

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Bishop Kip School

Now that the Bishop Kip School of the Episcopal Church is a reality and established in the Girl's Friendly House in Pacific Grove, there are questions to be answered such as "Who was or is Bishop Kip and why should a school here on the Monterey Peninsula honor him with a school named for him?" Here are some of the answers.

On July 30, 1854, the Rt. Rev. William Ingraham Kip, D. D. held the first Episcopal Church services ever held in Monterey in the then comparatively new Colton Hall (1847-1849). On July 30th, 1854, the service was repeated by the Rt. Rev. Karl Morgan Blocky late bishop of the Diocese of California, in St. James Church, Monterey at 8 a.m. followed at 11 a.m. with an observance of the centennial anniversary of the original service in Colton Hall.

Bishop Kip wrote in the first record which he titled In the Early Days of My Episcopate, "The service of our church had never been held in Monterey. Some years ago, on the first occupancy of the town by the Americans, the Rev. Walter Colton, chaplain in the U. S. Navy, a Congregational minister, was stationed here. He was appointed alcalde and while here erected a stone building or a town hall, which is now called Colton Hall. It is one of the most substantial public buildings in California.

"On Sunday morning for our service we had the court room in Colton Hall, the room in which the convention, which adopted the first constitution for the state, held its meetings. The congregation numbered about sixty persons and at the Holy Communion four came forward, some of whom had not for a long time enjoyed this privilege.

"In the afternoon the attendance was much larger as many of the Spanish ladies came in to witness the services though unacquainted with the language. After the second lesson I baptized five children.

"In the early part of the week I visited many of the Americans. They all expressed themselves as anxious to have the services of the church, but they were too few in number to take any steps toward this, nor is there any reason to suppose that Monterey will increase or strengthen its American population. In fact since my visit it has diminished, and the removal of Mrs. Joseph

Boston family has taken away the only one of any influence.

"Twelve miles distance on the Salinas plains, I am told, an agricultural population is settling, but of course it is too scattered at the ranches."

St. James Church on Pacific street was erected in the autumn of 1876 and was consecrated by Bishop Kip, California's first bishop, on July 14, 1878. It was the first Protestant church building raised in the old capital and from this beginning, the church took root and has sent but branches upon all sides.

Bishop Kip arrived in Monterey on the steamer "Sea Bird" from San Francisco on Thursday, July 27, 1854, accompanied by his wife. His arrival here occurred less than six months after coming to San Francisco. While here he was the guest of the Boston family. Subsequent church services were held in Colton Hall and in the dance hall of the old Washington Hotel for several years until St. James was built by the Rev. J. S. McGowan.

In Grace Cathedral in San Francisco there are six exciting murals painted by Jan De Rosen, which challenge the attention of all visitors to the Cathedral on Nob Hill. The scenes are both decorative and historical; representing both events related to the dramatic story of the Episcopal church in California, and significant episodes in its history.

The first mural on the north side depicts the first Anglican service ever to be held in North America when Chaplain Fletcher, of Sir Francis Drake's ship Golden Hinde, preached to the ship's crew and the Indians on St. John-the-Baptist's Day, 1570.

Next in line is Bishop Kip, the first bishop of California - "a striking likeness of this gentle scholar" - at Fort Miller, near Fresno, on October 7th, 1855. Here he offered the Holy Eucharist, baptized several individuals, and preached a sermon to the garrison and to various scouts and Indians. The military uniforms are those of the Third Artillery, United States Army.

From these recordings of the life of Bishop Kip we believe that he rightfully deserves a place of honor on the scroll of names of those who have, in the past, made history on the Monterey Peninsula so rich in color and in accomplishments.