

of the finest in New England. The original cost was \$11,000.

The organ is of 4 parts: the Choir organ with 11 stops, the Pedal with 10 stops, the Great with 11 stops, and the Swell with 15 stops. The organ has 2,748 speaking pipes, 976 pipes on the Great, 964 on the Swell, 598 on the Choir, and 210 on the Pedal. There are also 27 pipes in the center section that are non-speaking (dummy) pipes needed to fill in the space artistically. These pipes are not included in the pipe count. Viewing from the floor, the organ's pipes reach almost to the ceiling.

It is the largest pipe organ built by Woodberry, and the largest surviving pipe organ in the City of Lowell.

The instrument had been unplayable until Andover Organ completed a five year half million dollar restoration in the summer of 2021. Andover Organ's work included upgrading the organ's console mechanisms and electrical control systems; re-leathering and fitting the pedal wind chests with new primary magnets; building new manual chests, cleaning, repairing, and adjusting the pipes for evenness of speech and tone; and repairing and re-leathering the large reservoir in the tower area. Benjamin Mague project director for Andover Organ notes: "The organ is as good if not better than new."



Remembering the Organ's Glory Days

Taste in music has changed greatly over the decades. Some long time parishioners will recall organist Charlie McGrail playing "Holy God We Praise Thy Name" as soon as the priest intoned "Ite, missa est." (Go, the Mass is ended) and the congregation responded "Deo gratias" (Thanks be to God). Mr. McGrail then would blast the life out of the organ with a grand recessional. You could feel the vibrations of deep tones hitting you as you left church.

The organ is once again in fine voice and all are invited to enjoy the majesty of this fine instrument at the 10:00 Mass on Sunday mornings



Prepared by David McKean, educator, historian, author, and life-long parishioner of St. Patrick Parish. Produced by the Parish's Irish Cultural Committee which is committed to preserving its beloved Church.



*Make a Joyful Noise
Unto the Lord*



*1906 Jesse Woodberry Organ
Saint Patrick Church*

282 Suffolk St. Lowell MA 01854 ~ 978-459-0461

St. Patrick Parish



Dedicated on July 3, 1831, the original St. Patrick Church, a wooden structure, was too small to meet the needs of Lowell's growing Irish Catholic community. However the omniscient one had his own plan and in 1848, began what would come to be called the O'Brien Dynasty. Father John O'Brien, a man of vision, set St. Patrick's on the path that it follows to this day, helping immigrants struggling with the need to retain their ethnic identity while identifying themselves as Americans.

The tight knit Irish community that founded St. Patrick's has been replaced by a series of "new" people. Through it all, St. Patrick's has remained steadfast in its mission of service to God's people. Patrick was first and foremost a missionary. The spirit he instilled in those first Irish was carried here to the heart of the Acre and has been passed on for almost two centuries. At Mass, we stretch out our hands and raise our voices as an act of receiving Christ into our hearts.



The calloused hands and the voices of our diverse community come together in prayer and song – that joyful noise.

A Joyful Noise

At St. Patrick's that joyful noise is often associated with the organ. In 1830's Bishop Fenwick of Boston wrote in his diary that two-thirds of Catholic churches had little or no singing, just the sound of the organ. He even complained that one immigrant church in Lowell had what he considered "bad" singing. To help the situation, the Bishop, an amateur singer and musi-



cian himself, wrote a book of songs with lyrics to be used in the Diocese of Boston. St. Patrick Parish archives actually holds an original 1830's copy of Bishop Fenwick's work.

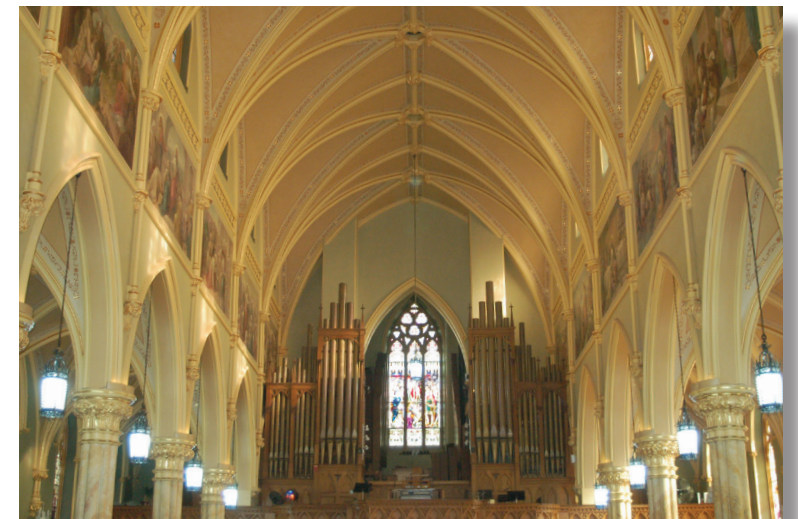
The organ in the original wooden church was second hand. That organ was made by local musician Ebenezer Goodrich.

In his year's accounting of church expenses in 1840, Father James McDermott paid the church organist \$40 for his services. Father McDermott bought another organ in 1847 for the cost of \$1,400. That organ was made by George Stevens. It had 22 registers (or stops) which refers to the pipes that produce notes. Ever hear of pulling out all the stops? It means give it all you've got.

When the present church was opened, a grand building such as it is, it needed a grander organ. The E. & G. G. Hook organ installed in 1850 cots \$3,000, quite a sum for the time, and had 33 stops. There is a possibility that this organ was powered by water to pump the bellows. The organ was in place right up until the fire in 1904 when it was destroyed. Some pipes were salvaged and put into a Chelmsford church. The organist at the time, Professor Johnson, actually entered the church during the fire to save some church music..

Today's Organ

When the church was rebuilt after the 1904 fire, the Jesse Woodberry Company of Boston designed and installed a new organ for the Church. Not wanting to obstruct the grand stained glass window of St. Patrick preaching to the Chiefs at Tara, Woodberry designed a divided organ with pipes



separated to provide a clear view of the window. According to an article in the Lowell Sun, this new organ was considered one