



History of St. Casimir Parish, Posen, Michigan
completed by Rev. Casimir Szyper in 1947
CAP at Orchard Lake, copy.

As the Poles came to Presque Isle (almost an Island), they settled in the south-eastern part of the County. They named the first township Posen after that province of Poland—Poznan; Krakow after the city of Poland of the same name; Pulaski township, honoring General Pulaski. Lawrence Kowalski, the first Pole to come, arrived in September, 1870. In November of the same year came Matthias Szymanski. Soon after that many others came, among whom were Andrew Wyrembelski, Frank Rozer, Jacob Strzelecki, Valentine Losinski, John Bronikowski, Lewandowski, Muszynski, Przybyla, Dojas, and Stosik. These people come by boat to Rogers City, and from there followed the paths and trails that led to the homesteads they had selected.

These folks made many trips on foot either to Rogers City or Alpena following the section lines and often fording swamps. They had to carry the purchases even cooking stoves, on their backs. A farmer carried a bag of grain on his back to the mill, and brought home a soak of flour. They also had to walk a distance of ten miles or more to church.

It appears from the baptismal records that long before any church organization was attempted, the new born infants were taken to Alpena for baptism. Among the signatures in the baptismal files appear the names of Fathers Taaken, Van Gennip, Murray, Lambert, and Dekiere.

1874 Rev. F. H. Szulak, a Jesuit, who had his headquarters in Chicago, was a missionary for Polish settlements, along Lake Michigan. Bishop Borgess of Detroit requested him to visit this colony. He came to Posen for the first time in June, 1874. In 1875 and the following years until 1878 inclusive he came here twice a year. During each visit Father spent several days baptizing Infants, instructing children and witnessing marriages.

Father Szulak said the first Mass at the home of Valentine Losinski. On his second visit, Mass and services took place at the home of Lawrence Kowalski. He was a good speaker, both in Polish and German, and the people flocked from the surrounding townships to hear him. Most likely it was due to his suggestion that the settlement was named Posen because the first homesteaders came from that province of Poland Poznan.

Under the leadership of Father Szulak a meeting of all the settlers was held and after considerable debate the present church site was agreed upon. The most important reason for this location was that it seemed to be the highest point in the township and perhaps in the county. Years ago there was an observation tower about 50 feet east from the present Sisters' Convent.

Let it be known to the present generation that Father Saulak came by boat to Rogere City and from there walked to Posen.

Forty acres of land was donated by Frederick Larke, which was recorded June 15, 1874. Either the same year or the following year a log church was built and according to tradition, Lawrence Wolozyk and John Losinski were the building contractors.

1879 In the first financial account book, still preserved in the parish archives, we find the following note: *"The first pastor of the Congregation of Posen, Rev. Anthony Bogacki, has been appointed by the Rev. Bishop C. H. Borgess (of Detroit) on the first day of March, A. D. 1879, and from this data the following accounts commence."*

In 1879 there were only two dioceses in Michigan Marquette and Detroit. This territory belonged to Detroit Diocese.

Father Bogacki, soon after his arrival, built a log cabin for his residence, and called it a "Kitchen." This kitchen later was used for school purposes, and still later for the Sisters' residence.

1882 The Grand Rapids Diocese was established.

According to this account book the pastor's residence was built of brick in 1882, at the cost of about \$3,000. The brick for this house had to be hauled a distance of 12 miles by ox carts;

1883 The log church burned down on January 28, 1883. A temporary frame building was constructed the same year which later was dismantled.

1884 Not in the least discouraged by the misfortune of 1883. The parishioners began to make preparations for a new brick church. There is no correct record as to what year this building was completed. But according to the account book of those years, they were building it up to 1890 or '91.

The first cemetery was started one mile north from the present church property. Since the rock was too hard there, they abandoned it and moved where the present cemetery is located.

1886 it appears from Father Bogacki's account book that a full time lay teacher was employed and in September, 1886, the school was opened and housed in Father's log cabin.

1890 I am unable to find the correct date, but it must have been in 1890, that Father Bogacki put up, at his own expense, a frame school building. To this frame building a brick veneer structure was added in 1901. Both are in use today. At this time tine Anthony Kwilinski came from South Bend, Indiana, to act as school teacher and organist.

1893 Upon request I have received, the following information from Mr. Charles A Pinkertor, Jr., Vice-president and General Manager, of Detroit and Mackinac Railway Company:

"I have your letter of November 29, 1947, requesting information regarding the building of the railroad between Alpena and Cheboygan through Posen.

From the best information available I find that the road known as the Alpena and Northern Rail-

road was completed from Alpena to LaRocque (Hawks) in November, 1893. In 1894 this road was purchased by the Detroit and Mackinac Railway and the line extended from LaRocque to Onaway in 1898, then on to Tower in 1900, and completed into Cheboygan in 1904. The first train ran into Cheboygan on June 26, 1904.

1895 Another disaster visited this parish. On March 4, 1895, the new brick veneer church, hardly completed, burned down to the ground. The same year a frame church building was erected which serves the congregation at this writing.

Felician Sisters came to Posen and took charge of St. Casimir School. They lived in Father Bogacki's log cabin— the first rectory.

1896 In September, 1896, Father Bogacki was transferred to St. Stanislaus Parish, Bay City, Michigan, and Rev. Joseph Lowandowski was in temporary charge of the parish from September, 1896 to April, 1897.

1897 In 1897, April 7, Father Bogacki returned to Posen, but due to a certain misunderstanding, resigned and left the parish. From April 9, 1897 to January 1, 1898, there was no priest here to serve the faithful.

1898 In January 1898, Rev. M. Matkowski was appointed pastor and served the parish until January, 1900. According to tradition, it was during his short administration, that the hard maple trees were planted in the cemetery and in front of the rectory.

1900 In January 1900, Rev. Joseph Lewandowski was appointed pastor.

1901 When the Felician Sisters took charge of the school, the enrollment increased steadily. The old two room building was too small. In 1901 therefore, a brick veneer structure was added to the first frame building. This new addition contained seven more classrooms and living quarters for the Sisters.

1904 A boarding school was started for those children who had to walk a long distance.

1908 The Metz Forest Fire. On the afternoon of October 15, 1908, this countryside was red with fire a fire that raged over field and farm, forest and thicket, gathering momentum as it advanced. Metz Township suffered the heaviest loss but Posen was not left unscathed. In two hours this part of Presque Isle County was wiped out of existence. It became a place of desolation. American Red Cross rushed clothing, food and medical supplies. That fall one could see the fields being plowed by a farmer wearing a prince albert coat and striped trousers.

1914 In January, 1914, Father Lewandowski was transferred to St. Stanislaus parish, Ludington, Michigan. In January, 1914, Rev. Joseph Chodkiewicz was appointed, pastor. He remained here until April, 1915.

In 1914, a house was built for the sexton. Since 1924 it has been occupied by the Sisters.

1915 From April to July, 1915, Rev. C. T. Skowronski was in temporary charge of the parish.

In July, 1915 Rev. Joseph Koss was appointed pastor.

1919 Feiician Sisters took charge of tree school.

Rev. Leo Euza was ordained, to the Holy, Priesthood on June 14 and celebrated his First Solemn Mass' on June 19, 1919.

1920 The parishioners sew, for the first times electric lights in the parish buildings. At first the Delco system was installed. Later it was replaced by the Echler of Kohler System.

1922 Two new furnaces were Installed in church, and the church was decorated.

1924 The old sexton house was remodeled and more suitable quarters were made for the sters. Father Koss made great Improvements on the cemetery and other parish property. He also started a building fund which was. a substantial help when the new school was built. Upon his departure he left \$23,000 toward this fund. November 26, 1931, Rev. Joseph Koss was transferred to St. Stanislaus parish, Ludington, Michigan.

1931 December 15, 1931, Rev. Leonard Kwasigroch was appointed administrator of the parish, and left the parish August 27, 1935. It was during this period that a marking system was Introduced In the cemetery.

1932 The School Board of Posen Township leased one room in the parish school and the 9th grade was started followed by the 10th the next year.

1935 August 27, 1935, Rev. Casimir Szyper was appointed pastor. He arrived on a rainy day.

1936 In the old school building the heating system was remodeled and a new Kewanee boiler Installed.

1937 Rural Electrification Administration (R.E.A.), the government agency, constructed the power line in this territory. The Kohler of Kohler system was dismantled and thrown out.

1938 Saginaw Diocese was established. Rev. Ignatius Woloszyk was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on May 20 and celebrated his First Solemn Mass June 5, 1938.

1939 A modern new school was erected at the cost of \$75,562.72 plus \$408.07 for the pump and the drilling of the well.

The 11th grade was opened and the following year saw the completion of the full high school.

1941 The church steeple was resigned and the church building painted on the outside.

1945 The main church roof was resigned.

1946 Two new furnaces were installed in church.

1947 The church was redecorated.

1948 The old Sister's convent was moved to a new location (cost \$ 46,000.00).