

Lithuanian family spotlight: the Kiselius family

Stella Buividas emigrated from the small village of Kilova, Lithuania to Bayonne, New Jersey in 1912. Her marriage to Anton Kiselius was arranged, and the couple moved to Chicago after several years. They had four children. Stella worked in Packingtown stuffing sausages, and her oldest child, Helen, was taken out of school at a young age to work alongside her. Anton worked in the stockyards for a brief time before transitioning to a job as a railroad car washer. The family lived on Honore Street between 45th and 46th Streets.

Anton died in 1938, and Stella remarried in 1942, to a widower named George Lesinskis, who lived across the street from the Kiselius family's residence. Previously, George worked for Armour and Company while his late wife ran the grocery store they owned, and he left Armour to operate the shop after her death. After George and Stella married, they converted the store to a tavern, which they rented out with an attached apartment.

Stella's daughter, also named Stella, married Anthony Vojtanek at Holy Cross Church on September 1, 1946. The couple had three children, and their family lived with Stella and George in their four-flat building. The family rented out the other flats to borders. Stella Vojtanek and her daughter Sandra moved in 1976 to the Marquette Park area, which had a large Lithuanian community at the time. They were the last of their family to leave the neighborhood.

Top right: Stella Kiselius at the party for her daughter Helen's 25th wedding anniversary.

Bottom right: Anton, at center back; Stella, at center front; and their daughter Stella, at left front, at a picnic with friends in 1935.



People of the Stock Yards: Lithuanian Family Stories



Stella Kiselius with her daughter Stella in 1934.



Julia Kiselius, another of Stella and Anton's daughters, in 1934.



Helen Kiselius, at right, with friends in front of the Kiselius home on Honore Street.

Images courtesy of Sandy Colbert.

Lithuanian community spotlight: Holy Cross Catholic Church

Holy Cross Parish was organized in 1904 to attend to the religious needs of the Lithuanian Catholic community in Back of the Yards. Construction of the present church began in 1913, and it was dedicated on September 26, 1915. Designed by Bohemian-born architect Joseph Molitor, the church features a Romanesque interior with a lofty dome and seating for 1,400 parishioners. More than 2,000 electric lights brighten the vast interior. The church's founder, Rev. Alexander Skrypko, served as pastor of the church to the Lithuanian community until his death in 1941. This magnificent church continues to provide religious services to a now largely Mexican-American community as Holy Cross Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish.



The 1941 graduating class of Holy Cross's grade school poses with Father Linkus. Stella Kiselius sits at the far left in the front row.



The interior of Holy Cross during the wedding of Anthony Vojtanek and Stella Kiselius in 1946.

Images courtesy of Sandy Colbert.