



Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

13/12/2015

St. Catharines

3 Lyman Street - St. Catharines - Canada



The first Catholic Church at St. Catharines was built to meet the spiritual needs of the Irish labourers who built the first Welland Canal which was opened in 1829. It was a wood structure on the same site as the present cathedral and was called St. John's because the Anglicans were already using the name St. Catherine for their church in the town of the same name. On November 12 1831 Bishop Alexander Macdonell of Kingston blessed and opened this church, the first Roman Catholic Parish church to be built in the Niagara Peninsula.

This first Catholic Church was burned down by an arsonist on August 23 1842. Fortunately the second Welland Canal was being built between 1842-45 and there were once again many Irish labourers in the area who used their free time to build a new parish church, this time of stone as we can see in the structure of the present Cathedral Church. Father Patrick McDonagh laid the cornerstone on Ascension Day May 25 1843 and opened the new church on June 10 1845. The new church was now dedicated to St. Catherine of Alexandria. On November 25 1958 it became the Cathedral Church of the newly formed Diocese of St. Catharines.