

Pojawie is a village in the administrative district of Gmina Szczurowa, within Brzesko County, Lesser Poland Voivodship, in southern Poland. It lies approximately 7 kilometers (4 mi) north-east of Szczurowa, 22 km (14 mi) north of Brzesko, and 57 km (35 mi) east of the regional capital Kraków. Residents who lived here in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were generally serfs or peasants. They were tied economically, legally, and socially to the Lord of the Manor. They were required to work the Lords lands as well as the small parcels allotted to them. Pojawie's serfs and peasants cleared forests, built homes, and raised families. As a result, this area became gradually populated and a village formed. Residing villagers engaged in hunting, gathering berries and mushrooms, farming, cattle breeding, and even the breeding of dogs. In the nineteenth century, in the year 1815 the inhabitants of Pojawie numbered 505. In 1870 the population had increased to 573. In spite of high infant mortality rates, infinite poverty, and hunger that dominated the time Pojawie continued to flourish.

Polish serfdom was officially abolished in 1864 with the rise of the Congress of Poland though this did not improve the life of its average peasant. As a consequence, in the second half of the nineteenth century, poverty and hunger spurred a mass emigration of Pojawie's residents. Most emigrating to neighboring countries such as Germany and Denmark. During this period Pojawie consisted roughly of 443 acres of countryside, 83 acres of grazing meadows, 12 pastures, and 2 acres of forest. Given the ratio of land to resident availability, there was nothing to look forward to but a bleak future, with large portions of that land already fragmented among current favorites of the ex-nobility and those that were able to pay the rent to the once Lord of the Manor but now legal landowner. This compiled with a rural backwardness that promoted no hope for Pojawie's younger residents, people between the ages of 25 -30 had little to no opportunities. This portion of Pojawie's population was considered essentially expendable. With their options incredibly limited their only chance at piecing together a life was to emigrate or remain and retrogress in latent unemployment and no hope of eking out a living from the land.

This trend continued long into the 19th and 20 centuries. In the 1880's, there was a massive emigration of Pojawie emigrants to Germany. In Germany, the laborers found work according to its availability or to their given talent. They represented the poorest layers of Pojawie's society, mostly landless family members of large families. Those who decided to emigrate departed via groups led by experienced guides. Almost within every family residing in Pojawie, there was one family member working in Germany. The money they earned was sent home to loved ones and spent on the purchase of land, construction and renovation of homes, or for everyday needs. Most emigrated to Germany with only short term goals in mind.

The emigration wave to broader countries in Europe such as France began later. There were very few Pojawianie working in France before World War I. In order to enter France willing emigrants had to pass certain requirements. Emigrant scouting parties held office in cities such as Brzesko and Tarnow. They were tasked to seek out laborers who were skilled in agricultural work or specific manual labor. France was not the place for a short stay or seasonal work in order to earn money. In order to work in France emigrants knew this would entail years of their lives. The sacrifice of those years served a purpose because it secured a pension. Entire families emigrated along with young people.

The draw of a French pension guaranteed a prosperous life and almost decadent retirement in their golden years for those willing to make the commitment.

In the interwar period 29 documented residents emigrated to France from Pojawie.

Before World War II and after its conclusion the following people returned:

- Siemieniec, Maria
- Pytlik, Jozef
- Pytlik, Jan and his wife
- Fela, Pawel and his wife
- Pawlik, Katarzyna
- Burzawa, Maria

The following remained in France:

- Siemieniec, Michal
- Padlo, Franciszek and his wife
- Łucarz, Wladyslaw
- Bak, Jan
- Pawlik, Anna
- Czaja, Zofia and Rozalia

The emigration movement was not limited to Europe during this period.

To the United States of America emigrated:

- Mika, Franciszek with his wife
- Mika, Walenty with his wife

To Argentina:

- Bak, Jozef
- Pacyna, Franciszek

Where they remained and forged futures in that distant land.

From 1860 – 1924 Pojawianie joined the “For Bread” Migration to the United States. Most settled in Chicago alone or with their families. Chicago was where people came with ideas and tried out technology. The city also benefitted from being the connection point between eastern and western railroads. This of course created hundreds of thousands of jobs. Pojawie’s emigrants accepted any job that was offered to them particularly work on the railway. Documented sources confirm that one of the first emigrants to Chicago was Pawel Majka, a native of Zaborow, who in 1893 married a Chicago Pojawianka.

In Chicago they had three sons Boleslaw, Pawel and Wladyslaw. Their sons remained and made their homes in Chicago while Pawel Sr. and his wife returned to Pojawie. During this period Pawel Sr. and his wife expanded their family by welcoming the birth of two daughters. With the money they earned in Chicago they purchased parceled farm land and built a house and adjoining farm buildings. The residents of Pojawie referred to him as “Majka from the Manor”. A large part of the Majka family after World War II emigrated to Chicago and remained.

Another early emigrant was Jan Fela who was referred to as "Jan from the sand". He lived and worked in Chicago with his wife and later returned to his homeland. However, a portion of Jan's family chose to remain in Chicago. Pawel Pytlik also emigrated from Pojawie. He was employed in the Chicago rail yards at the turn of the century. Having been involved in a major railway accident and no longer able to work, he returned to Pojawie. At 45 years of age Pawel married 18-year-old Maria Mika. They had three sons and a daughter. The following are documented Pojawianie who at the end of the nineteenth century or early twentieth century resided in Chicago and returned to Pojawie to farm:

- Mika, Jan
- Mizera, Marcin
- Pytlik, Jan
- Rębacz, Wawrzyniec
- Mizera, Jan
- Wodka, Stanislaw
- Mizera, Katarzyna
- Gulik, Jan
- Mika, Pawel
- Pawula, Szczepan
- Mika, Jan II
- Mika, Michal
- Bak, Szymon
- Mika, Jan-Dragon
- Mika, Stanislaw
- Gaca, Antonii

Those that returned to Pojawie after their stay in Chicago were not only richer, but also changed in their consciousness. They were self-reliant and independent. They exerted a positive influence on their neighbors and brought a new and democratic way of thought. In Chicago remained more than 70 former residents of the village. These people thought not only of themselves but also of their families, friends, and neighbors in Pojawie and surrounding villages. Patriotism was fierce and we have evidence of that with the first attempted nucleus of collective support for the village. It was the raising of funds among former parishioners of Zaborów to assist their church. The money collected was used to purchase liturgical accessories for holy mass.

With so many former residents of Pojawie in the city of Chicago we see the rise of the first social club. "The Rescue Society Pojawie and Zaborów" was founded in 1916 and thrived for 9 years. During its run the club raised and donated \$300 dollars to Pojawie's and Zaborow's poorest residents as well as \$3,000 dollars for the expansion of the brickyard in Zaborow.

In agreement with Clubs Dolega and Kwików "The Rescue Society Pojawie and Zaborow" began to collect and raise money for the purchase of three bells for the parish church in Zaborow. They collected \$800 dollars which was sent to pastor J. Nikla. Pastor Nikla together with the parish committee purchased the bells. In 1925 the "Rescue

Society of Pojawie and Zaborów” was dissolved due to various misunderstandings and disputes.

These disputes concerned the way money collected was distributed among the rural population. During the 1920’s polish emigration to the United States began to slow. After the conclusion of World War I most Poles swept up in the optimism of the times returned to Poland.

On June 19, 1925 an independent club Pojawian was established and named the "Educational Society of Pojawie." Its founders were Jan Walczak, Wojciech Kramacz, Walenty Mika, Kazimierz Miecek, Pawel Mika, and Aniela Ptasńska. The aim of the club was to assist only its members in times of illness or misfortune. It was also established that in the event of a club member’s death, four club members would help to organize the funeral and purchase flowers. Funds were generally not sent to Pojawie for its betterment during this period.

As the club progressed and expanded prior to World War II, the Educational Society of Pojawie allocated \$300 dollars to build a town meeting hall. However, due to differences of opinion among villagers regarding the location of the meeting hall, construction did not begin before the war commenced. The \$300 dollars designated to build the meeting hall was placed in a safe in Brzesko where it was lost during the onslaught of the second World War. In 1938 the “Educational Society of Pojawie" suspended its activities and did not resume them until April 19, 1941. At its first meeting after such a long lull the “Educational Society of Pojawie” changed its name to "Klub Pojawian" and a new club constitution was written. The purpose of the club still remained the mutual assistance of its members in case of illness or misfortune but now it officially included financial support for the village of Pojawie. In order to raise funds, the club arranged social picnics and bingos. These fundraisers however brought small dividends. Meetings were held once a month in private party rooms of local polish pubs or in the homes of the club’s members. Meetings were conducted for more than just the raising of money, they were also a form of socializing. Members would gather to talk and to bring news that they had received from family and friends via letters. Gathering together also served the purpose of integrating long residing former villagers with new emigrants. It afforded members an opportunity to speak in their native tongue outside their own personal residences. It may not seem significant in today’s age but given that emigrants were surrounded by foreign languages in a city with a tremendous amount of different cultures and nationalities it allowed them to speak with ease instead of utilizing the English language which they may have found difficult to master. Following the conclusion of World War II in 1946 the club donated \$250 dollars to aid in the construction of a new parish church in Zaborow. In 1948 \$500 dollars was earmarked for the construction of a new town meeting hall in Pojawie. The money sent was entrusted into the care of Franciszek Pawula. Franciszek Pawula soon found himself in prison. During this period in history it was illegal to own, maintain, or hold US currency. Poland was occupied by its emancipator, the Soviet Union who enforced soviet socialistic and communistic rules. While serving his sentence he did not give up the location of the US dollars.

In the years between 1952-1955 another \$250 dollars was donated to the ongoing construction of the parish church in Zaborow. In 1958 political thaw came to Poland. More dollars were donated and sent to aid in the improvement of the village of Pojawie and construction of the parish church in Zaborow. The activities of the club were led by

elected presidents with the help of elected vice presidents, treasurers, and protocol secretaries who recorded the entire meeting in club logs.

One of the longest reigning presidents in Klub Pojawian's history was Franciszek Pucek, who led the club for 22 years 1941-1963. During this period the construction of the town meeting hall, the electrification of the village, and the church in Zaborow were either begun or built. During his presidency the following funds were allocated as follows:

- \$1,000 for the completion of the Parish church in Zaborow.
 - \$1,500 for the electrification of the village of Pojawie
 - \$5,950 for the ongoing construction of the town meeting hall
- Total - \$8,450

It must be noted that the donations did not come only from the funds accumulated by the club through fundraising, but also by contributions from club members and other former residents themselves. From their own pockets they gave \$3580 dollars. The amount of money privately donated by club members varied.

- Franciszek Pucek \$200
- Antoni and Angela Ptasiński \$200
- Pawel Mika \$275
- Jan and Zofia Pawlik \$200
- Mucek Kazimierz \$110
- Wladyslaw and Rozalia Majka \$160
- Ludwik and Helena Nowak \$237
- Władysław and Maria Sobota \$180
- Tomasz and Anna Pawula \$263
- Franciszek and Maria Koziol \$130
- Jozef and Zofia Wrzepski \$107
- Stanislaw Czaja \$100
- Jozef and Zofia Mika \$100

Unfortunately, donations of less than \$100 dollars were not recorded individually.

In the 1960's through the early 1980's stiff immigration laws were eased. If a potential emigrant had American citizen relatives such as parents, siblings, or grandparents residing in America, the chance of applying and receiving permission to emigrate was high. Thus, a third wave of Polish immigrants flooded into Chicago. These immigrants were issued permanent residency visas commonly referred to as green cards. From Pojawie came the following documented immigrants:

- Wladyslaw Majka
- Pawel Gofron and Family
- Jan Tabor and Family
- Stanislaw & Zofia Pawula and Family
- Wladyslaw & Rozalia Czaja and Family
- Jozef & Marianna Pawula and Family
- Jozefa & Maria Pucek
- Jan & Janina Rebacz and Family

- Stanislaw & Zofia Pucek and Family
- Jan & Stefania Mika and Family
- Maria and Jozefa Rebacz
- Jozef & Maria Nowak and Family
- Wladyslaw & Maria Pucek and Family
- Edward & Jozefa Pucek and Family
- Jozef & Anna Sikora and Family
- Wladyslaw & Bronislawa Fela and Family
- Stanislaw & Bronislawa Mika
- Franciszek & Anna Lis and Family
- Leon & Zofia Jarosz
- Jozef & Zofia Jarosz
- Zofia Jarosz
- Michal i Anna Lucarz
- Jan & Helena Majka and Family
- Jozef Czarny
- Wladyslaw & Maria Majka and Family
- Jan & Bronislawa Rebacz

The second elected president of Klub Pojawian was Wladyslaw Majka. Wladyslaw emigrated to Chicago in the 1960's. He led the club in the years between 1964-1969. During his presidency \$2300 dollars was donated to Pojawie:

- \$1,500 was designated to further the completion of town hall meeting house
- \$800 to paint the fence of the church in Zaborow

The next president in the years 1970-1980 was Jan Rebacz. During this period new emigrants provided Klub Pojawian with fresh and new members. Klub Pojawian experienced a rejuvenation in its drive to better the lives of loved ones left behind. They improvised new methods of fundraising that included "Zabawy" or Carnival Dancing Parties. During Jan's term monetary aid amounted to \$ 8,650 dollars. Funds were divided among the following:

- \$1,550 for the continuing build of the town hall in Pojawie
- \$1,950 Voluntary Fire Brigade
- \$4,150 for the Parish church and its rectory in Zaborow
- \$1,000 for the implementation of street lighting

One of the shorter-term presidents but no less important was Stanislaw Pawula who was president from 1984-1985. During his presidency \$4490 dollars was sourced throughout Pojawie, Zaborow and the Alliance of Polish Clubs. The funds were divided among the following:

- \$700 Zaborów
- \$1,500 other parishes
- \$400 the poor of Pojawie
- \$1,890 to begin construction of the banquet hall connected to the town hall.

The second longest reigning president in Klub Pojawian's history was Edward Mika. In 1981 the Solidarity Migration began in earnest. The 4th wave of emigrants immigrated to Chicago. Edward Mika was elected to his first term as president of Klub Pojawian as this wave began. He held that honorable office for 2 years in one candidacy 1981-1983 and then again from 1986-2003. During his long presidency Klub Pojawian's constitution was amended and rewritten to allow the inclusion of non- residents of Pojawie. Edward also spearheaded new fundraising methods. The club began to host annual parties such as the "New Year's Eve Party" and a "Valentine's Day Dance". Raffles were conducted during the dances where members privately donated items to raffle. In 2002 Edward was elected President of the Alliance of Polish Clubs in the USA where he served two three-year terms. After completing his last term as President of the Alliance of Polish Clubs he was elected Honorary President for Life by the members of the Alliance of Polish Clubs in the USA. The amount of aid sent to Pojawie and aid donated to the Alliance of Polish Clubs totaled \$30,520 dollars.

- \$10,620 was designated to the completion of the dance hall adjacent the town hall
- \$2,000 towards gas pipelines for the residents of Pojawie
- \$1,800 purchase of a hearse
- \$6,100 Volunteer Fire Brigade and Fire Station
- \$1,100 Parish Church in Zaborow
- \$1,500 for the Kindergarten led by parish nuns
- \$2,00 for new water pipe lines
- \$5,400 for the Alliance of Polish Clubs in Chicago building

Wladyslaw Majka was elected president in 2004 and served till 2007. During his presidency monetary aid in the amount of \$13,900 was designated and dispersed as follows:

- \$9,900 to the church parish in Zaborów for a new organ and a heating system
- \$2,000 Voluntary Fire Brigade
- \$2,000 for the continuance of water pipeline installation

Since January of 2008 to the present Wladyslawa Nowosad has served as President of Klub Pojawian. Wladyslawa is the first ever elected female president of the club. Her candidacy has imparted a trend of cultural pride. She is dedicated to the improvement of interclub relations throughout the Alliance of Polish Clubs. Wladyslawa has revitalized the club's earlier fund-raising strategies with ideas and methods of her own. During her term thus far \$13,100 dollars in donations have been dispersed as follows:

- \$3,500 kindergarten
- \$2,000 for the parish church in Zaborow
- \$2,000 Voluntary Fire Brigade
- \$2,100 town meeting hall renovation
- \$1,500 opening of Pojawie's town square
- \$1,00 Dance and Song troupe

- \$500 Pojawie's Ladies Auxiliary
- \$500 public school in Zaborow

In conclusion Klub Pojawian and the Village of Pojawie has thrived not only because of its elected officials but due to its dedicated and loyal members. Non-residing members who may have been less visible but no less dedicated and important to its history were the core of the club who made most of its efforts possible. Although thousands of miles from home they never forgot or neglected loved ones left behind.