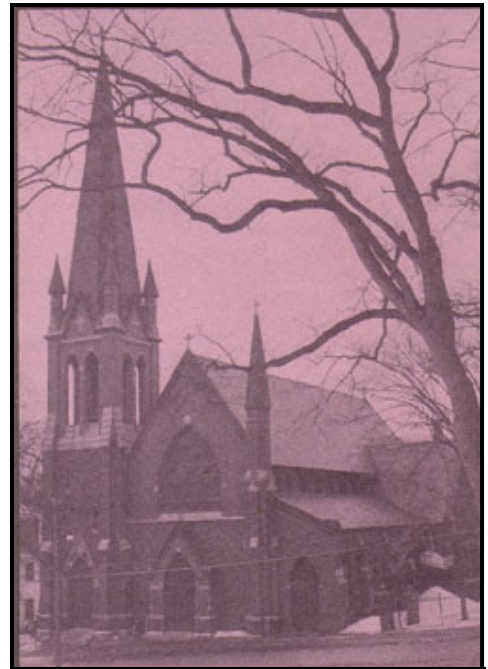


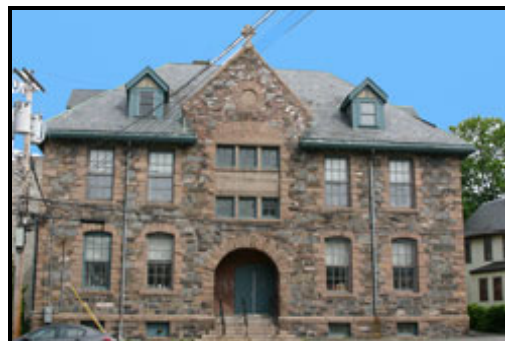
St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church

The size of the Catholic parish in Bangor had grown so large by 1869 that the congregation was divided and a new church was set to be built as a result of the growing catholic congregation on the west side of the city. The existing parish attended St. John's Roman Catholic Church which was built on York Street in 1854. In May 1872, the parish officially split in two with Rev. Murphy overseeing the new St. Mary's parish. This new parish would now include all Catholics living west of the Kenduskeag stream including East Hampden and Carmel. The lot for the new church was located on Cedar Street across from Davenport park. For more than a year while the basement of the new church was being built, services for the newly created St. Mary's Church were held at City Hall. The cornerstone for St. Mary's Church was laid Sept. 15, 1872 by the Bishop of Portland, Rev. Bacon. The church was built when materials and labor were extensively costly totaling \$65,000. The church completed, it was dedicated on Dec. 8, 1874 with approximately 2500 parishioners transferring from St. John's. Father Michael O'Brian succeeded Father Murphy and in 1892, he had a parochial school (Grades K-8) and a convent built on First Street.



*St. Mary's Roman Catholic
Church
Cedar Street*

*(From the Bells of St. Mary's Parishioner
Brochure 1971)*



*St. Mary's School and Convent
First Street*

Did you know...

In 1872, the lot on Cedar Street for the new St. Mary's Church cost \$2,000.00.

Fire consumed St. Mary's Parochial school on March 17, 1946 and the school on First Street was rebuilt. On the first of the year 1977, while priests presided over New Year's Mass next door, the cook at St. Mary's rectory discovered one of the second story bedrooms engulfed in flames. The second floor was extensively damaged and it was noted as one of the worst fires in recent years due to the head start the fire had on the firefighters. In fact, the flames were not fully extinguished until six hours after the fire discovery by the cook!

In the early evening of Feb. 3, 1978, during sub-zero weather, a 14 year old arsonist set ablaze the beautiful St. Mary's Church. It was one of the worst fires in Bangor's history and it the worst act of vandalism in our neighborhood's history. The building was destroyed. The crucifix that hung behind the alter did not burn... "a miracle" the parishioners called it. The church had more than 50 stained glass windows...many were destroyed in the fire and by subsequent vandalism. But, six were salvaged and repaired. Fortunately, the school building was spared. There were three options for St. Mary's moving forward: 1.) repair and rebuild the church in its former design. This would cost \$950,000 (the most expensive) and require a new boiler, a new adequate hall, new landscaping and paving 2.) Build a new church on the existing site (approximately \$700,000) which would include a new hall and more office space or 3.) Build a new church in an entirely different location. Five acres of land on Ohio Street was donated to the church by a parishioner for this option. For \$900,000 the new site would include the new church, better parking facilities, and lower operating and maintenance costs. Due to cost of rebuilding on the Cedar Street site and the limitations for expansion, the decision was made by members of the church to build



*St. Mary's Church
The Day After the Fire
February 4, 1978*

Did you know...

The crucifix from the original St. Mary's church on Cedar Street today stands in the baptistery of the new St. Mary's Church on Ohio St!

Four of the original stained glass windows hang in the new church's chapel and two are located in the baptismal area!

on the Ohio Street site. Ground was broken in September of 1979. The church cost a little over \$1 million and was built using the \$830,000 insurance money and money given from the parishioners. The new St. Mary's Church on Ohio St. was dedicated on Dec. 14, 1980. Eventually the school followed. The original St. Mary's Parochial School and Convent on First Street is now the home of Community Health and Counseling Services.

Did you know...

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church on Cedar Street was a magnificent structure built of stone and brick and one could often hear the bells of St. Mary's echo throughout our neighborhood!