

# D. O. Kelley Established 10 Churches In The Valley

EDITOR'S NOTE: The San Joaquin Valley was Indian country in 1776.

There were no farms, no settlements, no trading posts.

And, of course, there were no churches.

The only signs of "civilization" were provided by an occasional military patrol or a band of wandering Mountain Men.

But they were just passing through. They left no records or journals. The wind covered their tracks behind them.

This is regrettable - especially when one is trying to come up with a "local angle" on the Bicentennial.

How helpful it would have been had Junipero Serra taken Interstate 5 instead of El Camino Real!

The historical date for the Episcopal Church in the San Joaquin Valley was three years after the Centennial of 1876, when, on the first Sunday in June of 1879, a lawyer turned Priest held morning and evening services in Modesto.

His name was D. O. (Douglas Ottinger) Kelley. He would become known affectionately as the "Apostle of San Joaquin". During his devoted service in the Valley he would establish ten churches.

We think that it fitting in this Bicentennial year to publish monthly extracts from Fr. Kelley's "Reminiscences", as edited by the Rev. Stanley R. Sinclair, former Historiographer of the Diocese.

## D. O. KELLEY: APOSTLE OF SAN JOAQUIN

Edited by  
The Rev. Stanley R. Sinclair

Douglas Ottinger Kelley was born on Kelley's Island, Ohio, in 1844, in a two-story log house.

In his writings he tells of "Grandpa Kelley", who became a follower of Andrew Jackson Davis, a famous spiritualist of the times. "Grandpa got it into his head that he was destined to solve the problem of 'perpetual motion', and invented a machine that would develop it. He claimed to be guided by the 'spirits'. He spent several thousand dollars on it before he died, and then assured his sons that when he got into the 'spirit world' he would bring or send the secret of final success so that they could complete the machine.

"Nothing was ever heard from

Grandpa after he died, regarding perpetual motion or anything else!"

## RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

Kelley's Island was a remote farming area, and there was no church. "Father used to read Morning Prayer and a sermon as lay reader Sunday mornings," he recalled. "Sometimes I would be rather naughty and heckle my little girlie cousin while we were all supposed to be on our knees, and very devout - her little fat bare legs making altogether too tempting an object to let alone. Then there were the daily family prayers, when Mama always read the chapter from the Bible, almost always from the Old Testament - and Papa read the prayers."

He recalls his brother Heber teacher him the Lord's Prayer at age three. "This is one of the pleasantest recollections of early childhood days."

After moving to the little town of Napoleon, Henry County, Ohio ("I remember the ride on the canal, in a 'packet' . . . It was great fun going through the locks. . .") his father found that "some sort of union meeting place" was the only church, and he soon began holding Prayer Book services, "though scarcely anyone knew anything about the Episcopal Church. Whatever 'preaching' there was done by itinerant 'elders' of the Methodist, Campbellite, Dunkard . . . and other such bodies, nearly all of almost unbelievable ignorance . . ."

A year or two later a lot was secured, and St. John's Church built.

Educators will be interested in Fr. Kelley's further account of religious nurture: "From all this it will be seen that my religious training had been almost wholly received from my own parents. Also that it had been steady and consistent from the first. My knowledge of God, and of the Bible and of the Church was as good as a child of my age would be expected to have, though I had so little opportunity to attend church service other than my father's lay reading. I had a very clear idea of the position of the Church in relation to the various denominational protestant bodies.

"I remember insisting upon it in boyish discussions with Ezra Dodd, when not over nine years old that ours was the Church!

Don't think I knew much about the Roman Catholics - tho' too, I early got the fact that Henry VIII did not 'found' the Church of England well established in my mind."

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Fr. Kelley's recollection of his personal religious experience and his Civil War years will appear in the February edition of the STAR.)

PAGE 4 - SAN JOAQUIN STAR - JAN., 1976

**"Apostle of San Joaquin"**

SAINT MATTHIAS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
THE FIRST 50 YEARS 1887-1937

For all friends of Saint Matthias' Church this sketch has been prepared in the belief that the information may be comforting and enjoyable either in giving a knowledge not previously known or in recalling memories of the past. Of course it is incomplete, with many acknowledgments overlooked or forgotten with the passage of time.

The founding of the Episcopal Church in Oakdale dates back to early 1884 making it one of the oldest churches in the city. It was not until 1887 that Saint Matthias was officially recognized by the Diocese.

The working foundations for the Parish were laid in 1883 under the direction of the Rt. Rev. William Ford Nichols, D.D. whose Diocese included all of Central California. The name of Deaconess Dorsey is probably outstanding in formation of the new Parish.

No sooner had the little Episcopal group been formed in order to worship God in the way it wished than the women members decided to do their utmost to advance the work along the lines they knew best. "Saint Matthias' Guild met at the Union Church, Oakdale, March 31, 1885, for the purpose of forming a Ladies' working guild in Saint Matthias Protestant Episcopal Mission in Oakdale, Diocese of California-- the following ladies became members.

Mrs. A. Llewelyn  
Mrs. M.E. Stearns  
Mrs. Green

Mrs. Fannie R.A. Hunt  
Mrs. Anne Leuhrs  
Miss Hattie Woods

Mrs. Mary A. Lovall  
Mrs. Margaret Gilmer  
Mrs. Wyckoff

"Met at the house of Mrs. Stearns Wednesday April 7, 1885 and elected the following officers:

Mrs. Dora Woods (the late Mrs. Dora Rodden) President  
Mrs. M. E. Woods Vice President  
Mrs. M. E. Stearns Secretary  
Mrs. A. Llewelyn Treasurer

Members subsequently added:

Mrs. T. J. Green  
Mrs. C. H. Osler

(The record in quotations was taken verbatim from the original book of minutes of the Guild.)

A constitution and By-Laws were drawn up.

Article VII reads in part: "Any member speaking disrespectfully to or of anyone shall be fined five cents."

Article VIII reads: "Any member neglecting to pay dues or who shall be guilty of improper conduct calculated to bring this guild into disrepute, shall be expelled from the membership of the Guild by a two-thirds vote of the members present."

In 1900 and 1901 services were held in the rear of the old Lovell Building (east of the railroad) where a chapel was fitted up to meet the early needs of the church. "Through the thoughtfulness of Mr. Harry Ogle, the proprietor, the saloon in back of the altar observed quiet hours during the time of services." At other times meetings

were held in the Union Church when the Rev. D.O. Parker of Saint James, Sonora walked from Sonora to carry on the Parish work and to conduct the services, Rev. Jerome Trivett, and Rev. C.S. Linsley (dec.) also served the church during this period.

The congregation saw that the need for a permanent home was imperative, so a building was planned, built, and paid for within one year including the latter half of 1904 and the beginning of 1905. Rev. William Edgar Couper was the minister in charge. The movement for the new church was started by the late Deaconess Dorsey, cousin of Edward M. Dorsey of Oakdale, Mrs. C. G. Hoisholt, and Mrs. Dora Rodden. Deaconess Dorsey raised funds to purchase the lot, and through the combined efforts of the above mentioned ladies besides others whose names have been lost the splendid work of the new church went on to completion. A church built and paid for in one year was such a remarkable display of vigor and sincerity of purpose that the ripple of approval reached as far as the Atlantic seaboard from where the Babies' Branch of the Women's Auxiliary of the Parish in Bishop Nichols' home town in Connecticut sent the lovely granite and oak front that stands in the church today as a gift in helpful recognition of the unusual accomplishment. The money was raised by subscription and hard work.

The doors of the new church were opened to its first congregation on Sunday, January 29, 1905; it was consecrated June 3, 1907 by Bishop William Ford Nichols with the assistance of Deaconess Dorsey. The Venerable Archdeacon John Abbot Emery preached the church's first sermon from the Test: "What hath God Wrought?" Numbers 23:23.

In January 1911 the Missionary District of San Joaquin was formed. Louis Childs Sanford, its first Bishop with less than two thousand members.

The Rev. G.G. Hoisholt, a native of Oakdale, was Ordained to the Deaconate in 1917; and Rev. E. I. MacNalty, also of Oakdale, entered the Clergy from the Parish of Saint Matthias'.

There has been a long list of distinguished clergy and laity serve and visit Saint Matthias'. Among them are:

The Ven. Archdeacon John Abbot Emery, The Ven. Archdeacon Austin Seriven (later Lord Bishop of British Columbia) 1907-1908, The Rev. Charles E. Maimann who once held a Scandinavian service using the Prayerbook in Danish 1909, Rt. Rev. William Ford Nichols D.D., Archdeacon W.H. Hawkins 1911-1914, Rt. Rev. L.C. Sanford D.D., Rev. Jeffries (before the church was organized), Rev. Octavius Parker (first missionary to Alaska), Deaconess Dorsey whose officiating at a service at that time caused much discussion on the propriety of women officials, Rev. G.G. Hoisholt, Rev. William Edgar Couper 1904-1907, Rev. E.I. MacNalty 1914-1915, Rev. W.H. Rhames 1915, Rev. Frank H. Church 1916, Rev. Arthur L. Walters 1917-1920, Francis O. Jones 1921-1924, Rev. Arthur Bonner 1924-1931 of the College of Pacific, Rev. Thomas C. Maxwell 1932-1935, Rev. Paul Shimon, Rev. James E. Price.

The Vestry room was built and enlarged in 1912 by Archdeacon Hawkins who did the work himself with the materials supplied by the Ladies' Guild.

Those worthy of honorable mention in the works of the church are: Mrs. Catherine G. Hoisholt. Mrs. Lila Martin, Mrs. Helen Gray, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Dorsey, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Loughlin, Riverbank, Mrs. G.M. Hirman, Mrs. Lottie Hoffman, Mr. and Mrs. George Weeks, and many others whose names are not known to the writer.

Saint Matthias' has many memorials to former people of Oakdale. A brief list of memorials: Altar Cross, Hoisholt Memorial; Altar Vase, in memory of Bernhard Hoisholt, Sr.; Bishop's Chair, memory of Mary A. Lovell; Processional Cross, Hoisholt

memorial; Hymnals, in memory of Mrs. McGinnes (mother of Lottie Hoffman and Olive McGinnis). Over the altar on the rear wall of the present church is a stained glass window of Jesus and the lambs, originally in the first church edifice. This window is inscribed "IN MEMORY OF MRS. DORA RODDEN." Mrs. Rodden, at that time Miss Dora Woods, was the first president of the Women's Guild in April 7, 1885, and her name appears as secretary in the minutes of nearly every meeting from February 6, 1905 through April 28, 1916. As we gaze at this memorial window in the most prominent spot in the church, we can well remember the dedication of this faithful woman.

The year 1914 began several years of hard times for all of the churches. War clouds began to appear upon the horizon. The war not only took men into military service, but enlisted them in conducting patriotic rallies and selling war bonds. The clergy, when they did not go off to war, were serving as "Four Minute Men" and on their draft boards. The Red Cross and other agencies of government drew women from their accustomed church activities to the knitting of sweaters, making of surgical dressings, and other war activities.

Following the war, a highly infectious epidemic swept the nation in 1917-1918. The Spanish Influenza decimated the population. Few escaped the "flu" and those who did were recruited to care for the others. Boards of Health closed churches as well as theatres, prohibiting all public gatherings.

The Churches in California experienced a temporary recovery from the effects of the War, but the great depression and market crash in 1931 wiped out thousands of people financially. Newspapers daily reported, people jumping off buildings to their death. A program of drastic retrenchment was implemented to meet the great depletion of income. These were the years of great numbers of unemployed, "hunger marches," migration of people from the "Dust Bowl" of Oklahoma to California, of CCC Camps, extreme poverty and destitution. The most sung song of that era was "Brother Can You Spare a Dime."

During these years giving on the part of church members dropped off and grants from the National Council were slashed. The financial position of the Missionary District of San Joaquin became desperate. Many churches had to close thier doors. Saint Matthias was one of them.

In 1937 a young Public Works Administartion worker came to Oakdale. Saddened to see a little church boarded up, he set about contacting members with an idea to reopening it. A few rallied to the challenge and the Church again opened its doors for worship. Young Mr. Price, the PWA worker, was granted permission by Bishop Sanford to hold services and to serve as lay-reader. Saint Matthias' Women's Guild was organized again and the congregation began to grow.

\*\*\*\*\* Excerpts for much of the above information was obtained from the "Golden Anniversary" special edition, courtesy of the OAKDALE LEADER, 1939. Copy was supplied by Carl: Boswell, teacher of journalism at OAKDALE HIGH SCHOOL, 1937-1940.

SAINT MATTHIAS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
THE SECOND 50 YEARS 1937-1987

On May 27, 1938 a meeting was held to reorganize the church. James E. Price, student minister in charge explained the purpose and need for a vestry. Mrs. Lottie Hoffman, Mr. George Wasson, Mr. George Wells and Mr. Kenneth Brush were appointed to serve. In October 1938 a budget of approximately \$12.00 per month was suggested for 1939. For the year 1939 Mr. Carl Boswell, a teacher of Journalism at Oakdale High, became Junior Warden and Mrs. Lorena Landers appointed as Church School Superintendent. The Luthern's had agreed to pay \$42.00 per year rent for the use of the church.

Mr. Price went on to enter Church Divinity School of the Pacific in 1940. In 1942 he was called to the Episcopal Church at Redding after his graduation and ordination and later to Snohomish, Washington, where he now lives in retirement. Mr. Price has visited Oakdale and Saint Matthias' Church several times to look up old friends and witness the progress of the church he was instrumental in reopening.

Mr. Price's place in October 1942 was filled by another student minister, Mr. Richard Hartley who served until March 1944. Other active laity who carried on the work of the church during these years with part-time student ministers were: Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Pimley, Mr. and Mrs. David Tulloch, Mrs. Jessie Hirman, Mrs. Helen Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Ling, Mrs. Nina Dorsey, Miss Olive McGinnes, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Jarcoh, and Mr. and Mrs. Homer Bosse.

It was suggested by the Rt. Rev. Sumner Walters, Bishop of the San Joaquin, at the March 5, 1944 Vestry Meeting there was a possibility of a fulltime priest for Oakdale. A home would have to be provided with a stipend of \$1,500.00 per year, half to be paid locally and half to be paid by the District Office. The Bishop had made his first annual visitation on this date confirming Dorothy Rodden (Jackson) and Louise Bush and baptizing Edward Rodden and Eleanor Reed Cottle

In June of that year a seminarian named Gerwyn Morgan, who was a friend and fellow student at The Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, with now Bishop Victor Rivera, began traveling to Oakdale on weekends to hold services and was full time Vicar of Saint Matthias when priested in December 1944. Reverend Morgan was also instrumental in aiding in Bishop Rivera's return to California from his native Puerto Rico.

To Saint Matthias came renewed life as people turned back to the church because of both despair from the long devastating war and the stimulation from the Rev. Morgan's enthusiasm. Since that time there has been steady progress and growth.

In 1944 Sumner Walters had just become the second Bishop, formerly at Trinity, San Francisco, mother church of the Pacific coast. The Diocese now had twenty congregations with 4,000 members.

In 1947 Mr. Tom Turnbull succeeded Rev. Morgan and served for three years, being ordained in 1949. During his tenure the start of construction of Tulloch Hall was begun, first with a covered basement and later its completion as the lovely functional structure it is today. The Tulloch brothers, Dave and Jack, provided the leadership which led the congregation with much of the labor supplied persmally by the members. Dedication was not until January 1952. Vestrymen during Rev. Turnbolls stay were: Norman Hubbel, Ernest Havons, Dave Tulloch, Gordon Pimley, Bert Gripenstraw, Knox Newell, William Taylor, Gordon Allen, Ed Laughlin, and Jack Meyers.

Honored with the presentation of a Celtic Cross at this time, was Mrs. Joe (Lottie) Hoffman. Treasurer of Saint Matthias' Church for thirty-one years, she was retiring. "I would have retired sooner," she said, "but I had promised to continue as Treasurer until the hall was finished." A new item describing the event says that Lottie Hoffman was a member of the Church since 1912. She was a native of Sonora, the daughter of Mrs. W. T. McGinnes, who was one of the first white children to be born in Sonora, and one of two active charter members of the Native Daughters of the Golden West.

Mrs. Hoffman could recall the early history of the Church. "Church attendance averaged 20 persons, with sometimes only 4 or 5 members keeping the Church alive." She named the late Mrs. William (Dora Woods) Rodden, mother of Vernon Rodden, and the late Mrs. C.G. Hoisholt as "pillars" of the Church.

A terrific wind and rainstorm had blown off the roof at one time during her term, Lottie relates, and there were no funds to re-roof the Church. "The destruction began during a Shrove Tuesday dinner," according to Mrs. Hoffman. "A fund was quickly oversubscribed, and with some donated labor, the Church not only received a new roof, but a new coat of paint," she added.

Then in January 1951 The Rev. Arthur Beckwith and family arrived from Burns, Oregon prior to that having served in a remote region of Canada, Oakdale seemed like a populated metropolis compared to the back country they were accustomed to. The Parish felt at this time they should call an older, experienced priest rather than a seminarian. Looking for a community that had good schools and colleges close at hand for his three children, it looked as though Mr. Beckwith might stay long enough to give some stability to Saint Matthias' Church. It was his joy to become a Rector for the first time during his ministry when Saint Matthias' Church became a Parish in 1959. Previously, he had always been a Vicar in some Mission Church. Under The Rev. Beckwith's mature guidance and quiet understanding of people and the community, great strides were made in all areas, both the spiritual needs with many converts and new parishioners and the physical building of a Sunday School complex and a larger Church to hold the increasing congregation.

Ground breaking for the Sunday School rooms was on July 16, 1955 with Clarence Royce accepting the chairmanship of the building committee. The project required 38 working days to complete with mostly volunteer labor. Members of the building committee were: The Rev. Arthur Beckwith, Chairman Clarence Royce, Filmore McNear, Peg DeLong, Frances Pimley, Ira DeLong, Harold Long, and Bob Gilbert. There were a total of 65 people involved in the project with 53 different individuals actually contributing one or more days physical work. In addition many helped by making cash donations to the fund while others served food to the workers--Saint Matthias' Guild and Saint Catherine's Guild. It is to be noted that the record shows that Chairman Royce was present on each of the 38 working days. Others who contributed five or more days labor were: Dave Tulloch, Fil McNear, Gordon Pimley, Ira DeLong, Dan Hughs, Bill Taylor, Hugh Appling, Burt Gripenstraw, Sid Royce, and Bill Eastman.

The dedication was held Sunday, November 20, 1955 with The Rt. Rev. Sumner Walters, Bishop of the Missionary District of the San Joaquin presiding, assisted by The Rev. Arthur Beckwith, Vicar of Saint Matthias'. A financial report dated January 9, 1956 showed there was no residual debt and a balance of \$54.24 remained in the building fund, six months after the ground breaking.

With this achievement completed the Bishops Committee, (Vestry), at the Annual Meeting, also in January 1956, appointed a New Church Building Committee chaired by V.A. Rodden, (son of one of the original founders, Mrs. Dora (Woods) Rodden) and composed of A.L. Craft, D.D. Jackson, L.B. Gilbert, and Frank Lacy to study the feasibility of construction of a new Church Building. After many months of study and meetings in August 1956 it was concluded that a new church was needed to hold

the growing congregation. This proposal was brought before the congregation and it was unanimously approved and a five year pledge plan was started. In four months over 60% of the estimated costs were pledged and financing was arranged with the First Western Bank in Oakdale.

The new Church Building was dedicated a year later in October 1957. The original cost of \$54,000.00 was 25% paid for at this time. Records show that by March 1960 debt equal to 1/3 of the costs plus interest. Due to a unique cattle feeding program it was only a short time until Saint Matthias' was again debt free.

Another unusual fund raising plan was suggested and carried out by Dr. John Hogg, in which bonds were sold to finance a new organ, and subsequently retired by random drawing at Annual Meetings.

In the meantime another milestone was achieved. In 1959 a Modesto Bee article and picture show The Rev. Arthur Beckwith receiving the keys to Saint Matthias' Episcopal Church from Clarence Royce, the Rector's Warden, in a formal ceremony changing the Pastor's status from Vicar to Rector. The new title follows the Church's change from a Mission to a Parish on October 13, 1957. John Clinton served as the Peoples Warden and The Rt. Rev. Sumner Walters of Stockton officiated at the ceremony.

On the indise of the back of the program appeared:

IN RECOGNITION

John Biaggi-Contractor

G. N. Hilburn-Architect

The Workmen of the Building Trades

The Parish Building Committee

Mr. Vernon Rodden-Chairman

Mr. Frank Lacy-Secretary/Treasurer

Mr. Al Craft

Mr. Donald Jackson

Mr. Lawrence Gilbert

Getting past retirement age The Rev. Beckwith stepped aside for a young priest named Richard Henry. In June 1961 Richard Henry was admitted to the Deaconate and served along with The Rev. Beckwith until December 1961 when he was ordained Priest. The Rev. Henry led the growing congregation to additional achievements having a record number of confirmations with classes of 30 and 40 at one time. A new rectory was purchased on Oak Street to better suit a young family only to be replaced after he left in 1965 with the present home on Poplar. The Rev. Henry is now serving Saint Mary's, Fresno, his only residency since leaving Oakdale, and his wife Allene have many fond memories and close friends in the Oakdale area. He especially remembers the Orr Faimly, Mary Susan Brown, Mimi Royse, The McLaren's and The Jackson's

In 1962 the Missionary District of San Joaquin attained Diocesan status (self supporting), and in 1968 The Rev. Victor M. Rivera, D.D., Rector of Saint Paul's, Visalia was elected the third Bishop of the San Joaquin, and remains so today, 1987.

Mr. Beckwith retired, but from April, 1964 to January, 1965, served the Parish of Saint James, Sonora during a period when they were without a clergyman. A history of Saint James includes Mr. Beckwith's ministry. "He came to Sonora each Sunday and conducted two services, and at other times when necessary, working with interest and enthusiasm, he made hospital calls, visited the shut-ins and participated in community affairs," the booklet recalls.

The late Rev. Thomas Steensland succeeded Rev. Henry in 1965 and continued the good works established by his predecessors until a greater opportunity and challenge was provided at Saint Michaels of Carmichel, near Sacramento. Unfortunately his untimely passing prevented him from fulfilling this mission at that Parish.

The Rev. William Eastman followed The Rev. Steensland and brought to Oakdale his lovely wife Shirley and their children. His tenure was the longest since The Rev. Beckwith, and his dedication, true Saint Matthias' is pleased to have him as a neighbor now serving at Saint Benedict's Mission in nearby Ceres.

In 1976 a young deacon was called part time, with Saint Paul's, Modesto, taking up the balance of his time. The Rev. Paul Lambert was ordained a Priest of the Church at Saint Paul's, Modesto. He served as part time Youth Minister at both Saint Paul's, Modesto and Saint Matthias, Oakdale.

During the past ten years several Clergymen have ably served or filled in as supply clergy. These include The Rev. Edwin Shaklford, now at Our Merciful Savior's in Sacramento, who served as Rector for over one year. Many supply clergymen include The Rev. Norman VanWalterop of Modesto, The Rev. James Trotter of Turlock, and The Rev. Peter Barker of Stockton and others.

Since 1981, Saint Matthias has been blessed to have The Rev. Leon McDougall, his wife Beverly and family in residency. Father Mac as he is known, has been able to contribute much to the Parish based on his past broad experiences and a dedication to God to feed His sheep.

The past 50 years have seen a tremendous dedication by the Laity to make Saint Matthias' a truly loving Body of Christ. To be especially remembered is the work of two active Guilds at onetime, Saint Matthias' and Saint Chatherins. The womens guilds are usually the backbone of most Episcopal Churches. This was surely true at Saint Matthias.

Music has been provided by a choir led by Elizabeth McLaren, and an organist, the late Frances Pimley. Mrs. Pimley was also always instrumental in keeping the Sunday School going, ably supported by Brogee Clinton.

A men's group was active off and on through the 1950's and 60's and as late as the 1970's when Ted Goodling acted as both cook and organizer. Literally hundreds have served in various capacities to fill the multitude of needs to keep Saint Matthias viable and alive.

Saint Matthias' stands today in the downtown area not only as a monument to God and Jesus Christ, but to those pioneers who weathered the hard times, throughout the years, who kept the saving truth of God alive in this township.

We also wish to dedicate this day, April 26, 1987 to Hazel Greening, our oldest living member who has so unselfishly given her talents, time, and treasures.





# St. Matthias' Episcopal Church

(POST OFFICE BOX 26)  
CORNER OF EAST F AND SOUTH 1ST AVENUE  
OAKDALE, CALIFORNIA 95361

CHURCH (209) 847-2012  
RECTORY (209) 847-1486

THE REV. LEON MacDOUGALL  
RECTOR

A SPECIAL "THANK YOU" IS DUE TO BOB AND BEV GILBERT FOR THE REMARKABLE JOB THEY AND THEIR EXTENDED COMMITTEE PERFORMED IN PUTTING TOGETHER THIS HISTORIC BOOKLET AND FOR THE WONDERFUL CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION THEY COORDINATED THIS APRIL 26, 1987 FOR SAINT MATTHIAS' EPISCOPAL PARISH.

MAY GOD HAVE THE GLORY AND THE LORD JESUS BE MAGNIFIED.

LEON R. MC DOUGALL  
RECTOR & FOR THE  
VESTRY OF SAINT  
MATTHIAS' CHURCH

SAINT MATTHIAS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
1887

1987

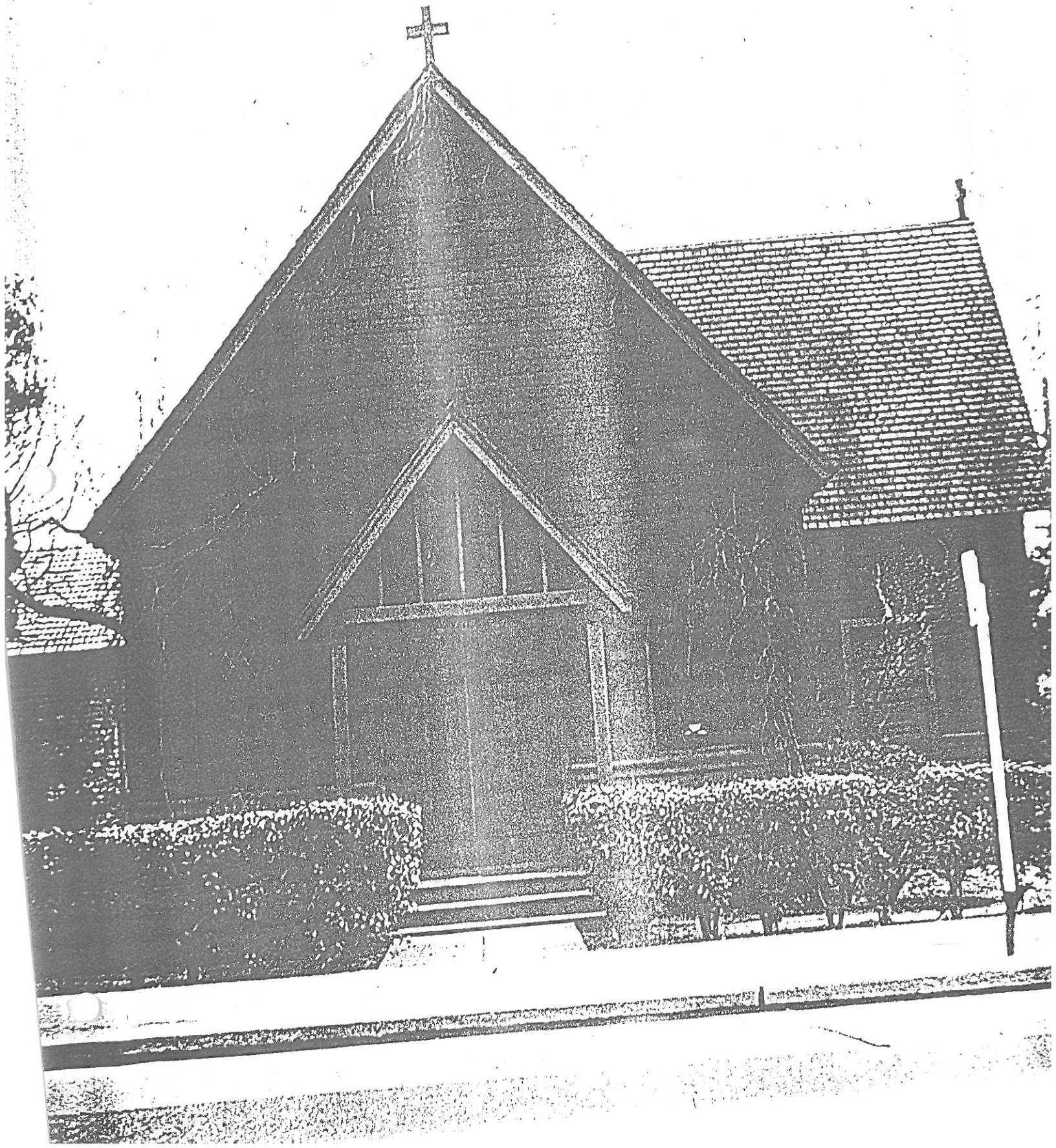


TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE	
2	SAINT MATTHIAS' WORKING GUILD'S FIRST MEETING MARCH 31, 1885
3	DEDICATION A MEMORIAL TO FRANCES PIMLEY
4	HISTORY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.
5	EARLY HISTORY OF SAINT MATTHIAS' AND THE CENTRAL VALLEY
6	D. O. KELLEY ESTABLISHED TEN CHURCHES IN THE VALLEY
7	SAINT MATTHIAS' THE FIRST 50 YEARS 1887 to 1937
10	SAINT MATTHIAS' THE SECOND 50 YEARS 1937-1987
14	RESIDENT CLERGYMEN SERVING SAINT MATTHIAS'
15	PARTIAL LIST OF PERSONS SERVING ON THE VESTRY 1938-1987

THE PURPOSE OF SAINT MATTHIAS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH IS TO COME TOGETHER AS A LOVING  
WORSHIPPING CHRISTIAN FAMILY AND TO SHARE OUR JOY AND EXCITEMENT OF CHRIST'S  
LOVE WITH THE WORLD.

# S. Matthias Working Guild

Met at the Union Ch. Oakdale,  
Mar. 31<sup>st</sup> 1885, for the purpose of  
forming a Ladies Working Guild in  
S. Matthias Prot. Episcopal Mission in  
Oakdale, Diocese of California - the  
following Ladies who became members -

- vi-
- Ms. A. Llewelyn.
  - " Fannie R. A. Hunt.
  - " Mary A. Lovell.
  - " M. E. Stearns.
  - " Anne Leukers.
  - " Margaret Gilmer.
  - " Carrie Hodge - Removed.
  - Green.
  - " Miss Hattie Woods
  - Ms Wyeckoff - Removed.

A

MEMORIAL

TO

FRANCES PIMLEY

What can one say about Frances Pimley? Many would say, "She was a friend." Yes, but more than a friend; an inspiration, a spiritual rock.

Frances came to Saint Matthias' Church when the little brown building was reopened in 1938, after several years of being boarded up. Only a handful of members came to church at that time. Church School was only through the third grade. In a span of years, it had grown into a full program through High School, with children's choirs and G.F.S. (Girl's Friend Society) as well. Young people responded to Frances' loving and patient way with them.

As organist for thirty-nine years, Frances' special touch with the organ added much to the worship at Saint Matthias'. She also led the choir before and between regular directors.

Frances was president of Saint Matthias' Episcopal Women more than once, and held other lesser offices in between. She was U.T.O. Chairman when her final illness incapacitated her. As Diocesan Devotional Chairman, she sent a monthly devotional letter which she composed, to every E.C.W. in the diocese.

A faithful member of the Tuesday Morning prayer, healing, and study group, Frances was devout and constant in her prayer life, twice a year joining a small group from Saint Matthias' who attended weekend retreats conducted by Dr. Charles Whiston.

Not limited to work in her own church, Frances was active in Church Women United in Oakdale--one of the faithful few who kept it going for many years.

Christ was Frances' life and love, and the body of Christians we call the Church was where she expressed it. No one could be more missed in the Church and Diocese, the community, than Frances. She was a mainstay and spiritual bulwark for every clergyman who served at Saint Matthias'.

What can one say about Frances Pimley? Those who have known her through the years, and those who knew her briefly, join together in saying, "Frances Pimley was a saint."

HISTORY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE U.S.  
Dean Spear

Books: Episcopal Church in the United States - Addison  
Men and Movements in the Episcopal Church (The Church Convalescent)

1607 - First colonists came to Jamestown. Didn't come fleeing but to get rich; brought church with them.  
History of church in Virginia most interesting (members: Washington, Patrick Henry, and others). Everyone had to attend church every Sunday twice. Only Episcopalians could vote. Didn't have to depend on England. Lay people took an active part. Clergy given 1-yr. contract; few lasted longer than that. No appreciation of bishops. One of the biggest fights: should lay people have a part in government of church. (In Britain bishops were appointed by the king--people had no say). Many Virginia area people Tories, supporters of the crown. In the Revolutionary war no Episcopalian members had to flee. Today, south still conservative.

Two characteristics continued in American life (contributed to):  
Episcopalians, because of the forging of history, inclined to be in the middle.  
Pragmatism.

18th Century made significant advances in cities. Kings College (now Columbia University) established by Episcopal Church.

After the Revolutionary War, the church had to decide what it was. No bishops at first. Suspicious of bishops. Bishops agreed their authority did not depend on the state and had to agree to live in peace and charity with everybody else.

In Connecticut: Seabury 1st consecrated bishop in England (had to pledge loyalty to crown). Finally want to Scotland and was elected.

1787 = First National Convention. Constitution. Prayer Book  
Next two bishops consecrated in England. Controversy over whether Seabury consecration valid.

Sir Francis Drake supposedly landed in 1537 in S.F. area.  
First Prayer Book Service conducted in that area, so cross in Golden Gate Park erected in commemoration.

Gov. of country patterned after church? Spear thinks not, but forged in conflicts of history.

# HISTORY OF SAINT MATTHIAS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND THE EARLY OF CALIFORNIA

Pitting its early American strength against the amorality of the West, where saloons outnumbered churches twenty to one, a "Little Church in the Wildwood," proudly opened its doors to its first congregation January 29, 1905. The amazing accomplishment of a church built and paid for in the period of one year, attested to the enterprise and determination of these early pioneers.

During the gilded age, presaging the Gay Nineties, the cry of "gold" brought a rush of immigration to the West; some prospecting, many to settle down and tame the wilderness and become farmers and merchants. By 1855, signs of order were emerging from what had been chaos. Rough mining camps had given way to tent towns, tent towns to shack towns, and some shack towns were showing signs of becoming permanent settlements. Descended from early settlers in the East, who may have come over in the Mayflower; or, perhaps, from the three-quarters of the signers of the Constitution who were Episcopalians, a few of these wagon-train immigrants, or their sons and daughters, sought to make an impact on the baser instincts which had been released with this gold rush and to build churches. Saint Matthias' Episcopal Church was one of them.

The simple architecture with its pitched roof and finest red paint, made of red lead and linseed oil, told of its English and New England heritage. Native shrubs and trees planted in the surrounding churchyard, spoke of loyalties to a new home state, California.

On that first Sunday, we are told the Church was filled with worshippers. We can imagine them being driven to the door in house-driven buggies, huddling in warm coats in their pews on this wintry day, with only a small wood stove for heat. It was not always an easy matter to come to Church. Creeks often became torrents. Roads were a foot deep in dust in summer- or slush and mud in winter. Bishop Nichols, the first bishop to the Missionary District of San Joaquin, traveled the length and breadth of the state by stagecoach. It is said that the Rev. D.O. Kelley, an early missionary of extraordinary zeal, who established ten churches in the Missionary District of San Joaquin, sometimes walked from Sonora to Oakdale to hold services. Those of us who ride to Church in air-conditioned comfort and sit in warm Churches, may well take our "hats off" to those dauntless early worshippers, for whom going to church was often a real ordeal.