



St. Stephen's Parish, Shamokin.

The Development of the Polish Catholic Parishes in the Diocese of Harrisburg, PA, by Chester T. Loszewski, p.16-18. CAP at Orchard Lake.

The St. Stephen's Parish, located in the western section of the city, is the second Polish parish in Shamokin, Pa. During the controversy in the St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish, the dissatisfied parishioners began to persuade the Poles from the western section, where already an organization under the patronage of St. Stephen existed, to organize another parish and promised them their support. The people took to this idea and in the year 1898 a plot of ground was purchased for the proposed church site, located on the corner of Chestnut and Oak streets. In the course of this year the building of the church was undertaken and the basement completed. Here up to 1913, when the remainder of the church was completed, the people fulfilled their religious duties. Prior to the completion of this church the people heard Mass in the public school. For this reason there are no documents available from which chronological data regarding the supervision of the parish can be gathered. It is mentioned that the Rev. W.V. Mutulajtys from the Lithuanian Parish of Mt. Carmel attended here in 1900, the Rev. J. Machnikowski, the Rev. Zarek of the Slovenian parish, and the Rev. Maciejewski in 1900 and 1901.

Due to the delay of the Rt. Rev. Bishop J.F. Shanahan in providing a priest for this parish the people became restless and dissatisfied. Meetings were held, some being impatient and not knowing the intention of His Excellency the Bishop, began to threaten the organization of a Polish National Church, others however having more patience and common sense had faith that in time their parish would develop materially and spiritually under the supervision and guidance of a resident pastor.

Finally in 1900, when the St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish went into the hands of the Franciscan Fathers, peace was also restored in this parish. The Fathers of the St. Stanislaus Parish attended here up to 1914, and in this time the remaining part of the church was completed.

In the year 1914 the authorities delegated the Rev. Patricius Topolski O.M.C. as the first residing pastor of the new parish. He fulfilled the duties of Pastor to 1917 when he was succeeded by the Rev. Bonaventure Santor O.M.C. During his time Felician Sisters were introduced into the parish, which up to 1917 were delegated from the St. Stanislaus Parish.

From 1920 to 1925 the following exercised the pastoral duties; the Rev. Raymund Marciniak O.M.C. 1920-1922, the Rev. John Kurowski O.M.C. to 1925, and the Rev. Stanislaus Tarnowski

O.M.C. to 1925. The latter purchased a plot of ground for the proposed new school and Sisters home hut died before his dream could be realized.

When the Rev. Gregory Zablonki took over the parish in 1925 he was forced to build a new school for the old one, which was located in the basement of the Church, was condemned by the State and diocesan authorities. It was found to be unsanitary and harmful to the health of the children. Five months after his arrival he began the construction of the present school which is a beautiful three story building of yellow brick and stone, having twenty spacious classrooms, and a modern gymnasium.

The parish congregation numbers close to 450 families, with 512 children attending the parochial school which is under the supervision of eight Felician Sisters.

From a turbulent and dissatisfied congregation has come forth a parish settled and peaceful. A beautiful tribute to the greater glory of God.