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**THE FOUNDING OF HOLY CROSS PARISH,
SALAMANCA, NEW YORK**

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The creation of Holy Cross parish in Salamanca, New York, was the product of a constellation of events that became ensnared in European and American history in the late nineteenth century. Unfortunately, much of the rich detail of the early history dating back 100 to 150 years is lost but enough pieces still exist to construct at least a part of the mosaic. What on the surface might appear to be simply a task of organizing a group of people to purchase some land and build a church on Broad Street in Salamanca was in fact a complex web of foreign oppression, mass migration, ethnic pride, and bizarre Indian leases, all unfolding in a small town in western New York. Economic and cultural survival appear to be the driving force in explaining the sudden appearance of such large numbers of Polish immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their survival in the United States seemed to be tightly woven around an intense involvement with a local Polish parish. The Poles came to the United States trading their oppressed political and economic past for a promising future where as one Polish newspaper commented “the smokestack is as sacred as the steeple”¹.

¹ *Brooklyn Eagle*, December 28, 1919.

A. THE PUSH FROM POLAND

Poland is an enigma in recent times. Historians often divide Polish history into a series of periods corresponding to major political eras. For example, the “Golden Age” of Poland is often considered to be 1320 to 1572 when Poland was unified initially under the reign of Casimir the Great. However, the period dating from 1792 to 1914, when Poland was partitioned among the three competing powers of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, not only depicts a country in marked decline but one that actually disappeared from the map of Europe. Pressure from these outside countries was exacerbated by political instability within Poland created by aristocratic families that held a tight grip on the land and led to a decentralization of power². These social and political forces also discouraged the development of any sort of an industrial base. Poland was still something akin to a feudalistic society while other European countries were modernizing and industrializing. Poverty, decades of warfare, virtual dismemberment of the country in 1775 by the Third Partition, and Bismarck’s *kulturkampf* in the 1870s, which the Poles living in the Prussian area perceived as an attempt to erase their culture and created an awakening of Polish consciousness³, led to the only avenue of escape, emigration.

An initial wave of Polish emigrants, who were better educated and somewhat more skilled, departed for different parts of Europe in the early and middle 1800s. But a growing number of rural peasants, searching for employment and resisting conscription, created the first massive wave of emigration, often called *za chlebem* (for bread) in the 1870s and resulted in three distinct waves of Polish emigration. Emigration from Poland began first in the German-held territories and crested between 1880 and 1893, then in the 1890s bands of Polish peasants began leaving from Russian-held territories, and finally, after 1900, Austrian Poles began to leave. It is estimated that between 1870 and 1914 approximately 1,2 million Poles emigrated from Prussian Poland, 1,3 million from Russian Poland, and 1,1 million from Austrian Poland⁴.

In his book *Crossings: The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870-1914*, Walter Nugent⁵ argues that during the forty-five year period between 1870 and

² J. B u k o w c z y k. *And My Children Did Not Know Me*. Bloomington, Indiana 1987.

³ A. G i e y s z t o r, S. K i e n i e w i c z, E. R o s t w o r o w s k i, J. T a z b i r, and J. W e r e s z y c k i. *History of Poland*. Warsaw 1979.

⁴ B u k o w c z y k, op. cit.

⁵ W. N u g e n t. *Crossings: The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870-1914*. Bloomington, Indiana 1992.

World War I, a unique set of factors operated to promote migration. First was the development of steam-powered transportation that reduced sailing time from four to six weeks to eight to ten days. Secondly, there were no legal or political restraints hindering the migration of people from Europe to the United States. Thirdly, better living conditions resulted in a significant decline in the death rate and a marked increase in the population and a problem of a surplus labor force. Nugent also argues that “Europeans have always moved in considerable numbers, and the modernization paradigm which characterizes migration as a comparatively recent phenomenon, fundamentally distorts the historical experience of Europeans”⁶. He suggests that the Poles were not so much “up-rooted” but extending their labor-seeking migration beyond the confines of Europe. The new technology of travel permitted transatlantic migration. For the Poles, as well as for other Europeans, return and repeat migration was normal and traditional. It is estimated that between 25 to 35 percent of Polish immigrants returned to Poland.

B. THE PULL TO AMERICA

The number of Polish immigrants to the United States prior to 1870 was quite modest. Wyrwal⁷ suggested that the first Polish immigrants were sent by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1585 to help establish an English colony on Roanoke Island. However, this first settlement disappeared. On October 1, 1608, early colonial records show that the ship, Mary and Margaret, landed at Jamestown, Virginia, with five Polish glassmakers: Zbigniew Stefański, Stanisław Sadowski, Jan Bogdan, Jan Mata, and Michał Łowicki⁸. They built a furnace and began manufacturing glass products. These were the first products manufactured in America for export to Europe. Poles arrived in small but increasing numbers and they operated a glass factory, potash shop and wood-distillers works in Jamestown⁹. Albert Zaborawski and his family came to New Amsterdam in 1662 and are believed to be the oldest Polish family in the United States¹⁰. A small trickle of Poles came to the United States in the early 1800s but the figures from the U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service show that be-

⁶ Nugent, op. cit. p. 36.

⁷ J. Wyrwal. *Poles in American History and Tradition*. Detroit 1969.

⁸ “Polish American Journal”, 1992.

⁹ A. Brożek. *Polish Americans: 1854-1939*. Warsaw 1985.

¹⁰ J. Konrad. *Polish Family Research*. Munroe Falls, Ohio 1982.

tween 1820 and 1850 the number of immigrants from Poland amounted to only 495. The decade of 1851 to 1860 saw an increase to 1 164, and 2 027 immigrants during the 1860s. The flood gates opened in the 1870s when nearly 35 000 Poles migrated *do Ameryki* (to America) and the numbers increased steadily for the next forty years. The 1920 Census recorded 1 139 370 Americans who were born in Poland, and 1 303 351 native Americans with one or both parents born in Poland. The U. S. Bureau of the Census recorded the following numbers of foreign-born Poles residing in the United States:

1870	14, 000
1880	49, 000
1890	147, 000
1900	383, 000
1910	938, 000
1920	1 140, 000

Immigration to the United States was spurred by propaganda from steamship lines, encouragement by the German government to alleviate surplus Polish farm labor, the need for cheap, immigrant labor in America's newly emerging factories, and the enticement from earlier immigrants who sent letters back to friends and relatives about America's "golden mountains". Generally, Poles left their villages in the company of friends and relatives, and headed for an American town where another relative or acquaintance was already living. The Poles who immigrated into the United States resembled other migrant groups in that they came from lower-class, rural and agricultural backgrounds, and had little formal education. However, the Poles in America were different from other minority groups in that many came to earn money, invest in property, and then wait for the right opportunity to return to Poland¹¹. Few Poles became farmers because they viewed their migration as temporary and agriculture called for a long-term commitment. Lopata in her classic study of Polish Americans argues that "Poles displayed an unusual lack of interest in American society and in acquiring traits which could gain them a higher social status here"¹². Nugent suggests that the migration of many Eastern Europeans, particularly the

¹¹ H. L o p a t a. *Polish Americans: Status Competition in an Ethnic Community*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J. 1976.

¹² L o p a t a, op. cit. p. 3.

Poles, may be misunderstood¹³. For Poles, seasonal migration became a fact of life, and for many Poles, their transatlantic migration was seen as temporary, desiring to improve their economic position at home with money earned abroad. The fact that many of the post-1880 migrants came and left generated resentment among native Americans. Many Eastern European immigrants were called “birds of passage” and as early as 1896 legislation was called for to restrict those immigrants who come to American and accumulate money “for the subsequent consumption of porridge, bloaters (herring), macaroni [sic!] and sauerkraut on the other side of the Atlantic”¹⁴.

The Poles brought with them a very strong ethnic culture that tended to isolate them from the dominant American culture. For example, while their religion was Catholic, they had their own saints, their own religious customs, and their own feasts that made them not just Catholic, but P o l i s h Catholic. Further, the Poles came in great numbers and collectively settled in specific towns and cities, and in narrowly defined Polish neighborhoods within these communities. They developed their own infra structure, and as one of the last bands of Europeans to enter the United States, they could maintain their self sufficiency and ethnic enclaves quite successfully within an already pluralistic society. These historical considerations provided a partial backdrop and initial setting for the development of a strong and vibrant Polish community that became known as The Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church Society of Salamanca, New York.

THE SENECA INDIAN LEASES

Totally separate from the factors surrounding Polish migration is the extremely complicated matter of leasing property in Salamanca from the Seneca Indian Nation. Christopher Vecsey, an expert in Native American Studies at Colgate University summed up the whole issue of these land leases as follows: “Salamanca represents a disaster in the making, maybe a disaster already made”¹⁵. To understand how Holy Cross Church fits into this picture, it is necessary to go back hundreds of years and grapple with the strange relationships that existed between “native Americans” and the European colonizers. To

¹³ N u g e n t, op. cit.

¹⁴ Quoted in N u g e n t, op. cit. p. 158.

¹⁵ C. V e c s e y. *Introduction: The Issues Underlying Iroquois Land Claims*. In: C. Vecsey and W. A. Starna (ed.), *Iroquois Land Claims*. Syracuse N. Y. 1988 p. 12.

begin with, New York State was initially inhabited by five Iroquoian-speaking Indian tribes: Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida and Mohawk Indians. These five nations were later joined by the Tuscarora in the early 18th century, and this federation constituted the Six Nations of the Iroquois League. Legal historians point out that after discovery of the “New World”, actual land title was vested in the European sovereigns held “ultimate dominion” in the land “subject only to the Indian right of occupancy”¹⁶. That is, full title to the American continent was in the hand of the European settlers, but the Indians had a right of occupancy.

During the Revolutionary War, different Indian tribes took different sides. The Cayugas, Mohawks, Onondagas, and Senecas sided with the British, and after the war ended, the newly created States had to resolve its differences with these hostile sovereign entities. In a treaty signed in 1784, these four hostile tribes lost a significant amount of land but were given certain segments of land in New York State¹⁷. In 1797 at the Treaty of Big Tree, the initial Seneca reservation was created, constituting a strip of land 40 miles long and from one to two-and-a-quarter miles wide so as to take in all the bottom lands of the river, running from Vandalia to the New York-Pennsylvania state line¹⁸. However, complicated land manipulations continued specifically between the Ogden Land Company which wished to purchase Seneca lands and Quaker missionaries who attempted to protect the interests of the Indians. At the Second Treaty of Buffalo Creek in 1842 the Senecas received back the Allegany and Cattaraugus reservations which were allegedly swindled from them by the Ogden Land Company in 1838. From 1875 onward, bills were introduced at the state and federal level regarding the partitioning of Seneca lands and its sale to non-Indians but these bills never passed. In 1888 New York State Assemblyman J. S. Whipple of Salamanca chaired a committee that recommended ending the Indian’s separate status, giving them full citizenship, and allotting the reservation lands to individuals. Later, Salamanca Congressman E. B. Vreeland, president of Salamanca Trust Company and a partner in the Seneca Oil Company, led the fight in Congress to allot Indian lands to individual Indians and non-Indians and change the nature of the tribal system.

¹⁶ W. A. S t a r n a. *Aboriginal Title and Traditional Iroquois Land Use: An Anthropological Perspective*. In: Vecsey and Starna (ed.), op.cit.

¹⁷ L. M. H a u p t m a n. *Iroquois Land Issues: At Odds With the “Family of New York”*. In: Vecsey and W. Starna (ed.), op.cit.

¹⁸ T. H o g a n. *City in a Quandary: Salamanca and the Allegany Leases*, “Journal of the New York History” 55(1974) p. 79-101.

However, while Congressman Vreeland exerted considerable influence in the House, his bills were continually defeated in the Senate¹⁹. The Whipple Report and the efforts of Congressman Vreeland were finally rejected in 1942 when the United States Circuit Court of Appeals handed down *United States v. Forness, et al.* This case involved a five-year legal battle between the Seneca Nation and Fred and Jessie Forness over the failure of the Fornesses' to pay a four dollar a year lease for eleven years. The essence of the litigation was whether New York State could enter into the negotiations and settle the dispute under State law. The Circuit Court of Appeals clearly stated that "state law cannot be invoked to limit the rights in land granted by the United States to the Indians, because... state law does not apply to the Indians except so far as the United States has given its consent"²⁰. This case emerged as one of the most significant legal decisions regarding the unique relationship of Indians with the federal government, and essentially deny New York State any legal standing in settling the lease problem in Salamanca.

In essence, the Seneca Nation as a collective entity owns the land that the city of Salamanca occupies. In fact, it is the only city in the United States that has the dubious distinction of existing nearly entirely on an Indian reservation. The practice of leasing part of the reservation land to non-Indians began in the mid 1800s and quickly became a legal nightmare. The reservation land is entrusted to the Seneca Nation meaning that no single individual owns the land, but it is held in trust for the collective tribe. But leasing portions of the reservation to non-Indians was never anticipated. At times, the Seneca Nation would lease a parcel of its land, at other times, individual Senecas would lease out land. The entire question of Indian leases was nearly declared void by Congress, but in order to protect the investments of non-Indians on the Seneca reservation, Congress approved the dubious legality of this practice in 1875. The original legislation permitted leasing of Indian lands for a period of five years. In 1880 renewals were to be given every twelve years. Finally, on February 18, 1892, Congress gave authority for these leases to be renewed for a period not exceeding 99 years.

The earliest lease found in the historical records preserved in the rectory of Holy Cross Church is dated April 28, 1880. This lease was for a parcel of land, "3/4 acre more or less" bounded as follows:

¹⁹ L. M. Hauptman. *The Historical Background to the Present-Day Seneca Nation-Salamanca Lease Controversy*. In: Vecsey and Starna (ed.), op.cit.

²⁰ L. M. Hauptman. *Formulating American Indian Policy in New York State: 1970-1986*. Albany, N. Y. 1988.

commencing at the north east corner of the Nelson Boardman lot and running southerly along the east line of said lot to the center of Broad St., thence easterly along the center of Broad Street to the west line of the lot leased by Nathaniel Plummer to Hevenor & Wait) thence northerly to the north east corner of the said Hevenor & Wait lot) then westerly along the south line of the Mill Co.'s land to the place of beginning, containing 3/4 acre more or less.

The term of this lease was for twelve years, and the annual rental was to be two dollars. The lease was signed by W. A. Crandall and Amos Shongo, President, Seneca Nation of Indians. On May 26, 1880, Dell Lewis purchased this land from W. A. Crandall. This lease delineated one of three parcels of land that were eventually purchased by Holy Cross Church. This particular parcel of land represents the current location of the parish rectory at 284 Broad Street.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF SALAMANCA

Philadelphia Quakers first came to the general vicinity of Salamanca in 1798 and established a mission in South Valley to minister to the Seneca Indians. In 1803 the Quakers purchased 609 acres and established a school for the Indians. Then in 1812 a saw mill was built but it seemed to create friction within the Seneca tribe and Chief Cornplanter ordered it destroyed, asserting that "It is better to have peace in our homes than lumber in our houses"²¹.

It is believed that the first permanent settler in the region was a Major Adam Hoops who settled near Olean in 1802. The Allegheny River was declared a "public highway" in 1807, despite the fact that the river flowed through the Seneca reservation. This public right of way permitted the floatation of logs down the river to Pittsburgh, and lumbering became the leading industry in and around Salamanca. At West Salamanca, a lumber mill was erected, and the locale became known as Bucktooth Mill. On November 19, 1854, the town of Bucktooth Mill was set apart from Little Valley and the name was shortened to Bucktooth²². Further up stream near to present Main Street bridge in Salamanca, another mill was erected on a island that no longer exists, called Hemlock Mill. An 1875 survey map shows Hemlock Island running from the

²¹ A. M e r r i l l. *Salamanca and Senecas*. "Southern Tier". Vol. 1 n.d. p. 86.

²² C. M. N i c h o l s and J. H. D y a s. *Salamanca, N. Y., The Town of Great Railroad Facilities*. Salamanca, N. Y. 1908.

Main Street bridge down along Sycamore Avenue and reaching to Front Avenue. The mill on Hemlock Island and most of the land along the river was owned by Fitts and Kent. In the 1880 Seneca lease, delineating one parcel of land that is presently the location of the rectory for Holy Cross Church, the deed refers to the northern boundary as “the Mill Co.’s land”, which is now Kent Boulevard. The current site of Salamanca was originally known as Hemlock Mills.

In 1842 the Erie Railroad signed a lease with the Seneca Nation permitting the railroad a right of way across the reservation. In 1851 the Erie Railroad was extended to Salamanca and then through to Dunkirk. The Erie stretched from New York to Dunkirk and served as a link between the Atlantic and the Great Lakes. In 1859 the Erie opened a railway line to Buffalo, and in the process the port of Dunkirk was eclipsed and never developed into a major Great Lakes shipping center²³. The Erie then set up a turntable, shops and engine houses in Bucktooth, presently West Salamanca. All of the early settlers who came to Salamanca lived in West Salamanca, around the Erie Railroad complex.

In 1862 the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad, which later became the Western New York and Pennsylvania Railroad, came to Salamanca from Cincinnati. It connected with the Erie at Bucktooth. On April 17, 1862, the name of Bucktooth was changed to Salamanca in honor of a Spaniard by the name of Don Jose Salamanca y Mayol, a large stockholder in the Atlantic and Great Western, who visited the town. The Erie shortly thereafter re-located its shops approximately one and a half miles upstream in what was the swampy land of Hemlock. Both Arch Merrill and Adams²⁴ commented that the cost of the land in Bucktooth was too high to permit expansion of railroad facilities, so the railroad acquired land from the Seneca’s, 1,000 feet wide, along the north side of the Allegheny River, drained the swamps in Hemlock and began building shops in that area. This new center was called “East Salamanca”. In 1873 East Salamanca became Salamanca and Bucktooth became West Salamanca.

On May 16, 1878, a third railroad came to Salamanca, the Rochester and State Line Railroad, which later became the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The population of Salamanca grew fairly rapidly: in 1855 the city’s population was 453, in 1870 it was 1,881 and by 1890 it was 4,572²⁵. Oil lines were laid

²³ W. S h a w. *When Salamanca Was Young*. Salamanca N. Y. 1925.

²⁴ W. A d a m s. *History of the Town of Salamanca*. “Historical Gazetteer and Biographical Memorial of Cattaraugus County”. N. Y. 1893 Vol. XLVI.

²⁵ A d a m s, *op.cit.*

from Carrolton to Salamanca in 1878 and “oil fever” hit in the 1890s with the formation of the Seneca Oil Company and the Salamanca Centennial Oil Company. In 1878 Salamanca was incorporated as a village.

According to the unpublished notes of Albert Maier on the history of Salamanca, the first Polish residents came to the Buffalo and Dunkirk area and then migrated to Salamanca. The hills surrounding Salamanca contained great forests of hemlock and this attracted tanneries to this region. The bark of the hemlock is used in the tanning process. Because the tanning process is labor intensive, a reasonably large labor force was needed to keep a tannery operating. Maier recounts interviewing Andrew Krieger, one of the first German settlers in Salamanca. It seems that Krieger was an agent for the North German Loyal Steamship Company. They arrived in Salamanca on the Erie Railroad and three days later were at work at the Curtis & Demming Tannery.

THE CREATION OF THE DIOCESE OF BUFFALO

John Carroll (1735-1815) was the first bishop in the United States. He was appointed the Bishop of Baltimore in 1789, and until 1808, his diocese included the entire country. In 1808 the diocese of Baltimore was divided and New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Bardonia were made into new dioceses. The Erie Canal was begun in 1817 at Rome, New York, and large numbers of Irish immigrants were recruited to work on this project. With the growing number of Catholics in the State of New York, Archbishop Hughes of New York recommended that two more dioceses be established, one at Albany and another at Buffalo. On April 23, 1847, the Diocese of Buffalo was created with John Timon as the first bishop. The Catholics of Rochester expressed dissatisfaction with the selection of Buffalo, and partially to appease the residents of Rochester, Bishop Timon appointed Rev. O'Reilly, a pastor in Rochester, as the vicar-general of the diocese. The diocese at that time encompassed all twenty counties west of Lake Cayuga. Bishop Timon died in 1867, and Stephen V. Ryan became the second bishop of Buffalo. The Diocese of Rochester was created in 1868, with twelve of the original counties becoming part of the new diocese, and the eight western-most counties in New York constituting the Diocese of Buffalo. Bishop Ryan died in 1896, and James Quingley became the third bishop of Buffalo in 1897. Bishop Quingley was made the Archbishop of Chicago in 1903. Charles Colton became the fourth bishop of Buffalo in 1903, and served in that position until his death in 1915. The fifth bishop of Buffalo was Dennis Dougherty, who became the Archbishop of Philadelphia in 1918.

William Turner became the sixth bishop of Buffalo in 1919, and served as bishop until his death in 1936. The seventh bishop was John Duffy, who served as the Bishop of Buffalo for seven years, when he died in 1944. The eighth Bishop of Buffalo was John O'Hara, who served in this position for seven years until he became the Archbishop of Philadelphia in 1952. Joseph Burke, who was the Auxiliary Bishop of Buffalo under Bishops Duffy and O'Hara, became the ninth bishop of Buffalo in 1952. Bishop Burke died in 1962 while attending the Second Vatican Council. In 1953 James McNulty, the Bishop of Paterson, New Jersey was installed as the tenth Bishop of Buffalo. Bishop McNulty died in 1973, and the current Bishop of Buffalo, Edward Head, was installed as bishop on March 19, 1973.

THE FIRST CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN SALAMANCA

Several historical documents cite the arrival of a few Catholic families in Bucktooth in the 1850s. A Father Sheehan came occasionally from Little Valley and held church services in the home of a Miss Muir. Later, a Father MacKeever came from Ellicottville and said Mass in a different house every Sunday. The pastor of the Catholic Church in Jamestown, Father Byrnes, also came to Bucktooth to say Mass in private homes and later in a small public hall. In 1860 Bishop Timon, the first bishop of the Buffalo diocese, directed that a parish be organized in Bucktooth. The first pastor was Rev. Burns, the pastor of SS. Peter and Paul's Parish in Jamestown²⁶. Different documents refer to this priest as P. Byrnes or Patricio Bytne, but several documents suggest that he was generally referred to as Father Patrick Burns. It appears that he lived in Jamestown from 1860 until 1865 but began commuting regularly to Bucktooth in 1862 when a church was built in what was then called Salamanca (West Salamanca, today). According to Everts²⁷, a neat frame church edifice, 32 by 50 feet, was erected in the northern part of the village, just beyond the Reservation limits". The *Beers Atlas* published in 1869 shows the Village of Salamanca, and indicates the location of a Catholic church at the end of "Church" street which today is Forest Avenue. A rectory was built later and the parish was known as St. Joseph's Church. Everts²⁸ lists other clergy who

²⁶ T. D o n o h u e. *History of the Diocese of Buffalo*. Buffalo, N. Y. 1929.

²⁷ L. H. E v e r t s. *History of Cattaraugus County: Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers*. Philadelphia, Pa 1879.

²⁸ E v e r t s, op.cit.

served as “resident priests and otherwise” from 1862 to 1870 as Fathers Cahill, McMullen, Wagner, Duyer, Bloomer, and Baxter. However, it appears that Father Burns was the official pastor of St. Joseph’s from 1862 to approximately 1869, when he transferred to a parish in Rochester. In 1870 Father John Byron was appointed pastor of St. Joseph’s and served in this capacity until 1879. According to Adams²⁹, Father Byron supervised the building of a church in Little Valley and another one in Killbuck but the latter church was used for only a short period of time.

The settlement of Hemlock began to experience rapid development and became known as East Salamanca. The shift in location of the maintenance facilities by the Erie Railroad from West Salamanca to East Salamanca, the opening of the tannery on Wildwood Avenue by Curtis & Deming, the replacement of the first wooden bridge on Main St. with a second, more stable structure in 1869, and the increasing number of lumber mills made East Salamanca a more inviting community than West Salamanca. The congregation of St. Joseph’s relocated its church to River Street in East Salamanca, and the new immigrants from Ireland and Poland would also settle in East Salamanca. On April 29, 1875, the *Cattaraugus County Republican* carried the following brief announcement:

We understand our Catholic friends have purchased a lot on West River St. of Pat. [sic] Monahan and will build a church thereon sometime in the future.

A short time later, a second new item appeared in the *Cattaraugus County Republican* on July 29, 1875:

A picnic for the benefit of the new Catholic Church will be held on the site of their new church on West River st. [sic!] Monday, August 16. In the evening a festival will be held in Flint’s Hall. The worthiness of the object should call out a large attendance of our citizens.

The October 7, 1897 *Cattaraugus County Republican* carried for the first time a listing of Catholic services under its regularly printed section entitled “Churches and Societies”. Listed at the bottom of that section is the following entry:

Catholic-Church at West Salamanca-Rev. J. Byron, Pastor. Residence on West River Street, Salamanca. Services every Sunday at 11 A. M.

This entry was followed a few lines down with the following announcement:

²⁹ Adams, op.cit.

St. Joseph's Temperance Society-Meets in Catholic Church, West Salamanca, semi-monthly.

Father Byron relocated his residence from West Salamanca to West River St., kept St. Joseph's Church in West Salamanca open, but proceeded to build a new church on West River Street. Everts³⁰ states that Father Byron leased a lot of ground on River St. and built a new church in 1876, 34 by 72 feet, with a seating capacity for 400 persons and goes on the state that "A neat personage was purchased near the church in 1875". This is slightly misleading since the new church was not built until 1876, inferring that the church already existed when the "neat" parsonage was purchased. The *Cattaraugus County Republican* carried the following announcement on October 5, 1876:

A Festival for the benefit of the Catholic Church will be held in St. John's Hall (recently built on West River St.), Wednesday evening, Nov. 15th, 1876. A pleasant time may be expected.

However, a few lines up in this same October 5, 1876, edition, in the section entitled "Church and Societies", the listing for Catholic services was still shown as "Church at West Salamanca", and the pastor's residence as "West River St." Perhaps the date of Nov. 15, 1876, is the "grand opening" of the new church that was to be called St. John's. The Catholic church in West Salamanca was closed late in 1876. Everts stated that there were 130 families in St. John's parish in 1876³¹.

This parish continued to grow, and within a few years, the new church was too small. In 1882 Father Byron built a second church next to St. John's, and this new church was called St. Patrick's. The local paper stated: "It is a brick structure and one of the finest churches in the county. It is patterned, in a small way, after St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City".

The old St. John's Church became a parish hall, and for reasons that are not clear, the building was turned so that the entrance was on River Street, rather than William Street. Father Byron also directed the building of a church in Little Valley, and another church in Killbuck but this latter church was closed a few years later. On May 31, 1899, Father Byron died in Buffalo. It appears that Father M. P. Connery served as the interim pastor for nearly a year. On May 1, 1890, Father Peter Berkery was appointed the new pastor of St. Patrick's and he served in this capacity until 1902. Father Berkery built a school in 1892 and had the school staffed by the sisters of St. Joseph. The

³⁰ Everts, op.cit.

³¹ Ibidem.

rectory became the convent and a new rectory was purchased across the street from the church at 120 River St.

According to a newspaper article in the *Salamanca Republican Press* in 1981, after St. John's was vacated in 1882, the Polish families in Salamanca united and formed their own congregation, and St. Patrick's agreed to rent "old" St. John's Church to them. In the unedited version of the write-up for the 1966 edition of *Millenium of Christianity of the Polish People for the Buffalo Diocese*, it is stated that the Polish people complained in the autumn of 1892 to James Rozan, a Polish politician from Buffalo campaigning in Salamanca, about the "unduly high church payments exacted from them by the pastor". Mr Rozan advised them to collect money for their own church and contacted a Polish priest in Buffalo to help them. This Polish priest was Rev. Jan Pitass, who would become the driving force behind the establishment not only of Holy Cross Church but virtually every Polish church in the Buffalo diocese.

THE CREATION OF HOLY CROSS PARISH

In an Abstract of Title for Holy Cross Church conducted by Burdette Whipple, dated October 13, 1923, a title search was conducted for each of the three separate properties that now constitute Holy Cross Church. The legal entity entitled "Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church Society" was established on June 28, 1892, according to Burdette Whipple's Abstract. However, there is no legal document in the Cattaraugus Court House that technically delineates the founding of the parish. The head of the records division at the Cattaraugus County Court House referred to this legal action as an "unofficial incorporation". Holy Cross Parish did not become officially incorporated until 1902, when it then obtained property. The head of the records division at the Court House indicated that many churches traditionally began as unofficially unincorporated entities until the actual purchase of property was considered, and then official incorporation was required for the legal transfer of property.

Holy Cross Parish was technically an ethnic parish rather than a territorial parish. The concept of an ethnic parish was a relatively new form of a parish that emerged in the United States with the influx of different ethnic groups. When a small group of immigrants settled in an area of the United States, there emerged the custom of obtaining permission from the bishop to establish an ethnic parish, regardless of the presence or absence of any other Catholic parish. The more typical parish, and one that existed in Europe, was

called a territorial parish, which embraced all the Catholics within a defined territorial area. With the introduction of the Code of Canon Law in 1918, the creation of ethnic parishes was severely restricted.

The unedited version of *Millennium of Christianity of the Polish People* states that Mr. Rozan returned to Salamanca from Buffalo with Father John Pitass and they “purchased land for a future church”. This purchase of land is also mentioned in the St. Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr Parish jubilee booklet, *Księga Pamiątkowa złotego jubileuszu Osady Polskiej i Parafii Świętego Stanisława B. i M. w Buffalo, New York 1873-1923* but no deed exists showing that this actually occurred until 1902. What conceivably happened was that permission was received from Bishop Stephan Ryan to create a parish and to make plans for a building fund. The mention of the collection of money in 1892 among the Poles in Salamanca, alluded to in St. Stanislaus Parish golden jubilee booklet, most likely refers to the creation of a building fund. On December 19, 1892, a meeting of the new parish was held and committees were appointed. Father Petras (Peter) Basinski was appointed the first pastor by Bishop Ryan, but it is not clear whether Father Basinski was present at this first meeting or whether he was appointed by Bishop Ryan after this meeting. The Diamond Jubilee booklet for Holy Cross Church, published in 1968, lists the founders of the parish as John R. Kubinski, Julius Nadolski, Michael Pilarski, the Ambuski’s, the Zaprowski’s and the Machowiak’s. However, the accuracy of this list of names has not been verified. The 1892 Census of New York State listed a total of 70 families with the head of household born in Poland, who were residing in the Village of Salamanca and Great Valley. The names found in this 1892 Census and the family size are listed in Table 1. These 70 Polish families, constituting 353 people, approximate the first parishioners of Holy Cross Church. The 1880 Census listed only fourteen Polish families residing in Salamanca (see Table 2). However, one of these families, the Hy Goldstein’s, is very likely a Jewish family from Poland, leaving at most only thirteen Polish Catholic families. This suggests that most of the 70 Polish “founding families” listed in the Census of 1892 were fairly recent immigrants. A cursory examination of the church records suggest that most of these first Polish families came from a clustering of small villages located between Bydgoszcz and Poznan (see Map 2). In *Historia Polska w Ameryce* by Rev. W. Kruszk, it is stated that at the founding of the parish there were 90 families, and approximately 160 families in 1901.

INFLUENCE FROM CHICAGO ON HOLY CROSS PARISH

Two individuals played a prominent role in the development of the Polish community in Chicago and had significant influence in the creation of Polish parishes in the Buffalo diocese. The first of these individuals is Peter Kiolbasa, who was born in Poland in 1837 and came to the United States in 1855, settling in Panna Maria, Texas. In 1862 he joined the Texas cavalry, presumably supporting the Confederacy, but Kiolbasa was captured by the Union forces and taken to Illinois. "Here the plucky Kiolbasa enlisted in the Sixteenth Illinois Volunteers... and was promoted to captain"³². After the Civil War, Kiolbasa moved to Chicago and became a leading Polonia activist. His first efforts were directed toward the creation of St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, built in 1867. His second, and perhaps more notable, contribution was the creation of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCU) in 1873. Initially the PRCU concentrated only on religious affairs in the Polish community. Later it endorsed the campaign for the appointment of Polish bishops in the U. S., and in 1886 developed an insurance program. The PRCU did not accept non-Catholics and gradually acquired a reputation for endorsing conservative causes. In opposition to the PRCU, there arose the Polish National Alliance (PNA) which sought independence from the clergy and was open to all Polish immigrants, regardless of religious convictions. The antagonism between the PRCU and the PNA split the Chicago Polish community into two hostile camps. Rev. Kruszka depicted the feud as follows:

In America, for a time, one might say, there were no Catholics and no Poles, but only either Union men or Alliance men; if you were not an Alliance man, you were not regarded by the Alliance as a Pole; if you were not a Union man you were not regarded by the Union as a Catholic... the struggle between the Union and the Alliance was referred to as a "fratricidal struggle"³³.

Kiolbasa was invited in 1892 to address a public meeting of Poles in Buffalo. In his speech, Kiolbasa stressed the need for more Polish churches and more Polish schools. Kiolbasa built the PRCU around the goal of preserving Catholicism among future generations of Poles in America, and this was to be accomplished by creating an elaborate Catholic parochial school system. At the time of Kiolbasa's visit to Buffalo, there were seven Polish parishes and six territo-

³² J. J. P a r o t. *Polish Catholics in Chicago, 1850-1920*. Dekalb, Illinois 1981 p. 23.

³³ W. K r u s z k a. *Historia polska w Ameryce*.

rial Polish parishes in the Buffalo diocese. Within a few months of his visit, the eighth Polish parish, Holy Cross Parish was created, and over the next twenty-five years, twenty-six more Polish parishes and twelve more territorial Polish parishes would eventually be established. At Holy Cross, two parish organizations seemed to reflect the influence of Peter Kiolbasa. The St. Adalbert Society, was affiliated with the Polish Union of America and this latter organization had seceded from the Polish National Alliance, and St. Joseph's Society which was directly affiliated with the Polish Roman Catholic Union. Kiolbasa was staunchly opposed to the Polish National Alliance and there is no evidence that this organization had any strong support in Holy Cross Parish. Thus, Peter Kiolbasa played an indirect, but nonetheless critical role in the creation of Holy Cross Parish.

A second individual who constituted part of the "Chicago influence" in the Buffalo diocese was Rev. Vincent Barzynski, who was born in Poland in 1838, came to the United States in 1866, and was pastor of St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish in Chicago from 1874 until his death in 1899. Parot refers to Barzynski as the "brick and mortar pastor"³⁴ because of his personal involvement in the building of countless churches and schools in the Chicago diocese. In fact, Parot entitled the chapter on Rev. Barzynski as "The Barzynski Era" referring to his overpowering presence in the Chicago diocese from 1874 to 1899. Barzynski "channeled the energies of his flock into the building of a gigantic community-parish system-churches, schools, religious societies, newspapers, fraternal organizations, welfare agencies and hospitals"³⁵. Barzynski was fiercely loyal to the PRCU and vehemently opposed to PNA. He was directly involved in the development of twenty-three Polish parishes in Chicago, and at the turn of the century, it is estimated that St. Stanislaus Kostka in Chicago was the largest Catholic parish in the world.

In the late 1880s the struggle between the PRCU and the PNA reached the national level, and Barzynski as the most powerful Unionist in the U. S. enlisted the help of his Polish counterpart in the Buffalo diocese, Rev. Jan Pitass, to organize the Polish League and to fight against the growing independence movement with some elements of the Polish Catholic Church. Both Barzynski and Pitass organized the First Polish Catholic Congress in 1896 to address the problem of episcopal representation in the American hierarchy along with the need for a Polish religious seminary, condemnation of the indepen-

³⁴ Parot, *op.cit.*

³⁵ *Ibidem* p. 59.

dence movement of what were called the Polish schismatics, and the formation of a Polish Catholic clergy. However, Parot stated that Barzynski and Pitass so dominated this meeting, that little of substance was accomplished³⁶. However, Barzynski was a strong influence in the Buffalo diocese in the person of Rev. Pitass, and the development of strong Polish parishes in the Buffalo diocese and along with a concomitant Polish parochial school system paralleled the growth of Polish church in the Chicago diocese.

JACOB (JAMES) M. ROZAN, POLISH POLITICAL ACTIVIST

While any discussion of the Polish community in Chicago must acknowledge the key roles played by Kiolbasa and Barzynski, in the Buffalo diocese the two key actors were Jacob Rozan and Rev. Jan Pitass. A critical link in the historical development of Holy Cross Parish resides in the energies of an influential layman, Jacob Rozan. As Kiolbasa complemented Rev. Barzynski in Chicago, Rozan was to collaborate with Rev. Jan Pitass in Buffalo. Rozan was born in Poland in 1865 and came to Buffalo in 1872. At the age of 19 he established the Polish American Democratic Club and taught school at St. Stanislaus Parish. In 1890 he was elected supervisor in Buffalo's 5th ward, became director of Empire Savings Bank and was offered the position of chief of the Buffalo Internal Revenue Service but declined that position. Rozan worked with Rev. Pitass, the pastor at St. Stanislaus Church, in establishing Polish parishes in the Buffalo diocese, and, in this effort, he invited Peter Kiolbasa from Chicago to address the Poles in the Buffalo area. Rozan visited Salamanca in 1892 as part of a political organizing campaign, and it was to him that the small Polish community voiced their objections of being assessed \$ 50 per family to help pay for a school at St. Patrick's. Rozan encouraged the Poles in Salamanca to begin to organize their own parish, and he contacted Rev. Pitass to come to Salamanca to officially establish Holy Cross Parish. Rozan was elected to the New York State Assembly in 1908 but campaigned against woman's suffrage ("we need more babies, not more ballots"). This led to his political demise and he lost the next election³⁷. Rozan died in 1929.

Rev. Jan (John) Pitass, Dean of all Polish Parishes in the Buffalo Diocese

³⁶ P a r o t, op.cit.

³⁷ W. D r z e w i e n i e c k i. *James M. Rozan: First Polish-American Democratic Councilman*. Typed speech in library of Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society. Tape 69-7.

The dominate organizing impetus behind the creation of Holy Cross Church was Father John (Jan) Pitass. Father Pitass was born in Poland, studied for the priesthood in Rome, came to the United States in May of 1873, and was ordained a priest on June 8, 1873. The following day he organized St. Stanislaus, Bishop & Martyr Parish in Buffalo. This parish began with 82 families, increased to 300 by 1880 and by 1900 the parish had 30, 000 members³⁸. In addition to his duties in this rapidly growing parish, Father Pitass served as an emissary for all Polish Catholics in Western New York and helped organize Polish parishes throughout the area. The centennial booklet for St. Stanislaus Parish, published in 1973, states that Father Pitass “has merited the title of the founder and patriarch of the Buffalo Polish community as well as of practically every Polish parish within Buffalo and the neighboring dioceses”³⁹. In 1887 Father Pitass began publishing *Polak w Ameryce* twice a week. Later this became a daily publication and assumed a prominent position as one of the most widely read periodicals in the Polish American community.

In 1894 Bishop Stephen Ryan appointed Father Pitass “Dean of all Polish Churches of the Buffalo diocese”. In this capacity, Rev. Pitass was given authority over ten Polish parishes, consisting of some 75, 000 people. However, most likely because of Father Pitass’ participation in what became known as “equal rights”, the move to have Polish bishops appointed in the United States, he acquired the reputation of being an ardent leader of the Polish cause. In 1896, the newly appointed bishop of the Buffalo diocese, Bishop Quigley, “did not uphold the appointment” of Father Pitass as dean of the Polish churches⁴⁰ in what was a futile attempt to “break the Irish-German monopoly in bishop appointments”⁴¹. In addition to being pastor of the largest Polish church in the Buffalo diocese, helping to establish Polish churches throughout the Buffalo diocese, and publishing a Polish periodical, Father Pitass was also active in the Polish Union of America (*Unia Polska w Ameryce*), a fraternal insurance organization numbering over 6, 000 by 1900. According to Brożek, a whole series of fraternal organizations were created around 1890, resulting from a struggle between the Polish National Alliance (PNA) and the Polish Roman Catholic

³⁸ B r o ż e k, op.cit.

³⁹ *One Hundred Years of Grace: 1873-1973*. Buffalo 1973 p. 11.

⁴⁰ B r o ż e k, op.cit. p. 100.

⁴¹ B r o ż e k, op.cit. p. 99. Of the 69 American Bishops in 1886, 35 were of Irish descent, 15 of German descent, and 11 of French descent but none were of Polish descent. The first Polish bishop was appointed in 1908, Bishop Pawel Rhode.

Union (PRCU)⁴². The PRCU was under the influence of the clergy, while the PNA sought independence from the clergy. Both groups attempted to influence the Polonia community and the animosity between the two groups was fierce and in several instances led to legal action⁴³. The Polish Union of America in which Father Pitass was active was created by a secession from the PNA and an ideological shift toward the PRCU.

Parot's comparison of Rev. Barzynski in Chicago with Rev. Pitass in Buffalo gives the distinct impression that each were mirror images of one another. Both dominated their respective dioceses, both were pastors of enormously large parishes named after St. Stanislaus (around 1900 there were 50,000 members in the Chicago parish and 30,000 in the Buffalo parish), and both were leaders of the First Polish Catholic Congress of 1896. Further, Parot suggests that both Barzynski and Pitass were considered at one time or another to be bishops, and both enjoyed so much power and prestige in their respective dioceses that they were for all intents and purposes *de facto* bishops⁴⁴. At the First Polish Catholic Congress convened in Buffalo in 1896, both Barzynski and Pitass were co-leaders and both supported staunch anti-PNA positions and admitted only delegates who were PRCU members. Rev. Barzynski's agenda for building strong Polish communities through the development of Polish parishes and Polish schools was eminently reflected in Pitass' organizing efforts in the Buffalo diocese.

Rev. Pitass played a critical role in the establishment of Holy Cross Parish. In the fifty-year jubilee booklet recording the history of St. Stanislaus, Bishop & Martyr Parish, the following account is given:

Father John [Pitass], is also properly the founder of the Polish Parish in Salamanca. This was probably the occasion of the one and only time in his life that he travelled by freight or "rode the rails".

This is what happened: Mr Jacob Rozan, one of our more prominent citizens, had travelled to Salamanca for a political speech, since he took an active part in American politics. Following a meeting with the Poles from that area, members of an Irish parish, they began to complain to him that the Irish priest had recently imposed on them a severe levy, specifically to collect up to \$ 50 for a school. Mr. Rozan told them, "Why must you pay for someone else's school? It would be better to collect the money for your own church, and Rev. Pitass will assist you".

⁴² B r o z e k, op.cit.

⁴³ Ibidem p. 65.

⁴⁴ P a r o t, op.cit.

Father John was not disappointed. In a couple of days, he left with Mr. Rozan for Salamanca, but by mistake they took a train which only took them half way and dropped them off at a small station. What to do? The next passenger train would not arrive until the next day. To walk? It was too far. They would arrive too late. No good, because the Salamancans had arranged a meeting and would be waiting.

By good fortune a freight train was passing by with trainmen aboard. Realizing their plight, they motioned them to board the caboose. It was necessary to accept the offer or be abandoned, so Rev. Pitass and Mr. Rozan resigned themselves to travelling by freight, overtook and jumped onto the train.

They were late for the meeting by only two hours and the following day purchased the land for Holy Cross Church for \$ 800, which the Poles there had already collected⁴⁵.

Rev. Pitass organized the parish, served as the intermediary between the Polish community in Salamanca and Bishop Ryan, played a role in the assignment of the first Polish parish priest to the parish, and arranged for the purchase of property for the erection of the first church.

THE FIRST CHURCH OF HOLY CROSS PARISH

The land that was to become the site of the first church for the Holy Cross parish was initially purchased in 1872 by Henry and Jacob Melenbacker. The quit-claim deed, dated March 22, 1872, stated the following:

all that tract, piece or parcel of land, situate in the Town of Salamanca, County of Cattaraugus and State of New York, and bounded and described as follows: Commencing at a point on the northwest corner of the Dennis O'Brien lot; thence running west along the Mill Company's line one hundred and seventy-one feet; then running south two hundred and seventeen feet to Broad Street; thence running east along said Broad Street one hundred and seventy-one and one-half feet; thence running north one hundred and forty-three and three-fourths feet to the place of beginning, be the same more or less.

On June 13, 1888 the Melenbackers sold this plot of land to William Arrowsmith. Then on July 7, 1893, the Melenbackers purchased the land again, and on the same day sold this land to Bishop Stephen Ryan for \$ 110. At the bottom of this deed appears the name "Rev. Jno. Pitas, Peckham & Townsend, Buffalo, N.Y." It would appear that Father Pitass was instrumental in the Melenbackers re-purchasing this land, and then he acted as Bishop Ryan's

⁴⁵ *Księga Pamiątkowa złotego jubileuszu Osady Polskiej i Parafii św. Stanisława B. i M.* Transl. by J. F. Kryniski p. 41-42.

agent in purchasing this plot. Clearly, Bishop Ryan's intent in purchasing this land was to allow the newly formed Polish congregation to build a church on this site. With the death of Bishop Ryan in 1896, this land is left to Rev. Michael Corrigan, Charles E. McDonnell and Patrick E. Ledden. The new bishop of Buffalo, James E. Quigley, assumed ownership of this land in February of 1897 by virtue of becoming bishop. Thus, the newly formed parish built its first church on land that is owned by the Bishop of the Buffalo diocese.

In the September 8, 1893, edition of the *Cattaraugus County Republican*, the following news item appears:

The cornerstone of the new Polish church on Broad street was laid last Sunday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock. The Citizens band headed a delegation that marched to the depot to meet the priests and a number of Polish people from Buffalo. Later a procession was formed in front of St. Patrick's church on River street and marched to the site of the new church. Father Besinski [sic], pastor of the Polish church in Buffalo, a French-Polish priest from the same place, and Rev. M. P. Berkery, pastor of St. Patrick's church.

The actual date of the laying of the corner stone was Sunday, September 3, 1893. While the church was being built, the first baptism took place on October 7, 1893. Franciscam Kasperek, the daughter of Antonii Kasperek and Josephse Grubiorska, living in Carrolton, was baptized by Rev. Petras Basinski. The baptism took place in St. John's Hall on River Street. Similarly, the first recorded wedding in the parish took place on October 16, 1893, between Antoni Marcinkiewicz and Apolonia Stachowiak.

On December 1, 1893, the local newspaper carried the following item:

The Polish Catholic church on Broad street is about completed, and services will be held there next Sunday. The Polish people are preparing to hold a fair at an early day for the benefit of their church.

The following week the local paper announced the opening of the church.

The Polish Catholic church was dedicated on Sunday. After mass in St. Patrick's church Father Berkery and his congregation, headed by the Citizens Band, marched to the new church on Broad street, where Father Berkery assisted in the ceremonies of dedicating the edifice to the worship of God. Two Polish priests from Buffalo were also present. The Polish people now have a neat little church, and we understand all paid for.

The actual date the church was dedicated was December 3, 1893. One of the "two Polish priests from Buffalo" was undoubtedly Father Pitass.

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARISH

Father Peter Basinski was the pastor of Holy Cross from December 1892 until 1895. While the records are not clear, it is very likely that the rectory was built at this time next to the original church. From 1895 to December 15, 1897, Father Francis Krzesniak was the pastor. Father Krzesniak said the first funeral mass recorded in the death records of the parish on January 27, 1896 for Helen Wisniewska. On December 15, 1897, Father Adam Marcinkiewicz became the pastor. He built a parochial school next to the rectory, and the teaching was done by laymen. In the 1900 *City Directory* for Salamanca Rev. Adam Marcinkiewicz is listed as rector of Holy Cross, living at 140 Broad. Also residing at the same address was a Kaiser Marcinkiewicz, whose occupation is recorded as a printer, and Johanna Silisz, a domestic.

On January 30, 1900, Father Thomas Stabenau became the pastor. He had the church renovated and painted. During Father Stabenau's tenure as pastor, the parish became legally incorporated. On June 17, 1902, Rt. Rev. James E. Quingley, Bishop of Buffalo, Very Rev. Michael Connery, Vicar General of the Diocese, Rev. Thomas Stabenau, rector, and two trustees, Stanislaus Jarzebowski and Maximilian Zaporowski, signed a certificate of incorporation. The name of this organization was officially listed as "The Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church Society of Salamanca, New York". A few days later, on June 28, 1902, "The Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church Society of Salamanca, New York", purchased the deed to the land that at that time was occupied by the church, rectory and school. The deed reads as follows:

Commencing at a point in the northwest corner of the Dennis O'Brien lot; thence running west along the Mill Company's line one hundred and seventy-one (171) feet; thence south two hundred and seventeen (217) feet to Broad Street; thence running east along said Broad Street, one hundred and seventy-one and one-half (171 1/2) feet; thence running north one hundred and forty-three and three-fourths (143 3/4) feet to the place of the beginning.

This agreement was between Holy Cross Church and "Saint Patrick's Roman Catholic Church Society of Salamanca, New York". Bishop Quigley is listed as the "President" of St. Patrick's Church Society, and only his signature is listed on the deed. Bishop Quigley inherited the right of ownership of this parcel from the previous bishop of Buffalo, Bishop Stephen Ryan, who purchased the land in 1893 for \$ 1, 125 from Jacob and Eleanor Melenbacker. As mentioned previously, the Melenbackers obtained title to this parcel of land in 1872, and Father Pitass was instrumental in getting Bishop Ryan to purchase

this land in 1893. On the “Abstract of Title” conducted by Burdette Whipple in 1923, it shows that Bishop Quigley deeded this land to Saint Patrick’s in 1898, and then Saint Patrick’s deeded it to Holy Cross in 1902.

On July 5, 1903, Father Ladislaus Bartkowski became the pastor. In November 8, of that same year, Bishop Colton came to Salamanca for the first confirmation in Holy Cross. The first name recorded in the Confirmation Book was Mary Zielinska. The 1907 *City Directory* listed the addresses of Holy Cross as follows:

134 Broad	Rev. L. J. Bartkowski (2 occupants)
136 Broad	Polish School

At the front of this *City Directory* under the listing for churches, Holy Cross Catholic (Polish) Church is listed at 132 Broad Street. For reasons that are not clear, the addresses on Broad Street changed between 1903 and 1907. Whereas the address of the church was formerly 140 Broad, as of 1907 it is 132 Broad.

On November 16, 1905, Holy Cross purchased a second parcel of land, the site where the convent is now located. The boundaries of this plot of land are described as follows:

Beginning at a point in the center of Broad Street and at the southwest corner of a lot formerly owned by Charles Nies and formerly occupied by Ozro Hunting; running thence westerly along the center of said street eighty-two and one half feet to lands owned formerly by J. D. Melanbacher; thence northerly along the east bounds of Melanbacher’s said lands to lands owned by Fitts and Kent; thence easterly along the southerly of said lands of Fitts and Kent to the northwest corner of said Nies’ said lot; thence southerly to the point beginning.

The previous owners of this parcel of land as described in the “Abstract of Title” are as follows:

March 31, 1870	Andrew Jacobs
March 31, 1881	Charles Nies
March 31, 1881	Denis O’Brien
April 13, 1892	William E. Laycock
July 21, 1905	George E. Forman
November 10, 1905	Bishop Colton
November 14, 1905	Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church Society of Salamanca, N. Y.

In 1905, Bishop Colton signed a mortgage for \$ 1, 500 payable to George Forman in fifteen equal annual payments of \$ 100, plus 5 % interest. In the

deed conveying the property from Bishop Colton to Holy Cross Church, the stipulation is added “second party assumes and agrees to pay a mortgage covering the above described premises given by first party to George Forman”. A Certificate of Discharge of Mortgage was given by George Forman to Sishop Colton on October 13, 1923.

According to the *Book of Visitations (Księga Wizytowa)* maintained by the Felician Sisters, four sisters arrived in Salamanca on February 1, 1906, “through the urgent request of Bishop Colton”. The precise meaning of “urgent” is not known. The *Book of Visitations* went on to state, “This home was founded with great efforts and most unexpectedly”. The unedited narrative for the *Millennium* for Holy Cross states that “This unexpected opening of a mission house and staffing a three-classroom school of 150 pupils during midyear was made in compliance with the urgent request of Bishop Charles Colton”. The February 3, 1906 edition of the *Cattaraugus County Republican* Carried the following news item: “Three Polish nuns of the Order of St. Francis of Buffalo came today to remain here permanently and teach the classes at the Holy Cross School”. This news item apparently lists the number of nuns incorrectly, and mistakenly lists the Order of St. Francis rather than the Order of St. Felix. According to the 1907 *City Directory* four Felician Sisters are listed at 130 Broad Street. This would apparently be a house next to the church on the east side.

On February 15, 1909, Father Leonard Podlewski became the pastor but his stay was very brief. Later that same year, Father Mecislaus Tymek became pastor on September 9th. While Father Tymek was pastor, the present rectory was built in 1914. The land on which the rectory was to be built was purchased in 1913. The title abstract lists the following owners:

May 26, 1870	Michael and Delphine Lewis
April 24, 1909	Edward B. Fitzgerald
May 9, 1913	Edward Ambuski
April 26, 1913	Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church Society

Edward Ambuski purchased the land for the new rectory from Edward Fitzgerald for \$ 2, 700 and then sold the land to Holy Cross Church. It is interesting to note that the quit-claim deed between Edward Fitzgerald and Edward Ambuski is dated May 9, 1913, while the quit-claim deed between Edward Ambuski and Holy Cross Church is dated April 26, 1913, which pre-dates the previous land transaction.

The *Book of Visitations* for the Felician Sisters has the following entry dated November 15, 1914 by Mother M. Sabina:

Until now the Sisters occupied a very small home in which they could hardly have any comfort due to cramped quarters. For that reason during the last days of September, the Sisters moved to a house previously occupied by the pastor. Nothing was renovated because during the coming year the house will be transferred on its original place and then renovated according to the needs of the Sisters.

On July 1, 1915, Father Adalbert Cichy became pastor. The 1916 *City Directory* gave the addresses of Holy Cross buildings as follows:

266 Broad Street	Holy Cross Church
272 Broad Street	Felician Sisters (5 occupants)
278 Broad Street	Holy Cross School
284 Broad Street	Rev. Adelbert [sic] Cichy (2 occupants)

Thus, the addresses on Broad Street were apparently changed a third time.

In May of 1917, Mother M. Sabina remarked in the Felician Sister's *Book of Visitations* that the Sisters' house had some renovations but "as a whole in cold weather the house is not heated and is not very comfortable for living purposes". The following year in 1918 she remarked that "the home is more convent-like this year except for the floor in the dining room which eventually will be replaced by a new one". In the *Chronicles (Roczniki)* for St. Agnes' Home (the name of the convent) an entry is made in May 11, 1914, that there were 150 children in school but only three small classrooms. In June 20, 1919, Mother M. Sabina made the following entry in the *Book of Visitations*: "There are 8 grades in 3 classroom [sic] and this combination makes school work very difficult..."

THE BUILDING OF THE NEW CHURCH

On October 23, 1923, Father Cichy filed a document with the County of Cattaraugus that stated the following:

This is to certify that the consent of 2/3 and more of the Trustees of the Holy Cross Catholic Church Society of Salamanca, N. Y., a religious corporation organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of New York, having its principle office at Buffalo, N. Y. to mortgage its property for a sum not to exceed \$ 75, 000, was given

by such Trustees by passing the foregoing resolution by a unanimous vote at a special meeting of said trustees.

The following month, the Supreme Court of the State of New York granted the petition to Holy Cross to mortgage its current land holdings, worth approximately \$ 85, 000, with \$ 12, 800 in personal assets and approximately \$ 10, 000 in liabilities. The names of the petitioners were as follows:

Right Reverend William Turner, Bishop of Buffalo
Right Reverend Nelson Baker, Vicar General
Rev. Adalbert Cichy, Pastor
Stanislaus Jarzemboski, Trustee (previously spelled Jarzebowski)
Mox Zaprowski, Trustee (previously spelled Zaporowski)

Salamanca Trust Company issued a loan for \$ 75, 000 on December 26, 1923. The terms of the loan were semi-annual payments, with an interest rate of 5 percent. Ground breaking was held on June 23, 1923, and the cornerstone was laid on October 15th. In the meantime, the Sisters were moved to a rented home on High Street and the school was moved behind the church. When the new church was completed, the old school was moved to where the “organist’s house” was located and converted into a convent. In October of 1924, the Sisters were able to move into their renovated convent. The Sisters’ old home that formerly stood between the old church and school was sold and moved. On September 28, 1924, the new church and school were blessed. The school was transferred to the basement of the new church which had six school rooms, accommodating up to 50 children per room, an office and a lunch room. In the Felician Sisters’ *Book of Visitations*, Mother M. Jerome made the following entry on March 9, 1925: “In November, 1924, Rev. Cichy resigned as pastor and Rev. Bubacz took his place”. Why Father Cichy resigned is not clear. Picture 6 shows the church after it was completed in 1924.

On June 23, 1924, the first payment of \$ 914. 90 was made to Salamanca Trust Company on the \$ 75, 000 mortgage. While payments were to be semi-annual, in 1926 three payments totalling \$ 4, 500 were made. Thereafter, from three to as many as ten payments per year were made on this loan. Father Bubacz became the pastor on November 1, 1924, and a significant proportion of the debt was repaid during his tenure as pastor from 1924 until early in 1933. Enrollment at the school reached 284 children in the 1930-31 school year, and six Sisters were assigned to Holy Cross. On April 20, 1933, Father Bronislaus Majerowski became the pastor. Despite what must have been difficult financial times for the church during the Depression, Father Majerowski was able to consistently make payments of not less than \$ 300 eight to ten times a year in the 1930s, and almost monthly payments of \$ 300 to \$ 500 in

the 1940s. On April 26, 1948, Edward Vreeland, President of Salamanca Trust Company signed the "Discharge of Mortgage". In May of 1948 Bishop O'Hara presided over the "burning of the mortgage" and christened the new bell that would replace the old cracked bell in the church's steeple. After serving as pastor of Holy Cross Parish for sixteen years, Father Majerowski was transferred in 1949 to Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Depew, N. Y. His memory is still fresh in the minds of many parishioners, remembering him racing around the parish grounds in his work clothes or making house calls and doling out candy to children in the neighborhood.

In the 1940s enrollment in Holy Cross School began to decline to slightly over 100 children. Four sisters were assigned to teach school, having combination grades of 1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 5th and 6th, and 7th and 8th. In April of 1949 Father John Saydak became pastor. Father Saydak suffered from chronic heart disease and was constantly going to medical specialists for extended treatment. Father Walter Waligora was assigned to Holy Cross as an assistant because of Father Saydak's failing health. On May 21, 1953, while seeking medical help, he died in a New York City hotel room. Father Walter Waligora became the interim pastor for one month after Father Saydak's death. On June 18, 1953, Father Ladislaus Malinski became pastor and remained at Holy Cross until 1961. On September 10, 1961, Father Walter Garstka became pastor and remained at Holy Cross for six years. Finally, the current pastor, Father Constantine Kwiatkowski became pastor of Holy Cross in 1967 and has been the pastor for 25 of the parish's 100 years of existence.

In June of 1970 Holy Cross School was disbanded because of declining enrollment and financial constraints. The Felician nuns were transferred to St. Patrick's School, and students from Holy Cross had the option of attending St. Patrick's. However, in 1989 St. Patrick's parochial school, known as Salamanca Catholic Academy, was also closed.

The original wooden Holy Cross Church that was built in 1893 was renovated after 1924 when the new church was built and had been used for parish activities for nearly fifty years. School plays, parish dinners, weddings, and social gatherings of all types took place in the parish hall. However, the old building was in dire need of major repairs in the late 1960s. With the closing of the school and of no further use to the parish, the old church was demolished in September of 1970 and a parking lot was created. The convent sat vacant for several years until the Cattaraugus County Community Action program moved into the building. In lieu of rent, the County agency agreed to make all necessary repairs to the old building at no cost to the church. Presently, the convent is vacant once again.

Table 1
Special Census: New York State, 1892

The following Polish families appear in the special census listing of 1892 for Salamanca. What was designated as the “First Election District” and the “Fourth Election District” had no Polish listings. The following names appear in the “Third Election District” with the indication that they were born in Poland. Some obvious spelling errors by census enumerators were corrected.

Head of Household	Household Size
Iskolski, John	2
Zanuski, John	7
Pawlozki, John	5
Nowoek, John	5
Delanski, Martin	6
Biskup, John	8
Ceroski, Barthel	2
Wisiniski, Mat	1
Biskup, Joseph	1
Szudrowicz, Clementi	4
Stephnic, Steven	5
Bierfeldt, Anthony	6
Prezbelski, Jacob	7
Simiek, Anthony	4
Debalski, Jacob	7
Kapranski, Mary	2
Embriski, Albert	8
Aldusky, Martin	5
Nevorski, Michael	3
Zilecwicz, Casper	5
Koucher, George	2

Head of Household	Household Size
Pelark, Martin	3
Pawlak, Michael	5
Swallow, Charles	7
Noble, Steven	7
Nowroski, John	6
Smith, Steven	8
Roswadoski, William	3
Kalamanka, Joseph	4
Stahowski, Josie	1
Franskowich, Joseph	4
Roskos, John	8
Imburski, Ed	1
Zaprowski, Joseph	3
Toodwski, Joseph	2
Rayn, Jacob	1
Friday, John	6
Zaprowski, Frank	8
Prusinowski, John	3
Borewicz, John	2
Irzekow, Barthlom	1
Mixcobiak, Michael	11
Kutchus, Andrew	6
Zelinski, Michael	5
Sehart, Joseph	1
Sepiorski, Michael	3
Siporksi, Joseph	7
Krosinski, Anthony	7

Head of Household	Household Size
Prusinowski, Joseph	8
Miller, Mike	6
Bierfeld, John	6
Ratayzak, Martin	3
Soeipz, Joseph	3
Pelarsky, Mike	9
Sobskobiak, George	8
Penkosky, Martin	9
Raggar, Joseph	6
Prebinski, Lawrence	8
Pincaolski, Frank	1
Amboskey, Charles	13
Forman, George	2
Miller, John	8
Kobinski, John	9
Amboskey, Mike	8
Pelarskey, John	7
Biskup, William	6
Levinski, Josie	1
Pricholski, Mike	6
Second Election District (all listed as servants)	
Pulaski, Mary	1
Ambuski, Mary	1
Skobiac, Francis	1
Vesutski, Jennie	1
Great Valley	
William Boza	2

Head of Household	Household Size
Michael Shuhan	2
Total households: 70	Total Polish population: 353

Table 2
1880 Census (T-9, Roll 813)
Salamanca Village, June 4, 1880; Inhabitants born in Poland

Living of Main St.

Goldstein, Hy, wife Ester and 6 children

E. River St.

Brillan, Frank, wife Josephus and 5 children

“Scattered across the River, newly opened District”

Beriuskiy, Thomas, wife Catherine and 4 children

Jonjaski, Martin wife Antonio and 4 children

Beriusky, Mike, wife Mary and 4 children

Kobiusky, John, wife Mary and 4 children

Subkowiak, G., wife Augusta and 2 children

Ambuski, Chas., wife Mary and 5 children

Brusky, Mike, wife Mary and 3 children

Subkowiak, Mike, wife Eunia and 3 children

Hills Mill Run

Mahkowiak, Mike and 4 children

Nobles, Michael, wife Pauline and 4 children

“Scattering across the River”

Nadolski, John, wife Pauline and 6 children

Nadolski, F. and 1 child

West River (same household)

Byron, J. Roman Catholic Priest, born in Ireland, 40 years of age

McKenna, Rose, housekeeper, born in Ireland, 39 years of age

Gleason, N., born in New York, 11 years of age