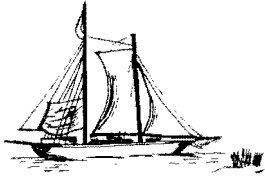
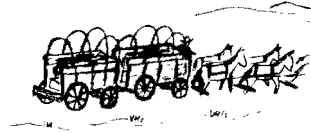


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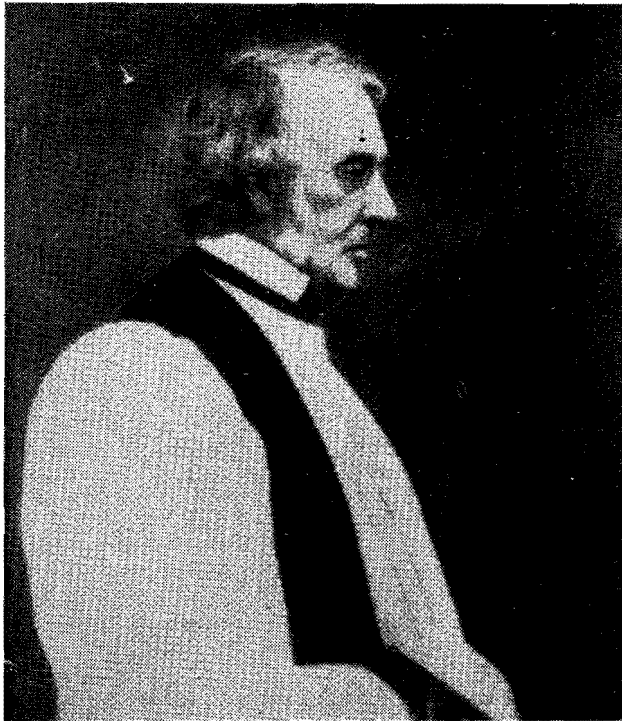
NUMBER 4

## HISTORY of ST. JOHN the EVANGELIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA 1850-1975

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

On October 26, 1975, historic St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church at the corner of Miner and El Dorado streets in downtown Stockton celebrated its one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary. Organized the same year as both the city and county (San Joaquin), the church,



**RT. REV. WILLIAM INGRAHAM KIP** — Consecrated a bishop on October 28, 1853, he arrived in San Francisco on January 29, 1854, and immediately assumed his duties as the first Missionary Bishop of California. He served for 40 years, until his death on April 6, 1893, at the age of 82. His first visit to the pioneer Stockton congregation was on February 18, 1854.

through its clergy and lay leaders, has ministered to the needs of all who have sought communion with it without interruption for over a century -- in times of war and of peace, in prosperous times and in bad times alike. It has been a powerful force working for the good of the entire community, and through the years it has exerted a Christian influence over the temporal affairs of our society throughout the San Joaquin area. Like the other pioneer Stockton churches, St. John's was organized to bring religion and the amenities of society to a people recently arrived in gold-rush California, many of whom were living under the comparatively primitive conditions then common to a frontier settlement. As Stockton and the north San Joaquin valley area continued to grow through the years, so did the need for the ministrations of the Church. Today St. John's, the mother-church of the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin, can look with just pride on the mission churches to which she gave birth and direction during their formative years (St. John the Baptist of Lodi, St. Anne's in Lincoln Village [Stockton], St. Mary's of Manteca, and St. Stephen's on Plymouth Road in west Stockton) and to the 38 other Episcopal churches and missions of the 13-county (San Joaquin, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Alpine, Stanislaus, Mariposa, Mono, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Kern, and Inyo) diocese located in the heart of central California.

The history of the Protestant Episcopal Church in California actually pre-dates the arrival of the Spanish settlers in Alta (Upper) California in 1769. One hundred and ninety years earlier, in June and July of 1579, while Sir Francis Drake was anchored above San Francisco Bay (Drake's Bay is generally conceded by historians to be the site of his anchorage), the chaplain aboard his ship, Francis Fletcher, held Episcopal services on shore on several occasions with both the English crewmen and the native California Indians in attendance. While the clergy of the Franciscan Order (Catholic) were the only Christian ministers in California during the Spanish and Mexican periods, a growing number of Episcopalian laymen began settling in the province in the 1840's along with other Americans and Europeans of different Protes-

## ST. JOHN'S PARISH (con't)

tant faiths.

With the advent of the Gold Rush in 1848-49 people from practically all parts of the world suddenly descended upon the Golden State. These argonauts brought with them the diverse cultural and national traits of their home countries and of our own eastern states. Religious beliefs were as varied as the tongues spoken and the clothing worn by these pioneer settlers. Among the earliest Christian denominations to form congregations during those hectic months was the Protestant Episcopal Church.<sup>1</sup>

In Stockton a Congregational minister, the Reverend Samuel Damon, preached a sermon on July 1, 1849, on board a ship lying at anchor in Stockton Channel, marking the first church service of any kind in the bustling pioneer settlement along the San Joaquin River. About two months later, on September 15 (1849), a Methodist service was held in a tent building. In January, 1850, the Reverend James Woods of the Presbyterian Church arrived in Stockton to preach the gospel. Both the Methodist and Presbyterian churches were officially organized the following spring (March, 1850).<sup>2</sup>

The Protestant Episcopal Church, the subject of this and the next several issues of the HISTORIAN, was the next denomination to organize a local group. Credit for spearheading the movement goes to the Reverend Orlando Harriman, Jr., a recent arrival from the eastern states. The official organization of St. John's Parish dates from August 24, 1850.<sup>3</sup> Seventy-five years later, in January of 1926, the congregation of this pioneer Stockton church celebrated its Diamond Jubilee by hosting a four-day diocesan Convocation and holding special daily church services while it was in session.

One of the noteworthy by-products of this historic event was the publication of a monograph history of the parish entitled HISTORICAL SKETCH COMMEMORATIVE OF THE 75th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ST. JOHN'S PARISH, AUGUST 25th 1850. STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA. Its author, J. W. Dorsey Ewing, was an active member of the congregation for many years and was serving as a vestryman at the time of its publication.<sup>4</sup>

Special anniversary services extending through the first half-year in 1950 marked the centennial celebration of St. John's Parish. In commemoration of this second jubilee Mrs. Clara Shepherd Renison<sup>5</sup> authored a brief history of the parish entitled A SHORT HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH. We are indebted to Mrs. G. P. (Margaret) Roberts, Jr., a long-time member of the parish as well as a member of our Society, for making available to us her copies of both publications. Because of the rarity of the 1926 history, and in order to pass on to the reader the full flavor of Mr. Ewing's work, we are quoting verbatim the body of his monograph. Due to the over-all length of his work, however, we have found it necessary to omit certain sections which were not essential to the story. These include the "FOREWORD," "PARISH PAPERS PUBLISHED," "MEMORIALS AND GIFTS," "PARISH OFFICERS AND ORGANIZATIONS," "LETTERS FROM FORMER RECTORS," the list of wardens and vestryman since the founding of the congregation, and the program of events held during the January, 1926, Convocation. Mrs. Renison's history will be quoted extensively for the period from 1926 to 1950.

For the information covering the last twenty-five years (1950 to 1975) and for the early photographs of the Church and its clergy we are indebted to the present pastor of St. John the Evangelist, Father James T. Booth, and to the Church Vestry. We wish to thank them all for their cooperation.

### HISTORICAL SKETCH COMMEMORATIVE of the 75th ANNIVERSARY of the ORGANIZATION of ST. JOHN'S PARISH

August 25, 1850  
Stockton, California

By J. W. Dorsey Ewing

The source of the impulse which leads us to desire to commemorate the noble deeds of days gone by is to be found in that quality of our souls whose highest exercise is worship -- the worship of God. For just as every heart will instinctively bow itself to the dust before Him whom it acknowledges the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and find a deep delight in such humiliation, so will it crave a time and place to pay its tribute of respect to those who, though it be but a feeble measure, have imitated the deeds of mercy and sacrifice and wisdom which have commended His name to men.

Nor is this all. Simple acts, if they become the germ of steady growing good to future generations, will call for a loving remembrance at some of the marked periods of time after their inception. Nor is it surprising that the century should be the unit of time which most excites our reverence for past achievements. For the century makes an entire gap between the actors of the past and the present, and as one class reaps where the other has sown, it would indeed argue an ungrateful heart if their minds were not roused to reflect somewhat upon the cost of their present enjoyment. And the same feeling, to a greater or less extent, is awakened by the half and three-quarter century period. There is then, also an involuntary looking to the past -- a grateful feeling for present blessings secured to us by the labors of others, or by the toils of those who yet linger to pluck fruit from trees of their own planting.

At the close, therefore, of the three-quarter century period of its existence, we wish to tell the story of the founding and growth of our Parish. It is the story of no great deed as the world counts greatness. Its interest will hardly extend beyond our own circle. But, for all that, it is the story of something which has proved a blessing to this community, and a comfort to many souls now passed into the unseen world. And in the spirit of the Psalmist we would review it, saying, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give the praise." 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.

The history of St. John's Parish derives an additional interest from the fact that it was organized almost at the same time the city of Stockton sprang into existence. Though the site of the city had always been a favorable camping spot of the Indians and early fur trappers, the various attempts to establish a permanent settlement here prior to 1848 were unsuccessful. In that year gold was

## ST. JOHN'S PARISH (con't)

discovered in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California. This news spread rapidly, and the lure of the magical word, Gold, had started a Westward immigration unparalleled in the history of the country. In 1849 the Gold Rush of that year made Stockton an important depot of supplies for the miners hastening on their way to the "Gold Diggings" in the foothills and mountains to the east. A sizable town had sprung up, so in 1850 steps were taken to incorporate it and give it a local government.

The year 1850 seems to have been a great year for the starting of new enterprises in our city. In March of that year the first paper was published here. The organization of the Presbyterian Church here dates from the 17th day of the same month. In May of 1850, the TOWNSHIP of STOCKTON was set apart in the COUNTY of SAN JOAQUIN. The Fire Department dates its organization from June, 1850. The first election of officers under the City Charter was held on August 1, 1850. And on the 24th day of August, in the year 1850, the Episcopal Church here, was organized and named.

To the Rev. Orlando Harriman belongs the honor of holding the first Episcopal services here. A minister of the Episcopal Church, he had come West in the tide of immigration to California and arrived in Stockton. True to his calling, he realized that the Word of God must be the influence to temper the lives and actions of these young men during those days of feverish excitement and unrestraint. Making known his intention of holding services on Sunday, August 25, 1850, he met with ready response from those early pioneers, the majority of whom were men of intellect and education, and brought up in the environment of Christian homes. After the close of the evening services a meeting of those interested was held,

and an election of Wardens and Vestrymen made. Let the minutes of that meeting be the record:

"At a meeting held at Stockton on Sunday evening, August 25th, 1850, for the purpose of organizing a Protestant Episcopal Church, the Rev. Mr. Harriman was elected Chairman, and Wm. Willis, Jr., Secretary.

"On motion of Mr. Wm. Summerhays, a committee was appointed consisting of Messrs. Bradford, Evans and Creaner, to procure a list of names to be presented to the meeting for election as Wardens and Vestrymen. The committee reported the following names:

"For Wardens: Mr. Eastman, Mr. Bissell.

"For Vestrymen: Mr. McCrackin, Mr. Ward, Mr. Schenck, Mr. Knight, Mr. Lansing, Mr. Prentice, Mr. Summerhays, Mr. J. A. Freeborn.

"On motion of Mr. Creaner, the report of the committee was adopted.

"On motion of Mr. Summerhays, it was decided that the Chairman designate the name to be given to the Church about to be established in this place.

"On motion of Mr. Harriman it was decided that the Protestant Episcopal Church now being organized and established in Stockton be called 'St. John's Church.'

"Mr. Eastman, Senior Warden, appointed a meeting of Wardens and Vestrymen to be held at his store on Tuesday evening, at 7:00 o'clock p.m.

"On motion of Mr. Lansing the meeting adjourned.

"WM. WILLIS, JR.,

"O. HARRIMAN, JR.,

"Secretary."

"Chairman."

Mr. Harriman remained here and conducted services for a month, and then left, failing to obtain a support, and on account of ill health.

Nothing further was done in the matter of establishing



AN 1860 VIEW of the first St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in Stockton, California. Construction on the brick structure, on the same site as the present-day

church (northeast corner of the intersection of El Dorado and Miner streets), was begun in September of 1857.

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the Church here until the spring of 1851, when Mr. J. M. Bissell, the Junior Warden, began lay services, which he continued for two years with but slight interruptions.

The next record of activity in the Parish is that shown by a meeting held in March, 1853. The purposes of this meeting are so clearly evidenced by its minutes that I embody them here, just as they were written so long ago:

"Agreeable to notice previously given, at an election held in the Chapel of St. John's Church, in the City of Stockton, on Easter Monday, March 28th, 1853:

"Mr. J. B. Hall was appointed Chairman, and Mr. B. W. Bours appointed Secretary.

"Mr. J. M. Bissell presented the minutes of the first organization of St. John's Church (appended hereto), after which the following document was presented and adopted:

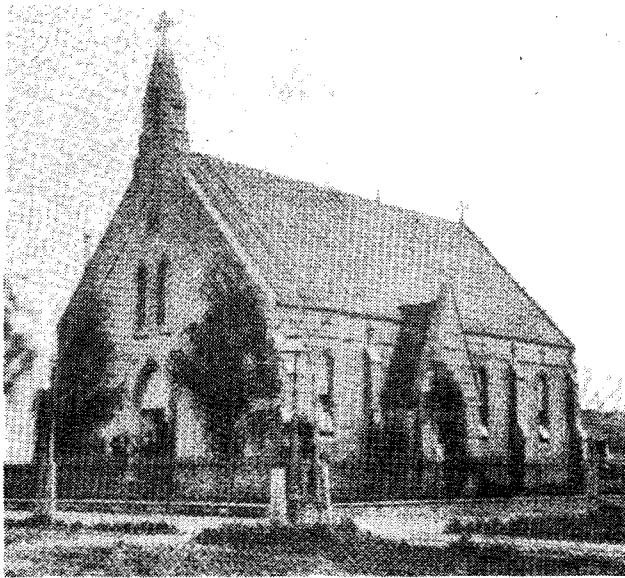
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Stockton, Cal., Easter Monday, March 28th, 1853.

"In order to revive, continue and perfect the organization of St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church in the City of Stockton, organized on the 25th day of August, 1850, WE, the subscribers, do hereby enroll ourselves as members of the Parish of said Church, and pledge ourselves to contribute to its support, to preserve the form of worship according to the Book of Common Prayer, and to conform to the Polity of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America."

SIGNED:

J. M. Bissell	Allen L. Bours
R. K. Eastman	Jasper S. Whiting
H. S. Norcom	John N. Etheredge
H. T. Compton	J. B. Hall
Wm. D. Cowan	B. W. Bours
Gilbert B. Claiborne	Henry T. Huggins
H. H. Hewlett	Otis L. Bridges
J. A. Freeborn	Isaac V. Lefern
W. White	Edwin W. Colt
Joseph Mansfield	W. C. Morris



**VIEW OF THE ORIGINAL ST. JOHN** the Evangelist Church taken in 1862 from the intersection of El Dorado and Miner streets. First services were held on May 2, 1858. Consecration of the edifice by the Bishop of California, Rt. Rev. William Kip, took place on June 20 of the same year.

"A motion was made and seconded, that the Chairman appoint a committee to nominate suitable persons for Wardens and Vestrymen, whereupon H. T. Compton, J. A. Freeborn and Joseph Mansfield were appointed said committee, who reported the following names:

"For Wardens: Senior--R. K. Eastman. Junior--H. S. Norcom.

"For Vestrymen: J. B. Hall, F. Pinto, H. T. Huggins, H. H. Hewlett, B. W. Bours, G. A. Shurtleff, A. G. Stakes and E. M. Howison.

"The report of the committee was adopted and the above named persons were duly elected by ballot, after which it was moved, seconded and carried that the meeting adjourn sine die.

"B. W. BOURS, Secretary."

"JOHN B. HALL, Chairman."

Shortly before the meeting above recorded, Mr. J. M. Bissell, being about to remove from the city, resigned his office as Junior Warden, at the same time presenting to the Vestry a brief sketch of his connection with the Parish as Lay Reader. In his report, which is full of a most devoted Christian spirit, he mentions so many items of historical interest that I feel that I must present it to you just as he presented it to the Vestry:

At a meeting of the Wardens and Vestrymen of St. John's Church, held on April 8th, 1853, Mr. J. M. Bissell presented the following report, which was read, accepted and ordered on file as part of the Church records:

MR. BISSELL'S REPORT

"Stockton, March 31st, 1853.

"To the Wardens and Vestry of St. John's Church, Stockton, California--  
Gents:

"The records of the Church, now in your possession, will show my connection with it since its organization on the 25th day of August, 1850. The Rev. O. Harriman, present at that time, remained and officiated for about a month, and not succeeding in obtaining an adequate support owing to the small number of Church people here at that time, left, and the Church services were suspended.

"In the spring of 1851, after consultation with the Senior officer of the Church, Mr. R. K. Eastman, Esqr., and at the earnest solicitation of many friends, I consented to and commenced the reading of Service. The first and second services were held on the 27th of April and the 4th of May, 1851, in a room in the west end of the Corinthian Building, second story. On the night of the 6th of May the fire occurred which nearly destroyed our young city. In consequence of this calamity the room where the services had been held was required for other purposes, and the services were suspended until in June, when they were resumed in the lower room of the building now standing on Main Street west of Center Street, then occupied as the Court House. The use of this room was kindly tendered by Dr. R. P. Ashe, then, as now, Sheriff of the County. Services were held here for a few Sabbaths, but the place was found to be inconvenient, and early in July Major R. P. Hammond very generously granted the use of a room on the first floor of the Corinthian Building, the same as now used as the Post Office. This room was the place of worship from July, 1851, to September, 1852, when it was exchanged for the one east of it, where the services are still held.

"Up to July, 1851, there had been but one service a day, but soon after removing from the Court House to the present building we had two services a day, and

## ST. JOHN'S PARISH (con't)

the same has been continued since with the exception of one Sunday in 1851, and one in 1852, when I was unavoidably absent on business; the services have been regular, either by Lay, residing or visiting Clergymen. The Clerical services have been as follows:

"In September and October, 1851, the Rev. O. Clarke, of San Francisco, officiated two Sundays at different times.

"On the 5th and 26th of December, 1852, the Rev. John Morgan, of New York, officiated.

"On the 6th of February, 1853, the Rev. John Reynolds, from San Diego, officiated and is still here as a minister of the Church at large; he has been permitted to occupy St. John's Chapel, there being no other place of worship of our Church in the city, but he has not been recognized by any authority in the Parish, existing preceding your election, as the minister of this Church. In a reasonable time after the Sunday's service, which he rendered as a visiting Clergyman, his expenses were paid, as in the cases of Messrs. Clarke and Morgan, since when he has remained on his own responsibility and is sustained by a private subscription list obtained by himself.

"The course adopted by your predecessors in relation to the Rev. Mr. Reynolds, was fully explained at the Parish meeting, held on the 28th inst., and having by that meeting been sanctioned leaves the ministry of the Church still vacant. The course above referred to was deemed necessary in order to preserve the independence of the Parish, and protect the rights of the Parishioners, among which is that responsible, sacred and inalienable one of choosing for themselves, through their immediate representatives, the Wardens and Vestry, their own Minister.

"In addition to the services heretofore enumerated, the following have been performed: March 26th, 1852, attended the funeral of W. H. Pruce, aged 25 years, of Hereford, England; September 4th, 1852, that of Judge W. A. Root, aged 29 years, of Rochester, N. Y.; September 17th, 1852, that of Mariposa, aged six months, daughter of John and Esther White, of this city. February 6th, 1853, assisted the Rev. J. Reynolds in the funeral services of Abiathar Hewlett, aged 16 years, of Long Island, N. Y.

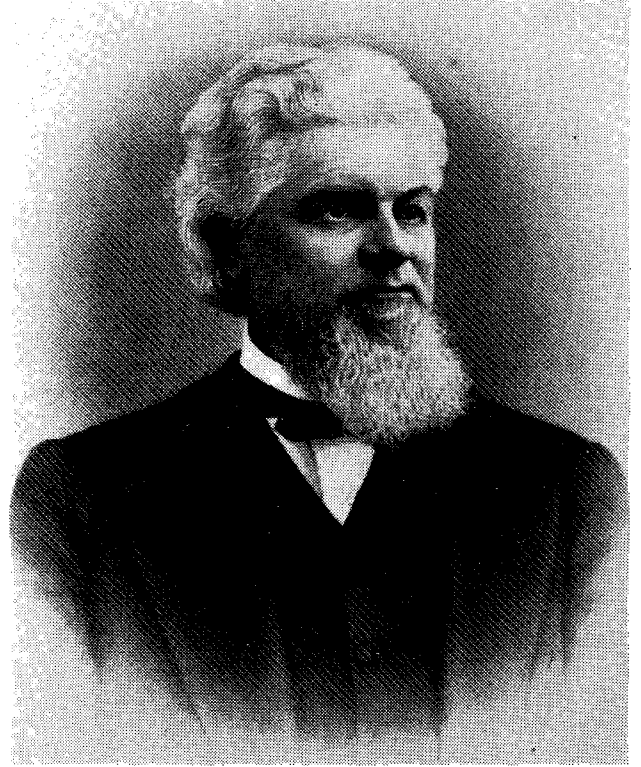
"In accordance with what I deem my duty, I thus lay before you in as brief a manner as possible, as a matter of record, a history of the Church up to the present time. Its future history must be traced by other hands when that which now pens this shall be cold in death. My interest in its prosperity and welfare remains unabated, and, although I soon expect to sever my personal connection with it, perhaps forever, yet I hope to be able to evince that, though absent, it is not forgotten.

"To you is now committed under God, the care and the responsibility of both its temporal and spiritual interests. That God may by His Holy Spirit be present with you in all your deliberations, to guide you in all your way in the exercise of the important trust committed to you as the council of this, His Church; to instruct you individually in the knowledge of true Holiness and Righteousness of Life, and afterwards receive you to Glory, is the sincere prayer of your friend and

"Obdt. Servant,  
"J. M. BISSELL."

Let us dwell particularly upon the services of this noble-hearted Layman, because it is felt that to him is largely due the preservation of this Parish in its infancy.

It seems somewhat strange to find a man like him in the city at such a time. They were hardly the times to expect such a man. They were days of tragedy and excitement, days when law was weak, and vice abundant, when the acquiring of gold was the absorbing topic, and Sundays scarce known from other days. But yet during all this time, expecting no other remuneration than the reward of his conscience, he kept the Church alive here, and made her services bear witness to the city that God was still to be worshiped, and not blasphemed.



DR. GEORGE A. SHURTLEFF, prominent Stockton pioneer, was a member of the Church from the time of its organization. He served as vestryman from March, 1863, until his death in March of 1902. Shurtleff was a native of Massachusetts (born August 5, 1819), and came to California in October of 1849.

The effect of Mr. Bissell's report was the stirring up of the people to the realization of their unsettled condition, and of the need of a permanent place of worship, with a Rector in charge. Though the room, in either the Corinthian Building or the one in the Court House, where services were held, had been generally known and designated St. John's Chapel, there was "that something" lacking, which only a definite Church home of their own could give. Impelled by this urge, a committee, consisting of Messrs. John B. Hall, R. K. Eastman, H. H. Hewlett and Dr. H. S. Norcom, was appointed "To ascertain and report at the next meeting, the number of members who will subscribe for the permanent support of the Church and an efficient minister." And a second committee, "To call on Mr. Charles M. Weber and request the donation of a lot for the use of the Church." Messrs. E. M. Howison, T. Robinson Bours, A. B. Stakes and J. B. Hall were appointed such committee.

Such activity and inspiration resulted in the first visit to St. John's Parish of Bishop Wm. Ingraham Kip, on February 18, 1854. On the day following he held Divine

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services in the Court House.

At the next meeting of the Vestry the committees previously appointed having reported most encouragingly, a resolution was passed, resulting in the following letter sent to the Bishop:

"Stockton, February 27th, 1854.

"Right Reverend and Dear Sir:

"We enclose a copy of a resolution passed this day at a meeting of the Wardens and Vestrymen of our Church, viz:--"That the Bishop be requested to call a suitable clergyman for St. John's Parish".

"We have already subscribed to the amount of \$200.00 per month (and, no doubt, will be able to increase to \$300.00) for the support of our Church and a Clergyman.

"We have now to request that you will call a suitable Clergyman for our Parish, leaving the choice entirely with yourself.

"We remain, Dear Sir,

"Respectfully, Your Obedt. Servants,

"R. K. EASTMAN,

"B. W. BOURS."

"To Rt. Rev. Wm. Ingraham Kip,

"Bishop of California,

"San Francisco.

A few months after the above letter was sent, and upon the recommendation of the Bishop, a call was made to The Rev. Jos. S. Large, of the Diocese of Indiana, to the Rectorship of the Parish. He accepted the call. Arriving in Stockton, November 17, 1854, [he] held morning and afternoon services in the Court House the following Sunday. Mr. Large was energetic and active in his ministry here, being ably assisted in the parochial work by his wife. To Mrs. Large is due the honor of having organized the first choir here and of generously devoting her salary as organist to the purchase of the first

melodeon for the Church.

During Mr. Large's Rectorship, which continued until April, 1856, the services were held in the Court House, which was used for this purpose until the Church building was finished. In this period three lots upon which the Church is built, were acquired, two by donation from Captain Weber, and one by purchase. A Sunday School was started by him, though in his report to the Convention of 1855, he states that but five children belong to families attending Church. On March 9, 1856, he presented to the Bishop a class of six for the first confirmation held in Stockton.

During the year of 1854, Bishop Kip made several visits to the young Parish in Stockton, greatly endearing himself to the people by his kindly counsel and guidance, and by officiating at the most sacred rites of the Church. In his report to the Convention of that year he speaks warmly both of the numbers present and of the hearty responses given at these services. It was at this Convention of 1854, that St. John's Church was admitted into union with the Convention, being represented by Mr. W. H. Glover.

Prior to the Annual Parish Meeting of 1855 on April 9th, the affairs of the Parish had been governed by two Wardens and seven Vestrymen. At this meeting for reasons unexplained, but two Wardens and three Vestrymen were nominated and elected, namely: R. K. Eastman and George A. Shurtleff, Senior and Junior Wardens, respectively, with Messrs. J. B. Hall, Austin Sperry and G. B. Claiborne as Vestrymen. Another item of interest at this meeting was the following resolution: "That the thanks of the congregation be tendered to Captain C. M. Weber, for his generous donation to the Parish of a suitable lot of ground on which to erect a Church building."

(To Be Continued in Next Issue)



ANOTHER VIEW OF THE OLD EPISCOPAL CHURCH. this one taken in the late 1870's. To the left of the church

is the Frankenheimer home. The Frankenheimers supplied the church with water until June of 1912.

## ST. JOHN'S PARISH (con't)

### EDITOR'S NOTES:

1. The early history of the Protestant Episcopal Church in California can be found in two excellent books which were published many years ago. Although long out of print and very scarce, the reader will find them both at the Stockton Public Library:

- (1) Kelley, D. O. **History of the Diocese of California, 1849-1914.** San Francisco: Bureau of Information and Supply [of the Episcopal Church], 1915. 471pp.
- (2) Kip, Rt. Rev. William Ingraham. **The Early Days of My Episcopate.** New York: Whittaker, 1892. 263pp.

2. On March 16, 1975, a rededication service was held at the First Presbyterian Church, El Dorado and Vine streets, to commemorate the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the organization of the Stockton Presbyterian congregation. A history of the local church, entitled **One Hundred Twenty-five Years, 1850-1975. . . An Historical Report of the First Presbyterian Church, Stockton, California,** was published at the same time. The author of this monograph was Mrs. John F. Blinn, Jr., a member of the congregation, and copies are available through the church's office located at Vine and El Dorado streets.

Actually three Methodist congregations organized churches in Stockton in 1850. The earliest of these was the Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in March of that year. Today it is known as the Central United Methodist Church and is located on Pacific Avenue between Fulton Street and the Calaveras River and directly across from the campus of the University of the Pacific (which was for many years affiliated with the Church). The history of this particular congregation in Stockton may be found in a monograph published in 1970 under the title of **The Central United Methodist Church in Stockton** (the inside sub-title is **A History of Central Methodist Church, 1849-1970**). It was the work of a special church history committee composed of Avanelle H. Hutchison (chairman), Grace Buck, and Mary Rudebaugh. In July (1850) the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) formed a local congregation. Nationally this branch of Methodism had been organized in 1846, having split away from the parent Church over the issue of slavery. Today this congregation is the Grace United Methodist Church. The history of this church may be found in a 1975 monograph, **Growing In Grace, 1850-1975**, written by a member of the congregation, Mrs. Pearl S. Sweet, and available at the church's office at 1625 North Lincoln Street.

The third pioneer Methodist congregation in Stockton was the Ebenezer

African Methodist Episcopal Church, now located at 132 North Stanislaus Street. It, too, dates back to 1850, when a black clergyman, Father Green, began preaching and with trustees James Onae, Harwell Bates, and Thomas Jackson founded a permanent congregation. Upon the observance of their one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary last year a pictorial souvenir book was printed under the direction of a member of the congregation, Mrs. Alsester Craig. Its title is **Ebenezer A.M.E. Church.**

3. This was the third parish organized by the denomination along the Pacific Coast; the two preceding were the Trinity Church and the Grace Cathedral congregations of San Francisco. Sonora's famous pioneer St. James (Episcopal) Church, long a landmark on the north end of the old part of the city, was constructed by the Sonora congregation soon after their organization in 1859 -- nine years after formation of the Stockton congregation. For a brief history of this Mother Lode landmark see Dixon, Rev. Leonard D. **The Little Red Church.** Sonora: The Mother Lode Press, 1975.
4. Although born in Texas circa 1882 John Worthington Dorsey Ewing came to California with his parents when still an infant and he lived in Stockton the remainder of his life. The old family home was on North El Dorado Street. He was employed many years at the First National Bank (organized in Stockton in 1872 as the First National Gold Bank; purchased by the Wells Fargo Bank in 1953). It was located on San Joaquin Street, south of and adjacent to the Lauxen and Catts dry-goods store. The latter was on the southeast corner of Weber Avenue and San Joaquin Street. He also spent some years with the local Boggs Real Estate office. He passed away on April 1, 1958, at the age of 76 years.
5. Clara Shepherd Renison was a native Stocktonian, the daughter of early-day area settlers, Mr. and Mrs. David Christie Shepherd. She was born on March 4, 1876 and spent all of her 77 years in Stockton with the exception of two years in Reno and one year in Phoenix. She married John Allen Reid of Stockton but was widowed in 1909. Shortly thereafter she opened a shop on West Park Street, selling decorative objects and jewelry which she made herself. Later the shop was moved to 125 E. Vine. Five years before her death on February 9, 1954, she had married a former rector of St. John's, the well-known and widely-respected Reverend William T. Renison. A very talented and active woman, Mrs. Renison was for years involved in numerous church and community organizations. She was also the author of some half-dozen published plays as well as several books.

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