

St. Stanislaus Kostka Catholic Church Anderson, Grimes County, Texas

By Michael Kurtin

The history of Catholicism in Anderson and Grimes County began with the first wave of Polish immigrants in 1866. They came here at the request of large landowners, particularly cotton farmers who needed laborers to work the land. Catholics were present in the Anderson area in 1866 when it was attended by Rev. John B. Ballaclas from Hidalgo Prairie, Washington County. From 1869 – 1870, Rev. Bussant and Rev. Francis Derue from Millican, Brazos County, were conducting masses for the Anderson community. The 1870 Grimes County Census shows 70 individuals originating from the Polish partitioned regions of Prussia, Austria, and Russia during this time. 26 of those individuals were in the Anderson area with many more from the Wielkopolska region to follow in the 1880's. St. Stanislaus was not mentioned in the Catholic Directories from 1871 – 1881. Only parishes with resident priests were listed. The first piece of property purchased for the parish was filed on December 23, 1880. It was a 4 8/10-acre tract. Many Polish priests served St. Stanislaus in the 1880's and 1890's. In 1897 Father Francis Pruss was appointed pastor and built the first church – a 40 x 60-foot wooden structure. In 1898, 2 ½ acres were purchased on the north side of the Navasota - Anderson road, where the present church was built under the direction of Father N. T. Domański. It was completed in 1917 at a cost of \$40,000, which was entirely paid for by the parishioners. The building features beautiful stained-glass windows and large Stations of the Cross with inscriptions in Polish and wood carved altars. It was considered the crown jewel of churches in Grimes County.

