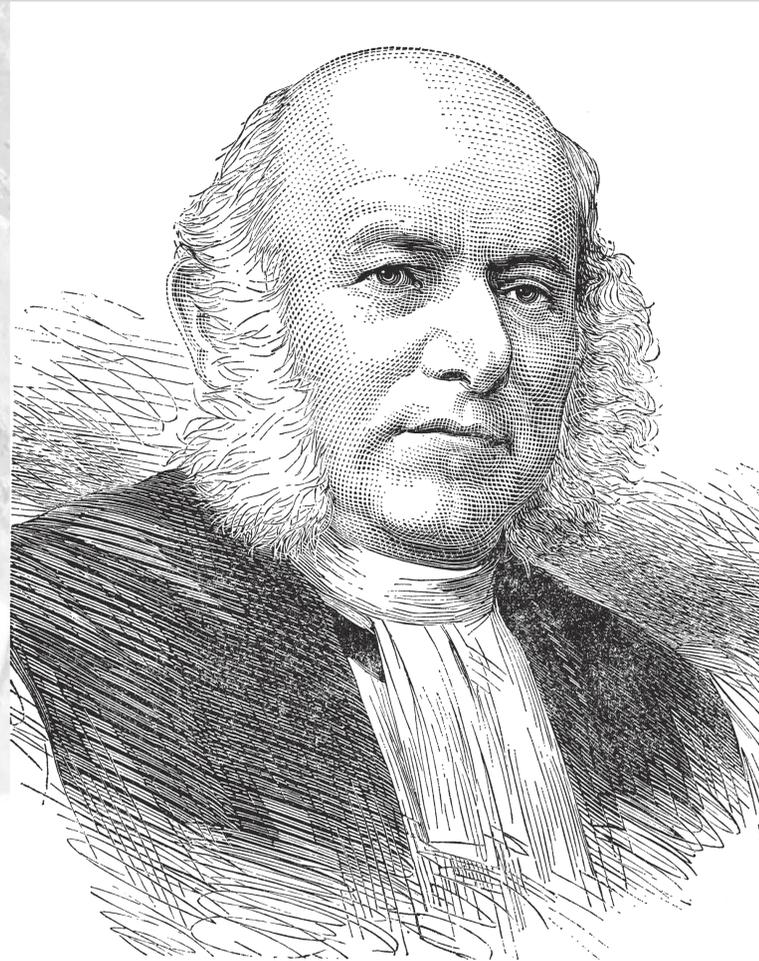


Reverend Isaac Hellmuth

(1817-1901)

Founder of University of Western Ontario



POLISH SPIRIT



Hanging in the Great Hall is the portrait of the little man from Poland, dressed as a prelate of the Church of England. He still presides over our University from his painted vantage point, as his legacy has grown beyond even his own vision.

Father William Cliff, *Western Alumni Gazette*, August 2003

Isaac Hellmuth was born son of a rabbi in Warsaw and attended rabbinical school there. In his teens, he moved with his parents to Prussia, where he broke with his family and converted to Christianity. He received his education at the prestigious University of Breslau, now Wroclaw, Poland. After emigrating to England in 1842, he was baptised in the Church of England, and became an ardent member of its evangelical wing.

Arriving in Canada in 1845, he initially worked among German-speaking settlers in the diocese of Toronto and then in Sherbrooke, Quebec, as rector of the parish and as professor of Hebrew at Bishop's College in nearby Lennoxville. Hellmuth studied for the priesthood at the Diocesan Theological Institution in Cobourg and Bishop's College, where he was ordained in Church of England in 1846. In 1847, he married Catherine Maria Evans, a wealthy Montrealer, with whom he had three children.

Hellmuth returned to England in 1853 to become the organizing secretary of the Colonial Church and School Society, which named him its general secretary for Canada in 1856. After establishing branches of the Society throughout British North America, he resigned from this demanding post in 1861 and went to London, Upper Canada, to become Archdeacon of Huron Diocese. There he assisted Bishop Benjamin Cronyn in the establishment of Huron College in 1863. Hellmuth became the college's first professor of divinity, then its Dean, meanwhile also founding two private secondary schools, one for boys and one for girls. In 1871, after Bishop Cronyn's death, he was consecrated the second Bishop of Huron. In 1878, he consolidated his educational enterprises by founding the University of Western Ontario and becoming its first Chancellor.

In 1884, Isaac Hellmuth resigned his Canadian posts and returned to England.

Photos from top left clockwise:

- Bishop Isaac Hellmuth / Photo – Huron College archives
 - The University of Western Ontario campus
 - A plaque on the wall of Huron College, founded by Bishop Hellmuth in London, Ontario
 - The entrance to Western University
- Other photos – Ewa Szozda

