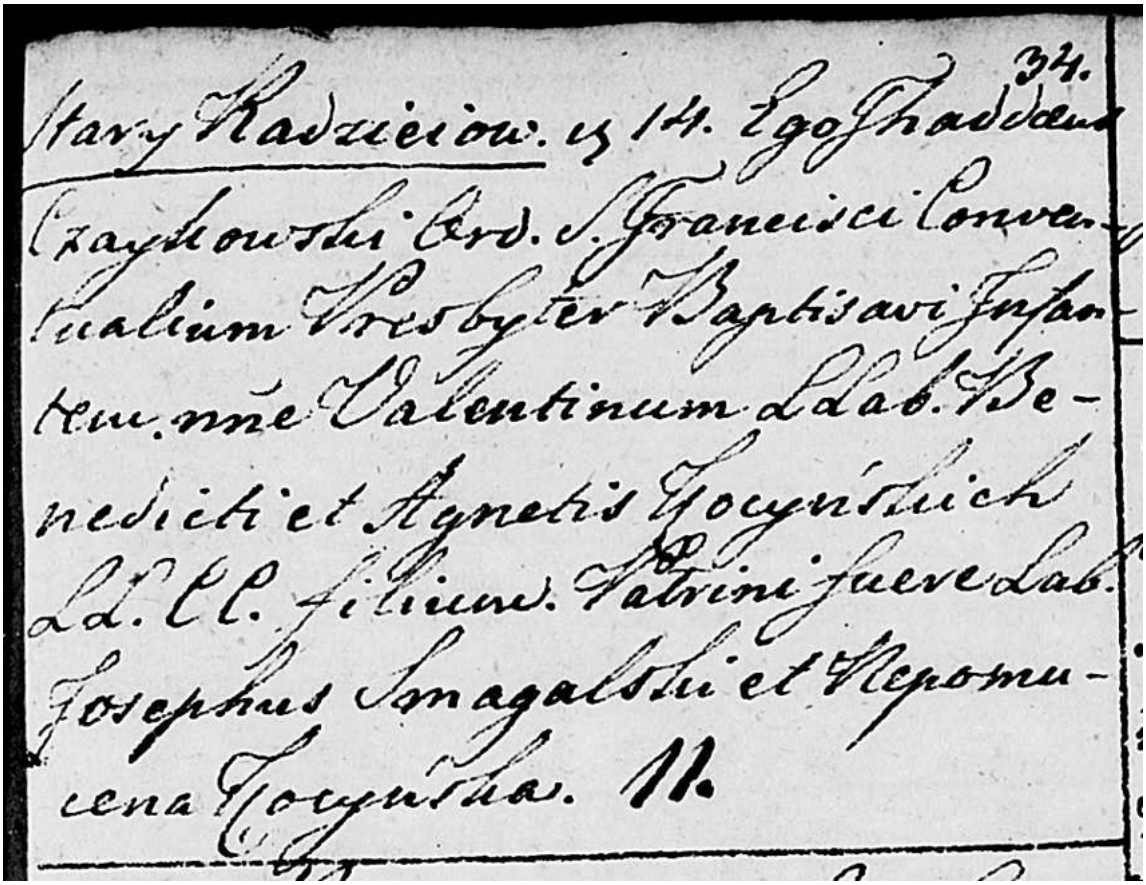

Stary Radziejow d. 14. Ego Idem
qui supra baptizavi Infantem
Nmè Mariannam. Lab. Bene,
dicti et Agnetis Kocyńskich
LL. CC. Filiam. Patrini fuêre
Lab. Simon Kocyński, cum
Marianna Balcerakowa. 55.

1803 Baptism of Marianna Kocinski
Stary Radziejów (Radziejów)

2. English Translation

Stary Radziejów, [date] 14 [1803]. I, the same [priest] as above, baptized an infant named **Marianna**, lawful daughter of the laboring spouses **Benedykt and Agnieszka Kuczyński [Kociński]**. Sponsors: the laboring **Szymon Kuczyński** with **Marianna Balcerak** [Balcerakowa]. 55.

AI translation (Google Gemini)


34.
Stary Radziejow. 14. Ego Jhaddem
Czaykowski Ord. S. Francisci Conven-
tualium Presbyter Baptisavi Infan-
tem. nmē Valentinum Lab. Be-
nedicti et Agnetis Gocyńskich
Ld. Cl. filium. Patrini fuere Lab.
Josephus Smagalski et Nepomu-
cena Gocyńska. N.

1808 Baptism of Valentine Kocinski
Stary Radziejów (Radziejów)

Nepomucena Kocinski was the godmother

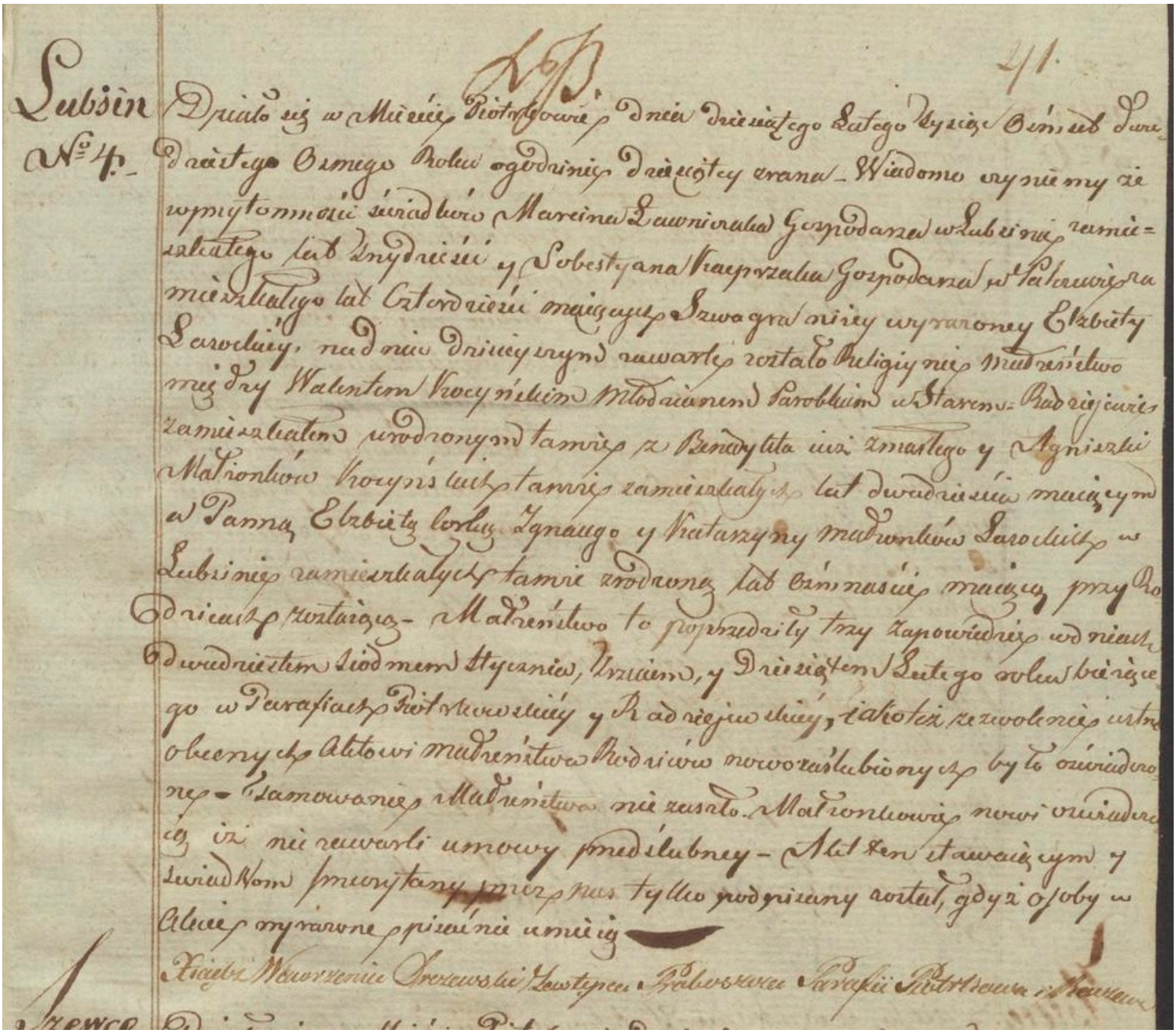
English Translation

Stary Radziejów No. 34

[February] 13 / 14 [1808]

I, Tadeusz Czajkowski, priest of the Order of Conventual Friars Minor of Saint Francis, baptized an infant by the name of **Walenty** (*Valentine*), legitimate son of the working-class/laboring couple (*laboriosi*) **Benedykt Kociński** and **Agnieszka née Kocińska** [or *Kocyńska*]. The godparents were the laborer **Józef Smagalski** and **Nepomucena Kocyńska**.

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1828 Marriage of Valentine Kocinski and Elizabeth Lasocki
Lubsin (Piotrków Kujawski)

English Translation

Lubsin No. 4

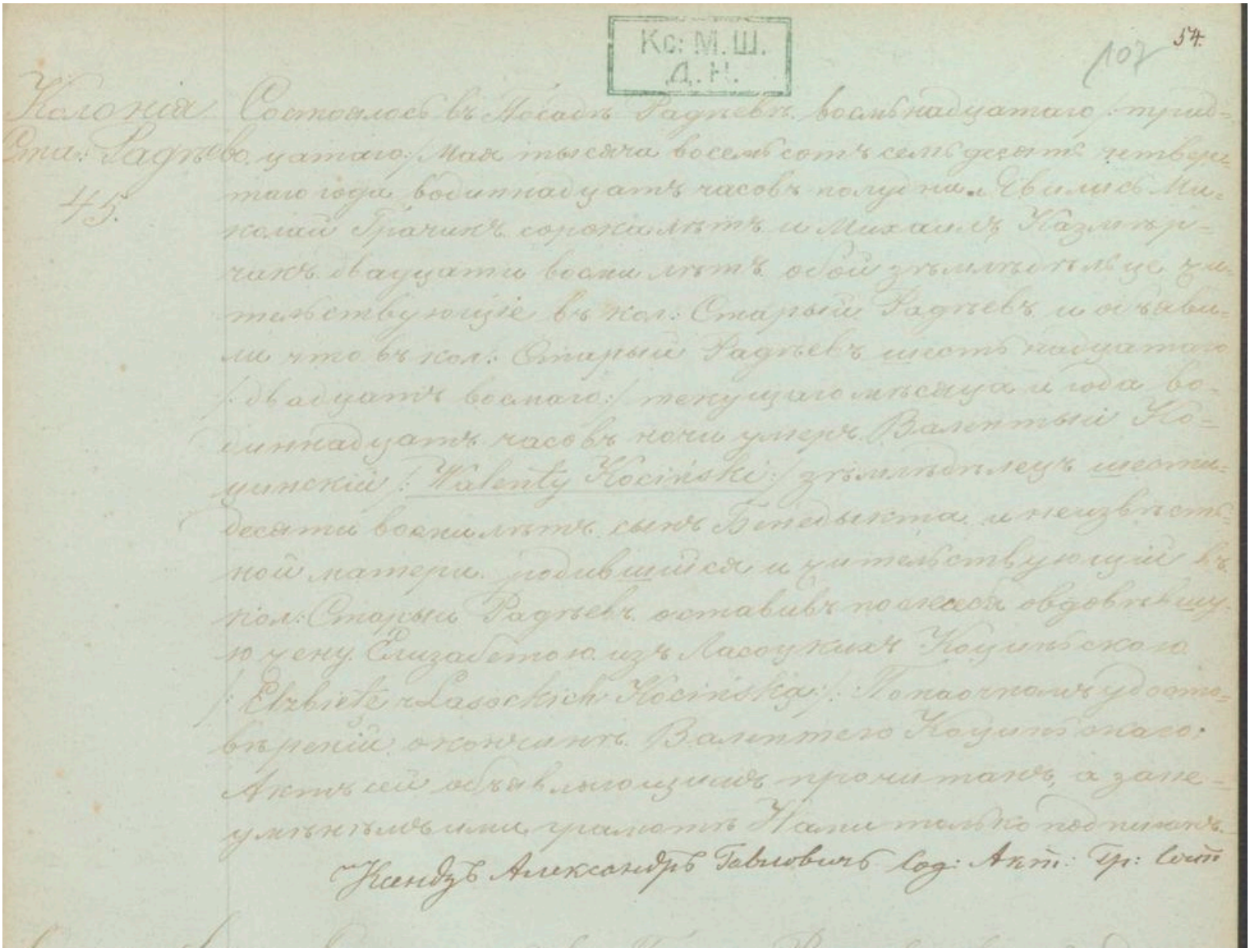
It took place in the Town of Piotrków [Piotrków Kujawski] on the **10th day of February, 1828**, at 10:00 in the morning [February 10, 1828]. We make it known that in the presence of witnesses: **Marcin Ławniczak**, a farmer residing in Lubsin, 30 years of age, and **Sebastian Kasprzak**, a farmer residing in Szewce, 40 years of age, brother-in-law of the below-named Elżbieta Lasocka, on this day a religious marriage was contracted between:

- **Groom: Walenty Kociński** (*Valentine Kociński*), a single man, farmhand / laborer (*parobek*), residing in Stary Radziejów, born there to the late **Benedykt Kociński** and **Agnieszka**, the married couple Kociński residing there, being **20 years of age** [born ~1808];
- **Bride:** Maiden **Elżbieta** (*Elizabeth*), daughter of the married couple **Ignacy Lasocki** and **Katarzyna**, residing in Lubsin, born there, **18 years of age** [born ~1810], residing with her parents.

This marriage was preceded by three banns published on January 27, February 3, and February 10 of the current year in the Parishes of Piotrków and Radziejów; as well as the oral consent of the parents of the bride present at this Marriage Act. No impediment to the marriage occurred. The newlyweds declared that they entered into no prenuptial agreement. This Act was read to the declarants and witnesses, and was signed by Us alone, as the persons named in the Act do not know how to write.

[Signed] **Fr. Wawrzeniec Sroczewski, Acting Pastor of the Parish of Piotrków and Szewce**

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1874 Death of Valentine Kocinski
Stary Radziejów (Radziejów)

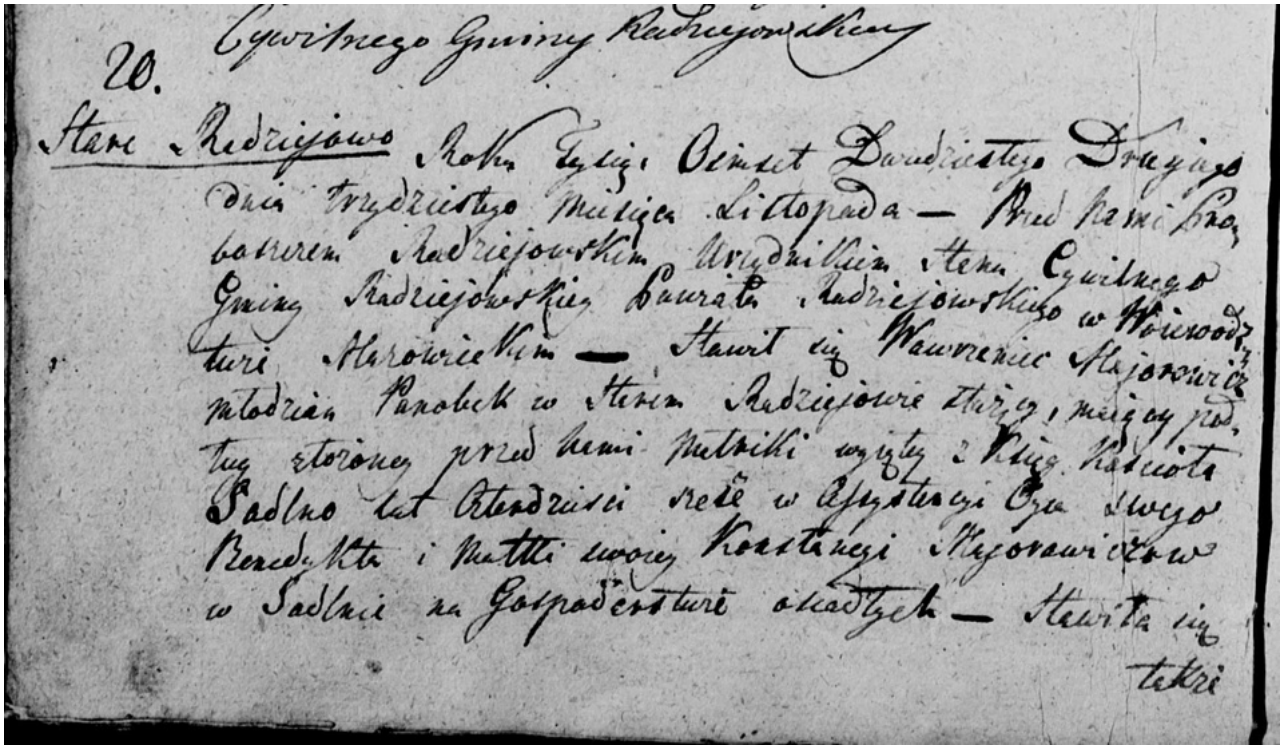
English Translation

Stary Radziejów Colony No. 45

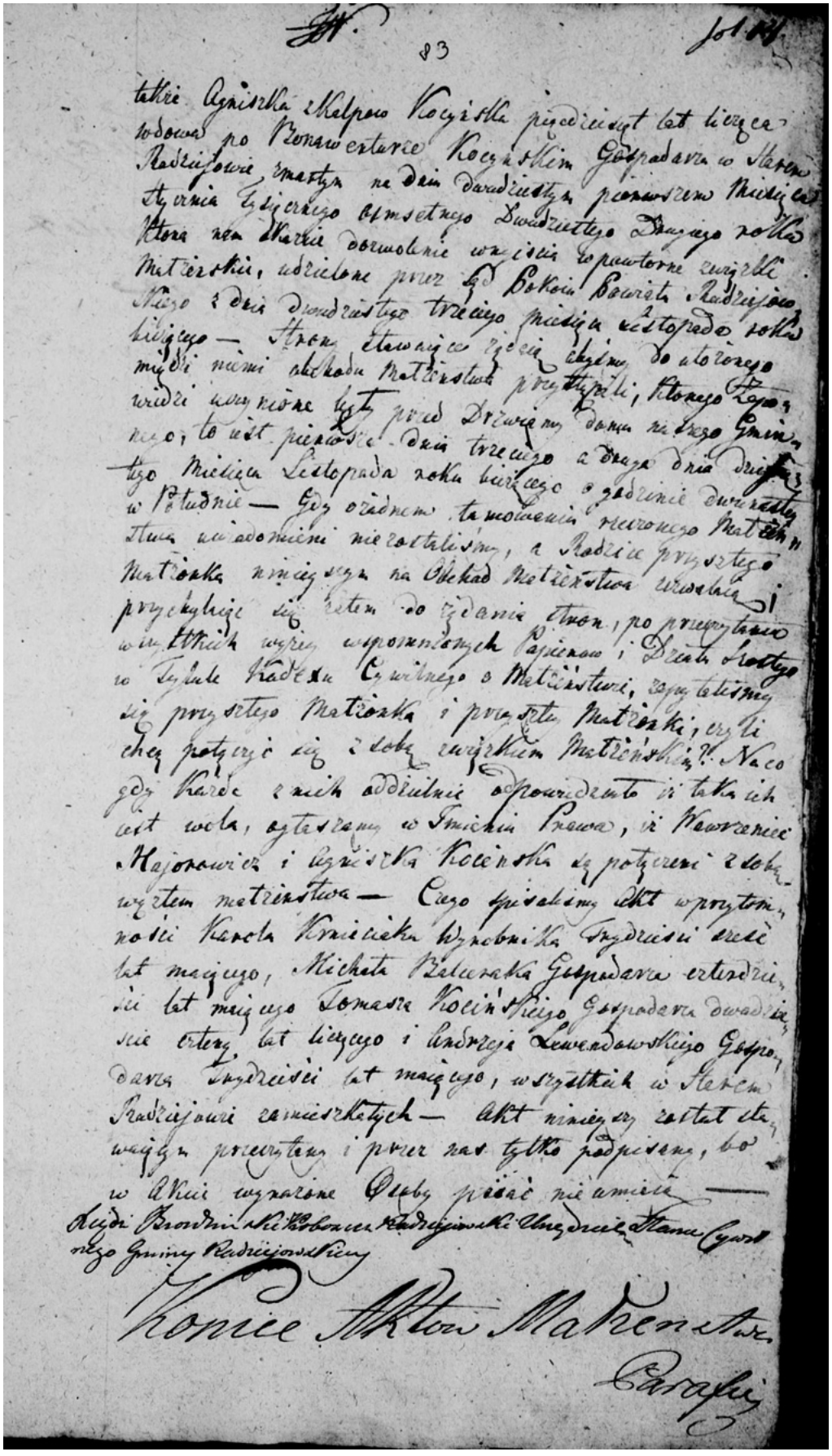
It took place in the settlement of Radziejów on the **18th / 30th day of May, 1874**, at 11:00 in the morning [May 18 Julian / May 30 Gregorian, 1874]. There appeared **Mikołaj Graczyk**, 40 years of age, and **Michał Kaźmierczak**, 28 years of age, both farmers residing in Stary Radziejów Colony, and declared that in Stary Radziejów Colony on the **16th / 28th day of the current month and year** [May 28, 1874], at 11:00 at night died **Walenty Kociński** (*Valentine Kociński*), a farmer, **68 years of age**, son of **Benedykt** and an unknown mother, born and residing in Stary Radziejów Colony, leaving behind his widowed wife **Elżbieta née Lasocka Kocińska** (*Elizabeth*). Upon visual verification of the death of Walenty Kociński, this Act was read to the declarants, and signed by Us alone due to their illiteracy. —

[Signed] **Fr. Aleksander Gawlewicz, Civil Status Registrar**

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1822 Marriage of Agnes (Kapelak) Kocinski and Lawrence Majorowicz
Stary Radziejów (Radziejów)
Part 1/2



1822 Marriage of Agnes (Kapelak) Kocinski and Lawrence Majorowicz
Radziejów Parish
Part 2/2

English Translation

No. 20. Stary Radziejów. In the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two, on the thirtieth day of the month of November. Before Us, the Pastor of Radziejów, Civil Registrar of the Radziejów Municipality in the Radziejów District, in the Masovian Voivodeship – appeared **Wawrzyniec Majorowicz**, a young bachelor farmhand residing in Stary Radziejów, whose age is stated here according to the civil registry extract taken from the books of the Sadlno Church as forty-six years, with the assistance of his father Benedykt and his mother Krystyna née Majorowicz, settled on a farm in Sadlno. 5 copy.jpg + 1

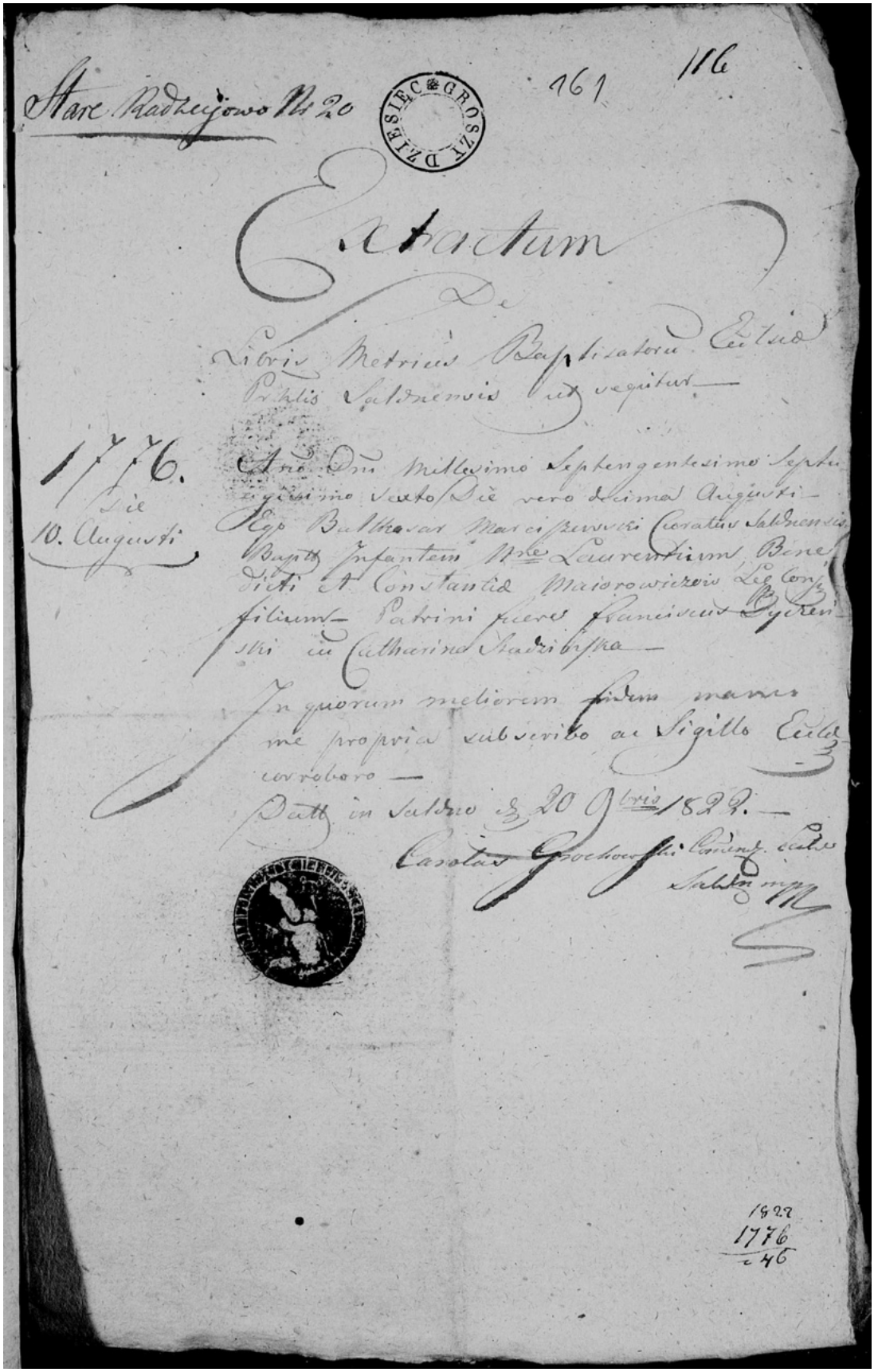
And also appeared **Agnieszka née Kapelek Kocińska**, 50 years of age, widow of Benedykt Kociński, farmer in Stary Radziejów, who died on the thirty-first day of the month of January in the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two. Having obtained the necessary episcopal permission to enter into a second marriage, granted by the Bishop of the Diocese... on the thirtieth day of the month of November of the current year – the appearing parties stated that they have agreed to enter into marriage, the banns of which were announced before the doors of the local municipal house, namely the first on the third and the second on the second [sic] day of this month of November of the current year at twelve o'clock in the afternoon. 6 copy.jpg + 1

Having received no notice of any impediment to said marriage, and the parents of the future groom... consenting to the marriage, after reading all the aforementioned papers and the historical act [civil code provisions] regarding marriage, we asked the future groom and future bride whether they wish to be joined to each other in the bond of matrimony. To which, when each of them separately answered that such is their will, we proclaim in the name of the Law that **Wawrzyniec Majorowicz** and **Agnieszka Kocińska** are joined by the strong bond of matrimony. 6 copy.jpg + 1

This Act was drawn up in the presence of **Karol Krucik**, laborer, 36 years of age; **Michał Balcerak**, farmer, 40 years of age; **Tomasz Kociński**, farmer, 24 years of age; and **Andrzej Lewandowski**, farmer, 30 years of age, all residing in Stary Radziejów. This present act was read to the declarants and signed by Us only, because the persons mentioned in the act do not know how to write. 6 copy.jpg + 1

Rev. J. Broudziński, Pastor of Radziejów, Civil Registrar of the Radziejów Municipality.
6 copy.jpg

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1776 Baptism extract of Lawrence Majorowicz
(Included with the 1822 marriage documents)
Sadlno Parish

1. English Translation of the Groom's Baptismal Extract (`0166.jpg`)

Extract

from the Baptismal Registry Books of the Sadlno Parish Church

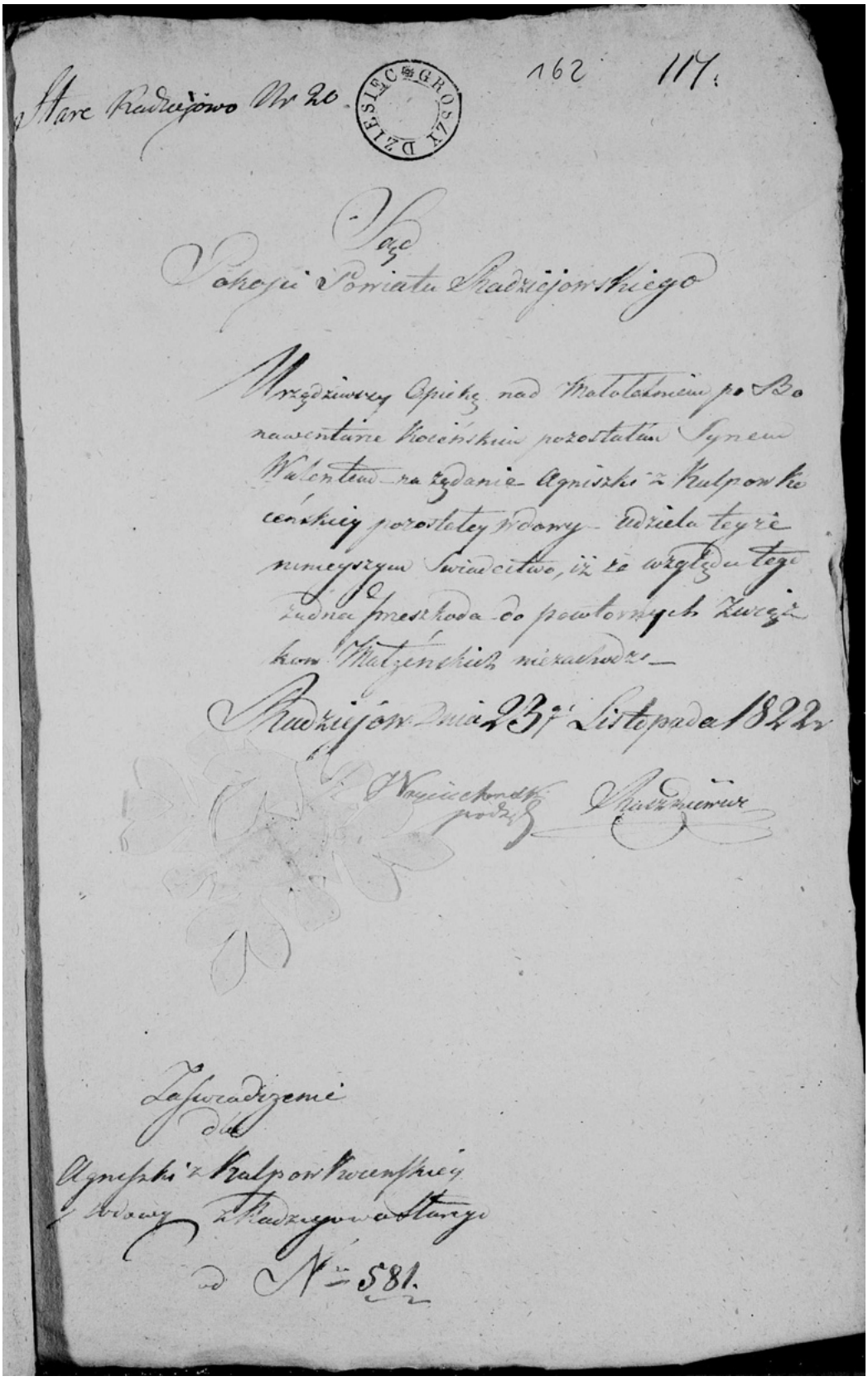
1776, August 10. I, Balthasar Marszałkowski, Curate of Sadlno, baptized an infant named **Lawrence (Wawrzyniec)**, legitimate son of **Benedykt and Konstancja Majorowicz**. Sponsors were **Franciszek Lydziński** with **Katarzyna Radzińska**.

In witness whereof I subscribe with my own hand and corroborate with the seal of the Church.

Given in Sadlno on November 20, 1822.

Carolys Grochowski, Curate of Sadlno

AI translation (Google Gemini)



Authorization for Agnes (Kapelak) Kocinski to remarry regarding guardianship status of her minor son Valentine
(Included with the 1822 marriage documents)

The document specifically identifies Valentine as a minor whose guardianship had to be addressed before Agnes could remarry. The available records do not establish whether Marianna was still living in 1822.

English Translation

Stare Radziejów No. 20.

Peace Court of the Radziejów District.

Regarding the guardianship over the minors left by the late Benedykt Kociński, specifically his son Walenty: upon the request of **Agnieszka née Kapelak Kocińska**, the surviving widow, this present certificate is granted, stating that in view of this, **no obstacle exists to prevent her entering into a second marriage**.

Radziejów, November 23, 1822.

[Signatures / Judge / Officials]

Authorization for Agnieszka née Kapelak Kocińska, widow, residing in Stare Radziejów, No. 581.

AI translation (Google Gemini)

3. Analysis of the Guardianship Document (`0167.jpg`)

Does this imply that only Walenty was a minor?

Yes, exactly. Under 19th-century law (governed by the Napoleonic Code in the Kingdom of Poland), the age of majority was **21**.

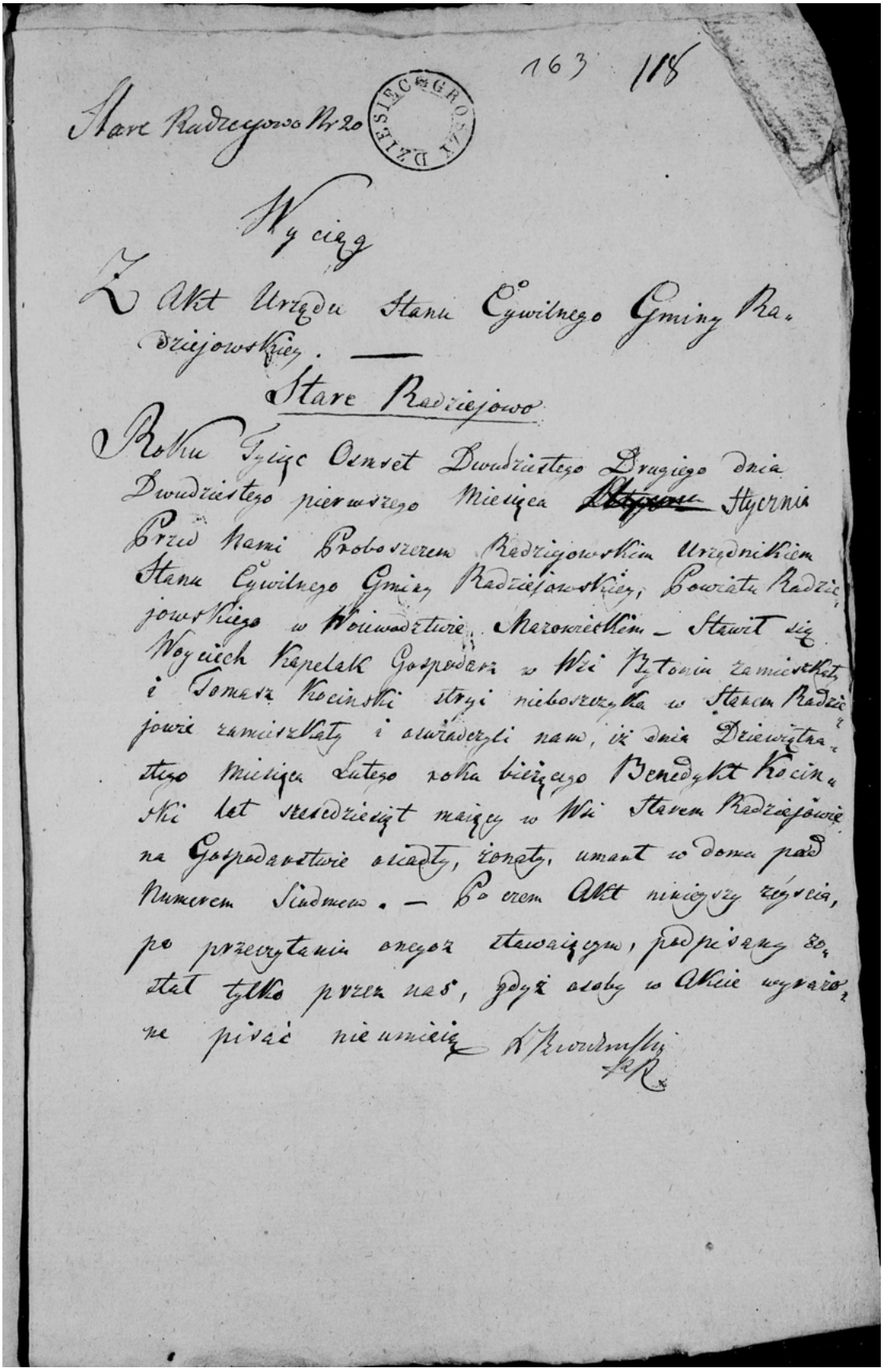
- As established in earlier records, **Tomasz Kociński** was born around 1798 (making him ~24 years old in 1822), meaning he was already a legal adult.
- **Walenty Kociński**, born around 1807, was roughly 15 years old in 1822—definitely a minor.
- The court document specifically singles out Walenty (*"Synem Walentym"*) because he was the only surviving child of Benedykt and Agnieszka who had not yet reached majority.

Why would this court intervention have been necessary?

Under the Napoleonic Code, civil law placed strict protections on the inheritance rights of minor children when a widowed parent decided to remarry.

1. **Protection of Minor Inheritance:** Before a widow could enter a second marriage, the local Peace Court (*Sąd Pokoju*) and a family council (*rada opiekuncza*) had to formally convene to take an inventory (*inventarz*) of the deceased father's (Benedykt's) estate, property, and assets. This ensured that the minor child's (Walenty's) inheritance couldn't be absorbed, sold off, or mismanaged by the incoming stepfather (Wawrzyniec Majorowicz).
2. **Legal Clearance:** Once the court verified that Walenty's interests were legally secured under a designated guardianship framework, the court issued this exact certificate (*Świadectwo*) stating that **"no obstacle exists to prevent her entering into a second marriage"**. Without this clearance, the parish priest legally could not perform the wedding ceremony.

AI-assisted analysis (Google Gemini) of why the guardianship document was necessary



Stare Radziejowo Nr 20

163 118

Wyciąg

Z Akt Urzędu Stanu Cywilnego Gminy Radziejowskiej.

Stare Radziejowo

Roku Tysiąc Osmset Dwudziestego Drugiego dnia Dwudziestego pierwszego Miesiąca ~~Listopada~~ Stycznia Przed Nami Proboszczem Radziejowskim Urzędnikiem Stanu Cywilnego Gminy Radziejowskiej, Powiatu Radziejowskiego w Województwie Mazowieckiem – Stawił się Wojciech Kapelak Gospodarz w Wsi Bytomin zamieszkały, i Tomasz Kocinski stryj nieboszczyka w Stanie Radziejowie zamieszkały i oświadczyli nam, iż dnia Dziewiątego Miesiąca Lutego roku bieżącego Benedykt Kocinski lat sześćdziesiąt mający w Wsi Stanie Radziejowie na Gospodarstwie ożeniony, żonaty, umarł w domu pod Numerem Siedmem. – Po czem Akt niniejszy czytano, po przeczytaniu onego stawaiącym, podpisany został tylko przez nas, gdyż osoby w Akcie wyżej nie pisać nie umieją. Proboszcz

Copy of Benedict Kocinski's 1822 death record
(Included with the 1822 marriage documents)

2. English Translation of the Death Record Copy (`0168.jpg`)

Stare Radziejów No. 20

Extract from the Acts of the Civil Registry Office of the Radziejów Municipality

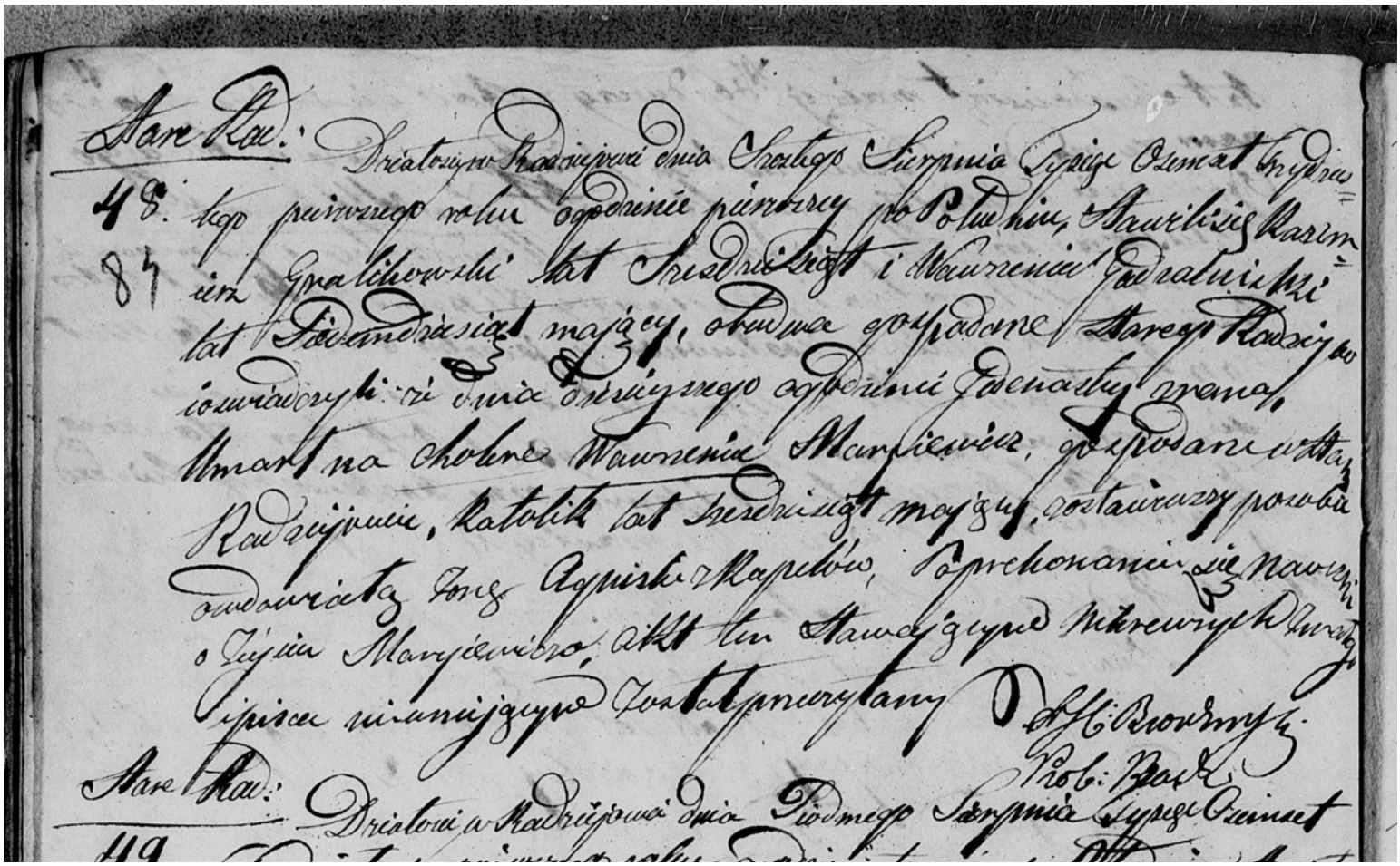
Stare Radziejów

In the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two, on the twenty-first day of the month of January [Note: administrative filing date of the copy]. Before us, the Pastor of Radziejów, Civil Registrar of the Radziejów Municipality in the Radziejów District, in the Masovian Voivodeship – appeared **Wojciech Kapelek**, farmer residing in the village of Byton, and **Tomasz Kociński** [recorded here as uncle / relative / son depending on the specific clerk transcription copy], residing in Stare Radziejów, and stated that on the ninth day of the month of February of the current year, **Benedykt Kociński**, sixty years of age, residing in the village of Stare Radziejów, settled on a farm, married, died in the house under number seven. 0168.jpg + 1

Whereupon this death act was read to the declarants, and signed by Us only, because the persons mentioned in the act do not know how to write. 0168.jpg

X. Broudziński, Pr[oboszcz]

AI translation (Google Gemini)



1831 Death of Lawrence Majorowicz
Stary Radziejów (Radziejów)

2. English Translation

Stary Radziejów

No. 48 / 87

Took place in Radziejów on the sixth day of August in the year one thousand eight hundred and thirty-one at five o'clock in the afternoon. Appeared Kazimierz Gralikowski, sixty years of age, and Wawrzyniec Gębralnicki, seventy years of age, both farmers from Stary Radziejów, and declared: that today at eleven o'clock in the morning died of cholera **Wawrzyniec Marjewicz [Majorowicz]**, farmer in Stary Radziejów, Roman Catholic, sixty years of age, leaving behind his widowed wife **Agnieszka née Kapel [Kapelak]**. After visually ascertaining the death of Marjewicz, this Act was read to the declarants, unrelated by blood, who do not know how to write.

Rev. J. Broudziński, Pastor of Radziejów

AI translation (Google Gemini)

Additional Information

Michael E. Byczek, an Illinois attorney and managing real estate broker, has compiled original records for genealogy since 1992. Research and analysis have been published on family websites for over 30 years. A project to compile comprehensive digital, print, and video documentaries for every direct blood ancestor began in September 2024 for accurate online genealogy.

Benedict Kocinski and Agnes Kapelak are Michael E. Byczek's 5x-great-grandparents. Their son Valentine Kocinski (4x-great-grandfather) married Elizabeth Lasocki in 1828 in Piotrkow Kujawski. Their daughter Catherine Kocinski (3x-great-grandmother) married John Nowakowski in 1857 in Radziejów. Their daughter Victoria Nowakowski (2x-great-grandmother) married Joseph Piotrowski in 1876, also in Radziejów. Their daughter Margaret Piotrowski (great-grandmother) married Joseph Bykowski in 1907 in Witowo prior to settling in Chicago, IL. Their son Roman Bykowski (grandfather) arrived in the United States when he was three years old. The family lived in the Bucktown neighborhood of Chicago. Roman married Antoinette Murzynowicz/Marynowski in 1936 at St. Stanislaus Kostka in the Pulaski Park neighborhood. Their daughter Betty A. Bykowski (mother) married Michael M. Byczek in 1974 at St. Helen's on Augusta and Oakley. They have two children. Michael E. Byczek is the eldest and was born in the Bridgeport neighborhood of Chicago.

Google Maps

Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship in central Poland:

- Radziejów is a town and capital of Radziejów County
- Stary Radziejów is a village in the administrative district of Gmina Radziejów, within Radziejów County
- Bytoń is a village in Radziejów County and seat of the gmina called Gmina Bytoń.

Revision History:

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9/8/2025

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