

Hamtramck - Not just for Kielbasa

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Website: <http://www.hamtramck.us/>

Hamtramck (pronounced /hæmˈɛtyæmjɪk/) is a city in Wayne County of the U.S. state of Michigan. As of the 2000 census, the city population was 22,976. Hamtramck is surrounded by the city of Detroit except for a small portion of the western border that touches the similarly surrounded city of Highland Park. Hamtramck is named for the French-Canadian soldier Jean François Hamtramck who was the first American commander of Fort Shelby, the fortification at Detroit.

Hamtramck was originally settled by German farmers, but Polish immigrants flooded into the area when the Dodge Brothers plant opened in 1914. Poles still make up a large proportion of the population. It is sometimes confused with Poletown, a traditional Polish neighborhood, which lies mostly in the city of Detroit and includes a small part of Hamtramck. As of the 2000 census, over 22% of Hamtramck's population is of Polish origin; in 1970, it was 90% Polish.

Over the past thirty years, a large number of immigrants from the Middle East (especially Yemen) and South Asia (especially Bangladesh) have moved to the city. As of the 2000 census, the city's foreign born population stood at 41.1%^[1], making it Michigan's most internationally diverse city (see more at Demographics below).

History

Historical populations

Census	Pop.	%±
1910	3,559	
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1920	48,615	1,266%
1930	56,268	15.7%
1940	49,839	−11.4%
1950	43,555	−12.6%
1960	34,137	−21.6%
1970	26,783	−21.5%
1980	21,300	−20.5%
1990	18,372	−13.7%
2000	22,976	25.1%
Est. 2007	21,122	−8.1%

* 1796: Colonel Jean Francois Hamtramck took possession of Detroit after British troops evacuated.

* 1798: The Township of Hamtramck was established.

* 1901: Hamtramck was established as a village.

* 1908: Saint Florian's parish is the first Catholic church in Hamtramck.

- * 1910: Dodge Brothers Motor Car Company break ground for an automotive plant in Hamtramck; rapid influx of European immigrants begins.
- * 1914: Dodge Brothers plant begins operations.
- * 1922: Hamtramck is incorporated as a city to protect itself from annexation by Detroit; Peter C. Jezewski is the first mayor.
- * 1926: St. Florian's present church edifice is built.
- * 1959: Won Little League World Series of Baseball.
- * 2000: Hamtramck goes into state receivership after running million dollar deficits and political in-fighting.
- * 2006: Hamtramck is out of state receivership after the resignation of state-appointed Emergency Financial Manager Louis Schimmel

Government

Hamtramck is governed under a council-manager form of government in which the elected mayor of the city is the chief executive officer. The city council hires a city manager, who becomes the city's chief administrative officer. The city manager has the vested powers and responsibility to appoint and remove all city employees and department heads, prepare the city's budget, and other city functions.[3]

The city council consists of six seats. The mayor is elected separately, and votes only in the case of a tie and on ordinances and contracts. The council elects its own mayor pro tempore, who serves in the mayor's absence.

As of the November 2007 city elections, the current mayor of the city is Karen Majewski, Hamtramck's first female mayor[4]. The current City Council members are mayor pro tempore Scott Klein, Shahab Ahmed, Abdul Al-Ghazali, Cathy Gordon, Alan Shulgon, and Catrina Stackpoole.

Geography

Hamtramck is mostly surrounded by Detroit except a small common border with the city of Highland Park. Hamtramck lies about 5 miles (8.0 km) from the center of Detroit. The I-75 freeway roughly runs along this city's western border and I-94 runs near its southern border.

Demographics

As of the census[1] of 2000, there were 22,976 people, 8,033 households, and 4,851 families residing in the city. The population density was 10,900.5 per square mile (4,208.7 /km²). There were 8,894 housing units at an average density of 4,219.6 per square mile (1,629.2 /km²). The racial makeup of the city was 60.96% white (which includes people of Middle Eastern ancestry), 15.12% African American, 0.43% Native American, 10.37% Asian, 0.10% Pacific Islander, 1.14% from other races, and 11.89% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 1.31% of the population.

In the 2000 census, major ancestry groups reported by Hamtramck residents were as follows:

- * Polish 22.9%[5]

- * Black or African American 15.1%
- * Yugoslav-Bosnian 10.5%
- * Arab (Excluding Iraqi and Lebanese) 8.2%
- * Asian Indian 5.4%
- * Ukrainian 3.2%
- * German 2.9%
- * Albanian 2.8%
- * Bangladeshi 2.7%
- * Irish 2.2%
- * Italian 1.8%
- * Russian 1.4%
- * English 1.1%
- * French (except Basque) 0.8%
- * Lebanese 0.7%
- * Scottish 0.7%
- * Mexican 0.6%
- * Pakistani 0.6%
- * Macedonian 0.5%
- * Iraqi 0.5%

3.1% of Hamtramck's population reported Albanian ancestry. This made it the second most Albanian place in the United States by percentage of the population, second only to Fairview, North Carolina.[6]

There were 8,033 households out of which 33.3% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 37.3% were married couples living together, 16.1% had a female householder with no husband present, and 39.6% were non-families. 32.2% of all households were made up of individuals and 13.3% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.74 and the average family size was 3.59.

In the city the population was spread out with 27.8% under the age of 18, 10.8% 18 through 24, 31.9% 25 through 44, 17.7% 45 through 64, and 11.9% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 32 years. For every 100 females there were 110.4 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 109.6 males.

The median income for a household in the city was \$26,616, and the median income for a family was \$30,496. Males had a median income of \$29,368 versus \$22,346 for females. The per capita income for the city was \$12,691. About 24.1% of families and 27.0% of the population were below the poverty line, including 36.9% of those under age 18 and 18.1% of those age 65 or over.

Culture

Hamtramck flourished from 1910 to 1920 as thousands of European immigrants, particularly Polish, were attracted by the growing automobile industry. The city has grown increasingly ethnically diverse but still bears many reminders of its Polish ancestry in family names, street names and businesses. A recent survey found 26 native languages spoken by Hamtramck schoolchildren. The city's motto was "A League of Nations".

At the time of the 2000 census, Hamtramck was again experiencing considerable growth, with over 8,000 households and a population of almost 23,000.

In 1997, the Utne Reader named Hamtramck one of "the 15 hippest neighborhoods in the U.S. and Canada" in part for its punk and alternative music scene, its Buddhist temple, its cultural diversity, and its laid back blue-collar neighborhoods. And in May 2003, Maxim Blender selected Hamtramck as the second "Most Rock N' Roll City" in the U.S., behind Williamsburg in Brooklyn, New York City. Hamtramck is home of several of Michigan's most distinguished music venues.

In January 2004, members of the Al-Islah Islamic Center requested permission to use loudspeakers for the purpose of broadcasting the Islamic call to prayer. This request set off a contentious debate in the city, ostensibly about the noise that would be caused by the call to prayer, eventually garnering national attention. Ultimately, Hamtramck amended its noise ordinance in July 2004 regulating all religious sounds.

Economy

General Motors' Detroit/Hamtramck Assembly plant, one of the automaker's premiere facilities, produces the Cadillac DTS and the Buick Lucerne. GM has announced they will begin manufacturing the new plug-in hybrid Chevrolet Volt in 2010.

The Polish Art Center, at 9539 Joseph Campau Street, is a local institution in Hamtramck. There, one can find many Polish art objects, books, foods, and art from other areas of Europe. The center's selection of Communist-era Polish theatrical and operatic posters is extremely unusual.

Kowalski Sausage Co. manufactures meat products at 2270 Holbrook Street.

P czki Day

Polish immigrants, residents of Hamtramck, and southeastern Michigan celebrate "Fat Tuesday" (known locally as P czki Day) by lining up at the city's numerous Polish bakeries to purchase p czki. On P czki Day, several local bars host parties with live entertainment, some starting as early as 7 A.M..

Hamtramck Blowout

The Hamtramck Blowout is an annual music festival in Hamtramck. It is said to be the largest festival of its sort in the world. There's usually over 200 bands there and the festival lasts for four days all over bars in the neighborhood.

St. Florian Strawberry Festival

Held annually in the first weekend in May at grounds at St. Florian Church.

Hamtramck Labor Day Festival

Held Labor Day weekend, ending with the Polish Day Parade on Labor Day. Live music on three stages, carnival area, beer, and food tents line a half-mile (1 km) stretch of Joseph Campau Street, from Caniff to Carpenter.

Planet Ant Film & Video Festival in Hamtramck

The festival celebrates independent movies and the people who make them, featuring comedies, dramas, documentaries, animation and music videos.

Notable residents

- * Jane "Peaches" Bartkowicz, tennis player
- * John Hodiak, actor
- * Ed Klewicki, American football player
- * James Marcinkowski, CIA case officer
- * Mitch Ryder, musician known for his "blue-eyed soul" stylings and creative medleys
- * Rudy Tomjanovich, former basketball player and coach for The Houston Rockets. He was born and raised in Hamtramck and is a 1966 graduate of Hamtramck High School
- * Tom Tyler, actor
- * Muruga Booker musician