

1851-2005  
One Hundred Fifty Forth  
St. James Parish

Come, gracious Spirit, heavenly Dove,  
With light and comfort from above;  
Be thou our Guardian, thou our Guide,  
O'er every thought and step preside.

In the early days, the spiritual needs of those in the Anglican Communion in Saint John were served by the Rectors of the Parish Church- Trinity. Eventually it became overcrowded and it was the desire of Trinity Church to divide the Parish and establish four "daughter" churches, one of which was St. James. From the old minute book of Trinity, we learn what steps were taken for the formation of a separate Parish in the southern section of the city.

In 1847 a report was presented recommending the division of the Parish into three parts... "Before the southern portion is separated, it is recommended that a church be erected in which the seats are to be free, and one half reserved for the troops."

The site for the new church was purchased from Mr. Beverly Robinson and the cost of the building was approximately \$10,000.00. The church was erected on Main St. (now Broad St.) it was a pretty wooden church, cruciform in shape, with two transepts in which were the galleries and also a gallery over the western entrance for the organ and choir. It was completed in 1851 and on October 1<sup>st</sup>, the Rev John Armstrong was appointed rector. The new church was consecrated by the first bishop of the Diocese of Fredericton, the Right Rev. John Medley on October 22 and opened for Divine Worship October 26 1851.

Before the arrival of the Loyalists in 1783 Lower Cove was a wilderness and from the pen of Dr. WO Raymond we are giving some ideas of the sufferings of the first settlers. Owing to cold weather, coarseness of provision, salt meat etc... many died and were buried in the old graveyard near where the sugar refinery stood." At the time St. James was erected, Lower Cove had become the residential section

of the city.

Many prominent businessmen lived in this area and coupled with the fact that it was the residential section, it seems rather strange that the members of the church found themselves in financial difficulty, not being able to raise enough money to support their church. In 1857 they found it necessary to ask Trinity for assistance toward paying the Rector's salary. In 1860 another petition was sent, stating that Pew Rents and collections were not sufficient to maintain the church. Apparently the idea of free pews were not carried out.

St James has firm ground on which to base the claim to being called "The Garrison Church." In the early sixties, the Rector of St James was appointed Chaplain to the Imperial Forces which were stationed at Barrack Green. A military service, always a popular one, was held at 9am. The choir for this service was formed from members of the artillery. St. James was (and is) the only Anglican Church where the traditional center aisle is not to be seen. The pews were designed with a large center section and two side sections enabling the troops to enter the Church in double file and leave in the same order.

Following the 9am service and 11 am service was conducted for civilians and another service at 3pm was held at the Marine Hospital situated on the site of the present Turnbull Home.

The great fire of 1877 was a disaster of the Parish of St. James, as the church and every house, with the exception of two or three were wiped out along with all the records. As soon as possible, the Rector, Rev. William Armstrong (son of the Rev. John Armstrong) set to work to collect funds for the building of a new church.

The corner stone of the present St. James was laid June 26, 1878 by the late Sir Leonard Tilley while he was Governor of the province. It was built of limestone on the site of the first St. James; was consecrated by the Right Rev. John Medley and opened for public worship Jan 7 1879. The bishop addressed the congregation and congratulated the parishioners for being the first to rebuild their church after the great fire.

According to the Deed of Consecration the official name of the church is "Saint James the Less". It is interesting to note that a letter received by a parishioner from a former Rector, says in part, "Give my kind regards to the Parish of St. James the Less."

Pews in the new church were free; a few designated for the Wiggins Male Orphans' Institution and the Protestant Orphans; Home, being reserved.

In 1899 an extensive renovation of the interior of the church was undertaken, and one improvement which immediately meets the eye upon entering it is the magnificent ceilings which replace one of water stained plaster. It is of the clearest spruce, practically without a knot and finished in its natural color.

Since 1899 many improvements have been made and many memorials placed in the church, most during the rectorship of the Venerable Archdeacon HA Cody A rector of St. James for thirty-three years, and his death Feb. 9, 1948 at the age of seventy-five, brought great sorrow to his parishioners and all who knew him as a gentle and kindly man and a warm friend. "You exerted a tremendous influence for good, not only upon the people of Saint John, but throughout the length and breadth of New Brunswick and far beyond." (These words were written by Bishop Moorhead to deacon Cody upon his resignation) The tributes paid to him upon his death show the great esteem in which he was held by his parishioners.

A few are printed here: "Truly a man of God", "His memory is precious to all who knew him", "He is the most lived and respected Priest in the Diocese of Fredericton". Archdeacon Cody faced many problems during his rectorship in St. James. Parish financial woes and other Parish problems upset him many times- at one point he threatened to resign. The rectors of St. James who have followed in his footsteps have toiled tiredly and faithfully among their flock. Dedicated to their religion, they have led St. James Parish through good times and bad always with a since of deep devotion to their high calling. During the first ninety-two years seven rectors served the parish. For the next sixty-two years there were 11 rectors, two priests-in-charge and one member

of the Anglican Church Army in Canada.

In this short history it is impossible to give a detailed account of all the noteworthy events in the life of the Parish of St. James but a few must be mentioned.

In 1891 a two manual tracker organ made especially for St. James by the Hook and Hastings Organ Co. of Boston Mass. Was installed in the church. It required a hand operated blower until the mid 1930's when an electric blower was purchased. It is always with great pleasure we welcomed Mrs. Dorothy Clark to our services when she arrived on all too rare visits to our church. Mrs. Clark was a dedicated organist and choir director in St. James church for thirty-one years (1940-1980). Following Mrs., Clarks; resignation, we were fortunate in obtaining the service of Mrs. Dianne Sutherland, until she became ill in 2003. The current choir director is Mrs. Pat Vincent.

Gas lights were replaced by an electric system between 1906- 1909. In 1910, a monthly magazine, the "Church Bell," edited by Archdeacon Cody, was published. It continued to bring a wealth of church related events to St. James parishioners for 33 years. The first vested choir was introduced in 1911 and in 1912 a bell was installed in the belfry.

On Oct 14, 1834, the old Fusiliers' Colors were laid up in St. James Church through the courtesy of Col. G.G.K Holder, commanding Officer of the Fusiliers and a long member of St, James. These colors, the King's color and the Regimental Color, had been presented to the Fusiliers Oct 17 1901 by King George V and Queen Mary when, as Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, there were visiting Saint John.

As we look around this beautiful church we see the outward and visible signs of love and devotion expressed in the many memorials to lived ones. The magnificent stained glass windows are examples of the fitting memorials within its walls.

Psalm 100:5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.