

## CHAPTERS IN TRINITY'S HISTORY

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### CHAPTER XV - "LET US GO INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD"

On October 31, 2010, our congregation will officially re-enter our restored Cathedral for corporate worship. It will be a time for rejoicing and thanksgiving, but it also should be a time for reflection. This will mark the fourth time in our congregation's history that members of Trinity have entered their sanctuary for the "first time." As we celebrate on All Hallow's Eve, we might pause to remember those who have gone before who in their time praised God and very likely quoted from Psalm 122:1--"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

December 14, 1814. Bishop Theodore Dehon journeyed to Columbia to consecrate the sanctuary of the new Episcopal congregation in the capital city. In remarks to the 1814 diocesan convention, he noted that "the congregation of Episcopalians in Columbia...[have made]...arrangements for the erection, in that place, of a building for the purpose of Christian worship, according to the usages of our church. This success of exertions, in a place where three years ago the Liturgy of our Church was scarcely known...." The cornerstone was laid on March 7 and the "neat wooden building" completed within ten months. In his consecration sermon, Bishop Dehon used for his text I Kings, 8:66. He explained that the passage in Kings followed the dedication of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. After elaborating on this theme, he concluded his remarks with a prayer for the congregation and its new building: "Let this be a house of the Lord Our God in this place, because of which, for the purity of its faith, the perfection of its charity, and the holiness of its worship, all people shall seek to do it good."

February 17, 1847. The original wooden church had been enlarged in the 1830s but by the early 1840s was too small for the growing congregation, now one of the largest in the diocese. During 1844 and 1845 the vestry made plans for a new structure. The cornerstone was laid on November 25, 1845. Edward Brickell White designed the Gothic revival-style building. The rectangular brick structure was covered with stucco that was then scored to resemble stone. It took just about a year to complete the construction and furnishing of what was described as "the only complete specimen of Ecclesiastic Gothic in the Southern country."

The rector, the Reverend Peter Shand, had hoped to have the consecration service before the end of the year. However, Bishop Christopher E. Gadsden was not able to make it to Columbia until February 1847. The church was filled to capacity for the service. Mr. Shand preached the sermon and used as his text II Corinthians 6:2 --"I have built an house of habitation for Thee and a place for Thy dwelling forever." Then, even though it was the second Sunday of the month, there was a celebration of Holy Communion with the Bishop as the celebrant.

June 15, 1862. In the decade following the erection of its new sanctuary, the congregation had continued to grow. As early as 1854 the vestry discussed plans for expansion, but it was not until August 1860 that construction was begun. During the interim, the congregation worshipped in the chapel of the South Carolina College [the present-day Longstreet Theater]. It was not a very satisfactory arrangement. The acoustics were terrible, the roof leaked, and the building was drafty. Unlike our present worship in Averyt Hall, our forebears made no attempt to recreate a "church atmosphere." When there was a communion service, Mr. Shand simply placed the consecrated bread and wine on the steps to the stage. One shocked communicant was offended: "Desecration! He is a good old man. I wish he would not do it."

War-time shortages meant that not all of the planned construction could be completed. And much of what was done was, of necessity, a bit slap-dash. However, the shape of Trinity as we now know it had taken shape. Transepts and a chancel had been added to give the building its cruciform shape. The interior and exterior walls were scored stucco and matched those of 1846. Balconies was added in the transepts.

There was great rejoicing when the congregation moved back into the church. One witness was Mary Boykin Chesnut, who confided in her diary: "Glory be to God, as my Irish Margaret said as an opening discourse - Glory be to Him now - because they are washing the windows of Trinity Church. Hitherto... [we had] used the college chapel...But we are going back to a genuine church."

And so, on Trinity Sunday 1862, the congregation of Trinity began worship services in its newly-renovated sanctuary.