

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 2

Fr John E Boll, Diocesan Archivist

No 38

BUILDING THE CATHEDRAL Without a Fund Drive

By Eleanor Doyle, printed in the September 30, 1976 issue of the *Catholic Herald*

One of the intriguing mysteries in the historic annals of the Catholic Church in Sacramento is the source of funds for the building of its massive Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament at the corner of 11th and K Streets.

Within three years after the creation of the diocese proclaimed by Pope Leo XIII in 1886, Bishop Patrick Manogue, founding prelate, turned over to his people a \$250,000 edifice, debt free. There was never a fund raising campaign, only a token collection of monies on the day the cornerstone was laid two years earlier. However, it had quickly become an open secret throughout the area that Manogue's deeply rooted bonds of friendship with the Bonanza Kings of the famed Comstock were opening sources of revenue which turned the dream of a handsome edifice into a reality.

Bishop Manogue never denied or confirmed the rumors. This was the one act of non-communication with which some of his flock took issue during his lifetime. It was partially responsible for the lack of local monetary support, according to some residents whose forbearers lived at that time.

There are no files, no records or bills or receipts, nothing to prove or disprove the theories which circulated through Sacramento. Bishop Manogue had little time for the niceties of an orderly file system. Yet, within the Cathedral itself rest the best clues of who the people were who supported the prelate in his building endeavors: Fair, Crocker, Coolot, Dwyer, McCarthy and Kaseberg to name a few. True, their names only indicate they were donors of gloriously colored windows, yet it is possible that some of them had given more than stained glass to a bishop known for his winning personality.

Proof of his popularity rests with a little jingle that was often hummed during his days in Sacramento: "Of all the Bishops that are now in vogue, the greatest of all is Bishop Manogue." This writer grew up hearing the story of how a beloved maternal grandfather, F. Marcucci, then a very small immigrant boy from Italy, had earned his first dollars in the new world helping dig the foundation for the Cathedral. But the knowledge of such a youngster hardly extends to the realm of finance and the exact source of his daily wage.

There is still another clue to the Cathedral building funds which appears in the daily press when it was dedicated in the summer of 1889. A news account states that among the contributors and the sums donated were: Frank G. Newland of San Francisco, \$4,000; A. Coolot, \$1,500; Capt. Thomas Dwyer, \$1,500; and Mr. McLaughlin, a San Jose Banker, \$1,000. The latter name,

perhaps only by coincidence, appears on the bottom of the gold plated chalice which had been given to Father Manogue during his early years in Virginia City.

There was yet another source of possible help for Cathedral funds, John W. Mackey, that almost legendary giant of the Comstock whose friendship with Manogue was constant and undiminished throughout their lifetime. But again, concrete evidence is totally lacking.



Photo by John E boll 2011

The Impressive Façade of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament

In an age when ecumenism was not *au courant*, Bishop Manogue's capacity to draw the affection of people of varied religious beliefs was often apparent. This was dramatically pointed out the day of the Cathedral dedication, which was then considered to have only one peer in the US, St Patrick's in New York City. The famed Jesuit missionary priest, Father J.M.C. Bouchard, SJ while delivering an eloquent sermon for the historic occasion, read aloud a letter from the Congregation B'Nai Israel of Sacramento, signed by L. Elkus, president. It stated the enclosed check for \$178.25 was a gift to the Cathedral's mentor, Bishop Manogue, and was to be used as an offering for the poor.

As long as the Cathedral stands, its treasured stained glass windows attest to the personal generosity of many known and unknown names in Sacramento. The window of the Last Supper made in Innsbruck, Austria, was a gift of Augustine Coolot, noted businessman who died in June 1933. His widow, Rebecca Coolot, a great promoter of Catholic institutions, in later life was honored with the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal for her devotion to the Church. Mrs. Coolot died in July 1964.



Photo by John E Boll 2012

**Cathedral Window of the Last Supper, made in Innsbruck, Austria
Gift of Augustine & Rebecca Coolot**

The Nativity window was donated by Mrs. Thomas Dwyer whose husband, Captain Dwyer, was a Cathedral contributor. They were the grandparents of a present day diocesan priest, Monsignor Richard C Dwyer, pastor of Rancho Cordova.

Dan McCarthy of Brighton was the donor of the Ascension window scene; Mrs. Michael Rigney, the window of the Blessed Virgin; Mrs. James Kaseberg, the Flight into Egypt; Mrs. Agnes Bermely of Woodland, St Paul Preaching to the Athenians. St Mary's Parish in Virginia City gave the window of St Patrick Converting the Irish; the Knights of Columbus presented the Delivery of the Keys to St Peter. The daughters of Mrs. Theresa Fair, Birdie and Tessie, donated the windows of St Augustine and Mother and the Last Communion of St Jerome. Mrs. Crocker purchased at an art sale in Austria the six windows in the Cathedral nave which depict in miniature the Stations of the Cross.

All of these people, and probably many more, may well have been direct donors to the Cathedral building fund. Some of the monies could even have come from Bishop Manogue himself, the result of prudent investment of personal funds which may have stemmed back as far as when he dug gold from the rich Mother Lode near Moore's Flat.



Photo by John E Boll 2012

Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Christmas 2012