

George Street School ?relics? find home at Aurora Museum & Archives



It was quite literally a cornerstone of learning for generations of Aurora students, and now relics from the former George Street Public School building have found a permanent place in the Aurora Museum and Archives.

Earlier this month, crews working on demolishing the building to make way for an expansive park on the lion's share of the site and residential lots on the George Street frontage, recovered the sealed relic box that was placed in the building's cornerstone on September 14, 1957.

The box was formally removed from the corner of the building on April 8 by Mayor Tom Mrakas, accompanied by Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland.

Inside, lovingly bound together with a red ribbon as vivid as ever, were minutes from a meeting of the Aurora Public School Board ? this was nearly 15 years before the foundation of the York Region District School Board ? on March 7, 1957; a copy of the Aurora Banner; coins from 1957 ? including all denominations from the penny, to a 50-cent piece, to that year's Voyageur silver dollar; a list of names associated with the completion of the building; and an Order of Ceremony from the cornerstone laying event itself.

?While it may resemble a time capsule at first glance, the box is more accurately described as a ?foundation deposit' ?a practice dating back thousands of years, traditionally used to sanctify buildings and mark significant moments in their construction,? said the Town and Museum in a statement. ?Unlike time capsules, foundation deposits often contain no instructions for future reopening, and instead serve as a quiet, symbolic gesture to future generations. The cornerstone and relic box were placed by Trustee C.V. Peterson, Chairman of the Board at the time. The ceremony was marked by a dedication from Rev. J.C. MacFarlane, Representative of the Ministerial Association, and remarks from then-Mayor James Murray.

?This unexpected discovery not only offers a rare glimpse into the civic pride and community spirit of 1950s Aurora, but also reaffirms the deep historical roots shared by today's residents. The relic box and its contents are now safely housed at the Aurora Museum & Archives, where they will be preserved, studied, and appreciated for generations to come.?

The Town and Museum note for posterity that the meeting minutes were contributed by Secretary Harold Clark; the Banner by then-editor Dorothy Barker; the coins by Trustee Betty Ward; and the list of names by site architect William H. Robinson.

?The weather didn't stop what was truly a memorable day at George Street School,? said Mayor Mrakas on social media. ?It was an

incredible experience to see the items, letters, coins, and a copy of the Aurora Banner that students and staff from the past left behind ? a snapshot of Aurora's history.

?As we celebrate the past, we continue to look ahead ? building a future rooted in community, connection, and pride in where we've come from.?

By Brock Weir