

Cross of Christ Archives

More Recent Acquisitions

Last month we told about the 80th anniversary panoramic photo donated by the Charles Carrier family. Somewhat recently the family added an early picture of the Stone Church to the collection and we certainly want to thank them again for their thoughtful generosity. It appears to be a gelatin print taken around the turn of the last century (1900) and is mounted on a gray matte board. In our experience it is quite rare since this is only the third one we've ever seen, but naturally there may be others out there among the "diaspora." The photo is unusual in the fact that it was taken of the north and west sides, while almost all the other pictures we've seen from that period show a southwest view. This adds to its importance as part of the photographic record of the Stone Church.

Judging by the look of the picture and the fact that there is no photographer's imprint on the matte board it was probably taken by an itinerant, possibly amateurish practitioner of the photographic arts, but that's hard to say. Interestingly enough, the original glass negative of this picture can be found at the Houston County Historical Society, but it is in rather poor condition and not much is known about its origins.

It is somewhat difficult to say which picture of the Stone Church is the earliest, but so far we have not located any that were taken before 1892, which was the year that the first furnace was installed in the basement necessitating the tall chimney on the rear of the church. That chimney is not visible on this picture since it was built on the southern side of the back of the church, but we know it's there since prior to the furnace the church was heated with regular wood stoves, the pipes of which were attached to short chimneys which protruded through each side of the roof, centered near the eaves.

How do we know this without photographic evidence? This chimney arrangement was known at the time and can be seen on pictures of the early wood frame school house in Houston taken in 1876 and circa 1905 (see pages 68 & 75 in Ingrid Julsrud's, *Remembering Old Times*, 1993). Also, through personal inspection it was found that the bases of those chimneys remain mounted on the inner walls, in the additional attic spaces that were created when the ceiling of the church was "arched" in 1925. To achieve that look they simply built in the upper corners of the walls and ceiling, at an angle, where they meet along both sides of the sanctuary. (The added support beams are purely decorative.)

Getting back to the picture itself, some people have been rather taken by the odd shape of the tree. Why the top droops over is not known to us. Notice that the front doors open inward—not so good in case of fire—but that situation was corrected well before the major modernization of 1925.

A wooden fence is clearly visible on the photo—also an indication of the time period since the original stone fence built in front of the church was removed in 1892. Now you know that the

year 1892 has two important identifiers when it comes to dating early pictures of the church. It would certainly be a dream come true if we could locate a picture taken before that year. This seldom seen picture of the Stone Church is currently on the upper shelf of the freestanding display case. It's worth a look.

Another item recently donated by Rae Evenson is a rather cleverly designed *Bible Verse & Words of Wisdom "Rolodex"* which was made by one of the Circles. It has a simple wooden framework decorated on each end with a routed-out cross. The verses are written on small slips of paper, one for each day of the year, suspended by two book rings from a cross-piece or spindle affixed to each end of the frame. This setup allows them to be easily flipped or searched.

We would very much like to know more about this intriguing object. Does anyone know when it was made and by which Circle? If you'd like to take a look, it is currently in the Ladies' Aid display case.

Lastly, we come to a somewhat mysterious device that was saved from being thrown out during the construction project in 2014. It was most assuredly made by Armin Korthauer for some use at the church, since his name and the date (1998) are written on it, but we have no idea of its purpose. It has a "break-away" component that allows each rounded end to be secured into a corresponding hole. The distance between these two unknown holes is of course the length of the tool itself, but to what end? This peculiar *widget* can be seen in the narthex display case and again we would like very much to know more about it. Thanks.

— *Jim and Shelley, Cross of Christ Archives, June 2018*