

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

GRASS VALLEY'S OLDEST CHURCH

Rev. William H. Hill of Nevada City commenced Episcopal services in Grass Valley March 20, 1855, under the name of Emmanuel Parish. Meetings were held in the Masonic Hall on Main Street until its destruction by fire September 13, 1855. The Hall of the Sons of Temperance was next engaged on Church Street at a rental of \$18.00 per month.

The first person to be baptized was Mary Thayer on April 29, 1855, by Rev. William H. Hill. The first couple to be married was James E. Pingle and Mary L. Horrick on August 5, 1855. On November 11, 1856, the first confirmation class knelt at the Bishop's feet to receive the laying on of hands.

Rev. William H. Hill resigned in 1856 and was succeeded by Rev. Edmund D. Cooper. On December 11, 1856, the Gold Hill Quartz Mining Company presented the parish with a lot of land bounded by Hill, Walsh, and Church Streets on the condition that a church edifice be erected in 18 months. The Vestry formally accepted the gift in January of 1857 and advertised for proposals to build the church in the Grass Valley Telegraph, Nevada Democrat, Nevada Journal, and the Sacramento Union. Mr. William Bottes was employed to supervise the building. The lumber was furnished by Mr. McMurtry at \$25.00 per 1,000 feet with nine months credit and interest at two percent per month.

In February of 1858 Rev. Cooper resigned and the parish enjoyed considerable prosperity under its third rector, Rev. O. G. Smeatham. The first services were held in the new church August 1, 1858, and they have been held continuously ever since.

Owing to lack of financial support Rev. Smeatham had to resign and was later killed by the Indians in Surprise Valley on March 13, 1864. His last words as the hostile Indians approached were, "Be cool and calm as though you were entering church."

Since those dark early days, the Emmanuel Church has taken firm root in Grass Valley. Many of the pioneer families have associated their lives about its services.

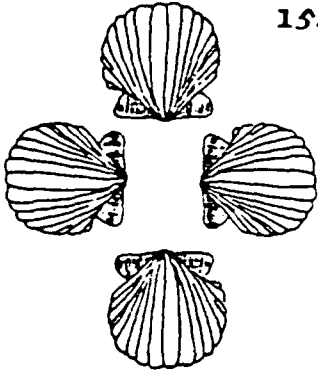
from Nevada County Gold Trails
Grass Valley Evening School

1940

st. james' episcopal church

1540 12th avenue, oakland, california 94606

(510) (415) 533-2136



august 17, 1992

Mrs. Pat Jones
P.O. Box 10
Chicago, Park, CA
95712

Dear Mrs. Jones,

Your June 20 letter regarding Emmanuel Episcopal Church arrived in our diocese before my all-july vacation.

Here is summary information:

- 1- Emmanuel was the fifth surviving congregation organized in the (Episcopal) diocese of California.
- 2- Two of the other four congregations built buildings before Emmanuel.
- 3- Both buildings were destroyed before 1980.
- 4- One of the remaining congregations (St. John's Church, Stockton) erected a building and occupied it in 1958; it has since been replaced.
- 5- The remaining congregation had no building, and did not survive.

(Thus, Emmanuel is the oldest extant Episcopal edifice in California.)

- 6- The earliest extant edifice for an Episcopal Church in Oakland was built in 1860. It is currently the Parish Hall of St. James Church.

I am writing this during a meeting in the diocese to get it into the mail - please excuse my handwriting

Sincerely,

(The Rev.) John Rawlinson
Rector and

DIOCESAN ARCHIVIST.