

In my Google wanderings, I recently came across a Works Projects Administration publication from 1940 entitled “Inventory of the Church Archives in New York City – The Protestant Episcopal Church” It contains the following entry about our Church:

ASCENSION (The Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of the Church of the Ascension in the City of New York), 1827--. 5th Ave. and 10th St., Manhattan.

Organized 1827. Incorporated October 2, 1827 (County Register, Rel. Inc., vol. 1, p. 156). Admitted into union with Convention 1827. Services, Broadway and Howard St. until 1829; church, Canal St., east of Broadway until 1838; 9th St. , east of Broadway until cornerstone of present Gothic stone church laid March 19, 1840; dedicated 1841. Paintings by John LaFarge, Louis Saint Gaudens, D. Maitland Armstrong adorn the Chancel. At the services held in November 1940, to mark the 100th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone, Dr. Henry Bradford Washburn, dean-emeritus of the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Mass., delivered the sermon. The rector announced a one hundredth anniversary gift from Miss Susan A. Cox for four stained glass windows for the tower of the church. They are being executed by Owen Bonawit of New York after a thirteenth century model. First clergyman, Rev. Manton Eastburn, 1827-42. Present rector, Rev, Donald Bradshaw Aldrich, 1925--; ed. Dartmouth Col., 1917; Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Mass., 1922.

I find historical snippets like this fascinating. In particular, it struck me that we are approaching the 180th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of our present Church next Wednesday, March 19. It is a moment for reflection on the generosity and stewardship of those who have gone before us, maintaining not our beautiful house of worship but also a vibrant Christian community within the neighborhood.