The Rise and Fall of the Grand Rapids Polonia

Eduard Skendzel

Introduction

Grand Rapids, like so many Middle West American cities, is a mosaic of ethnicity. One of the larger immigrant groups to coexist and counter act with the majority Dutch were the Poles. The object of this presentation is to present a schematic overview--"warts, wrinkles, and all"--of that coexistence and counter action of the Hollanders and Polanders in what can be capsulized as "The Rise and Fall of the Grand Rapids Polonia." And like Caesar's Gaul, Omnis Gallia in tres partes divisa est, this presentation is divided into three parts: firstly, the history and geography of the Grand Rapids Polonia; secondly, its sociological growth; and, thirdly, its present status. As an aside, the word "Polonia" is a Latin word meaning "Poland." It has been Anglicized to refer to a community of people of Polish antecedents who live outside Poland. We speak of the Grand Rapids Polonia, the Bay City Polonia, the Michigan Polonia.

Early Beginnings

The history of the Grand Rapids Polanders really begins with the arrival of Frederic Baraga who came to Grand Rapids in 1833.[1] He was a Slav, born in Slovenia (modern-day NW Yugoslavia), an Austrian national of gentry background, a Vienna-educated law student who became a missionary to the Indians of Michigan (1831-1868) and author of a Chippewa grammar and dictionary, and Grand Rapids' first Roman Catholic priest (1833-1935).

Their history continues with the arrival in 1835 of Missionary Andreas Viszoczky (Vee-shots-key). He, too, was a Slav, a Hungarian national of Polish antecedents (Wysocki), and first permanent Catholic pastor in Grand Rapids from 1835 to 1853 at what is now St. Andrew's Cathedral (named so after his patron saint, St. Andrew, the Apostle).[2]

The first bonafide Polander to arrive in Grand Rapids and environs was Julian John Maciejewski (Ma-tsche-yevs-ki), a priest from Posen in Prussian-partitioned Poland.[3] He became the first permanent pastor from 1852 to 1858 of what was known as the German Settlement, in what today is Holy Trinity Church in A;pine Township, just northwest of the city. He also became the founding pastor of St. Joseph Parish a congregation of German farmers in Wright, Michigan, in 1854. It was precisely at this time when the Dutch had formed Second Reformed Church in 1849[4] and when they founded the Christian Reformed denomination in 1857,[5] that individual Polanders came to this area. The first Polish family was that of Joseph Jakubowicz (known as Jacoboice), a machinist (whose great-grandsons still operate his Monarch Machinery Co. out Michigan Road), was the first Polander to settle in the corporate city limits in 1853 or 1854.[7] He was followed by other tradesmen, among whom was Andrew Poposki, a cabinetmaker who eventually sold his interests to what became Berkey & Gay Furniture Company.

Church-centered History and Geography

The one central fact about the history and geography of the Grand Rapids Polonia is that it is intensively church-centered. St. Andrew's, the first Roman Catholic church in the city, has preserved names like Poposki, Tloczynski, Pogodzinski, Jablonski, Olbinski in its Baptismal Registry of the 1850s.[8] However, it is especially at St. Mary's German Church, founded in 1857 and located today at the crossroads of two freeways on the city's West Side, which once was ethnically mixed with Germans, Swedes, Irish, and Poles, that we find a plethora of Grand Rapids Pioneer Polanders. These Polonians, basically craftsmen,[9] came from Prussian or German Poland in such numbers in the post bellum Civil War years that in the 1870s approximately 20 percent of the entries in the Baptismal Registry were of Polish background.[10] In the early 1870s, they helped build the present St. Mary's Church, one of the best examples of German Gothic Hallen-korchen architecture in the state.[11] St. Mary's naturally became the mother-parish of St. Adalbert's Polish Parish in 1881, just as it subsequently did in 1887 of St. Joseph's Holland Parish, in the Grandville-Franklin sector, once so homogeneously Dutch with three Christian Reformed churches, two Reformed churches, one Congregational church, and two large Christian schools.[12]

St. Adalbert's

St. Adalbert's, founded for Polanders from German Poland in September of 1881, is the cradle of the Grand Rapids Polonia.[13] (Incidentally, in 1980, it was designated a "basilica" by Rome, i.le., a special church because of its historicity, its architectural splendor, and its ethnic ministry.[14] It was located near the Stocking-Fourth sector. To the south of that point, Germans, Poles, and Irish mixed along Bridge Street. Polanders themselves concentrated homogeneously around the church on Fourth and Davis and in a northerly thrust along Muskegon, Davis, and McReynolds almost to West Leonard. Dutch families lived along Alpine Avenue where earlier in 1881, in May, Alpine Avenue Christian Reformed Church was formed.[15] Alpine Avenue was the accepted line of demarcation between Hollanders and Polanders. Her it was that their first confrontations took place. Here it was that was heard the Polish teenagers' cry in their neighborhood battles: "Get the Hollikeys! Get the Hollikeys!" Here the Dutch teenagers probably retorted: "Get those Polacks! Get those Polacks!"[16]

St. Adalbert's first frame church was dedicated in May of 1882.[17] In the early 1900s a cathedral-type, twin-spired French-Gothic church was planned.[18] In 1907-1913, however, the present stone Michaelangelesque-domed, twin-towered church (a very visible landmark on the West Side so clearly viewed from the freeways) was not only blessed but consecrated since it was completed for $150,000 without incurring any indebt3dness. It was patterned after the church in Tremessen, 35 miles ENE of Posen in German Poland, from whence came so many pioneer Grand Rapids Polanders.

St. Adalbert's was truly the mother of Grand Rapids' Polish Catholicism. In 18897, St. Isidore's was established for the "East Side" Brickyard Polanders out Michigan Street way (then called East Bridge Street). In 1904, also, St. Adalbert's became the mother-parish of the city's Lithuanian Parish of SS. Peter and Paul in the West Leonard-Quarry sector, an area contiguous to the large Dutch constituency which lived in these parts. In 1909, St. Adalbert's mothered St. Michael's in Muskegon, and in 1914, Assumption Parish in Belmont for a contingent of fifty families of Polish farmers who lived in Plainfield Township, north of the city. Note may be made that St. Stanislaus Parish in Hilliards, a hamlet four miles west of Wayland and four miles south of Dorr, is not considered a daughter-parish of St. Adalbert's. Hilliards is really the oldest Polish parish in the Grand Rapids-West Michigan area.[19] Formed for Poznanian (Posen) and Kashubian (Danzig) Prussian-Poles, its first building went up in 1879 (although a benevolent society existed already in 1876.)

St. Isidore's

In the Michigan Street-Eastern Avenue sector lived many "East Side" Polanders who found employment in the nearby brickyards. Poles started settling here on East Bridge and East Street (i.e. Michigan and Eastern), the eastermost limits of the city, in 1870. Eventually in the 1890s Russian and Austrian Poles settled this tightly-knit 95 percent homogeneous Polish enclave bounded by Grand Avenue on the west, Lyon Street on the south, Fuller Avenue on the east and Malta Street on the north. It was veritably a "Polish Village Revisited," a picturesque area of hills and valleys, traversed by Coldbrook Creek (from Fish Lake), where gardens and poultry barns and even cows graced backyards.

In 1897-1900, a combination brick church-school was built on Diamond Street hill and called St. Isidore's. In 1912-1917, a permanent, tan-bricked, red-tile-roofed Gothic church was dedicated and consecrated (not merely blessed) to the service of God since it too was debt-free on completion. Today, this most visible East Side landmark, juxtaposed to the Gerald R. Ford Freeway, looks like a medieval fortress built on a promontory. To the south of this most homogeneous Polish enclave was the Dutch East Fulton thrust which eventually embraced Third, Bethany, and Calvary Reformed congregations, Dennis Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Baldwin Christian School, and the Holland Home for the Aged. The Polanders often shopped in this area which they called Holendrija (Haw-len-dree-yah).

Sacred Heart

The Parish of the Sacred Heart was founded in 1904 for the South Side Poles. (The south sector of the West Side was always referred to by the Grand Rapids Polanders as the South Side.)[21] Nearby were the gypsum mines and plaster mills out Butterworth way where many unskilled Polish workers found employment. The topography of this western extremity of the Grand River Valley was a plain abounding in swamps. Eventually, the area, in the immediate confines of John Ball Park which bordered the parish to the west, was where many Prussian Poles from St. Adalbert's, as they moved up the socio-economic ladder, built fine homes on Shawmut Boulevard (now called Lake Michigan Drive) and near Lincoln Park.

Later immigrants to Grand Rapids from Russian-Poland and Austrian-Poland settled the Sacred Heart area. The Parish roughly was bounded by Bridge Street on the north, the park on the west, Butterworth Road on the south, and Straight Avenue on the east. Along the eastern periphery eventually settled a small colony of Italians from the hills south of Rome,[2] a goodly number of Swedish families, and a contingent of Hollanders who already in 1893 had organized Ninth Reformed Church on Deloney Avenue at Watson Street (dissolved in the 1980s when it was replaced by Servant Community Reformed Church).

The Sacred Heart Polanders built a brick church-school combination building in 1904. In the early 1920s, the architecturally splendorous, twin-towered Romanesque church, patterned after the Basilica of St. Paul Outside-the-Walls in Rome, was built. Its coffered ceiling and its ornate, limestone-trimmed domed towers make the structure a particular architectural landmark. Its north tower houses four bells, the largest of which weighs 4,500 pounds, making it the largest bell in Grand Rapids.[23]

Schools

After a schematic view of the history and geography of the Grand Rapids Polonia, a bird's eye view of its sociological development is in order. In the Golden Age of the Grand Rapids Polonia, from 1910 to 1945, St. Adalbert's numbered some 2,000 families, making it the largest parish in the Grand Rapids Diocese which comprised the thirty-nine counties north of a line from Holland to Saginaw to Mackinaw City. St. Isidore's counted an average of 800 families and Sacred Heart some 600 families. However, it is the foundation of schools which is perhaps the most telling hallmark of the Grand rapids Polonia. Adolescent Polish jokes notwithstanding, the foundation of a parish school was always uppermost in the perspective of these Pioneer Grand Rapids Polanders, the majority of whom were of peasant background, to pass on their Catholic faith and their Polish traditions to their progeny.

Founded in 1881, St. Adalbert's, by 1884 had built and initiated a four-room frame elementary school to which Polish pupils attending St. Mary's German school transferred. In 1890, a new eight-room brick school was constructed.[24] In 1921, the present twenty-seven-room school with auditorium and recreation area was dedicated. In the 1920s it housed over 1,500 pupils, making it the largest parochial school in outstate Michigan. When parish enrollment declined after World War II, part of the facility housed the West Side ninth and tenth grade Catholic Central studentry until West Catholic High School was built out Bristol Road as an autonomous institution.

Opened in 1900, St. Isidore's opened its school in January of 1901 in a combination church-school brick building. In 197, the present large, eighteen-room, modern brick school was built, again without incurring any indebtedness for nearly one thousand pupils. And Sacred Heart, founded in 1904, initiated an elementary school in 1905. In 1918, a new four-room wing was built, and in 195 a six-room, concrete-block bungalow school was built. It was dismantled in 1959, and the present $615,000 modern school was constructed. Indeed, education and schools figure paramountly in the history of the Grand Rapids Polonia.

Halls

Benevolent societies, operating from their own lodges, were a part of Grand Rapids' Polonian landscape. In fact, halls founded by various ethnic groups were commonplace in Grand Rapids' ethnic neighborhoods. The Germans, Swedes, Danes, Irish, Lithuanians, and even the Dutch,[25] i.e. the Holland-American Hall at 439 Ottawa Avenue, just north of Michigan Street, counted some dozen halls. The Polish halls, however, were especially numerous and visible in their ethnic enclaves. There once were sixteen of them; eight on the West Side, five on the East Side, and three on the South Side.[6]

These Polish halls were both a blessing and a curse. They provided minimal medical and death benefits for their membership. They were veritable community centers providing for wedding receptions, parties, and every manner of celebration. They provided rooms for classes when parish schools were overcrowded and for evening citizenship and language classes. The myriad clubs and organizations used their facilities for meetings and various activities. Religiously, they cooperated with the local parish in both spiritual ministrations and material development. But they were simultaneously a negative factor. They exacerbated the clannishness and isolationism of the Polish group and impeded their Americanization, linguistically and socially.

And they were a source of great scandal! Alcoholic over-indulgence and inebriation and fisticuffs and violation of local ordinances, to couch it all in very euphemistic terms, brought the local constabulary on the scene.[27] The abuse of a legitimate right, used in moderation as part of the Polish ethos, became a cause of shame and disgrace, especially to Americanized Polanders and to the clergy. Favoring temperance and moderation, they saw advancement in thrifty, sober, and self-disciplined living. Theirs, however, was not an easy task for they had to reckon with the peasant mindset of many of the immigrants and with hostile opposition from various outside liberal quarters.

The Press

The Grand Rapids Polonia had a weekly newspaper. The Glos Polski (The Polish Voice) was published in 1899-1900. From 1900 to 1957, the Echo Tygodniowe (The Weekly Echo) appeared each Friday.[28] Except for Dutch publications, it outlived all other Grand Rapids ethnic publications. In 1906-1907, still another weekly, named Kuryer z Grand Rapids (The Grand Rapids Kuryer) served the Polish community.[29] Of all these issues, only portions of the Echo have survived the ravages of time and the negligence of humankind. Happily this Echo microfilm (1908-1928 = 21 years) spans the bulk of the local Polonia's Golden Age (1910-1945). It provides a good partial social history of this immigrant group.

Cultural Growth

To maintain their Polish identity in an American ambient and to offset a too-quick denationalization and to allow for a more gradual assimilation into the American milieu, the Grand Rapids Polonians initiated various types of numerous cultural endeavors. Each parish had its choirs and choral groups, its dramatic clubs, its military bands, its paramilitary drill teams, its folkloristic dance ensembles, its sport teams, its English and citizenship evening classes, its occasional lecture series, and a host of religious societies. Initially, these endeavors were productive, but the forces of acculturation, i.e. the process of becoming adapted to new cultural patterns of a majority society, militated against the permanent development of a Polish subculture. The Wasp ethos prevailed resulting in an ever-accelerating loss of a Polish identity among their progeny. Like with the Dutch, the question of isolation in a subsociety and the question of language in church, school, and cultural undertakings polarized the Polish community in its Golden Age.

Political Participation

The problem of language and a comparatively late arrival on the local scene delayed Polish participation in municipal politics. Too, there was a need for civic education among their own kind since peasants from a partitioned Poland, especially those from the Austrian and Russian Partitions, were exposed only to minimal education and to virtually no participation in local governance. They had no exposure to democratic traditions. English and citizenship classes were only marginally successful among a people of such negative history, coming from remote villages and isolated backwoods where politics were only a remote or unknown phenomenon. There were individuals, however, like Albert Damskey, a member of the Board of Election in 1883, who through the succeeding years participated in local politics.

There were attempts at the turn of the century to organize the Grand Rapids Polanders politically. They were forced to meet the opposition of the more numerous Holland community, headed by the Fas and Jus organization which was well-knit and strongly disciplined by Dutch church leaders and which gave non-Dutch candidates for office strong opposition. In fact, when Simon Ponganis, pastor of St. Adalbert's, formed the Kosciuszko Democratic Club in 1899 so as to have Poles participate in local government, Bishop Henry Richter disciplined him.[30] After subsequent confrontations, he even terminated Ponganis' nineteen-year tenure at St. Adalbert's in 1904 and transferred him to "Siberia," i.e. to Gaylord in the North Country. This all caused a minor riot and demonstrations and ended in both the civil and ecclesiastical courts, and even in two attempts to form a Polish National Catholic Church, independent of Rome, which would not threaten the Poles' cultural heritage, reawakened as it was in the American atmosphere of political and religious freedom.[31]

Akin to their participation in Democratic Party politics was the issue of worker unionization. This issue was epitomized in the Furniture Strike of 1911, an April-to-August attempt to change a ten-hour day to a nine-hour day at the same pay.[32] The Polish unionized worker was posited against his non-unionized fellow Dutch counterpart. This consequent bitterness exacerbated the physical and philosophical isolation of these two ethnic groups, especially so since the strike was not a successful one.

Dutch and Polish Demographics

Both groups, by virtue of historical and religious factors, generally kept to themselves. For the Dutch, the interaction of social trends, th4ological uncertainty (i.e. the overall Christian Reformed and Reformed rift and the Protestant Reformed schism of 1924), and a changing identity produced confusion with the denomination in the early years of the twentieth century.[33] At the root of the controversy was the issue of Americanization, as it was in good measure for the Poles. The on-going argument for both the Dutch and Poles was just how far a transplanted church group, up to this point basically conservative and isolationist, could accommodate itself to an aggressive, pragmatic majority American society.

Through the years Dutch-Polish relations were minimal. They worked along side each other in the furniture factories, but nil else. Each lived in their own ethnic neighborhoods. The West Side St. Adalbert Polanders considered Alpine Avenue the line of demarcation between themselves and the Hollanders who were so heavily concentrated the length of West Leonard Street.[34] The East Side St. Isidore Polanders had only very minimal contact with the East Fulton Dutch thrust which bordered the southern limits of their enclave. The South Side Sacred Heart Polanders reacted similarly to the Dutch families on the easterly extremity of their enclave near Ninth Reformed Church. Simply stated, both groups kept to themselves and avoided each other. Both were conservative in outlook, despite the Polanders' Democratic Party orientation, and both were apprehensive of American liberalism. They each strove to make Grand Rapids a city of individual homeowners in clean neighborhoods who wanted to live a better life in a new land of opportunity.[35]

The Present Current Status of the Grand Rapids Polonia

A general observation can be made that today the three Grand Rapids Polish communities in no way exude the vim, vigor, and vitality of the Grand Rapids Polonia in its Golden Age between 1910 and 1945. Assimilation and acculturation and Americanization have taken their inexorable toll ethnicity-wise. Intermarriage and ecumenism have also exacted a diminuition of their original ethnic identity. Today these people are not Polanders; they are not even hyphenated Polish-Americans. They are Americans of Polish ancestry.

Today, St. Adalbert's, once the largest parish in the diocese with its 2,000 families, claims allegiance of 1,250 families.[36] Attrition and the thrust to the city's periphery and suburbs and the parishes found there have affected the basilica parish. Its school enrolls only about 200 pupils. Some of its nearby neighborhoods have deteriorated. On the East Side at St. Isidore's only 700 family units are on the parish roster, only about 150 pupils are enrolled in the school, and demographic change in the East Fulton once-Dutch constituency has begun to affect the parish southern limits. Only Sacred Heart has experienced a slight increase in its parish roster due to growth in the post World War II era in the area beyond John Ball Park, which some would call "Polish Grosse Pointe." Neighborhood deterioration, however, has affected its eastern and southern limits where Hispanics and Appalachians have located along the eastern reaches of West Fulton and Straight and Butterworth.

Four of the halls on the West Side have been liquidated. Two East Side halls long ago have ceased operation. The membership of most of these so-called benevolent societies is markedly down. This reflects the phenomenon that the parish and its ancillary institutions no longer is the pivotal center of the social and recreational lives of its parishioners. These benevolent societies have almost lost their ethnic dimension. Moreover, their marginal religious relationship to the parish is now a most tenuous one. No longer are these halls the locale of their wedding receptions and cultural presentations and political manifestations.

Other Indications of Ethnicity Loss

There have been other symptoms of loss of Polish ethnicity in Grand Rapids. The beautiful, rolling, 100-acre Polish cemetery, founded in 1909, in the Walker-Richmond sector had its name changed in 1947 from Polish Catholic Cemetery to Holy Cross Cemetery. The weekly Polish Echo ceased publication in 1957. Even the diocesan The Western Michigan Catholic which provided news from the Polish parishes was liquidated in 1991. The Polish-American Military Band was disbanded during World War II. There are no dramatic groups. The numerous choirs have been phased out. The Polish language was curtained in the schools in the early 1940s and in the churches in the early 1950s. Rarely is the language heard. Polish political organizations are a non-entity.

Cultural endeavors are at a minimum. The Polish Heritage Society, founded in 1963, is the only organization which attempts seriously to project the Polish presence in the city with various Polish celebrations. Its choir and other cultural events which it sponsors are the only vestiges of the Golden Age of the Grand Rapids Polonia. The October Pulaski Weekend, on the other hand, staged by a consortium of local halls of any and all ethnic origins, though interestingly named after a Polish general who gave his leadership and life in the American Revolutionary War, is only a superficial attempt to manifest American and Polish patriotism.[37] It is really a legitimate rationalization for a Munich-type Oktoberfest, though unfortunately and very erroneously, the local newspaper would present the event as the epitome of Polish culture.

Business Deterioration

Perhaps the most physical indication of the deterioration and diminution of Polish ethnicity in Grand Rapids is the demise of its business districts on the West Side in the Stockbridge sector and on the East Side along Michigan Street. (Only the South Side West Fulton Polish business stretch has maintained a semblance of its former self.) The Bridge Street and Stocking Avenue business areas were a veritable second downtown with shops and stores operated by Germans and Polanders. Typically there were groceries, bakeries, butcher shops, barber salons, tailor shops, dry goods stores, shoemakers, sausage shops, hardware stores, adult-beverage watering holes, doctors and dentists, haberdasheries, drug stores, restaurants and even a police station. Today these areas are hardly a skeleton of their former selves. Brown's Stocking Theater near Fourth Street, the State Theater on the northwest corner of Stocking and Second, and the Town (or Roosevelt or Alcazar) Theater on Bridge Street just west of Lexington Avenue are no more. The Polish neighborhood stores on Alpine and Seventh and on Davis and Eleventh and on many other neighborhood corners throughout the area are no more.

The Dutch Connection

Formerly, relations between Hollanders and Polanders, chiefly because of their mutual isolationism, were non-existent. The author of Gathered at the River,[38] the much-welcomed, just-published historical profiles of Grand rapids' congregations, so correctly remarks: "One of the striking things about Grand Rapids' history is that in social profile and intensity, the Dutch Reformed and Polish Catholics are a lot alike. They shared a strong devotion to religion and the immigrant's desire to succeed. Politically they split, with the Dutch Reformed supporting business interests and the Polish supporting ;unions and the working-class ticket."[39]

The condition of things, however, has somewhat been ameliorated. Intermarriage and ecumenism (since Vatican II) have helped tear down many national and religious barriers that once so devastatingly isolated these Christians, hardly exemplifying the ideal of Christian charity. They now even talk to each other and invite each other to occasions as this one. At the time of the American bicentennial, on May 7, 1976, in the Welsh civic Auditorium, the Dutch Immigrant Society and the Polish Heritage Society staged a gala "Celebration of Heritage."[40] And of recent years, each Good Friday evening the Basilica of St. Adalbert's has invited all West Side churches, including especially the Reformed and Christian Reformed churches, to participate in Passiontide services. What an auspicious occasion for a rapprochement between the Dutch and Polish groups still marginally cognizant of their ethnic heritage!

Conclusions of The Rise and Fall of the Grand Rapids Polonia

1. The Grand Rapids Polonia is only a vestige of its former self. It is really in a moribund state.
2. Its ancillary institutions: cultural groups, societies, language, newspaper, business enterprises, hall membership, political activity, etc. have been decimated.
3. Grand Rapidians of Polish antecedents are not really Poles; they are not even hyphenated Polish-Americans. They are Americans of Polish ancestry.

4. For more than a century, relations between the Dutch and Polish, despite their residential contiguity and their mutual juxta-position in the workplace, have been minimal. Of recent years they have improved.

ENDNOTES

1. Chrysostom Verwyst, Life and Labors of the Rt. Rev. Frederic Baraga: First Bishop of Marquette, Michigan. (Milwaukee, 1900). This is perhaps the most complete and definitive biography of Baraga.

   Bernard J. Lambert, Shepherd of the Wilderness. (L'Anse, 1967). This is a popular biography of the sainted missionary.

2. John Whalen McGee, The Catholic Church in the Grand River Valley. (Grand Rapids, 1951). This book has perhaps the most thorough analysis of Andreas Viszoczky available.

3. Eduard Adam Skendzel, "O Those Wild Slavs!" The Western Michigan Catholic, (December 21, 1979), 6.

4. John A. Dykstra, A History of Central Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. (Grand Rapids, 1968), 25.

5. Jacob DeJager, One Hundredth Anniversary 1857-1957 - First Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. (Grand Rapids, 1957), 10.

6. Harry Milostan, Enduring Poles. (Mount Clemens, Michigan, 1977), Chapter 13 of this text deals with the Baranowski's.

7. George A. Jackoboice, "Monarch Road Machinery Company--a West Michigan Centennial Business," Grand River Valley Review, Fall-Winter 1981, 33. There are different dates attesting to Joseph Jackoboice's arrival to Grand Rapids. The Citizens Historical Association of Indianapolis in a document dated March 14, 1936, gives 1855, as does Chapman's The History of Kent County, (1881), p. 1050. The Grand Rapids Evening Press, on the occasion of Jacoboice's death, gives 1854 as the date of his arrival. This article about the firm he founded, written by his grandson George Jacoboice, lists 1853 as the date of his arrival. (Grand River Valley Review, Fall-Winter 1981, 33.)

8. Baptismal Registry of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Vol. I.

9. Edward Symanski, "Polish Settlers in Grand Rapids, Michigan," Polish American Studies, (XXI, No. 2), 91. (The author claims that "The majority of them were skilled workers who found ready employment as shoemakers, tailors, blacksmiths, carpenters, cabinet makers and wagon makers.

10. Baptismal, Marriage, and Funeral Registries of St. Mary's Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. "Polish Names in the Parish Registries, 1857-1890." Telescript copy - xxiii + 125 pp. by Eduard Adam Skendzel.

11. Joseph Schrembs, Geschichte der St. Marien Gemeinde in Grand Rapids, Michigan. (History of St. Mary's Parish in Grand Rapids, Michigan.) Golden Jubilee Memories of St. Mary's Church, Grand Rapids, 1907, 26.

12. David G. Vanderstel, "Dutch Immigrant Neighborhood Development in Grand Rapids, 1850-1900." (cf. Footnote #34.) The author lists the

Grandville Avenue Dutch thrust as #1 of the twelve distinct neighborhoods, each composed mainly of immigrants from certain communities and regions of the Netherlands, which he identified. From Wealthy Street to Clyde Park Avenue along Grandville Avenue there were: Fifth RCA, St. Joseph's RC Church, Franklin CRC, Franklin Christian School, Grace RCA, Bethel CRC, Smith Congregational Church, Grandville Avenue CRC, and Grandville Christian School.

13. Waclaw Kruszka, Historya Polska w Ameryce, History of the Poles in America, Vol. XI. (Milwaukee, 1907), 233-235. A good history of the beginnings of the parish is found in this text.

14. Eduard Adam Skendzel, The Basilica of St. Adalbert - a Great Temple on the Grand. (Grand Rapids, 1980), 4.

15. A Book of Remembrance - Alpine Church 1881-1981. (Grand Rapids, 1980), 4. (N.P., N.A.)

16. Joseph Kubasiak, (b. 1903). Interview April 5, 1995. A retired banker, this individual, a Grand Rapids native and a grandson of Pioneer Polander Michael Kubasiak, was reared on Muskegon Avenue north of Eleventh Street. He remembers well these confrontations between Dutch and Polish youth. This recalls the derogatory ditty used against Dutch immigrants quoted by David Cornel De Jong in his 1934 text, Belly Fulla Straw: "Dutchman, Dutchman, belly fulla straw. Can't say nothin' but Ja, Ja, Ja."

17. Andrew Narloch, Ksiazka Pamiatkowa Zlotego Jubileuszu i Historja Parafji Sw. Wojciecha, Souvenir book of the Golden Jubilee and a History of St. Adalbert's Parish. (Grand Rapids, 1931), 6.

18. Eduard Adam Skendzel, "Christmas Over the Years - The Three Churches of St. Adalbert," The Western Michigan Catholic, (Dec. 22, 1983), 10-11.

19. Eduard Adam Skendzel, The Sacred Heart Story - Part of the Saga of the Pioneer-West Michigan Polanders. (Grand Rapids, 1981, 43.

20. The first history of St. Isidore's was very serendipitously found in the Vatican Secret Archives during the author's one-month research endeavor in Rome. It is entitled Szkola i Kosciol Sw. Stanislawa B.M.-1897, (St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr, School and Church). The parish was initially called St. Stanislaus. How it came to be called St. Isidore's is a story in its own right. To date, this twenty-page brochure is really the only history of the near-centennial parish.

21. A full definitive history of Sacred Heart Parish was written in 1881 on the occasion of its diamond jubilee. Cf. Footnote #19.

22. Skendzel, Op. Cit., 162.

23. Eduard Adam Skendzel, "Easter Bells in Old Grand Rapids," The Western Michigan Catholic, (April 8, 1982), 11.

24. In 1892, a twelve-page brochure was published giving an account of the expenses incurred in the building of the new brick school. Besides a cursory history, it gives a complete listing of Polanders than in Grand

Rapids, making it very valuable for genealogists. Long searched for, this brochure was found very serendipitously in an old box of newspapers and articles presented the author of this Dutch-Polish study by octogenarian Joseph Szczepanski of St. Adalbert's parish in January of 1990.

25. The Grand Rapids Saturday Evening Post, October 10, 1874, 5:2 "Holland Aid Society."

The Grand Rapids Democrat, May 31, 1900, 3:3-4, "Dutch Societies" - Knickerbocker Society, Dutch Alliance, Holland-American Aid Society, Holland Aid Society, Barnabas Society.

26. Halls in Grand Rapids at the turn of the century.

Germans, Germania Hall on Front Avenue, just north of Bridge Street, which later became Eagles Club and which was razed most recently for Bridgewater Place.
St. Joseph Casino at the SW corner of Scribner and Third Avenue, was razed for the 131 Freeway in the early 1960s.
Arbeiter Hall, at the north west corner of Lexington Avenue and Chatham Street, was razed in the 1940s.
Turnverein Hall, an athletic club on the south west corner of Lexington at Jackson, now called the Lexicon Club.

Swedish Hall, South west corner of Douglas street at Seward Avenue, now a 40 and 8 veterans' club.

Danish Hall, 518 Schribner Avenue, south of Second Street, which later became the West Side Ladies Literary Club and eventually razed for freeway construction.

Hibernian Hall (Irish), 415 Ottawa Avenue, which later became the Grand Rapids Labor Temple and eventually razed for urban renewal.

Holland-American Hall at 439 Ottawa Avenue, directly across the street from Beth Israel Orthodox Synagogue at 438 Ottawa Avenue. It was eventually razed for urban renewal.

Lithuanians, St. George's Hall, on Quarry Avenue, just north of Webster Avenue. It is still extant.
SS. Peter and Paul Hall, on Hamilton Avenue, just north of Quarry Avenue. Amalgamated with St. George's. Hall vacated.
Sons and Daughters Lithuanian Hall, at 1057 Hamilton Avenue, south of Leonard Street. A non-church-related group.

Polish West Side
St. Adalbert Casino, NW corner of Fifth and Davis (1872).
St. Hyacinth Hall, NE corner of Ninth and Muskegon (1886).
Knights of St. Casimir Hall, NE corner of Sixth and Davis (1895).
St. Hedwig's Hall, NE corner of Fourth and McReynolds (1904). Liquidated in 1970s. Presently a union hall (American Seating Company).
Polish National Alliance Hall, Jackson Street, west of Lane Avenue (1878).
Taxpayers Hall, First Street, just east of Stocking, was burned out and the society liquidated. Originally built for Deutsche Landwehr Unterstutzungs Verein - German Army Benevolent Society.
Polish Veterans Hall, Bridge Street east of Fremont, liquidated in 1982 and sold.
Swantek Hall, a privately owned facility on Stocking at Second Street. Operation ceased long ago and building razed.

Polish East Side	St. Isidore Casino, known popularly as Diamond Avenue Hall, at Diamond and Baraga (1892). Sacred Heart Hall, known popularly as Eastern Avenue Hall, at Eastern and Harvey (1896). St. Stanislaus Hall, known popularly as Little Hall, on Michigan Street east of Eastern Avenue (1898). Lipczynski Hall, Eastern Avenue, just north of Michigan Street, privately operated by John and Valeria Lipczynski, community leaders. Liquidated years ago and razed in the 1970s. Zukowski Hall, Baraga Street, west of Diamond Avenue, privately operated and liquidated years ago.
Polish South Side	Sacred Heart Hall, popularly known as Kosciuszko Hall, NW corner of Park at Gunnison (1903). St. Ladislaus Hall, popularly known as Ladies' Hall, on Lane Avenue, south of West Fulton Street. Falcons' Hall, NE corner West Fulton at Lane.

27. The local newspapers in the early years of this century had many articles reporting police interaction at the Polish Halls. E.g. Daily News (Grand Rapids), February 11, 1910, 6:2; Evening Press, May 12, 1910, 2:2-4.

28. Microfilm copies of the Echo from 1908 to 1928, inclusive, are found in the Grand Rapids Public Library. Unfortunately, copies from 1900 to 1907 are unavailable, nor are those (except for some isolated actual copies) from 1929 to 1957.

29. The Kuryer z Grand Rapids was a nationally distributed paper, published in Chicago, which reserved one or two pages for a particular city for news of the local Polonia, e.g. like the Grand Rapids edition. It was located very serendipitously in January of 1993 in the stacks of the Michigan Room at the Grand Rapids Public Library by Dr. Richard Harms, archivist, and identified by this author.

30. The Evening Press (Grand Rapids), August 28, 1899, 32.

31. Eduard Adam Skendzel, "Polonian Roots in Grand Rapids," The Eaglet, Vol. 2, No. 3. (September, 1982). This publication is the official organ of the Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan, operating from the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library.

    The Polish National Catholic Church was established in the 1897-1904 time span as a result of schisms in Buffalo, Chicago, and Scranton. It is really the only major schism to have affected the Roman Catholic Church in the United States, presently having a constituency of approximately 300,000, four dioceses, and some 200 parishes.

    Cf. Victor Greene, "Poles," Harvard Encyclopedia of Ethnic Groups, 794.

32. Jeffrey D. Kleinman, The Great Strike: "Religion, Labor and Reform in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1890-1916." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, (Michigan State University, 1985), 97. Chapter II - The Divided City 1890-1906, and Chapter IV, The Great Strike of 1911, are especially germane to this paper in that they develop Dutch and Polish relations at length.

33. Case H. Vink and Sheryl Barlow Smalligan, "Chapter III - 1924: The People and the Issues," *100 Years in the Covenant - Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church 1879-1979*. (Grand Rapids, 1979), 30-40.

Gertrude Hoeksema, *God's Covenant Faithfulness*. (Grand Rapids, 1975), 13-15.

Gertrude Hoeksema, *A Watered Garden - A Brief History of the Protestant Reformed Church*. (Grand Rapids, 1992), Chap. 1-6, (75 pages).

34. David Vander Stel, "The Dutch of Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1848-1900: Immigrant Neighborhoods and community Development in a Nineteenth Century City" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 1983), 125-153. Found in Robert P. Swierenga, ed., *The Dutch in America: Immigration, Settlement, and cultural Change*, (New Brunswick, NJ, 1985).

35. Kleiman, *Op. Cit*., cf. Footnote #32.

36. These and subsequent general parish and school figures were obtained on July 2, 1993, at the offices of the three Polish parishes.

37. On the occasion of this first weekend in October celebration, an 8 1/2 by 11-inch souvenir booklet entitled "Pulaski Days" has regularly been published. Replete with pictures and colorful ads, the 1991 unpaginated, sixty-four-page issue contains but one historical or patriotic page about General Pulaski. This is a typical issue.

38. James D. Bratt and Christopher H. Meehan, *Gathered at the River: Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Its People of Faith*. (Grand Rapids, 1993), 65-81.

39. Ed Golder, "History in the Making - New Book Tells the Story of Grand Rapids' Churches, Religious Development," *The Grand Rapids Press*, (October 2, 1993), B1 and B3. Reference is made to James D. Bratt's statement on B3:2.

40. An excellent 16-page, 8 1/2 by 11-inch brochure entitled "The Polish Heritage Society and the Dutch Immigrant Society Present a 'Celebration of Heritage'" was published for this bicentennial celebration, with a goodly number of very pertinent photographs and a good portion of historical text.