

FAITH • FAMILY  
COMMUNITY



# POLISH HERITAGE CENTER

PANNA MARIA, TEXAS

## Visitor Experience #51



**Fabian Lorenz Kowalik - 1932 Chicago Cubs**

*Photograph from the George Burke Collection (1874-1951)*

# Fabian Lorenz Kowalik

1908 – 1954

## Major League Baseball and World Series Pitcher

*by Mary Ann Moczygamba Watson*

**Fabian Lorenz Kowalik**, the pride of Falls City, Texas, had family origins in Upper Silesia, present-day Poland. His grandfather, **Johann Kowalik**, was born on May 30, 1824, in Obrowiec. **Johann Kowalik** married **Agnieszka Snoga** who had been born in Gogolin on January 21, 1827. The wedding took place in the Św. Marii Magdaleny Church in Jasiona on November 10, 1850.

Two children were born to **Johann** and **Agnieszka** before the couple left for America, **Marianna** and **Philippine**, but sadly **Marianna** died only sixteen days after she was born. The couple with their two-year-old daughter **Philippine** set sail for the new world aboard the *Weser*, arriving in Galveston on June 3, 1855, and they settled in Panna Maria where they introduced the **Kowalik** surname to Texas. Sometime around 1855, their third child, **Joanna**, was born. After making their home in Texas, **Agnieszka** gave birth to five more children, **Vincent**, **Peter**, **Tecla**, **John**, and **Leopold**.

**Peter**, the fifth child born to **Agnieszka** and **Johann Kowalik**, was baptized on August 12, 1860, at the Immaculate Conception Church in Panna Maria (entry #122). On July 19, 1887, **Peter** married **Mary Lorenz**, the daughter of **Adam** and **Anna Lorenz**, and their marriage was performed in Panna Maria by **Rev. Felix Zwiardowski** (p. 13, third entry).

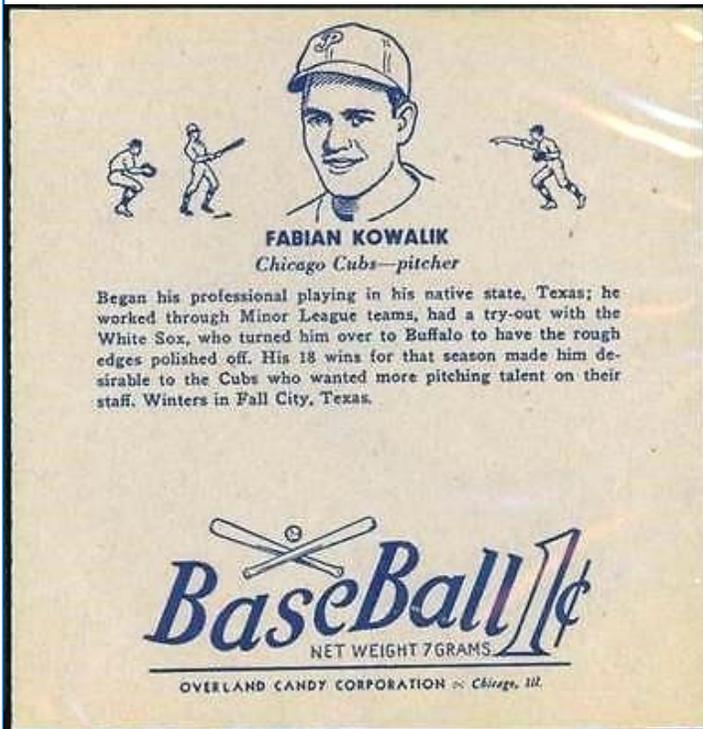
After farming for four years, the couple moved to Falls City, Karnes County, Texas, where **Peter** operated a successful business, the Kowalik Lumber Company. In the 1910 United States Federal Census, **Peter Kowalik** is enumerated as a retail merchant living with his wife **Mary** and their nine children, the youngest being **Fabian**, recorded as 1 and 11/12 years old [23 months old].

**Fabian Kowalik** had been born on April 22, 1908, and was baptized at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Falls City on April 26, 1908 (p. 13, first entry). In 1920, the census taker recorded **Fabian** as a twelve-year-old attending school. His father **Peter** had passed away in 1928, and the 1930 census reflected that **Fabian** was assisting as a clerk in the family business, the Kowalik Lumber Company.

Aside from helping with the family business, **Fabian Kowalik** began his baseball career in the minor leagues with the Coleman Bobcats in 1929, pitching a season of 7 wins and 2 losses. The Coleman Bobcats were a team in the West Texas League based in Coleman, Texas. In 1930, **Fabian** joined the Topeka Senators, also a minor league team out of Topeka, Kansas, that played in the Western League.

**Fabian's** primary position was described as "Pitcher" who batted and threw right-handed. His height was recorded as 5 feet 11 inches, and he weighed 185 pounds. He was also labeled as an outstanding fielder. For a two-year season in 1931-1932, Fabian pitched for the San Antonio Indians, a minor league team based in San Antonio, Texas.

It was in the early 1930s, though, that he became recognized by major leagues after pitching 25 winning games for the San Antonio Missions which took the team to the “Dixie Series” for the first time. The San Antonio Missions were a minor league team of the Double-A Central and the Double-A affiliate of the San Diego Padres.



**Fabian Kowalik** was 24 years old when he was recruited into the “big” leagues on September 4, 1932, with the Chicago White Sox.

The White Sox then turned him over to the Buffalo Bisons “to have the rough edges polished off. His 18 wins for that season made him desirable to the [Chicago] Cubs who wanted more pitching talent on their staff” *Overland Candy Baseball Wrapper* (1938, #R301, Fabian Kowalik).

## Chicago Cubs - 1935

**Fabian Kowalik** is pictured in the back row, 3rd from the right.



*Photograph courtesy of:*  
Ernie Harwell Sports Collection  
Detroit Public Library

**Fabian's** career continued with the Chicago Cubs in 1935-1936; Boston Bees in 1936; and Philadelphia Phillies in 1936. The most remarkable point of his career came in 1935 when he pitched in the World Series for the Chicago Cubs vs. the Detroit Lions.

The caption reads:

*The slide probably tore off several square inches of Relief Pitcher **Fabian Kowalik's** hide, but his gymnastics enabled him to score behind Jurges in the seventh inning of yesterday's game. Catcher Mickey Cochrane caught the ball, but couldn't tag **Kowalik** in time.*

**Fabian Kowalik** married **Hilma Goetz**, a school teacher from Karnes County on February 3, 1936, in Runge, Texas. The witnesses

for the marriage were **Tom A. Pawelek** and **Ester Gilly** as noted next to **Fabian's** Baptism record in the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Falls City.

An arm injury ended **Fabian's** major league baseball career, but he continued playing with Texas teams. In the 1940 Tarrant County Federal Census, he was enumerated in a boarding house as a "lodger" and recorded as a "professional ball player" with permanent residence in Falls City, Karnes County, Texas. Baseball statistics show he was a player with the Fort Worth Cats, a professional team based in Fort Worth, Texas. The Cats were a member of the South Division of the now disbanded United League.

A joyful event, the birth of a son to **Fabian** and his wife **Hilma**, occurred on October 30, 1947. They named their child, **James Milton**, and he was baptized on November 15, 1947, at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Falls City (p. 22, fifth entry). The Baptism was performed by **Rev. E. S. Dragon**, and the sponsors were **Cecil H. Kowalik** and **Rose Mary Jendrusch**.

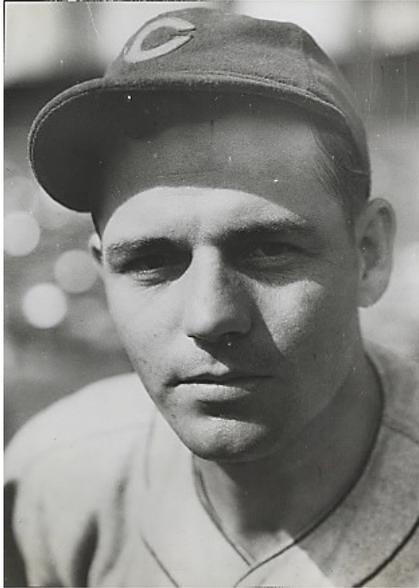
After retiring from professional baseball, **Fabian Kowalik** managed a minor league team, the Robstown Rebels, who played in the Southwest Texas League, the Texas Valley



League, and the Rio Grande Valley League. He also assisted with coaching young prospective professional players.

Sadly, **Fabian Lorenz Kowalik** died on August 14, 1954, in Karnes City, Texas, at the young age of 46 years (Texas State Death Certificate #40328). Funeral services were held at the St. Cornelius Catholic Church in Karnes City, and he is buried in the Holy Trinity Cemetery in Falls City.

According to his obituary notice, “Fabulous Fabe ... The handsome Kowalik, one of the most popular players who ever wore a San Antonio uniform ... was a spectacular fielder as well as an outstanding right handed pitcher. A check of the records after the '33 season showed nobody had ever beaten out a bunt while he was pitching... An arm injury ended his baseball career... He is survived by his wife, **Hilma**, and a son, **Jimmy**, not quite 7” (*San Antonio Light*, 15 August 1954, p. 3).



Additional Sources:

1935 World Series Photographs. *Los Angeles Times*, October 4, 1935

baseball-almanac.com/players

Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Falls City, Texas, LDS Microfilm #0025081

*San Patricio County News*, Sinton, Texas, 29 March 1928

*Silesian Profiles: Polish Immigration to Texas in the 1850s*, 1999, pp. 90-91

United States Federal Census, 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940

*Victoria Advocate*, Victoria, Texas, 28 February 1952, p. 6

Please Join us & Save the Date for our Polish Heritage Center's  
Live Virtual (via Zoom) Program on

**June 16, 2021, 7-8:30pm**

**“Traditional Polish Dancing in Texas”**

Presented by Genny & Dr. Matthew Kraus of Mazurka Polish Dancers  
of San Antonio & Erica Dryden & Lukas Bielcki of wawelhouston.com.



**Please share with your friends, families, &  
community organizations!**

To join the day of please open the Zoom link:

[https://zoom.us/j/96072735797?](https://zoom.us/j/96072735797?pwd=eEF6cjFERXgwbGhOWEpTWWlaaGZBZz09)

[pwd=eEF6cjFERXgwbGhOWEpTWWlaaGZBZz09](https://zoom.us/j/96072735797?pwd=eEF6cjFERXgwbGhOWEpTWWlaaGZBZz09)



# *A Room for Many Occasions*



A special gem within the Polish Heritage Center is the *Rotating/Temporary Exhibit Room*. Located just past the niche housing the icon of *Our Lady of Czestochowa*, this 30 foot by 34.5 foot space offers just over 1,000 square feet of flexible space. This area is ideal for temporary and rotating exhibits to aid in further educating and inspiring our visitors with displays that are not part of the static exhibits in the main portion of the Polish Heritage Center. This grand room can be well utilized for gatherings and special events too!

One of the first things you will likely notice in this elegant room is that the flooring is the same as in the Main Exhibit area. The 6” wide, manufactured solid



Above is a panoramic view looking into the *Rotating/Temporary Exhibit Room* from its entry way.

To the left is a view of the chandelier looking upwards. It is styled after what is found in the famous *Wieliczka Salt Mine chapel* of Poland.



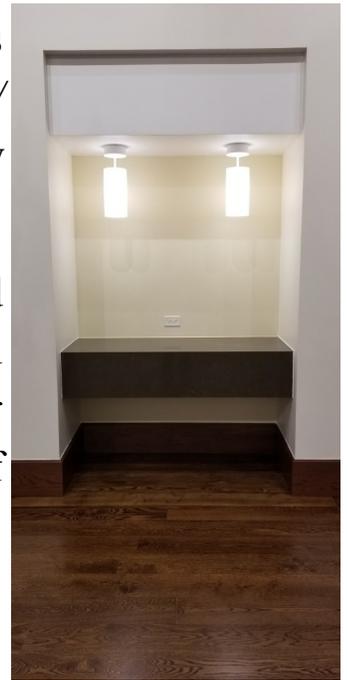
*Above is a view looking into the Rotating/Temporary Exhibit Room revealing the beautiful chandelier that hangs in the center of the ceiling.*

oak floor is darkly stained. There is matching floor molding with the same wood stain to complement the oak floor. Oak is an abundant, native wood that our immigrant ancestors used extensively as they were building their new lives in this unfamiliar land. The quality and craftsmanship of the flooring will ensure that generations to come will enjoy and appreciate its beauty.

Looking up is a beautiful crystal chandelier. This exquisite lighting fixture is meant to call to mind the chandeliers of the famous *Wieliczka Salt Mine chapel* located in Wieliczka, Poland. Unlike the chandelier of the *Wieliczka Salt Mine* which is made out of the salt of the mine,

the chandelier in the Polish Heritage Center is made from glass crystals. Still beautiful, the chandelier in the *Rotating/Temporary Exhibit Room* can create the same warm, soft glow for a special effect.

As you enter the room, to the right is a beverage and multi-purpose station. This station adds to the flexibility and use of the room. The recessed station provides open floor space and easy access. Electrical plugs allow the use of



*At right is a beverage/multi-purpose station that is located on the right side as you enter into the Rotating/Temporary Exhibit Room.*



appliances, coffee carafes, and warming plates. Accenting this station are two lamps to provide needed illumination. This useful space adds to the multiple ability that this reception room offers.

The beverage and multi-purpose station is only the beginning! Back in the corner is a kitchenette with a full function sink, cabinets, and a storage closet! When an event is held, having this facility ready will help provide refreshments for any event that is held in the *Rotating/Temporary Exhibit Room*.

As you can see in a number of these images of the room, there is ample space, both in the open area and along the wall for any number of events. Policy and guidelines are being finalized, of course, but can you imagine holding a meeting in this space? It is anticipated that the space will be available for a variety of events and activities. Being located in the heart of our immigration community, the *Rotating/Temporary Exhibit Room* should be a prime pick for family

*Above is a picture of the kitchenette connected to the room. With its adjacent storage closet, this preparation area can be closed off when not needed.*

*Below is a panoramic view of the room from its back looking towards the entrance. The door on the left is to the kitchenette, and the door on the right exits to the west entrance to the building.*



*Adding to the flexibility of the space is the adjustable lighting.*

*Being able to adjust the lighting levels can add to and enhance the ambiance .*



gatherings and reunions. For get-togethers with your relatives, some archival items, if available from the Polish Heritage Center collection, may be set up and presented, thereby allowing fellow family members to view and enjoy their own ancestral history. Most commonly, this will be from the vast repertoire of photos and family documents that have been scanned and digitized from the many scanning sessions over the years. In addition, and what may be far more common, will be for families to bring their own treasured heirlooms like antique quilts, ancestral wedding dresses, military memorabilia, and framed historic photographs to display and share. How exciting would it be for a family, be it **Moczygamba, Pawelek, Kotara, Moy, Kiolbassa, Rzeppa, Pawlik, Dlugosch, Zyzik, Pierdolla, Bednorz, Lyssy, Tudyk, Yosko, Sowa**, or any of the many families, seeing a significant family item or artifact for the first time! That will be a special moment!

The possible uses of this inviting and versatile room are perhaps limited only by our imaginations. As the grand opening draws closer, the policy, cost, and guidelines will be published. Now would be a good time to start considering your organization's meeting or a family gathering in this spacious venue. You do not have to travel to San Antonio, Corpus Christi, or Victoria to have the benefit of a memorable space and location. When ready, contact **Angelica Docog**, Executive Director, at **[angeldocog@msn.com](mailto:angeldocog@msn.com)**.



# Polish Heritage Center Update

Given the social and civic unrest today, and the challenges in public education, the new Polish Heritage Center and Library play a greater role in providing opportunities for education and cultural appreciation through the Center's exhibits and programs. The Center will be an active learning center for everyone to learn and be inspired by the history and contributions of the first Polish settlers.

As we are busy preparing to open the Center to the public in the fall, we are also busy preparing fun and engaging programs for the summer and fall. The summer programs will remain virtual, and pending post COVID conditions, we would like to start offering programs such as family days onsite at the Center starting in October.

The Center will also be an important resource for elementary and secondary educators since the Center supports the Texas Education Agency Curriculum Standards specifically for social studies. Lesson plans and other resources are being developed now for teachers to use in their classroom curricula.

Please check the Center's website and Facebook for future information about the Center's programs and resources for teachers.

# *Heartfelt thanks to our supporters from May 1, 2021 to May 21, 2021!*

Elizabeth Clark, Georgetown, Texas  
Diocese of Brooklyn Ministry to the Polish  
Immigrants, Brooklyn, New York  
Terry Dworaczyk, Kenedy, Texas  
Wilfred & Dianne Dziuk, Falls City, Texas  
Antoni & Krystyna Falkiewicz,  
San Antonio, Texas  
Pat & Barbara Moczygemba Hoffmann,  
San Antonio, Texas  
John & Albina Kiela, Glen Cove, New York  
Leonard & Mary Krzywosinski,  
San Antonio, Texas  
Barbara Lemecha,  
Dearborn Heights, Michigan  
C.D. & Catherine A. Lewis, Saint Cloud, Florida  
Rick Lyssy, San Antonio, Texas  
Rev. Canon Philip S. Majka, Annandale, Virginia  
John & Mary Pollok Yanta Memorial Trust,

San Antonio, Texas  
John & Patricia Picacio, San Antonio, Texas  
Mark & Ann Pienkos, Sarasota, Florida  
James J & Lorraine M Polonis,  
San Antonio, Texas  
Robin Raquet, San Antonio, Texas  
Bogdan M & Helen Seroka,  
Oyster Bay, New York  
Peter & Kathryn A Snoga, San Antonio, Texas  
Richard Sowa, San Antonio, Texas  
Gladys Stanush, Adkins, Texas  
Krzysztof & Jolanta Sygnarowicz,  
Syosset, New York  
Patricia Szalwinski, Pleasanton, Texas  
John & Christie Schroeder Wojtasczyk,  
Karnes City, Texas  
Bishop John W. Yanta, San Antonio, Texas  
Zulu Investment Corp., San Antonio, Texas

## Calendar of Events

*As many of our communities are still examining moving forward with their celebrations,  
many of the listed events **ARE PLANNED BUT NOT FINALIZED!***

June 20: Father's Day  
July 15: PHC Virtual Event  
August 1: Annual Picnic, St. Ann,  
Kosciusko, Texas  
September: Annual Homecoming  
Bazaar, St. Mary, Plantersville,  
Texas  
September: St. Joseph Annual Bazaar,  
New Waverly, Texas  
September 5: Holy Trinity Church  
Festival, Falls City, Texas  
September 5: Dożynki Mass &  
Homecoming, Chappell Hill, Texas

September 6: Labor Day  
September 6: Holy Trinity Picnic,  
Falls City, Texas  
September 24—26: Polish Harvest  
Festival, Houston, Texas  
October: Polish Heritage Month  
October 10: Turkey Dinner &  
Homecoming, Panna Maria, Texas  
October 10: Homecoming Bazaar,  
St. Stanislaus, Anderson, Texas  
November 13: PACT ANNUAL  
MEETING, St. Joseph Church,  
New Waverly, Texas



*A Corpus Christi procession in the southern Polish city of Kraków on Thursday.  
Photo: PAP/Łukasz Gągulski. Article below by Rev. Wiesław Iwaniec.*

In Poland, on the day of Corpus Christi after celebrating the Holy Eucharist, a procession with The Blessed Sacrament takes place on the streets in big cities and also within small country communities. At the front is the cross, altar servers with candles, incense, and young people. Members of different organizations carry the banners and statues of the popular saints. Children wearing white robes who made First Communion and little girls also in white dresses walk before the Blessed Sacrament, repeating words: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Host, Hosanna in the highest" and throwing the petals of the flowers in front of the approaching canopy under which the priest carries a monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament.

The procession, which may last few hours, stops at four altars built especially for this occasion by local families. At each altar, the Gospel is proclaimed, and the homily is given. Then the blessing with the Blessed Sacrament takes place. The procession is an act of profession of faith to the world that in this small Consecrated Host, true God is present. Also the procession in a visible way reminds everyone that this same Jesus present in the tabernacle inside the church lives among His people and blesses their homes and places of work. During the procession, led by parish orchestra, worshipers sing Eucharistic songs. Parishioners participating in this form of worship walk sometimes one mile. It is a very beautiful manifestation of our faith as Jesus is The Way, and we follow Him as we see the little children, youth, adults, elderly walking behind the canopy. He is our God, and we follow Him.

In Poland the Feast of Corpus Christi is a public holiday.

May God bless you and yours,  
†Bishop John W. Yanta