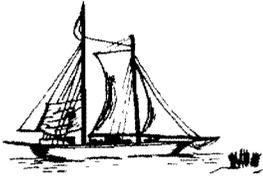


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HISTORY of ST. JOHN the EVANGELIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA 1850-1975

[Continued from the January-March 1976 Issue]

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In this issue we conclude our three-part presentation of the history of St. John's Episcopal Church. The two previous issues, XI-4 and XII-1, covered the years from 1850 to 1925 and the contents were quoted directly from the 1926 publication by Dorsey Ewing, HISTORICAL SKETCH COMMEMORATIVE OF THE 75th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ST. JOHN'S PARISH, AUGUST 25th 1850. We now continue our quotation of the Ewing monograph, ending with a list of the clergy which he compiled through 1926.

ORGAN - MUSIC - CHOIR

From the earliest days of St. John's Church the Vestry has encouraged and supported those in charge of the music of the Church. On December 9, 1854, the following Resolution was passed:

"Whereas, the use of an organ is essentially necessary in the performance of the ceremonies connected with the worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and

"Whereas, Mrs. J. S. Large has kindly consented to present Saint John's Church with an organ at such time as the salary of an organist shall amount to a sum sufficient for the payment for the same;

"We, the Wardens and Vestrymen of said Church do resolve: First--That the services of Mrs. Large, as organist, be solicited from the first day of January, 1855, and that the Sunday offerings be exclusively appropriated for the payment of a salary to such organist: Resolved,

"Secondly--That the Rector be, and he is hereby authorized and requested to procure a suitable organ--with the assurance from us that the Sunday offerings shall be appropriated in the manner herein specified.

"Stockton, December 9th, 1854."

"Signed:

Senior Warden: R. K. Eastman
Junior Warden: Allen Lee Bours
Vestrymen: H. T. Compton
H. H. Hewlett
Chas. P. Greenly

John B. Hall
Geo. A. Shurtleff
Gilbert B. Claiborne
Richard Fowler

This resulted in the purchase of a Melodeon, which was used for about seven years.

On June 6, 1859, the Vestry appointed E. F. Chittenden, Senior Warden, and J. Little and L. M. Hickman to make arrangements for forming a good choir.

January 17, 1860, the Vestry resolved that an organ be purchased, provided the sum of \$500.00 could be raised by voluntary subscription, Mr. L. M. Hickman being appointed to make the purchase.

On May 31, 1860, the \$500.00 having been raised, the Rector was authorized to send a Bill of Exchange for \$500.00 to New York, together with five promisory notes for \$107.00 each.

January 11, 1861, a committee was appointed to arrange for the construction of the choir gallery for the new organ, soon to arrive.

February 12, 1861, the resignation of the organist, Mr. W. L. Needham, was accepted and Miss Whitney engaged in his place.

February 27, 1861, the new organ having arrived, McCraith & Shelland, organ builders of San Francisco, were engaged to set it up and tune it at a cost of \$200.00. The old Melodeon was then sold for \$150.00. The cost of the organ was about \$1500.00--installed complete.

Some time between 1876 and 1880 Mr. Birdsall, who was a great believer in congregational singing, had the organ taken down from its original position in the organ loft at the west end of the old Church, and placed at the south of the Chancel. It stayed there for some time, without any case to cover up the pipes and mechanism, and must have presented an extraordinary sight. It was afterward returned to the organ loft and stayed there until the new Church was built, when it was installed in its present position. This organ is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, Church organ in California. Certainly it is excelled in beauty of tone by none. It is to be hoped that some day it may be possible to rebuild it, with modern electric action,

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place it in a more suitable case, so that it will speak more directly into the body of the Church, and move the Console to a better position. The pipes, of course, should all be used as they are so that the tone will be in no way altered.

In 1869 the Vestry appointed a committee to organize a choir. Among the soloists and prominent choir singers may be mentioned:

- Miss Mary Chittenden
- Mrs. Chas. Pinkham
- Mr. Hugo Talbot
- Geo. Vincent (father of our present Horace Vincent)
- Louis Hewlett
- Edward Bellis
- Miss Eliza Lang (Rose Edwards, the actress)--1880-1881
- Miss Belle Rogers--1884-1885
- Mr. Wm. Jones and Mrs. McLochlin--1884-1885
- Miss Clara Stier--1887-1892
- Mr. K. Brueck--1891
- Miss Nellie Voglesang--1889 to 1892
- Miss Eliza Lang--1890
- Mr. Robert Fyfe and Mr. Ira Ladd--1891-1892

ORGANISTS

- Mrs. J. S. Large January 1, 1855 to April, 1856
- Miss Grove April 1, 1856 to March, 1857
- Miss Loretta Kroh 1857 to Spring of 1859
- Mr. W. L. Needham Spring of 1859 to February, 1861
- Mr. John Kelher February, 1861 to 1862
- Miss Whitney 1862 to July, 1863
- Mrs. Nicholson 1866 to 1867
- Miss Nellie Gardner 1868 to 1869
- Mr. S. D. Waterman 1872 to 1880
- Mr. Hugo Talbot 1880 to 1883
- Mr. Chas. E. Owen 1883 to 1905
- Mr. G. Albrecht 1900, Choirmaster
- Lewis Thwaites 1897 to 1898
- Gerald Barton 1901 to 1902
- E. W. Buss January, 1902 to November, 1905
- Mrs. Horace E. Prole 1905 to 1909
- Mr. J. M. Nutting 1909 to Date

CHOIRMASTERS

- Mr. Henry Kirke White 1892 to 1894
- Mr. Robert Lloyd 1895 to 1899
- Mr. James E. Ziegler 1908 to 1917

The first vested choir was organized in 1892 and gave their first service on December 18 of that year. Henry Kirke White was the Choirmaster, Charles E. Owen, the Organist, George Dohrmann, the Crucifer, and the following men and boys made up the choir:

BOYS

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| J. Dorsey Ewing | Norman Compton |
| Oxley Moore | Richard W. Tully |
| Hugh B. Chalmers | Howard Oates |
| B. Walker Bours | Chester Moore |
| Clark G. Wakefield | John A. Zimmerman |
| Archie Hewitt | Bert F. Kitchener |
| Percy Wollam | Delmar Hewlett |
| Harry Hewitt | Mark Daniels |
| Lewis E. Wright | Ralph Phelps |
| Roy B. Webster | George R. Smith |
| Geo. O. Ernest | |

MEN

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| W. W. Oates | Charles Wood |
| Howard Mosher | H. H. Fisher |
| Morris Wenk | Preston Morris |
| W. H. Lorenz | Fred Power |
| Argyle Tully | Robert Fyfe |
| Ross Perkins | |

The Boys' Choir was continued under Robert Lloyd, [Mr. G.] Albrecht, T. [L.?] Thwaites, Barton Buss, Mrs. Prole and Mr. Nutting until some time in 1909 or 1910, when Ziegler introduced some women Sopranos and Contraltos to help the tone of the boys.

The membership of the present Choir is as follows:

Sopranos--Mrs. R. G. W. Fyfe, Mrs. F. J. Painton, Miss Vincent, Miss Wolf, Mrs. Florence Waite, Mrs. Powell, Miss Betty Anne Vail, Miss Hazel Ridenour, Miss Young and Miss Wolf.

Altos--Mrs. Maurice Nunan and Miss Ella Ross.

Tenors--Mr. Horace Vincent, Mr. C. P. Wilkinson and Mr. F. J. Painton.

Basses--Mr. W. G. Bywater, Mr. F. N. Vail, Mr. Robert Glenn, Mr. Emile Painton, Mr. William Jones and Mr. Reid.

Organist and Choirmaster--Mr. J. Marshall Nutting.

St. John's has always been fortunate in getting good men to take charge of the music. From the earliest times down to the present, the music has been of a dignified and Churchly character. No cheap or trashy songs have been used, anthems have been chosen from the best Church composers, and the music library contains a fair collection of the best in Church music. Especial attention has always been paid to the singing of the hymns, and there are few choirs, anywhere, who sing so large a percentage of the total number of hymns in the Hymnal, or sing them so well.

ST. JOHN'S PIONEER CHURCH WOMAN

THE FIRST congregation of St. John's Church was composed of four ladies and four gentlemen, one little school girl and one little Indian boy. They were Dr. and Mrs. G. A. Shurtleff, Mr. and Mrs. Pinto, Mr. and Mrs. Lambier, Mrs. Reid and Mr. Knight. The little Indian boy was a protege of Mrs. Reid and was baptized before he died. The little school girl was Miss Mary A. Grattan, who is now Mrs. Mary A. Bidwell.

Mrs. Bidwell is the sole survivor of that first congregation and the present congregation is looking forward with pleasure at having her with us on this, the 75th anniversary of St. John's Church.

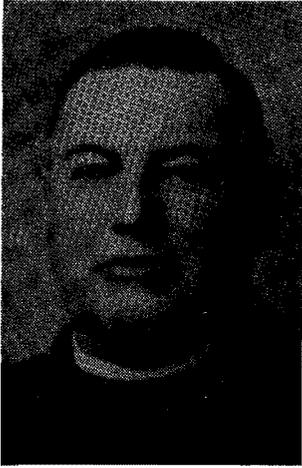
From those early pioneer days up until she left Stockton a few years ago she was ever an active and faithful worker in the Parish of St. John's. Upon her removal to Reno, Nevada, she became a member of Trinity Church, but the hallowed recollections of her old Church, here, remained. A letter received from her is here printed because of its historical and sentimental value:

"Mr. Dorsey Ewing:

"I received your kindly letter, asking me for information of the early history of our dear old St. John's in Stockton.

"To begin, I will write a little, as briefly as I can, to explain how I came to be the seventh one in that gathering of six. Dr. G. A. Shurtleff and wife, Dr. Reed and wife, Mr. Pinto and wife, and myself, Miss Mary A.

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REVEREND HUGH E. MONTGOMERY served as rector of St. John's Church from July, 1922 to December, 1927. During his tenure a new rectory was purchased at the corner of Van Buren and Magnolia streets.



MRS. MARY A. BIDWELL, nee Gratton, was a member of the original congregation. She arrived in Stockton in 1852 and enrolled in a private girls' school. While attending school she lived with Dr. and Mrs. George A. Shurtleff.

Grattan. I came to Stockton in September, 1852. There were only three Churches—Presbyterian, Methodist and Catholic. There was not one school building in the town, but three private schools, one for girls. As my family lived on a ranch, I attended the one for girls, but they had as many boarders as they had room for, so I went to live with Dr. and Mrs. Shurtleff and went to the girls' school as a day pupil.

"At that time they were considering a meeting place for the Episcopalians, as they were attending the other Churches. They secured the room where Court was held in the Corinthian Building, a three-story frame structure facing the river opposite the steamboat landing. It was owned by Capt. Weber, the founder of the city of Stockton, as he had planned to have the business on that side. [The] Postoffice, a printing office, Custom House and other offices were there in the Corinthian Building.

"Bishop Kip had sent The Rev. Morgan and he held services till November. He was not well and perhaps discouraged. Then The Rev. Large came with his wife and lovely little daughter. They were so genial and adapted themselves so easily to our Western inconveniences. They had Thanksgiving dinner with the Shurtleffs. I was not there, as I had gone to my home for that day. The new Court House, on the site of the present one, had been completed, so the committee secured the Court Room, which was not quite ready, and the ladies made the minister's surplice. I do not know, but I am sure they bought it all cut and fitted as his wife helped to make it. There were no sewing machines. It was made beautifully. It was the very finest linen cambric. The willing hands made the work go quickly and the following Sunday had service in our new room, with plenty of sunny windows and a good congregation for those times. The ladies had rented a small Melodeon. As we had no choir before, the people were wondering who was to play, when Mrs. Large took her seat, opening her hymn book and played a soft, sweet voluntary. There were good singers present and Mrs. Large gave them confidence, and how we did enjoy

the music of that little instrument!

"Among the singers that day was a Stockton girl, whose sister was the lady who taught the school I attended. They had a piano, one of three in private homes at that time. Miss Margaret Kroh, the late Margaret Blake Alverson. She had such a fine voice: it was very noticeable as a young school girl. She sang with our choir, which Mrs. Large trained, until she went to the old seminary at Benicia, where she had her first vocal culture, and afterwards became California's 'Prima Donna.'

"The young men were fine, too, in those pioneer days: so courteous: always so pleased to escort the young ladies to and from Church, and carry their umbrellas. It seems, as I remember that winter, it rained nearly every Sunday, but it did not keep us from going and we never thought it an inconvenience to walk. It did not take much to make young people happy that winter. It was a new condition to us: no frost or snow: as few of the early comers had lived in a land that was not bleak with snow and ice for half the year. There were no theatres, but we had a few concerts. One, the first one I ever attended, was given by a beautiful and famous singer, Catharine Haynes (?), known as the Irish Nightingale. Her mother was with her and a fine violinist. It was given in the unfinished Methodist Church; tickets ten dollars the couple, and all the seats taken. It did not seem very much then; money was plentiful. That was in October, 1852.

"The Fall of 1854, Miss Kroh's school closed, as she was in failing health; died the following year; Stockton's pioneer teacher. I went home then and could not go to Church regularly afterwards, as the roads were so muddy people had to travel most of the time on horseback.

"I have a clipping from a Stockton paper with the account of Dr. Shurtleff's death, an account of his life work and his condition after his long years of work and study into the causes of mental disease and the wreck of his own grand mind. But no mention of his connection with his Church, as one of the first Vestrymen. And I know what a cheerful giver he was, and his wife as cheerful a worker.

"After I was married and lived on a farm, I did not know as much about the first Church as I did about the second one. When our children were old enough to go to the town schools, we rented the farm, and built a house in the eastern part of the city, to be near the Jefferson School.

"The Mission was in an old frame building, which had been the old Vineyard School. The Rev. Elias Birdsall was Rector and lived in that neighborhood. There were also several Church families living up that way, so someone proposed that we start a Mission Sunday School, and we did. Had a goodly number of children and teachers. Dr. Walter Langdon was ever prompt and faithful.

"We were all interested and happy at the success of our venture, when children came who had never been to Sunday School before and the mothers were beginning to come to visit. There was a little old organ and a dear young girl came to play for us—but, after a good beginning in our summer's work, a grass fire started one week day that burned our building and all its contents.

"I will send you this, with a feeling that it may not be of much interest. The picture of the Church is very dear to me, as I was confirmed there by our first Bishop; all my four children were baptized there and all confirmed by Bishop Kip, except my youngest daughter; Bishop Nichols had come by then.

"I do not know how we came to get that beautiful window. In those days we had no automobiles, moving

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pictures, street cars, or ice cream stands. We had more money; our clothing was good, but only a trifling cost compared to now.

"I will write more about the new Mission on East Market Street. Hope you will think of my many years (if this paper is not what you expect); in a few more months I will have reached my 86th birthday. I have many blessings to be thankful for: the possession of my faculties, good health; surely my Heavenly Father has all my heartfelt gratitude and devotion.

"Sincerely yours,
"MARY A. BIDWELL."



THE RT. REV. LOUIS CHILDS SANFORD, D.D., first Bishop of the Missionary Jurisdiction of San Joaquin. Consecrated on June 25, 1911, he served the San Joaquin area until his death on August 10, 1948. The Missionary District of San Joaquin was authorized in 1910 and organized the following year. It became a regular diocese in November of 1961.

WORK OF THE WOMEN OF ST. JOHN'S

IN ONE of the earliest written reports of services in St. John's Parish we find this: "In the Summer of 1853. Rev. Mr. Morgan came to Stockton and held services in the Corinthian Bldg. on the Peninsula. Evening Services were held at 4 p.m., as there was no way to light the room, which was the one in which court was held. The first congregation was composed of four men, four women, a school girl and a small Indian boy." The school girl mentioned in this report is now Mrs. Bidwell to whom we are indebted for many interesting details of the early St. John's.

The first big effort of the women of St. John's was advertised in the San Joaquin Republican of Thursday, December 24th, as follows:

CHURCH FESTIVAL--DEC. 24th, 26th, 27th

"It should be borne in mind that the elegant holiday festival under the direction of the Ladies of St. John's Church will commence this evening at the City Hall. It is only necessary to say the proceeds are for the purpose of aiding in the completion of the new Church. The elegance of the entertainment and the sacredness of the cause should and doubtless will ensure a large attendance."

The news report on the festival read "Partook of an excellent supper. Dec. 25th, and raffled off a fine piano from the establishment of Nunn and Clark. The whole affair successful." Thus in those early days was established a precedent.

Of the twenty years of quiet effort from 1857 to 1877, of the ceaseless toil, the steady effort to build and equip the Church home. Of the many suppers and sales the women held during that time there is no record. However, the single item culled from an old paper, "The ladies of the Parish in the Spring of 1879 completely renovated and refurnished the whole Church at a cost of \$750.00--Entire amount raised entirely by themselves," certainly means that their efforts were successful.

All these years (twenty years) the upkeep of the Church and the Sunday School was largely due to the women.

In 1877 St. John's Guild was organized. The offices of the Guild were all held by men; but the eight active chapters of the Guild were composed of the women of the Church. That they were workers indeed is shown by the reports of the various chapters.

Stockton at this time was divided into districts, and to the women of the Church was assigned the duty of collecting from each district. Thus to correspond to the six political districts of the town we have the six collectors of the Guild. This was in a way a forerunner of our present annual campaign.

In 1884 there is a report from the Sewing Circle of St. John's of the sum of \$3860.45 on hand, which money was applied to the Building Fund for the new Church.

The first mention of the Women's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions is a notice of a meeting in the Vestry room of the Church on the 7th of August, 1885. \$28.30 was collected and sent to the Diocesan Secretary. "The object of the society was to aid missionary fields in the Diocese." The membership at the opening meeting was about fifty.

As the years pass the duties of the chapters becoming greater, they each elected their own officers and worked independently, as the Women's Auxiliary, Guild, Altar Guild, and St. Margaret's Guild. In May, 1919, at a general assembly of the women the various organizations were again united under one head as the Church Service League and as such continue to function.

To the women of St. John's, as to all Church women, has fallen the details of Church labors that build the material foundations. Who can count the stitches that have gone into the garments, the endless suppers, sales and dinners that have swelled the building funds? Nor has the press of material needs made less earnest the spiritual building--as the work in the Church School testifies--the building in early childhood of that foundation of faith that endures.

St. John's Church School was organized early in the life of the Parish and the women's part in that work has been a very active one.

Several times during the past fifty years the school has formed Mission Schools in the south end of town. For many years a Mission Sunday School was held on Market Street. The last effort in that field was during the Summer of 1913 when each Sunday afternoon a school of about fifty

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assembled in a warehouse on South Pilgrim Street.

St. John's Church School has been blessed in the guidance of many strong and beautiful characters. Outstanding among these, beloved by all, is Mrs. Frank Coburn, who, for the last 34 years, has taught a class in the school and been the director of a group of young girls, and the late Mrs. P. B. Ewing, who for 40 years was a teacher and the Treasurer of the Sunday School. Her passing two years ago has left a void in our Church life; but the memory of her untiring labors for her beloved Church remains with us a lasting incentive to increased efforts.

**RECTORS AND ASSISTANT MINISTERS
OF ST. JOHN'S PARISH,
STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA, FROM 1850 TO 1925**

- Rev. Orlando Harriman, Jr. August 24, 1850--
September, 1850
- Rev. O. Clarke (Sojourner) September, 1851--
October 31, 1851
- Rev. John Morgan (Sojourner) December, 1852--
January, 1853
- Rev. John Morgan (Sojourner) June, 1853--
September, 1853
- Rev. John Reynolds (Sojourner) February, 1853--
June, 1853
- Rev. Jos. S. Large November, 1854--April, 1856
- Rev. E. W. Hager April, 1856--May, 1859
- Rev. David F. MacDonald May, 1859--February, 1862

- Rev. J. G. Gassman May, 1862--April, 1866
- Rev. Elias Birdsall June, 1867--July, 1868
- Rev. Dr. Breck (Supply) July, 1868--February, 1869
- Rev. W. F. Tucker February, 1869--June, 1870
- Rev. Elias Birdsall September, 1870--July, 1872
- Rev. H. L. Foote August, 1872--October, 1876
- Rev. Elias Birdsall November, 1876--November, 1880
- Rev. E. H. Ward January, 1881--June, 1885
- Rev. W. C. Mills September, 1885--September, 1888
- Rev. W. J. Lemon November, 1888-- November, 1893
- Rev. W. J. Case April 1, 1891--July 1, 1891
(Supply for Rev. W. J. Lemon on account of illness.)
- Rev. D. L. V. Moffitt ... December, 1893--September, 1895
- Rev. Daniel G. MacKinnon November, 1895--
January, 1900
- Rev. John T. Bryan July, 1900--October, 1901
- Rev. Alfred S. Clark December, 1901--January, 1905
- Rev. Reginald H. Starr February, 1905--May, 1908
- Rev. Wm. T. Renison October, 1908--January, 1922
(Leave of absence, April, 1918 to April, 1919, in
France, Y. M. C. A. work, World War)
- Rev. G. B. D. Stewart (Supply Rev. W. T. Renison)
April, 1918--April, 1919
- Rev. E. L. Howe September, 1919--January, 1922
(Associate Rector, and in charge of Department
of Religious Education in Missionary District of
San Joaquin.)
- Rev. E. L. Howe (Supply) January, 1922--July, 1922
- Rev. H. E. Montgomery July, 1922--Incumbent



We now conclude this series on St. John's Church with a brief account of its activities during the last fifty years, from 1926 to the present. For this information we are indebted to the late Clara Shepherd Renison, to Father James T. Booth (the present rector of St. John's), and to the Church Vestry.¹

While the Reverend Hugh Montgomery was still pastor chimes were added to the church organ. First used by St. John's organist, J. Marshall Nutting, in a special service on July 22, 1925, they were a memorial gift presented to the Church by one of its members, C. M. Jackson.

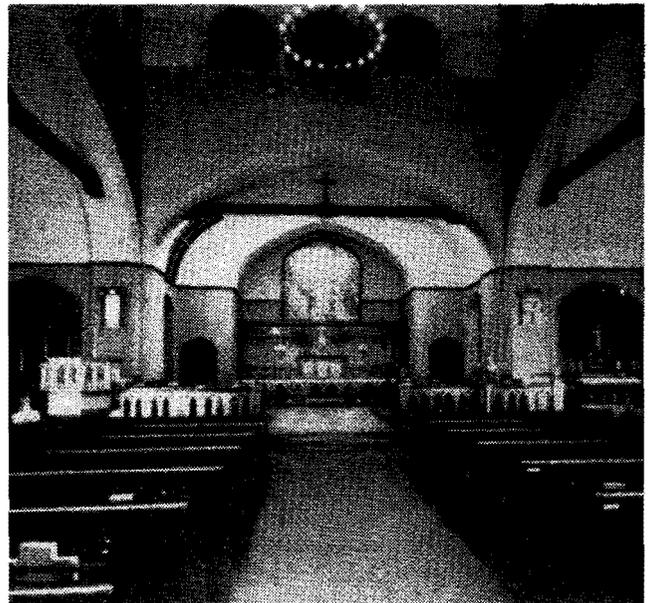
The historic organ (the first pipe organ in Stockton and still in use today) had been manufactured in Boston, shipped around the Horn, and then installed in the balcony at the rear of the original church in March of 1861. In 1892 it was transferred to its present location in the chancel of the new church.

With the transfer of Father Montgomery to All Souls Church in Berkeley at the end of 1927 a Reverend C. P. Leachman was named rector, but he remained for only six months. He in turn was succeeded by the Reverend Seth C. Hawley, whose tenure was to carry the church through its most trying times, the depression years of the 1930's.

Father Hawley proved to be an energetic and enthusiastic leader, and immediately picked up where Father Montgomery had left off; the Group System (also called the Group Movement) was reactivated and participation on the part of the parishioners hit a new all-time high. Among the projects undertaken was the installation, in late 1928, of six stained-glass memorial windows in the walls of the nave or main transept. The largest window in the church, occupying the end of the north transept, was also installed at this time.²

In 1930, despite the growing recession caused by the stock market crash of the previous year, members of the Church in the Terminous area northwest of Stockton opened a small house of worship which was consecrated by Bishop Sanford under the title of the Emmanuel Chapel.

As the recession deepened into the prolonged depression of the 1930's St. John's, like all the other churches in the community, found it impossible to continue many of its



INTERIOR VIEW of St. John's Church, taken in 1925.

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programs, or to meet its outstanding debts previously contracted (during the prosperity of the 1920's). However, Father Hawley was able, thanks to the generous donations of Kate Austin, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Simpson, and a Mrs. Monteagle, to clear the most pressing debts.

Pastoral work begun at this time in the South Stockton area mushroomed later with the development of war-related industries and activities in the area during World War II. With the opening of the Edison Villa Housing Project (located on the north side of Navy Drive and west of the present I-5 freeway) the National Council of the Episcopal Church granted some funds for the centralization of this effort in the project area. The missionary activity was basically interdenominational, but the supervision of the program and the leadership involved was furnished by the local parish. This effort continued until about the time of the closing of Edison Villa in the latter part of the 1950's.

An unusual event in the history of the local Church occurred in April of 1933 when the Eighth Province of the Church held its Provincial Synod in Stockton. Delegates from all the parishes in the western states attended. Then in November of 1935 the Young People's Group hosted the first annual diocesan convention of similar youth groups throughout the thirteen-county area. A month later, on December 27, the parishioners of St. John observed the 85th anniversary of the founding of the congregation with special services and a parish festival.

In the spring of 1939 Father Hawley resigned and for the next several months services were conducted by various clergymen and lay-readers. In August (1939) the Reverend George Foster Pratt arrived from Hoquiam, Washington, to assume the rectorship. With the growing prosperity resulting from the outbreak of war in Europe the same year it was not long before the debts of the church were finally cleared. After U.S. entry into World War II, Stockton became an important military center as well as a war production center, and the city began to grow rapidly. Mr. Waddell Robey took charge of the missionary work at Edison Villa (mentioned above). Following his ordination to the Ministry Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hasson assumed the task, continuing to serve until the program's disbandment in the 1950's.

In 1947 Father Renison returned to Stockton, and although officially retired from the active ministry, served St. John's in various capacities until as late as 1953. The Reverend Charles W. Boyce served as an assistant to the rector following his ordination in Canada in early 1948. He left Stockton in February of the next year, however, following acceptance of a call to the Church at Del Mar.

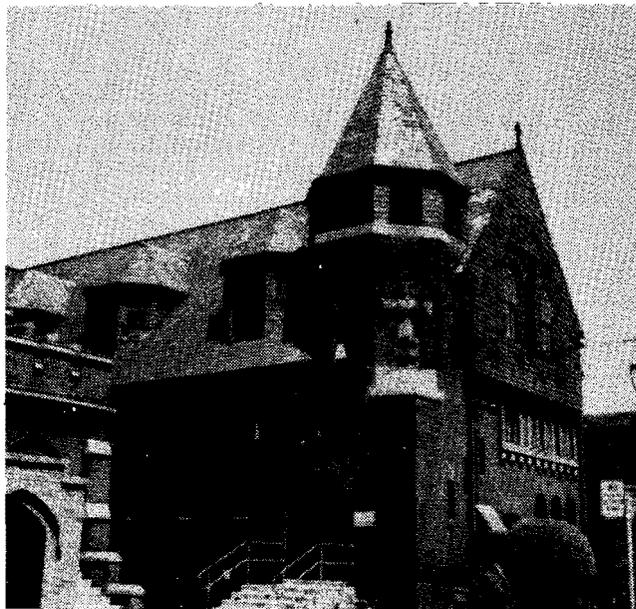
These post-war years saw continued growth in Stockton, and the work of the Church was extended to cover the growing suburban areas of the city. By 1950 the church building had undergone extensive interior renovation, including recarpeting and electrical rewiring. The basement of the historic structure (called the Crypt) was converted into classrooms for the Church School. And on July 3, 1950, St. Anne's Chapel in Lincoln Village was opened to accommodate the residents of Lincoln Village and north Stockton.³

In the fall of 1950 Father Pratt was succeeded by the Reverend Paul E. Langpaap. Of major concern to the congregation during his tenure was the future of the Church in downtown Stockton. This problem was to plague the parish through the 1960's. As the area continued to grow and people continued to move outward from the central city (a national phenomenon of the 1950's and 1960's!), the question of retaining the downtown church

assumed major proportions. Should the parish church remain downtown, with new parishes forming in the suburbs, or should it move out to suburbia itself? Could it hope to continue to attract suburban families if it were to remain downtown? If it were to remain where it was, would the cost of necessary renovation and/or maintenance on the existing structures justify remaining? With the exception of historic St. Mary's Catholic Church on Washington Street, the other pioneer denominations had already moved out from the downtown area.

One obstacle to the sale of the downtown property was the inclusion of a reversionary clause in Captain Weber's original deed to the congregation which stated that if the property were no longer used as a church it would revert to the Weber heirs. This problem, however, was eliminated in 1955 when Weber's grandson, Charles Weber III, presented the Church with a quit-claim deed, thereby freeing the congregation to dispose of the property if it wished.

No permanent decision on relocation was made during the administration of Father Langpaap. In January of 1958 the Reverend Peter N. A. Barker replaced Langpaap, remaining until his resignation in September of 1970. During his rectorship the question of relocation came up again. The Vestry voted in September of 1965 to set up a "Master Plan Committee" to formulate both immediate and long-range plans concerning the parish. The results were generally inconclusive; the report recommended some repair and renovation of the existing facilities, and left rather open the basic question of possible relocation in the future.



A 1969 PHOTOGRAPH of St. John's Guild Hall with a portion of the south transept of the church showing on the left edge.

Courtesy of Raymond W. Hillman

In retrospect, it would appear that perhaps the inability to make a decision in this particular case was in the best interests of the Church after all. By the beginning of the decade of the 70's it became apparent, through the downtown urban renewal project and other actions, both business and civic, that the central core of the city was once more becoming a vibrant and living part of the total community. With the re-vitalization of downtown Stockton as a government, banking, and business center once more.

ST. JOHN'S PARISH (con't)

the voices raised in behalf of relocation seem to be diminishing as St. John's begins to realize that it, like old St. Mary's, can continue to fulfill its obligations to its parishioners living in the residential areas while also providing much-needed services for the downtown core residents.

Soon after Father Langpaap's arrival in Stockton in 1950 discussion began on the feasibility of purchasing property in northwest Stockton for the erection of a new parish. At that time St. Anne's had recently opened to serve the communicants in Lincoln Village, and the Weber heirs still held reversionary rights to the downtown parcel. Finally, on September 27, 1954, St. Stephen's was officially organized as a parochial mission of St. John's Church. A three-acre parcel on Plymouth Road north of Del Rio was purchased and a temporary church-school-social hall building was put into use under the leadership of the Reverend Max L. Drake, at that time an assistant at St. John's.⁴

In 1954 one of St. John's loyal parishioners and the wife of a former rector of the Church, Mrs. Clara Shepherd Reid Renison, passed away. In her memory the Renison Chapel in the north transept of the church was dedicated on Whitsunday of the following year. It has been in continuous use ever since then.

In 1957 the Vestry voted to purchase the Chase Chevrolet building next door (east) to the Guild Hall. This brick building eventually provided sorely-needed office space and rector's office, as well as its "Budget Shop" operation. Two parishioners, Mrs. Ed Fay and Mrs. David Hawley (now deceased) were instrumental in opening the shop in September of 1964. This has proven to be a source of financial aid to the parish.

Following a report on the structural safety and general condition of the church and hall in 1968, a number of renovation and repair projects were undertaken the following year, as finances allowed. Work continued intermittently, culminating in 1975 with a complete renovation of the second floor of the Guild Hall.

In July, 1972, the Stockton Cultural Heritage Board, on behalf of a city just awakening to the importance of recognizing and encouraging the preservation of the physical ties to its pioneer days, declared St. John's Guild Hall to be an historical city landmark. Recognition of its historical significance in the history of Stockton was based not only upon its age, but also upon its unique Nordic style of architecture.

The Reverend Charles Smith succeeded Father Peter Barker as rector in January, 1971. He remained until the spring of 1974. In August, on the eve of St. John's 125th



A 1975 PHOTOGRAPH of St. John's Church and Guild Hall taken from the intersection of North El Dorado and East Miner streets.

ST. JOHN'S PARISH (con't)

anniversary, Father James T. Booth, the present rector, transferred from St. James' Cathedral in Fresno to assume the rectorship of the local parish.

A special 9:30 a.m. service on Sunday, October 26, 1975, marked the 125th anniversary of the founding of St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church. Principal celebrant at the Eucharistic service was the Bishop of the Diocese of San Joaquin, the Right Reverend Victor Rivera, D. D.⁵ Assisting were Father Peter Barker, Father James Booth, and Deacon (now Father) George Cornwell. Other major participants in the historic ceremonies were the Junior and Senior Wardens, George Sinnock and Eldon Woodbridge, respectively. Mr. Sinnock was also the general chairman of the parish observance.

The history of a parish like St. John's is more than just a record of sites purchased, buildings constructed and renovated, of special ceremonies and visiting bishops. These are but the visible, outward signs of a living parish. What is difficult to record, and consequently the most

often neglected by the chroniclers, are the many deeds and services performed, and the many sacrifices made, by its individual members. These are the ingredients that go into creating a strong parish that can, on its 125th anniversary, look backward with just pride, and at the same time look forward to another century-plus of service.

It would seem appropriate, therefore, to end the history of Stockton's St. John the Evangelist Church with a quotation from Dorsey Ewing's introduction in volume XI, no. 4 [page 92], in which he pays tribute to all those pioneer members of a previous generation whose hard work, sacrifice, and devotion had created a strong church:

While we realize that it was God's hand which has guided our past, we would yet remember how much of toil and strife has been needed on the part of His instruments to make us what we are and if possible, to let the lesson of their past devotion rouse up in our hearts an earnest desire to preserve it entire, and to hand it on to others with a real increase of our faith and devotion.

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. The Church Vestry is composed of twelve members, elected by the congregation at its annual meetings, whose general duties include the over-all supervision of the operation of St. John's parish as well as providing lay assistance to the rector. One member among them is appointed annually by the rector to serve as its Senior Warden. The duties of this office may be compared to those of a committee chairman. The present Senior Warden is Mrs. Alice Metcalfe.
2. It is interesting to note that the stained-glass window area over the main entrance to the church (El Dorado Street entrance) was originally installed in 1858 over the main altar on the east end of the first church. The figures in this window include the symbolic representations of the four evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) as well as the figures of Christ and St. John. It is probably the oldest stained-glass church window in the entire San Joaquin Valley. The chancel window (over the main altar), a memorial to Stockton pioneer S. Willard Sperry, was installed at the time the church was constructed (1892). It represents St. John receiving the Gospel. At the present time plans call for the installation of four more stained-glass windows, these to be placed in the cupola area above the intersection of the nave and the transept. These will represent women saints of the church.
There are few historic churches in California whose interior beauty can match that of St. John's, and its windows are undoubtedly the biggest single factor that makes it so distinctive and pleasing to the eye. A 1968 appraisal of the church property indicates an estimated value of \$95,000 for the windows alone.
3. St. Anne's had been organized on July 26, 1949, as a mission church in the fast-growing Lincoln Village subdivision. The parcel is located at 1020 West Lincoln Road, just west of Pacific Avenue. The building was moved to the site from Terminus where it had been constructed in 1930 to serve members of the Church in that area. (The present Emmanuel Chapel at Terminus was built on the same site some time following the removal of this first structure.) St. Anne's received parish status in 1958 and the present rector is the Reverend Douglas Thompson.
4. The name St. Stephen's Mission was formally adopted at a general meeting of interested persons held at the Madison School on September 27, 1954. The first service in the area was held at the home of Mrs. Inez Henderson Pond on October 10, 1954. St. John's parish sponsored the new mission establishment and a surplus army structure, 20 by 100 feet, was purchased to serve as an all-purpose center. Bishop Walters formally separated St. Stephen's from the mother parish on October 1, 1955, giving to it the status of a diocesan mission. Since then additions have been made to the original structure, which now serves only as the church. A concrete block parish hall as well as a vicarage have been added. The present vicar is the Reverend Richard Williams who also serves the Emmanuel Chapel in Terminus.
5. Bishop Rivera is the second clergyman to hold the title of "Bishop of San Joaquin." At first a part of the statewide "Diocese of California" under the pioneer Bishop William I. Kip, the Missionary District of San Joaquin was organized in 1911 with the elevation of Louis C. Sanford to episcopal rank and his appointment as its first bishop. He was succeeded in 1944 by the Rt. Reverend Sumner D. Walters, and it was during his tenure (on November 4, 1961) that the District was raised to the rank of a regular diocese of the Episcopal Church in the U. S. Victor M. Rivera was elected Bishop of San Joaquin upon the retirement of Bishop Walters in 1968. Fresno has been the See City of the diocese since its formation, with St. James' Church serving as the diocesan Cathedral.

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