



Lithuanian Chicago (Images of America)

Justin G. Riskus

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Today, there are more than 100,000 Lithuanians in Chicago, making the city home to the greatest concentration of Lithuanians outside of the country itself. Their presence in Chicago began in 1834 and drastically increased during the 20th century as immigrants and their descendants sought work in the stockyards and other industries. Lithuanians in Chicago were dedicated to celebrating and preserving their unique culture, evident in its churches, schools, museums, and community centers in neighborhoods such as Bridgeport and Marquette Park. They also maintained ties to the homeland and played an important role in Lithuania's struggles for independence throughout the 20th century. Many prominent Lithuanian Americans are from the City of the Big Shoulders, including football great Dick Butkus, actor John C. Reilly, and director Robert Zemeckis. The former president of Lithuania, Valdas Adamkus, was a resident of Chicagoland for nearly 50 years.

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