

Lake Forest Preservation Foundation NEWSLETTER

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100 Years: Churches of Saints Patrick and Mary

by Arthur H. Miller, Jr.



St. Patrick's Church

Photo by John Litchfield



St. Mary's Church

Photo by John Litchfield

In December 2010, Lake Forest's beautiful Church of St. Mary celebrates the centennial of its dedication on Sunday, December 11, 1910 by Archbishop Quigley of the Chicago Archdiocese. St. Mary's had been founded in 1875 and in 1925, when the parish celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, Cardinal Mundelein described it, according to a newspaper report quoted in the 1975 parish centennial book, *Church of St. Mary, 1875-1975*, as "the elder daughter of more than 400 sister churches that claim the care of the head of diocese and the close neighbor of a city that is destined to be one of the greatest in the world."

But St. Mary's is also the sibling parish of west Lake Forest's St. Patrick's. This year the 1910 "old," red-brick St. Patrick's is celebrating its centennial, with both edifices being designed by the same outstanding architect, Henry Lord Gay. Today St. Mary's remains one of the leading parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago. St. Patrick's too has grown to become a major center in its own right, serving ca. 1,800 families in a new church, but guarding still its 1910 building, the soul of its heritage. This article recognizes the special legacy to the community of these two historic structures.

Parishes' Histories to 1910

The Church of St. Mary, grand as it has been, was begun in 1875 as a mission church of St. Patrick's, Everett (now southwest

Lake Forest). The roots of St. Patrick's Church and also St. Mary's go back to 1840, when ships collided and went down in the lake, necessitating a Catholic cemetery, today's St. Patrick's Cemetery on Telegraph Road. On that property, too, in 1844 the community of farm residents in the area grew large enough for a log church, St. Michael's, and it served parishioners in four townships initially. That church was sold and became a residence, and the church moved north to Meehan's Settlement. This was a mission of another log church at Little Fort, soon called Waukegan. The new parish was founded in 1849, with an 1855-completed brick church near the intersection of Route 60 and Waukegan Road.

The Reverend J. W. Kennedy had purchased the property on Illinois Road at Green Bay in 1867 for a mission there near the recently founded Lake Forest. Later it was again St. Patrick's Reverend James J. McGovern, arriving at that church in 1875, who led the effort to found St. Mary's and to erect a substantial wood-frame, steepled church on the present site of that church, a building larger and taller than the east-of-the-tracks First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest erected in 1862, thirteen years earlier. The next year a parish house too was built next to St. Mary's, and, according to the 1975 history, that became the main church, with St. Patrick's the mission, served by the same priest, Father McGovern, who moved into the new St. Mary's rectory.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Fellow Residents and Property Owners of Lake Forest:

In 1902, gas lights were installed in Lake Forest by the North Shore Gas Company. Many of the Lake Forest homes of that era (including my home) were illuminated by gas as well, since electricity had been brought to the City only six years earlier.

Those gas lights became the logo for the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation in 1976 when our founder and then first President, Edward H. Bennett Jr., looked out his window from "Pembroke Barn" on Green Bay Road and saw the gas light in the driveway. He took a pad and pen and sketched the lamp, thereby creating the logo for the newly formed LFPF.

That same logo appeared on the first Newsletter masthead and is still in use 34 years later. After burning brightly for over 100 years, the gas lights were shut off and threatened with extinction in 2003 as a potential cost savings. Thanks to a \$15,000 grant to the City in 2004, your Preservation Foundation was able to help relight the 438 historic gas lights throughout town, still broadcasting their warm glow even today.

The train station at Market Square hopefully will be getting some much needed attention with a new roof, painting, and related repairs. While not being executed to the vision of the study we commissioned and funded, due to the current economy, this will certainly provide visible and necessary improvements to last until a more comprehensive restoration can be undertaken.

This summer we held another extraordinary Family Fair in Market Square, including extremely popular narrated trolley tours of historic homes in town. Many thanks to CROYA who helped out with a lot of the work at the Fair. We marched in the Lake Forest Day Parade, winning third prize, and held a record-attendance program at the Meadowood Farm Historic District in September as part of our ongoing series "Exploring Lake Forest's Neighborhoods."

We hope you were able to attend some or all of these events and that you will be intrigued by those we have planned. Coming up in the near future is a program on historic windows followed by a reception. Capping the year end once again is our annual members-only Holiday Party in a private home.

Our Board members and volunteers work hard to make this a vibrant organization, dedicated to the preservation of the historic visual character of our town. For our members, we would like to express a sincere "thank you" for your loyal support.

In this issue is a list of our current members and a tear-off membership application. If you're not already on that list, we hope you will consider becoming a member of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation.

Tom Daly, President

FOREST PARK UPDATE

In response to the City Council's May approval of the Conceptual Master Plan for Forest Park, two aspects of the plan have been addressed: studies of two park concerns and formation of a committee.

This past summer an engineering study was undertaken to determine the stability of the bluff. In addition, a traffic study was created to evaluate the car/pedestrian usage of the park. There appears to be no immediate threat of erosion along the majority of the bluff at present. However, there is still need of attention to the drainage issue. Traffic results are still being evaluated.

Throughout the summer careful consideration and time has been given to the formation of a community committee: one which will guide this project to completion and is in the process

of setting up a 501(c)3. Ralph Gesualdo was selected to chair this committee and is willing to volunteer his time to the success of Forest Park. The committee is comprised of community leaders with varied interests and expertise relative to this project.

Forest Park, like all of Lake Forest, is special to everyone. A group of committed citizens is ready to volunteer time and raise money to protect this treasured landscape for the benefit of everyone today and tomorrow. Be patient and support us. The committee is proceeding with our community's best interest at heart.

The Forest Park Committee

Visit us on the web @ www.lfpf.org

St. Patrick's 1855 church building, according to the church's website history, was not lucky. In 1883 it was rebuilt after serious foundation problems developed. Then in 1895 the church was struck by lightning. From this history it is not clear if the church moved then to Everett further south before lightning struck again, or if the move took place after the church burned to the ground in 1908.

By 1906, when the Reverend Francis T. Barry began as pastor at St. Mary's, there were forty families at the St. Patrick's mission and one-hundred and fifty families at St. Mary's, but income was low, with the priest even going to farms for food. By 1908 St. Patrick's was gone, with the parishioners attending St. Mary's, until their church could be replaced. The 1875 St. Mary's structure, which had had been "rickety" when Father Francis J. Barry arrived, soon was in danger of collapse: the steeple was taken down and the walls were braced from the outside.

New churches for both parishes were needed, and church income was up. This resulted in part from Father Barry's influence and in part due to the influx of elite, wealthy, and sometimes Catholic Chicagoans on the new estates, such as the young Mrs. Joseph Medill Patterson (Alice Higginbotham), west of Lake Forest (Westwood Farm, Howard Shaw, 1905).

Architect Henry Lord Gay (1844-1921)

The architect chosen for both churches was Chicagoan Henry Lord Gay, who at the age of twenty in 1864, during the Civil War, came to booming Chicago, and entered the office of architect W.W. Boyington. He had been, since grammar school, in the office at New Haven, Connecticut, of Sidney Mason Stone (1803-1882), who in turn had studied there under the eminent architect Ithiel Town (1784-1844), designer of many New England churches, as would Stone as well (Church of St. Michael, New Haven, 1855). Thus, Gay was at least the third in a line of U.S. architects specializing in churches.

By 1867 he had begun to practice on his own, and designed the First Congregational Church in Chicago, destroyed in the 1871 Fire. In 1880 Gay went to Europe, and entered the competition at Rome for the national monument to King Victor Emanuel, ending up with second place from among hundreds of architects, according to A.T. Andreas' *History of Chicago...* v. 3 (Chicago: Andreas, 1886), 68-69. Gay joined the A.I.A. in 1874 and was made a Fellow in 1887. He returned to Chicago in 1883. He designed summer places at Lake Geneva, culminating in the 1901 grandly-scaled, highly-visible, classic Younglands/Stone Manor. By that time, too, he was moving to San Diego, and became a major contributor to the developing architecture there, including the landmarked Sanford Hotel, 1913. Clearly, though, his work with church architecture and in the Chicago area continued in 1909-10 with St. Mary's and St. Patrick's.

Architectural Character

Church of St. Mary

The style of St. Mary's particularly is a masterful blend of Romanesque for the nave and windows and Gothic for the buttressed towers, incorporating elements of prominent Presbyterian models in town: the Norman (Romanesque) and Shingle Style First Presbyterian Church (1887, Cobb and Frost), the Gothic Church of the Holy Spirit (1902, Alfred Granger) and the Collegiate Gothic, similarly-towered Lily Reid Holt Chapel at Lake Forest College (1900, Frost and Granger). Culturally assimilationist and contextual in intent at the heart of the mostly Protestant community, it manages firmly to express Roman Catholic motifs: the rounded Romanesque windows, the classically centered entry (in contrast to the typically Richardsonian-plan side entries of the others), and the limestone details and pediments over the three north-façade, front doors. The exterior nave side-wall cornices are machicolated, recalling subtly medieval French fortress churches with openings from above to throw things at invaders (such as heretical groups). Henry Lord Gay created an edifice for St. Mary's that fit in architecturally while also clearly proclaiming its two-thousand-year Roman heritage.

The 1970 remodeling of St. Mary's was a direct outgrowth of the Second Vatican Council, convened in the early 1960s. New directives and liturgical changes were undertaken and then in 1967 Father James D. Brett was appointed, his first major project being the remodeling of St. Mary's following the new direction of Vatican II. He was assisted by Father Richard J. Douaire, Loyola University and St. Mary-of-the-Lake Art History professor. Douaire was vice-president of the American Society for Church Architecture (ASCA) and was a member of the Archdiocesan Commission on Art and Architecture. The design for the remodeling of the church, beginning in the summer of 1970, was entrusted to Lake Forest architect Norman Abplanalp (today a member of the Preservation Foundation Board of Directors). Abplanalp was recommended by Douaire for the architect's knowledge of church architecture, the two having served together on the ASCA.

According to the 1976 St. Mary's history, the Church needed "several changes" and few of the older Archdiocesan buildings "have lent themselves so well to remodeling toward the objectives of the council's reforms" (pp. 22-23). Following the new guidelines "superfluous altars were eliminated" and a "new altar, lecturn, and presidential chair were designed." The lighting was significantly improved, with a north glass wall to the sanctuary letting in light from the vestibule and making the whole space feel larger. The original oak woodwork was restored, long buried under paint; the interior's new simple tone was set by the oak against a white background.

Church of St. Patrick

St. Patrick's, built in the smaller scaled, rural village setting of Everett also in 1910 and by Henry Lord Gay, in turn, is a smaller

version of Gay's St. Mary's, with one tower on the north side rather than two towers (one extending above the nave at St. Mary's), Romanesque rounded windows, vestigial machicolation on the sides, but here topped with a steeple, giving the 1910 St. Patrick's its own village church character.

In the 1970s St. Patrick's grew in what now was west Lake Forest, with a Parish Center built for education. The new space was pressed into use also for Masses as the 1910 sanctuary became too small for some services by the 1970s, with much growth in the area in the period. By 1986 St. Patrick's was remodeled as had been St. Mary's, simplicity and restoration being the guides as at St. Mary's earlier. Steps, accessible walkways, and restrooms were added. The white-painted exterior brick was sandblasted, according to the web parish history, and the brickwork was repointed. The Resurrection window was expanded to bring in more light, and one of two altars was removed, in keeping with the new spirit. New Stations of the Cross by member artist Franklin McMahon were a superb final touch for the church then serving three-hundred and sixty-five families.

But all that work on St. Patrick's was in the same year as the enactment of the "Reagan" income tax cuts, one major effect of which was a building boom in west Lake Forest. In 1995 ground was broken for a new church and space for meetings and offices, with the first service in December of 1997, and formal dedication by Cardinal George on March 22, 1998. The church is reported in the web history as now serving one-thousand, seven-hundred and eighty families, a five fold growth in the parish in a quarter century. Today, though, the century-old, 1980s honored Henry Lord Gay "old" St. Patrick's continues to serve the congregation as a chapel, and remains the anchor of this west side Lake Forest community, called today Settlers Square.

Indeed, these were the first settlers in the 1830s and 1840s, those founders of the St. Patrick's Cemetery and its first small St. Michael's log church of 1844. The 1910 church building, tied as it is to the history also of St. Mary's, stands as continuity to a heritage of Catholic service and fortitude through trying as well as good times. As it celebrates its centennial, as a sister church to St. Mary's in 2010, it recalls

the age-old village churches of Ireland and Europe that nurtured this congregation especially in its first century and a half. Its handsome lines, derived from one of the best church architects of its day Henry Lord Gay whose own educational ties went back to the early Republic, earn it an important place among Lake Forest's defining historic structures.

Conclusion

The two linked parish churches of St. Patrick's and St. Mary's together add significantly to the architectural heritage of the city and represent a vital part of its legacy to the future. Recognizing the outstanding architectural character of the two century-old church edifices is one way of sharing in the centennial celebrations of these two landmarks, each a defining element for its neighborhood.

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UPDATE ON REVISION OF LAKE FOREST'S EAST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICT

This Spring, the city of Lake Forest received a Certified Local Government grant from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency to update our National Register Historic District on Lake Forest's east side. The District nomination was written in 1976 and leaves out a considerable amount of information on the significance of the area. The focus of that nomination was on buildings constructed before 1926 (those then more than 50 years old), and many important buildings were not even mentioned.

Benjamin Historic Certifications (Susan Benjamin, Gwen Sommers Yant and Courtney Gray Resnick), City staff and many members of the Preservation Foundation are working on revising the nomination. A survey of all the buildings that have become fifty years old since 1998, when Suzanne Germain finished the City's survey, and of all buildings that have been altered or constructed since 1998 has been completed. Foundation volunteers Sally Wimmer, Rommy Lopat, Gail Hodges, Pauline Mohr, Shirley Paddock and Linda Liang have been working with Susan and Gwen to record building permit data on these buildings. This phase is now complete, and the information is currently being entered on the Survey Data base by Megan O'Neill; it will be completed by early October. As soon as the leaves fall, all of the buildings researched will be photographed.

The second phase is under way, with Art Miller contributing historical research and Susan Benjamin gathering architectural information. Others, including Paul Bergmann, and others who wish to be involved, will be contributing to this effort. The research will be wound up by the end of the year and writing will begin. The revised nomination will be completed by June, 2011, and the City will have a National Register document equal in importance to the excellent, more recent National Register listings.

Susan Benjamin, Benjamin Historic Certifications

NOTE OF APPRECIATION FOR PETER COUTANT

This November, Peter Coutant will be leaving his position as Senior Planner for the City of Lake Forest after thirteen years. In a recent letter to Peter, President Tom Daly noted his openness, competence and patience with petitioners, his ability to grasp changes presented in petitions and his fortitude in following the process through to completion.

The Foundation recognizes Peter's respect for historic preservation and appreciates his shared understanding of what drastic change would do to the visual character of Lake Forest. We wish him well in his future endeavors. He leaves Lake Forest with the admiration and thanks of Foundation members. We will miss him.

Sarah Wimmer, Past President, Honorary Director

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HELP PROTECT THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

As the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation looks forward to 2011 and its 35th anniversary we welcome you to become a member of our dynamic group. Membership gives you an opportunity to learn more about the historic areas of Lake Forest, its architects and home owners. Your membership in the Preservation Foundation is your ticket to exclusive historic neighborhood and home tours.

Want to know more about architectural elements and building materials? How they all relate? What works, what doesn't? Programs with expert speakers have the answers for you. Social events such as the Christmas Party and the Annual Meeting where preservation award winners are celebrated are not to be missed. What is most important about membership in the Preservation Foundation is that you become a partner in the Foundation as we continue to work toward our mission of conserving and preserving the historic visual character of our community. Memberships also bring in the vital funds needed by the Foundation to underwrite preservation projects and to give restoration grants. Past recipients include Gorton, Ragdale, Dickinson Hall, Elawa Farm and the Walden Bridge.

The Board and members of the Preservation Foundation believe that we have a responsibility to future generations to continue the vision as those in the past did for us. **JOIN US!**

Linda Shields, Past President, Honorary Director

LAKE FOREST PRESERVATION FOUNDATION PROGRAM COMMITTEE SCHEDULE 2010 & 2011

November 14, 2010 - 2 pm to 4 pm

Historic Windows presented by Elizabeth Logman (Midwest Preservation LLP) & Anthony Rubano (Illinois Historic Preservation Agency)
Slide program at Gorton and reception at a private home following the program

December 5, 2010 - 2 pm to 4 pm

Annual holiday party
Private home

March 2011 (TBD)

History of Prominent Architecture -
A Tour in Lake Forest

May 15, 2011

Annual Meeting & Awards Presentation
Program and Reception

June 2011 (TBD)

3rd Annual Family Fair in Market Square

September 10, 2011

Lake Forest Celebrates Its Own Preservation
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Together we can ensure the preservation of the historic visual character of Lake Forest.

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