8.0 Ethnic/Immigration

8.1 Introduction

Several ethnic populations, mainly from southern and eastern Europe and Hispanic nations were attracted to the Greater Cleveland area for a chance at a new life away from political and social oppressions of their native lands. This section focuses on specific ethnic groups that immigrated into Cleveland during the mid-century. In 1940, Cleveland was home to 34.7-percent of the foreign-born population in Ohio, which was higher than all other major Ohio cities — Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown (Otiso and Smith 2005:136). An average of 20.5 percent of those living in Cleveland were immigrants, compared to the national average of 8.8 percent (Table 2) (Otiso and Smith 2005:133).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>180,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>113,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>96,365</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>56,319</td>
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This section focuses on immigrants who came to Cleveland from three regions: Eastern Europe, Latin America, and East Asia. Drastic changes in the political climate in post-World War II Ukraine and Hungary encouraged many to leave the country, either on their own or as a displaced person. Hispanic immigrants, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Cubans arrived in Cleveland for more reliable and steady employment. Immigrants who arrived from East Asia countries found Cleveland desirable for the educational opportunities that became available to them after the Immigration Act of 1969 (ECH 2017h).

8.2 Eastern European Immigration

8.2.1 Ukrainians

Ukrainian immigrants who arrived between World War I and World War II settled in Cleveland’s Tremont neighborhood south of downtown and were comprised of former fighters for Ukrainian Independence (ECH 2017i). Subsequent waves of immigrants Post-World War II consisted of political emigres who bolstered Soviet resistance promoting Ukrainian independence from the Soviet Union upon arrival (Gawur 1994:11). Many Ukrainian natives arrived after the Displaced Persons Commissions Act was signed by President Harry Truman in June 1948. For the next four years, the Commission would be responsible for providing visas, transport, and processing roughly 270,000 Ukrainian immigrants for entry into the United States (Ukrainian Museum-Archives 2017).

Similar to other immigrant ethnic groups, Ukrainians in Cleveland established local religious and cultural buildings to preserve their heritage and religious beliefs. Religious institutions, more so than any other collectives, served as strongholds for the communities in which they were located. Mid-century ecclesiastical buildings were constructed for the growing Byzantine Rite Catholic (Ukrainian Catholics) community as parishes of the mother church of Saints Peter & Paul (ca. 1910) in Tremont. Located in Parma, these church extensions were St. Josaphat (1959) in the heart of the Ukrainian community, St. Andrew (1972), and St. Pokrova (1973) (ECH 2017i).

As their religious history suggests, the Ukrainian community that once thrived in Tremont shifted southwest, away from downtown to Parma. There were two main reasons for this. First, a third wave of Ukrainian immigrants who came to America in the 1960s chose to settle in
Parma, the suburbs, rather than the declining Tremont neighborhood. As described in the Political/Social Welfare and Transportation sections of this report, Tremont was devastated by the effects of urban renewal and freeway/highway construction which physically divided the neighborhood and the communities within it. The second reason Parma became the hub of the Ukrainian community echoes the first, where those living in Tremont in the 1940s and 1950s chose to relocate to Parma, following the trend of suburbanization for the same reasons new immigrants didn’t want to settle in Tremont. By 1965, there were roughly 18,000 people in the Cleveland Metropolitan area of Ukrainian decent, with most belonging to the Eastern Orthodox churches or Byzantine Rite Catholic churches (CPD 1965a:12).

Religious institutions were ingrained in the Ukrainian community as a tangible symbol of their heritage. Orthodox Catholic churches not only sprung from Ukrainian’s strong ties to religion; they served as a catalyst for fraternal, education and culturally affiliated institutions, as well as commercial and social service buildings. The motivation for these types of institutions, particularly those established around the mid-century, was to encourage Ukrainian independence from Soviet rule in Europe and to share and preserve their cultural heritage in the United States (Gawur 1994:11). Similar to religious buildings, cultural and educational facilities sought to unify the Ukrainian community and served as a substantial contribution to the physical landscape of Tremont, pre-World War II, and Parma, post-World War II (Gawur 1994:12).

Many Ukrainian buildings, first in Tremont and later Parma, accommodated everything from schools, libraries and museums to credit unions and funeral homes (Gawur 1994:11). The Ukrainian National Home opened on West 14th Street in Tremont in the 1920s as a center for ethnic pride that would host social and cultural events honoring Ukrainian traditions, and served as the cornerstone of the community until 1967 (Keating 2016). In 1947, Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church opened an elementary school at 1208 Kenilworth in Tremont, which moved to a new location on State Road in Parma in 1949. (Ukrainian Museum-Archives 2009). After the relocation of the elementary school, the building on Kenilworth was acquired by the Holowczak Funeral Home, who built a brick addition and paved a parking lot on the property. The funeral home, a symbol of the Ukrainian community, abandoned their Tremont location to find a new home in Parma, following the Ukrainian-flight to the suburbs in the 1950s (Ukrainian Museum-Archives 2009).

The Ukrainian Cultural Garden (1940), the Ukrainian Museum-Archives (1952), and the Ukrainian heritage school, Rinda Shkola (ca. 1953), made significant contributions towards preserving and promoting Ukrainian culture during the mid-century. The Ukrainian Garden, operated by the Cleveland Cultural Gardens Federation and part of Rockefeller Park, features multiple gardens from various ethnic groups (Cleveland Cultural Gardens 2017). Located near University Circle, the Ukrainian Garden is composed of brick and stone masonry courts that are wove by paved walkways. Focused on artistic representations of history, the garden’s focal points are three busts sculpted by cubist artist, Alexander Archipenko who immigrated to the United States from Kiev in the 1920s. Archipenko’s three bronze busts “departed from classical sculpture design and utilized negative space in creative ways” (Cleveland Cultural Gardens 2017). His work was representative of Ukraine’s diverse history. Through his busts (sculptures), Archipenko highlighted significant achievements made by the Grand Prince of Kiev Volodymyr the Great (ca. 956–1015); teacher, artists, and poet Taras Hryhorovych Shevchenko; and poet and writer Ivan Franko (1856–1916) (Cleveland Cultural Gardens 2017).
The Ukrainian Museum-Archives (UMA), located at 1202 Kenilworth Avenue in Tremont, was founded by Leonid Bachynsky and Alexander Fedynsky in 1952. Bachynsky was a Ukrainian native living in Cleveland and Fedynsky immigrated to Cleveland from Ukraine just four-years prior to founding the museum-archives. Their motivation for UMA’s undertaking was to collect and preserve documents and items from Ukrainian history, particularly those relating to their immigration and cultural history; which was especially important in the post-World War II era because their homeland was under Soviet control (ECH 2017h).

Rinda Shokola, known as the School of Ukrainian Studies in English, was originally organized by supporters of the Ukrainian youth organization in 1950 but was affiliated, and officially opened, by the Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (ECH 2017i). When the school opened, ca. 1953, it was located in the Merrick House at 1208 Kenilworth Avenue in Tremont. The school relocated to Parma in 1959, coinciding with Ukrainian families’ reestablishing themselves in Cleveland’s suburbs. The school moved again, in 1960, to Scaaf Jr. High School, where 19 faculty members taught 340 students, between kindergarten to 11th grade, the Ukrainian language, as well as literature, culture, history, and geography (ECH 2017j).

### 8.2.2 Hungarians

The Hungarian immigrant population came into Cleveland in three waves. The first came at the turn of the twentieth century, particularly during the inter-war period, which drew in the largest number of Hungarians into Cleveland (Papp 1981:131). The second was post-World War II, when ‘displaced persons’ from the turmoil in Europe left Hungary for America (Papp 1981:266). The third was upon entry of post-1956 refugees, who sought asylum from the Hungarian Revolution (Papp 1981:278).

were required to provide a written guarantee that a job and residence have been secured in the US prior to arrival. Since many displaced Hungarian immigrants did not have relatives or friends already living in the US, they were supported by churches and other organizations. Hungarians who came to America after the war were forced to take blue-collar jobs instead of continuing with their careers prior to the war, such as journalism, law, education, and politics (Papp 1981:141). Many who emigrated from Hungary after the war did so with the intention to go back after Soviet occupation ended, since they primarily left due to an unstable political climate (Papp 1981:270).

While Hungarians originally settled in parts of East Cleveland along Buckeye Road in the early 1900s, Hungarians who arrived as displaced persons during the mid-century decided to reside elsewhere in Cuyahoga County because they felt they could maintain their connection to their homeland through their involvement in cultural organizations. Newcomers felt no need to have homes in proximity to other Hungarians to preserve their culture (Papp 1981:270). Established in 1952 to promote cultural heritage through humanities and the arts, the Hungarian Association offered lecture series, film events, and fine art exhibits.

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 brought nearly 41,000 Hungarians into America as displaced persons, with 6,000 of these immigrating into Cuyahoga County (Papp 1981:278). Many of these people were younger and more educated than those of the first two waves of immigration. Still, many refugees had difficulty acquiring and retaining jobs. They were aided in their resettlement through relief efforts of local Hungarian organizations (Papp 1981:280–281). Statistically, the immigrant Hungarian population in the 1950s hovered around 4,000 foreign-born residents of the Buckeye Road neighborhood, while the suburban communities of Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights, Euclid, and Lakewood were each home to about 1,000 new Hungarian residents respectively; and Parma had an intake of more than 2,000 residents (Papp 1981:282).

Preserving Hungarian heritage was especially encouraged for children, after the refugees of 1956 arrived in America. This was accomplished by implementing educational and extracurricular programs, so that Hungarian children could embrace and uphold their cultural identity. In 1958, the West Side Hungarian School of Cleveland was founded by Dr. Gabor Papp, who taught thirty-six students in a private residence. By 1967, the school had expanded from offering courses for those in kindergarten through eighth-grade, to incorporating high school level courses in Hungarian literature, folklore, and geography. The school closed approximately twenty years later (Papp 1981:273). Extracurricular activities for children ranged from Hungarian-led scout troops to the Hungarian Scout Folk Ensemble. The first Hungarian scout troop in the US was founded by Frerenc Beodray and Ede Csaszar in 1951, while the Folk Ensemble was created in 1973 (Papp 1981:275–276).

In conjunction with Hungarian newspapers, which had been circulating within the community since their first wave of immigration, post-World War II immigrants published poetry, prose, or other forms of literature along with new journals and newspapers (Papp 1981:276). However, although their cultural heritage was still alive, younger Hungarian immigrants no longer saw the need to live in proximity to older generations. The disconnect between generations, coupled with the desire to live outside the city drew more and more Hungarian immigrants, as well as Hungarian-Americans to relocate to the Cuyahoga County suburbs (Papp 1981:284).

The decline of the Buckeye Road neighborhood continued through the 1970s when illegal activity in the area was at a record high. In 1974, it was found that over fifty percent of Buckeye Road residents were victims of crime (Papp 1981:285). The Buckeye Woodland Community Congress, also founded in 1974,
worked to integrate the Buckeye Road communities by electing African-Americans, Italians, and Slovaks, in addition to Hungarians in hopes to improve the community and preserve the neighborhood’s diverse cultural heritage (Papp 1981:287).

The Hungarian immigrants’ journey towards establishing themselves in Cuyahoga County, between 1940–1970 was full of ups and downs due to financial and economic constraints. Older generations living in the Buckeye Road neighborhood did not share the mindset of younger generations of post-World War II and 1956 Hungarian Revolution immigrants in a variety of ways. The first wave of immigration was approached socio-culturally, while the second and third waves were more proactive, socio-politically. (Papp, 1981:185).

8.3 Hispanics

Three distinct Latino groups who immigrated to Cuyahoga County during the mid-century, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Cubans, each arrived separately and settled in different areas.

8.3.1 Puerto Ricans

Between 1945–1965, immigrants from Spanish speaking countries, namely Puerto Rico, sought job opportunities in northeast Ohio. Directly after World War II, an influx of Puerto Rican men worked in factories and greenhouses in Lorain, a city approximately 30-miles west of Cleveland in Lorain County (ECH 2017k). Many of these men expected to return to Puerto Rico after their contracts ended, but chose to settle instead and have their families immigrate into the United States. The Puerto Rican immigrant population steadily increased during the 1950s, and spiked between 1960 and 1970 (ECH 2017k). By 1960, 4,595 Puerto Rican immigrants lived in Cleveland, and by 1970, that number jumped to 16,050 (Arreola 2004:190).

For many Puerto Ricans, religion defined their sense of community. Immigrants who arrived around the mid-century first took up residence on Cleveland’s east side, in proximity to the Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church; however, prejudice and discrimination from other ecclesiastical parishes on the east side prompted Puerto Ricans to establish their own church on the west side of the city ca. 1955 (Arreola 2004:191). The church of San Juan Bautista was located on West 32nd Street, near Lorain Avenue. By the late-1990s, the congregation outgrew its facility on West 32nd Street and merged with another congregation to construct a new Spanish colonial mission-style church on Detroit Avenue (Arreola 2004:191). Into the 1960s and 1970s, with greater numbers of immigrants arriving, many found the Cuyahoga County suburbs a more desirable place to live than the deteriorating neighborhoods of the city (ECH 2017k).

In addition to religion, the preservation of Puerto Rican culture was also of importance. Established in 1966, the Spanish American Committee provided socio-cultural services to the Puerto Rican community. Additionally, Puerto Rican Friendly Day, which began in the summer of 1969, was an annual event with two community engagement objectives; to bring Puerto Ricans together for a celebration of culture, and to educate Clevelanders about Puerto Rican heritage (ECH 2017k).

8.3.2 Mexicans

Similar to Puerto Ricans, Mexican emigrants came into northeast Ohio with the intent of returning home following their wartime employment, while many who were from rural areas of Mexico feared returning to a politically unstable country. After the conclusion of World War II, many Mexicans left their industrial jobs in Lorain County for a new life in Cuyahoga County. They resided near Puerto Rican settlements within the city, which allowed both ethnic groups to connect through their shared language and cultural traditions (ECH 2017k).

In 1951, Club Azteca, founded in the late-1930s as a social and cultural organization, purchased a storefront on Detroit Avenue. Very
little has been written about the Mexican population in Cuyahoga County, let alone the settlement patterns within the area. Most of the US Census data found on Hispanics in Cleveland between the 1940s and 1970s does not differentiate between other Latin American ethnic groups. It was found that, in 1983 approximately 4,000 Mexican immigrants were living within Cleveland’s city-limits, compared to the 679 Mexican-born residents in the city ca. 1920 (ECH 2017k).

8.3.3 Cubans

Cubans began emigrating to Cleveland when Fidel Castro took control of the Cuban government in 1959. Cuban natives planned to return home once Castro was out of power but, rising tensions between the US and Cuba in the early 1960s resulted in many Cubans choosing to remain. The Bay of Pigs Invasion of 1961 was a turning point for many Cubans, as they realized the severity of the political situation in their homeland. Soon, the number of Cuban immigrants increased from 200 prior to 1950, to approximately 650 by the late-1970s. Cuban-born residents of Cuyahoga County were presented with many challenges, some of which included the need to preserve their heritage and the desire to fight for freedom in Cuba, locally (ECH 2017k).

8.4 Eastern Asians

8.4.1 Chinese

Unlike many other East Asian ethnic groups, Chinese immigration to Cuyahoga County did not originate during the mid-century, although students from Taiwan and Hong Kong did arrive in the area in the late-1940s and early-1950s for education and subsequent residence. By the late-1970s, students from the People’s Republic of China traveled to study for professional degrees at Case Western Reserve University (ECH 2017l).

Chinese organizations that arose between 1940 and 1970 ranged from professional groups to religious congregations. The Euclid Avenue Baptist Church formed in 1941, offered youth groups and language courses as well as religious services. Most of the activities at the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church were discontinued in the 1950s, which prompted many to meet in private homes for Bible study classes. In 1966, the Cleveland Chinese Christian Fellowship was born. By 1975, the Fellowship had formed a church affiliate, known as the Cleveland Chinese Christian Church (ECH 2017l). The fellowship moved the church to the Richmond Heights suburb in the 1980s, in a building originally constructed for the Bethel Full Gospel Church of God in 1969 (CUY 1123822) ([CPD] 1969:4–C). Designed to seat 300 people, the building at 474 Trebisky Road still serves as the location of the Cleveland Chinese Christian Church, and is comprised of a one-story sanctuary clad in brick veneer and an apparent two-story administration building. Its location in Cleveland’s environs reflects the Chinese immigrant community’s mid-century movement to the suburbs.

8.4.2 Koreans and Vietnamese

The Korean immigrant population in Cuyahoga County was nonexistent until the conclusion of America’s involvement in the Korean War in 1953. Fleeing the military control and unpredictability of their government, these South Korean immigrants were drawn to America for its freedom and opportunities. Immigration into Cuyahoga County began slowly, with only 50 South Koreans entering the county by 1960. Up to the 1970s, immigration policies presented challenges for Korean immigration and thus, the population in Cuyahoga County remained few. While South Korean immigration did not occur in great quantities until the later part of the twentieth century, the Korean community in Cuyahoga County eventually rose into the thousands. (ECH 2017m).

Vietnamese immigrants, primarily from the southern region, began to arrive in the United States in 1975, following the conclusion of America’s involvement in the Vietnam War and
Vietnam’s reunification. Sponsored by local organizations, approximately 13,500 Vietnamese immigrants arrived in Ohio. By 1980, approximately 750 immigrants moved to Cuyahoga County, almost 500 within Cleveland itself, prompting the Buddhist and Catholic Vietnamese communities to form social and religious groups in the (ECH 2017n).

8.4.3 Indian

In 1960, there were 170 Indian-born inhabitants of Cleveland. By 1970, the number grew to 307. Unlike immigrants from other countries seeking asylum, Indians came to the US to pursue professions in the medical, engineering, and business fields. The passage of the Immigration Act of 1965 allowed foreigners to obtain a professional degree in America allowing larger numbers of immigrants for educational and professional purposes (ECH 2017g).

In 1963, Indian immigrants already living in Cuyahoga County formed the India Association of Cleveland to introduce non-Indians in the area to their traditions. In 1974, the Youth India Club was created as a way for young, single Indians to meet. Also in 1974, the India Association of Cleveland formed the Speaker’s Bureau as a tool for sharing and presenting information about Indian life, history, and customs (ECH 2017g).

8.5 Conclusion

The settlement patterns of Eastern Europeans, Latin Americans, and East Asians were widely diverse. Ukrainians and Hungarians had been immigrating to Cuyahoga County since the turn of the twentieth century, providing post-World War II immigrants the opportunity to establish themselves in extant communities. Many mid-century immigrants chose to live in the suburbs rather than the city for a better quality of life.

Although Latin Americans did not have an established community prior to mid-century immigrants arriving in Cuyahoga County, they worked hard to preserve their culture. All three Hispanic ethnic groups found they needed to escape their homelands for better employment opportunities in the US. These groups took advantage of their shared traditions to form the Cleveland Pan American Cultural Society in 1960, for the purposes of collectively promoting their diverse sub-cultures to the public (ECH 2017g).

Similarly, East Asians came to America to escape the communist governments of their homelands, particularly for South Korean and South Vietnamese immigrants. Chinese and Indian groups were able to immigrate to Cuyahoga County for educational purposes. For many, culture was tied to religion, which allowed certain immigrant communities, like the Chinese, to cultivate in suburban areas.

A common thread between Eastern Europeans, Hispanics, and East Asians was the intrigue of suburban life. Even though many first settled within Cleveland’s city-limits, later arrivals followed the trends of Americans by relocating to the suburbs outside of cities for employment, residence, education, and recreation.

8.6 Ethnic/Immigration Survey Results

As discussed above, Cuyahoga County drew numerous immigrant groups beginning in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Many southern and eastern European immigrants arrived to escape oppression in their home countries and were attracted by the promise of industrial jobs. The need for low-skill workers in new and expanding factories provided the immigrants with new opportunities. As groups arrived, they tended to settle in the same area to afford themselves a sense of community where they spoke the same language, celebrated the same traditions, and worshipped in the same fashions. Many first settled within the city limits of Cleveland within walking distance to employment. As these groups established themselves in the area, they began to move beyond the city limits, following the trend of Post-World War II suburbanization. Quite often
members of these groups moved to the same general areas where they could continue their sense of community even as later generations were more assimilated to American culture.

8.6.1 Ethnic Group Churches

As many shared heritage members blended into the suburbs during the post-war period, their main community connection became the church or synagogue. Many churches in the region are of national origin, designed and built by congregations of specific nationalities, some even continuing to hold services in their native languages. These churches attracted, and continue to attract, members who relocated to other areas to return to worship with other community members.

Plate 20. Former Our Lady of Perpetual Hope Roman Catholic Church, now St. Casimir Church (CUY 1127411), constructed in 1950, 18022 Neff Rd., North Collinwood. The church was designed by a Lithuanian architect for the Lithuanian congregation, and continues to hold masses in Lithuanian.
8.6.2 Ethnic Group Movement Outside the City

In other cases, the house of worship followed the movement of the congregation. The University Parkway subdivision in University Heights, developed between 1947 and 1965, witnessed many Orthodox Jews moving into the neighborhood in the 1960s. An Orthodox Jewish congregation was established in 1910 in the Woodland area of Cleveland, and eventually moved to Glenville, and then to Cleveland Heights, thus following the movement of Jewish residents to these areas. As many Orthodox Jews moved to University Heights, the congregation purchased property in 1972 to erect the Green Road Synagogue. Later, the Young Israel of Greater Cleveland and Hebrew Academy of Cleveland were erected to the immediate south of the synagogue. As Orthodox Jews do not operate vehicles during the Sabbath, having the synagogue within walking distance is convenient for its members.
8.6.3 African American Movement

African Americans arrived in Cuyahoga County for the prospect of new opportunities. Arriving during the First and Second Great Migration periods (those coinciding with World War I and World War II), African Americans took advantage of available industrial jobs while looking to escape socially and politically adverse conditions of the American South. Like other groups, African Americans settled in areas within the city limits in close proximity to jobs. Unlike other groups, African Americans were more limited to where they could resettle outside of the city due to segregation policies. Resident restrictions were placed within many new subdivisions, therefore excluding African Americans from buying or renting homes in these areas.

Into the 1970s, many African Americans tended to remain within the City, settling in neighborhoods where previous residents left for the suburbs. As businesses and schools closed in these areas, they reclaimed buildings to suit their needs. For example, a former bank along Lee Road in Cleveland Heights is now home to the Victorious Church of Christ congregation (CUY 1124510). After the Clara Tagg Brewer Elementary School (CUY 1120310) in the city closed in 1979, the Canaan Baptist Church assumed ownership, and continues to use the building.
8.6.4 Other Ethnic Group Movement

Survey did not present any mid-century resources associated with later migrations of ethnic groups specifically from Asia and Central America that were originally associated with these groups. One surveyed church in Richmond Heights, however, has been known as the Cleveland Chinese Church since 1983 (CUY 1123822). This church, built in 1969 for the Bethel Full Gospel Church of God congregation, has served the Chinese congregation longer than its original function.
8.7 Further Survey Recommendations

Many of the surveyed resources associated with ethnic immigration to Cleveland and Cuyahoga County during the mid-century period were religious buildings. While these are excellent examples of ethnic movement, the migration stories of this period will be more fully understood through the survey of other types of resources, such as commercial buildings owned, developed, or rented by people of a particular nationality or ethnic group. This survey expansion will show where groups settled and/or dispersed in later periods.

Furthermore, as religious buildings are covered in this section, many other places of worship built during this period were not included as part of this survey in order to cover all topics related to the mid-century period. Some of these houses of worship, like those mentioned in Section 6.1.1 Ukrainians, are recommended for survey to document these important buildings in relation to the Cuyahoga County mid-century histories of ethnic group migrations and religious congregations.