The phenomenal expansion of American cities during the few decades prior to and after the turn of the twentieth century resulted from mass European immigration. Diverse peoples, seeking economic opportunities, headed for the cities where they filled the need for unskilled labor in the rapidly rising factories. At the same time, however, they sought security by establishing ethnic communities. Consequently, American industrial centers came to resemble a multinational mosaic, a mini-Europe.

A major city where well defined ethnic communities developed was Buffalo, New York. Its Polish community, originating in 1873, was by the 1920's not only the largest in the city, but perhaps most outstanding for its adherence to Old World linguo-cultural values. Its people, nevertheless, took great pride in being Americans and adapted inasmuch as they deemed feasible to the majority culture. In brief, the Poles acquired "a fair knowledge of American traditions, legends and customs, and yet this acquisition did not result in a corresponding loss of Polish cultural elements."!

This cultural dualism appears to have had its roots in the ideals which emanated from St. Stanislaus B. & M. Church, the mother church, which in size and influence overshadowed for many years the other Polish churches in western New York. Incidentally, the parish owes much of its prosperity, progress, and stability to the fact that during its century of existence only three pastors, each with an outstanding administrative ability, guided its spiritual and temporal affairs.

It is the purpose of this essay to summarize a century of socio-historical development of St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish. As most other Polish American communities, St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish experienced four developmental phases: the pioneer period, the Polish period, the transition period, and the period of integration and intercultural cooperation with these being followed by successive socio-cultural developments.2 The three pastors of St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish happened to have administered the parish within the scope of three consecutive periods beginning with the Polish one. Each pastor in his own way influenced acculturation and the social development of the parish.

THE PIONEER PERIOD — Before 1873

Poles have been known to have taken at least a temporary residence in Buffalo as early as 1834. The Western Star, the first Buffalo daily newspaper, mentions two army officers exiled by the Austrian government for participating in the Polish Uprising of 1830.3 Both stayed briefly in Buffalo. Another Polish officer, Anthony Wegierski, gained renown as a dance and French teacher. Casimir Gzowski, also an exiled officer of the same uprising, became outstanding in western New York for
the construction of the first bridge to span the Niagara River.

There were other more or less known individuals scattered over Buffalo, but they were so few in number that they failed to be recorded, or for that matter, recognized as Poles. In the 1860's the number of Polish immigrants to Buffalo increased and they became gradually noticeable as a group.

THE POLISH PERIOD 1873-1914

It was shortly before 1870 that the Polish peasant immigrants began to settle in the cities and towns of western New York. Most of them came at first from the Prussian-held sector of Poland where Bismarck's policies increased discontent causing a swell of emigration from the Polish provinces. In Buffalo they settled within the German community becoming rather widespread in a few years. When they assembled on Sundays first in the rear of St. Mary's Church on Broadway and then in the chapel reserved for them in St. Michael's Church on Washington Street, it could be seen that the group represented a new element in Buffalo which was increasing very rapidly. Differing in language and culture from the groups already established in Buffalo, these people were in need of a community of their own until they could be acculturated to the new country. The desire of the Polish people to have a parish of their own headed by a Polish priest, led to a coordinated effort on the part of the local bishop and the German clergy to procure one for them.

FATHER JOHN PITASS

The man chosen to organize the first Polish parish in western New York was John Pitass, a twenty-nine-year-old theology student in Rome, Italy. Born in 1844 in Piekary, Silesia, a region of Poland then under German rule, he completed his elementary and secondary education there before leaving in 1868 to study in Rome. He came to America in May 1873; and that same year, on June 8, the day after his ordination to the priesthood, he organized St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish for which he planned a church-school centered community in an unpopulated area east beyond the German community.

Father John Pitass remained pastor of St. Stanislaus B.M. Parish until his death in 1913, that is for forty years. Historically, these were the years of greatest mass immigration from Europe, a fact which accounted for the origin and growth of ethnic parishes like St. Stanislaus B. & M. in Buffalo. The parish began with 82 families with the number increasing to about 300 by 1880. These constituted more or less a homogeneous group as most of these people emigrated from Prussian-held Poland.

The small frame church, dedicated January 25, 1874, and the school which opened the following April, provided at first sufficient accommodations for the needs of the relatively small community which scarcely changed in size until 1880.5 No doubt, Father John Pitass and his parishioners anticipated an eventual expansion of the Polish community with the arrival eventually of many more immigrants. What occurred, however, was beyond anyone's expectations.

RAPID GROWTH

Mass immigration from Poland which began about 1870 gained momentum shortly before 1880. The newcomers headed largely for the big cities especially those where a Polish community al-
ready existed. It was not unusual to see on certain days two passenger trains full of Polish immigrants stop at Buffalo. Housing problems with acute shortage of living space were very common then.

As St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish membership suddenly doubled and tripled in less than two years, Father John Pitass began to plan for a large two-level church the construction of which began in 1882. It was completed and dedicated in 1886 although its lower level was put to use already in the autumn of 1883.

Despite the formation in 1886 of St. Adalbert Parish in close proximity, St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish continue to grow by leaps and bounds. Parish records, especially for years before the turn of the century, reveal data of almost unbelievable proportions. There were for example in the years from 1890 to 1894 more than one thousand baptisms per year with the climax of 1221 reached in 1892.6 That same year 182 couples took marriage vows and there were 457 burial services. One can imagine how busy Father John Pitass must have been administering the sacraments besides involving himself with the parish church building projects and other activities.

Faced with an acute shortage of teachers when St. Stanislaus B. & M. School enrollment began to rise rapidly, Father John Pitass invited the Felician Sisters to fill that need. Three Sisters came from Polonia, Wisconsin, on December 27, 1881,7 to staff the girls' section of the school. A decade later, 22 Sisters and a few laymen who taught older boys, staffed a school which from 1892 to 1899 had an annual enrollment of more than 2000 pupils.8

IMPACT

The continuous four-decade influx of Polish immigrants to Buffalo had a significant impact on the development and the socio-cultural evolution of the Polish community especially of St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish. The newcomers kept reinforcing the Old World values and delaying acculturation. In turn, Father John Pitass and his successor were also steadfast in their adherence to Polish heritage. Consequently, the parish, as the largest and the most influential, overshadowed until almost the 1920's, the other Polish parishes in western New York with the spirit of Polishness.

ORGANIZATIONS

St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish has been characterized by the number of its various organizations. Some were strictly church societies founded before or shortly after the church was organized. Among them were the Society of St. Stanislaus B. & M., the Society of St. Casimir, the Society of St. Adalbert, the Holy Rosary Society, the Society of the Living Rosary, the Society of the Infant Jesus, and the Society of the Apostleship of Prayer. Two fraternal benefit insurance associations, the Polish Roman Catholic Union and the Polish Union of America founded in 1873 and 1890 respectively, had very close ties with the church, the first having at one time as many as 13 separate groups and the second as many as seven, each of which held its meetings on the parish premises. In time, cultural organizations, such as the Moniuszko Singing Society, the Perła Dramatic Club, and St. Stanislaus Athletic Club were founded to fill the need for recreation, culture and entertainment in the parish.9
COMMUNITY LIFE—BUSINESS CENTERS

» An almost self sufficient community developed around St. Stanislaus B. & M. Church where, except for employment, the people had all their needs satisfied. Enterprising Polish merchants opened grocery and meat stores, tailor and millinery shops and other stores with a variety of merchandise. Peckham Street between Fillmore and Smith became the main shopping center with stores gradually opening and spreading out to the side streets.

With the organization of St. Adalbert Parish in 1886, Polish businessmen foresaw the need of a new shopping center to attract into one area the members of the original and the newly-formed Polish parish. The choice fell on Broadway to which most businessmen from Peckham moved shortly and where many other enterprises opened. It was at this time that the famous Polish Broadway Market opened.

THE PRESS

In most early Polish American communities, a newspaper in the Polish language helped bridge the cultural barrier. It gave news of the Old World and also acquainted the immigrants in their native language with the important political and social events occurring in the host country as well as with the educational, religious and economic aspects of the majority culture.

The first Polish weekly, the Ojczyzna (Fatherland), appeared in Buffalo in 1885. It evolved by 1887 into Polak w Ameryce (Pole in America) under the sole ownership of Father John Pitass. For more than three decades the newspaper served as a powerful medium of unifying the Polish community inasmuch as it informed them of the current news in the New World as well as in the Old. Perhaps the greatest merit of the paper was in its struggle for the rights of Poles in America, specifically in western New York. Its editorials stressed the importance of the preservation of the Polish language, of Polish Catholicism and of the Polish parochial school. It denounced the failure of the Catholic hierarchy in America to allow the Polish clergy to rise to episcopal positions. Already at the turn of the century Poles in America were fast becoming a major ethnic group; yet, as Roman Catholics they failed to have representation among the bishops.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

There were many "firsts" in the life of Father John Pitass. As the organizer of the first Polish community and Polish parish in Buffalo, he hoped to satisfy the many needs of his people. A church, a school building, parish organizations, and a newspaper were essential but not sufficient.

In 1891, Father John Pitass purchased a 20-acre farm on Pine Ridge Road for a parish cemetery. In time, additional acreage became necessary as the cemetery became the burial ground for the deceased from almost all the Polish parishes in Buffalo.

As early as April 26, 1882, Father John Pitass entrusted to the care of the (Felician) Sisters the first orphan, initiating in this way a form of a hospital or an orphanage in his parish. This in turn gave origin to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Home for Children the Sisters opened in 1895.
In 1894, Bishop Stephen Ryan appointed Father John Pitass dean of the Polish churches in his diocese. This nomination was the only one of its kind in the history of the Polish Americans. Its importance lay in the fact that while other bishops failed to acknowledge national identities of diverse peoples in their dioceses, Bishop Ryan acknowledged the Polish people in his diocese as an ethnic group with its own cultural needs including that of spiritual leadership.

Despite many obstacles St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish continued to flourish during the Polish era. Father John Pitass, as the first Polish priest in Buffalo, surmounted numerous difficulties to attain his goals. He has merited the title of the founder and patriarch of the Buffalo Polish community as well as of practically every Polish parish within Buffalo and the neighboring dioceses.

When Father John Pitass died December 11, 1913, after almost forty years as pastor of St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish, both the parish and the Polish community of Buffalo were among the largest of the Polish communities in the country.

Most social historians believe that an era of cultural transition began in the immigrant communities shortly after the passage of Immigration Restriction Laws in the 1920's. However, in the Buffalo community, especially in St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish, a cultural transition with an effort to retain as much as possible of the Polish linguo-cultural heritage, began shortly after the death of its first pastor when his successor assumed that position.

Rev. Dr. Alexander Pitass, the nephew of the first pastor, became the second pastor of St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish in January 1914. Faithful to the ideals of his uncle, Monsignor Alexander Pitass appears to have assumed for the next three decades the responsibility of preserving the Polish identity of his parish as to language, culture, and religious practices.

During this time the outstanding characteristic of Monsignor Alexander Pitass was his continual stress on the support of Polish churches, Polish parochial schools, Polish press, Polish business enterprises, and Polish organizations.

Monsignor Alexander Pitass seems to have dominated the religious, social, cultural, economic, and educational aspects of the Polish people especially in his own parish. Since so many of the Polish clergy rallied under his leadership and expounded similar views, the Polish communities tended to cultivate a spirit of isolationism and generally kept to themselves.

This does not mean that acculturation came to a standstill or that everyone in the Polish community adapted to the ideals Monsignor Pitass upheld. On the contrary, various forces lured the Polish people already then to shed their linguo-cultural values and to assimilate into the majority culture. One major force which threatened the Polish community with an eventual loss of identity was the public school which the people supported because unlike the parochial school, it was tuition-free. To prevent the transfer of children from his school to the new public school, Monsignor Pitass delayed their reception of First Holy Communion until the seventh grade. In this way they were less likely to fall prey too early to non-Polish influences.
When in 1923, a new diocesan syllabus practically forbade the use of the Polish language for instruction in the Polish parochial schools, Monsignor Alexander Pitass redoubled his efforts to preserve bilingual and bicultural teaching in his school. But other forces, like the movies and the radio presented a threat. Fearful of an eventual Americanization of his community, Monsignor Alexander Pitass tried to stem the tide. Perhaps he was partly successful in delaying the progress of acculturation. A study in the 1920's of the Polish community in Buffalo showed that the people retained a "strongly marked and well-maintained cultural identity."lo This does not suggest that the Poles clung rigorously to their national values, but rather that they retained much of their heritage while absorbing a great deal of the American culture into which they were thrust.

REASONS FOR INFLUENCE
Monsignor Alexander Pitass exerted an unusual influence on the Polish community in Buffalo perhaps because he was one of the most highly educated priests in western New York holding doctorates in philosophy and theology from the Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. He completed his grammar and secondary schooling in Piekary, Upper Silesia, of German-held Poland where he was born in 1875. At the age of eighteen he emigrated to America where he entered St. Francis Seminary in Michigan. From there he left in 1898 for Rome to complete his studies and be ordained to the priesthood. Back in America in 1904, he served as assistant pastor to his uncle at St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish. For two years before his uncle's death he was pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Niagara Falls, New York.

Despite the impact he had on the cultural development of the Polish community, some blame Monsignor Alexander Pitass for the slow educational upgrading of the Polish group. However, other circumstances, especially the communal adherence to traditional customs and values, as well as the generally low financial status of the majority helped to impede the rise in educational and social status.

PAROCHIAL SCHOOL
There is no doubt that Monsignor Alexander Pitass took great interest in the development and progress of his parochial school. This was evident as soon as he assumed the pastorate of St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish. Almost at once the school underwent changes and updating. It had its grade system reversed and it began to function on the eighth grade level with grade one as the lowest. The separation of boys and girls by grades was abolished except for the eighth grades. Furthermore, a beginning of what could have developed into the first Polish parochial high school in western New York occurred when for the 1916-17 school year, one of the two eighth grades included a combination with a ninth grade. The latter had an enrollment of eight boys and six girls aged twelve to fifteen. 11 There are no sources to indicate what program the Sister who taught the class followed, nor why this grade was dropped after one year.

One of the principal innovations in St. Stanislaus B. & M. School at this time was the formal adoption of the Felician course of studies. Accordingly, the children were to master relatively well the English language before completing the eighth grade. Such was not the case because while Monsignor Alexander Pitass approved on the one hand the curriculum the Sisters used and showed great concern for high' educational standards, on the other hand, he placed undue em-
phasis on the exclusive use of the Polish language outside of classroom instruction. Since almost everyone in the parish still spoke only in Polish, the children failed to acquire fluency or the proper accent in English. It was this handicap which as late as the 1930's deterred many promising students from enrolling in the English speaking public or private institutions of higher learning, or for that matter to acquire better positions.

Nevertheless, it was in the parochial school that the children of Polish immigrants underwent much acculturation. The children bridged the linguo-cultural gap there and if they often failed to master oral English, they did very well in written work as for example in the New York State Regents examinations.

It was the St. Stanislaus School staff which as early as 1915 applied for and received the privilege to act as a center to administer state regents examinations. Consequently, the school became subject to the Education Law of New York State whereby the Regents, or the Commissioner of Education, or his representative could visit and inspect the school as often as desired and require reports therefrom.

In the 1920's the State Department of Education not only granted recognition but praised the staff and the school. In a letter to Monsignor Alexander Pitass the Chief Commissioner from the Board of Education in Albany reported among other things:

Perhaps this recognition convinced Monsignor Alexander Pitass that the educational standards of his parochial school surpassed those offered the masses in his native land. That is undoubtedly why although he never consciously dissuaded anyone from pursuing higher studies, for that matter he did not take the initiative to promote means for mass high school education in the Polish community.

BUILDING PROJECTS

Monsignor Alexander Pitass proved himself an excellent administrator. Before 1920 he completed the parish complex by adding to it a new rectory and a new convent. At the same time he renovated the interior of the church, installed electricity in it, and imported a new marble altar and rails for the church from Italy.

WORLD WAR I AND AID TO POLAND

Meanwhile, as World War I broke out, Monsignor Alexander Pitass called a meeting of representatives of all his parish organizations with the purpose of forming a committee to aid war-torn Poland. Thereafter, he showed great interest in the eventual re-establishment of Poland as a free country and in world affairs relative to the well-being of his native land.

TWO DAMAGING FIRES

Besides his constant concern about the spiritual and material growth of the parish as well as about current social problems with which he was involved, Monsignor Alexander Pitass had the misfortune of having a fire on two different occasions in his parish. In the latter part of December 1920, the parish hall in the school was completely destroyed. Fortunately the firefighters saved the classrooms. In 1923, shortly before the parish celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, a fire broke out in one of the church towers doing extensive damage to it.
A DISTINCT HONOR
On May 25, 1925, the pastor of St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish was a recipient of a unique and distinct honor. The Holy See conferred on him the honor of a domestic prelate with the title of monsignor. He justly merited this distinction, for prior to it and for many years after, he was a member of various diocesan boards on which he exercised an important function as a spokesman for the Polish American Catholics in the diocese.

DEPRESSION OF THE 1930's
Most Polish American parishes felt keenly the effects of the decade-long depression into which the country plunged in 1929. St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish, however, was rather financially secure although its income diminished somewhat as more and more members found themselves unemployed. Consequently, a slow and at first an almost imperceptible exodus from the parish began as heads of families started to move where jobs were available.

Perhaps only the school records show that St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish began to diminish as a gradual but significant drop in enrollment started in 1933. Whereas at the beginning of the depression there were approximately 1700 pupils, a decade later showed a drop to 1124. In the 1943-44 school year, just before Monsignor Alexander Pitass died, the school recorded an enrollment of over one thousand pupils for the last time.

BREAK-UP OF THE COMMUNITY
As the era of cultural transition of the Polish people in Buffalo neared its end, a number of factors began to affect the heretofore strong solidarity of the community clustered around St. Stanislaus B. & M. Church. The most important was the outbreak of World War II in 1939 with its draft and also its economic opportunities in the rapidly expanding war-production plants. With their incomes suddenly increased, more and more people, seeking better living conditions, moved to the suburbs. Fortunately, Monsignor Alexander Pitass lived long enough to witness only the preliminary exodus which was hardly noticeable. Other factors which would eventually displace many of his parishioners were not as yet evident.

FINAL ACTIVITY
In May 1944 the Polish American Congress held its national meeting in Buffalo. One of its main functions, the Sunday High Mass, was celebrated in St. Stanislaus B. & M. Church. Monsignor Alexander Pitass tried to participate actively in all the functions of the meeting but his failing health limited his activity. He died July 30, 1944. His parishioners, especially the children towards whom he showed great concern, mourned the passing of their spiritual leader for whom they had great respect and admiration.

TEMPORARY ADMINISTRATOR
While the Polish community wondered who would be a worthy successor to a pastorate held for so long first by the illustrious founder of the parish and then by his nephew, a youthful and energetic assistant, the Rev. Stanislaus Kulpsinski, administered the parish for almost a year. Alert to the needs of the parish he added to the continuous process of renovations two important things.
One was the rails on the high steps to the entrance of the church. Senior citizens were especially grateful for the new security measure. He then installed new boilers to heat the church and the school. Those removed were outdated and failed to exert enough pressure to heat the buildings in cold weather.

**THE PERIOD OF INTEGRATION AND INTERCULTURAL COOPERATION 1945-**

This new era actually began with the Second World War in 1939. People of diverse races, nationalities, and creeds found themselves allied in a struggle to preserve freedom and ideals common to them. Rapid means of communication led to a realization of the need for independence and also for recognition of the need to respect ethnic linguo-cultural differences.

Perhaps no other event had a greater effect on the Polish American community than did World War II. It interrupted the normal course of life of the American Polonia and opened opportunities for group involvement with the society-at-large. Training camps, battlefields, and various local war programs broke down ethnic barriers as men united behind a common cause. All this helped give the American Poles a new image, accelerated the already well advanced process of acculturation and increased the self-confidence of the group.

With Poland a victim of World War II, American Poles identified with the Old Country but without extreme nationalism. The feeling was rather one of sympathy for Poland and its people. In fact, their major concern was about America's own problems. The group as a whole, however, showed generosity by sharing its material goods with the war-impoverished needy in the land of their forefathers.

**RT. REV. MSGR. PETER ADAMSKI**

On July 2, 1945, St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish welcomed joyfully the announcement of the appointment of Rt. Rev. Msgr. Peter Adamski as its third pastor. In accepting this position, however, the new pastor relinquished the pastorate of St. John Gualbert Parish which he held since 1918, or almost from the origin of that parish.

Buffalo Polonia held Monsignor/Peter Adamski in great esteem for the progress evident in St. John Gualbert Parish. His solicitude and concern for the spiritual, material, educational, and cultural needs of his parishioners were no doubt responsible to a great extent for the rise of many members of that parish in social and economic status higher than the one enjoyed by most members of other Polish parishes.

Born in Poland August 2, 1891, Monsignor Peter Adamski came to America as a college student. He enrolled at St. Bonaventure University where two years later he earned his Bachelor Degree with a philosophy major. At the commencement exercises he was awarded a gold medal for achieving top grades. He then entered the theological seminary in the same school and was ordained a priest on June 10, 1915. After only three years as assistant at St. Stanislaus B. & M., St. Casimir, and Holy Trinity Parish in Niagara Falls, respectively, the young priest assumed the pastorate in the newly-founded St. John Gualbert Parish which then numbered about fifty families. These and many other Polish families which eventually helped increase the church membership to well-nigh over a thousand families, formed part of the initial exodus from the congested Polish
community in Buffalo, especially of St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish. In 1945, the parish boasted of a beautiful church, a school, and a rectory in one of the very outstanding and well kept suburban residential centers in metropolitan Buffalo.

**AT ST. STANISLAUS B. & M. PARISH**

When he assumed the pastorate of St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish, Monsignor Peter Adamski found his new parishioners more or less responsive to his socio-cultural and educational ideals. As this was a post-World War II era and the people were more secure economically than ever before, Monsignor Peter Adamski was convinced this was an opportune time to urge his parishioners to take advantage of one of the greatest opportunities America had to offer to anyone willing to do so. This was education above the level the Polish people were accustomed to reach.

Unfortunately, prior to this time, very few young people from the Polish communities pursued higher studies and the high school dropout rate was very high. Most people accepted the elementary eighth grade level as sufficient and urged their children to seek employment as soon as they were of age. Monsignor Peter Adamski hoped to re-educate his new parishioners about the importance of higher studies as a means to rise both in economic and social status in America.

**HIGH SCHOOL**

Lamenting the lack of Catholic high schools in the thickly populated Polish community, Monsignor Peter Adamski decided to open a parochial high school in his parish. To his disappointment, when the school year began in September 1945, only six students registered. Despite the uncertainty of the initiated project, the school continued to function and expanded under the direction at first of one Felician Sister who taught all the subjects.

After the first year, Polish interest stirred when Bishop John O'Hara decided to organize district schools which would accommodate large numbers of students, have better facilities, and provide for athletics. In accordance with the wishes of the bishop two such schools opened in the Polish community using as a nucleus the co-ed ninth grade of St. Stanislaus B. & M. School. These were Bishop Colton High School for girls and Bishop Ryan High School for boys. Thus, in a way, the Buffalo diocesan school system owed its origin to the initiative of Monsignor Peter Adamski who was a spokesman for such schools in the Polish community. To realize this project he not only kept urging his parishioners to send their children for higher studies but cooperated with the diocese in providing acceptable educational facilities for the girls' high school.

As registration in St. Stanislaus B. & M. School dropped in the mid-1940's to 800, there were vacant rooms in the building which Monsignor Adamski leased to the diocese for the new school. In a few years when these accommodations became inadequate Monsignor leased the lower level church which the diocese converted in the latter part of 1950 into the Bishop Colton High School Annex. Four years later he relinquished the parish garden whereon a new Bishop Colton High School was constructed and opened in 1955. When in 1971, the diocese closed the high school, Monsignor Peter Adamski purchased the building and converted it into St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parochial School. Shortly after he had the four-story red brick landmark, which housed St. Stanislaus B. & M. School since 1890, demolished and the site converted into a parish parking lot.
PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PARISH
With time and constant usage, the parish heating, electrical, and plumbing systems became not only outdated but also beyond repair. Almost from the beginning of his administration, Monsignor Peter Adamski began investing considerable sums of money to reservice, but in most cases to install the more modern and improved conveniences into practically all the parish buildings. In addition, he had the parish playground hardsurfaced, the church interior remodeled, and the parish cemetery acreage increased.

THE NEW SOCIAL CENTER IN THE PARISH
The old red brick structure on Peckham Street, which for many years served as a parish social center, lacked proper facilities, was rapidly deteriorating, and after the 1945 fire which badly damaged the hall, was hardly worth any extensive remodeling to meet the more modern recreational and cultural needs. To Monsignor Peter Adamski it was an "eyesore" which he hoped to demolish eventually and replace with a new parish lyceum. Upon becoming pastor of St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish, he at once launched a program to solicit funds for a new parish social center. In three years the collection reached a total of almost $100,000 in addition to considerable sums several wealthy parishioners donated.

Meanwhile, other projects, like the building of Bishop Colton High School on the parish grounds, delayed the construction of the parish social center. Shortly after the completion of the latter, however, the old red "kamienica" (brick building) was demolished and in its place arose a new St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish Social Center which was opened April 18, 1960. It has since served as the focal center of most of the parish activities including the Sunshine Club Monsignor Peter Adamski organized for the senior members of the parish.

SUNDAY MASS BROADCAST ON RADIO
Modern communication media has enabled Monsignor Peter Adamski to reach via radio thousands of Polish-American or Polish-Canadian faithful beyond his parish limits. His kindly voice and fatherly exhortations have won him a vast and attentive audience. Beginning with November 1945, station WWOL gave St. Stanislaus B. & M. Church one hour free time every Sunday to broadcast the Mass and sermon. Listeners presently tune to station WXRL which allots the church a half hour on Sunday at noon for that purpose. The time is insufficient for the entire Mass with the sermon but better than none at all.

In 1958, the Holy See bestowed upon Monsignor Peter Adamski a singular honor, that of raising him to the rank of Prothonotary Apostolic. His parishioners and the entire Polonia of Western New York were extremely pleased that the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, which most of the Polish Americans support, recognized one of the Polish clergy worthy of this elevation.

THE QUESTION OF LINGUO-CULTURAL HERITAGE
Monsignor Peter Adamski has always expressed pride in the fact that he was a Polish immigrant. As such, he retained great love and respect for his native land supporting inasmuch as feasible, organizations and activities to preserve the Old World linguo-cultural heritage. He regarded the teaching of the Polish language in the parochial schools as very important to the preservation of
Polish identity in America. In the 1950’s however, the Polish parochial schools began to discontinue gradually the teaching of Polish language and culture. In 1955 Monsignor Peter Adamski leased the vacant fourth floor classrooms in St. Stanislaus B. & M. School to a group of laymen who organized and have since conducted with much success a "Polska Szkoła" (Polish Saturday School). In gratitude for the cooperation, the concern and benevolence which Monsignor extended to this venture, the laymen renamed the school before its tenth anniversary to "Szkoła Polska Im. Infułata Piotra J. Adamskiego" (Monsignor Peter J. Adamski Polish Saturday School).

However, the manner in which Monsignor Peter Adamski supported all Polish institutions differed considerably from the views his predecessors held. He appeared to advocate and support an adherence to a bicultural heritage whereby the people adapt to the linguo-cultural norms of the majority culture but do not shed their inherited national values. At St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish, where the stress always had been greater on the Polish language and culture, Monsignor Peter Adamski began to urge the children and the parishioners to try to master the English language to perfection both in diction and accent since this was important in their pursuit of higher studies, applying for positions, holding good jobs, and associating with other national groups. Radio and television reinforced what Monsignor Peter Adamski urged his parishioners to pursue.

Unfortunately, the bicultural balance was upset in favor of the majority culture as the younger generation completely shed the use of Polish and no longer taught it to their children. The parochial school followed suit. As fewer and fewer children understood Polish and the parents failed to encourage its learning or opposed it, the staff discontinued teaching it in the 1960’s.

Meanwhile, Monsignor Peter Adamski adapted accordingly the parish services which traditionally were mainly in Polish except for the Latin Mass. Shortly after the Vatican Council II and the introduction of the vernacular into the Mass, he arranged for the latter to be in English or in Polish according to the needs his parishioners expressed. No doubt, many older parishioners regretted the change and were perturbed to hear English in the once all-Polish church. But with the adaptation to the needs of the new generation, Monsignor Peter Adamski prevented an exodus from the parish of many who no longer used or understood Polish.

**THE LATEST IMMIGRATION**

As one of the largest of its kind in the country, the Polish community in Buffalo attracted thousands of Poles whom the events of World War II uprooted from their native land. Many of them settled near St. Stanislaus B. & M. Church. It is generally not known, but Monsignor Peter Adamski extended a charitable hand to many of these newcomers and helped numerous families start a new life in America. While his own parishioners in the meantime began an exodus to the suburbs, the new immigrants filled the gap and reinforced St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish with a new, vibrant, and strong sense of Polish consciousness.

**CHANGE, EXODUS, DISPLACEMENT**

The greatest changes in the Polish community clustered around St. Stanislaus B. & M. Church occurred during the fourth phase of acculturation. The period began more or less after the close of World War II and coincided with the pastorate of Monsignor Peter Adamski. The change can hardly be called; an alteration or a transformation of a community. It was rather a horizontal move-
ment whereby hundreds of Polish families moved from within the parish limits or -neighborhood to less congested areas or to" the suburbs. It could most likely be termed displacement or a shift of peoples of different cultures. The expansion of one in the inner city stirred the original one to move and make room for the one in need of more housing.

At first Monsignor Peter Adamski pleaded with his parishioners to disregard block busting, to resist the temptation to sell their homes, and to refrain from moving out as soon as a Black-American family occupied a house in their neighborhood. He preached brotherly love and understanding towards people of other races and cultures. He asked the people to compromise with their differences. The people tried to heed his advice but to no avail. The culture they encountered differed drastically from the one to which they were accustomed. The neighborhood was no longer the same.

On its centennial, St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish differs considerably from what it was only three or even two decades earlier. The Black-American community has reached almost to the church on the north and the west confining the immediate Polish-American group to a small area south and east of the church. Monsignor Peter Adamski stopped dissuading the people from moving away hoping that a core group would remain to continue supporting the church and worshiping in it.

CONCLUSIONS

On the centennial of St. Stanislaus B. & M. Parish Monsignor Peter Adamski claimed the parish numbered approximately 1200 families. Many of these are elderly whose children have since moved away. A considerable number of people moved away but hold membership in the church and come occasionally to worship in it. Many of the latter are prominent in various professions and come to participate on some occasions in public parish functions as for example the celebration of the parish centennial on June 3, 1973.

Besides some of the former characteristics the neighborhood lost, such as its Polish cleanliness and neatness, the greatest change occurred in the school where the effects of the exodus and of families with fewer children were most evident. The enrollment kept decreasing steadily in the 1960's. The school which at the turn of the century boasted of being one of the largest parochial schools in Buffalo with approximately 2,000 pupils, in its centennial year had a registration of only 371 pupils which included a few children from the Black-American community.

The staff, since the 1960's has been teaching only in English using on some occasions and for assemblies Polish songs in translation. To commemorate the parish centennial, for example, the children presented the past events of the parish but in English. All externals appear to point to the fact that a complete assimilation of St. Stanislaus B". & M. Parish and the Polish community of Buffalo is imminent but the memory of the great past of Poles in America is already reviving in many the desire to resume Polish studies and to identify as Polish Americans.

NOTES


Rev. John Pitass, 'Parish Census," c. 1874. St. Stanislaus B.M. Rectory Archives, Buffalo, N. Y. (Manuscript.) (The census enumerates males only, giving their date of arrival, marital status, and residence.)

"Confessionies Paschales anni 1875-1880," St. Stanislaus B. & M. Rectory Archives, Buffalo, N.Y. (The average number of names registered per year was 720. This number doubled in 1881.)

"Baptismal Records." St Stanislaus B.M. Parish Archives, Buffalo, N.Y.

Mother Mary Sybilska, CSSF, "Kronika Zgromadzenia SS. Felicjanek Polonii Amerykańskiej Matki Moniki, 1874-1894," (Mother Monica's Chronicle of the Congregation of the Felician Sisters in the Polish American Communities, 1874-1894), p. 67. Archives of the Felician Sisters Buffalo Province.


Felician Sisters, "Katalog Dzieci Szkoły w Domu Filialnym Sw. Stanisława B.M. w Buffalo, N.Y Zgromadzenia Sióstr Felicjanek, r. 1912-1918," (St. Stanislaus B.M. School Register), St. Stanislaus Convent Archives, Buffalo, N.Y.


Interview with Rt. Rev. Msgr. Peter Adamski, St. Stanislaus B.M. Rectory, Buffalo, N.Y., January 14, 1961. (Botli schools were closed as of June 1971 because of the diocesan financial difficulties.)