

The Milwaukee Ukrainians

Early History in Milwaukee

Ukrainians began arriving in Milwaukee early in the twentieth century, settling in the Walker's Point neighborhood. Included in the numbers were members of both the Ukrainian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholic Church.

In 1917, members of the Orthodox Church of the growing Ukrainian-American population purchased an old Norwegian Lutheran building on the Near South Side. This site, now known as St. Mary's Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Churchⁱ, became a central hub for the city's ethnic population. Located at 1231 W. Scott, in the center of the area where most Ukrainians had settled, the church attracted both Orthodox as well as non- Orthodox Ukrainians for services, but also for the chance to socialize with other members of their ethnic group--regardless of religious and cultural differences

Later History in Milwaukee

Additional immigrants arrived after World War Two, as many Eastern Europeans fled their homes in the aftermath of war. The 1948 Displaced Persons Act and later amendments helped to increase the number of Ukrainians and other Eastern Europeans who qualified for immigration to the United States.

Soon the new arrivals would build another church—this time a Catholic one. In the 1950s, Ukrainian Milwaukeeans purchased a church just blocks from St. Mary's Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and named it St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Churchⁱⁱ. Located at 1025 South 11th Street, St. Michael's is built of cream city bricks on a very simple plan with a modest central spire. Both institutions provided opportunities for the Ukrainian population to worship, socialize, and maintain cultural practices. Both still hold some services in Ukrainian.



St. Mary's Protectress
Ukrainian Orthodox
Church



St. Michael's Ukrainian
Catholic Church

"My grandparents came here in the early 20th century and settled in the Walker's Point area. But I think just about every immigrant that ever set foot in Milwaukee got their start in that neighborhood."

"Some of us [Ukrainians] were Orthodox. Some were Catholic. Some were Jewish. Some were atheists. Many who came later from the Soviet Union were atheists. The Christians I think stuck together more because they had their churches as a center of the community."

Quotes of Ukrainian informants from the 12-year Milwaukee ethnic study conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.

The last large wave of Ukrainians arrived in Milwaukee following the breakup of the former Soviet Union. Slowly, some Ukrainian Milwaukeeans began to migrate to other areas of City. In the Layton Park neighborhood, Ukrainians, as well as others of Ethiopian, Eritrean, East Indian, Greek, Romanian, Albanian, Bulgarian, and Serbian backgrounds also worship at St. Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Churchⁱⁱⁱ at 2505 S. 30th Street. Some Ukrainians moved to Milwaukee's North Side. Today, over 3,000 people in the metropolitan area identify as being of Ukrainian ancestry.

St. Cyril and Methodius
Orthodox Church



"A lot were on the South Side. A few on the North Side. There was a dentist on, I think, South 76th Street, who was a major figure in the Ukrainian community. He also had some kind of role in Marquette's School of Dentistry."

Quotes of Ukrainian informants from the 12-year Milwaukee ethnic study conducted by Urban Anthropology Inc.

Meet two of your past Ukrainian neighbors

Natalia Artymko Dowhy and Nicolai Dowhy^{iv}

Born in 1893 in Komarno, L'viv, Ukraine, Natalia Artymko immigrated to the United States with her family in 1913. Two years later, Natalia married Nicolai Dowhy in Milwaukee. Nicolai was born in the County of Kiev, Ukraine, in 1891. He was naturalized in 1927.

The couple settled on North 22nd Street, where they purchased a home. Nicolai took a job in a tannery. Over the

next 25 years, the couple had five children—three boys and two girls.

At least one of the children served during World War Two and at least two of the children eventually settled on the South Side, within a mile of either of the Ukrainian churches.

Natalia died in 1985 and Nicolai in 1975. All the children have since passed.



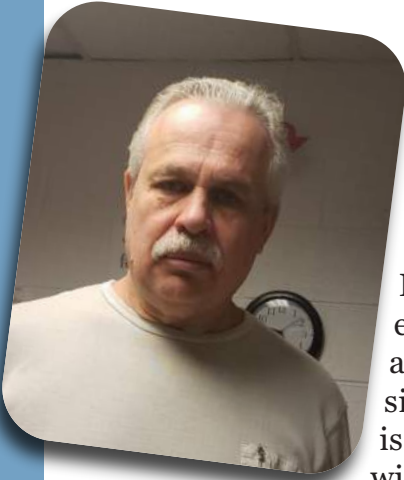
Meet one of your current Ukrainian neighbors

Alexander Letzer

Alexander Letzer is a proud Ukrainian. He describes himself as Ukrainian/Russian. “I stay connected to other members of my ethnic group through social networks, celebrations and holidays,” he states. “I eat ethnic food, listen to ethnic music, and tell stories.” The

national dish of Ukraine that originates from the country is borsch, a sour soup with beets as the main ingredient. However, *varenyky* (dumplings) and *holubtsi* (cabbage rolls) are also considered national favorites of the Ukrainian people.

With a bachelor’s degree in Civil & Instructional Engineering, Alexander works as a maintenance engineer. His hobbies include ping-pong, soccer and basketball. When asked about his most significant achievement, he replies, “My family is my most proud accomplishment.” He has a wife and two children.



References

Reck, Bill. *Encyclopedia of Milwaukee: Ukrainians*.
<https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/ukrainians/>

ⁱ Photo attribution: <https://www.joinmychurch.com/photo-galleries/Saint-Mary-Protectress-Ukrainian-Orthodox-Church-Milwaukee-Wisconsin-United-States/all-photos/242416>

ⁱⁱ Photo attribution: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem_Evangelical_Church_\(Milwaukee,_Wisconsin\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem_Evangelical_Church_(Milwaukee,_Wisconsin))

ⁱⁱⁱ Photo attribution: <https://www.joinmychurch.com/maps-and-directions/SS-Cyril-and-Methodius-Church-Milwaukee-Wisconsin-United-States/70826>

^{iv} Photo attribution: Public records at www.ancestry.com