

CHURCH RECORDS AS A SOURCE OF ETHNIC HISTORY ST. JEROME CROATIAN CATHOLIC PARISH IN CHICAGO A CASE STUDY

Ante ČUVALO*

Key words: Church Records, Croats in the USA, St. Jerome Croatian Catholic Parish, Ethnic History

Introduction

Croatians in America

There are strong indicators that some Croatian seamen from Dubrovnik sailed with Columbus on his first voyage to what was later known as America, though this fact is not proven (yet) from any primary sources. It is certain, however, that already during the first decades of the 16th century Croatian sailors and captains, serving the Spanish crown or sailing under the banner of St. Vlaho/St. Blaze, came to the western shores of the Atlantic. From the early 16th century on, Croatians were coming to the New World in increasing numbers. Among the first arrivals were some sailors (Mato and Dominik Konkeđević - c. 1520, Basilije Basiljević - 1537, and others), missionaries and explorers (Ivan Ratkaj – 1680, Ferdinand Konščak – 1730, for example), as well as adventurers who jumped off Spanish ships. Most probably, the name Croatan Indians in North Carolina is a living memorial to the 16th century shipwreck of a Ragusan (Dubrovnik) ship, whose survivors remained with the local natives leaving among them their posterity and Croatian name.¹

An increasing number of Croatian immigrants began to arrive to North America during the first half of the 19th century. Most of them arrived through

* Ante Čuvalo, Ph. D., Ljubuški, Bosnia and Herzegovina

¹ Ljubomir Antić, *Hrvati i Amerika* (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada; Hrvatska matica iseljenika, 2002), pp. 9-74.

Central America, Mexico, and especially through the port of New Orleans. From that port they migrated northward to various places along the western coast. Thus, we already find a large Croatian settlement in San Francisco in the mid-19th century. Another major route of their migration from New Orleans, where Croats had established a colony in the first half of the 19th century, was to the emerging industrial towns along the Mississippi river, especially St. Louis and Chicago.

Croats in the Chicago Metropolitan Area

Croatian presence in Chicago began in the mid-Nineteenth century. Historical research so far indicates that the first (or among the first) Croats in Chicago were Joseph and George Randić. In the 1870s, both were listed as restaurant owners. In 1877, Joseph is also listed as a professional clerk (or perhaps there were two Joseph Randićs). These men (and maybe some others) must have been in Chicago before the 1871 Chicago fire, most probably in the early Sixties. The Randićs came from the Bakar area, near the seaport of Rijeka.

The above mentioned individuals and other early Croatian immigrants to Chicago lived in the downtown area. A number of them became saloon keepers and restaurant owners. Sources from the 1920s tell that about 15 such businesses were owned by Croats before the economic crisis of 1893. They were located on Clark, State and Wabash streets between Van Buren and Lake streets.² It seems that those early comers became well-to-do individuals but they were not able (or interested) in organizing themselves as an ethnic community.

When the so-called “new immigrants” began arriving from Europe en masse toward the end of the 19th century, numerous Croats were among them. Chicago, as a rapidly growing industrial and commercial center, was the final destination for many immigrants eager to find a job and improve their living conditions. It is believed that about thirty thousand Croats settled in Chicago before the beginning of World War I. They settled in several city neighborhoods and adjacent industrial towns to the south and west of the city. Such settlements were located as follows: Wentworth Avenue and 22nd St., South Throop and 18th St., South Central Park, West Archer Avenue, Marshfield Avenue and 60th St., South Chicago, East Chicago, Ind., Whiting, Ind., Gary, Ind., Hawthorne (later incorporated into Cicero), Joliet and smaller settlements in other towns to the south and west of the city.

Being that Croats were (and are) mostly Catholic, the acquiring (or building) of local churches as their ethnic parishes, becomes a strong indicator not only of the neighborhoods where they lived, but also of the strength of

² Vjekoslav Meler, *Hrvati u Americi* (Chicago: Adria Printing, 1927), p. 23.

their numbers in such neighborhoods, their organizational skills, and religious enthusiasm. Croatian Catholic parishes in the Chicago area were established in the following chronological order: 1900 - Assumption of BVM, Marshfield Ave.; 1903 - St. George (Croatian and Slovene, taken over by Slovenes a few years later), South Chicago; 1906 - Sts Peter and Paul, South Central Park Ave.; 1906 - Nativity of BVM, Joliet; 1910 - Sts Peter and Paul, Whiting, Ind.; 1912 - St. Jerome, Wentworth Ave.; 1912 - Holy Trinity (later renamed St. Joseph the Worker), Gary, Ind.; 1913 - Sacred Heart, South Chicago; 1914 - Holy Trinity, Throop St., 1916 - Holy Trinity, East Chicago, Ind., and 1973 - Guardian Angels-Bl. Cardinal Stepinac, Chicago.

St. Jerome Croatian Catholic Church – A Brief History

St. Jerome parish was established in 1912 by Fr. Leon Medić. A Protestant church building was purchased on 25th St. and it served the spiritual needs of the local Croatian community for 10 years. In 1922, another Protestant (Lutheran) church building was acquired and the parish moved to its present location on 28th St. and S. Princeton Ave.

Through its 100 years of history, the faithful were served by 21 pastors and 35 assistant pastors, all of them Croatian Franciscans. So far, the longest serving pastor was the late Fr. Ferdinand Skoko (1943-55 and 1956-58). The highly esteemed actual pastor, Fr. Jozo Grbeš, was first an assistant pastor (1996-2001) and then pastor from 2001 to the present.

The parish school was opened in 1922 and entrusted to the Sisters Adorers of the Blood of Christ, who educated the younger generations of Croatians and others for decades. The parish, its school, church hall, and other facilities have had a significant impact on the life of the Croatian community in Chicago and local neighborhood as well.

Out of all the Croatian parishes in the Chicago metropolitan area, the community of St. Jerome has been the most vibrant. Besides its religious life and activities, it has greatly contributed to the preservation and promotion of Croatian cultural heritage in the city. All of this was achieved thanks to hard-working and capable priests and very dedicated parishioners. In addition to that, the parish is located very close to downtown, and the neighborhood has been relatively stable.

PART I

Register of Baptisms 1912 – 2002

The data presented here is based on St. Jerome's written records of baptisms, marriages, and deaths for the first 90 years of the parish history. One should not assume that the church records or our transcription and counting are without mistakes. Mostly, the pastors were very conscientious in keeping the vital records, but some not so. We have noticed, for example, that in 1965 for a while no deaths were recorded, while other sources confirm that some people did pass away and were buried from St. Jerome during that time gap. However, regardless of possible omissions and mistakes, the present statistics will offer new insights into the history of St. Jerome's parish and, at the same time, it will contribute to ethnic studies in America, mostly those dealing with Croatians.

Births

There were 6,207 baptisms at St. Jerome Croatian Catholic Church in Chicago through the first ninety years (1912-2002) of its history. Out of that total number 3,145 were males and 3,062 females; for 24 people the date of birth is unknown (12 males and 12 females), and 13 people were born before 1912 (7 were males and 6 females), that is, before the parish was established as such.

Numbers according to year of birth (not baptism) and gender

1888 - 1	1917 – 175 (84m/91f)	1932 - 50 (29m/21f)
1894 - 1	1918 – 121 (63m/58f)	1933 – 52 (26m/26f)
1903 - 1	1919 – 128 (61m/67f)	1934 – 50 (29m/21f)
1904 - 1	1920 - 106 (57m/49f)	1935 – 29 (15m/14f)
1905 - 1	1921 – 140 (63m/77f)	1936 – 46 (26m/20f)
1906 - 1	1922 – 181 (86m/95f)	1937 – 39 (21m/18f)
1908 - 2	1923 - 171 (80m/91f)	1938 – 45 (19m/26f)
1909 - 1	1924 – 163 (90m/73f)	1939 - 37 (15m/22f)
1910 - 3	1925 – 167 (86m/81f)	1940 – 34 (16m/18f)
1911 - 1	1926 – 144 (66m/78f)	1941 – 46 (23m/23f)
1912 – 33 (19m/14f)	1927 – 138 (77m/61f)	1942 – 57 (19m/38f)
1913 – 152 (76m/76f)	1928 – 137 (70m/67f)	1943 – 50 (24m/26f)

1914 – 164 (78m/86f)	1929 – 110 (54m/56f)	1944 – 47 (23m/24f)
1915 – 191 (99m/92f)	1930 – 102 (47m/55f)	1945 – 38 (24m/14f)
1916 – 172 (82m/90f)	1931 – 82 (48m/34f)	1946 – 62 (34m/28f)
1947 – 43 (26m/17f)	1966 – 33 (18m/15f)	1985 – 43 (28m/15f)
1948 – 54 (32m/22f)	1967 – 43 (18m/25f)	1986 – 38 (20m/18f)
1949 – 42 (19m/23f)	1968 – 44 (25m/19f)	1987 – 39 (20m/19f)
1950 – 54 (27m/27f)	1969 – 54 (33m/21f)	1988 – 27 (12m/15f)
1951 – 51 (28m/23f)	1970 – 51 (20m/31f)	1989 – 33 (20m/13f)
1952 – 51 (25m/26f)	1971 – 66 (26m/40f)	1990 – 52 (29m/23f)
1953 – 65 (28m/37f)	1972 – 64 (32m/32f)	1991 – 57 (27m/30f)
1954 – 62 (29m/33f)	1973 – 67 (35m/32f)	1992 – 44 (20m/24f)
1955 – 58 (28m/30f)	1974 – 66 (35m/31f)	1993 – 46 (20m/26f)
1956 - 49 (27m/22f)	1975 – 52 (26m/26f)	1994 – 51 (26m/25f)
1957 – 59 (24m/35f)	1976 – 45 (24m/21f)	1995 – 47 (25m/22f)
1958 – 64 (36m/28f)	1977 – 83 (46m/37f)	1996 – 43 (22m/21f)
1959 – 50 (30m/20f)	1978 – 57 (23m/34f)	1997 – 38 (18m/20f)
1960 – 42 (22m/20f)	1979 – 52 (30m/22f)	1998 – 36 (23m/13f)
1961 – 66 (35m/31f)	1980 – 55 (25m/30f)	1999 – 31 (14m/17f)
1962 – 54 (30m/24f)	1981 – 56 (33m/23f)	2000 – 21 (13m/8f)
1963 – 58 (32m/26f)	1982 – 40 (20m/20f)	2001 – 36 (16m/20f)
1964 – 48 (29m/19f)	1983 – 32 (14m/18f)	2002 – 16 (8m/8f)
1965 – 37 (20m/17f)	1984 – 46 (26m/20f)	

According to decades

1912-1919 – 1,136	1960-1969 – 479	Born before 1912 – 13
1920-1929 – 1,457	1970-1979 – 603	Unknown date of
1930-1939 – 532	1980-1989 – 409	birth - 24
1940-1949 – 473	1990-1999 - 445	Total – 6,207
1950-1959 – 563	2000-2002 - 73	

The above numbers clearly indicate a sharp drop in births in the 1930s. For example, while 167 baptized children were born in 1925, only 29 were born in 1935. The most important reason for such a drop in births must have been the Great Depression and its consequences. But there must have been some other

causes that followed the depression, among which we can mention: World War II., employment of women outside the home, later marriages, increased practice of birth control, flight to the suburbs and joining other parishes, and other reasons. One can notice birth increases in the parish during the Seventies. The main reason for this is the arrival of a larger number of Croatian new immigrants to Chicago (and other major cities in North America) in the late Sixties and early 1970s, many of whom settled in the vicinity of St. Jerome church and joined the parish community. Besides this exception, birth rates among the parishioners of St. Jerome followed fertility patterns similar to those in the city of Chicago, which were constantly declining.

Average number of children

St. Jerome community is an ethnic parish, not territorial, and its membership might be divided into two general groups: one is made up of loyal and stable members, who come to church every Sunday for services no matter where in the city or suburbs they live, and the other group is composed of those who come a few times a year (Christmas, Easter, Our Lady's Assumption, and other specific religious occasions), and those who are members for a few years and then join other parishes. It is difficult, therefore, to say what was the average number of children per family in the parish. If we simply divide the number of children baptized in the church by the number of mothers, the average would be a little less than 2 children per family. Most probably, the actual number is somewhat higher than this. Generally speaking, the number of children in Croatian-American families is very close to the overall American average.

Croatian and non-Croatian Heritage

Deciding who is of Croatian or non-Croatian ethnic background on the basis of church records, in many cases, was not an easy task. We have used the last names as key factor. But, some families have Americanized their last names, especially in the early decades of the 20th century. Some full-blooded Croatians have last names of foreign origin and, if we are not familiar with such names, we may easily count them as non-Croatians. Furthermore, it is hard to tell who is Croatian or non-Croatian in the case of third or fourth generations in ethnically mixed marriages, especially on the female side. However, our counting, although not perfect, presents a general ethnic picture of the parish.

Most non-Croatians baptized at St. Jerome Church were Italians because the church is located in an Italian and Croatian neighborhood. It is interesting to notice that even some Italians who came directly from Italy baptized (for whatever reason) their children at St. Jerome church, although the Italian Catholic parish (St. Lucy's) was only a few blocks away.

According to the last names, out of 6, 207 baptized at St. Jerome Church, 1,101 (about 18 percent) were of non-Croatian ethnic background. Out of those, in the case of four of them their date of birth is not indicated, 7 were born before 1910. The rest were born in the following decades:

1910s	18
1920s	43
1930s	44
1940s	116
1950s	180
1960s	160
1970s	186
1980s	173
1990s	146
2000-2002	24

Total - 1,101

Adoptions

Records indicate that from 1939 to 1996, 11 adopted children were baptized at St. Jerome parish. Judging by the adopting parents' last names, it seems that 3 were adopted by Croatians and 8 by non-Croatians. The smaller number of adoptions among Croatians most probably had four major reasons. First, lack of economic stability among immigrant families. Second, adoption agencies usually did not see immigrants as suitable adopting families. Third, Croatian families (especially in older days) had numerous children of their own. Fourth, there is no strong adoption tradition in the lands where Croatians came from, except for taking care of the child of some relative in need.

Godparents

In the early history of the parish, there was an interesting practice, that of having more than two godparents. In 12 cases there were three godparents and in 3 cases there were four godparents. Was this a temporary "fashion" or a local practice carried over from some region in Croatia, we do not know.

Later baptisms

It was easy to notice that a number of children were baptized at what might be considered a later age than customary among Croatian Catholics, which would be a few weeks after birth. It seems that there were various reasons for such delays, including: father might have been of socialist and anti-religious orientation (especially in the 1910s and 1920s), mixed marriages, illegitimacy, or, according to some older members of the community, in some cases because of financial reasons, especially during the Great Depression. Apparently, the parents would wait for better times in order to prepare for what was thought to be a proper celebration of their child's baptism. In the cases of religiously mixed marriages, probably there was no pre-marital agreement regarding the religious upbringing of their children, and baptisms were delayed till the parents made a decision regarding this issue.

The records indicate that the highest number of baptisms taking place a year or more after the child's birth was in 1921. Out of 140 baptisms in that year, 12 were (8.5 percent) "later" baptisms. The following numbers indicate "later" baptisms according to decades.

From Croatian families:

1910-1919	43
1920-1929	55
1930-1939	15
1940-1949	12
1950-1959	9
1960-1969	8
1970-1979	7
1980-1989	2
1990-1995	3

Total 154

Age	No. of Baptisms
29	1 - Croatian born
26	1 - Croatian born
24	1 - convert
21	1 - from mixed marriage
16	1

15	1
11	1
10	1
9	3
8	2
7	8
6	13
5	6
4	6
3	15
2	24
1	69
Total	154

Church books indicate that out of the “later” baptized Croatian children, 16 came from civil marriage families, 18 were from mixed marriage families, 2 were illegitimate, and 2 children born in Croatia were not baptized as babies most probably because their parents belonged to the communist party. For the children of one specific family records indicate that their father was an atheist (*bezvjerac*), and for another child that the father was a “Bolshevik.” In such cases, most probably, the mothers were taking their children to be baptized even without the knowledge of the fathers.

Cases of “later” baptism from non-Croatian families (using last names as indicators).

According to decades

1910-1919	4 cases
1920-1929	17
1930-1939	11
1940-1949	31
1950-1959	38
1960-1969	15
1970-1979	24
1980-1989	10
1990-1995	8

Total 158 cases

Age	No. of Baptisms
25	1
15	2
14	2
13	2
12	4
11	3
10	5
9	6
8	5
7	6
6	12
5	15
4	20
3	19
2	28
1	28
Total	158

Out of the above cases, the books indicate that 34 were from civil marriage families, 16 were from religiously mixed marriages, and 5 were illegitimate children. The average baptism delay for these three categories was a little over 4 years. Out of the illegitimate children, one was 13 and the others 1 year old at the time of baptism. There is a strong indication that most of the parents of the above children were not regular members of St. Jerome Church, but lived in the neighborhood. Some of the illegitimate children were brought to St. Jerome for baptism most probably because the mothers were ashamed to bring them to the parishes they or their parents belonged to.

Adult Baptisms and Converts

There were 71 adult and convert baptisms.

According to decades:

1910-20	2
1920s	2

1930s	3
1940s	14
1950s	18
1960s	5
1970s	6
1980s	3
1990s	0
2000-2002	4

The oldest baptized convert at St. Jerome Church was 62 and the youngest 6 years old. The average age of baptized adults and converts was 23.8 years. For two people, the date of birth is not known. For three people, neither their date of birth nor that of their acceptance into the Church is known, but it is indicated that they were Protestants. For 11 people, the year of birth is known, but not that of their baptism, although it is clear that they were baptized at St. Jerome Church. The records indicate that the converts came from the following backgrounds: "Protestant" 7; Lutheran 3; Orthodox 3; "Parents not Catholic" 3; Baptist 1; Congregationalist 1; Episcopalian 1; Methodist 1; Polish National Church 1; Jewish 1; no religion 1.

Children from Civil Marriages

In 114 cases the children were born into civil-marriage families. Judging by the parents' last names, 49 of the total were children of Croatian background and 65 of non-Croatian heritage. Out of 49, in 30 cases the father was Croatian or of Croatian background. In 10 cases the mother was Croatian or of Croatian background. In 9 cases both the father and the mother were Croatian or of Croatian background. In some cases, more than one child from the same family was baptized.

Children from civil marriages, according to decades:

1920s	0
1930s	21
1940s	40
1950s	26
1960s	11
1970s	6

1980s 6

1990s 4

2000s 0

Obviously, the highest number of children from civil marriages were born in the 1940s, about 8.5 percent of the total number were baptized during that decade. Why at that particular time, we don't have an answer.

Children from Religiously Mixed Marriages

The total number of children born into religiously mixed families was 93.

According to decades:

1910s 5

1920s 3

1930s 2

1940s 24

1950s 22

1960s 12

1970s 3

1980s 6

1990s 16

2000 0

The fathers were not Catholic in 51 cases and the mothers in 28 cases, and unknown in 14 cases. In 29 cases the mothers, and in 15 cases the fathers were Croatian or of Croatian heritage, and in 49 cases the parents were of non-Croatian ethnicity.

Religions of non-Roman Catholic parent:

Protestants 16

Orthodox 9

Jewish 3

Muslims 2

Chaldean 1 (Catholic of different rite)

Assyrian Church 1

Asian religions 2

No religion 1

Unknown 58

Children born out of wedlock

Out of the total number (6,207), 56 illegitimate children were baptized at St. Jerome. For one child the record states that it came from a concubine relation.

According to decades:

1910s - 8

1920s - 8

1930s - 6

1940s - 3

1950s - 0

1960s - 4

1970s - 5

1980s - 14

1990s - 6

2000s- 2

Out of these, either one or both parents of 22 (39%) children were ethnically Croatian, 16 of these were born from 1910-1930 and three in the 1930s. Other children (34 or 61%) were of non-Croatian parents. Among the Croatians, children were born out of wedlock mainly during the early decades of the parish history.

Parents' Place of Birth

Out of those that were baptized before 1928, in 943 cases it is known where their mothers were born.

Most of them were born in Croatia. In 27 cases, the mothers were born in the USA, 10 in Poland, 11 in Bohemia, 9 in Hungary, 7 in Slovenia, 1 in

England, 1 in Italy, 1 in Belgium, and 1 in Argentina of Croatian parents. In most of these cases, both parents came from the same region of Croatia.

In 1,816 cases, it is known where the fathers were born. The places and numbers are listed below according to the different regions of Croatia, and towns, if known. In some cases, it was hard to decipher the name of a village or some part of the village. Where we had doubts, a question mark was added.

Places where fathers came from and number of recordings in the book of baptisms	
Dalmatia	Hreljin 23
Aržano 5	Jablanac 1
Bajagić 2	Kraljevica 7
Bisko 23	Kras/Krk 5
Bitelić/Sinj 2	Krasica 21
Bobovišće/Brač 14	Krk 7
Brač 1	Kukuljanovo 8
Bristivica 1	Novalja/Pag 4
Brnaze 8	Orlec/Cres 1
Brusje 1	Pag 1
Čačvina 1	Punat/Krk 1
Čaparice 31	Praputnjak 26
Cista 4	Rijeka 8
Dalmatia 9	Risika/Krk 5
Damlik? 1	Škriljevo 13
Dicmo 11	Starigrad 1
Donji Dolac 4	Stivan 1
Donje Selo/Šolta 7	Susak 1
Dolac/Poljica 3	Valun 1
Dračevica/Brač 3	Vrbik 10
Drevnik 2	
Drniš 6	Istria
Dubrava/Poljica 1	Boljun 2
Dubro 1	Istra 2
Dugobabe 1	Krasica 1
Dugopolje 21	Labin 1
Galovac/Zadar 6	Lupoglav 8

Gardun 10
 Gdinj/Hvar 2
 Gljev? /Sinj 1
 Gornje Selo/Šolta 1
 Grab/Sinj 40
 Grabova Draga 1
 Grabovac 6
 Grohote/Šolta 10
 Gruda 1
 Hrvaci 27
 Hvar 8
 Imotski 20
 Jabuka 16
 Jesenice 1
 Kamensko 5
 Kaštel Gomilica 12
 Kaštel Kambelovac 56
 Kaštel Lukšić 17
 Kaštel Novi 5
 Kaštel Stafilić 5
 Kaštel Stari 1
 Kaštel Šućurac 82
 Kaštele 7
 Katuni 1
 Klis 22
 Knin 6
 Komiža 1
 Korita/Sinj 1
 Korušće/Klis 2
 Kostanje/Poljica 7
 Košute/Sinj 7
 Kotlenice/Klis 27
 Krivodol 1
 Kruševo 1
 Kućarica? 1

Poljane 1

Rovinj 2

Lika

Brinje 1

Kardun 1

Križpolje 1

Lika 1

Otočac 1

Vranik 1

Central Croatia

Croatia 7

Cvitović? 1

Donja Bistrica (Međimurje) 1

Grabić 1

Kapelna/Ogulin 1

Karlovac 1

Komesarac 1

Koprivnica 1

Lokve 2

Ludbreg 2

Međimurje 2

Nova Jošava? 1

Petrinja 1

Plešvica? 1

Prekomurje 10

Ravnagora 1

Severin na Kupu 1

Sisak 1

Slatina 3

Slunj 2

Sv. Juraj 1

Sv. Ivan Zelenci 3

Toplice 1

Varaždinske Toplice 1

Kučice/Omiš 1	
Kutisce? 1	
Labin/Trogir 1	
Lečevica/Trogir 6	
Ljubitovica/Trogir 2	
Lokvičići/Imotski 4	
Lovreć 4	
Ložišća/Brač 9	
Makarska 3	
Marina/Trogir 4	
Medov Dolac 11	
Mirlovći? 1	
Milna/Brač 4	
Nevest/Šibenik 2	
Novi Trogir 1	
Novigrad/Zadar 1	
Ogorje 1	
Oklaj/Knin 4	
Okrug/Trogir 3	
Omiš 4	
Ostrovica 2	
Otavice 2	
Otok/Sinj 12	
Podbablje/Imotski 2	
Podgora 1	
Podnopolje/Sinj 1	
Pograđe/Omiš 3	
Poljica 33	
Potrvlje 4	
Preko/Zadar 13	
Proncina? 2	
Prugovo 5	
Pučišća/Brač 1	
Putišići/Sinj 4	
Radošić 1	
	Slavonia
	Badljevina 1
	Bokane 3
	Crnik? Cernik? 6
	Čeralije 2
	Drenovci? 1
	Ilok 2
	Kapela 1
	Lisak 1
	Osijek 1
	Požega 6
	Slavonija 1
	Terezovac 1
	Virovitica 1
	Voćin 2
	Bosnia
	Bosnia 2
	Duvno 2
	Grabovac 1
	Korita 2
	Livno 35
	Podhum/Livno 2
	Rujani 1
	Sanski Most 1
	Sarajevo 1
	Zabrišće/Livno 1
	Zidine 1
	Županjac 1
	Herzegovina
	Broćanac (Dalmatia?) 2
	Cerno/Ljubuški 1
	Gorica 1

Roze?/Sinj 1
 Ruda/Sinj 28
 Runić? 1
 Runovići 1
 Satrić 1
 Šestanovac 1
 Šibenik 6
 Sinj 51
 Sitno/Poljica 3
 Sitno Gornje 1
 Slatine/Trogir 2
 Slivno 1
 Sola? 1
 Solin 12
 Šolta 70
 Špić 1
 Split 110
 Srd.Selo/Šolta 2
 Srinjine/Poljica 17
 Stobreč 10
 Stomorska/Šolta 2
 Strizirep/Sinj 4
 Strmi Dolac/Sinj 3
 Struga 1
 Šućurac 1
 Suhi Dolac 13
 Sutomišćica/Ugljan 1
 Suhač/Sinj 1
 Svib/Sinj 5
 Terca? 1
 Tijarica 33
 Trbusi 1
 Trilj 10
 Trogir 12
 Tučepi 2

Gradac 3
 Grude 1
 Hercegovina 3
 Humac/Ljubuški 2
 Ljubuški 4
 Mostar 5
 Posušje 3

Uncertain

Govedun 1
 Medovica 1
 Metlike 1
 Mitranska 1
 Mobil 1
 Tergesto 1
 ..ubljona 1

Other places

Bačka 2
 Banat 1
 Karlovci/Srijem 1

Born in USA

Chicago 18
 Joliet 1
 Michigan 1
 Montana 1
 Viper/Kentucky 1
 Watsonville/California 2
 Wisconsin 1
 Hispanics/USA? 2

Other Countries

Belgium 1
 Bessarabia 1

Turjaci 24	Bulgaria 1
Udovičići/Sinj 2	Czech/Slovakia 6
Ugljane/Sinj 4	Germany 2
Ugljan 1	Hungary 2
Vedrine/Trilj 4	Italy 4
Velić/Sinj 4	Poland 1
Vinišće/Trogir 14	Slovenia/Carniola 1
Vis 3	Spain 6
Vojnić/Sinj 26	
Voštane/Sinj 13	
Vrboska/Hvar 25	
Vrpolje/Knin 10	
Vučevica 1	
Zadar 4	
Zagvozd 1	
Zakućac?/Vis 2	
Zasiok/Sinj 1	
Zastražišće/Hvar 15	
Zaton/Šibenik 1	
Žedno/Trogir 3	
Zelovo/Sinj 2	
Zemunik/Zadar 12	
Žeževica 2	
Zvečanje 15	
Primorje	
Beli/Cres 35	
Cres 8	
Divjake 1	
Dobrinje/Krk 30	
Gorica/Krk 12	
Gostinjac 1	
Grobnik 8	

Dalmatia

Marriages Registered in the Book of Baptisms

According to Catholic church practice, once a Catholic is married, enters a religious order, is ordained to the priesthood, divorced, re-married, etc., the parish where he/she was baptized should enter the detailed information in the book of baptisms. This is especially important for marriages that take place in another parish (no matter where). In that case, the specifics of the marriage are (should be) sent to the “home parish” to be recorded.

Thus, St. Jerome’s church baptism register also provides marriage information in 1,531 cases. Out of those, 768 are men and 763 women. Judging according to the last names, out of those 181 were non-Croatians and 1,350 were ethnic Croatians, either both parents, or one parent or one or both grandparents.

Out of the total number (1,531), the place/church of marriage is indicated in 1,418 cases, out of which 184 (130 women and 54 men) were celebrated at St. Jerome church, the church of their baptism. Out of those 184, non-Croatians were 31 while 153 of Croatian ethnicity. The average age of men at the time of marriage was 26.2 and of women 23.9 years.

Out of the total number, there were 1,234 people who had been baptized at St. Jerome Church but had their church wedding somewhere else, mostly in Catholic churches in Chicago. Of the more than 200 churches that are mentioned in the baptism register, we bring only those in which the highest numbers of marriages took place:

St. Theodore 38	St. Ethelreda 10	St. John 6
St. Rita 35	St. Gall 10	St. Joseph & Ann 6
St. M. Incoronata 30	St. Mary of Mt Carmel 10	Mary Q. of Heaven 6
All Saints 30	Immaculate Conception 9	St. Michael 6
St. Anthony 25	St. Tiburtius 9	Our L. of Snow 6
Nativity 25	St. Agnes 8	St. Peter 6
St. Nicholas 23	St. Augustine 8	Sts. Peter and Paul 6
St. George 22	St. Barbara 8	St. Rose of Lima 6
St. Lucia 21	St. Christina 7	St. Brendan 5
St. Symphorosa 18	St. Joseph 7	St. Alphonsus 5
Visitation 17	St. Maurice 7	Christ the King 5
Assumption (Croatian) 14	Queen of Universe 7	Holy Trinity (Croatian) 5
St. Gabriel 14	St. Theresa 7	St. Mary 5
Sacred Heart (Croatian) 10	St. Bede 6	St. Pancratius 5
St. Basil 10	St. Blaze 6	

Some were married in other states (48 in California), others in military chapels (11), in Croatia (7), in Orthodox churches (3), and Protestant churches (2).

The highest number of marriages of those that were baptized at St. Jerome but married in other parishes was in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. These were mostly second generation Croatian Americans (and non-Croatians as well). May be it become fashionable to have a marriage ceremony in certain churches or perhaps St. Jerome Church was seen by some as a parish of immigrants that did not serve their needs any longer. Most probably, it was just part of the normal process of acclimatization and wish of the second generation to become part of mainstream America.

Second Marriages

Records indicate that out of those who were baptized at St. Jerome Church, 17 people had a second church marriage. The first case in 1959 and the latest in 2000. Most probably, there were more such marriages but St. Jerome parish was not informed about them, and therefore they were not recorded in the book of baptisms.

Annulled Church Marriages

Records indicate that out of those who were baptized at St. Jerome Church, there were 39 annulled church marriages. Out of those, 11 were annulled in the 1970s, 15 in the 1980s, and 13 in the 1990s; in three cases the husband and wife were of Croatian background, in 7 cases both were non-Croatians, in 13 cases the husbands were non-Croatian while the wives Croatian, and in 16 cases the husbands were Croatian while the wives non-Croatian, out of these 2 or 3 were half-Croatian.

PART II

Marriage Register 1912-2002

During the first 90 years of St. Jerome's history, 2,092 marriages were registered in the parish marriage books. Out of that, in two cases the exact date of the marriage is not known, one took place in 1955 and the other in 1983.

Years and number of marriages

1912 - 7	1939 - 21	1966 - 16
1913 - 62	1940 - 21	1967 - 9
1914 - 72	1941 - 20	1968 - 11
1915 - 24	1942 - 19	1969 - 16
1916 - 34	1943 - 12	1970 - 37
1917 - 16	1944 - 13	1971 - 36
1918 - 22	1945 - 14	1972 - 20
1919 - 13	1946 - 43	1973 - 32
1920 - 30	1947 - 39	1974 - 26
1921 - 80	1948 - 36	1975 - 25
1922 - 77	1949 - 34	1976 - 19
1923 - 56	1950 - 18	1977 - 27
1924 - 47	1951 - 26	1978 - 15
1925 - 29	1952 - 31	1979 - 18
1926 - 32	1953 - 8	1980 - 22
1927 - 38	1954 - 24	1981 - 7
1928 - 22	1955 - 26	1982 - 12
1929 - 17	1956 - 17	1983 - 11
1930 - 19	1957 - 19	1984 - 9
1931 - 10	1958 - 14	1985 - 24
1932 - 11	1959 - 20	1986 - 13
1933 - 13	1960 - 21	1987 - 21
1934 - 9	1961 - 26	1988 - 11
1935 - 21	1962 - 29	1989 - 12
1936 - 18	1963 - 23	1990 - 20
1937 - 22	1964 - 15	1991 - 20
1938 - 12	1965 - 15	1992 - 22

	According to decades
1993 - 19	
1994 - 20	1912-1919 – 250
1995 - 12	1920-1929 – 428
1996 - 22	1930-1939 – 156
1997 - 11	1940-1949 – 251
1998 - 9	1950-1959 – 203
1999 - 14	1960-1969 – 181
2000 - 8	1970-1979 – 255
2001 - 19	1980-1989 – 152
2002 - 20	1990-1999 – 169
	2000-2002 – 47
	Total: 2,092

Clearly, the highest number of marriages took place in the 1920s. Most probably, young Croatian men who came to America/Chicago, in large numbers during the first decade of the 20th century, were more than ready to marry in the post-war years. The economic situation in the U. S. in the 1920s was reasonably good, especially in comparison to Europe.

Only a small number of single Croatian women came to America before the war, and during the war probably none. So after the war, single men were arranging for their future wives to come to them as fast as they could, at first as “ordered brides” and/or as wives whom they sometime earlier married by proxy in their native village. Also, one should not forget that a number of children of those who came to America at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century had grown up and were of marrying age.

The Great Depression, however, put everything on hold, including marriage for many. The number of marriages at St. Jerome Church dropped dramatically from 428 in the 1920s to 156 in the 1930s. In 1933, only nine marriages took place at this church. The numbers did go up immediately after World War II because war veterans returning home were ready to get married. The economy improved and a new and brighter era began for them, as well as for all of America.

In the 1950s and 1960s the number of marriages went down, most probably for three main reasons. Veterans were already married, post-World War II immigrants settled down, and a number of Chicago-born Croatians, that were born in the Bridgeport area and baptized at St. Jerome, were moving out of the old neighborhood to other more affluent areas of the city or suburbs, as a part of their upward social mobility and Americanization process.

In the 1970s, the number of marriages did increase but mostly due to a wave of new Croatian immigrants. In the mid-1960s, the Yugoslav communist regime opened the safety valve and encouraged people, mostly Croatians, to go to the West as migrant workers. For many that was an opportunity to come to America. Thus, a large number of new Croatian immigrants came to Chicago and other larger cities. Many of these were young single men who were marrying girls mostly of Croatian heritage, some from Croatia proper or of Croatian ethnicity. The relative surge of marriages in the early 1970s diminished, and numbers remained on a relatively low side till the end of the 20th century.

Ethnic Mixing

Out of the total number of marriages (2,092), judging by the last names, in 1,058 cases (c. 50%) both wife and husband were either Croatian born or of Croatian heritage. In 434 (c. 20.5%) cases, while the wives were of Croatian heritage, the husbands were not (Out of that number in 19 cases it is hard to say whether they were ethnic Croatians or not). On the other hand, in 320 cases (c. 15%) the husbands were of Croatian ethnicity, but the wives were not (It is hard to tell for sure in 38 cases). In 280 cases (c. 13%), both the husbands and wives were non-Croatians (In 11 cases it is hard to tell). This and other indicators tell us that out of the total number of marriages at St. Jerome church, about half of them have been intra-Croatian, about 36 percent Croatian and non-Croatian, and the rest of other ethnicities. Also, Croatian women were inter-marrying ethnically more than Croatian men.

Birthplace

In most cases, it is recorded where the marriage partners were born. It is easily noticeable from the church records that in the beginning years of the parish, Croatian men were inter-marrying women coming from the former Austro-Hungarian empire, namely today's Czech Republic, Slovakia, southern Poland, and Austria. First, because there was a shortage of Croatian women and also Croatians in Chicago mingled with others from the empire, especially with the Czechs who were already an established ethnic community in Chicago, when Croatians began to arrive in larger numbers. One finds quite often that various Croatian organizations of that time held their meetings and celebrations at Czech halls. Thus, a number of marriages came out of such social contacts. It might be that Czech, Hungarian, and Polish women were coming to America in greater numbers than those from Croatian lands and, therefore, it was easier to find a bride among them. Furthermore, Croatians in Croatia at that time had strong cultural and political ties with Prague, it is not surprising, therefore, that there was an open and friendly contact between the two

communities in Chicago. However, the Croatian-Czech relations in Chicago cooled off and eventually became practically non-existent after the collapse of the Habsburg empire and the establishment of the newly formed countries of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Prague's cooperation with Belgrade and support of the Yugoslav state slowly alienated Zagreb from Prague, and that had a negative impact on community relations in Chicago.

It is interesting to note that although Slovenia was under the same rule as Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina before and after 1918, there were relatively very few inter-marriages between the two nationalities in Chicago.

Grooms' Birthplace

Croatian lands 1,062 (c. 50.75%)

Chicago 760 (c. 36.3%)

Place unregistered 120

Places in the USA other than Chicago 114

Italy 10

Austria 4

Poland 4

Germany 3

Canada 2

Lithuania 2

Mexico 2

Hungary 2

Philippines 2

Macedonia 1

Venezuela 1

Ukraine 1

Romania 1

Slovenia/Carniola 1

Brides' Birthplace

Chicago 953 (c. 45.5%)

Croatian lands 779 (c. 37.2%)

Places in the USA other than Chicago 125

Place unregistered 111

Czech Rep. and Slovakia today 43
 Hungary 18
 Austria 12
 Poland 12 (out of that 6 from Galicia, 1 from Silesia)
 Italy 8 (out of that 3 of Croatian heritage)
 Germany 6 (2 from Prussia)
 Slovenia 5
 Argentina 3
 Mexico 3
 Australia 2
 Canada 2
 Ireland 2
 Egypt 1
 France 1
 Honduras 1
 Hong Kong 1
 Kosovo/Janjevo 1
 Lithuania 1
 Philippines 1
 Russia 1

Chicago Born Grooms

Out of the total number of bridegrooms married at St. Jerome church, 760 of them were born in Chicago. Out of those 760 marriages, in 206 (c. 27%) cases the bride and bridegrooms were of non-Croatian background, judging by their last names, although they might have had a Croatian grandma, for example. In 125 (c. 16. 45%) cases, the brides were not of Croatian heritage, in 299 (c 39.3%) cases the husbands were not of Croatian heritage. In 130 (c. 17%) cases, both brides and bridegrooms were of Croatian heritage

Religiously Mixed Marriages

From 1912-2002, there were 181 (c. 8.65%) religiously mixed marriages at St. Jerome Croatian Catholic church. In 107 cases, the husbands were not born Catholics. The books record the following:

“Non Catholic” 24

Lutheran 15

“Converts” 17

Baptized at the time of marriage 12

Protestant 10

Not baptized 6

Orthodox - Greek 5

Baptist 4

Methodist 4

Presbyterian 3

Episcopalian 1

Evangelist 1

Jewish 1

Orthodox - Macedonian 1

Orthodox - Serbian 1

Orthodox 1

No religion 1

In 74 cases, the wives were not born Catholics. The records indicate the following:

Baptized before the marriage 28

“Converts” 8

“Different religion” 12

Not baptized 9

Lutheran 6

Jewish 2 (1 convert)

Methodist 2

No religion 2

Baptists 1

Episcopalian 1

Evangelist 1

Presbyterian 1

Protestant 1

Out of the total number of marriages, in 176 cases, the wife's religious affiliation or lack of it is not indicated.

Out of the total number of known religiously mixed marriages (181), in 56 cases both the wife and husband were non-Croatians and in 127 cases at least one partner was of Croatian heritage.

Age of Marriage

Bridegrooms

Out of the total number of marriages (2,092), for 258 husbands the age is not known and for 1,834 it is known. The marriage age was as follows:

Age and No. of Cases

16	1	36	41	56	3
17	4	37	32	57	2
18	11	38	22	58	1
19	14	39	12	59	3
20	49	40	23	60	4
21	74	41	11	61	1
22	108	42	9	62	1
23	130	43	6	63	4
24	130	44	9	64	3
25	170	45	6	65	1
26	141	46	5	66	1
27	147	47	5	67	3
28	114	48	7	68	1
29	104	49	3	69	1
30	99	50	7	70	2
31	90	51	7	72	2
32	55	52	3	77	1
33	50	53	3	89	1
34	58	54	2		
35	34	55	3		

Brides

Out of the total number of marriages (2,092), for 258 wives the age is not known and for 1,834 it is known. The marriage age is as follows:

Age and No. of Cases

13	1	32	37	51	3
15	3	33	24	52	2
16	15	34	21	53	2
17	50	35	20	54	3
18	103	36	17	55	3
19	170	37	19	56	3
20	192	38	6	57	4
21	171	39	6	58	2
22	160	40	10	60	1
23	146	41	4	61	2
24	130	42	6	62	1
25	107	43	1	64	1
26	110	44	5	67	1
27	68	45	2	71	1
28	60	46	3	72	1
29	49	47	6	78	1
30	42	48	7		
31	29	49	3		

From the above numbers it can be concluded that the average age of the bridegrooms was of almost 29 and that of the brides 24.7 years. However, one should take into account that in a number of cases this was a second marriage. For example, records indicate that 105 widows and 16 widowers were married at St. Jerome church in those nine decades, in 70 cases the couple was in a civil marriage before they married in the church; one couple lived all their life together and married at a very old age. However, the numbers indicate that the “favorite” marriage age for men was 25 and for women 20.

In addition

In 11 cases, one partner comes from a previous marriage annulled by the Church.

In 6 cases, one partner came from a divorced civil marriage.

Out of the total number of marriages under this study, 24 were later declared “null and void” by the Catholic marriage tribunal.

PART III

Deaths Register - 1912-2002

During the first 90 years of the parish history, 3,615 deaths were registered in the church books. Out of those 2,225 (c. 61.5%) were males, and 1,252 (c. 34.6%) females, and in 138 (c. 3.8%) cases the gender is not known. They were entered as “babies” or “infants”.

Number of Deaths According to Years

1912 – 6	1936 – 26	1960 – 26
1913 – 60	1937 – 25	1961 – 43
1914 – 62	1938 – 24	1962 – 33
1915 – 64	1939 – 35	1963 – 36
1916 – 68	1940 – 26	1964 – 9
1917 – 97	1941 – 30	1965 – 3
1918 – 93	1942 – 32	1966 – 40
1919 – 85	1943 – 43	1967 – 33
1920 – 86	1944 – 33	1968 – 34
1921 – 57	1945 – 42	1969 – 26
1922 – 74	1946 – 36	1970 – 26
1923 – 69	1947 – 24	1971 – 30
1924 – 73	1948 – 31	1972 – 26
1925 – 86	1949 – 25	1973 – 30
1926 – 83	1950 – 34	1974 – 42
1927 – 84	1951 – 31	1975 – 27
1928 – 104	1952 – 34	1976 – 27
1929 – 93	1953 – 33	1977 – 13
1930 – 76	1954 – 29	1978 – 22
1931 – 57	1955 – 30	1979 – 30
1932 – 57	1956 – 45	1980 – 26
1933 – 42	1957 – 27	1981 – 28
1934 – 40	1958 – 31	1982 – 24
1935 – 41	1959 – 48	1983 – 32

1984 – 25	1991 – 26	1998 – 27
1985 – 22	1992 – 28	1999 – 25
1986 – 16	1993 – 27	2000 – 39
1987 – 30	1994 – 22	2001 – 25
1988 – 18	1995 – 46	2002 – 27
1989 – 13	1996 – 30	
1990 – 18	1997 – 24	

Number of Deaths According to Decades

1912-1919 – 535

1920-1929 – 809

1930-1939 – 423

1940-1949 – 322

1950-1959 – 342

1960-1969 – 283

1970-1979 – 273

1980-1989 – 234

1990-1999 – 273

2000-2002 – 91

Unknown year of death - 30

Deaths of Males (2,225) and Females (1,252) According to Decades

1912-1919 M 340 - F 165

1920-1929 M 480 - F 275

1930-1939 M 270 - F 139

1940-1949 M 247 - F 74

1950-1959 M 239 - F 97

1960-1969 M 180 - F 101

1970-1979 M 165 - F 108

1980-1989 M 122 - F 110

1990-1999 M 154 - F 138

2000-2002 M 28 - F 45

The above numbers clearly indicate that the 1920s were the deadliest decade in the parish history, and that the year 1928 (followed closely by 1929) had the highest number of deaths. Also, the number of deaths of men were much higher than those of women during most of the decades. They start leveling off only in the Eighties and in the first two years of this millennium when there were more deaths of women than of men. A careful study of the causes for such a big gap is not done here, but one can think of the following: longer life expectancy for women in general, widows moved from the area and were buried from some other church, men had more work-related accidents, more violent deaths, and there was a higher number of smokers and alcoholics among men, and some other vices, too.

Causes of Death

During the first three decades of parish history, pastors did enter the cause of death in most cases at the parish register. After that less and less information on the causes of death is given. Such data is important since it gives us an opportunity to learn about the leading health problems in the community at the time. Also, this data sheds light on some other aspects of life, as lack of adequate healthcare, medicines and even food, various vices, social problems, nature of work, etc.

The following causes and numbers are listed in the church books:

Abnormal? - 1	Fractures - 2
Abscess bone - 1	Broken spine - 1
Abscess lung - 6	Drowning - 1
Abscess liver - 3	Foot - 1
Abscess stomach - 1	Gas - 1
Accidents (total 174)	Street car - 1
Accident (no explanation) - 133	Suffocation - 1
Car (killed by) - 10	Alcoholism - 6
Fractured skull - 12	Alzheimer's - 2
Burns - 5	Anemia - 2
Asphyxiation - 4	Aneurysm - 2
Blood poisoning - 2	Angina pectoris - 1

Apoplexy - 1 ("stroke")	Acute catarrhal enterocolitis (baby) - 1
Appendicitis - 16	Cerebral hemorrhage - 18
Asthma - 10	Cerebral meningitis - 1
Arterial sclerosis - 2	Cerebral thrombosis - 1
Atelactasis - 9	Cholecystitis (gall bladder) - 1
Atrophy/liver - 1	Cholera - 2
Asepsis - 1	Cirrhosis of the liver - 1
Alactosis - 1	Complications measles shot (age 15) - 1
"baby"?!	"Contagious" - 1 (3 years old)
Bacterial endocarditis - 1	Convulsions - 2
Bifida/spine - 1	Coroner case - 4
Bone disease - 1	Cough - 2
Brain infection - 1	Cysts ovary - 2
Brain tumor - 2	Died in hospital - 2
Broken compensation - 1	Decomposition - 1
Bronchitis - 16	Delivery - 2
C. thumboir?	Diabetes - 7
Cancer (total cancer 94)	Diarrhea - 9
no explanation - 60	Diphtheria - 29
brain - 1	Disabled - 1
lungs - 6	Dropsy? Marasmus - 1 (1 year old)
prostate - 3	During operation - 1
stomach - 9	During birth - 1
eye - 1	Emphysema - 1
liver - 5	Emphysema/lungs - 1
bladder - 1	Endocarditis/heart - 9
breast - 1	Enteritis/inflame. of the small intestine - 45
cerebrum - 2	Epid. cerebro? - 1
colon - 1	Erysipelas/bacterial skin infection - 2
esophagus - 1	Erythematosis - 1
larynx - 1	Foramen ovale - (just born)
neck - 1	Foreal fistula - 1
rectum - 1	Found dead - 4

Gall bladder - 2	Intestinal obstruction - 2
Gastroenteritis - 2	Kidney Failure - 8
Gastritis - 7	Knot in cord? - 1 (baby)
General paralysis - 2	Kužna bolest/contagious disease - 3
Goiter lobar - 1	Leg wounds - 1
Goiter cancer - 1	Leukemia & heart - 1
Goiter - 1	Leukemia - 1
Heart (total 142)	Liver disease - 3
Heart attack - 72	Long term disease? - 1
Heart condition - 64	Lung abscess - 1
Heart & asthma - 1	Lung disease - 2
Heart & Diabetes - 1	Lung & heart - 1
Heart & emphysema - 1	Lungs/smoking - 1
Heat exhaustion - 3	lymph sarcoma - 1
Hemorrhage cystitis - 1	Ma?? (as in the book!) - 1
Hemorrhage - 12	Malnutrition - 21
Hemorrhoids - 1	Marasmus/malnutrition - 5
Hodgkin's - 1	Muscular dystrophy - 1
Hydrocephalus - 1	Mediastinal sarcoma - 1
Hypoxemia - 1	Meningitis - 17
Icterus - 1	Meningitis/TB - 1
Iliac colic? - 1 (4 years old)	Mental illness - 2
Inanition/starvation? - 1 (14 days))	Microcephalus - 1
Inflammation/intestines - 1	Miscarriage - 81
Inflammation/lungs - 1	Miserere/miseria/misery?- 2
Inflammation/stomach - 1	Mitral insufficiency - 3
Infectious disease - 1	Mitral stenosis - 1
Infirmity - 35	Multiple sclerosis - 1
Influenza - 43	Myocarditis - 45
Inquest pending - 11	Natural causes - 16
Insane asylum - 1	Nephritis/kidney - 17
Insanity? - 1	Nephritis/chronic - 5
Insolation? - 2	Nephritis/acute - 1

Obstructive jaundice - 1	Rabies - 1
Old age - 11	Red disease - 1
Operation caesarean - 1	Rhinitis - 1
Operation stomach - 1	Rheumatism - 1
Operation - 3	Rickets - 3
Otitis - 1	“od rizipjele”? - 1
Otitis media - 2	Rupture - 3
Pancreatitis - 1	Subphrenic abscess - 1
Paralyzes - 4	Sarcoma/kidney - 1
Paralyzed since 1 year old - 1	Scarlet fever - 5
Paralyzed 2 years - 1	Sclerosis of arteries - 1
Paralyzes of the insane - 1	Sclerosis - 1
Pericarditis - 1	Senectus - 2
Peritonitis - 6	Septicemia - 4
Peritonsilla - 1	Shock - 1
Pereniseisan anemisa? - 1	Skin disease - 1
Pharyngitis - 1	Still-birth - 124
Phtisi pulmonary - 3	Stomach - 1
Placenta praevia - 2	Stomach flu - 1
Pleurisy - 2	Stroke - 25
Pneumonia - 331	Sudden death - 71
“Posljedica od podmetnuća djeteta”?	Sudden - at work - 1
21 year old woman - 1	Suicide/temporary insane - 1
Poliomyelitis - 1	Suicide/insane - 3
Post-operation - 4	Suicide - 5
Pox - 8	Syphilis congenital - 2
“pril. bolest” (contagious disease?) - 1	Syphilis lues - 1
Prostatic hypertrophy - 1	Syphilis - 1
Pulmonary hemorrhage - 2	Tuberculosis - 225
Pulmonary abscess - 1	TB meningitis - 4
Pyamia - 1	“TB or cancer” - 1
Pyelitis - 1	TB spine - 1
Pythisis - 1	TB/glands - 1
R. sarnal? - 1	TB/lip - 1

TB/Fibroid phthisis - 1	Gunshot wound - 1
Thyroid gland - 1	Killed on duty - 1
“toxicogenic”? (1 year old) - 1	Killed by police - 1
Typhoid fever - 2	Killed - 9
Typhus - 4	Killed by robbers - 1
Ulcer - 9	Murdered - 7
Uremia - 1	Vitium cordis - 7
Urinary trouble ½ paralyzed - 1	Vitium cerebri - 1
Uterus infection - 1	Wars - 6
Violent deaths (total 23)	Whooping cough - 4
Accidentally killed - 1	Wounds? - 1
Stabbed - 1	
Bullet wound - 1	

The above list indicates that the highest number of people (except for infant deaths) died of pneumonia (331), tuberculosis (225), heart illnesses (142), cancer (94), etc. It might be shocking to see that in the early history of the parish accidents caused (at least) 174 deaths in a small community such as St. Jerome parish. Those numbers point to the kind of jobs they had, to the very poor working conditions, and lack of safety regulations in the earlier decades of the 20th century. Also, a high number of violent deaths witness to unstable socio-economic conditions not only in an immigrant working neighborhood but also in the city itself at the time.

One should keep in mind that the main causes of death at St. Jerome parish were similar to those in the city of Chicago at the beginning of the 20th century. Also, we often forget that modern medicine (antibiotics for example) were just being discovered at that time and were beginning to be used. Thanks to the new medicines, some old death causes almost disappeared, as it can be seen from the following:

Highest Causes of Death According to Decades

1912 – 1919 (1919 included) - Total 535, known causes for 455 cases.

Tuberculosis 92 (22.1%)

Pneumonia 66 (14.5%)

Accidents 35 (7.7%)

Infirmity 34 (7.5%)

Still-birth 24

Influenza 23

Miscarriage 18

Diphtheria 18

Enteritis 14

1920-1929 Total 812, known cause for 751 cases.

Pneumonia 153 (20.4%)

Tuberculosis 81 (10.8%)

Still-birth 80 (10.6%)

Accident 66 (8.8%)

Miscarriage 41(5.4%)

Enteritis 33 (4.4%)

Malnutrition 22

Influenza 19

Myocarditis 19

Stroke 18

1930-1939 Total 423, known cause for 406 cases.

Pneumonia 102 (25%)

Tuberculosis 40 (9.8%)

Heart illnesses 26

Myocarditis 24

Miscarriage 23

Cancer 21

Still-birth 19

Malnutrition 4

1940-1949 Total 322, known cause for 171 cases.

Heart diseases 35
 Sudden? 24
 Accidents 20
 Cancer 19
 Pneumonia 6
 Tuberculosis 2

1950-2002 – indicated causes of death 220 out of total 1,496 cases.

Accidents 13
 Cancer 40
 Heart illnesses 53
 Stroke 6
 Sudden 48
 Tuberculosis 2

Although the parish deaths register gives less and less information regarding death causes after the 1930s, we have listed the available information for the 1940s and 1950s because it clearly shows how the “old causes” were being replaced by new ones. For example, tuberculosis and pneumonia were disappearing, while heart illnesses and cancer were on the rise.

It might be surprising to see that about one hundred years ago a number of people in Chicago, in America – the “promised land” for so many immigrants, died of malnutrition. It did happen!. It might be useful to note that in most such cases listed in the parish books, it seems the unfortunate ones were not of Croatian ethnicity. Immigrants usually help each other to survive. These must have been people who had no one to turn to. For example, we find that a young lady (of non-Croatian ethnicity) had an illegitimate child that was baptized at St. Jerome’s church. Probably she was scared and left her home, and was ashamed to go to her local church to baptize her baby and ask for help. She was surviving on her own and later we found out that the baby died of malnutrition.

Causes of death of men till 1930

Because there was a high mortality of males, especially during the first two decades of parish history, it might be of interest to see what were the main causes of such deaths. They were mostly young men.

1912-1920 (known 179 cases – 14 years and up)

Tuberculosis 61 or 34% (mostly in 20s and 30s)

Accident 30 or 16.8% (one 11 year-old)

Pneumonia 27 or 15%

Influenza 9 or 5%

Killed 6 (one killed in Fulton, S. Dakota.)

Cancer 5

Alcoholism 4 (age 22, 26, 41 & 66)

Typhus 4

1920-1930 (known 245 cases – 12 years and up)

Tuberculosis 48 or 19.6%%

Accident 53 or 21.6%%?

Pneumonia 31 or 12.6%

Myocarditis 12 or 4.9%

Stroke 12 or 4.9%

Heart 11

Influenza 8

Cancer 6

Ulcer 5

Besides tuberculosis and pneumonia, one notices a high number of accidents out of which many were work related.

Average Age at Time of Death According to Decades

1912-1919

Total number of deaths - 535; known age for 505; babies less than 3 years of age 250; 3 years of age and older 255; average age of death – **30.09 years**. If children up to 10 years of age are excluded, the average age was **32.86 years**.

1920-1929

Total number of deaths – 809; known age for 795; babies less than 3 years of age 403; 3 years of age and older 392, average age of death – **35.88 years**. If children up to 10 years of age are excluded, the average age was **39.2 years**.

1930-1939

Total number of deaths – 423; known age for 416; babies less than 3 years of age 139; 3 years of age and older 277, average age of death – **44.2 years**. If children up to 10 years of age are excluded, the average age was **46.4 years**.

1940-1949

Total number of deaths – 322; known age for 318; babies less than 3 years of age 8; 3 years of age and older 310, average age of death – **55.7 years**. If children up to 10 years of age are excluded, the average age was **56.3 years**.

1950-1959

Total number of deaths – 342; known age for 336; babies less than 3 years of age 8; 3 years of age and older 328. Among these there was only one 6 year old child and three more youths under 18 years of age. Average age of death – **64.1 years**.

Clearly life expectancy was steadily increasing as the decades were passing and in the 1980s the average age of those who were buried from St. Jerome parish was **72 years**, which is about 40 years longer than during the second decade of the 20th century.

Cemeteries at which St. Jerome Parishioners were Buried

The names of the cemeteries where St. Jerome parishioners were buried are known in 3,529 out of 3,615 cases. We bring here the names of six cemeteries in which the highest number of St. Jerome faithful members have found their final resting place.

Name and known number of burials

St. Mary's - 2,203

Mt Olivet - 981

Resurrection - 79

Holy Sepulcher - 65

Mt Carmel - 62

Queen of Heaven - 53

Concluding Remarks

As the community of St. Jerome Croatian Catholic parish in Chicago this year celebrates its Centennial, along with congratulations and best wishes, we have gathered here data that is found in the Registers of baptisms, marriages, and deaths of the parish. An attempt has been made to group and examine the available information in order to gain some new insights into the life and history of this vibrant Croatian Catholic community. We hope that the given information will be interesting and useful not only to St. Jerome Church parishioners, but also to students of the Croatian-American community and ethnic history in America in general.

Die kroatische katholische Pfarrei des Hl. Hieronimus in Chicago. Eine Fallstudie

Zusammenfassung

Anlässlich des 100-jährigen Jubiläums der kroatischen katholischen Pfarrei des Hl. Hieronimus in Chicago stellt der Autor die Angaben dar, die in den Matrikeln der Getauften, Verheirateten und der Verstorbenen dieser Pfarrei gefunden waren. Das ist ein Versuch, zugängliche Informationen zu gruppieren und zu untersuchen, mit dem Ziel, das Leben und die Geschichte dieser lebendigen kroatischen katholischen Gemeinschaft unter neues Licht zu stellen. Der Autor hofft, dass die von ihm gegebenen Informationen interessant und nützlich sowohl für Mitglieder der Pfarrei des Hl. Hieronimus als auch für Studenten der kroatisch-amerikanischen Gemeinschaft und für ethnische Geschichte in Amerika im Allgemeinen sein werden.

