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the development of a land poor, agricultural poor country led to many Polish migrating West in hope of finding a better sense of life. This was true of my stepfather's grandparents, who came to the United States from Poland around 1915. " During the late 19th and early 20th Century, social as well as economical hardships fell upon a country which saw more than three million emigrate overseas to the New Land." (American Identity). The mass movement of people was the result of the reforms of the legal systems governing land ownership in all three states occupying parts of Poland.

Upon the collapse of the feudal system, many poor Polish peasants inherited land that was simply unaffordable to them. The peasants had to pay the previous landowner for their small farms; they did this by working at his farm, usually hard long hours allowing minimal hours for him to farm his own land. Thrusting all other members of family to find work in any area possible to put food on the table. " Jobs however, were simply not to be had due to the economical backwardness, which occurred by the vast rise in population and the slow industrial growth." The mass amounts of manpower looking for jobs, coupled with a very new industry which couldn't support the mass manpower led to mass migration out of Poland into many countries, the greatest of these the United States.

The emigrant travels usually started by train, bringing them from their homeland to ship ports across Europe. Once at such ports, a ticket was to be purchased, costing anywhere from \$25-35, which enabled the passage to begin. The voyage, lasting about two months in the mid 1800's fell drastically to eight to fifteen days in the early 1900's. Aboard huge steamboats, migrants were cramped and sleeping space was confined to

compacted bunks, outlined by poor ventilation. " A report to congress in 1909 called the conditions disgusting and demoralizing" (American Identity - Immigrants arriving in NY 1906). Upon arrival to America, immigration authorities first investigated them.

Arrival for the early immigrants landed them in Castel Garden Island, and later on Ellis Island. After passing through immigration, which consisted of medical as well as legal inspection, Poles were often met by relatives or representatives of Polish National Union or some other organization. Typically, however, they had to continue their journey by themselves.

Clearing immigration inspection many Poles were attracted to midwestern life, namely Detroit and Chicago because of the vastly increasing opportunity for occupation. Of the many options, which were presenting was; the building of railroads, the paving of streets, and in the city's rapidly expanding manufacturing industries. " Between 1910 and 1920 the number of foreign born whites in Detroit nearly doubled.

The largest group, the Poles, accounted for 20% of foreign born whites" (American Identity - Thirteenth U. S. Census). Poles were attracted to manufacturing rich parts of the United States.

The labor force used in large part for this industrial expansion comprised of Polish immigrants. Unskilled in any trade, the Poles were forced to begin their careers at the lowest level of employment. As such groups as the Germans and Irish sought advancements in their occupational opportunities, the Polish were forced to the unskilled lower paying professions.

“ Such professions included in stove works, in cigar and tobacco factories, in foundries, in machine shops, in construction work, and in packing houses. Women, at first found mainly in the domestic service, in the bean factories, and in farm work, soon drifted to the cigar factories, the match factories, to hotels and restaurants, and to tailoring establishments. (Dziennik Polski, 4 (Fri. Dec. 20, 1907). 1-4, Col. 7; Personal interviews.

) Polish immigrants tried to fit into American culture. With the key to success for Polish to be like the many, English was mandatory as well as American customs. On the contrary, Chinese immigrants who mostly settled in California, mainly the San Francisco area developed a self-sufficient community, which was properly labeled Chinatown.

Unlike the Polish, Chinese immigrants consisted of 90% males that worked to support not only themselves but also family back home. “ Chinese workers played a key role in the Californian agricultural development.” (American Identity – Chinese agricultural workers). Working conditions, much like that of the Polish was very unsanitary.

Bottom of the barrel jobs where cheap labor was needed, laid the commonality between Chinese and Polish job-hunts. Another group, which likewise was shown discrimination against, was the Italians. They unlike the Polish didn't migrate entirely to the industrial boom. Many went to California to do what they knew best, fishing. However, many Italians like the Polish “ took seasonal work as well as working for the railroads” (American Identity – Italian Occupations). In contrast, all of these groups had a common identity. All cultures came to make money the best way they could.

By doing this, all had the commonality of a better lifestyle. Polish migrants, being deeply devoted religious people, built expensive churches to ease their transition into America. The first Polish settlement was organized in the neighborhood of the first Polish Roman Catholic church. Built as luxurious palaces, the Church united the Polish, as a common symbol that eluded pride out of the timid new Americans. Bringing a sense of unity at a time where self-searching was definite, these churches united the Poles into proud Polish-Americans.

In the Polish communities, building and loan cooperatives began early and spread widely. Centered by their core, the church, it was run by a wide interest of people who got to share their views equally. Its purpose was to amass funds from small regular contributions upon which members could draw to purchase homes. This was the basis for which their first mutual aid societies were formed. The death benefit ran in a similar style, amassing financial effectiveness by having individuals pay small amounts yearly until the death of the loved one occurred. The insurance covered a proper burial, as well as financial stability once the loved one passed on.

A larger association, free from church ties was the Polish National Alliance. Made up of many smaller organizations helped guide the Polish into a easier transition into American life. " The Union encouraged all Polish to take on an American style of living, by encouraging them to vote, become U. S citizens, and to take stand in the Nations public needs. It has encouraged Polish people to build their social institutions, including parishes and schools, and to actively support further advancements of these institutions" (American

Identity). Establishing a better means cannot simply occur through self-involvement alone.

The reactions and the responses the Poles encountered helped mold them into Americans. " The great goal of America was to impress the men, that they are, or should be Americans, and that prior alliance to any other country shall be disregarded" (American Identity - English School outside of Ford Plant). Polish Americans, better than most groups blended with the American style of life and with its previous inhabitants. The attitude of the Poles towards slavery was very strongly against the issue. Since they themselves were against all forced servitude in their motherland, they didn't support American enslavement.

Because of this, many Polish were treated like the Blacks themselves. Problems arrived with the Jewish race soon after the End of WW1. " Polish-Jewish relations were strained by tensions over events in Eastern Europe concerning Poland's return to independence, the plight of its largest minority, and the post-war Minorities Treaty extending equal rights to ethnic minorities" (American Identity - Peddling in Hamtramck)." Following the 1890's, a gradual rise in the social status of Poles from unskilled to skilled labor or to independent business activity is evident. While nearly all the Poles before 1890 could be classified as laborers, in 1900, according to Federal statistics, the percentage of that group decreased to approximately 47 per cent. Although not absolutely conclusive, these statistics show the general tendencies in economic life: the Poles were making their way into practically every field of economic activity; there were among them brokers, bookkeepers and accountants, commercial travelers, electricians, engineers,

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foremen, government officials, officials of banks and companies, and the like. In the professional fields the Poles had few representatives during the first two or three decades" (J.

0. Curwood, " An Ethnographical Study of Detroit," The Detroit News-Tribune, 68 (Sun. Aug. 21, 1904), 4, Col. 3.)