

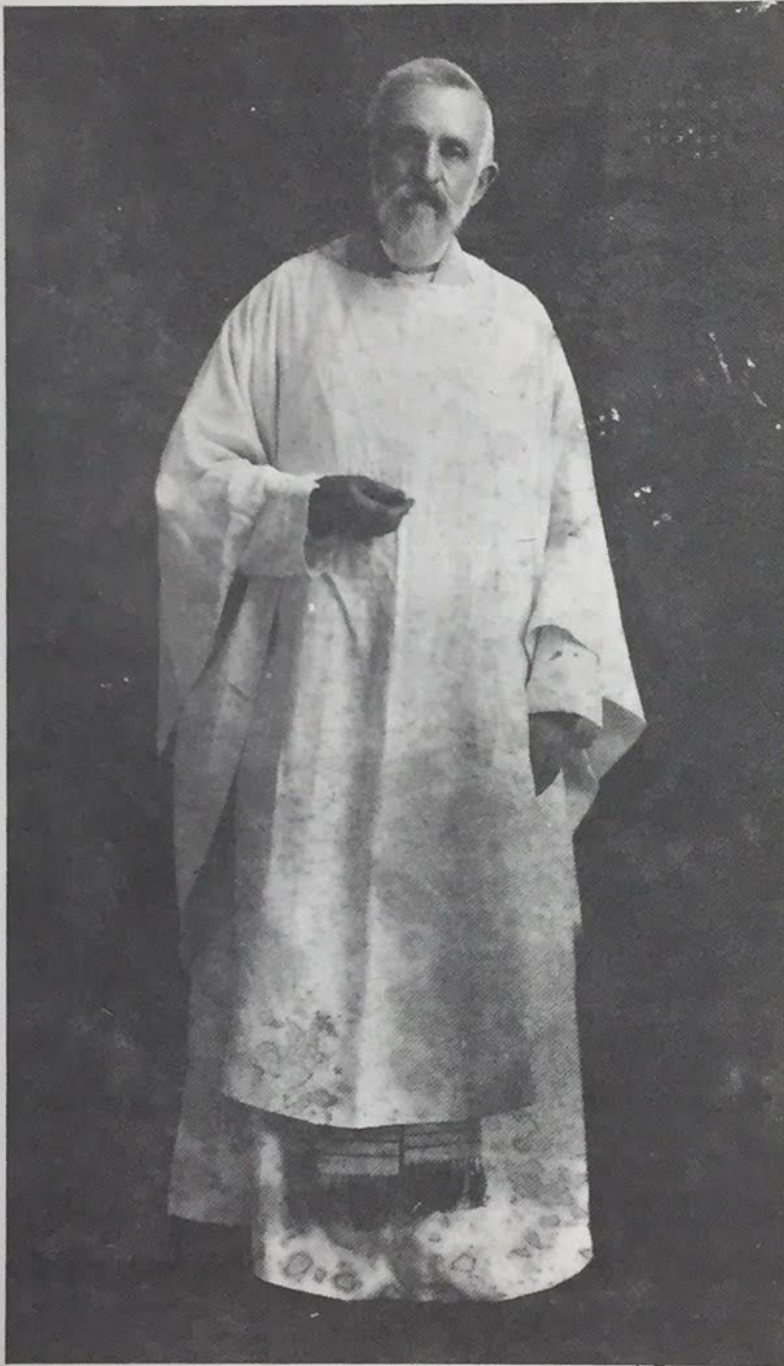
FLASHBACK

published by the
WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

Vol. XVI, No. 3

W. J. Lemke, editor

August 1966



REV. JAMES J. VAULX
Rector, St. Paul's Parish, 1876-1902

(See "History of St. Paul's Parish, Fayetteville,"
beginning on next page.)

HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S PARISH, FAYETTEVILLE

By Rev. J. J. Vaulx, Rector 1876--1902

On the 18th of October, St. Luke's Day, 1876, the Rev. James Junius Vaulx took charge of the Parish of St. Paul, Fayetteville, Arkansas, as Rector. Fayetteville was then a small town of 1,500 inhabitants, with no communication with the outside world save by stage or private conveyance. The Little Rock and Fort Smith R. R. was 60 miles distant on the south and the Frisco 75 miles on the north. The University of Arkansas, then the Arkansas Industrial University, had but a few years before been established and built.

The shell of St. Paul's Church had been built during the Rectorship of my predecessor, the Reverend Thomas May Thorpe, who had done a good work in Fayetteville. The lot on which it was built was given by Dr. Charles W. Deane. The church was without ceiling (i.e. on walls) and had only a few benches, not more than a dozen, and with a very small box stove for heating it. There was no provision for a robing room save a little curtained-off place in the northwest corner of the church. (I wish I could draw a plan of its interior as it was then, for it would be of interest to you who read this.)

For service vessels there were a flagon, a paten and two chalices of plated ware. The paten and one chalice were given to a Negro parish in Little Rock. There was no cross on the altar -- this lack was supplied by the Rector placing a cross which had been given to him by the Sisters of St. Mary, Memphis, and had been used by them on the altar in the chapel of the church house, Memphis. This was used until a brass cross had been bought by the S.S. and placed on the altar to the glory of God, and in loving memory of George Brooks (son of Mrs. McIlroy) and a faithful S.S. teacher and a member of the Choir.

The Vestry of the Parish was composed of: Dr. C. W. Deane, S. W.; Wm. McIlroy, J. W.; James H. VanHoose, Sec.; and Charles H. Leverett. There were forty communicants, all of whom have fallen asleep except thirteen. They were very much disheartened and discouraged.

The salary provided the Rector was \$300 and the offertory, which amounted to about \$75, out of which to cover house rent, clothing and household expenses. To supplement this I had to teach school in the unconsecrated church. Among those taught in the school were: Charles Healy and wife; J. L. Bozarth; Loddie, Amanda and Ab Stone; Sallie Pettigrew (Mrs. Ullissis Jackson); Joseph Hill, a lawyer in Ft. Smith; Robert, James and Charlie McIlroy; Wythe and John Walker; Jessie (Mrs. Ollie Cravens) and Leila (Mrs. H. L. Gregg) Cravens.

The Parish grew in numbers and became stronger every year. The present altar was built to the glory of God and in loving memory of John Beale Gordon, the assistant professor of mathematics in the University who was a faithful communicant and a teacher in the Sunday School. He was one of the most manly and lovable characters I have ever known and was to me as a younger brother by blood.

The Holy vessels were gotten by getting contributions of old silver and gold from the members of the parish and were consecrated to the glory of God and in loving memory of all the faithful departed of the parish. Wherefore let every faithful priest that useth them remember them when he offers the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar. Likewise let him see that his hands and heart are clean when he cometh to the altar and let him see that these vessels are kept clean and untarnished as becometh the sacred vessels of the sanctuary.

The candlesticks for the two Eucharistic Lights were given by the Rector as a thank offering for over \$100 given to him by one who was called an infidel by the world, which money bought my winter's wood and otherwise helped me through the winter. May the Lord have mercy on him at that day and may light perpetual shine upon him. Let me say that the so-called infidel has always been my friend and I have been his friend because I have found him open and honest, freer from hypocrisy and deceit than many professed followers of our Divine Master.

The reading desk was given by the parish to the glory of God and in loving memory of Dr. Deane. Here was a man faithful and true, that all the members of St. Paul's parish should ever delight to honor. The good physician and a good churchman who had ministered professionally to the needs of the people in his neighborhood, never refusing to go to the call of the poor, night or day, dying comparatively poor and with thousands of dollars of uncollected debts.

The Rector had designed, if it had pleased God for him to have remained long enough in the parish, to build a chapel in the neighborhood where Dr. Deane lived, to the memory of this saint, with an altar over which should be painted a scene from his last illness (and I pray that it may yet be done at some time).

.....

The Font was made of stone, dug from the surrounding hills and by a stonecutter from the town. The money to pay for it was raised by getting a small contribution from every person who had been baptized in St. Paul's church by the Rector.

It was always the desire of the Rector, as far as possible, to have all of the furnishings of the church made from native material and by home workmen, for obvious reasons. So the Font was made from stone dug from the hills and by a home workman. The bishop's chair, the prayer and litany desks, the seat for the clergyman and the sittings in the church were all made from native wood and by home mechanics. When the ceiling of the church was put up, the Rector had the east end ceiling placed away from the wall, so as to make something of a chancel, with a robing room on the south and a corresponding room on the north.

There are two trees in the churchyard that I must mention and that should be preserved; the one is an osage orange which stands at the southwest corner of the church. This tree which was then a small bush was said to be the cause of the selection of the lot for the church; the former Rector taking a fancy to it selected the lot for that reason. The tree has been kept trimmed and in good order in memory of Rev. Thomas May Thorpe, the former Rector, and I would fain hope that it will always be looked after and cared for in his memory.

The other tree is the sugar maple near the southeast corner of the church. This tree was set out by the hands of James Hayden VanHoose, sometime vestryman of this parish, who has gone to his rest. Be careful of it and tend it well. It is to his memory.

There is one other thing that I must mention -- it is a bell now at the rectory. After the war with Mexico, it was given to the church by Major Mecklin. It came from one of the monasteries or churches of Mexico, and he, a soldier in the U. S. Army, brought it with him. It should be carefully preserved because of its history. It had always been my intention to have it hung in the tower of the church so as to be rung for some of the services, and I would suggest to my successors to have this done.

In the spring of 1884 contributions were asked and obtained from the citizens of Fayetteville, irrespective of religion, for the purpose of completing the house of the Lord against the time of the meeting of the Division Council, when it should be dedicated. The Rector said to the Bishop that he wanted to place in the church all of the ornaments and accessories of worship as he intended it should remain. He had already, for many years, been using the Albe and Chasuble, the proper Eucharistic Vestments. He had made the Fala Litany desk and placed it at its proper place. He also borrowed from Mrs. Dickson, two candlesticks for the Eucharistic lights.

On Sunday (I think it was April 27) the Bishop and clerical members of the council, robing at Mrs. Dickson's on Dickson street, proceeded to the church escorted by Baldwin Commandery Number 4 as the guard of honor. Just outside the door, the Sir Knights arranged themselves on either side making a passageway between, and forming an arch of steel as a shield by raising and extending their swords over the passageway, under which the Bishop and clergy passed to the door of the church, where the Bishop, by three raps on the door, in the name of the Ever Blessed and Adorable Trinity, demanded admission. After gaining admission, the Bishop and clergy proceeded up the aisle and solemnly dedicated and consecrated the church to the service and worship of Almighty God. During the ensuing week, the Rev. James Junius Vaulx was instituted Rector of the Parish and formally given the keys of the church and given authority to perform all the dues of the priesthood in the same and formally endowed with all the rights and privileges thereunto belonging.

Here let us record that although in many parishes there is much trouble over the introduction of lights on the altar and other like ceremonies, in St. Paul there was no trouble, neither was there any objection raised because the Rector had taught that such things were simply non-essentials and were merely accessories of worship to make more beautiful and imposing the services and worship of the church, and might be used or not as the Rector chose.

This same year, 1884, the Bishop exchanged some property he held for the church, known as the Ozark Institute property, for the lot with the small house on it, on the southeast corner of College and Lafayette avenues in the town of Fayetteville for a rectory. The Rector took possession November 3rd, 1884. The lot had a small house on it, which was added to several times until it became a large and commodious house, sufficient for a large family, or as the Rector had hoped, the residence of a body of clergy who could look after the spiritual interests of all the surrounding country. Before taking charge of the rectory, the Rector had for many years occupied a house furnished by the Junior Warden, William McIlroy.

There were two things the Rector had set his heart on doing and which he kept continually before the parishioners. One was the building of a tower to the church and a guild hall or parish house, and the establishment of a church home where orphans and half-orphans might be cared for; where the sick poor might be nursed and cared for; and where the aged and infirm poor might be cared for in their old age.

The Rector's wife having been restored from a very severe illness, the Rector made a thank offering of fifty dollars to be used toward the building of a tower to the church and a guild hall to the memory of William McIlroy, who had been for many years J.W. of the parish and during the last years of his life was S.W.

This work was soon completed through the gifts of the parish and principally through the liberality of the McIlroy family, and the further gift of \$300 by the Rector. The guild hall was to be used as a Sunday School room, as a place of meeting for the various societies of the parish and for the parish library, hoping at some future day to increase the library to a public library for the town. It was also to be used for the storing of clothing for the destitute poor.

Here I must say a word about William McIlroy. He was a merchant and the banker of the town, one who had been successful in business and had become one of the richest men of the place. As is often the case, his riches had excited the envy of others and he was universally considered and spoken of as being the stupidest and closest-fisted man in the place, having no charity whatever for the poor.

A new Rector hears everything but especially the bad about everybody. Happy is the Rector who hears, holds his tongue, and reserves his judgment. The Rector heard all manner of stories about Mr. McIlroy's uncharitableness and his oppression of the poor, but when he came to know the man, he found him and his blessed wife to be among the most charitable persons he ever knew.

When it came to a matter of business he wanted the last cent that was due him. His charities were done in secret and were not known to the world. There was scarcely a time that he and his wife did not have some poor old woman at their house, that they were looking after and caring for. Besides this, the Rector found so often that the poor whom he was called upon to minister to had received help from Mr. McIlroy. The rector has never known a man who cared as little for the pomp and circumstance of life.

The poor at his house were treated as well if not better than the rich who might be there with them. In his gifts to the church he made it a rule always to give a tenth of whatever was needed. It was the Rector's desire to build a chapel to the memory of him and his wife, to have a painting over the altar a scene from their life.

.....

As for the church home which the Rector so earnestly desired to be established, Mrs. Jamie (Wilson) Duncan on her deathbed gave to the Rector \$500 for this purpose, under the management of Dr. W. B. Welch as trustee. It has increased to many thousand dollars. It is to be hoped that not many years will elapse before this much needed institution will be built.

St. Paul's, near 60 miles from VanBuren, the nearest Parish church on the south, and none in Arkansas on the north, east or west, the Rector felt that he should as far as possible give light to all the surrounding country wherever there was a communicant of the church, to look after him and break to him the bread of life. These were the counties of Washington, Madison, Benton and Carroll that seemed to be specially under his charge.

During his rectorship he had communicants at Osage Mills, Bentonville, Rogers, Siloam Springs, and in the country about four miles from Lay's (Rhea's ?) Mill, these all in Benton County. He had services at Bentonville, Rogers and Siloam Springs with some regularity for a time, ever breaking to the communicants the bread of life at each visitation, for he considered this to be the great purpose of his visit. In Madison county he held services at Huntsville and St. Paul, where there were no communicants.

In Carroll county, as soon as the Eureka Springs were discovered, even before the railroad was built there, he began holding services there and established a mission there known as the St. James Parish. The name St. James was given to it by the people there because the Rector's name was James. At Eureka Springs he held services regularly for many years, always breaking the bread of life.

In Washington county he had communicants at Winslow and Boonesboro (Now Cane Hill). At Winslow, a mission had been built up by the energy mainly of one devoted church woman, Mrs. Dr. Dunlap, and a chapel had been built. Here the Rector of St. Paul's held services regularly for many years and many were baptized and confirmed, and St. Stephen's at Winslow is now a strong mission -- strong in numbers though the people are very poor.

At Boonesboro the Rector held many services and there are now several communicants, Dr. and Mrs. Blackburn and two daughters, and Mrs. Reynolds. The Rector also held services for many years once a month on Sunday afternoons at the Deane School house and also at the Appleby School in the Anderson-Davis neighborhood. Also at Springdale, where there were several communicants then, he held services with some regularity for some time -- I believe there are no communicants there now.

At all of these places, although there has been as yet no growth, yet the seed has been sown and he prays God in his own good time to give the harvest. The Rector of St. Paul's believed that there should be no drones in a parish, but that every one should do his part, and to this end the parish should be organized to do work under the constituted authorities. He thought that as the Rector had his duties of teaching the people, old and young of his parish, looking after the afflicted and burying the dead.

As the almoner of the people to look after the poor and care for them; to baptize, prepare and present for confirmation, to preach to the people and expound the Word, and to break to them the Bread of Life. In other words his duties were to look after the spiritual affairs of the parish, while.

. . . to the Wardens and vestry belong the duty of looking after the temporal affairs, to attend to the purchasing of property, to keep up and care for the church, its lots and other properties of the parish, to provide holy vessels for the sanctuary, proper vestments for the priests and altar and other subordinate ministers, such as organist and choir, books for the choir and to see to their care, to provide bread and wine for the holy communion and to be trustees for all funds belonging to the parish.

These, with such other matters as pertain to the temporal affairs of the parish, constitute the duties of the Wardens and Vestry. These are the legally constituted officers of the parish: the Rector and the Wardens and the Vestrymen and these are their duties which they should strictly and with one eye to the day wherein they must give a strict account. The rector being convinced that all subordinate organizations should be only to assist these officers in discharge of their duties.

According to this, the Rector organized a Guild called St. Paul's Guild with as Director the J.W. of the Parish, the Guild to consist of various wards each with a warden, for assisting the Rector and Wardens and Vestrymen in the performance of their (duties), as in the constitution of the guild itself it was stated that it was not to act independently but to assist the recognized authorities to perform their duties, as in the constitution of the different wards it was distinctly stated what particular part of the work it was to assist in doing, whether the Rector in his duties or the Wardens and Vestrymen in theirs, e.g. St. Mary's Ward was to raise money to assist the vestry in taking care of the church and other property; St. Luke's was to assist the Rector in looking after the poor by gathering clothing and raising money for this purpose. . . .

By this means he hoped to have every member of the parish -- man, woman and child -- engaged in some work in the parish, working under the officers of the parish. I have been thus full in my explanation of the guild as organized hoping that may suggest something to some of my successors in the Rectorship of the parish.

The Parish of St. Paul has been singularly blessed inasmuch as it was the place of the death of the First Bishop of the Catholic Church in Arkansas. The Rt. Rev. Henry Niles Pierce, DD LLD, entered into life eternal from the southwest upstairs room of St. Paul's rectory. He was a man deeply learned in all the learning of the age, both theological and secular. Indeed, he came nearer knowing everything than any man I have ever known.

.....

I think I am safe in saying that he never failed in an appointment. I have written this moreover for this purpose, that you may know what a blessing it has been to you to have such a one to enter into life eternal from your midst. Since the good Bishop died in your parish, the Rector has thought that in this parish church above all places should be placed a memorial of his, having as many persons as possible giving towards it. To this end, the Rector has started a fund for the purpose of building a Chancel to the church according to plans now in the hands of Mrs. W.B. Welch, which plan or something similar he hopes will be carried out.

Failing health caused the Rector to leave St. Paul's where he had ministered so long and which he loved so well. Having to leave caused a failure in carrying out the plan. He has left two hundred and odd dollars in the hands of D.W.B. Welch as trustee, having the promise of three members of the parish to push the matter forward. The plan is to get subscriptions from every person to whom the Bishop ministered, specially from those whom he confirmed. My prayers shall always ascend for God's blessing on this work and on those who labour for its accomplishment.

In looking over the 26 years of this Rectorship, the remembrance of many persons who have gone to their rest who for their faithful service deserve to be remembered: Prof. Leverett, Jas. H. VanHoose, Thomas Boles, and George Brooks. Among the faithful women were: Mrs. Bell and her sister, Mrs. Dickson and her daughter Miss Mary Kate Dickson, Mrs. Hauptman, Mrs. North and her sister, Mrs. Gunter, all of whom deserve to be mentioned in this history.

Among the living are many whose names equally deserve to be mentioned, but I refrain from doing so because they are still living and I leave this for some future historian to write. This is a faithful and true history of St. Paul's parish written without prejudice or partiality. There are many things that cannot be written.

The Parish has been noted for its charities, faithfully looking after the poor, the sick, the distressed, the sinful and the fallen ones without regard to their religion, politics or color, and in doing this work the parish was helped cheerfully by many people of Fayetteville who shall receive their reward hereafter from our great Master who has said "inasmuch as you did it to the least of these my brethren you have done it unto me" and "whoever shall give but a cup of cold water ...he shall in no case lose his reward."

The Rector's health had been failing for many years. He had had "la Grippe" several years in succession which caused his health to fail more rapidly. He had always told his parishioners that when it should be that he could not do the work of the parish -- hold the services, baptism, prepare and present for confirmation, marry, break the Bread of Life, minister to the sick and the poor, and bury the dead, that he would have to leave them, as much as he would regret it.

In the winter of 1901-1902 he was granted an unlimited leave of absence to go to Southern Florida for his health. He returned after six weeks much improved, but he soon found that he could (not) stand the cold of the winters and he felt compelled to give up the work and he resigned to take effect the last of October 1902, and accordingly with deep regret and many tears he left St. Paul's which he had served so long and loved so well. May God's best blessing be poured out upon St. Paul's Parish and all of its members is the prayer of

"The Old Rector"
Jas. J. Vaulx

NEWS NOTES

Our last FLASHBACK featured an article about J.W. "Bill" Fulbright, written by one of our members, Irene Carlisle. When Mrs. Carlisle wrote her article in 1942, Congressman Fulbright objected to certain comments. So it was a pleasure to receive a letter from the Senator dated July 21, saying "I was delighted to see the May issue of FLASHBACK containing the article by Irene Carlisle. It brought back some pleasant memories of the old days. The objections I had at that time certainly are out of date. As I read it now, I do not see much justification for any of them. On the contrary, I think it is one of the most interesting articles I have seen. I like the photographs and if the Society has any spare copies, I would like very much to have them. J.W. Fulbright, US Senate, Washington, D.C."

- wchs -

The Faulkner County Historical Society and the Conway Chamber of Commerce invited our Society to attend the dedication of the Greathouse Restoration on the court house square in Conway, Ark., June 26. This is the original log home of the Greathouse family, which stood at Cross Roads. These, of course, were ancestors or kinsmen of the Greathouses who moved to Washington County. Capt. Jack Greathouse, author of the history of the family, still lives in Fayetteville (Route 3) and is a member of our Society.

- wchs -

A Rieff family from Columbus, Ohio, visited our office in June, seeking information about the branches of the family who came to Washington Co., Ark. We were able to give them some information about the Rieffs buried in the Rieffs Chapel cemetery and in the Friendship cemetery on the Devil's Den road. And we were able to show them all the Rieff references in our bound file of FLASHBACK. They also visited the court house and looked up Rieff marriage records.