

Wanda's Cybulski family narrative – Part 2

Note: As with part 1, anything in bold print was added by Andie. This is a continuation of the story begun in Cybulski part 1. Jacob Cybulski was Wanda Werbicki Fortenberry's great grandfather and Franciszka Cybulska was her great grandmother. Bachie (their granddaughter) lived with Jacob and Franciszka during most of her childhood. The events occurring here would have occurred 1910 to 1913. None of these pictures are family pictures but used as illustrations.

Flax farming and processing

The seed was saved from year to year. The larger field was planted for cutting, a smaller one for seed. As soon as the flower buds appeared on the weaving flax the children were sent into the field to "disbud" the flax; this was done twice. A week later the flax was cut. If it was cut too early, there would be no fibers, if too late the fibers would be too coarse for her **(Franciszka's)** type of weaving.

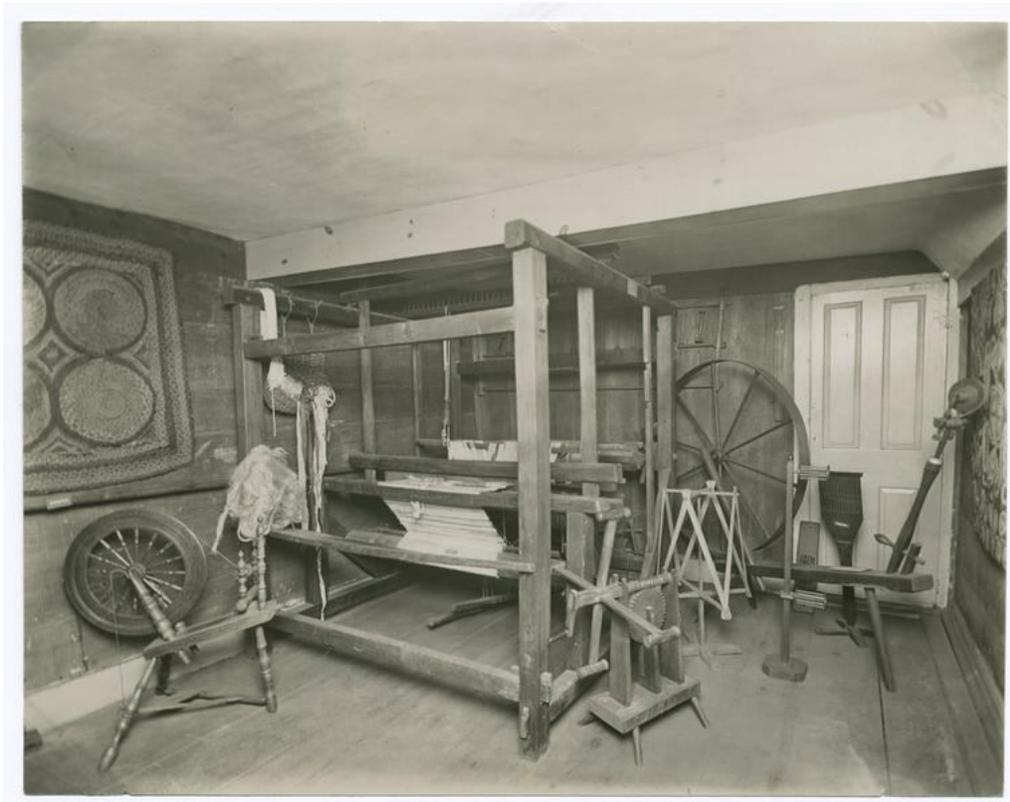


Jacob had a low field below the mill that he dammed so it could fill with rain water. The cut flax was placed into the flooded field in straight rows and left there until the pith became soft. The water was drained and the children were sent barefooted to walk on the flax. The field was flooded again with either rain or millstream water so the pith particles would rise to the top and be drained off. This was repeated until all the pith was drained off. Before the last flooding, the flax was covered with wood ash, walked on, and then drained the next day. Momma **(Bachie)** said she hated to walk on the flax pond. She learned to be especially good during the retting time because the smell made her sick to her stomach. Then flax would be gathered into bundles, rinsed in the running stream, and placed on racks in an open shed to dry. After drying, the flax would be beaten with a cloth hammer to soften it and combed to separate the finer fibers. Maryanna spun the finer grade into linen thread; the medium was used to make cloth for sheets, dresses, shirts, pillow cases, petticoats, tablecloths and whatever else that required material (they did not have cotton). The coarser fiber was mixed with the fiber from the seed field and was used to make linsey-woolsey for winter clothing. **(Cloth made out of 100% flax would not be warm, so weavers made the warp from linen for strength and the weft of wool for warmth. Cloth made of all wool for warmth was not very durable.)**

(This picture was taken in 1914 in Ireland during the retting process.)



Jacob developed a loom for Maryanna that had one scalloped edge, which became her trademark; she used this loom for special orders. Momma said she never wove more than 100 meters on this loom since she only wove special orders on this loom, and she usually sent the linen to her cousin in the village, who was a master embroiderer. The linen and embroidery were like signatures, since they were closely guarded secrets, and the women would not copy someone else's embroidery, they were known for their particular pattern and stitch style of embroidery. Maryanna never spun or wove linsey-woolsey. She said it ruined her fingers and eyes for the fine weaving. No one was allowed into the room that Maryanna used as a weaving room, but Momma, being Momma said she tried to help her grandmother because she was working into the middle of the night. Momma didn't pack the treads and Maryanna didn't notice it until it was being taken off the rollers. Jacob took it to the shop keepers in Warsaw; he accepted it but at much lower price.



Typical room used for spinning and weaving similar to what Maryanna Cybulski would have had.