

Laying of the Cornerstone

Thursday, July 17, 1879

Thursday of last week was a high day in the history of our village and of this part of Cattaraugus County. It was feared that the intense heat which had been raging for some days would interfere with the comfort and attendance of the people but these fears were allayed for when the morning dawned the temperature had decreased nearly 20 degrees and sky overcast so that Nature seemed specially propitious for the honor to be paid to Nature's God in laying the cornerstone of a Temple to be erected for His glory and worship.

The building committee and the ladies were busy during the morning erecting and decorating a temporary arbor around the foundation and by 2 p.m. the corner of the church lot was a scene of beauty. The evergreens were interlaced and overhead and around the pillars while a Gothic arch was sprung over the entrance to the platform. This arch was surmounted with a large evergreen cross and upon it the motto, "Soli Deo Gratia" was beautifully arranged in letters on a white ground. Chairs, tables and organ were placed on the platform. On the tables were many vases of tastily arranged flowers while a very handsome cross 3½ feet high of white flowers was the center of attraction.

Long before the appointed hour a large concourse of people of all classes, men, women, and children, on foot, in wagons and carriages assembled. At 4 o'clock the Rt. Rev. A.C. Coxe, D.D., with the Rev. P.P. Kidder of Dunkirk, Rev. P. McFarlane of Mayville and the rector, Rev. S. Burford of Jamestown, robed at the residence of Mrs. Lee and, going forth from the gate, were met by the choir of ladies and gentlemen of this village and Jamestown, the Masonic and Odd Fellows fraternities in regalia, and with banners, and in processions, all began the march to the church lot, singing the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers".

On reaching the cornerstone the citizens and societies formed in open order and the Bishop and the clergy passed through to the beautiful bower where the service was most beautifully and impressively celebrated.

After singing the above hymn, the Bishop addressed the congregation in words of burning eloquence which thrilled hundreds who had never had the pleasure of listening to this distinguished and learned prelate.

The address was listened to with the most wrapt attention and not a few carried away valuable food for reflection and study. The Bishop was kind enough to make special note of the attendance of so many children who gathered close about him and whose faces became radiant as he spoke to them loving words which they will ever remember.

The rector read the following list of articles deposited in the cornerstone.

A Holy Bible; A Prayer Book; A Hymnal; a Journal Council Diocese 1878; the Sermon of Bishop Coxe at

the Consecration of Dr. Riley as first Bishop of Mexico; a Church almanac 1878; Spirit of Missions; Newspapers - Churchmen, Standard of the Cross, Society Churchman, Orbit, Young Christian Soldier, Courant and Courant extra, Randolph Register, Olean Weekly and Daily Times, Olean Record, Cattaraugus Republican, Cattaraugus Union, Salamanca Gazette, True Friend, Examiner, and Chronicle; letters from the Rev. Dr. Anstice, Hon. D.H. Bolles, and Messrs. Forbes and Murray; blanks and engravings of the State Bank of Randolph; 20 dollars; a Confederate note 1861; annual Catalogue Chamberlain Institute 1879; cards of invitation by the building committee; coins of the U.S. of present date; subscription list of Grace Church; engraving of St. Luke's Church, Jamestown.

All these were packed in a black tin box, soldered and covered with a lead and iron top and made fast in the cavity of the stone which is of Berea stone, having the inscription on the north face "Grace Church, A.D. 1879" and on the east face, a well carved floriated cross.

