

FROM REV. ROBERT McNAMARA 9-26-86
DIOCESEAN HISTORIAN
& AUTHOR

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(PREP FOR
75th
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MIN.)

THE CHURCH OF SS. PETER & PAUL A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

THE ORIGINAL GERMAN-LANGUAGE CATHOLIC CONGREGATION WAS ST. JOSEPH'S - FOUNDED IN 1836 BY THE REDEMPTORIST FATHERS. THE INITIAL LOCATION OF THE CHURCH WAS ON ELY STREET OFF SOUTH AVENUE JUST BELOW MAIN STREET EAST. THIS TOOK CARE OF GERMANS WHO LIVED ON BOTH THE EAST AND THE WEST SIDES OF THE GENESSEE RIVER.

IN 1841 THE REDEMPTORISTS BEGAN TO CONSIDER MOVING TO A BETTER LOCATION ON FRANKLIN STREET. THIS DID NOT SET WELL WITH THE WEST SIDE GERMANS, SINCE THEY LIVED AT SUCH A DISTANCE FROM ST. JOSEPH'S, THEY THOUGHT THAT A CHURCH WEST OF THE RIVER SHOULD BE GIVEN THE PRIORITY. THEY

1843 UNDERTOOK TO BUY A LOT ON THE CORNER OF MAPLE AND KING STREET ON THE WEST SIDE AND TO BEGIN THERE A SMALL FRAME CHURCH COSTING \$3100.00. ALTHOUGH THE REDEMPTORISTS WERE DISPLEASED, BISHOP JOHN HUGHES STUDYING THE DISPUTE * ACCEPTED THE CHURCH AS A CATHOLIC CHURCH AS LONG AS THE * TITLE TO THE PROPERTY WAS VESTED IN HIS NAME IN TRUST AS CHURCH LAW REQUIRED. TO AVOID FURTHER FRICTION, THE BISHOP ASSIGNED ONLY NON-REDEMPTORIST GERMAN PRIESTS TO TAKE CHARGE OF THIS NEW CHURCH, WHICH WAS CALLED ST. PETER'S.

A DECADE LATER, ST. PETER'S BECAME THE CENTER OF CONFLICT, THE CHURCH WAS REINCORPORATED IN 1859 AS SS. PETER & PAUL (THERE IS NO NEED TO GO INTO THIS AT PRESENT)

* THEREFORE ST. PETER'S DATES FROM 1843

FURTHERMORE, A NEW CHURCH IN BRICK WAS CONSTRUCTED ON THE SAME LOCATION. BISHOP JOSUE M. YOUNG OF ERIE, PA. DEDICATED IT ON AUGUST 15, 1859. THIS BUILDING SERVED THE CONGREGATION UNTIL THE THIRD AND PRESENT STRUCTURE WAS OPENED IN 1912.

THE REASON FOR BUILDING A THIRD CHURCH WAS THAT THE BUFFALO, ROCHESTER + PITTSBURGH RAILROAD, WHICH RAN IN FRONT OF THE MAPLE STREET CHURCH, SOUGHT NEW LAND IN ORDER TO ENLARGE ITS OPERATION. THE PARISH HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO SELL ITS LAND AND MOVE ELSEWHERE BY MAY 1910. PASTOR THEN WAS REV. J. EMIL GEFELL. HE HAD SUCCEEDED TO THE PASTORATE ON OCTOBER 4, 1907 FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF FATHER FRANCIS SINCLAIR (1838-1907), WHO HAD BEEN PASTOR SINCE 1865. THE WHOLE PROCESS OF SALE AND CONSTRUCTION FELL UPON HIS SHOULDERS. THE CONGREGATION ACQUIRED A NEW SITE ON MAIN STREET WEST RUNNING THROUGH TO BROWN STREET

IN THE REAR. THE ARCHITECTS CHOSEN WERE THE ROCHESTER FIRM OF GORDON + MADDEN, WHO HAD PRODUCED SOME OF THE "FINEST CHURCH BUILDINGS IN THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE: CORPUS CHRISTI, BLESSED SACRAMENT, ST. STANISLAUS IN ROCHESTER CITY, ST. STEPHEN'S IN GENEVA, + ST. MARY'S CAYANDAIGUA. THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT FR. GEFELL INFLUENCED THEM A GOOD DEAL IN THEIR CHOICE OF ARCHITECTURE STYLE FOR THE NEW SS. PETER + PAUL'S, FOR FATHER GEFELL, EDUCATED IN ITALY, WAS CAPTIVATED BY CERTAIN DETAILS OF CLASSIC ITALIAN DESIGN. THUS THE HANDSOME ARCHED PORTICO HAS EARLY RENAISSANCE LINES REMINISCENT OF THE HOSPITAL OF THE INNOCENTS IN FLORENCE.

REASON FOR MOVE FROM MAPLE + KING LOCATION

ARCHITECTURE

1859 Church: YES ?

THE BELL TOWER IS A MINIATURE COPY OF THE COMPANILE OR BELL TOWER OF THE GOTHIC CATHEDRAL OF SIENA. THE CHURCH INTERIOR IS DESIGNED WITHOUT COLUMNS SO THAT VISIBILITY IS OPTIMUM. THE CEILING IS OF EMBOSSED SHEET STEEL - QUITE POPULAR IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY. AN ALTAR OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER ERECTED IN THE OLD CHURCH IN 1909 IN MEMORY OF FR. SINCLAIR WAS BROUGHT OVER INTO THE NEW CHURCH. SO, TOO, WAS THE HIGH-SET MAIN ALTAR OF MARBLEIZED WOOD - EVIDENTLY INTENDED TO BE USED ONLY SO LONG AS THE CHURCH COULD NOT AFFORD A BETTER ALTAR. ABOVE THE ALTAR IN A SEMI-DOME, ARE STATUES OF SAINTS. THE FIGURES OF SS PETER & PAUL ARE PERHAPS THE ONES THAT ORIGINALLY STOOD IN THE FACADE OF THE 1859 CHURCH ABOVE THE MAIN ENTRANCE.

? THE BAROQUE STYLE IN THE ORNAMENTAL PLASTER WORK AND THE MURALS. THE LATTER, I BELIEVE, WAS THE WORK OF THE ITALIAN-AMERICAN GONIPPO RAGGI. (I THINK I RECALL BEING TOLD THIS BY FR GEFELL)

BISHOP THOMAS F. HICHEY OF ROCHESTER LAID THE CORNERSTONE ON OCTOBER 6, 1911. THE CORNERSTONES OF BOTH THE FIRST (1843) AND THE SECOND (1859) ST. PETER'S WERE TRANSFERRED TO THE NORTH EAST OUTER WALL OF THE NEW BUILDING. BISHOP HICHEY ALSO DEDICATED THE ALMOST COMPLETED NEW CHURCH BUILDING ON JUNE 30, 1912. IT WAS A SUNDAY, THE DAY AFTER

THE FEAST OF SS PETER + PAUL. THE TOTAL BUILDING COST OF THIS CHURCH WAS \$100,000.

THERE WERE TWO RESIDENCES ON THE PROPERTY. THAT ON THE EAST, THE "EVEREST[?] MANSION" WAS REMODELED INTO THE RECTORY. THE BUILDING TO THE WEST IS REMODELED INTO A CONVENT. THE SAME TAPESTRY BRICKS USED IN THE CHURCH WERE USED IN THE CHURCH BUILDING, THUS PRESENTING AN ATTRACTIVE ENSEMBLE.

THE CONTRACTOR WAS THE HIRAM EDGERTON CO.

AFTER PURCHASING THE MAPLE STREET PROPERTY, THE BRYP DID NOT AT ONCE DEMOLISH THE CHURCH BUILDING.

THEY ALLOWED IT TO BE USED (1912-1913) BY THE NEWLY-FORMED ITALIAN CONGREGATION WHILE THE ST. LUCY CHURCH + SCHOOL BUILDING AT 247 TROUP STREET WAS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. THE ST. LUCY BUILDING WAS DEDICATED ON MAY 18, 1913 (CLOSED + SOLD, 1975.)

anyone still around from St Lucy?

GROUND HAD BEEN BROKEN IN AUGUST 1911 FOR THE NEW SS. PETER + PAUL SCHOOL BUILDING ON THE BROWN STREET SIDE OF THE MAIN STREET LAND. THIS SCHOOL OPENED IN THE FALL OF 1912.

THE BELL THAT WAS TRANSFERRED FROM THE MAPLE STREET BELFRY TO THE NEW BELFRY ON MAIN STREET HAD AN INTERESTING HISTORY. IT HAD HUNG IN BOTH THE 1843 + 1859 CHURCH TOWERS, AND IN ITS EARLIER YEARS, IT SERVED NOT ONLY AS A CHURCH BELL, BUT AS A (FIRE BELL) FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD. A VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY SERVED THE

DUTCHTOWN DISTRICT. THIS COMPANY PAID \$1.25 PER FIRE TO SOUND THE ALARM. PETER RENAUD WAS THE FIRST BELL-RINGER TO FULFILL BOTH DUTIES. HE WAS ASSISTED BY HIS SONS. THE RENAUDS WERE SUCCEEDED BY THE JANITOR, PETER VOSS. "Peter" is popular

ANOTHER STORY OF THE SECOND CHURCH, BEFORE HIS DEATH name in 1907, FR. SINCLAIR LAMENTING THE DECLINE OF BIRTH IN THE PARISH, HUNG BLACK CREPE ON THE BAPTISMAL FONT AS A SIGN OF MOURNING. (THIS CAST IRON FONT WAS LATER GIVEN TO ST. PHILIP NERI CHURCH, BUT EVIDENTLY PERISHED IN THE FIRE AT ST. PHILIP'S IN 1967.)

SOURCES

THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS BASED ON VARIOUS SOURCES:

1. PROSPECTED SALE OF MAPLE ST. PROPERTY: CATHOLIC JOURNAL MAY 13, 1910.

2. LAYING OF CORNERSTONE: CATHOLIC JOURNAL OCT. 6, 1911.

3. CONSTRUCTION & DEDICATION: " " JUNE 28, 1912:
JULY 5, 1912

4. STORY OF THE BELL - DEMOCRAT & CHRONICLE JUNE 7, 1912:
- P. 7 COLS. 1+2

(THE DEMOCRAT & OTHER LOCAL PAPERS SHOULD HAVE MORE ABOUT THE CHURCH ITSELF IN CONNECTION WITH ITS DEDICATION ON JUNE 30, 1912 - BETTER CITE WHAT

5. ACCOUNT OF CHURCH IN CATHOLIC JOURNAL

RUNDEL
Library

6. FOR THE ORIGIN OF THE PARISH, SEE FREDERICK
ZWIERLEIN - LIFE + LETTERS OF BISHOP McQUAID
(1925-1927) I 90-97.

7. FOR ST. LUCY'S USE OF THE OLD CHURCH - SEE D+C
JUNE 30, 1912. P. 32 COL 5.

THE FOLLOWING PERSON HAS MADE A DEEPER STUDY
OF THE PRESENT CHURCH BUILDING. HE WILL PROBABLY
BE ABLE TO SUPPLY MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE
STRUCTURAL AND DECORATIVE DETAILS (MR. LOUIS CIARO ?
TEL# 865-6075. (HE IS DOING GRADUATE WORK AT
BROCKPORT - CALL IN THE EVENING.)

CALLED LOUIS CIARO - 10-29-86 WILL CALL - TALKED TO HIS MOTHER

History of rectory bldg?
(several versions)
open house 4-20-'26
p 22 (1961)

- Blueprints
- plans -

Usually try to hide "skeletons" in the closet... but - ended w "Love Feast" 1854
Being in touch with grave problems in history gives greater appreciation
to subsequent history - growth & life - and can help us put into
perspective the "problems" we face today...

list of assistants - p 37 (1961)
any still around?

Reiter family - p 43 (1961)

* look up lay teachers - list from Wilton
names/addresses -

Charles Helbert - Mary Knall - any relation?
silver am. 1951 / H 1961 p 22

1987
1843

144
75

69