

THE BLACK BOX TREASURES (5)



(War at St. Hedwig)

Today we move to Chicago. It's in the year 1894. Fr. Joseph Barzynski CR, the pastor of St. Hedwig Parish, is in need of associates. Even though it is a new parish, founded in 1888, it has been growing very rapidly. So, a diocesan priest from Poland, Fr. Anthony Kozlowski, was sent to help at St. Hedwig's. However, within a few months, because of his ambition to become a pastor, he created serious conflict in the parish. One faction

supported the pastor. The other side had gathered around Fr. Kozlowski. As a result, Fr. Barzynski resigned and a new pastor, Fr. Joseph Gieburowski, was assigned by the bishop. When Kozlowski's supporters learned about the change, they were convinced that the new pastor had no right to stay in the rectory and they began to revolt....

The *Chicago Tribune* related the whole story on February 9, 1895. "Officers Wendt and Hammill, of the Attrill Street Police Station, were on duty at 7:30 a.m. near St. Hedwig's church at the time the attack started on the church rectory. They broke in the front door, at the same time shouting: "Get the priest and lynch him!". The assack was led by women, one of whom true a handful of red pepper into Policeman Hammill's face. He was temporarily blinded by the assault, but he struck at the woman with his fist, hitting her in the face and knowing her against the railing outside door. Meanwhile Patrolman Wendt droves the crowd back, using his club freely. When about wenty feet from the door some one struck Wendt on the back of the head with a mallet, knocking him senseless and inflicting a severe scalp wound. The mob of men and women was armed with bricks, stones ans clubs, and made persistent attacks on Policeman Hamill, who did his best to keep the infuriated Poles at bay by pointing his revolver at them..." (*Chicago Tribune*, February 9, 1895).

As a consequence, Archbishop Feehan had to close the church on February 8, 1895. That summer Fr. Kozlowski founded All Saints parish a few blocks from St. Hedwig. His group joined the Old Catholic Church (now known as the Polish National Catholic Church).

Today you can "touch" a note sent by bishop Feehan. It's a directive sent to Father Kobrzynski about closing the parish. You can also read the rest of the story in the attached article from the *Chicago Tribune*. The parish was reopened and then closed on three different occasions in 1895. (*On the picture above, Fr. Kozlowski is far left standing as a bishop, 1900).

Chicago.
8th Feb. 1895

Very Rev. Father.

Simon Kobzynski C.R.

Very Rev. Father.

I regret that, owing to recent and public disorders in the congregation, it becomes necessary to close the church of St. Hedwige.

No religious services of any kind can be performed in it for the present.

Yours faithfully in Chr
+ P. A. Fichan
Abs. Chicago -

RIOT OF POLISH MOB.

DESPERATE ATTACK ON PARISH HOUSE OF ST. HEDWIG'S CHURCH.

Avowed Object Was to Kill the Assistant Priest, Father Paboski, and Many Women Armed with Red Pepper Aided in the Battle—Policemen Many Times Reinforced Have a Hard Tussle to Subdue the Infuriated Crowd—New Phase of Old Church War.

There were lively scenes early yesterday morning around St. Hedwig's Polish Catholic Church, at Hoyne and Webster avenues. Ever since the trouble between the priest, Father Barzynski, and a faction of his parishioners began about last Christmas, two or more policemen have been detailed for duty at the parish residence to protect the priest from violence. Patrolmen Wendt and Hammill of the Attrill Street Station were performing this duty at 7:30 o'clock yesterday morning when a crowd of men and women gathered on the front steps of the parish residence.

The avowed object of the mob was to kill the assistant priest, Father Paboski. They broke in the front door, at the same time shouting: "Get the priest and lynch him!" The attack was led by women, one of whom threw a handful of red pepper into Policeman Hammill's face. He was temporarily blinded by the assault, but he struck at the woman with his fist, hitting her in the face and knocking her against the railing outside the door. Meanwhile Patrolman Wendt drove the crowd back, using his club freely.

Policeman Knocked Senseless.

When about twenty feet from the door some one struck Wendt on the back of the head with a mallet, knocking him senseless and inflicting a severe scalp wound which occasioned considerable loss of blood. The mob of men and women was armed with bricks, stones, and clubs, and made persistent attacks on Policeman Hammill, who did his best to keep the infuriated Poles at bay by pointing his revolver at them.

Information of the trouble was telephoned to the Attrill Street Police Station and Capt. Rehm and Lieut. Steele gathered all the patrolmen available and hurried to the scene. The mob still hung around the church in a threatening manner and more reinforcements were sent for, the response being two patrol wagon loads of policemen from the Rawson street and North avenue stations.

Before the wagons arrived another attack was made on the police on the ground. Patrolman Klawns bore the brunt of this assault. A woman filled his eyes with pepper, but he succeeded in arresting two women and a man who were among the leaders of the mob.

At this time Father J. Barzynski, a brother of the priest lately in charge of St. Hedwig's Church, drove up in a cutter. When he appeared the police escorted Paboski from the house to the cutter. As the two priests started to drive away the crowd went in pursuit and the two patrol wagons followed the mob. The driver of the cutter had a good horse which quickly outstripped the crowd, the remnants of which were scattered and driven from the streets by the police.

One Shot Is Fired.

While the trouble was in progress at the door of the parish residence, Officers Christofferson, Tobin, and Niederschmidt came to Officer Hammill's assistance, and Niederschmidt fired one shot in the air to intimidate the mob. In the mêlée one woman, Mrs. Anna Druwka, No. 68 Lubeck street, was struck on the left side of the head. She was only slightly injured.

Following the riot Lieut. Quinn, Sergt. Walton, and eight patrolmen were detailed to guard the church and the priests' residence. No further trouble had occurred at midnight.

The three persons arrested were Theodore Dimoint, Mrs. Antonia Groms, and Mrs. Kate Lagodzinski. They were released on bail.

As nearly as can be learned from members of the church the strife is caused by a faction composed of the younger element, which desires to have Father M. Barzynski deposed and his place taken by his former assistant, Father Klozowski.

When the trouble began Father Barzynski was temporarily relieved and Father Paboski was placed in charge. He also was objected to by the faction opposed to Father Barzynski, and this feeling led to the trouble yesterday. The differences between the priest and his parishioners led to the arrest of several of the latter a few weeks ago. Officer Hammill was on duty at the church Feb. 3, when a crowd of fifty or sixty Poles followed him into the building. Several persons shouted "Kill the policeman," and others cried, "Don't kill him in the church, take him outside and kill him."

The outbreak resulted in several arrests. At the trial in the police court it was stated that all the trouble had been patched up and the charges were dismissed.

"Very Revered Father, Regret that owing to recent and public disorders in the congregation, it becomes necessary to close the church of St. Hedwig. No religious service of any kind can be performed in the church for the present time".

(ACRR 39486)