BICENTENNIAL HISTORY

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The Building of St. Paul's *Part 2*

By Marion Greenhalgh

Continuing with our Bicentennial Celebratory Year, below is the continuing brief history and description of our current St. Paul's Church, part 2, as it was in 1885 through 1892.

The tall (205 foot) limestone memorial spire, surmounted by its seven-foot Cross, houses the same bell that (after several recastings in Troy, NY) called those who worshipped at the first St. Paul's Church (194 years ago this year). The red and blue roof was covered with Akron tile of a diamond pattern. The ceiling is a semicircular pointed arch of Georgia pine, stained a cherry color (I've also read it is made of redwood). The church seats about 900 people and the acoustics are unusually good. The aisles and chancel windows are from Munich, Germany. A doorway from the south transept led into the vestry room, over which was the "Ladies Work" room. The walls are pierced by mullion windows with pointed arches, jambs, and tracery of molded Ohio sandstone. The windows are associated with European and in particular, English churches of the period from the middle of the thirteenth to the middle of the fourteenth centuries. Four windows are on the north wall, and five on the south. The walls supporting the clerestory are of Milwaukee colored pressed brick, relieved by belting curves of terra cotta diapers of novel patterns. The several clerestory windows are of cathedral brightly colored glass furnished by Hawley and Whittaker. Separating the chancel from the sanctuary was an elaborately draped brass railing mounted with a mahogany rest. North of the chancel and in an arched porch occupying the lower stage of the tower was the organ "used in the old church but which had been repaired and enlarged"; the organ was operated now by hydraulic pressure. The choir was placed in front of the porch and was enclosed by an oak screen. An oriel window is over the altar. The sanctuary furniture was of cherry (or mahogany) of Gothic style. The pulpit, located in the south transept was an attractive combination of mosaic paneling and burnished brass work resting on a base of Vermont marble. The Memorial lectern was of exquisitely wrought brass, in the form of a brazen eagle with outspread wings. Both from the Lamb Brothers of NYC.



continued

The Building of St. Paul's

Part 2 continued

A magnificent brazen altar cross of repousal work adorns the chancel. The narthex was shut off from the vestibule on one side and the passageway leading to the chapel on the other by open mahogany screen portals. The church was lighted by quintuple jets from the level of the nave aisles, by brackets on the side walls, by concealed jets from the jambs of the chancel archway, and by brackets on the chancel walls. The main floor was covered with rich olive-color carpeting with matching pew cushions on stained Cherry pews; in the chancel the cushions were maroon. In the principal memorial vestibule (northwest porch) off of Fayette Street is a small window given by the parishioners in memory of John Griffith, a faithful sexton in the second church. Much of the wood work, including the mahogany chancel furniture, was made by Collin, Arnold and Sisson of Fayetteville, NY. Above the main entrance on Fayette Street two carved stones commemorating the second St. Paul's were placed in the wall 15 feet above the floor.

St. Paul's has been given many fine memorials through the years, including memorials cared for in the Sacristy, such as the altar silver, altar brass, rare linens, Communion silver, and other gifts used in the services of the church. On December 20, 1887, a few minutes after 7 pm, the bell in the tower over the organ, was being rung with a rope pulled by Sexton Franklin W. Dodge to announce the evening services, when it fell and crashed down through the organ. The organist, Professor Henry R. Fuller, had just opened the great organ for preliminary practice, heard the crash above and quickly left the console. Repairs to the organ were made by K. Knollin of Syracuse, and the pipes which could not be repaired were re-purchased by Hook and Hastings.

In 1888, the Cathedral was opened for daily Morning and Evening Prayer with a choir of men and boys, paid by St. Paul's, and the parish showed signs of increased vitality. However, the increased cost of these and other changes due to being a cathedral, along with a large mortgage, made it difficult to make ends meet.

In 1891, in an attempt to lessen the burden of daily services to both Bishop and Rector, other Syracuse Episcopal clergy assumed this role. By early 1892 these services were moved to the chapel because of the small congregations.