

## THE CORNERSTONE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS

As our cornerstone proves, some lumps of granite are more peripatetic than others. Most granite still lies in the mantle of mother earth in the place where it was vomited up by some volcano many aeons ago, or was scattered in bits and pieces over the landscape by some wandering glaciers a mere 30 thousand years ago or so. But ours, neatly squared, smoothed and inscribed has a more interesting history.

It first appeared before us in more or less its present form on a damp August afternoon one hundred and twenty years ago, but where might it have been before that? Well, we can be pretty sure that it is from Nova Scotia and probably from the old Imperial quarries at Purcell's Cove. As a local origin seems probable, our cornerstone would have cooled and crystallized some 345 to 405 million years ago, part of a deposit forming a vast arc from Halifax to Yarmouth.

So it was at 4:30 PM on Friday, 12 August 1887, under threatening skies, an impressive assemblage of clergy gathered in the "Bishop's Chapel", St. Stephen's, on Robie Street at the head of Spring Garden Road. Not only Nova Scotian clergy, here for the Synod to elect a successor to the late Bishop Hibbert Binney, were in attendance, but, in addition, a galaxy of invited episcopacy, here to help the Diocese celebrate the centenary of its founding as the first Colonial Bishopric in the British Empire.

Samuel Brookfield, the contractor, had blasted out the ironstone bedrock to form a level platform for what would be a new cathedral for the Diocese, a dream of Bishop Binney, who saw it as the centre for the work of the diocese. The Bliss Family had given this superb site at the head of Spring Garden Road, in the growing western suburbs of Halifax, and plans for a fine stone gothic revival church were prepared by a leading English architect, Arthur E. Street.

Waiting for the procession from Saint Stephen's was our stone, ready to be positioned in a niche in a buttress built for the occasion. After appropriate ceremonies, the elderly Metropolitan of the Province of Canada, Rt. Rev'd John Medley, was presented with a handsome silver trowel, and His Grace did the honours.

Our cornerstone is not a solid block, for its interior was hollowed out and committed to posterity were records of the Diocesan Synod, the Calendar of King's College, the current Halifax daily newspapers, current Canadian coins, and other memorabilia.

And there, for twenty-one years, our stone sat in its lonely buttress, for Bishop Binney's death had taken the wind out of the cathedral movement. It was not until a calamitous December night in 1905, when Saint Luke's Pro Cathedral burnt to the ground, that a new Bishop, Clarendon Lamb Worrell, took up the cause. He commissioned a fine new design, the present All Saint's, from the American firm Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, and with focused determination, set about to make it happen.

Alas, the new design would not fit on the old site, so the old Exhibition Grounds on Tower Road were acquired instead, and here, on 26 September 1907, the first sod was turned for the new cathedral, and a year later, on 19 October 1908, on a damp and windy afternoon, the band of the Royal Canadian Regiment, the boy's choir of St. Luke's, the Lieutenant-Governor, Hon. D. C. Fraser, clergy, laity and citizenry assembled on the site. There too, was our old friend, the 1887 granite cornerstone, translated from its first resting place, buffed up with an additional inscription to commemorate its rebirth, and ready for Bishop Worrell to set it in place. To further upgrade it, the original contents were brought up to date by the addition of a booklet on the new cathedral, current Year Books of the Diocesan Synod, the Church newspapers, Church Work and Canadian Churchman, the third Annual Report of the Diocesan W. A., the new Church of England in Canada Hymn Book, the Encyclical of the 1908 Lambeth Conference, the first coins issued by the Ottawa Branch of the Royal Mint, stamps commemorating the Tercentenary of Quebec, a cross made up of coins of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and the Halifax papers.

This time the stone had more luck, for Bishop Worrell's vision did indeed arise around it and looms before us today, buffed up once more for a day of celebration. The world in which the cornerstone and its cathedral stand today is farther removed from those of 1887 or 1908 than mere years would indicate. There is no Czar in Russia or Kaiser in Germany, but there is a world wide web and a global economy. The enduring qualities of granite are a fitting symbol for the Church in a world of constant change.

- *William Naftel*

Join us in 2010 for special worship & music events  
as we celebrate 100 years of Christian witness at the  
Cathedral

■ **Love to Learn Lecture Series** \_\_\_Jan-Mar/10  
Featuring archives & architecture, vestments &  
vessels, woodwork & windows, music, melody,  
and more!

■ **Tea in the Transept**\_\_\_\_\_Apr/10  
An elegant afternoon tea, 1910 style

■ **Cathedral Capers**\_\_\_\_\_June/10  
Cathedral Hospitality Day for the children of our  
diocesan family

■ **Cathedral Tours**\_\_\_\_\_Jul/Aug/10  
In costume and drama

■ **Grand Patronal Festival**\_\_\_\_\_Nov/10  
Featuring a 1910 style dinner in the  
Cathedral and a majestic church service

■ **Christmas at the Cathedral** \_\_\_Dec/10  
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