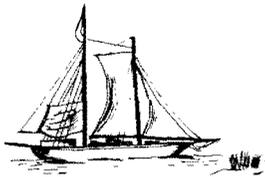


SAN JOAQUIN HISTORIAN



PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



VOLUME XII

JANUARY - MARCH 1976

NUMBER 1

HISTORY of ST. JOHN the EVANGELIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA 1850-1975

[Continued from the October-December 1975 Issue]

EDITOR'S NOTE:

We continue in this issue the 1926 HISTORICAL SKETCH of St. John's Church written by Dorsey Ewing in commemoration of the church's 75th anniversary. The previous issue, the first of this series on Stockton's pioneer Episcopal Church, narrated the events from the organization of the congregation in August of 1850 through the tenure of its first regular pastor, the Reverend Joseph S. Large, who served from November, 1854, to April of 1856.

Captain Weber's generosity in matters of this kind deserves more than a passing notice. Though the original holder, by a Mexican Grant, of the whole site upon which our city is built, he at no time showed a disposition to be exorbitant or grasping. The public squares of our city are

all donations from him. Excepting the few sites purchased in recent years, the lots for all of our free public school buildings were given by him. Of the older religious organizations in the city, there is not one to whom he has not given lots upon which to erect Church buildings.

After the resignation of Mr. Large the Vestry appear to have been fully alive to the necessity of having a Rector in charge of the Parish. A call was soon after extended to The Rev. Elijah W. Hager, of Marysville. In Mr. Hager's letter to the Vestry, accepting the call to Stockton, he states, "One of the reasons I accept your call to Stockton, at a lesser salary than I am now receiving, is, that I will have the benefit of the sea breezes prevailing there." He remained as Rector here for three years, or from April, 1856 to May, 1859.



1891 PHOTOGRAPH showing the newly-completed Guild Hall to the rear of the 1858 brick church building. The Guild Hall, declared an historical landmark by the city of Stockton in 1972, is still in use. It is one of the very few examples of Nordic architecture in North America.

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Mr. Hager's energetic administration resulted in the accomplishment of many things that have redounded to the benefit of the Parish. The Constitution of our Parish, presented and adopted at that time, with but few changes, obtains in force today. He crystalized into action the ambitions of the congregation to have a Church edifice of their own. Expressive of the confidence reposed in Mr. Hager, the Vestry passed a resolution authorizing him to erect a Church building on the lots belonging to St. John's Parish, the whole matter of adopting plans, and providing means for payment for the same to be left to him.

Concerning this important event in the Parish history, I find in the files of the "San Joaquin Republican," (the daily paper of those days) and in the journals of the Convention, several items which I give entire. In the "San Joaquin Republican" of August 8, 1857, is the following:

"CHURCH ENTERPRISE--The members of St. John's Church of this city are actively engaged in raising funds for the erection of a Church building, which will be an ornament to the city as well as an honor to the zeal and enterprise of the religious portion of the community. The Rev. E. W. Hager, pastor of the Church, has the matter in hand and is making satisfactory progress. He has already obtained subscriptions to the amount of \$3500.00. The building will cost over \$7000.00. It will be erected on the property belonging to the Church on the corner of El Dorado Street and Miner Avenue. The subscriptions are in the form of joint stock, each subscriber being entitled to a pew or sitting, according to the amount taken, which, of course, will always be worth the full amount subscribed. We trust the amount necessary for the consumation of this laudable enterprise will be at once subscribed."

The good wishes of the editor seem to have been realized, for [in] the issue of Thursday, September 10, 1857, is the following:

"LAYING THE CORNER STONE OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.--The ceremonies of laying the corner stone of St. John's Church was performed yesterday in the presence of about three hundred persons. The beautiful and impressive ceremonies of the Episcopal Church were read by the Rector, Mr. E. W. Hager. In the corner stone prepared for the purpose were deposited the following articles: A volume of the Common Prayer, a copy of the 'San Joaquin Republican' of September 9, 1857, a copy of the 'Stockton Argus' of the same date, several copies of other journals in the State, a list of the Church Vestrymen, etc., etc., and a number of coins. The cap of the principal stone was then placed in position, and the deposits left to tell a future generation of the solemn ceremonies of laying the foundation of St. John's Church which took place on the 9th of September, 1857."

The progress of the building was hindered by the failure of the contractor to keep his pledge, and it was not until April 29, 1858, that the Church was ready for occupation. Sunday, May 2, 1858, services for the first time were held in the new Church, and on Sunday June 20, 1858, the Church was consecrated to the service of Almighty God by The Right Reverend Wm. Ingraham Kip, Bishop of California.

Newspaper Notices of those times:

April 29, 1858: "SALE OF PEWS."--"The religious community will remember that the sale of pews in the Episcopal Church will take place at 2:00 o'clock today."

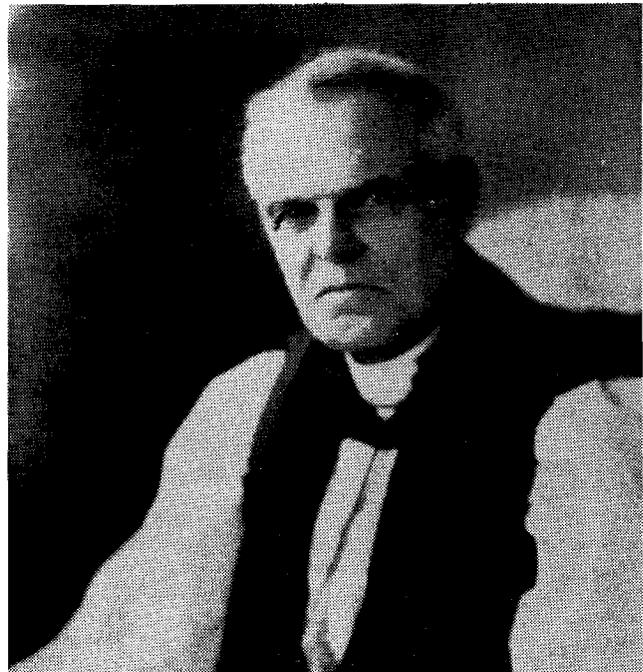
April 30, 1858: "RESULTS OF SALE OF PEWS."--"The result of the sale of pews was of a gratifying character. Forty-six pews were sold at prices which, in the

aggregate, amounted to \$6800.00, the premiums amounting to \$2200.00. There yet remains to be sold some fifteen or twenty pews, which will be disposed of Saturday."

It is but justice to say that the plans of this Church were drawn by the Senior Warden, Mr. R. K. Eastman, and that his services were so much valued that the Vestry recorded in their minutes the following resolution:

"Resolved, by the Vestry and members of the Parish of St. John's Church, Stockton, acting in concert, that the hearty thanks of the Parish are most especially due to our Brother, Robert K. Eastman, for his untiring effort, zeal, industrious aid, and generous pecuniary assistance from the commencement of the Church building to its completion; and we hope that he may live long to worship in this edifice which he has so faithfully and zealously labored to achieve." Dated April 5, 1858.

Immediately after the departure of Mr. Hager in May, 1859, The Rev. David F. McDonald took charge of the Parish and continued its Rector to March 4, 1862. During Mr. McDonald's Rectorship, the beautiful iron fence around the Church was built at a cost of \$1900.00 and the pipe organ (still in use) purchased and erected at a cost of over \$1250.00--two very decided gains to the Parish and its property. A combination of causes contributed to bring Mr. McDonald's Rectorship to a close, and though the Parish had been very prosperous under his ministrations, his departure left it very much divided and distracted. Still there was much real zeal left, and in less than two months the Rev. J. G. Gassman, of Sonora, had removed to this city and began his work. He remained as Rector until April, 1866. In his report to the Convention he stated that the condition of the Parish was due to two factors, viz:--the political feeling engendered by the war between the States, but more so by the great flood of January, 1862. This flood laid the city's site entirely under water to



THE RT. REV. WILLIAM F. NICHOLS, D.D., Second Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California. Well-liked by all who worked with him, Ewing described him as a "great scholar, a statesman, a prophet." He was raised to episcopal rank on June 24, 1890, and passed away on June 5, 1924.

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a depth of two to six feet, and for a time after it subsided the people were really unable to do much toward the support of the Church. The labors of Mr. Gassman seem to have been rewarded. He had taken over the Parish during a most trying period, with a debt of \$3000.00 at two per cent interest per month; he built up the Church to an harmonious working congregation, and left it with an indebtedness of but \$1300.00, with interest only one and only-half per cent per month. Pews Nos. 1 and 2 were set aside for Negroes attending services.

It was during Mr. Gassman's stay here that he made an attempt to establish a Church School. It was probably started as a Parish School, but not long after the more ambitious scheme of making it a Diocesan School was entertained. A building was purchased and partly paid for, but from a combination of causes, difficult to ascertain now, the whole project fell through. With The Rev. A. S. Nicholson as principal, the school opened in September, 1863, with four pupils. Although the building in which it was held burned down, compelling a stoppage of two weeks, it closed its first academic year with forty pupils. Known as the Stockton Seminary, it gradually grew until it was closed down after three years' existence. At the time of closing it had an enrollment of eighty-one pupils.

I find no record of the time when Rev. Elias Birdsall was first called to the Parish, but judge that he came here in June, 1866, resigning in June, 1868. The most marked event of his stay here was the strong stand he took in regard to the music of the Church. He procured the removal of the organ from the gallery to one corner of the Church. This act excited much opposition but later proved to have been a very judicious one in that it greatly improved and increased the congregational singing. Mr. Birdsall left the Parish entirely free of debt, the first time during its existence.

After Mr. Birdsall's departure the services were maintained by The Rev. Dr. Breck, and others from the Episcopal College at Benicia, until March, 1869, when The Rev. Wm. P. Tucker entered upon the Rectorship. Remaining a little over one year, he resigned to accept the Head Mastership of St. Augustine's College, Benicia.

Being now without a Rector, the Church remained closed for three months, when The Rev. Elias Birdsall returned to again take up the work here. He remained until July, 1872, during which time he had started the Mission Sunday School in the eastern part of the city.

The Rev. H. L. Foote, of San Francisco, was called and entered upon his duties as Rector in August, 1872. Remaining four years, or until October, 1876, he greatly endeared himself to the people. Firmly believing in the value to the Parish of the Mission Sunday School, he devoted much attention to its upbuilding. By August, 1873, the school had grown to such an extent that the Vestry was urged to purchase a lot and build a Chapel for its use. This they did at an expense of over \$960.00. The Mission prospered under the leadership of that kindly Christian gentleman and able instructor, Dr. Walter R. Langdon, who was for a great many years its Superintendent. Through this gateway many families were brought into the communion of the Church. The Mission was maintained for over twenty years. Later, falling into idle desuetude, it was sold and the proceeds devoted to the debt on the new Church.

As mentioned hereafter, the first Parish paper was published by Mr. Foote.

It was in August, 1874, that the Rector brought to the attention of the Vestry the need of a new Church edifice, stating that the present one had now grown too small for

our needs. A "New Church" fund was started at this time.

Immediately after the Vestry had reluctantly accepted the resignation of Mr. Foote, they turned to their old friend and former Rector, Mr. Birdsall. Always devoted to St. John's Parish, he accepted the call and, for the third time, became its Rector. This time he remained just four years, November, 1876, to November, 1880. The Parish was fortunate in having such a loyal old friend in charge, for it was a strenuous period financially. The Church being continually forced into debt by extraneous causes, the Rector would voluntarily reduce his salary to meet the emergency, each time overcoming the objections of the Vestry to such action. Paradoxical as it may seem, he was keeping intact, and building up, the three important funds that had been established: i.e., New Church Fund, Sunday School Bell Fund and Sunday School Building Fund, amounting in the aggregate to more than \$5600.00 when he resigned.

A call to the Rectorship being made to The Rev. E. H. Ward, he accepted, and took charge in January, 1881. He remained until June, 1885. It is to be regretted that we have no detailed record of the splendid work accomplished by Mr. Ward during his incumbency. Best evidence of his work here is that many of our most loyal members of the congregation today are those whose interest in St. John's began during this period. Reluctantly was this good man's resignation accepted.

After the Rev. Ward had resigned, the Church was kept open Sundays through the Summer, by having a supply sent by the Bishop. The advisability of recalling the Rev. Mr. Foote was considered. The Vestry voted, in June, 1885, to discontinue the pay of the choir. The Mission Chapel, not being in use at this time, was rented to the Baptist Church for \$60.00 per year.

In August, 1885, a call was extended to The Rev. Mr. W. C. Mills, who, after consulting with the Vestry at their September meeting, accepted the call and immediately entered upon his duties as Rector. One item of expense noted at this time--now not provided for in the budget--was the voting of money "to place six new iron hitching posts on the Weber Avenue side of the Church." The Annual Report made on Easter Monday, April 27, 1886, showed that the average attendance of the congregation had been 99 at morning service and 56 at evening service. The largest morning attendance was on Easter, there being 375 communicants present; the largest evening attendance was 150, when Bishop Kip was present. Mr. Mills devoted much attention to Sunday School and it was soon in a most flourishing condition. It was during this time that the Font, which we now use, was presented to the Church by the Sunday School. The two Building Funds of the Parish were materially increased by him through the inspiration he aroused in the congregation, his thought and energy. During all of this time he was not only carrying on the work of the Parish, but bearing the anxiety of his wife's illness. She died and was buried in Mr. Whale's plot in Rural Cemetery, as is also Mr. Mills, who passed away several years after leaving Stockton. Mr. Whale was a former Vestryman. In February, 1888, Mr. Mills handed in his resignation to take effect in September, and St. John's Church again lost one of its most beloved Rectors.

Soon after this a letter was received from The Rev. Mr. Elias Birdsall, recommending The Rev. W. J. Lemon, of Detroit, Michigan, who wished to come to California for the winter. A temporary call was thereupon extended to Mr. Lemon. In February, 1889, he was regularly called to

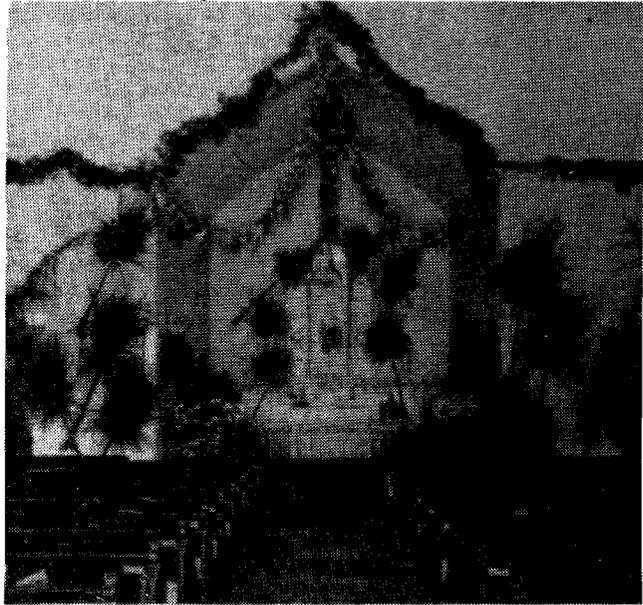
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the Rectorship of the Parish. Mr. Lemon's letter to the Vestry, accepting the call, is, in part, here quoted: "I ask your full and hearty co-operation in all things conducive to the spiritual and temporal prosperity and advancement and upbuilding of Christ's Kingdom in the hearts and lives of the community where our lot is cast. We pray for good. We look to and depend on Him, who is the hope of all the earth. I pray Him to succor and defend us, and keep us from evil. May we labor together in love and peace, and God will, I believe, reward our efforts." Verily was this prayer answered. The hopes and ambitions of the Parish for a new Church and for a new Guild Hall were fulfilled, due, in no small measure, to the faith, able leadership and zeal of Mr. Lemon.

Mr. Lemon was eager for some definite step in regard to the proposed new Church, so in April, 1889, appointed a committee composed of Messrs. C. C. Moore, H. W. Taylor, W. B. Austin and himself, to get some rough plans, and ascertain the cost of an edifice of wood, stone or brick and report to the Vestry. In May, Mr. E. A. Coxhead, Architect of Los Angeles, appeared before the Vestry with some plans for Church and Guild Hall. The plans were discussed and a Building Committee of Messrs. W. B. Austin, C. C. Moore and The Rev. W. J. Lemon was appointed, with instructions to make any advisable changes and invite bids. Four bids received by the committee were rejected as being too high. After certain changes had been made in the plans for the Guild Hall new bids were called for. The bid of F. W. Muller to erect the Guild Hall at a cost of \$9200.00 was accepted in September, 1887. The total amount of money in the various funds (The Woman's Guild, the Sunday School Fund and the Eastman Bell Fund) amounted to but \$6131.36, leaving an approximate amount of \$3100.00 yet to be raised by the Parish. With but the one source to appeal to in time of need, a united congregation ably led by their Rector, prayed to God to grant them His blessing and for success in their efforts to raise this money. Their prayers were answered, for it was not long before this amount was raised. Many of the present congregation remember how, as Sunday School children, they worked for this building fund by using cards marked off like fifty bricks, each brick selling for ten cents, a hole being punched through it when sold, until all were sold. Although the contractor had promised to have the new Guild Hall completed by Easter, 1889, it was found necessary to grant an extension of time. The first service in the new building was the Whitsunday celebration in 1890, the Sunday School children leading the procession. In July of that year the first meeting of the Vestry in the Guild Hall was held in the Rector's Study. In November of this year came news of the death of the Rev. Elias Birdsall. A jubilant congregation was cast into mourning, for he had ever been a staunch friend of St. John's Church: three times had he answered the call to the Rectorship. Never hesitating, when the call came from St. John's, to ask whether conditions were good or bad, he came back to the people he loved because they needed him.

From January to October, 1891, the most important topics of discussion before the Vestry were the ways and means of raising funds for the new Church building; the examining of the plans submitted; the rejection or changing of some, and, finally, the acceptance of the plans of Mr. Page Brown. Then the Building Committee was empowered to let the contract to the lowest bidder.

The last service to be held in the old Church was the marriage ceremony of Miss Kittie Chalmers and Mr. Wm. H. Post, on November 4, 1891. The decorations for the



RARE PHOTO OF THE INTERIOR of the original St. John's Church. This was taken in November of 1891, just prior to the razing of the structure to make room for the construction of the present church. The decorations were for the wedding of Miss Kittie Chalmers to William H. Post on November 4, 1891. This marked the last service to be held in the pioneer church.

wedding were still on the walls when the razing of the building commenced.

The organ and the font were taken from the Church and put in the Guild Hall; the stained glass chancel window was removed and afterwards placed in the west end of the new Church; the altar and chancel furnishings were removed and saved for use in the new building. Then the old Church of pioneer days was torn down. The bricks and the iron fence around the Church yard were sold and the money put into the new Building Fund. Services were held in the Guild Hall during the period that the New St. John's was being built. It was a busy time in the Parish and the Woman's Guild and all the other Church organizations were putting forth every effort to raise money to put into the Building Fund. The parishioners and the people of Stockton were asked to contribute to this fund and, for this worthy purpose, a generous response was given. The corner stone was laid on April 4, 1892.

Before the new Church was completed Mr. W. B. Austin, Chairman of the Building Committee, resigned, and Mr. C. C. Moore, a member of the committee died. The Rector, Mr. Lemon, had been called from Stockton several times by the serious illness of his wife, so he offered his resignation to the Vestry. As he had worked so earnestly to have a new Guild Hall and a new Church, the Vestry urged him to reconsider and remain until the Church was completed so that he might have the pleasure of holding the first service in it. There was no one in the congregation happier than he when, on December 18, 1892, he conducted this first service in the new St. John's Church.

The Church structure presents an exterior appearance that, though strange here, is architecturally pleasing, being built after the style of the old English Cathedrals. Even the battlemented walls of old England's ancient Churches, from behind which the archers used to defend

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themselves when the occasion required, are retained in the architecture. The general massiveness is patterned after as nearly as possible. The heavy hinges of the old Church doors, hand-made by rough fisted village blacksmiths, are duplicated, the hinges on the outer doors of St. John's Church extending clear across the doors. They show the hammer marks very plainly, as if wrought by the unskilled hand of the rustic smithy. Even in the elegant interior this patterning after the ancient model is very pronounced, for the heavy, black wooden arches in the nave, chancel and both transepts are rough-hewn with an adz. The structure is, of course, cruciform. Upon the occasion of this opening service in the new St. John's Church was used for the first time a vested choir composed of eleven men and twenty-two boys, who had been training for many months under the instruction of that able Choirmaster, Henry Kirke White, Jr., and Organist, Charles E. Owen. The names of the members of this choir will be found in that portion of the Church's history devoted to the Choir, Music and Organ.

To the noble Christian women of St. John's Parish much credit is due in making a reality of a long cherished hope for a new Church. Untiring in their efforts to raise money for the new building, they gave dinners, parties, plays and bazaars. So enjoyable were these occasions that they were anticipated with pleasure by all, becoming great social events in the community.

The beautiful Chancel window in the new Church was given by Mrs. S. Willard Sperry in memory of her

build up the finances of the Church. The old Mission property on East Market Street was ordered sold, the proceeds to go towards the debt on the new Church. Mr. Moffitt resigned in September, 1895, and in the same month a call was extended to The Rev. Daniel G. MacKinnon.

The Rev. Mr. MacKinnon arrived in November of that year. After looking over the affairs of the Church, he called a meeting of the Vestry for the purpose of devising ways and means of financing the Church and of creating in the hearts of the congregation a greater interest in Parish work. It was decided to call the celebrated Rev. Percy Weber, of Boston, to conduct a Mission for one week during the coming Fall. It was a phenomenal success, for he was a forceful speaker and his message impressed his hearers. As a result, an awakening and inspired people was made manifest by larger congregations and larger contributions.

The Convocation of the Diocese of San Francisco was held in Stockton in October, 1896, as St. John's Parish was at that time, in that Diocese. Bishop Nichols presided, The Rev. W. K. Moreland (now the Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento) being the Dean.

The Finance Committee of the Vestry had been active during these years and the dawning of 1898 brought the promise of having the Church indebtedness paid and the building consecrated the coming Easter. This was to be a day of days in the history of St. John's Church. The members of the congregation had been working hard and



THE NEW ST. JOHN'S CHURCH as it looked shortly after it was opened for services on December 18, 1892. The Guild Hall is to the right (east) of the church, facing on Miner Avenue. Both structures remain in use today.

husband, who had been one of the earliest Vestrymen of the Parish. At the same time, Mrs. Wm. H. Crocker, formerly Miss Ethel Sperry, of Stockton, presented the Church with the carpet for the whole edifice.

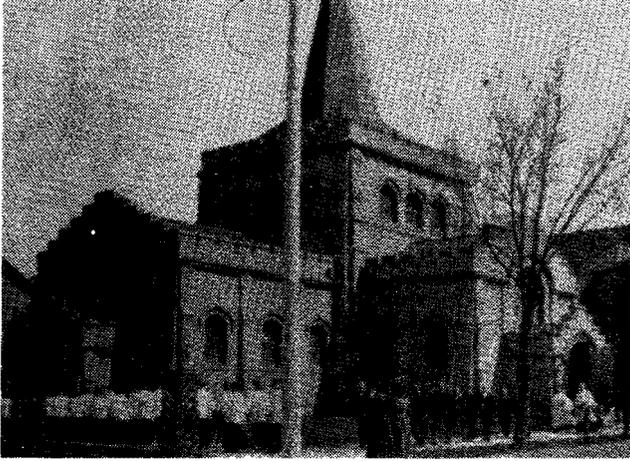
Following The Rev. Mr. Lemon's hard and earnest work to see the new Church completed, his resignation took effect, to the sincere regret of the whole Parish.

The Rev. D. L. V. Moffitt was called to the Parish in December, 1893. During his Rectorship here he devoted a part of his time to the upbuilding of the Church Mission in Lodi. At his suggestion the pews from the old Church were sent to the chapel in Lodi. The envelope system for contributions was first tried at this time in an endeavor to

faithfully since 1889 to pay, first for the Guild Hall and then for the new Church. The Guild had pledged themselves to pay a certain amount; with but a few more days left in which to raise it they were still some \$1500.00 short; a message to Mrs. W. H. Crocker, then in Europe, asking if she would help; her reply that she would pay this last \$1500.00 brought joy to their hearts, for the whole indebtedness had been raised.

Easter Day, April 10, 1898, the new St. John's Church was duly consecrated by Bishop William Ford Nichols, D.D., assisted by the Rector, Rev. Daniel G. MacKinnon. The Instrument of Donation was read by the venerable Senior Warden, R. E. Wilhoit.

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CONSECRATION ON EASTER SUNDAY, April 10, 1898, of St. John's Episcopal Church. In view is part of the procession on its way into the church for the ceremony. Bishop William Ford Nichols presided, assisted by the rector of the parish, Reverend Daniel MacKinnon.

There was one among those who worked so hard raising funds, that the new Church might be consecrated, for whom its consecration held a sentimental significance, for her wedding was to be the first marriage ceremony performed in the Church after its consecration. Our Parish record shows that Miss Lena S. Bidwell and Fred O. Norton were married by the Rev. Daniel G. MacKinnon on April 25, 1898, in St. John's Episcopal Church. Miss Bidwell had been a bridesmaid at the Post-Chalmers wedding, the last marriage ceremony performed in the old Church.

In February, 1899, St. John's Parish was transferred from the San Francisco Convocation District to the District of the San Joaquin Valley.

The Parish had been increased and strengthened during Rev. MacKinnon's Rectorship, and it was with no little regret that his resignation was accepted in January, 1900. In August of that year The Rev. John T. Bryan took charge of the Parish. He remained for one year, during which time he greatly endeared himself to the people.

The Vestry meeting in December, 1901, was presided over by the beloved Bishop Nichols, and it was upon his recommendation that a call was extended to The Rev. Alfred S. Clark, which he accepted, assuming his duties immediately.

In March, 1902, the congregation and Vestry drafted resolutions upon the death of Dr. George A. Shurtleff, "whose connection with the Parish has been long, faithful and of loving service," he having been one of seven in the first congregation. He had been a Vestryman continuously from March, 1853, to March, 1902. As a token of the esteem in which he was held the Vestry utilized his bequest to the Church by placing a memorial window to him in the north transept.

Within a year another Vestryman, who had served fifty years, less two months, was called by death. Mr. Henry H. Hewlett was one of the pioneers of the Church. He was confirmed by The Rt. Rev. Wm. Ingraham Kip at the second confirmation held by that prelate in Stockton, March, 1857. His wife had been confirmed in the first confirmation class. Previous to his confirmation he had become a Vestryman in March, 1853, and with prudent counsel and judgment he participated in the work of St. John's Parish through all the years.

This communication from Mrs. James H. Hough, enclosing a check for \$1000.00, was received by the Vestry:

"To the Vestry of St. John's Church,
"Stockton, California.

"Gentlemen:

"This being the Cardinal anniversary of my father's connection with your Vestry, you will please accept the enclosed check, to be used in payment of Church debt and current expenses.

"Respectfully,
"ELIZABETH HEWLETT HOUGH.

"March 28th, 1903."

In July, 1904, after having cheerfully, willingly and faithfully performed all his duties as a Vestryman for twenty-one years, the Junior Warden, Mr. James M. Welsh, was taken by death.

The Rector, having been in continued ill health for some time, presented his resignation in January, 1905. It was with regret that the Vestry accepted it for his work in the Parish had greatly redounded to the building up of the Church.

The services were conducted for a few months by the Rev. R. H. Starr, of New York. In April he accepted the call to the Rectorship, in which capacity he served until May, 1908. He was a brilliant man and his sermons were always a treat to his congregation. It was during his ministry here that a fund to purchase a Rectory was started. In June, 1906, Dr. Starr reported to the Vestry that a fund of \$4900.00 had been subscribed, in addition to a lot offered by Mrs. F. N. Vail. As the cost of building was high it was deemed best, after much discussion, to buy a Rectory, so a residence at the corner of Willow and Center Streets was purchased at a cost of \$5500.00. This Rectory was used until 1920, when it was deemed advisable to sell it, the proceeds of the sale being placed in a fund for the purchase of a new Rectory.

During that period immediately after the resignation of Rev. R. H. Starr, the services were conducted by various supply clergymen, and among them was one who won the hearts of all the people in the Parish. A call to the Rectorship of St. John's was tendered him, which he accepted, and in October, 1908, The Rev. Wm. T. Renison took up his work in Stockton. Quietly this young Priest came to our people. Behind this quiet gentleness was a power of spiritual strength that so effectively guided and supported St. John's parishioners during the fourteen years that he remained among them--the longest Rectorship in the history of St. John's Church. Space does not permit the recital of the many things he accomplished or the many positions of honor and trust to which he was elected. The influence of his labors in the Parish soon made itself felt in the City of Stockton, and a warm spot was ever held in the hearts of the citizens for this Godly man.

The Parish was continually growing in size and at the Annual Parish meeting in April, 1917, the congregation presented Mr. Renison with an automobile, the better to enable him to minister to his flock.

When Mr. Renison volunteered for Y.M.C.A. War Work in France, he was granted a leave of absence from April, 1918, to April, 1919. A farewell dinner was given in his honor by the business men of the city as a testimony of their esteem.

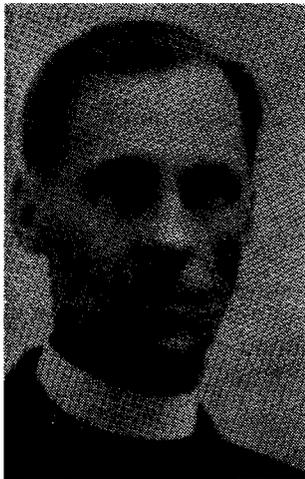
The Rev. G.B.D. Stewart was called as supply during Mr. Renison's absence in France. He ably carried on the Parish work, greatly endearing himself to the members of St. John's. War Relief work occupied the attention of the

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Church organizations during this period.

The Rev. E. L. Howe was elected as Associate Rector of the Parish in September, 1919. Mr. Howe had long made a study of Religious Education and had been appointed by the Bishop to the head of the Department of Religious Education in the Missionary District of San Joaquin. His competent instruction has redounded greatly to the efficiency in this branch of the Church's work throughout the whole district.

In June, 1921, Mr. Renison attended as the delegate from this district, the National Conference of Social Service, held in Milwaukee. So impressed was he with the importance of this part of the Church's Program, that the urge to take up this work in a larger field was strong



REVEREND WILLIAM T. RENISON, rector of St. John's Church from October, 1908, to January of 1922. Rev. Renison served one year in France as a Y.M.C.A. volunteer from April, 1918, to April, 1919. He resigned the local pastorate in 1922 to become chaplain of the Syracuse (New York state) Seaman's Institute. He returned to Stockton in 1947 and although retired served as a voluntary assistant to the rector until his death in 1957.

within him. He tendered his resignation, to take effect in January, 1922. The Annual Parish meeting held that month was more a farewell party to our beloved Rector than a business meeting. The commingled emotions of sadness for his leaving and happiness for his call to greater work, surcharged the parishioners and friends present to bid him farewell. Many loving gifts and resolutions of regret mutely told that his leaving left many aching hearts.

That period of six months immediately following left the Church without a Rector. The Rev. E. L. Howe, now an old friend, acted as supply, giving the Parish excellent service in the faithful performance of all parochial duties.

During the years from 1911 to date St. John's Church has had many sorrows. We miss the familiar faces of those noble Christians--pioneer Churchmen and women--who have been called to lay aside their labors here and come to Him as a reward of faithful service.

Mr. Andrew Wolf passed away in 1911. He had been on the Vestry for thirteen years, the last six of which he was Junior Warden. The acacia trees in front of the Church were planted, and nurtured, by him.

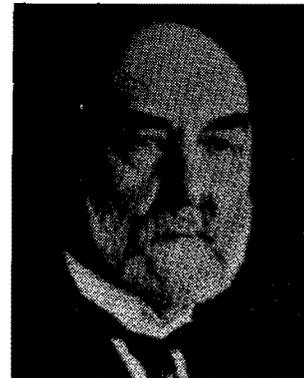
Dr. J. D. Young was called in May, 1917, after having served as a Vestryman for over twenty-six years. A sincere Christian gentleman, he cheerfully performed all his duties and was greatly beloved in the Parish.

Mr. Chas. E. Owen, who had been the Organist of St. John's for over thirty years, passed away in 1922. He had served as Vestryman for twenty years.

Mr. S. B. Coates, as Chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee, had faithfully performed his duties for many years until he was taken from us in January, 1921. He had been a member of the Vestry for fourteen years.

Mr. James H. Hough, our Junior Warden, was absent from his accustomed place at the entrance to St. John's Church, in December, 1921. A shocked congregation learned that nevermore would this loyal and faithful Christian gentleman be there to greet them. To the regular attendants at Church his greeting had become a part of the service. A Vestryman for twenty-five years and Junior Warden for ten his wise and prudent counsel was greatly missed. No encomium is necessary to note his memory for, by his acts of kindness and beneficence, an indelible imprint on the minds and consciences of the congregation will ever remain.

Mr. R. E. Wilhoit--On June 21, 1922, at the age of ninety-two years, there came to our Venerable Senior



RALEY EARLY WILHOIT, born in Kentucky in March, 1831, came to California in 1850 and settled in Stockton two years later. He was active in local politics and civic organizations, and was a member of St. John's. He served as a member of the Vestry for a total of 53 years before his death on June 21, 1922.

Warden the Almighty fiat to lay aside his earthly labors. Mr. Wilhoit, while not one of our original pioneer Churchmen, was, in fact, the Patriarch of St. John's Church. First elected to the Vestry in 1868, he served (with the exception of the year 1870) continuously as such for fifty-three years. He was appointed Senior Warden by the Rev. Elias Birdsall in 1879, and during the succeeding forty-three years he held that office, establishing a record for long and faithful service seldom equaled in Parish history. By his death the Church and Vestry suffered a distinct loss, for his business judgment and remarkable retentive memory of Parish events were of incalculable value.

Mr. W. M. Fowler, who was elected to the Vestry in 1922, lived but two years afterwards. He was a regular attendant at services and conscientious in the performance of his Church duties, being Treasurer of the Parish at the time of his death in August, 1924.

Mr. Charles M. Jackson--On September 28, 1924, our beloved Junior Warden was called upon to put off this garment of mortality and put on the robes of immortality, a just reward for a life well spent in the service of God. He had been a Vestryman for thirty-four years. Ever thoughtful of his Church, his generosity and beneficence were bestowed in quiet manner, for "Large was his bounty and his soul sincere." By his death was severed the last link in the chain that bound the older Vestrymen to us younger men of today, but their lives shall not have been lived in vain, if their steadfast faith in God be our inspiration.

Dr. Charles R. Harry--A shocked congregation received the news in February, 1925, that, again had the final summons come to a member of our Vestry--our beloved Dr. Harry. A sincere Christian Churchman, he was elected to the Vestry in 1916 and had loyally and faithfully performed all his duties as such. He was ever ready to aid and assist in the upbuilding of St. John's, and we note his absence with a reverent sense of loss.

ST. JOHN'S PARISH (con't)

Those who write the history of St. John's Church on its Centennial anniversary will find at the very dawn of its last quarter-century the record of the death of one of its most beloved, faithful and beneficent members--Mrs. James H. Hough.

We, who write this history of the Parish up to the close of the third quarter-century, feel that she belongs to that period of time allotted to us. And, yet, there are no words of expression that we feel could, even in part, adequately portray or cover her noble Christian life, her acts of kindness and her bounty to the Church. Her life and deeds are too fresh in your memories to require any encomiums. The Altar Guild that she so well loved passed the following resolution:

"Whereas, God in His Infinite Wisdom has seen fit to call Mrs. James H. Hough, and

"Whereas, Mrs. James H. Hough has for so many years been a loyal and devoted Churchwoman, and President of this Guild; therefore,

"Be it Resolved: That we, the members of St. John's Altar Guild, express in this memorial our gratefulness to God for the example and leadership of Mrs. Hough; and at the same time express to the members of her family an expression of most sincere and hearty condolence in their sorrow, which we feel is shared by all who came within the sphere of Mrs. Hough's personality."

The present Rector of St. John's was tendered a call to this Parish, which he accepted, and, on July 15, 1922, The Rev. H. E. Montgomery came to us from the Church at Menlo. He found the Vestry without a Senior Warden, owing to the recent death of the venerable Mr. R. E. Wilhoit. Naturally, he turned first to Mr. C. M. Jackson, the Junior Warden, he being now the senior member of the Vestry. Owing to his physical condition Mr. Jackson declined the honor, and Mr. F. A. Eckstrom was appointed Senior Warden.

Mr. Montgomery quickly made himself acquainted with his parishioners. His own energy and cordiality was soon reflected in the renewed activity of all the Church organizations, and each department became a working unit for St. John's Church. He introduced in Parish work many innovations. Space will not permit the detailing of the many things he has accomplished since he became our Rector. We leave to those who write the Centennial history of St. John's Church many things to record, for we here mention but a few of the outstanding ones:

The publication and circulation of a Parish paper known as the Ivy Leaf. The acceptance and adoption of the Church Program as recommended by the National Council, particularly the Group System and the Parish Council. In connection with the Church Program, Parish Program Dinners and Parish Conferences have awakened enthusiasm and afforded opportunity for St. John's members to share in planning a definite program for the ensuing year.

Following the suggestions of various committees in Eastern Jurisdictions the Church School joins in the first part of the Sunday morning services and then adjourns to the Guild Hall for instructions.

Of benefit to the community the University of California Extension Division Lectures have been instructive; and the fostering of Miracle Plays has well proven their merit to the Church and the community.

A revival of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew filled a gap and afforded opportunity for good work similar to that carried on in most Parishes.

The appointment of the Parish Chancellor, David B. Lyman, brought an honor to St. John's through the

appointment of its official as Chancellor of the Missionary District of San Joaquin.

Increase in the attendance of communicants at the early Sunday morning services. The revival of the mid-week Healing Service, together with the Sunday Morning Services, have offered additional opportunities for attending Church Services.

By contact with fraternal and social organizations has had them attend service in a body.

The increased activity in the Parish of St. John's, at Stockton, was noted throughout the whole Diocese, and our Rector was honored by being elected and appointed to many offices in the District. In October, 1924, he was elected Dean of the Northern Deanery, in the District of the San Joaquin, and was re-elected to the same office in October, 1925; he was appointed a member of the Cathedral Chapter; the Field Department; the Finance Department; and also a member of the Executive Council of the Diocese; Trustee of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in San Francisco, and State Chaplain of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion.

(To Be Continued in Next Issue)

Back issues of the *San Joaquin Historian* are available from the Corresponding Secretary:

SAN JOAQUIN HISTORIAN

The Quarterly of the
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Published Four Times Each Year
P.O. Box 21, Lodi, California 95240

Editor: Robert Bonta

The San Joaquin County Historical Society, a non-profit corporation, meets the fourth Monday of each month except for July and August. Annual memberships are: Individual - \$5.00, Corporate - \$8.00, and Junior - \$1.00, and include a subscription to the *San Joaquin Historian*. Non-members may purchase individual copies from the Society's Secretary at \$1.00 per copy. The Society also operates the San Joaquin County Historical Museum at Micke Grove. Persons wishing to donate items should contact the Museum Director.

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