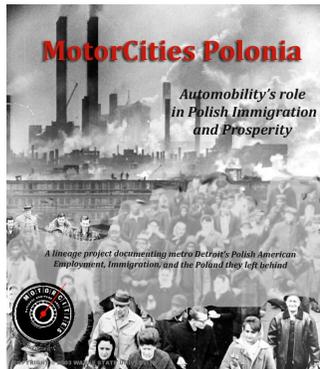


MotorCities Heritage Grant Funds New Project:

MotorCities Polonia Automobility Drove Metro Detroit's Polish-American Prosperity



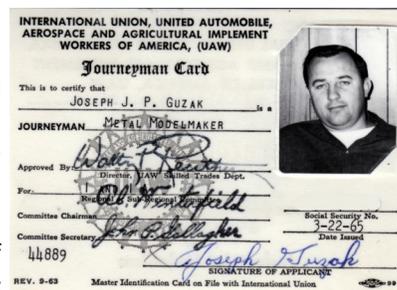
Transistor radios filled the airwaves with odes to pink Cadillacs, little deuce coupes, and red corvettes. We sang along; but did we know who built these auto icons? Many were built by Polish-Americans, the unsung line workers employed by the Big Three. Men with names like Franek, Jan, and Stan fabricated the hot rods; and the more mundane Chevys, Fords, and Dodges. Over time, the prosperity enjoyed by these laborers allowed them to send their children to skilled trade schools and colleges becoming the engineers and designers of the industry. Today, many metro Detroit Polish-American families can document four generations of their family who found work and the "American Dream" via employment in the industry. From the Michigan Polonia lecture *Working the Line*, The MotorCities National Heritage Area (MCNHA) awards The Polish Mission at Orchard Lake Schools the maximum grant of \$10,000 to facilitate the creation of a lineage project documenting Polish-American autoworkers. The Polonica Americana Research Institute (PARI) will offer workshops that will guide researchers in completing three components of their history: employment in the auto industry; documentation of the immigration process; and a description of the economic status of the Polish village they left behind. Cecile Jensen, Director of PARI, is seeking participants who would like to enroll in the workshops and submit their family histories. Her latest publication-*Sto Lat: A Modern Guide to Polish Genealogy*-will be the manual for the project. The completed family histories will expand the international knowledge of the Polish experience in the auto industry.

Mike Smith, Director of the Walter Reuther Library, states: The Walter Reuther Library at Wayne State University, the official archives for the UAW, is extremely pleased to work with The Polish Mission on this most important endeavor. The founding and growth of the UAW is entwined with the history of Polish immigrants and Polish-Americans, who were significant contributors to the development of the automobile industry. The Reuther Library will support this great project with materials and images from our extensive UAW archives and I will personally work with The Polish Mission. Finally, congratulations to The Polish Mission and PARI on receiving this grant.

According to Marcin Chumiecki, Director of The Polish Mission: This is an incredible opportunity to tell how Poles helped build the American Dream in Metro Detroit. Leading Polish-American genealogist, Cecile Jensen, is well qualified to facilitate this project. I cannot wait until Cecile introduces this project in September at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków and at the National Library of Poland in Warsaw during the international conference XXXII *sesji Statej Konferencji Muzeów, Archiwów i Bibliotek Polskich*.

Joe Guziak has an impressive resume that includes working 39.6 years at General Motors, 6 years at Ford Motor Company, and three months with Chrysler. He is, along with his wife Betty, a founding member of the Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan. Joe states: I would like to honor my Polish immigrant grandfathers, Florian Guziak and Vincent Cison. They came to America, the land of opportunity, to find work and freedom. Without their courage and success, I would not be here to have the privilege to tell my humble story.

Cecile feels: It is fitting that we begin this lineage project during the 125th anniversary of the Orchard Lake Schools. Our research continues the education tradition established by our founder, Father Józef Dąbrowski.



For complete details go to www.polishmission.com.

The Polonica Americana Research Institute (PARI) is a new department of The Polish Mission located on the historic campus of St. Mary's of Orchard Lake, Michigan. PARI was developed to enhance these preservation efforts.

About the MotorCities National Heritage Area

MotorCities National Heritage Area is an affiliate of the National Park Service dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and promoting the automotive and labor heritage of the State of Michigan. The programs and activities of the MotorCities National Heritage Area are designed to increase tourism throughout the region by developing and deploying educational and informational programs that tell the story of the American automobile industry and labor in our region. For more information visit www.motorcities.org