

July 23, 1962

St. James Church Notes Anniversaries In July

St. James Episcopal Church will have observed two important historical events before the month of July 1962, has passed into history. St. James was born, we might say, on July 30, 1854 - 108 years ago, when Rt. Rev. William Ingraham Kip, D.D., conducted the first service of the Episcopal Church ever held in Monterey in the then comparatively new Colton Hall.

On July 14, 1878 - 84 years ago - Bishop Kip, bishop of the diocese of California, consecrated the small white church on Pacific street which still stands there, but no longer is the property of the diocese.

On the centennial, "July 30, 1954, the first service was repeated by the late Rt. Rev. Karl Morgan Block, bishop of the diocese, at 11 o'clock in the morning in Colton Hall just as that first service had been conducted over a century ago.

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 heard 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 for 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 services we had the court room in Colton Hall, the room in which the convention, which adopted the first Constitution for this state, held its meeting. The congregation numbered about 60 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."

For almost 20 years thereafter there is an absence of records of any church service of the Anglican communion. On March 14, 1875, Rev. J. S. McGowan, the builder of the former St. James Church on Pacific street, wrote in the records: "My first service at Monterey was given in a dance hall of the Washington Hotel on March 14, 1875, to a congregation of 40 souls.

At my next three appointments I had no congregation, but I still continued the appointments and soon the services became an established fact."

May 2, 1875, Mr. McGowan wrote: "My first administration of the Holy Communion was given in Monterey on this date.

"It was soon considered advisable to erect a church building, and as there was no other 'Protestant House of Worship', all united in faithful and earnest work for the accomplishment of that purpose."

The church was erected in the fall of 1876 and was consecrated on July 14, 1878 by Bishop Kip.

On July 30, 1954, Rt. Rev. Karl Morgan Block, bishop of California, repeated the service of July 30, 1854, at the centennial of St. James; again, holding the historical service in the Convention room of Colton Hall. The event climaxed the day's observance marking the 100th anniversary of the first Anglican church in Monterey.

An organ was borrowed from the First Theater in Monterey and the commemorative ceremony took place at the south end of the hall, using the table on which the state constitution was signed in 1849.

Bishop Kip arrived in Monterey on the steamer Sea Bird from San Francisco on Thursday, July 27, 1854, accompanied by his wife. His arrival occurred less than six months after coming to San Francisco. Bishop and Mrs. Kip were the house guests of the Boston family during their stay here.

The present St. James Church is situated on property surrounded by Franklin, High and Hellam streets. Rev. George E. Ridgeway is the vicar, succeeding his late father who died June 26 at his home in Monterey.