

In the Cathedral Library, under some cushions, under a window seat, are stacks of scrap books which seldom see the light of day. We have blown the dust off a few of them here for you. This is not the definitive narrative of St. James' story, but just a sampling of our rich past. The images and the accompanying descriptions are those of the people who recorded those moments.

Our First Church



Fresno, 1882

This picture, taken December 25th, 1882, looking north from the Court House, gives some idea of the wonderful growth of that part of Fresno during the past few years.

Very few buildings shown in the picture remain on the tract included, the Hawthorne School being the most prominent, and it has been turned to face northward since the picture was made. To the right of the Catholic Church steeple will be seen the residence of Judge David S. Terry, at that time one of Fresno's prominent characters. This house has been moved but still stands on Stanislaus near O Street. The Champion Flour Mills, occupying the present site of the Sperry Mills, was destroyed by fire. It was operated by water power obtained from the canal to be seen running down Fresno Street [the street running from lower left to upper right]. Notwithstanding an existing injunction that canal was filled in during the latter eighties by irate citizens who objected to its passage through the middle of the town. Across Fresno Street from the Catholic Church is seen the residence of J. T. Shanklin. That location is now occupied by the Brix apartment house. The [St. James] Episcopal Church seen the picture is not the same building that now occupies that site, while the Catholic Church was removed many years ago.

Unless small objects noticed at the junction of the roads near the middle of the picture should prove to be that of a woman and two children, and to their right appears to be a white cow, there is no evidence of life in the entire picture. This is remarkable, considering the immense population now living in the same district. The scarcity of trees is also noteworthy.

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written c. 1902



The Reverend Douglas O. Kelly
First Rector of St. James' Church, 1888-1891

Wife and seven sons

The first organization of the Episcopal church in Fresno county was St. James Mission, Fresno city, which I formed in the fall of 1879. On the first two Sundays, services were held in Tupper's law office, near where the First National bank now is. Then for a few months an old garret on H street, known as Magnolia Hall, did duty as a place of worship. Afterwards a room in the public school house was fitted up and occupied for some time.

In the summer of 1880 steps were taken toward the building of a church, and about \$1300 was subscribed for the purpose. Lots were secured on the corner of Fresno and N streets, though considerable hesitancy was expressed as to the expediency of building "so far out of town" - the schoolhouse being then about the only other structure in that region.

The first service in the new church was held in the spring of 1881, the Rev. William L. Mott of Modesto preaching the sermon. The building then was in a very incomplete condition, consisting of little more than the bare brick walls, the roof, floor and windows.

During the winter of 1880-1 a commodious parsonage was also built adjoining the church, with funds I raised mostly at the East. The church was not finished and cleared of debt until December, 1884, when it was consecrated by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Kip.

Since then various improvements and additions have been made both to the church and the parsonage, and now there is talk of enlarging the church to accomodate the increasing congregation. A fine pedal-bass organ was placed in the church last spring, at which Prof. E. M. Drury presides as organist, and, assisted by some of the best vocalists in the city, provides a musical service of a high quality.

The Mission was developed into a parish at Easter, 1888, at which I as the missionary became the rector. The vestry consists of W. E. Gilmore, Dr. Hopkins, Philip Stewart, J. G. Rhodes, Wm. More Young, J. M. Collier and Wm. G. Uridge. George H. Andrus is treasurer of the parish, and also superintendent of the Sunday school.

When first organized, in 1879, there were but nine communicant members, all ladies. Since that time 74 have been added by confirmation and 160 by admission.

Rev. D. O. Kelly
 written c. 1891



Episcopal Church of St. James
At NW corner of N & Fresno Streets

photo c. 1884

note growth in trees from photo above, 2 years earlier

Pulled down and rebuilt 1904 on this site. Sold to city of Fresno 1963. This photo enlargement shows my wife Kate Evans (Kathleen Hodgson Holland). Her mother Mrs. W. R. Evans (Kate), the taller of the three girls & her two little dogs. I came to Fresno Sept. 1919. I met my wife in 1920. We were married here in March 1921. My wife was baptized in this chrch 1889. We were members of St. James until her passing 1964.

(signed) Richard G. Holland
 115 N. 3rd Street, Fresno Calif.

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