

HISTORY
OF THE
DIOCESE OF EAU CLAIRE



1928 - 1978

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN WISCONSIN

The first recorded Episcopal Church services were held in Wisconsin at LaBaye (Green Bay) by Eleazer Williams. Christ, the first Wisconsin Episcopal Church, was organized at LaBaye on September 16, 1829, with the Rev. Richard Cadle in charge. Judge James D. Doty, Chairman; A. G. Ellis, Secretary; Daniel Whitney, A. G. Ellis, Wardens, were the founders. The church was incorporated under the territorial laws of Michigan. The first recorded building of a church was by the Oneida Indians in 1829. The Diocese of Wisconsin was founded June 25, 1847. The Diocese of Fond du Lac was founded on January 7, 1875.

The first Episcopal Church services held in the present Diocese of Eau Claire were held in the Valley of the St. Croix River before Chief Wabasha and his warriors had folded their tents on the plains of Winona. One Episcopal Missionary was keeping the fires lighted throughout the St. Croix. The Rev. E. A. Greenleaf was assigned to St. Croix county by the General Missionary Board, arriving in the valley on April 1, 1846. The county then consisted of most of N.W. Wisconsin and all of present Minnesota north of the St. Croix to the Canadian border and east of the Mississippi to Lake Superior. Willow River, later Hudson, was the county seat, and present St. Paul, Minnesota, was a voting precinct in the county. Stillwater, where Greenleaf resided, was then a part of St. Croix County, Wisconsin. He attended the primary council of the Diocese of Wisconsin in 1847. The only other Episcopalian priest in this huge area was A. G. Gear, Army Chaplain at Fort Snelling. Greenleaf conducted services at every habitat in the St. Croix Valley to the Falls and visited most of the inhabitants.

The Associate Ministry of Minnesota, consisting of the Rev. James Lloyd Breck, the Rev. Timothy Wilcoxson and the Rev. John Austin Merrick began extensive missionary work in the St. Croix on July 7, 1850, having services at Hudson that afternoon. Thereafter Hudson was one of their mission stations, according to their reports to Council. They held their first services as a mission at Prairie La Crosse on June 23, 1850. Bishop Kemper reported two confirmations at Willow River (Hudson) and one at Prairie La Crosse in his report of 1851. Without further research it must be stated that the first confirmations in the present Diocese were at Hudson and La Crosse.

Bishop Kemper divided the state into four convocations in 1867. The present Diocese of Eau Claire comprised most of the then Convocation of La Crosse. The only regular work was then being done by Father Dorset at La Crosse, Peabody in the Northwestern part of the state and the railroad missionary from Portage to La Crosse along the main line of the Milwaukee Railroad. Redeemer, Superior, was also in operation. By 1877 the Convocation reported work at Bayfield, Ashland, Eau Claire, La Crosse, Chippewa Falls, Galesville, Prescott, St. Croix Valley, River Falls, Mauston, Sparta, Tomah and Soo Line Missions. However, a lot of the area was still a wilderness and did not receive a great deal of attention from the bishops and councils. In 1894 the Convocation

began the effort to set up a Diocese. Thereafter, each year there was much debate but no action, and the area received even less attention. The Council of 1910 petitioned the General Convention of 1913 to set up a Diocese, but it was laid on the table. When Bishop Ivins became coadjutor he pushed the establishment of a Diocese strongly, and about \$40,000 was raised as an Episcopate Fund. The Rev. Frank E. Wilson of Christ Church, Eau Claire, was also very active and instrumental in securing a gift of \$150,000 from Mrs. Mary E. Dulaney of Eau Claire to finance the establishment of a new Diocese. The Rev. Robert Vinter, Dean of the La Crosse Convocation led the movement at the Annual Council of the Diocese, which voted approval. The General Convention of 1928 gave approval. The Primary Council was held at Eau Claire on November 28, 1928, with Bishop Weller of Fond du Lac presiding. There were 11 clergy and 65 lay delegates present, and the Diocese of Eau Claire was formed. The Rev. Frank E. Wilson was elected Bishop on the first formal ballot.

The Bishop's salary was set at \$4,500, with a house. The Diocese consisted of 9 parishes, 23 organized and 5 unorganized missions. There were 24 counties, with a population of under 600,000 in an area of nearly 26,000 square miles. There were 37 churches, 15 parish houses and 16 rectories. 3,000 communicants appeared on the parochial lists, with 4,500 baptized persons. The total property values were about \$900,000. There are two surviving members of the Primary Council: The Rev. Robert Vinter, retired and living in California, of the clerical delegation, and Mr. Martin Roth, Sr., of Mauston, Wisconsin.

JACKSON B. KEMPER

He was born in Pleasant Valley, New York, on December 24, 1789, of German ancestry. He graduated as valedictorian of his class from Columbia College August, 1809, and had a year of theological training under the supervision of Bishop Hobart. He was ordained deacon on March 11, 1811, and to the priesthood on January 23, 1814, at Christ Church, Philadelphia. Jackson Kemper was 5' 7", square shouldered, erect, with a springy step, heavy brown hair, short side whiskers, fair complexion, and a strong chin and voice. He married Jerusha Lyman in 1816, and she died in 1818. In 1821 he married Ann Relf. They had three children: Elizabeth in 1824, Samuel in 1827 and Lewis in 1829. Mrs. Kemper died in 1832 at Norwalk, Connecticut. The General Convention of 1835 elected Kemper Missionary Bishop of the West. He was consecrated September 25, 1835, by Presiding Bishop William White. He left for Indiana and Missouri, reaching his new home in St. Louis on December 19, 1835, where he was also Rector of Christ Church. He made his first official visit to Wisconsin, going to Prairie du Chien and other communities in Southwest Wisconsin. He was elected Bishop of Maryland during this period and declined. He shortly established Kemper College in St. Louis, the first institution of higher learning in that city.

On September 11-12, 1840, all of the clergy in Wisconsin met with Bishop Kemper in the courthouse in Milwaukee to discuss formation of a Diocese. It was found to be impractical at that time, and Wisconsin continued under the general guidance of Kemper. In 1842 the territorial legislature granted a

charter to Nashotah House. Three young men, James Lloyd Breck, John Henry Hobart, Jr., and William Adams, came to the area and established an associate mission. The Rev. R. F. Cadle became the Prior for a short time. Bishop Kemper purchased the present Nashotah House property around the Nashotah Lakes, and the Blue House, still in use, was erected. Hobart and Breck departed in 1850, and William Adams became the interim president, being succeeded by the Rev. A. D. Cole, who remained in the position for many years.

Nashotah House Seminary is today the oldest institution of higher learning in Wisconsin, and is recognized as one of the best seminaries in the Episcopal Church. Bishop Kemper erected a home in 1840 about a mile from the Seminary, where he resided until his death.

The Primary Council of the Diocese of Wisconsin was held June 24-25, 1847, at St. Paul's Church, Milwaukee, and the Diocese of Wisconsin was formed. Bishop Kemper was elected Bishop in 1848, but he declined, and the Diocese remained under his supervision. In 1854 he was again elected Bishop, and he accepted, resigning all Missionary Bishop responsibilities in 1859. In 1866 Bishop Kemper, then 76 years old, asked for an assistant, and the Rev. W. E. Armitage was elected and consecrated. Bishop Kemper died at his home on May 24, 1870, in his 82nd year. Thus passed the one man responsible more than any other for the firm establishment of the Episcopal Church in the State of Wisconsin, as well as the entire northwest. He was the greatest missionary in the history of the Episcopal Church, a true evangelist carrying the Word of God to the then most remote parts of the wilderness, which was the Western United States. He held services in schools, courthouses, railroad stations, fraternal halls, churches of other denominations and private homes. The thousands of miles that he travelled on foot, horseback, buggy, wagon and coach, boat, and later on the crude railroads, is almost unbelievable. The distances today, with modern ground transportation, are still considered enormous. The passing of this great man was mourned by not only Episcopalians, but also the thousands of his friends in every walk of life. A truly great man.

JAMES DE KOVEN

He was born in Middleton, Connecticut, September 19, 1831, and graduated from Columbia University in 1851 and General Theological Seminary in 1854 and was ordained as a Deacon. He then came to Nashotah House to teach Ecclesiastical History and to be rector at nearby St. Chrysostom, Delafield. He soon established a small preparatory school near the church called St. John's College. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Kemper, and in 1859 became Warden of Racine College, consolidating the Delafield school with that institution. He remained as head of Racine College until his untimely death on March 19, 1879.

Dr. De Koven came to prominence in the National Church at the Baltimore General Convention of 1871, with a famous speech on ritualism. Historians state he was the only really brilliant orator the House of Deputies has ever produced. He was a skilled debater, and no man was better qualified to defend any unpopular cause. His forensic ability and high personal integrity commanded the respect of his most bitter opponents.

In 1873 De Koven was nominated as Bishop of Massachusetts, but was defeated. In 1866 he was nominated to be Bishop of Wisconsin, but was defeated by Bishop W. E. Armitage, only receiving five votes. The Rev. Greenough White states in his book that Bishop Kemper's, and his contemporaries', opposition to De Koven was strong by reason of his eucharistic adoration and oral confession. Dr. William Adams was presumably offended by De Koven's visits to Nashotah to hear student confessions.

Bishop Armitage died suddenly on December 7, 1873, and a special Council was called at All Saints Cathedral on February 12, 1874. The sessions were marked by considerable disorderly conduct of the delegates as many newspapers were represented, and there was considerable adverse publicity throughout the country. Several newspaper accounts said it was obvious that there was formidable opposition, both clerical and lay, to the election of Dr. De Koven as Bishop. On the first ballot Dr. De Koven and Dr. Hoffman each received 32 clerical votes, with 35 needed for election. On the fourth ballot Dr. De Koven was elected, 35 to 33, in the clerical order. The lay order then balloted for confirmation. On the first ballot 31 voted to disapprove and 5 were divided (no votes), 15 voted to approve. Among the strong lay leaders who opposed the election of Dr. De Koven was Angus Cameron of La Crosse. The regular Council met in June, and Dr. De Koven would not permit his name to be entered. Dr. Brown and Dr. Lewis Kemper were nominated, but the clergy and laity were again deadlocked. A committee composed of members of both factions was appointed to secure a candidate, and the name of the Rev. E. R. Welles, D.D., was submitted, and he was unanimously elected.

On January 7, 1875, the Primary Council of the new Diocese of Fond du Lac nominated Dr. De Koven to be Bishop. The clerical order elected Dr. De Koven, but the lay order elected the Rev. W. P. Ten Broeck. On the 13th ballot the Rev. Leighton Coleman was elected Bishop. In February, 1875, the Diocese of Illinois elected Dr. De Koven as Bishop, but the consent of the Standing Committees of the various dioceses could not be obtained.

Several church histories show Dr. De Koven as being a brilliant man of many talents. However, he had bitter opponents among the clerical ranks which seemed to be centered at Nashotah House. He also had strong lay opposition to his being elected Bishop. Careful analysis of his career after becoming a national figure in the Church must be termed controversial, both by his supporters and his enemies.

THE REV. A. B. PEABODY

Probably the best known of the early missionaries in what is now the Diocese of Eau Claire was the Rev. A. B. Peabody. He was a native of Vermont, born May 26, 1823. He attended Nashotah House and was ordained Deacon by Bishop Kemper. On July 18, 1859, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Kemper at Hudson. Except for a brief time at Plymouth, he devoted his entire ministry to the area now the Diocese of Eau Claire. He died on February 27, 1895. His last church was St. John's in the Wilderness at Star Prairie. When the congregation disbanded, Bishop Horstick had this historic building moved to

the grounds at Bundy Hall where it is used as the chapel. This is a true monument to the long labors of Fr. Peabody. He served as a missionary priest at Wagon Landing, Apple Creek, Prescott, Alden, Cedar Valley, Hudson, River Falls, Jewellton, St. Croix Falls, Huntington, Star Prairie, New Richmond, Osceola, Barron, Rice Lake, Cumberland, Shell Lake and Spooner. Most of his work was done in St. Croix, Polk and Pierce Counties. He can be truly called the great missionary of Northwest Wisconsin, and the first permanent minister in the field which is now the Diocese of Eau Claire.

The Rev. Henry E. Chase played an important part in bringing the Episcopal Church to the northern and eastern part of the Diocese of Eau Claire. He was a grandson of Philander Chase, the first Bishop of Ohio and Illinois. He came to the present Diocese of Eau Claire in 1907, serving until his death in 1938. Several churches in the northern part of the Diocese were founded by Fr. Chase.

Three of the most memorable priests of the Diocese are Canon Robert D. Vinter, Rector of Christ Church, La Crosse, one of the founding fathers of the Diocese and a truly great leader for many years. He is now retired and lives in California. Dean Gordon E. Brant of Christ Church, Eau Claire, spent most of his life in the ministry as Rector of Christ Church, Eau Claire, and Dean of the Cathedral. Many improvements were made during his administration, including the Bishop Wilson Building which adjoins the Cathedral. He is retired and resides in Eau Claire. The Rev. A. R. P. Heyes served long and faithfully many missions in the Eau Claire - Rice Lake area, as well as Tomah and Mauston. He was retired, but still active, when he was killed in an automobile accident.

THE RT. REV. FRANK E. WILSON (1929-1944)

Bishop Wilson was born at Kittaning, Pennsylvania, May 21, 1885, and died at Eau Claire February 16, 1944. He married Marie Louise Walker in 1911, and she died in 1924. They had one daughter, Mrs. Robert C. Gould. He married Eleanor Hall, who has since passed away. Bishop Wilson graduated from Hobart in 1907 and General Seminary in 1911. He was ordained in 1911 and consecrated Bishop on May 29, 1929. He served churches at Arlington Heights, Chicago, Wilmette, Illinois, and Eau Claire. He was a Thirty-third Degree Mason and Grand Prelate of the Knights Templar of Wisconsin at the time of his death. He served as an Army chaplain in World War I in England, France and Germany. Bishop Wilson was a prolific writer and author of note. He served on many national and local church commissions and committees.

THE RT. REV. WILLIAM W. HORSTICK (1944-1969)

Bishop Horstick was born January 31, 1902, at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He was married at Aurora, Illinois, and his wife Joan and four children, David, Ruth, Emmy and Mary Alice, survive him. He was a graduate of Nashotah House and was ordained by Bishop Weller in 1929. He served at Redeemer, Chicago, and was Rector of Trinity, Aurora, when he was elected Bishop on

April 19, 1944. He was consecrated at Eau Claire on June 29, 1944. He was a Thirty-second degree Mason and a member of other Masonic bodies as well as Tripoli Shrine. Bishop Horstick spent an enormous amount of time and energy putting the material fabric of the Diocese in order. Not much had been done along those lines with the great depression and the advent of World War II. He raised funds from many sources and recruited sufficient clergy to insure regular services at the most isolated church. Two new church buildings were erected during his administration, one at Rice Lake and the other at Park Falls. His greatest achievements were the establishment of Buffington Home for the aged and the Conference Center at Bundy Hall. The summer camp has been designated Camp Horstick in his memory. They are living memorials to his great work in the Diocese of Eau Claire. He wore himself out physically doing the enormous amount of work that he carried on. At his request a special Council on November 8, 1968, gave permission for the election of a co-adjutor, and Stanley Atkins was elected on January 25, 1969. Bishop Horstick resigned his seat on December 31, 1969. Bishop Horstick died of a massive coronary at his home near Oconomowoc on May 27, 1971.

THE RT. REV. STANLEY HAMILTON ATKINS (1970-

Bishop Atkins was born in England on March 8, 1912, and attended Kings College, London, was ordained in England in 1939 and was received into the American Church in 1955 from the Church of Canada. He served as a chaplain (Lt Colonel) in the British Army from 1941 until 1946. He served at New Richmond and Hudson in the Diocese of Eau Claire and was Archdeacon for the Diocese of Milwaukee at the time of his election. He became Diocesan January 1, 1970. Bishop Atkins and his wife, Maureen, have three children.

BISHOPS OF THE DIOCESE OF WISCONSIN

2. WILLIAM EDMOND ARMSTRONG Assistant Bishop 1866; Bishop, 1870-1873. Died at age 43. He established All Saints' Cathedral at Milwaukee.
3. EDWARD RANDOLPH WELLES Died at age 58. Bishop, 1874-1888.
4. CYRUS FREDERICK KNIGHT Died at age 61. Bishop, 1889-1891.
5. ISAAC LEA NICHOLSON Died at age 61. Bishop 1891-1906. One of Wisconsin's greater bishops, a true Missionary who gave a great deal of his time and attention to what is now the Diocese of Eau Claire, and a well-loved man.
6. WILLIAM WALTER WEBB Died at age 76. Bishop Coadjutor, 1906. Bishop until 1933. A former Dean of Nashotah House. He was a man of huge size, making travel difficult. His tastes were more academic than missionary. His annual reports reflect his distaste for the extensive travel necessary to visit the territory now the Diocese of Eau Claire. He detested the crude beds and "cut over country" and the poor train service.
7. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PRICE IVINS Bishop Coadjutor, 1925. Bishop, 1933. He did much work on the formation of the new Diocese of Eau Claire.

THE LADIES GUILDS AND WOMENS AUXILIARY

In most every instance where an Episcopal Church was established, a Ladies' Guild was first organized. It was always the ladies who did the hard work, raised the money, kept the fuel supplied, the buildings clean, the pastor's salary paid. Through trials and tribulations the groups, large or small, kept going. There were women's auxiliaries established at an early date, and a Diocesan organization, until 1978 when it became a department of the Diocese. With the women's liberation movement and the advent of far more liberalized policies in the Episcopal Church, the need for the auxiliaries dwindled.

This condition, however, will never change the status of the individual church guilds. They are still the backbone of most of the churches. Over the life of the Diocese there has often been powerful opposition to the guilds as such by both bishops and clergy. However, the harassment that once in awhile took place only seemed to make the system stronger. Most of the opposition came to the semi-autonomous nature of the guild system. Some guilds have survived long after the church to which they were connected have died. I believe the system which originated so long ago will always survive.

BUFFINGTON HOME

The Buffington Home, 1500 State Street, Eau Claire, was established by Bishop William W. Horstick in 1949. The Home was made possible by a gift from Mrs. Byron Buffington, a communicant of Christ Church, Eau Claire. It is a small but well operated organization under the direction of a Board of Governors. Membership in the Home is limited, as nearly as possible, to the elderly who cannot afford a home of their own. It is not a nursing home.

BUNDY HALL CONFERENCE CENTER

Bundy Hall Conference Center was established in 1949 by Bishop Horstick. The buildings and grounds (then known locally as the Knapp House) were given to the Diocese of Eau Claire by the children of C. T. Bundy, of Eau Claire and of Menomonie, who had obtained the buildings from John H. Knapp, who built the establishment in 1863. There is a main house, a boys' dormitory and a girls' dormitory. St. John's in the Wilderness of Star Prairie, a pioneer church building has been placed on the grounds as a chapel. A modern swimming pool was built and a caretaker's cottage added. The summer camp for Diocesan youth is known as Camp Horstick.

The Conference Center is used for youth conferences, retreats, interfaith conferences and general meetings. The buildings are situated on the edge of a heavily wooded lot which make a beautiful backdrop for the Center. Bishop Horstick considered Bundy Hall to be his greatest achievement as Bishop.

CHURCHES OF THE DIOCESE

The churches of the Diocese are being listed briefly in alphabetical order, with a summary of each. Most of the data shown was obtained from Council journals, THE HERALD, and some local church histories. Because of space limitations the information will be brief.

ASHLAND, ST. ANDREW'S

Originally part of the Diocese of Fond du Lac, the Mission was opened by Bishop J. H. Hobart Brown on November 30, 1877, in a hall rented for church purposes. A frame church was built in 1879 on the corner of 3rd Street and 8th Avenue. In 1892 the parish was incorporated.

The cornerstone of the present church and guild hall was laid in 1904. A rectory had previously been built in 1902. The first rector was the Rev. F. W. White, and the first wardens were John McCloud and Dr. F. H. Luce. The organ was purchased in 1919. The Rev. Douglas E. Culver has been rector since 1968, and the Senior Warden is Mr. Paul Tomlinson.

ALTOONA, ST. LUKE'S

The earliest church record of Altoona is the baptism of William Isaac Thompson on March 15, 1884, by the Rev. Charles S. Starkweather, Christ Church, Eau Claire. Services were quite regularly held in various places, starting September 16, 1885, by clergy from Eau Claire. Bishop Welles visited after he became Bishop of Fond du Lac. Under the direction of Deacon William F. Hood, a school house was purchased and a small group with a good Sunday school was developed. The Mission was regularly organized on May 25, 1932, being an unorganized mission previously. For a number of years the assistant at Christ Church, Eau Claire, has served as vicar at Altoona. The Rev. Paul Dicks is presently in charge, and the Warden is Lowell Odegard.

BARRON, ST. MARK'S

The original mission was called St. Augustine and was organized in 1891 by the Rev. Edgar F. Gee. A few years later the name was changed to St. Mark's. The first services were held by the Rev. Canon Richey of Christ Church, Chippewa Falls. The present building was erected in 1901, and was consecrated that year by Bishop Nicholson. The mayor of Barron, Mr. Frank Stebbins, was the first Warden, and the Rev. E. F. Gee was the first priest-in-charge. For a number of years, Barron has been served by the Rector of Rice Lake. The Rev. Donald Langlois is presently in charge, and Wilber Malone is the Warden.

BAYFIELD, CHRIST CHURCH

This is probably the most historic church building in the Diocese. On December 27, 1974, it was designated as a historical landmark by the State Historical Society, and is registered as such with the United States Department of the Interior. There are few other churches in Wisconsin with this honored designation. The first official mention of the church at Bayfield is in the report

of Bishop Armitage to the Council in 1870. He stated that he had requested the Rector at Superior to hold summer services at Bayfield. The Mission was organized April 8, 1870, with Theodore Carrington as Warden. The first resident priest was the Rev. H. B. St. George, who also held services in Ashland. The beautiful little church has several Tiffany stained glass windows which are irreplaceable. A famous stained glass window above the altar bears the inscription "In thankful memory of deliverance from a great peril on the lake", summer of 1892.

The church is regularly used during summer months, and house services are held in winter. Douglas Culver, Rector at Ashland, is in charge. Eleanor Knight is the Warden. This is a truly historical spot in the North.

CHIPPEWA FALLS, CHRIST CHURCH

Christ Church was incorporated August 27, 1866, as Zion Church. The Rev. I. H. Hendley was the Rector, and L. H. Brooks and George Harding, Wardens. The first services were held in the Presbyterian Church, and then in various halls and buildings until the church was completed in about eight years. The building was erected on the corner of Bay and Spruce Streets. On January 14, 1882, the name was changed to Christ Church. The building was destroyed by fire, and Bishop Nicholson laid the cornerstone of the present building on July 15, 1897. The building was completed in 1898. During the early days of the parish it organized and operated a hospital for lumbermen engaged in rafting logs on the Chippewa and tributary rivers. The present Rector is the Rev. Alfred Burkert, and the Wardens are Lyle Pearson and Mrs. James Konsella.

CHIPPEWA FALLS, ST. SIMEON'S

The Mission was originally Melville, a locality in Chippewa County. The first recorded services were reported by Bishop Welles in his 1884 report to Council, and covered services held June 3, 1884, when 9 were confirmed. It was a mission of Christ Church, Chippewa Falls, until 1900, when it became an unorganized mission under the jurisdiction of the Archdeacon of the La Crosse Convocation. A new church was built in 1931, and shortly thereafter they became a mission. This church is the only truly "rural" mission in the Diocese. Bishop Horstick celebrated Rogation Sunday there for a number of years. The Rev. A. P. Burkert of Christ Church, Chippewa Falls, is in charge, and Robert Hall is the Warden.

CLEAR LAKE, ST. BARNABAS

The church was organized by Archdeacon Henry E. Chase, and the first services were held on August 20, 1907, at the Charles Pierson home when their infant son Raymond was baptized. The ladies' Guild was organized on February 11, 1908, and is still active. The cornerstone for a church building was laid in 1910. The building was completed, and the first services held on Christmas Day in 1912. The Rev. David Lewis is in charge, and the Warden is Charles Clark.

EAU CLAIRE, CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

The first recorded church services were those held by the Rev. A. B. Peabody on his way to the St. Croix Valley on Monday, June 21, 1858. A vestry was organized a short time later with E. A. Frear as Senior Warden and N. B. Boyden as Junior Warden. The Rev. Fayette Durlin, Rector of La Crosse, accompanied Bishop Kemper to Eau Claire on August 12, 1861, and services were held. After the close of the Civil War, the Rev. Charles J. Hendley established the mission on June 24, 1866. Meetings were held in various halls and homes until the erection of the first church building. On July 17, 1872, the congregation purchased lots now a part of the present church site.

The Rev. Peter B. Morrison was in charge during the construction of the first building, with it being completed in November, 1875. Fr. Morrison conducted regular services and did extensive missionary work in the area. The rectory (replaced by the present educational building) was built in 1900. The chancel and Guild Hall were completed and opened on December 21, 1910. The complete building was opened on April 6, 1916, and consecrated on May 16, 1920. The old building was taken down in sections and hauled to Owen where it was again erected and became the present St. Katherine's.

Frank E. Wilson became rector on December 1, 1919, serving for 10 years before becoming the first Bishop of Eau Claire. The Rev. Frank V. Hoag became the first Dean of the Cathedral. Mrs. Mary E. Delaney gave the funds for the erection of the Chapel of the Ascension on the south side of the Cathedral.

The Rev. Gordon Brant became the Dean and Rector on December 1, 1946, and served for 25 years, retiring in 1971. During his services as Rector, the Bishop Wilson Memorial Hall was erected in 1958. This building is used for Church School classes, meetings, and the parish and Diocesan offices. A new pipe organ was also placed in the church. The woodwork in the chancel was completed and a number of memorial windows were placed in the church.

The Rev. Jay W. Breisch became Dean and Rector following the retirement of Dean Brant, and serves presently, assisted by the Rev. Paul Dicks. Duane Herrick is the Senior Warden and Richard Roehrich is the Junior Warden.

HAYWARD, CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

The first recorded Episcopal Church services were held in Hayward in July, 1885, by the Rev. A. B. Peabody, Missionary to Northern Wisconsin. The Journal of 1885 lists Hayward as an unorganized mission in charge of Peabody, with 35 families shown on the parochial report. Six Sunday services were held that year. Services were generally held by missionary priests in the Public Library until the erection of the church in 1912. The first services in the new church were held on Ascension Day that year. Most services were held by Archdeacons Henry E. Chase and P. Webber of the La Crosse Convocation. St. Cecelia's Guild was formed shortly after the first church services were held.

The Rev. Richard C. Nevius is presently in charge of Hayward and Springbrook. The Warden is Duane Winegar.

HUDSON, ST. PAUL'S

There has been some confusion in the past regarding the early church history of Hudson, as the present City of Hudson and area came from two settlements - Buena Vista and Willow River. Most of the early history of Hudson appears under the name Willow River. St. Croix County was established by the Territory of Wisconsin in 1840, and Willow River was named as the county seat.

The Rev. Ebenezer A. Greenleaf was appointed missionary to St. Croix County by the General Board of Missions on April 1, 1846. The Associate Ministries of Breck, Wilcoxson and Merrick was formed in 1850 and followed Greenleaf who left in 1848. They conducted services at regular intervals at Willow River. The first services they held at Hudson (shortly after the name change) was on July 7, 1850. The first church services in what is now the Diocese of Eau Claire were without doubt held at Hudson.

The Journal report of Bishop Kemper of 1859 reads: "I went to Hudson on the St. Croix on July 18, 1858, and admitted the Rev. A. B. Peabody to priest's orders"...present were the Rev. Dr. Patterson, the Rev. Mr. Wilcoxson, the Rev. Mr. Russell, all of Minnesota. The Rev. C. P. Clarke, who regularly serves Hudson, and the Rev. J. Phelps of Wisconsin were also present. Four were confirmed during the services. (This was the first ordination in what is now the Diocese of Eau Claire.) Thereafter, services were held with considerable regularity at Hudson, mention being often made of services in the Mission Hall. Peabody had Hudson in his charge on many occasions over the years of his services in the area. A number of missionaries served the station prior to the arrival of the Rev. Henry Langlois in 1879. Bishop Kemper made at least one visit to Hudson each year from 1850 until his death, usually confirming some persons at that time. He conducted services in private homes, the courthouse, railroad station, halls and other churches. A truly historic spot in the Diocese of Eau Claire.

The cornerstone of the first church was laid by Bishop Welles on September 21, 1882. The church was completed and dedicated on June 8, 1884, and a rectory was built in 1885. The Rector was the Rev. L. R. Ferguson when St. Paul's became a parish. The Rev. Douglas Beauchamp is now Rector, with Howard Wilcox as Senior Warden and Warren Lemmon as Junior Warden.

LA CROSSE, CHRIST CHURCH

The Rev. Timothy Wilcoxson and the Rev. L. P. Breck held services at Prairie La Crosse on June 23, 1850, the earliest recorded Episcopal church services in that area. The Rev. Fayette Durlin was sent to La Crosse by Bishop Kemper in 1857. He organized a parish. In the Journal of 1859 Christ Church, La Crosse, is listed as a parish in union with the Council. Services were held in various churches, halls and homes until the first church was constructed under the leadership of Father Dorset. The church had the usual frontier days "ups and downs". The Rev. W. P. Ten Broeck was a steadying influence in his second term as Rector, from 1881 to 1892, and the steady growth of the parish continued. The church was fortunate to have some of the leaders of Wisconsin as members of the congregation. One notable layman was Alexander Cameron who was also active in the Diocese. There were a number of priests with limited tenure until the arrival of the Rev. Robert D. Vinter in about 1920. The church became a stalwart symbol in Western Wisconsin under his leadership. Fr. Vinter retired in 1957 after 37 years at the helm. He served many years on the Board of

Trustees of Nashotah House and worked very hard during the establishment of the new Diocese of Eau Claire. He moved to California after retirement, and in spite of failing eyesight is still able to be fairly active. He is the sole surviving member of the clerical order in the founding Council of the Diocese. The Rev. Christopher Pratt has been Rector for about 5 years and will retire on December 31, 1978. The Rev. Donne Puckle is the Assistant. Richard Randall is Senior Warden and William Estes is Junior Warden.

LUGERVILLE, OUR SAVIOUR'S

This church was established in the cutover country during the tenure of Bishop Wilson. The organization resulted from the efforts of the Postmaster and the Rev. T. O. Moehle, then Vicar at Medford. Services were held in the school house until Bishop Horstick purchased an unused school and moved it to the hamlet. He had it remodeled and placed Deaconess Hill in charge. Services in recent years were held by the Vicar of Park Falls and are now under the supervision of Canon Missioner Stillings. Alvin Grant is the Warden.

MAUSTON, ST. JOHN'S

The first services were held by Bishop Kemper in 1855, arriving over the Old Troy stage coach line. He made yearly trips to Mauston until 1867 when a mission was organized and placed under the charge of the Rev. George Vernor, Missionary along the main line of the Milwaukee Railroad. This arrangement lasted until 1871 when Kilbourn and Mauston were served by the same priest. Until 1886, infrequent services were held by a number of missionary priests assigned to the Convocation of La Crosse. On December 19, 1886, the Rev. Thomas K. Allen took charge, and services were again regularly held. The cornerstone for a church was laid on October 22, 1888. After completion of the church, the first services were held on Easter Day, April 10, 1890. Several priests served until 1899 when the Rev. H. C. Boissier arrived. A rectory was soon purchased and a guild hall erected, all with local funds. Father Boissier resigned in 1905. There followed a long line of priests and some archdeacons from the Convocation of La Crosse. However, services were held regularly. Archdeacon William Wolfe served Tomah and Mauston for ten years. The Rev. W. R. Scott came in 1954 and left in 1959. He and his wife make their summer home here and he regularly conducts services during the summer, although he is now retired and resides in Florida. The Rev. Barry Whenal is now in charge of Tomah and Mauston and Charles Roth is the Warden. Merton G. Eberlein is the Treasurer and has served as Deputy to General Convention 9 times as a representative of the Diocese. Martin Roth, Sr., is the surviving layman of the Primary Council, and an active member.

MENOMONIE, GRACE CHURCH

The first Episcopal Church services were held in 1870, and on September 1, 1872, a Mission was established, with Robert McCauley as the first Warden. In September, 1874, the Rev. P. B. Morrison was appointed Missionary, and the church cornerstone was laid on June 10, 1875. The brick church building was completed in October, 1875. The first services in the new church were held on October 10, 1875, by Bishop Welles. A rectory was built south of

the church in 1888. On June 16, 1916, the church burned and Archdeacon William Wolfe remained until the church was rebuilt. On January 26, 1950, the church was again badly damaged by fire. The building was repaired and reopened September 1, 1950. The basement was remodeled in 1970 and carpet installed in the church. The Rev. Ralph Stanwise is Rector, with Tom Connell Senior Warden and Don Chase, Junior Warden.

NEW RICHMOND, ST. THOMAS

The first church services were held here by the Rev. A. B. Peabody after his arrival in 1858. Regular services were not held until Fr. Peabody settled at Star Prairie about 1873. Bishop Armitage visited New Richmond that year. The Journal of 1877 lists a mission at New Richmond without a name. This condition existed for a number of years. John Neder was the first Warden. After the arrival of the Rev. Henry Langlois at Hudson, he also had charge of services at New Richmond. In 1881 the Mission was named St. Thomas and St. John. In 1882 a school house was purchased and remodeled for church purposes. This building together with a goodly portion of the town was destroyed in the terrible cyclone of 1898. In 1910 the Archdeacon in his annual report stated that Episcopal Church work at New Richmond was dead.

With the advent of Bishop Horstick, he became interested in reopening the Mission and was instrumental in securing a building and establishing regular services. The Mission was admitted into Union with the Council in 1947 with Glenn Thoreen as Warden. The church has continued to have an active life, being served by the Rector at Hudson. This is presently the only Mission in the Diocese that receives no subsidy. The Rev. Douglas Beauchamp is in charge and James Tilly is Warden.

OWEN, ST. KATHERINE'S

The first Episcopal church services were held on November 18, 1914, by the Rev. P. H. Linley, Rector of Christ Church, Eau Claire. During 1913-15, services were held in various homes of the members. When the new Christ Church was erected in Eau Claire in 1915 the old church was rebuilt at Owen. The first services in the church were held May 16, 1916, and were conducted by Fr. Linley. The Vestry was organized on June 27, 1916, and St. Katherine's became a parish in 1957. It is presently in charge of Canon Missionary Eugene Stillings. Eugene Sutter is the Senior Warden and Paul Stasek is the Junior Warden.

PARK FALLS, ST. MARGARET'S

The first services were held by the Rev. A. H. Ross in 1906 who was then Rector of St. Andrew's, Ashland. Services were held at frequent intervals until 1915 when Fr. Ruth of Ashland resumed regular services. This is one of the churches that was in the Diocese of Fond du Lac until it became a part of the Diocese of Eau Claire. The first church building was the old wooden Soo Line Railroad station. In 1959 a fine new church building was erected. The church is now in charge of Canon Missionary Stillings. The Warden is William Bly.

PRESCOTT, CALVARY

Bishop Kemper first visited Prescott in 1858 and the Rev. Timothy Wilcoxson served here for a number of years. The Rev. John Williamson also conducted early day services. A Mission was established here in 1872 by a lay reader, William Gould. The date of the building of the original church is not known, but it was rebuilt in 1908. For a number of years Prescott was served by the Rector from the Church at Hastings, Minnesota. It is presently in charge of the priest serving River Falls. The Rev. James Larsen is in charge, and Mrs. Beatrice Hixon is the Warden.

RICE LAKE, GRACE CHURCH

The first Episcopal services were held in the town hall on March 23, 1879, by the Rev. E. P. Morrison of Christ Church, Eau Claire. The Rev. A. B. Peabody also held services for about three years. Bishop Welles made his first visit to Rice Lake on May 20, 1881. The Mission was formally organized on May 24, 1881, with F. M. Angel as the first Warden. A church building was erected, and the first services were held in it on June 3, 1884. A rectory was built in 1823, and in 1931 a guild hall was erected by J. E. Horseman in memory of his wife. A new church was completed in 1952 while the Rev. J. E. Allen was Rector. Many serious problems arose in clearing the heavy debt caused by building the new church. The financial problems have largely been resolved, and Grace Church should have a fine future. The Rev. Donald Langlois is Rector, and Mark Haight is Senior Warden and Marvin Thompson, Junior Warden.

RIVER FALLS, TRINITY CHURCH

The earliest Episcopal church services were held by the Rev. T. Wilcoxson in 1858. The church was organized by the Rev. John Williamson, and a building was constructed in 1872, with first services being held on Easter, March 31, 1872. On March 24, 1918, the church building was destroyed by fire. A new church was built, and the first services were held in it on November 23, 1924. The church has had the usual mission church ups and downs, and has had some mediocre leadership, but in the past few years it has been outstanding. An excellent history of Trinity Church has been written by Douglas L. Patin, and was published in 1976. The Rev. James Larsen is presently in charge, and Cornelius TerMaat is the Warden.

SHELL LAKE, ST. STEPHEN'S

The church was organized in 1882, mostly through the efforts of P. B. Craddock, with a building being erected in the spring of 1883. The first priest was the Rev. Charles L. Sleight. The Rev. A. B. Peabody was holding services in nearby logging camps about this time and served as Vicar for a brief period. J. R. S. Devereaux was the first warden. A two-room addition as living quarters for the priest was added in the late 1890's. Services for a number of years were conducted by Archdeacon Henry E. Chase of Springbrook. The living quarters were later converted to a guild hall and a kitchen was added. The church has been associated with Spooner for a number of years. The Rev. Paul Sanford serves both churches. Geza Endredy is the Warden.

SPARTA, ST. JOHN'S

The first recorded church services were held by the Rev. John B. Pratt in the summer of 1857. Services in 1859 were held at fairly regular intervals by the Rev. Fayette Durlin, who first visited Sparta with Bishop Kemper in 1857. The original church building erected in 1863 is the oldest church building in the City. Sparta was the home of Suffragan Bishop E. J. Randall of Chicago, and his mother organized the first Sunday School at St. John's. The first recorded assigned clergyman was the Rev. L. D. Brainerd. The church has had many priests over the years, some with very short tenures. Nearby Fort McCoy has had considerable effect on the church during the two major wars of this century. Randolph Richards and Robert McCoy were Army officer members of note. The Rev. Jack Faas of Livingston, Montana, will become the Vicar on November 1, 1978. Robert Hess is the Warden.

SPOONER, ST. ALBAN'S

Earliest church services were held by the Rev. A. B. Peabody. In 1900, a group of ladies organized St. Alban's Guild and withdrew from the local community church. The organization secured the services of the Rev. James Trimbell and began construction of a church which was completed in 1903. A chapel was added the same year. The building was dedicated in 1904 and a guild hall was added in 1924. A rectory was purchased at a later date. The church has been served by a great number of clergy over the years. At one time the town was a thriving railroad division point. Today the railroad industry is all gone making a tremendous change in the community. The Rev. Paul Sanford is priest-in-charge and Chester Nelson is the Warden.

SUPERIOR, ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR

The first Episcopal Church in Superior was Redeemer, which was the first organized church in the present Diocese of Eau Claire. It was incorporated December 31, 1855, with the Rev. Barton as Rector. Superior, as a city, is composed of many locales, all within the city boundaries and are scattered over a huge area. A mission named St. Luke was established in West Superior about 1889. In 1891 the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Wisconsin approved the establishment of a new parish in West Superior. In 1892, after several problems, the parish was admitted into union with the Diocese. Plans began for a new church in 1902, and the present stone structure was completed in 1905. There have been many problems over the years in Superior, and some of them apparently still exist.

With the demise of the Church of the Redeemer, it appeared that St. Alban's would become a much stronger parish, but this has apparently not been the case. Economic conditions in Superior have been one of the strong factors in the parish problems. At present the church is without a Rector, the Rev. G. Randolph Usher having resigned this past year. Paul Skamser is the Senior Warden and Robert C. Lambert is the Junior Warden.

SPRINGBROOK, ST. LUKE'S

I have been unable to obtain a great deal of actual data on this Mission. The Rev. Henry E. Chase, grandson of Bishop Philander Chase, Bishop of Ohio and Illinois, began the church in what was then a huge pinery in about 1907. A church building was erected in 1916 where he served until his death in 1938. The first services in the present church were held on Easter, 1917. Henry E. Chase served the North as Archdeacon of the La Crosse Convocation for a number of years. The church has always been a community center and has provided a real service to the area. The name of Neste has long been associated with the church at Springbrook, members of the family having served for long periods on the Executive Board and Committees and Commissions. The Rev. Richard Nevius of Hayward serves Springbrook. Paul Buchman is the Warden.

TOMAH, ST. MARY'S

The first recorded services at Tomah were held by Bishop Kemper on June 8, 1859. The Journal of 1867 shows St. Mary's as an unorganized mission. The first church was built in 1878 on the corner of Brownell and Kilbourn Avenues. In 1892 it was moved five blocks, and later moved to the present location on McLean. Extensive remodeling was begun at the time of the last move and completed in 1977 after the receipt of a large sum of money from the estate of Nina Fix. This endowment can only be used for building and maintenance of the building. The Rev. Barry Whenal is now in charge and also serves St. John's in Mauston. Edward Rizner is the Warden.

TURTLE LAKE, ST. PHILIP'S

The first church services were held in homes and the I.O.O.F. Hall until the church was built in 1906. St. Philip's is one of the smallest active missions in the Diocese and has a fine little church in the small community. The church is in the charge of the Rev. David Lewis of Clear Lake, and the Warden is Jerry Cornwall.

This history would not be complete without some mention of St. Mary's, Medford, which has taken a new lease on church life under the guidance of Canon Stillings. It is hoped we will again have an active mission in this thriving city. Among the cities and villages of the present Diocese of Eau Claire are many where some form of Episcopal services have been held over the years. In some instances the communities are long gone, and in others the villages and cities still thrive. Listed are most of the early day places. Where the community is gone the name will be followed by an asterisk: Black River Falls, Ellsworth, Glendale*, Onalaska, Baldwin, North La Crosse, Galesville, Neillsville, Maiden Rock, Cumberland, Tiffany*, Wilson, St. Joseph*, Viroqua, Knapp, Trempeleau, New Lisbon, Fairchild, Downing, St. Croix Falls, Webster, Chetek, Alden*, Huntington*, Wagon Landing*, Bouchea*, Star Prairie, Jewellton*, and Osceola.

An extensive investigation was made of the feasibility of the consolidation of the Diocese of Milwaukee and the Diocese of Eau Claire in 1971-72. A very comprehensive plan was submitted to each Diocese, and while there were some who strongly favored such a move, it was defeated in both orders in both dioceses. This was the only move of this nature during the 50-year period. It will probably not arise again in the next 50 years. One of the strongest arguments against such a move is the large area that would be covered by at least one of the proposals. This was true when the Diocese was founded, and even with modern transportation does not relieve the great distance factor.

Thus ends the first 50 years of the Diocese of Eau Claire. We have survived a great depression and a great war. There has been no startling growth in the Diocese, but in many ways, the first 50 years has made us far more aware of our problems which bodes well for the next 50 years.

October 10, 1978

Merton G. Eberlein, Historiographer
The Diocese of Eau Claire
27 Morris St.
Mauston, WI 53948

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1929

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Registrar
Francis B. Randall

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The Rev. H. G. Purchase

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The Rev. R. D. Vinter, President
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Mr. S. G. Moon, Secretary
Mr. C. L. Baldwin
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The Executive Board
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