

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Victoria

# Board of Managers Report

---

Thursday 20 August 1868

This document has been copied from original sources held in the archives of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Victoria. It includes details of the laying of the cornerstone for the church and the Board's view of the events leading up to the foundation of the congregation and the separation from First Presbyterian Church.

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1868

The laying of the foundation stone of the new church, corner of Gordon and Courtney streets, took place today at a quarter past three o'clock. The ceremony was performed by the Masonic Lodges of Victoria assisted by their brethren of Nanaimo and New Westminster. The stone was laid by D. Powell Grand Master of the Scotch Lodge, to whom a silver trowel used on the occasion was presented. The ceremony was very interesting and was witnessed by a large crowd of spectators. After the laying of the stone addresses necessary and suitable to the occasion were delivered by Rev. Mr. Somerville, D. Powell, Mr. Wallace, Chairman of Managers, and Chief Justice Meadham. - In the cavity of the stone were placed several British coins, the newspapers of the colony, a document from the Masons on parchment, also the following on parchment by the Church Managers being a short "History of the Church of Scotland" "Mission in British Columbia":  
"In 1863, the colonial committee deputed the Rev. James Nimmo M. A. to labour in British Columbia. Arriving in October of the same year his services attracted a small but united congregation. These having assembled in the Municipal Council Chambers, they resolved to build a church and applied to the

1864, "The General Assembly, having regard  
"to the peculiar position of their Mission  
"in British Columbia authorized the Com-  
"mittee to use their best endeavours,  
"by procuring special subscriptions,  
"to promote the building of a Church  
"at Victoria in Vancouver's Island, and  
"heartily recommend this most important  
"object to the liberality of the Church at  
"home." Immediately after this deliberance  
was passed an unexpected movement  
was made towards the Committee on  
the part of a congregation professedly  
Presbyterian worshipping in what  
was called the first Presbyterian  
Church in Victoria, to send them a  
Minister of the Church of Scotland. This  
movement was met with all cordiality,  
and the Rev. Thomas Somerville M. A.  
Assistant in St. James' Church, Glasgow,  
having accepted a "Call", offered through  
the Colonial Committee by the first  
Presbyterian Congregation, arrived  
here in May 1865. Mr. Nimmo  
at the same period having been  
removed to Canada and his con-  
gregation recommended by the Colonial  
Committee to amalgamate with the  
first Presbyterian, it was expected  
that the Presbyterianism of Victoria  
would be moulded into one strong  
and harmonious congregation  
under Mr. Somerville. From

May 1865 till February 1866, when the annual Congregational Meeting took place, the Church prospered so well that the debt on the building was nearly cleared. Groundless, suspicious, however, had been entertained by a few that Mr. Somerville and his friends, instead of seeking the <sup>highest</sup> spiritual welfare of all, were seeking the particular good of the Church of Scotland. And at this Annual Meeting it was discovered that shortly before, the three individuals who had previously held the property by a temporary Deed in fee simple, had without consulting the Congregation changed it into a Trust Deed in favor of themselves, giving them very extensive powers over Doctrine, Discipline, Minister, and Congregation. Mr. Somerville and the Congregation having signified their disapproval in explicit terms consulted the Colonial Committee as to their course. With their approval they withdrew from the first Presbyterian Church and on fifth September 1866 formed themselves into a Congregation in connection with the Church of Scotland. They assembled on Sabbath 16<sup>th</sup> Septm. in the old Gymnasium Hall which had been secured and prepared for Divine worship. On the 10<sup>th</sup> October the Congregation met, and the name St. Andrew's Church having been adopted, the following gentlemen