

Call for Papers
International Conference

Poles in Chicago: The Experience of an Immigrant.

Integration, Isolation and Assimilation

Poland, Warsaw, 14–15 June 2018

The conference will explore the immigrant experience of Poles coming to and living in Chicago over approximately the last 150 years. It will examine experiences and practices relating to integration into American society, as well as the efforts involved in maintaining a Polish identity. There will be discussion of strategies and practices related changes to identity and entryways into the American reality that have been adopted by different generations of migrants, as well as the varied backgrounds and common values that helped them build strong ties within the Polish American communities. The conference will offer a unique perspective on the experience of many immigrant populations that have fueled the city's growth and shaped its identity. The main goals of the conference are to explore the history and significance of Polish immigrants in Chicago, to describe their daily lives and the struggles, and the challenges they faced, and to better understand their accomplishments in the new social and economic environment.

The conference intends to reveal the early experiences of a typical immigrant community and to explore the ways that members of the Polish community have strived to preserve its identity while integrating into the Chicago community and American society. What did it mean to the Polish immigrant to be considered an American or Chicagoan, and how that has changed over time? Was being Polish and American complementary or were they mutually exclusive identities? Finally, the conference would like to examine how the mobility of Polish immigrants since 1989 has changed the immigrant experience.

Papers can present both group and individual cases that represent general issues. Suggested topics should offer historical, sociological and anthropological approaches to the problems. Preferred perspectives will include the use of visual

materials to exemplify experiences, such as photographs and historical iconography, images of objects, architectural objects, etc.

The conference will deal with the following questions, among others:

- * Arrival of the first Poles to Chicago: main reasons for emigration from Poland, ways of emigration, problems of the first immigrants, why Poles chose Chicago, what made Chicago so attractive to so many Poles between the 1850s and the 1930s, and again, since 1980.

- * Polish community in Chicago from the middle of 19th century to contemporary times: sociological and historical analysis focusing on waves of emigration: from emigration for economic reasons to the “Solidarity” emigration, and emigration after 1989 – social, professional and religious structure, integration and assimilation into American society.

- * Social life of the Polish community in Chicago: fraternal organizations, community support societies, professional societies, social pathology and crime among Polish immigrants.

- * Politics activity of the Polish immigrants: participation in the social and political life of Chicago, politics and political organizations in the Polish community, participation in and attitude toward politics of the Polish state.

- * Religion and role of the Roman Catholic church in preserving sense of the Polish national identity: relations with the American church, the Polish National Catholic Church, Polish churches and Polish parishes in Chicago; traditions of the Polish church holidays; Polish parochial schools.

- * Family as a place of cultivating Polish language, Polish traditions and Polish life style, mixed families and their identity choices, problems of everyday life, relations with neighbors, experience of different generations of immigrants, problems of Polish children, youth and seniors.

- * Family in Poland: economic assistance, visits to Poland, bringing family to Chicago.

- * Education in the Polish and American schools: adaptation to conditions in American schools, Polish community schools, parochial schools, and Polish studies at Chicago universities.

- * Work: places of employment of the Polish immigrants, adaptation to new work conditions, employers from the Polish community.

- * Everyday life in the Polish community: housing, neighborhoods, shops, restaurants, clubs, cuisine, culture of everyday life.
- * Creation of Polish culture in Chicago: radio programs, newspapers and magazines, film and theatre, museums, research centers, the presence of Polish culture in Chicago: annual May 3rd parade, Pułaski Day, Polish Heritage Month, and other celebrations.
- * The Polish community in Chicago during the First and Second World Wars.
- * Case studies – stories of Polish immigrants in Chicago.
- * Poles in business – Polish businesses in Chicago.

The conference is being organized by the Polish History Museum in Warsaw in cooperation with the Chicago History Museum, the Polish Museum of America and the Interdisciplinary Polish Studies Program of Loyola University Chicago.

All those interested are encouraged to participate – both as presenters and as auditors. The conference organizers will provide the presenters with accommodation and meals during the conference. Conference participation is free of charge. The language of the conference will be Polish and English (simultaneous interpretation will be provided).

The deadline for conference paper proposals (to be submitted on the attached form) is January 31, 2018. Please enclose, along with the proposal, an abstract of your paper of up to 500-700 words in English or Polish and a short CV.

The conference program will be made available by February 28, 2018.

Submissions and additional questions should be sent to:

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