

The Polish Mural is Kool and the Gang's song, "Celebrate" - only with a polka beat! It portrays Polish life in South Omaha with personal stories while highlighting Polish culture and history.

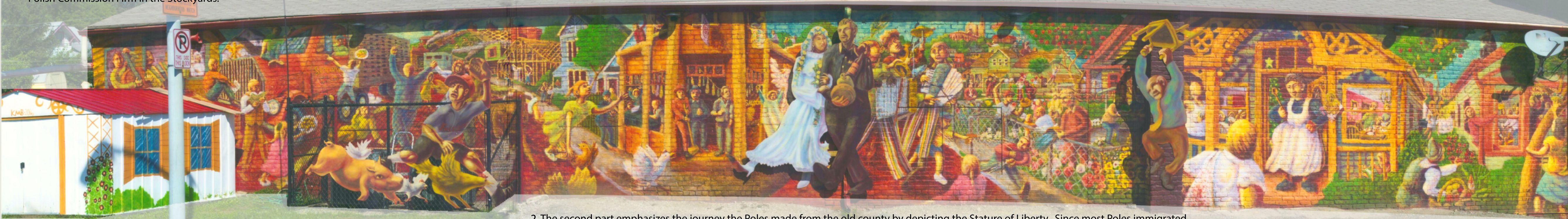
1. The far west of the mural starts with local legend, Tom Jadowski, playing a concertina. Next we witness a Pole on a roof reading a Dear John letter from his sweetheart back in Poland (taken from a personal story). An older gentleman is seen learning English so intently that he doesn't notice he is in front of a truck.

The most significant manifest of this part of the mural is the truck, portrayed with Poles bringing food to the driver. The Polish people settled along both sides of L Street in South Omaha and on Sundays the trucks would line up to deliver live-stock to the world's largest meat packing center. The pictures show offerings of traditional polish foods like paczki and golumpki. The yellow Polish Eagle ornament on the truck is similar to Casimir Pulaski's Eagle, harkening back to the Revolutionary War hero who saved George Washington's Army. The Stolinski sign on the truck is a tribute to the largest Polish Commission Firm in the Stockyards.

3. The middle of the mural is set on the White Eagle Bar, first known as the Polski Saloon, on 33rd and L Sts. Taverns were the center of entertainment in all of South Omaha, and the Polish Bars were no exception, as the hard and dangerous meatpacking work led to hard, robust play. The White Eagle is filled with interesting stories and Polish legends. Paderewski is pictured conducting Chopin at the piano. Dr. Bernard Kolasa, a UNO Political Science Professor and one time President of the Polish Home, is shown rigorously studying. The three men standing in the doorway are former Mayor James Dalhman, who always started his campaigns in Sherrytown, Nicodemus Dargaczewski the self-proclaimed leader of the neighbor hood, and the founder of Dinkers Bar. The broom in the window was a sign that a liquor salesman was in the bar and would buy free drinks. The ties were left there by Poles going off to fight in WWII hoping to retrieve them when they came home.



4. The section just to the left embellishes the major theme of the mural -a Polish Wedding. Renowned in South Omaha, Polish Weddings would last three days with a chivaree, polka music, and the traditional breaking of the chair to predict how many children the couple would produce. Dingus Day is also depicted, when Poles celebrate their conversion to Christianity by dousing each other with water similar to being baptized. Across the top, the different Churches created by the Poles appear: Immaculate Conception, St. Frances of Assisi, and St. Stanislaus. Two important figures in Polish History, Marie Curie and Copernicus are also painted, along with John Szczepaniak, a prominent baseball player. The Poles love for fruit trees and gardening is also portrayed.



2. The second part emphasizes the journey the Poles made from the old county by depicting the Statue of Liberty. Since most Poles immigrated to the new world during the 1880s through the 1910s, they made the trip to South Omaha by train. Depicted, at top, is the reason the Poles came to South Omaha in the first place- the livestock industry. The town of South Omaha was built around a feedlot which soon became a stockyard, which later included packing houses. The Poles first settled in Sheelytown, named for the Sheely Brothers Packing House. Later, they moved closer to the Stockyards, as more packing houses were built. Pictured, at top, are the big four houses - Swift, Amours, Wilson and Cudahy along with the Stockyards and the Livestock Exchange Building. The construction of St Paul's church is shown here, as the Poles were devout Catholics. Like most immigrants, dedication of their neighborhood began immediately with a church. Polish culture and traditions are also manifested here, as they were known to keep farm animals such as pigs and chickens. The Poles had a love for baseball with their parish teams, as well a semipro and tavern sponsored baseball and softball teams. Their devotion to the sport is depicted by an outfielder running down a fly ball. Falstaff, on his shirt, was a famous brewery in South Omaha - and it's favorite beer. Also painted here is the beginning of the celebration that is depicted throughout the mural -a Polish Wedding. Its embodied here with the Flying Dutchman dance held at all such occasions.

5. The last segment of the mural shows a Polish packinghouse worker heading home, after a hard day's labor, to his wife and waiting supper. In the house are traditional Polish ornaments include a picture of Pope John Paul the Third. Pictured also in this section is a renowned lovable scoundrel in South Omaha folklore, "Yakahola", who owned a bar on 42nd and L Streets, just outside the city limits. Further evidence of Polish life is shown by the immaculate upkeep of their homes and yards. The mural ends with the hilarious story of a Pole who worked in the Zoo and was accosted by Casey the gorilla. He used a cigarette to burn his paw and escape.

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