

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 20, 1951

### **St. John's Del Monte Chapel And How It Came to Be**

The calendar shows that the date August 1 is near, the time marked for the departure of the Reverend Theodore Bell, the beloved rector of St. John Chapel, Del Monte, since 1935 – 16 years of devoted service completed.

At this time it is most appropriate that the Diary devote one day to the recital of the history of the little chapel which was begun 61 years ago – the result of an inspiration of a group of guests at Hotel Del Monte.

A photograph in a small brochure printed 10 years ago, shows the chapel as it looked 50 years previous. The picture had been taken by the late Charles K. Tuttle, one-time organist of St. John's and the father of Mrs. Winifred Beaumont of Pacific Grove.

The Reverend C.S. Fackenthal, whose son now resides in the Carmel Valley was the first priest to minister in St. John's Chapel. The reason for the founding of the chapel was in horse and buggy days of more than a half century ago it was the custom for a group of families from Nob Hill, San Francisco, to spend several months each year at the Hotel Del Monte.

On Sunday they came by carriage to St. James church in Monterey for services. This took almost as long as it would take today to motor to Salinas. So the guests at the famous hotel made plans to erect a chapel as near as possible to the grounds of the hotel.

Charles H. Crocker and his sisters, Miss Hattie Crocker, who later became Mrs. H.H. Alexander, and Mrs. Rutherford, had the vision to secure and the generosity to present to the church the beautiful grove of oaks and pines which border the highway opposite the hotel, now the Navy Line School.

The Chapel was built by the generous gifts of interested individuals. There is a story behind the granite and shingle construction of the little church, according to the brochure. Carlos P. Huntington, a second member of California's "big four," wanted to erect a church of granite, a reproduction of an English country church. Charles H. Crocker wanted a shingled church to blend with the beauty spot in rural California. The Rev. Mr. Fackenthal persuaded them to compromise by instructing Coxhead and Coxhead to design a church of granite and shingle.

In an interesting handbill which has been loaned to the Diary by Miss May Lee, the daughter of an early day grounds keeper at the hotel, tells of the offering for sale of 300 beautiful building lots," comprising the Oak Grove section of Monterey by an auctioneer on July 5, 1890. As a superscription on this old advertisement, made with a rubber stamp, is this statement: "Contribution. The proceeds of the first Oak Grove lot sold at auction on July 5 will be donated to assist in completing Del Monte Chapel.

On Sunday, June 4, 1891, Bishop William Ford Nichols, Protestant Episcopal Church, bishop for the Diocese of California, dedicated the chapel.

In the gay nineties men and women came to the chapel to be married and they are still coming a half century later. The marriage register represents a cross-section of America, many young people from humble homes, scions from wealthy families, couples well known in the movies, workers in field and factory, all sorts and conditions of young men and women, find here a setting of their dreams for the beginning of their great adventure, wrote the Rev. Theodore Bell when he compiled the small booklet relating the history of the chapel.

Theodore Roosevelt worshipped in St. John's when he visited the Peninsula on May 17, 1903. The booklet reproduced a picture of the late former President as he walked through the lych-gate after the services to return to the hotel.

In 1930 St. John's Chapel became a parish in the diocese. Following the ministry of the Rev. Charles S. Fackenthal, there were the following priests in charge of St. John's – the Rev. Hobart Chetwood, the Rev. Griffin M. Cutting, the Rev. Edward Molony, the Rev. Francis G. Williams, the Rev. George M. Dorwarf, the Rev. Ernest Bradley, and the Rev. Theodore Bell. The Rev. Mr. Bradley and the Rev. Mr. Cutting each served the congregation twice.

Among the memorials are appropriate church adornments in memory of the following former members of the chapel: Elizabeth and Jame Tallant, George and William Burton, Mary Harrison, Frank Puxley, Charles H. Dickey, Clarence A. Black, E. Quinby, Sophie A. Harris, J.R. Synd-Kynnersley, Erastus Hopkins, Beatrice Taylor, James A. Forsythe, Anita Murray, Charles and Phoebe Tuck, Emily Lydia Tuck, John and Hannah Purcell, William and Elizabeth Bell and Robert

Douglas Morrison. Others have been added since 1941,  
the date of the brochure publication.