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Wojciechowo: Polish Immigrants in St. Paul, Minnesota, 1875 to 1925

by

John Radziłowski

Poland is not yet lost in the far west,
at least in our city of St. Paul.
Wiarus, December 10, 1908

The first Polish community in St. Paul, Minnesota, formed around the parish of St. Adalbert. It was the genesis of all urban Polish settlement in Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Prior to the explosive growth of large Polish communities on the east coast, St. Paul's Polish community also played an important role in America Polonia disproportionate to its size. It hosted an important convention of the Polish National Alliance (PNA), and through its leading figure, Rev. Dominic Majer, played a significant role in Polonia's early political battles and was the site of an effort to found a third major fraternal organization, Unia Polska (UP). Although the Saintly City's Polish community would be eclipsed by other, larger Polonia centers by 1900, it remained a unique and significant community whose history has received little attention from historians. This article endeavors to present the first half century of the history of this community.

The first Pole in St. Paul, and probably in the Minnesota Territory, was Stanisław Bilański who arrived in 1842 from Wisconsin.[1] His early presence

[1]Fletcher Williams, *A History of the City of St. Paul to 1875*, intro. Lucile M. Kane (1876; reprint, St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1983), 121-22, 199.

in the United States suggests that he was a political refugee fleeing the defeat of the November Uprising of 1830-31 against Russian rule in Poland.[2] Bilański took a claim and built a cabin in what was then still a largely uninhabited area. The city's first history described him as "an uxorious individual ... [who] had a facility for marrying and divorcing wives, that ultimately brought him to an untimely end."[3] His fourth wife, Annie Evards-Bilański, was arrested shortly after his death in 1859, and accused of poisoning her husband with arsenic. Following a trial that featured evidence from Bilański's exhumed body and testimony from a family servant, Evards-Bilański was convicted of murder and hanged in 1860, becoming the first and only woman executed in Minnesota.[4] Bilański's later-arriving compatriots generally led less sensational lives.

The city the Poles migrated to in the late nineteenth century was, along with its neighbor and rival Minneapolis, becoming a major trade and transportation hub of the upper Midwest. Both cities had major food and lumber processing industries. Although milling was far more important to Minneapolis than to St. Paul, meatpacking was dominant in the Saintly City. Flour milling, brewing, lumber milling, and slaughtering/meat packing were all significant employers of European immigrants. The Twin Cities were the main collection point for agricultural and forestry products from a vast hinterland that included not only the entire state of Minnesota, but also the Dakotas, northern Iowa, western Wisconsin, and eastern Montana.[5] Railroads like James J. Hill's Great Northern, headquartered in St. Paul, made the cities the transportation center for one-fifth of the United States. The wealth the railroads and their offshoots generated built the mansions that lined St. Paul's Summit Avenue, the greatest of which was Hill's own mansion, overlooking the Mississippi River.[6]

St. Paul was also home to many other industries. An 1888 survey of the city's manufacturing is displayed in Table 1. Among some of the factories that employed Poles were the C. Gotzian shoe factory (with 480 workers),

[2]On this group, see James S. Pula, *Polish Americans* (New York: Twayne, 1995), 4-8.

[3]Williams, *A History of the City of St. Paul to 1875*, 121-22.

[4]*Ibid.*, 392-93. The case was the subject of a revisionist piece painting Bilański as having deserved his fate. Matthew Cecil, "Justice in Heaven: The Trial of Ann Bilansky [*sic!*]," *Minnesota History,* Vol. 55, No. 8 (Winter 1997-98), 350-63. The author's evidence is scanty.

[5]John R. Borchert, *America's Northern Heartland: An Economic and Historical Geography of the Upper Midwest* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

[6]On St. Paul's railroads and their reach, see W. B. Hennessy, *Past and Present of St. Paul, Minnesota* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1906), 156-57.

the Foot & Schultze Shoe Company (300 workers), the St. Paul Box Factory (75 workers), and the St. Paul Knitting Works (300 workers).[7] In addition to its role as a manufacturing and transport center, St. Paul was also the state capital, and the seat of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, which initially encompassed all of Minnesota and the Dakotas.

TABLE 1: MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, 1888[8]

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	VALUE OF PRODUCT (IN MILLIONS)
Pork Packing	$9.0
Slaughtering	$2.5
Machinery, foundries, boilers	$2.5
Cigars	$1.7
Boots and Shoes	$1.4
Stone cutting	$1.3
Flour and grist milling	$1.2
Clothing	$1.1
Printing and publishing	$1.0

ORIGINS

The area that became the first center of Polish settlement was northwest of the city's downtown, an area that has always been known as Frogtown.[9] Made up of what would become the city's eighth ward, Frogtown has long been St. Paul's "port of entry" for newcomers. French Canadians were among the earliest residents. Following them were Irish, Czechs, and

[7]*Ibid.*, 439-40, 444-45.

[8]C. C. Andrews, *History of St. Paul, Minnesota* (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason & Co., 1890), 439. Value is shown in 1888 dollars. See also Hennessey, *Past and Present of St. Paul*, 157-58.

[9]The origins of the name are somewhat obscure. It may have been a derogatory reference to French Canadians, who were among the area's earliest settlers. A more chamber-of-commerce-friendly interpretation has the neighborhood named by German settlers after the area's abundant amphibian population ("Froschburg," that is "Frogtown").

Swedes.[10] Later arrivals included east European Jews, Romanians, and African Americans. Yet, the largest single group were Germans, many of them *Ostdeutsch*, from Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, Pomerania, east and west Prussia, and Poland. In 1880, Ward 8 was 40 percent German (although some of those counted as German were actually Poles).[11] Aside from these groups, there was a smattering of Italians, Norwegians, and old-stock Americans. Although it is beyond the scope of this study, non-Polish ethnic groups seem to have gradually left the neighborhood after 1920, while Poles from rural communities in northern Minnesota and South Dakota continued to migrate to the neighborhood, making it more Polish than it had been initially.[12] In 1930, Germans and Poles were the two largest foreign-born groups in Ward 8.[13] The area maintained a Polish and German character well into the 1980s, when new groups — African Americans (migrating mainly from outside Minnesota), Vietnamese, and Hmong — began to arrive in large numbers and the resident ethnic groups aged and/or migrated out.[14]

Significant Polish settlement in St. Paul dates to the 1870s, although the numbers were small. Given the nature of early censuses it is hard to tell how many Poles lived in the Saintly City prior to 1880, since most were listed as Germans. Table 2 shows the growth of the Polish community in the Frogtown neighborhood, which was home to the Twin Cities' first Polish parish.

The 1885 state census showed a widely dispersed Polish population, scattered over Wards 3 and 4, freely intermixed with Czech and German immigrants. Census takers recorded small clusters of Poles, sometimes as

[10]Despite the fact that Germans were the largest single ethnic group in the city, St. Paul had a reputation as an Irish town and the Irish often controlled city politics and, of nearly equal importance, the St. Paul archdiocese. On the Irish in St. Paul, see Ann Regan, "The Irish," in *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*, ed. June D. Holmquist (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Press, 1981), 130-52, esp. 131, 134. On the French Canadians, see Sarah P. Rubenstein, "The French Canadians and French," in *ibid.*, 36-54, esp. 37-38, 45-46. On the Swedes, see John G. Rice, "The Swedes," in *ibid.*, 248-76, esp. 251-52, 255; Byron Nordstrom, ed., *The Swedes in Minnesota* (Minneapolis: T. S. Denison & Co., 1976), 24-28.

[11]Hildegard Binder Johnson, "The Germans," in *They Chose Minnesota*, 153-84, esp. 169-71. See also Sr. John Christine Wolkerstofer, "Ramsey County's German Americans: Their Struggle with Pride and Prejudice," *Ramsey County History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring 1968), 3-10.

[12]The author thanks Elizabeth Madison of Roseville and other former or current parishioners for this insight.

[13]See Nordstrom, *The Swedes in Minnesota*, 26-27.

[14]See *Centennial Celebration, 1881-1981: Church of St. Adalbert* (St. Paul: n.p., 1981), advertisements; "Many Cultures, One Church," *Star Tribune*, July 12, 1997.

large as four families, but nothing resembling a compact, ethnic neighborhood. Even near the site of the Polish church, Poles were few and far between.[15] Some Poles lived along the banks of the Mississippi River, in shanties on the flood plain, in a location known as the Upper Flats. Many had built their own homes and some may have been squatters. Due to periodic flooding and the city's growing need for industrial space near the river, a number of these Polish and Czech families were displaced.[16]

TABLE 2: POLISH POPULATION IN THE FROGTOWN/WOJCIECHOWO NEIGHBORHOOD OF ST. PAUL, 1885 TO 1920

	ADULTS (AGE 16+)			CHILDREN (0-15)			ALL	
YEAR	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	POLES	WARDS
1885	363	222	485	191	211	402	887	3-4
1895	359	336	695	342	329	671	1,366	8-9 [a]
1900	380	358	738	352	336	688	1,426	8
1905	511	447	958	382	338	720	1,678	8
1910	476	418	894	274	248	522	1,416	8 [b]
1920	594	588	1,182	281	287	568	1,750	8

[a] Includes only Precincts 7-8 of Ward 9.

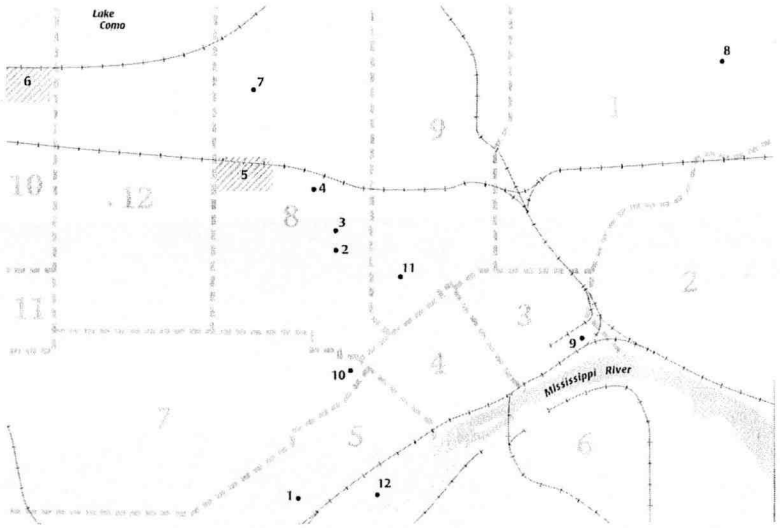
[b] After 1905, Ward 8 was split in half, with the western portion forming Ward 12.

Figures are taken from the Minnesota State Census, 1885, 1895, 1905 and the Federal Census 1900, 1910, 1920. Jews listing themselves as being from Poland were counted separately, The total number of Jews listed as Poles in each census are as follows: 47 in 1885; 10 in 1895; 24 in 1900; 15 in 1905; 7 in 1910; 101 in 1920. These numbers represent only a fraction of the city's Jewish population.

Prior to the founding of the city's first Polish parish in 1880-81, the Poles formed the parish of St. Stanislaus in 1872 in cooperation with their Czech neighbors. The first pastor to serve the parish was a Pole, but he was succeeded by a Czech priest in 1874, and the parish was served by Czech pastors from then on. Part of the reason for this was that the neighborhood near the church became increasingly Czech. In 1878, the Poles broke away

[15]This was determined by reading the 1885 census manuscript. Although street addresses were not recorded in 1885, the residence of the Polish priest, Rev. Majer, marked the immediate area near the church. Many Poles, over half, were listed as Germans, including Majer. Nevertheless, the area around St. Adalbert was inhabited mostly by non-Polish groups in 1885.

[16]See *Wiarus*, May 23, 1889, 1.

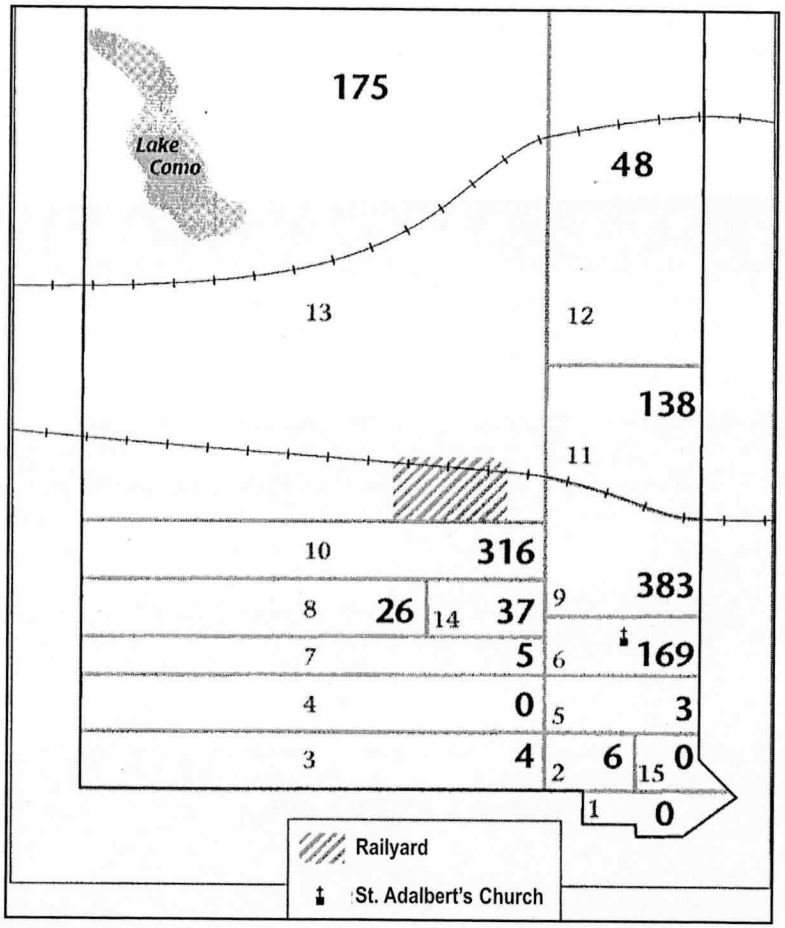


Map 1

and began to hold Mass in the basement of the cathedral.[17] In 1881, they founded their own parish, St. Adalbert (parafia św. Wojciecha), which as in other Polish urban areas named the neighborhood/community: "Wojciechowo" (or the St. Adalbert neighborhood). This began a process of geographic concentration that would continue for at least fifty years.

The geographic concentration, which is most striking when the 1885 and 1895 censuses are compared, was the result of two factors. The first was the formation of the Polish church, which provided a logical nucleus for the community's religious, social, and cultural life. Polish saloonkeepers and store owners soon set up shop nearby to serve the weekly gatherings of their compatriots. More and more families began looking for homes in the reasonably priced working-class neighborhood near the parish. Another key reason for the concentration was the cluster of employers in the vicinity. Within the main area of Polish settlement in Ward 8 (see Map 1) were a foundry, clothing and shoe factories, a carpet factory, and the Great Northern

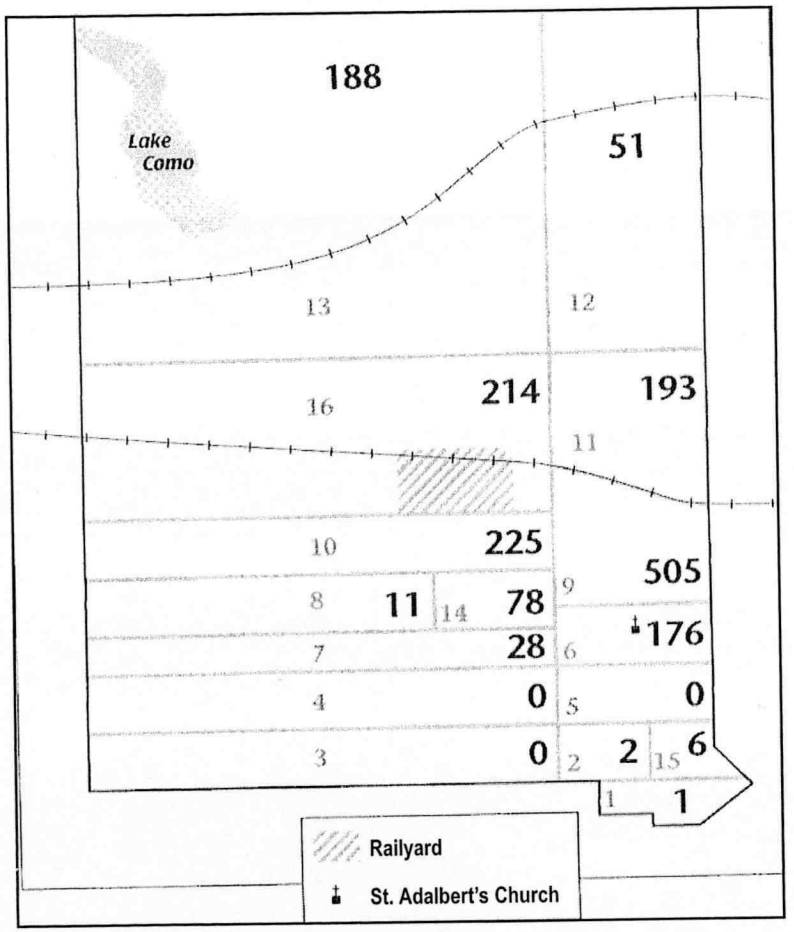
[17]*Seventy-fifth Diamond Jubilee Anniversary, St. Adalbert's Church, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1881–1956* (St. Paul: n.p., 1956), 15; Paul T. Kulas, "Polish Catholic Churches in Minnesota. Part 1: Polish Catholic Churches in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis," *Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 1994), 5-8. See also, *Polish American Encyclopedia* (Buffalo: Polish American Encyclopedia Committee, 1954), Vol. 1, 58; *Centennial Celebration, 1881-1981*, 21.



Map 2

rail yard, all of which became major employers of Polish immigrants and their children. Furthermore, on the western edge of Ward 8 was the Northern Pacific yard, a secondary employer of Poles.

Within Ward 8, the Poles were centered in an area north and west of St. Adalbert church (see Maps 2 and 3). The church was located in precinct 6, which marked the southern edge of the community. In 1895, the heaviest Polish concentrations were to the north in Precinct 9, and in the eastern parts of 10, 11, and 13. Ten years later, these areas had become even more Polish, with heavy concentrations in Precincts 9-13 and 16, with a few Poles



Map 3

spilling over in Precinct 14 (see Map 3). The Polish population in Precinct 6, in the immediate environs south of the church, remained at the same level, but Poles in Precinct 9, just to the north of the church, rose by over 30 percent between 1895 and 1905. The Poles were following the line of Como Avenue northwestward from the church toward the Great Northern rail yard, which became an important place of employment.

The increasing concentration in Wojciechowo was mirrored by concentrations in other Polish communities in the Twin Cities. As the first Polish parish in the Twin Cities, St. Adalbert was mother parish to several other

Polish churches. The most significant was Holy Cross (św. Krzyą) in Northeast Minneapolis, founded in 1886, which eventually became the largest Polish-American parish west of Chicago and Milwaukee. It gave birth to its own daughter parishes — St. Hedwig (św. Jadwiga) and Holy Trinity (św. Trójcy) in Northeast Minneapolis, and St. Philip (św. Filipa) in North Minneapolis, not to mention the break-away National Catholic parish of Sacred Heart (in Northeast Minneapolis).[18]

In the nearby rural area of New Brighton, St. Adalbert's pastor Rev. Majer helped found St. John the Baptist parish in 1902.[19] An even closer daughter parish began in 1892 on St. Paul's east side for immigrants streaming in from Austrian Poland. It was placed under the patronage of St. Casimir (św. Kazimierza). This entailed a somewhat bigger change for St. Adalbert, as most of those parishioners who had made the trek from the east side switched membership to the new parish. Still, the growth of the Polish population on the east side made this move necessary, as it was impossible for a single parish to serve two separate areas.[20]

DEMOGRAPHY AND ECONOMY

The first Polish settlers of St. Paul came from German-occupied Poland in family groups. Although a number of unattached, single male laborers turn up in the 1920 census, the majority of Poles in Wojciechowo migrated and lived with their families, usually in single-family settings.

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[18]Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis, parish history questionnaires, 1959; Frank Renkiewicz Papers, n.d [1976-81], Central Archives of Polonia, Orchard Lake Schools, Orchard Lake, MI; *Diamond Jubilee, Church of the Holy Cross, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1886-1961* (Minneapolis: n.p., 1961); Edward Chmielewski, "A History of Holy Cross Parish, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1886-1914: A Polish-American Community," (MA thesis, St. Paul Seminary, 1960); Idem, "Holy Cross Parish, Minneapolis, Minn., 1886-1906," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Jan.-June 1961), 1-18; Idem, "Minneapolis' Polish-American Community, 1886-1914," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (July-Dec. 1961), 84-93; Idem, "Minneapolis' Polish Priests, 1886-1914," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Jan.-June 1962), 27-35; Kruszka, *Historia Polsce w Ameryce*, Vol. 11, 8-9.

[19]See Rosine Schmalzbauer Boryczka and Janet Boryczka Johnson, *St. John the Baptist Catholic Church: A Pictoral History* (New Brighton: n.p., n.d. [1982?]); Kruszka, *Historia Polsce w Ameryce*, Vol. 11, 17.

[20]See *St. Casimir Catholic Church, 1892-1992* (St. Paul: n.p., 1982); *Wiarus*, Dec. 8, 1892, 8; Kruszka, *Historia Polsce w Ameryce*, Vol. 11, 7-8; "St. Casimir's Church and Its 100-Year Journey of Faith," *Ramsey County History*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Fall 1992), 22-23; DeAnne M. Cherry, "Growing Up in St. Paul: Polish Sausage and Trips on the Streetcar." *Ramsey County History*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Fall 1992), 22-23; Hennessy, *Past and Present of St. Paul*, 653.

Table 3 shows the age of primary Polish householders in Ward 8. The table indicates a fairly consistent age difference in married couples of about five years, with the exception of the results from 1885. Most men seem to have married in their late 20s or early 30s, while women married in their early 20s. There are many households in the sample containing several children in their 20s, all gainfully employed. The Poles followed a classic working-class strategy of using the wages of grown children for the parents' old age fund. Another way of taking care of parents occurred when one daughter chose (or was induced) to remain unmarried and care for aged parents.[21]

TABLE 3: AVERAGE AGES FOR MAIN POLISH HOUSEHOLDERS, ST. PAUL, WARD 8, 1885-1920 (IN YEARS)[22]

YEAR	MALE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD	WIVES
1885	34.9	34.4
1895	39.8	34.7
1900	44.5	39.1
1905	43.0	39.4
1910	42.1	38.5
1920	44.9	41.3

Table 4 shows child-bearing and mortality patterns. Most Polish-born women in the sample population had 5-8 children. The proportion who had over 8 tended to be lower than their rural counterparts. The more significant number comes in figures for their American-born daughters, who seem to have chosen to have smaller families (although still large by 1998 standards and by the standards of native-born Americans of British stock). The availability of good jobs reduced the need for additional earners, allowing families to groom their children for skilled blue-collar jobs or even lower-level white-collar jobs by placing additional emphasis on education and apprenticeship.

In their employment choices, these immigrants developed a profile somewhat different from the better-known (and perhaps stereotypical) portrait of urban Polish immigrants elsewhere, even elsewhere in the Twin Cities. The Wojciechowo community had a surprising number of business owners, artisans, and skilled workers. Table 10 below shows a breakdown of occupations by job category for men and women.

[21]See for example, the Józef Kujawa household, 1910 Manuscript Census, Ward 8, precinct 6.

[22]Sample of Polish households: Manuscript Census, 1885, 1895, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1920.

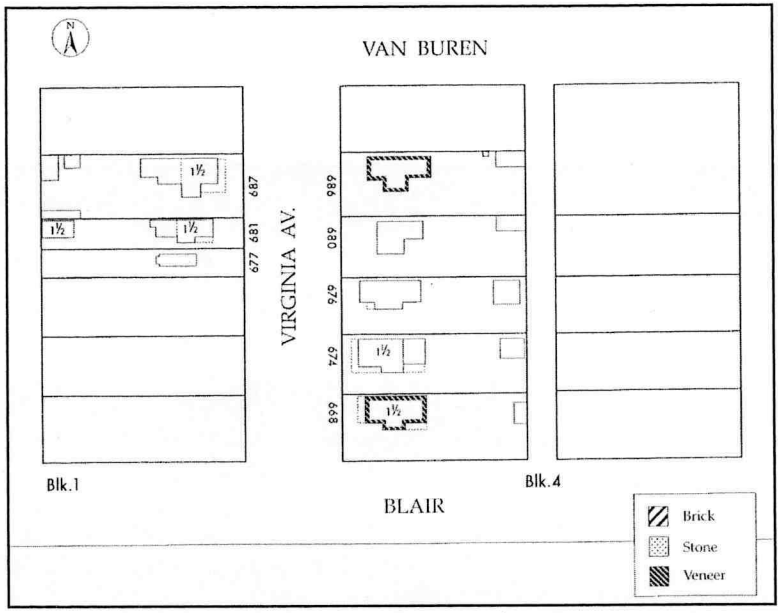
TABLE 4: CHILD MORTALITY: EUROPEAN- AND NORTH AMERICAN-BORN POLISH WOMEN, ST. PAUL, WARD 8, 1900 AND 1910

	EUROPEAN-BORN				NORTH AMER.-BORN			COMBINED
YEAR	4 OR LESS	5-8	8+	TOTAL	4 OR LESS	5+	TOTAL	TOTAL
1900								
Number	3	22	10	35	5	3	8	43
Live Births	10	148	123	281	14	17	31	281
Live Children	10	108	77	195	14	12	26	195
% Mortality	0	27	37.4	31	0	29.5	17	30
1910								
Number	10	14	7	31	11	2	13	43
Live Births	24	100	81	205	20	16	36	241
Live Children	19	80	47	146	18	14	32	178
% Mortality	21	20	42	29	10	12.5	11	28.2

TABLE 5: OCCUPATIONS OF POLES BY JOB CATEGORY IN ST. PAUL, WARD 8, 1895-1920. SAMPLE OF POLISH HOUSEHOLDS.

	1895 #	1895 %	1900 #	1900 %	1905 #	1905 %	1910 #	1910 %	1920 #	1920 %
Men	71	100	62	100	89	100	73	100	91	100
Laborers	30	42	20	32	24	27	13	17	19	21
Factory Workers	6	8	10	16	18	20	20	27	13	14
Other Semi-skilled	0	0	7	11	7	8	6	8	13	14
Skilled	15	21	9	14	10	11	9	12	17	19
Retail	5	7	2	3	3	3	5	7	1	1
Service/Clerical	6	8	8	13	12	14	12	16	19	21
Professional	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	5	1	1
No Occupation	9	13	6	10	11	12	2	3	8	9
Women	69	100	73	100	96	100	62	100	74	100
Service/Clerical	2	3	14	19	8	8	5	8	11	15
Factory Workers	1	1	6	8	12	13	15	24	10	13
Professional	0	0	1	1	3	3	6	8	0	0
Skilled	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	2	2	3
At Home/No Occupa.	65	94	51	71	65	68	35	56	49	66
Domestic/Servants	1	1	1	1	4	4	0	0	1	1

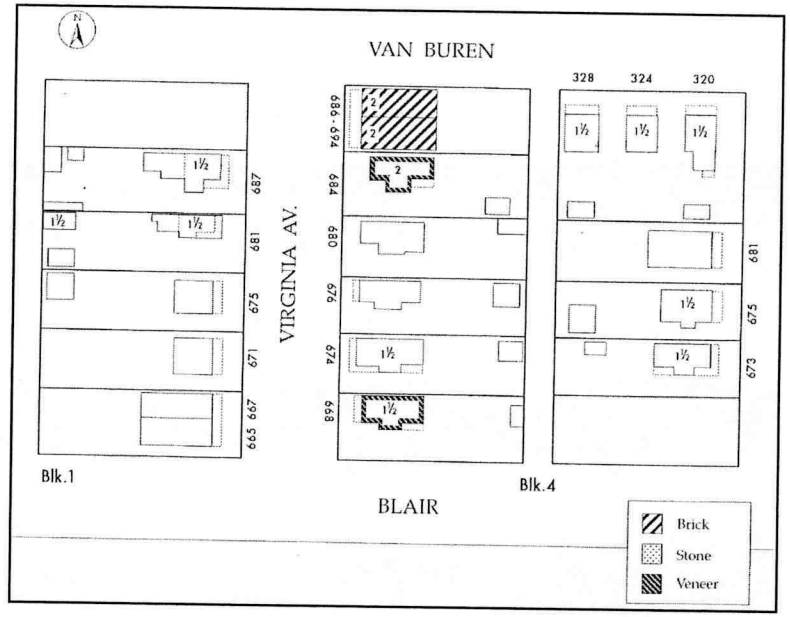
Service/Clerical includes clerks, boarding house keepers, barbers, police, firemen, teamsters, conductors, janitors, laundresses, seamstresses outside factories, cooks, waitresses, stenographers and telephone operators. Professional includes teachers, clergy, musicians factory owners and managers, and contractors. Skilled includes carpenters, butchers, bricklayers, wagonmakers, tailors outside factories, boilermakers, electricians, dressmakers, railroad engineers and furriers. Other Semi-Skilled includes railroad car cleaners, repairers, sealers, painters, machinists, paperhangers, plasterers, machinists, sausagemakers, roofers, metal workers and mechanics. Laborers include railroad laborers and blacksmiths' helpers. Retail includes saloonkeepers, salesmen, salesclerks and grocers, Factory workers include all forms of employment inside factories, including foremen, but not managers and owners.



Map 4

In Table 5, the number of men listed as common laborers was highest in 1895 (42 percent) and declined steadily thereafter. Factory and other semi-skilled workers increased steadily to 28 percent by 1920. Skilled workers remained about 15-20 percent. Clerical and service workers increased to 21 percent by 1920. Together, skilled and clerical/service workers, and retailers made up 25-30 percent of all employed men. Most of the women in Table 10 were unmarried and living at home, although a few were widows and in 1920 a couple of married women worked outside the home. Most young women working outside the home found employment in nearby factories, especially in clothing and carpet manufactories. The number of domestic servants may well be higher, but most were employed outside the largely immigrant, working-class Ward 8.

Table 6 further clarifies the status of Polish men in Ward 8. Younger men who were not heads of households found employment as laborers and semi-skilled workers. Few worked as skilled workers, but some of the semi-skilled may have apprenticed with skilled laborers. Some young men worked as clerks in warehouses, factories, or shops, which provided a path to white-collar employment. The high number of skilled workers among



Map 5

heads of households shows the link between heads of households and more desirable jobs. Although steady employment helped Polish men find good marriage partners, over time the sample population indicates that heads of households sought to "trade up," improving over time their workplace standing and (presumably) pay.

Table 7 shows place of occupation. Although the garment trade was important for both men and women, it was disproportionately so for women. It provided the bulk of semi-skilled and factory jobs for men in 1895 and 1900, but by 1910-20 other factories, such as the St. Paul Foundry, a box factory, and a cement works, drew the majority of male workers. The biggest employers of skilled labor were St. Paul's railroads. Poles were a minor presence in the yards in 1895, with the majority of Polish skilled workers finding employment in small shops they often owned. Yet, by 1920, the railroads were the biggest source of skilled labor for the Polish community.

Most Poles were employed in car repair shops, as engineers, electricians, boilermakers, carpenters, or clerks, and in less prestigious positions such as car cleaner, painter or freighthandler. Interestingly, the Poles seemed to have entered the rail yards only after the major labor unrest of 1894 in

which Eugene V. Debs played a prominent role. They were on hand, however, for the less successful but more radical strike of 1922.[23] St. Paul provided unskilled work, such as street repair, and more prestigious positions such as city policemen. The first Pole to join the police force was Walenty Kruszewski. The Winona newspaper wrote: the "majority of our brethren in this city rejoiced" on hearing the news.[24] The police force required little experience and provided an excellent salary. Regular patrolmen, like Kruszewski and Andrzej Kukla, received $840 a year. Michał Urbański, who had served as a corporal of uhlans in the German army, used his riding experience to get a job as a mounted officer, making $1,100 per year.[25]

Although systematic evidence is hard to come by, there seems to have been a clear trend toward Polish parents securing employment for their children, as well as for siblings, to work together in the same establishment. For example, two of Jan Sądowski's sons worked together in a printing plant in 1900. In 1905, Franciszek Mazurkiewicz, a 44-year-old immigrant working as a "mechanical laborer" in a factory, secured a similar job for his 16-year old son.[26] In 1910, Michał and Franciszek Lange were the owners of the St. Paul Stone Company. They hired Franciszek's 18-year-old son to work as a teamster for the plant. The Langes hired fellow Pole Józef Gasker as foreman, while Gasker's 19-year-old son worked as a laborer at the plant. In 1920, Lange had also hired two more of his sons to work at the plant.[27] This practice was not limited to men. Marta Packa, a 32-year-old widow who worked as a sewer in the Crex Carpet Company's factory at the intersection of Front and MacKubin Streets, secured a spot on the production line for her

[23]Tamara C. Truer, "Eugene V. Debs, James J. Hill, and Great Northern's Railway Strike of 1894," *Ramsey County History*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Spring 1990), 12-13, 23; W. Thomas White, "The 1922 Shopmen's Strike in St. Paul and Northwest," *Ramsey County History*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Spring 1992), 4-13.

[24]*Wiarus*, July 24, 1890, 4. For more on the few Poles in the city police and fire departments, see *History of the Police and Fire Departments of the Twin Cities* (Minneapolis: American Land and Title Register Association, 1900), Vol. 1, 123, 124, 131, 144. The two Poles were at the Rondo patrol station and thus patroled the Frogtown area. There was also a Czech who spoke Polish. At this time, there were at least as many if not more blacks on the force as Poles. See *Remember Rondo: A Tradition of Excellence* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1999), 23-24.

[25]*History of the Police and Fire Departments*, Vol. 1, 144, 149.

[26]1900 and 1905 Manuscript Census, Ward 8, precinct 9.

[27]1910 Manuscript Census, Ward 8, precinct 9 and Ward 12; 19320 Manuscript Census, Ward 8, precinct 9. On this company see St. Paul City Directories. See the 1910 edition, 195, for one of the company's ads. Its products were concrete blocks and other building material.

[28]1910 Manuscript Census, Ward 8, precinct 9.

TABLE 6: OCCUPATIONS OF POLISH MEN BY JOB CATEGORY AND HOUSEHOLD STATUS IN ST. PAUL, WARD 8, 1895-1920. SAMPLE OF HOUSEHOLDS.

	1895 #	1895 %	1900 #	1900 %	1905 #	1905 %	1910 #	1910 %	1920 #	1920 %
Heads of Households	42	100	41	100	43	100	46	100	47	100
Laborers	21	50	16	39	17	40	10	17	6	13
Factory/Semi-Skilled	1	2	8	20	9	21	14	30	14	30
Skilled	11	26	9	21	8	19	4	9	16	34
Service/Clerical	4	10	6	15	5	12	6	13	13	28
All Other Men	20	100	15	100	35	100	25	100	36	100
Laborers	9	45	4	26	12	34	3	12	12	33
Factory/Semi-Skilled	5	25	9	60	11	31	12	48	12	33
Skilled	4	20	0	0	2	6	5	20	1	2
Service/Clerical	2	10	2	13	7	20	6	24	7	19

15-year-old daughter.[28]

Retail positions seem to have been most prestigious in the community and provided the best opportunities for family advancement. Grocery store owners and saloonkeepers were among the community's secular elite. Józef Matz is a prime example. One of the founders of St. Adalbert parish, Matz ran a saloon and later a grocery store on Rice Street a few blocks from the church. By 1897, he also distributed liquor to other Polish saloonkeepers in the region. *Wiarus* noted, "Mr. Józef Matz, a liquor wholesaler from St. Paul, will be in Ashland, Wis., and Duluth, Minn., today. We recommend his products to all Polish saloonkeepers, who now support his rivals, as the best of liquors in terms of quality as well as price."[29] The children of this well-to-do businessman were able to take occupations normally reserved for non-Poles. His daughter Bronisława was a music teacher, while her sister, Marta, was a violinist. Another daughter held the white-collar job of bookkeeper.[30] Matz was also a part-owner of businesses in Wilno, Minnesota, a stockholder in the ill-fated Nova Polska Company, and in the more successful

[29]*Wiarus*, Jan. 28, 1897, 4. Matz also served as agent for *Wiarus* and *Zgoda*. See *Wiarus*, March 31, 1887, 7; July 14, 1887, 7; Jan. 19, 1888, 5; *Zgoda*, June 8, 1887, 3; March 28, 1888, 8; Jan. 30, 1889, 5. For more on Matz's store, see *Wiarus*, Feb. 15, 1894, 8.

[30]*Ibid.*, 1905 Manuscript Census, Ward 8, precinct 9.

[31]*Nowiny Minnesockie*, July 14, 1922, 4; Matz family history. For a discussion of the Wilno community see John Radzilowski, "Hidden Cosmos: The Life-Worlds of Polish Immigrants in Two Minnesota Communities, 1875–1925," Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 1999. On the Nova Polska Company, see idem, A New Poland in the Old Northwest: Polish Farming Colonies on the Northern Great Plains," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (Autumn 2002).

TABLE 7: OCCUPATIONS OF POLES EMPLOYED OUTSIDE OF THE HOME BY EMPLOYER TYPE IN ST. PAUL, WARD 8, 1895-1920. SAMPLE OF POLISH HOUSEHOLDS.

	1895 #	1895 %	1900 #	1900 %	1905 #	1905 %	1910 #	1910 %	1920 #	1920 %
Men	63	100	57	100	78	100	71	100	83	100
Railroad Jobs	1	1.5	7	12	3	4	9	13	14	17
City of St. Paul	0	0	4	7	2	3	3	4	6	7
Garment/Apparel [a]	8	13	8	14	6	8	5	7	11	13
All White Collar	5	8	3	5	12	15	9	13	9	11
Women	4	100	22	100	31	100	27	100	25	100
Garment/Apparel [a]	0	0	9	41	13	42	15	55	9	36
All White Collar	0	0	2	9	5	16	9	33	7	28

[a] Garment/Apparel includes all workers involved in making clothes and footwear, carpets (3 women in 1910), and one seamstress in 1920 who worked at a publishing house. The category does not include laundresses.

publishing company that produced *Nowiny Minnesockie* after 1918.[31]

Another successful family, and one related to the Matzes by marriage, was the Rosenthal family. Józef Rosenthal was one of the founders and leaders of St. Adalbert parish and owned a grocery store a few houses away from the church. The two story-structure at 217-19 Charles Street contained a store downstairs and living quarters upstairs, while a small, one-story house on another part of the lot may have been rented out as a source of additional income.[32] In 1905, Rosenthal was listed as a butcher, while his 28-year old son was listed as a clerk, his 27-year old son as a grocer, his 24-year old son as a lawyer, and his 20-year old son as a student. His 22-year old daughter was a school teacher, while an 18-year old daughter was listed as a clerk, quite possibly working in the family store.[33] By 1903, Rosenthal had built a large, new house on the lot next to his store (225 Charles). By 1908, Rosenthal opened a second grocery store in an ethnically mixed area of east St. Paul. Although this lasted only a couple years, by 1911 he had shifted the location of the second store to a middle-class neighborhood on Selby Avenue, south of Wojciechowo.[34]

[32]St. Adalbert, Parish Account book, individual dues records, 1883-90, 31; *Centennial Celebration, 1881-1981*, 19; *Rascher's Insurance Atlas of St. Paul, Minnesota* (Chicago: n.p., 1891), 3:229. Rosenthal was also an agent for *Zgoda*. See *Zgoda*, Jan. 30, 1889, 5.

[33]1905 Manuscript Census, Ward 8, precinct 9; R. L. Polk and Co., St. Paul City Directory, 1884/85, 685; *ibid.*, 1890/91, 1160.

[34]*Ibid.*, 1908/09, 1437; *ibid.*, 1910/11, 1439; Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of St. Paul, Minnesota* (New York: n.p., 1903), Vol. 3, 341.

Matz and Rosenthal were prominent leaders of their community, heading many local Polish organizations and holding positions of responsibility within the parish. Rosenthal served in the local PNA and sometimes chaired patriotic celebrations.[35] Matz served as church organist for many years, and was one of the leaders of the church choir. He was active in the PNA, the Polish Singers Alliance, the Association of Polish Youth, and the Union of Lublin Library Society.[36] The sons and daughters of both men were also active in the community's cultural and social life and his son-in-law served in the Haller Army and was active thereafter in its veterans association.[37]

HOUSING AND MOBILITY

Led by *prominenti* like Matz and Rosenthal, and taking advantage of family connections and skilled positions, the Poles of St. Paul were able to advance economically as well as in self-confidence. *Wiarus* bragged that "The Polish parish in St. Paul is growing large in size and in the well being of its members. Today near the Polish church live many Poles whose Polish patriotism is openly revealed, not like previously when reverend Fr. Majer was not here. The Polish 'February' Society is building itself a large hall nearby, where it and other Polish societies can meet. The hall will stand beside the house of Józef Jarosz at 250 Thomas Street. In the work of building the Poles are directed by Mr. Walenty Kruszewski.... Citizen Michał Moga is building himself a two-story house for $1,500."[38]

Like Polish immigrants in many areas, those in St. Paul placed their primary investment in their homes. High rates of home ownership have been noted in many Polish communities, as Poles, more than other immigrant groups, invested most of their extra capital in property.[39] Table 8 indicates rates of home ownership and renting. The proportion of renters to owners remained relatively consistent, with renters making a third of the sample, and those owning homes outright about half. Anecdotal evidence indicates that most renters were younger couples or less well-established families.

With the house being the primary economic focus of the family, it is lit-

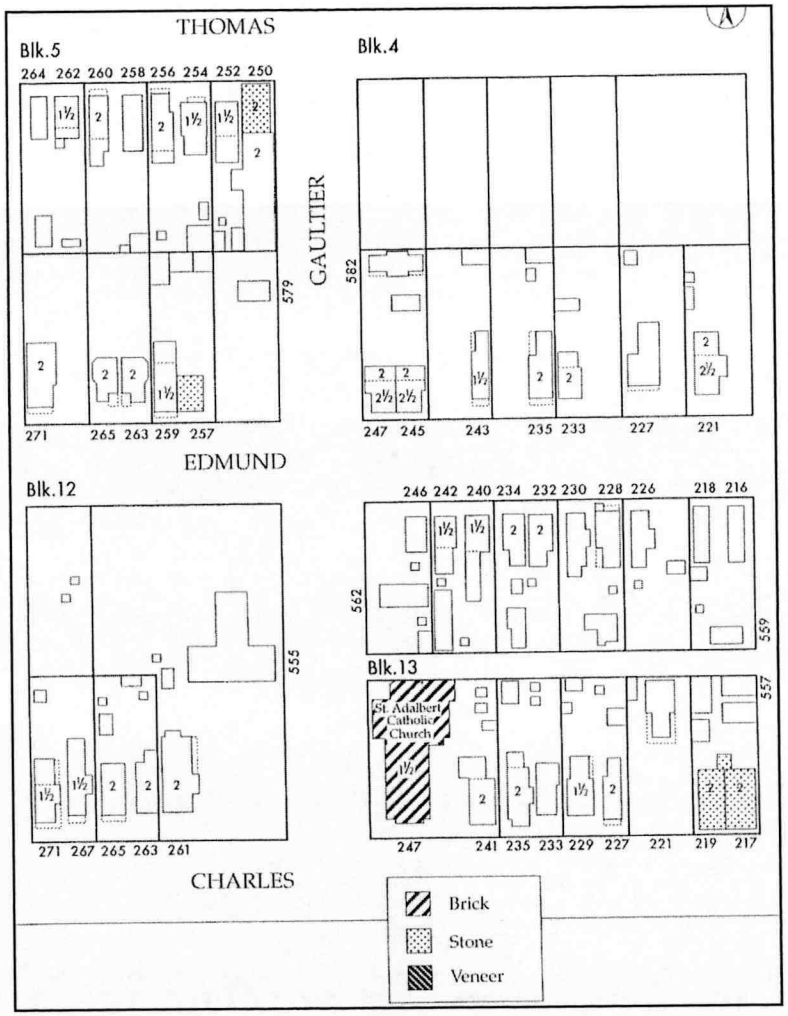
[35]See *Wiarus*, Dec. 3, 1896, 4; *Zgoda*, Jan. 12, 1887, 4; Jan. 15, 1890, 5; Jan. 24, 1894, 5; Jan. 30, 1896, 4-5; Jan. 20, 1898, 4; Feb. 9, 1899, 6.

[36]*Nowiny Minnesockie*, July 14, 1922, 4. Matz served as local delegate to the 1889 PNA convention in Buffalo. See *Zgoda*, Sept. 25, 1889, 1; Dec. 11, 1889, 4.

[37]See, for example, *Zgoda*, Jan. 15, 1890, 5; March 25, 1897, 5; Feb. 2, 1899, 5; Feb. 9, 1899, 6; interview with Rose Polski Anderson.

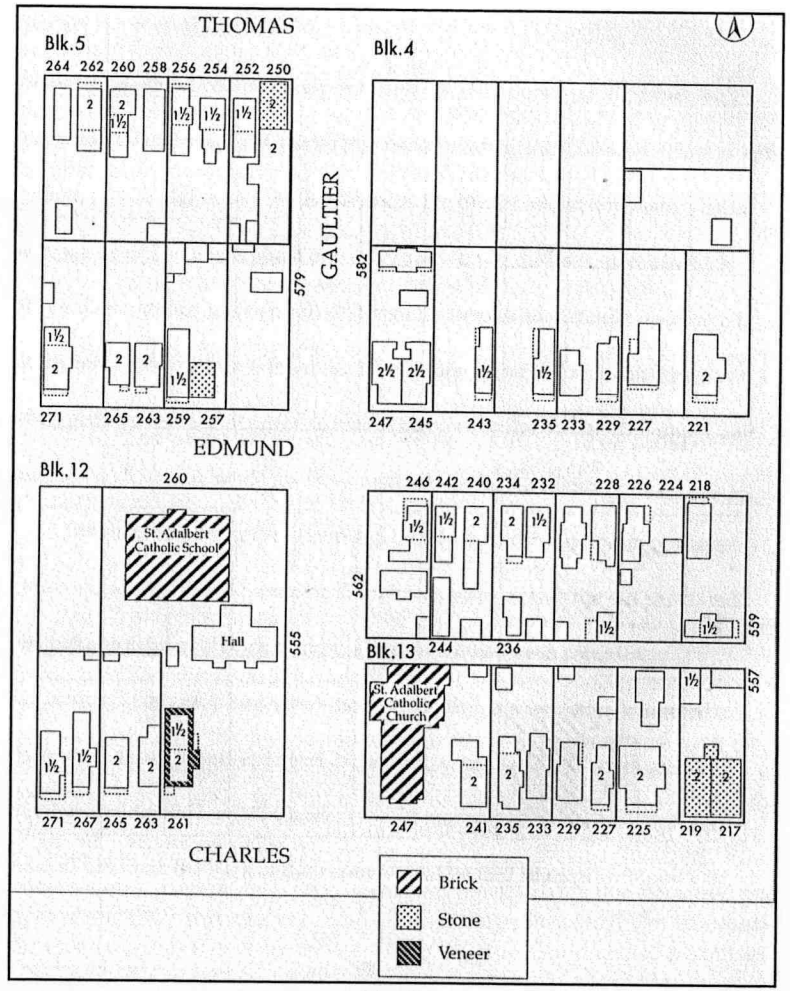
[38]*Wiarus*, July 28, 1888, 5.

[39]See Victor Greene, *For God and Country: The Rise of Polish and Lithuanian Ethnic Consciousness in America, 1860–1910* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1975).



Map 6

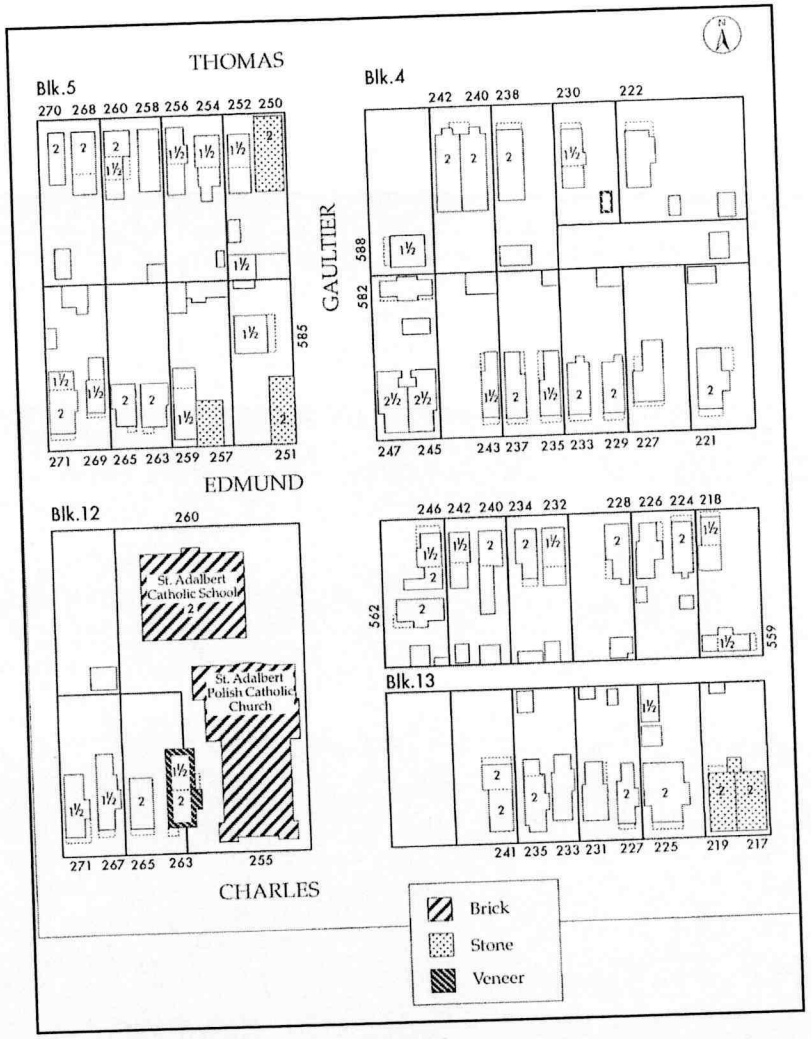
tle surprise that the house building itself was a major recipient of both labor and capital inputs. Studies from Polish neighborhoods in Milwaukee show that families frequently undertook large, complex building projects. These might involve digging basements or creating basement apartments for renting to boarders (as a way to help pay off the mortgage) or for providing a married son or daughter with an inexpensive first home that kept them close to family and community. Often using only family labor, houses were some-



Map 7

times moved and reoriented on their foundations. New additions and upper stories were added to accommodate growing families, to provide added

[40]Judith T. Kenny, "Polish Routes to Americanization: House Form and Landscape on Milwaukee's Polish South Side," in Robert C. Ostergren and To Vak, eds., *Wisconsin Land and Life* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1996). I briefly discussed the quality of life issue in "Polish-American Architecture in Comparative Perspective," *Polish American Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Spring 1997), 5-6.



Map 8

space for taking in boarders, or simply to improve the quality of life.[40]

An examination of information on insurance maps shows that the Poles of Wojciechowo followed a similar strategy. Maps 4 and 5 show a one-and-a-half block area on Virginia Avenue that was occupied almost exclusively by Poles after 1900. Map 4 shows the situation in 1903. Most lots contained a single worker's cottage, either "T" or "L" shaped, typical of most work-

ing-class neighborhoods. Half of the houses had a partial second story added and two of the buildings (686 and 668 Virginia) had a brick or plaster veneer. Most of the lots also had a small storage shed at the back of the lot. One of the lots, 677-81, was divided in two and was occupied by two dwellings. This was doubtless a cost-saving measure, since St. Paul had a significant number of unimproved residential lots at that time.

TABLE 8: HOMEOWNERSHIP AMONG POLES IN ST. PAUL, WARD 8, 1900–20 (SAMPLE OF POLISH HOUSEHOLDS)

	Own Outright		Own With Mortgage		Rent	
Year	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
1900	20	48.0	11	26.0	11	26.0
1910	18	39.0	14	30.5	14	30.5
1920	30	47.0	16	25.0	18	28.0

Map 5 shows a snapshot from the end of the study period, 1926. Here we see significant changes, the most notable of which were the construction of six new dwellings on the eastern half of Block 4 and the erection of a brick four-plex at 686-94 Virginia. At 684, the owners added a complete second story. At 680, there were major additions to both front and back (this may even be an entirely new house). The houses at 674 and 668, which in 1903 had partial attics, got full attics (possibly used as extra bedrooms for older children). On Block 1, a wooden four-plex was constructed at 665-67 as were new houses at 671 and 675 Virginia. An especially interesting modification took place at 681. One of the two houses (677) that occupied this split lot in 1903 was entirely removed (possibly relocated). The additional lot space was taken over by the owner of 681, who also enclosed a front and side porch as a one-story front room. These modifications provided the owners not only with more internal space, but also with more yard space to accommodate a garden or simply to add greater privacy.

Another example of this building strategy can be found in the blocks near St. Adalbert church, an area that was almost entirely Polish (and more so in 1926 than in 1893). Maps 6 (1893), 7 (1903), and 8 (1926) show the changes. At 250-52 Thomas Street we see the home, saloon, and Polish hall owned by Józef Jarosz. The front part was a saloon, while the longer back part was a social and dance hall. The family house was built along side the saloon, the two buildings almost touching each other. Many of the lots are more densely occupied than on the Virginia Avenue example above. Most of

the lots contain two dwellings, while some contain three (262-64 Thomas; 582 Gaultier and 245-47 Edmund; 232-36 Edmund; 240-42 Edmund; 216-18 Edmund and 559 Marion; and 217-19 Charles and 557 Marion) with the third house located behind near the alley or the back of the lot. The parish church and rectory are located at 241 Charles, while the large one-story building across Gaultier on Block 12 is a public school.

The 1903 snapshot (Map 7) shows important changes, the most obvious of which is construction of a new, two-story brick parish school. The former public school building was purchased by the parish and modified for use as a parish hall. At 225 Charles, the Rosenthal family built a new house next to their store (217-19 Charles). Another dwelling occupied the back part of the same lot (221 Charles), but it is unclear whether the family owned that building as well. Several homeowners added complete upper stories (265 Charles) or transformed half stories into full stories (261 Charles [the parish convent], 267 Charles, 256 and 262 Thomas, and 257 Edmund). At 260 Thomas, the owner added a two-story ell on the east side of the house, and a one-story addition to the back, part of which had a half-story attic. Jarosz's hall (250 Thomas) remained virtually unchanged, but the insurance map noted that the lower story of the hall was converted into a stable, perhaps more a lucrative source of income for the owner. The upper part remained a social hall, while the front section remained a saloon.[41]

The final map from 1926 (map 8), clearly shows the increasing prosperity of the community. The old wooden church was gone, as was the old parish hall. In its place stood a new brick church. The convent had been completely reconstructed (and may have been moved slightly) as a two-story veneered structure. The Rosenthals removed the second dwelling (221 Charles on Map 7) from their residential lot (225 Charles) to add more space, and also eliminated the small house on the back of their commercial lot (557 Marion on Maps 6-7). The Polish family at 228 Edmund bought out the non-Polish family whose dwelling had stood at 230, again creating more space for a garden or extra privacy.[42] The Polish hall at 250 Thomas was gone by 1926, although the saloon/grocery and family dwelling still stood. There was significant new building, especially on the north half of Block 4.

These developments in property status were not simply a matter of individual family economic strategies. The Poles of Wojciechowo also banded to together to create a community structure that would encourage home ownership. According to *Wiarus*, "The Polish-American Building and Loan Association has begun to germinate. The first meeting will be on July 3d in the Polish hall of J. Jarosz on Thomas Street. The association has selected

[41] *Rascher's Insurance Atlas of St. Paul, Minnesota*, Vol. 3, 229; Sanborn, *Insurance Maps of St. Paul, Minnesota*, Vol. 3, 341.

[42] See *ibid.*; 1910 Manuscript Census, Ward 8, precinct 6.

15 directors — all are Poles except for one Czech. They have acted smoothly to make contracts. Among others, Józef Mac [*sic* — Matz] received $5,000, A. Kalduński received $4,000, and many received amounts of $3,000 to $2,000."[43] The stated purpose of the organization was "to provide funds by contribution of members to be loaned to members of the association desiring to borrow such loans." Capital stock in the association was to be $500,000 "to be divided into Ten thousand shares of Fifty (50) dollars each and to be paid in monthly installments of twenty-five (25) cents per share." Not surprisingly, among the officers were Józef Rosenthal, Józef Matz, and Józef Jarosz.[44]

PARISH AND ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE

As in Wilno, the Poles of Wojciechowo centered their community life around their church. Unlike St. John Cantius, which had a series of priests, St. Adalbert's early history was largely dominated by two men, Rev. Dominik Majer (1838-1911) and Rev. Piotr Roj (d. 1950). Of the two, Rev. Majer was the more important. The parish's first pastor was Rev. Józef Horbaczewski, a veteran of the 1863 uprising. He was remembered primarily due to his fire and brimstone homilies, exacerbated by the fact that his jaw had once been shattered by Russian musketball, giving him a particular fearsome visage. Like Rev. Horbaczewski, Rev. Majer was a veteran of the January Uprising, serving as a chaplain for an insurrectionary unit. Following the defeat of the uprising, Majer was forced to flee Poland and eventually ended up in America.[45]

Rev. Majer played an important but often-overlooked role in Polonia history. He was a founding member of three major Polish-American organizations and was a key actor in the ideological conflicts that rocked the immigrant community in the 1880s and 1890s. Arriving in America by 1874 or earlier, Rev. Majer was one of the priests involved in founding the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA), and was a stockholder in the organization's quasi-official newspaper, *Gazeta Katolicka*. From 1875-78 he served as pastor of St. Adalbert parish in Chicago.[46] There he came into conflict with Rev. Wincenty Barzyński, the pastor of St. Stanislaus Kostka parish, the leader of Chicago's Resurrectionist fathers, and the unofficial

[43] *Wiarus*, June 28, 1888, 1.

[44] Articles of Incorporation, Polish-American Building and Loan Association of St. Paul, June 28, 1888, Minnesota Secretary of State's Office.

[45] See Chmielewski, "A History of Holy Cross Parish, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1886–1914," 3.

[46] Edward T. Janas with James Wahl, *Dictionary of American Resurrectionists, 1865-1990*, 2d ed. (Chicago: n.p., 1991), 269.

Polish vicar of Chicago. Rev. Barzyński had originally arranged for Rev. Majer's appointment as pastor of St. Adalbert, but the two soon had a falling out. Rev. Majer led a group of secular priests who felt that Rev. Barzyński was committing fiscal irregularities that would harm the Resurrectionist congregation, and that Rev. Barzyński had too much influence over the choosing of priests for Polish parishes. He was joined by Rev. Teodor Gieryk, one the primary founders of the PRCU.[47] Rev. Gieryk and Rev. Majer also felt that Rev. Barzyński was taking the PRCU in the wrong direction by restricting membership only to Roman Catholics in good standing, instead of accepting all Poles regardless of their faith.[48] Of course, Rev. Barzyński was the staunchest defender of the religionist position. Through his influence and with the aid of his brother and his fellow Resurrectionists, the Catholic party was able to defeat all attempts to include nationalist societies in the PRCUA. Rev. Majer made another attempt to amend the constitution during the 1876 sejm in Chicago, but this too was defeated.[49] Rev. Majer remained active in the PRCUA until 1880 or 1881, when he left to join the new PNA.

In the mid 1870s, parties within the Union had tried to alter its fundamentally Catholic character to include secular societies. With the defeat of these initiatives, many of those who wanted a more secular, nationalistic organization defected to the Alliance. Once there, however, many found the PNA was not what they had envisioned either. Where they had once found the PRCUA too religiously oriented, many later found the Alliance too secular, or even anti-clerical. Among the strongest voices in this camp were a group of pro-nationalist priests who in the mid 1880s called themselves the "Alliance priests." Their leader was Rev. Majer, who along with eleven other priests, mostly from Minnesota, sent a letter to *Zgoda* proclaiming that the PNA "has as its goal the common good" and that it did not offend "the Catholic religion or the Polish nation." As long as the Alliance did not stray from the basic truths of Catholicism, they would support the organization. Thus began a honeymoon that lasted about three years. Rev. Majer had several letters printed in *Zgoda*, and the paper lent the Minnesota priest its editorial support as he formed the "Society of Polish Priests" to further his

[47]Iwicki, *Resurrectionist Charism*, Vol. 1, 356, 358.

[48]Osada, *Historia Związku Narodowego Polskiego*, 255. The PRCUA-PNA conflict is highly complex and I deal with it in greater detail in *The Eagle and the Cross*, chs. 2-4.

[49]Mieczysław Haiman, *Zjednoczenie Polskie Rzymsko-Katolickie w Ameryce, 1873-1948* (Chicago: PRCUA, 1948), 40-42, 45.

[50]Haiman, *Zjednoczenie Polskie Rzymsko-Katolickie w Ameryce*, 79-80; *Zgoda*, June 29, 1887, 5; *ibid.*, Nov. 30, 1887, 4; *ibid.*, April 18, 1888, 4; *ibid.*, May 30, 1888, 4; *ibid.*, July 25, 1888, 4.

goals and those of the Alliance.[50]

Despite Rev. Majer's support for the Alliance, things did not go smoothly. In 1887, at the PNA convention in St. Paul, Rev. Majer's home town, Rev. A. Jaworski of Pittsburgh introduced a motion to rename the organization the "Polish Roman Catholic National Alliance." According to *Ognisko* "the motion was popular with no one and there was such a general outcry in the hall that the censor quickly ruled it out of order."[51] The anti-clerical faction within the Alliance opposed language in the PNA constitution honoring the importance of Catholicism and objected to the role of priests like Rev. Majer. At the Alliance's 1889 convention, the crisis came to a head when Rev. Majer and his allies tried to ban "notorious" atheists and Jews from the PNA. This attempt ended in failure after much heated debate, and Rev. Majer and his allies left the convention amid the jeers of their opponents.[52]

Although some of Rev. Majer's allies, such Rev. Konstanty Domagalski, joined or rejoined the PRCUA, Rev. Majer decided to start his own fraternal that would be a "third way" between the Alliance and the Union, and would supersede both, bringing unity to Polonia under its banner. Rev. Majer named the new group the Polish Union or Unia Polska (UP). It was to gather all "righteous and enlightened" Poles who together would promote a spirit of unity and prevent future divisions.

It was to follow a political line that was neither too liberal nor too conservative.[53] Based first in St. Paul, the new fraternal had over 100 societies by 1900 when the UP moved its headquarters to Buffalo. Thereafter it split into two rival camps, one in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, the other in Buffalo. An earlier split in 1903 created the Polish National Alliance of

[51]*Ognisko*, Sept. 19, 1887, supplement page. On the PNA's St. Paul convention, see also *Zgoda*, Sept. 28, 1887, 1, 4; *ibid.*, Oct. 5, 1887, 2; *ibid.*, Oct. 12, 1887, 2-3; *ibid.*, Oct. 19, 1887, 2-4; Osada, *Historya Związku Narodowego Polskiego*, 268-73, 282-84.

[52]Haiman, *Zjednoczenie Polskie Rzymsko-Katolickie w Ameryce*, 96. On the PNA's Buffalo sejm, see *Zgoda*, Oct. 16, 1889; *ibid.*, Oct. 23, 1889; *ibid.*, Oct. 30, 1889; Osada, *Historya Związku Narodowego Polskiego*, 285-95.

[53]Haiman, *Zjednoczenie Polskie Rzymsko-Katolickie w Ameryce*, 96-97; Stanisław Bubacz, *Historya Unii Polskiej w Ameryce, Inc., z Siedziba w Buffalo New York* (Buffalo: "Rekorda-Unisty," 1930), 43-51; *Złoty Jubileusz Unji Polskiej w Stanach Zjednoczonych Północnej Ameryki, 1890-1940* (Wilkes Barre, Pa.: n.p., 1940); Galush, "Forming Polonia," 58–59; *Słonce*, March 10, 1898; *ibid.*, Jan. 7, 1900.

[54]B. M. Zielinski, *Pamiątka Jubileuszu 15-letniej Rocznicy Założenia Zjednoczenia Polsko Narodowego* (Brooklyn: n.p., 1918), 2-4; *Złota Księga Zjednoczenia Polsko Narodowego w Brooklynie, U.S.A., 1903-1953* (New York: n.p., 1953); Alvin S. Schmidt, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Institutions:*

Brooklyn.[54] Rev. Majer's UP, although a promising and intriguing idea, proved more prone to division than either of the two major fraternals it was meant to replace. Yet, at the same time, it detracted from the membership rolls of both the Union and Alliance, worsening the very problem Rev. Majer had sought to solve.

The PNA's St. Paul convention, and the early and important role of Rev. Majer, demonstrates that for a brief period St. Paul was an important center of Polonia life. This changed as the Polish population of other cities grew at a faster rate than St. Paul's. The UP's center of power shifted eastward, and Majer lost much of his influence, having burned too many bridges to other Polonia power centers.[55] Nevertheless, he remained an active participant in Polonia's ongoing ideological battles until his death in 1911.[56]

Despite losing power nationally, Majer retained a great deal of influence locally. This was due to three factors: first, unusually good relations (for a Polish priest) with the powerful Archbishop of St. Paul, John Ireland; second, an unusual but effective style of parish management; and third, his prestige as pastor and founder of the UP. For reasons unknown, Rev. Majer, a staunch Polish patriot, got along well with Archbishop Ireland who rarely made a secret of his dislike for Poles. Rev. Majer never advocated schism with the Church and chose to work within its structure, rather than criticize it in public as did some other Polish-American priests of that era. With his prestige among Polish immigrants, his undoubted intellectual gifts, his loyalty, and his position as pastor of the largest and most visible Polish parish in the Twin Cities, Rev. Majer was perhaps the one Polish priest Ireland needed to avoid antagonizing. In turn, Rev. Majer and his priestly allies preached loyalty to the Church and defended Ireland from attacks in the Polish-American press.[57] In addition, Rev. Majer arranged for Ireland to address the PNA's St. Paul convention in 1887, perhaps the only time the

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Fraternal Organizations (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1980), 268, 271; Małgorzata M. Wawrykiewicz, *Polonijne Organizacje Ubezpieczeniowe w Stanach Zjednoczonych Ameryki w Procesie Przemian* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1991), 90-91; Frank Renkiewicz, "The Poles," in *They Chose Minnesota*, 372; Andrzej Brożek, *Polish Americans, 1854-1939* (Warsaw: Interpress, 1979), 222-23.

[55]Frank Renkiewicz, "The Poles," in *They Chose Minnesota*, 372.

[56]A fuller study of Majer's life and ideology has yet to be undertaken. Majer's lengthy letters and polemics frequently appeared in *Wiarus*. See *Wiarus*, Sept. 3, 1896, 1; Aug. 15, 1901, 5; Oct. 17, 1901, 1; Oct. 24, 1901, 1; June 26, 1902, 4; June 25, 1903, 4; Aug. 20, 1903, 4; Oct. 22, 1908, 4; Nov. 12, 1908, 4; April 21, 1910, 4; Oct. 20, 1910, 4. For a sermon marking the 600th anniversary of the Polish victory at Grunwald, see *ibid.*, July 21, 1910, 4-5. On Majer's death and funeral, see *ibid.*, March 23, 1911, 4; March 30, 1911, 4.

[57]See *Wiarus*, March 9, 1893, 1.

archbishop ever spoke to a Polish organization and the only time a Polish organization — especially a staunchly secular one like the PNA — invited him to speak. In return, Ireland made Rev. Majer the irremovable pastor of St. Adalbert, essentially giving him tenure in the parish, an honor he seems to have accorded to no other Polish priest. In 1906, with the archbishop's recommendation, the patriarch of Minnesota Polonia was named a domestic prelate and took the title of monsignor.[58]

Rev. Majer's style of management helped smooth over any problems he might have encountered with his parishioners vis-à-vis finances, a perennial problem in many Polish-American parishes. In Europe, wealthy people who endowed churches were often given significant power over the choice of pastor and disposition of finances. Polish immigrants, having endowed their own churches in America, expected to continue that tradition, but came up against a long-standing Church policy against it, leading to numerous conflicts over local control. Rev. Majer, unlike many pastors, pursued a more open style of management than many priests. For example, in 1891 he held an open parish meeting in which the parish records were opened to any parishioner wishing to inspect them. The meeting began with a reading of the previous year's financial balance sheet. Parishioners were then allowed to inspect the books and question the pastor and the trustees about any financial matters.[59] Furthermore, Rev. Majer kept most of the records himself, to the point of recording the minutes of parish meetings in his own hand. This unusual degree of pastoral openness and the good relations with the archbishop meant that St. Adalbert, unlike so many Polish parishes, seems never to have suffered a serious church conflict.[60]

Although there were no open disputes within or over the parish, this does not mean the community lacked for conflicts. As might be expected from Rev. Majer's presence and decision to hold the PNA convention there, St. Paul's early Polonia tended to be overtly political. Under Rev. Majer's early influence, a PNA group, the Fraternal Aid Society of St. Joseph, was

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[58]*Seventy-fifth Diamond Jubilee Anniversary*, 19. A more complete understanding of the relationship between the two men awaits further study.

[59]*Wiarus*, Jan. 22, 1891, 5. Cf. St. Adalbert, Parish Financial Record book, 1882-95, 78-84.

[60]Since many of these conflicts were forgotten or hidden, it is impossible to be completely certain on this point. Nevertheless, the parish seems to have had an unusually harmonious history in this respect.

[61]See *Zgoda*, Jan. 15, 1890, 5; Feb. 10, 1898, 5; July 12, 1900, 438. Cf. Donald E. Pienkos, *PNA: Centennial History of the Polish National Alliance of the United States of North America* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1984), 338, 450*n*4. The later shows seven PNA societies in Minnesota in 1887. The PNA's first Minnesota lodge was probably the Harmony society, No. 22, in Minneapolis.

formed by the mid 1880s as PNA Society 31.[61] After Rev. Majer's break with the PNA, several UP lodges formed in St. Paul under his influence. By 1901, these included Sacred Heart, No. 1; St. Adalbert, No. 2; Star of Freedom, No. 3; and St. Casimir, No. 8 (in east St. Paul), some of which many have been breakaways from the PNA. In addition, the UP's newspaper, *Słonce* [the Sun] was located in St. Paul from 1898 to 1900.[62] The St. Adalbert Society was probably originally a PNA group or an independent death benefit society, which switched allegiance to the UP after 1890. It later claimed to be the oldest Polish Catholic group in St. Paul.[63] The low numbers of these lodges indicate their foundational nature within the UP. The PRCUA was a negligible factor in St. Paul during the early years of the community.

As the strongest group in the community, the local PNA often incurred the ire of its neighbors. This happened more frequently during patriotic celebrations such as May 3d or November 29th. Control of the public programs of these holidays provided a great deal of prestige for the group that could pull it off. The local PNA society usually tried to organize the largest and most elaborate celebrations.[64] This often led other groups to complain that the PNA was grabbing all the attention. In 1896, during the height of the ideological battles that rocked Polonia nationally, a non-PNA member wrote to *Wiarus*: "Yesterday we here held a November Uprising commemoration arranged by the Alliance. To be sure, all the other Polish societies were present, which granted the national celebration an air of unity as complete as could be hoped for. Thus, instead of having two celebrations, the rest were obliged to commit themselves, for better or worse, to patriotic unity, and as good, faithful people, they came to the celebration and filled the hall." The writer then went on to deride some of the speakers: "Next was a lecture by Mr. Rakowski, as long as a Chinese opera, boring the good listeners, who applauded with joy because it was finally over."[65]

Although not all patriotic celebrations resulted in inter-community conflicts, having a strong PNA group in the same community as the PNA-dissident Majer no doubt brought its own share of tensions. Annual national celebrations required painstaking negotiations, which could often break down over ideological differences or even minor points of protocol. A correspondent, "the voice of the Kościuszko Society," wrote to *Zgoda* in 1898 to complain about Majer, and did not spare anti-clerical rhetoric:

> Fr. D. Majer's weekly *Słonce* roared about the May 3d celebrations and the commemoration of the centennial of the birth of the Bard Adam [Mickiewicz] which was held on Sunday, May 22, in St. Paul, Minn.
>
> This celebration was to be held in common, like "equals with equals." ... But Fr. Majer canceled the united program, says citizen T., maybe for fear that the honored listeners might learn something more than what they already know.... Fr. Majer, the initiator and president of the celebration, gave orders about "loving your neighbor" and stressed that organizing a common celebration for the Poles of St. Paul and Minneapolis would — as he put it — bring honor to the Polish names in the eyes of Americans.
>
> That is all fine and good ... but his words were not sincere.... Brother Alliancers! Long may this occurrence serve as an example, that a celebration for the good of the Fatherland, for the development of the PNA, and the enlightenment of the people was not held due to the egotism of this priest.[66]

As avid newspaper readers, St. Paul's Polish immigrants responded to their share of ideological back-and-forth between proponents of various sides, which was conducted in the form of letters and written protests. One frequent target was Hieronym Derdowski, the maverick editor of *Wiarus* in Winona who had an uncanny ability to raise the blood pressure of proponents of all ideological stripes. In 1889, several St. Paulites wrote to *Zgoda*, complaining about Derdowski's polemics, describing him as a "gypsy editor" [*cygański redaktor od Wiarus*], and describing his paper with the English loan word "garbage."[67] Two of St. Paul's Polish merchants wrote to the Pittsburgh newspaper *Jutrzenka* [Dawn] in 1894, upset about remarks Derdowski had made about a friend: "Because H. Derdowski, publisher of *Katolik*, unfairly besmirched the name of citizen Langowski and did so only to bring sorrow to a Pole who for the sake of our dear country endured exile in Siberia, we the undersigned declare to H. Derdowski that we do not wish to carry his newspaper any more in our stores."[68]

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[62]Unia Polska Account book, 1900-1904, found in St. Adalbert Parish, Records, St. Paul, MN. Majer also doubtless influenced the formation of other lodges in the region in Minneapolis, Duluth (2), Owatonna, Delano, and Browerville, Minn., as well as several in western Wisconsin. For more on the UP in St. Paul, see *Wiarus*, Jan. 7, 1897, 4; Jan. 28, 1897, 4; Sept. 16, 1897, 4; and issues of *Słonce* 1898-1900.

[63]*Wiarus*, Dec. 24, 1896, 4. The Star of Freedom group had also probably been PNA, as a group by that name had existed in St. Paul in 1889. See *Zgoda*, Dec. 11, 1889, 4.

[64]For examples of patriotic celebrations, see *Zgoda*, Dec. 21, 1887, 4; May 15, 1889, 4; Nov. 20, 1889, 5; Dec. 10, 1890, 4; May 13, 1893, 4; Feb. 14, 1894, 6; Nov. 16, 1899, 4; *Gazeta Polska Narodowa*, May 15, 1890, 1.

[65]*Wiarus*, Dec. 3, 1896, 4. See also, *ibid.*, Dec. 10, 1896, 4-5.

[66]*Zgoda*, July 14, 1898, 5.

[67]*Zgoda*, Nov. 13, 1889, 4.

[68]*Jutrzenka*, Sept. 1, 1894, 2. See also, *Zgoda*, March 7, 1888, 4.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

The Poles of St. Paul had the critical mass of population enjoy a more varied cultural and community life than their rural counterparts elsewhere in Minnesota. By the late 1880s, the community had a PNA-related society dedicated to educational and cultural advancement. It went under various names, such as "the Enlightenment Society," but was later known as the Kościuszko Society. The group put on amateur dramatic performances and literary events. It formed its own library which had forty-five volumes in 1899, mostly in Polish but some also in English.[69]

A parallel group, the Union of Lublin Library Society, was also dedicated literary pursuits, describing itself as a library and literary circle. Founded in 1893, the group's goal was to "spread learning among Polish youth through reading good and useful books." Membership was open to "any Pole of good character without regard to age or sex." The group helped organize patriotic celebrations and literary evenings, and acquired inexpensive books both for its library and for sale to members at reduced prices.[70] An 1898 announcement noted a meeting would be held

> on the third Thursday in February at Józef Rosenthal's hall. Admission for the evening is free to all Poles. The Union of Lublin Literary Society also decided to sell new books by authors such as Mickiewicz, Sienkiewicz, and Kraszewski. At present the library contains 226 volumes of varied contents and dozens of brochures and periodicals. Thus, one can see, honored compatriots, that our library is well supplied with books and accessories which the library has recently purchased to establish a first-rate Polish library. Thus, one should not wait but should join and avail oneself of the knowledge-filled books in the library. Admission for men is 25 cents and for women 15 cents; monthly dues are 10 cents for men and 5 cents for women. The library is open from 7-8 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday and 4-5 p.m. Sunday.[71]

The celebrations of patriotic holidays were among the most important community events, despite the potential for division. These events were often quite elaborate, borrowing ritual and emotional intensity from the participants' Polish (and Catholic) heritage, combined with a format taken from contemporary Anglo-Protestant Chautauquas.[72] An 1898 commemoration of the November Uprising of 1830 began with the selection of a chairman and a secretary to take notes on the proceedings. Then, the main program began, consisting of: "1. Speech by F[eliks]. Derwichowski. 2. Song by the Antoni Kontski and Wanda Choir. 3. Declamation by Lucja Jarosz. 4. Speech by Józef Rosenthal. 5. Song by the Antoni Kontski and Wanda Choir. During this part of the celebration $3.21 in contributions and fines was collected, the first part of which will go to the national fund in Rappersville, and the second part for the Kosciuszko Monument. 6. Reading by Franciszka Rosenthal. 7. Song by the Antoni Kontski and Wanda Choir. 8. Declamation by L. Kalduński. 9. Declamation by Miss Anna Bulińska. The conclusion was the singing of 'Boże coś Polskę.'"[73]

In addition to the Building and Loan Society noted above, other secular groups in the community included a women's singing society, a theater group, and a Polish Republican Club.[74] The latter was formed to counter the traditional dominance of the Democratic party among Polish immigrants. In Minnesota, due to its early Polish immigration and links between Poles and Germans, as well as the strength of the Republican-leaning PNA in St. Paul, the Republicans seem to have enjoyed more support among Poles than was normally the case, especially early on. Significantly, those listed as leaders of the Polish Republican Club in St. Paul were also prominent PNA leaders.[75]

Aside from the ability to participate in a more active cultural life, the community's young people were also subject to what some community leaders felt was the corruption of urban life. One correspondent to *Wiarus* gave vent to his or her feelings about the community's "wantons and dissolute youth."

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[69] *Zgoda*, Jan. 19, 1899, 6; June 1, 1899, 4. See also, *Zgoda*, March 26, 1896, 4; March 25, 1897, 5.

[70] *Zgoda*, April 19, 1893, 4; Jan. 24, 1894, 5; Jan. 30, 1896, 4-5; March 26, 1896, 4; Jan. 20, 1898, 4; Feb. 2, 1899, 5; Feb. 9, 1899, 6; State of Minnesota, Secretary of State, Incorporation Records for Biblioteka Unia Lubelskiej, December 5, 1894, (St. Paul: R. L. Polk and Co., 1915), 118.

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] Chautauquas were summer events held in many small towns and imported with Yankee settlers. They combined a series of speeches, dramatic skits, and musical numbers meant to enlightenment as well as entertain. See Radziłowski, *Prairie Town: A History of Marshall, Minnesota* (Marshall: Lyon County Historical Society, 1997), 44-46.

[73] *Zgoda*, Jan. 20, 1898, 4. The national fund in Rapperville, Switzerland, was formed as sort of a national treasury in exile by Polish émigrés. It was dedicated to furthering the liberation of Poland. Collections for the fund among Polish emigrants in the U.S. were frequently the source of controversy, since the group that managed it was closely associated with the PNA. The Kosciuszko Monument stands today across the street from the White House in Washington, D.C.

[74] *Wiarus*, Jan. 28, 1897, 4; *Zgoda*, May 23, 1888, 5; Oct. 10, 1888, 4.

[75] *Ibid.* For an explanation of the political leanings of the PNA and its rival the PRCU, see Radziłowski, *The Eagle and the Cross*, ch. 4.

> I saw several of our young ladies who had been to confession dancing two days later. This was on November 21st.... This was not the end. On November 25th, our Polish Misses B., G., J. G., A., Sk., C., D., L., H., R., and others were dancing in a saloon with some fellows. When it was already midnight, I was awakened by this whirling, and I heard such shrieks in the street and noise that I thought the neighbor's house was on fire and rushed into the street. I listened and listened as these girls and fellows made noise and chased each other in the dance hall without regard for the fact that it was past midnight and Friday had begun — the day on which the Lord Jesus was beaten and killed.
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> One should not be surprised at the young ladies who do this, but we should deplore the mothers whose daughters knock about the streets in the dark of night, becoming the laughingstock of other peoples.... I reassure you [however] that all young women in St. Paul are not like this. This is thanks to God and to the many virtuous and decent young women who do not act this way, and their parents and families. I write only about our wantons and dissolute youth so that they will abandon their whoring life so that everywhere they might be clear and bold of eye, conducting themselves as decent young people ought.[76]

Given the comparative evidence from Wilno, where dancing and drinking were common activities, it is hard to sustain a thesis of "urban corruption." Nevertheless, lacking further evidence on the social life of Polish young people in St. Paul it is impossible to reach a definitive conclusion.

Of course the most important community events were religious. As in Wilno, forty-hour devotions were major events.[77] Similarly, the visit of the archbishop for the sacrament of Confirmation was news worthy of a report to Polish-American newspapers.[78] In describing a First Holy Communion at St. Adalbert, one correspondent noted, "Such ceremonies always and everywhere make a great impression, not only in the parish but also on all witnesses, even those who do not belong to the Catholic Church." A sense of specialness and ritual significance was invested in each such event, through elaborate decorations, processions, and sermons written especially for the event. The First Communion correspondent noted, "The church, and particularly the altar, was decorated in a splendid fashion. From the pulpit, the pastor proclaimed the gospel to the children which ... was sublime and plaintive."[79]

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[76] *Wiarus*, Dec. 2, 1886, 4.

[77] See *Gazeta Polska Narodowa*, April 3, 1890, 2; *Wiarus*, April 2, 1896, 4 and April 12, 1906, 5.

[78] *Gazeta Polska Narodowa*, Nov. 13, 1890, 1.

[79] *Katolik*, July 12, 1894, 5.

Another important church event was the first Mass of a new Polish priest. On June 27, 1886, Rev. Jakub Wójcik said his first Mass at St. Adalbert, with the pastor Rev. Majer giving a keynote homily. "J. W." a correspondent for *Wiarus*, described it as follows:

> At 10 a.m. our pastor, Fr. D. Majer, together with other priestly ministers and led by the Holy Cross, went in procession from the church to the rectory, from whence they led the newly made priest to the church. Then, Holy Mass began, celebrated by Fr. Wójcik. Fr. D. Majer was the archdeacon, Fr. J. Pacholski the deacon, Jan Sroda the subdeacon, and N. Bajce and Cyryl Slatiński were acolytes.... During Holy Mass, Fr. D. Majer gave the homily and it was so moving that nearly everyone wept uncontrollably. He spoke about the dignity of chaplains and also how fortunate were the families who could see their sons as priests and be present at their first Holy Masses. But alas! The family of the newly ordained priest could not enjoy this fortune, because God ordained that they be separated by many thousands of miles. Here in this land of America he would celebrate his first Holy Mass, but fortunately among you, that is, among Poles, who could at least in part replace his mother and father and therefore — as Fr. D. Majer said — offer prayers so that the Lord God would give him strength and comfort in His Holy Grace on the thorny path that priests must trudge.[80]

As in other Polish parishes, an ad hoc school began shortly after the parish began to grow larger. The school seems to have been under way by 1882. In 1901, the parish built a brick school house at a cost of nearly $30,000.[81] As in other Minnesota communities, the first teachers were laymen who also doubled as organists. One parish account book notes a stipend of $45 for a teacher/organist (although it is unclear if this was for the entire year or part of a year). In 1887, Rev. Majer brought five Polish Franciscan sisters from Rochester to teach at the school. In 1908, these nuns were replaced by Sisters of Saint Felix (Felicians) from Chicago, an entirely Polish order that provided the largest number of teaching sisters in Polish-

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[80] *Wiarus*, July 8, 1886, 4-5. The sermon was poignant for Rev. Majer, who in 1883 had tried to return to Poland to visit his dying mother, but had been denied by a vengeful Russia government. For a description of a ceremony marking the 900th anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Adalbert in which a Czech priest also participated, see *Wiarus*, April 29, 1897, 4. Rev. Wójcik was one of the Alliance Priests who supported Rev. Majer during his political battles.

[81] *Wiarus*, Nov. 14, 1901, 1; *Seventy-fifth Diamond Jubilee Anniversary*, 17.

[82] *Ibid.*; St. Adalbert, Parish Account book, 1882-95, 19. The lay teacher, Jan Wons, also worked as an agent for *Wiarus*. See *Wiarus*, June 8, 1887, 3 and March 28, 1888, 8.

American schools.[82] A 1910 census listing for the Felician convent on Charles St. shows six nuns, divided evenly between recent Polish immigrants and American-born sisters. All but one (who was 42) were in their 20s, with the youngest being only 20. Between them, the nuns received $120 a month upkeep, plus the use of the convent.[83]

Between the school and church, the parish was a major expense for the community, but given its importance, one that the vast majority of Poles were glad to accept. In the 1880s, quarterly dues averaged between $3 and $5, with some individuals, such as wealthier merchants, paying as much as $10 and the less well-to-do paying as little as $1.75 per quarter.[84] Special collections were taken up for a Christ's Tomb at Easter (a type of display common in Polish parishes). Money was also collected, intriguingly, from "the German parishes" in the amount of about $5.25 a week. This may have been from fees paid to Rev. Majer to minister to Poles who attended nearby German churches.[85]

The greatest expense and the proudest achievement in the life of the Polish community was the building of a new brick church. For the Poles of Wojciechowo, this day came in 1911. Beginning in the summer of 1907, they had collected money. By 1909, when construction began, parishioners were giving contributions in the $10 to $20 range, with some giving as much at $100. This was in addition to normal dues and offerings on the collection plate. People also gave through women's rosary and men's fraternal societies. Children collected money in school. Over four years, through the end of 1911, the community raised $20,000 in individual and small-group contributions. One of the contributions was a final gift of $3,000 from Rev. Majer, who died without seeing the church completed. The remainder of the money was borrowed and paid off over the next several years. In order to maximize the economic impact of the building project and to keep as much of the money as possible in Polish hands, there seems to have been a clear effort to hire Poles for as much of the work as possible. In addition, local firms that employed Poles were also well represented in the new church expense ledger.[86]

The new brick church was dedicated by Rev. Piotr Roj, who had formerly served the Poles of Lincoln and Lyon Counties as pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul in Ivanhoe and visiting pastor of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in

[83]1910 manuscript census, Ward 8, precinct 6; St. Adalbert, Parish Account book, 1890-1910, esp. 335, 341, 343.

[84]St. Adalbert, Parish Account book, individual dues records, 1883-90.

[85]*Ibid.*

[86]St. Adalbert, "Book of the New Church Building of St. Adalbert in St. Paul, Minn.," 1907-1912.

Taunton. Yet, the new church was a tribute to Rev. Majer's long tenure in the parish, to his careful management style, and to the vision of Polishness he and his parishioners shared. Most had grown up in thatched-roof huts with earth floors, and mud-plaster walls. In less than a generation, they had created something — together, as a community — that could compare with some of the fine churches of Europe. The new church was built in the neo-Gothic style, with rich stained glass windows, many donated by Polish societies. The design of the east-facing rose window, through which the morning light would filter down on the chancel and altar, was, fittingly, the symbol of the Three Lands of the old Polish Commonwealth: the horseman of Lithuania, the Archangel Michael of Ukraine, and the White Eagle of Poland. There was no better sign that the immigrants had succeeded and were in America to stay.