

Now I would like to do a flashback...to about 1838 in Eastern Jefferson county....about six miles from downtown Louisville. The area was very rural...a few fairly large farms owned by a few well to do farmers and a few, very few, merchants. There was no railroad yet, and very few roads, as the farms were big and little roads were not needed. There was a road...or maybe it was a wide path...from Louisville to Frankfort and on to Lexington, and, of course, there was a tavern....for overnight sleeping, food and drink, owned by a Mr. Gilman. In those days a Sunday morning trip to downtown Louisville, was a real trip...the only mode of transportation being horse or horse-drawn wagon...even 6 or 7 miles was a real effort and took a good deal of time away from the farm.

A few of the families in the area were apparently Episcopalians. After consultation with Bishop Smith, a small group decided to build a church closer to home. John and Helen Massie Martin deeded one acre of their farm to the Vestry of Saint Matthew's Church for the purpose of building a church. The Vestry, as shown in Deed Book 55, page 464, in the office of the Jefferson County Court Clerk, consisted of Robert M. Smith, David S. Chambers, William L. Thompson, James Brown and John Brengman. The deed is very specific in that the property is to be used for the benefit of the Protestant Episcopal Church as a place of Christian worship and for no other purpose and that it shall always be devoted to the pious purpose of providing a place of worship for Episcopalians. The Vestry could not sell the property and if it ceased to be used for church purposes for a period of five or more years, it reverted to Mr. & Mrs. Martin. Although the deed is signed by both Mr. and Mrs. Martin, she is mentioned throughout it and I

suspect that she may have inherited the property from her family.

Although this deed was recorded on May 8, 1839, it is obvious that formation of the congregation and building of the church took place prior to the signing of the deed.

The 11th Convention of the Diocese on June 13, 1939, was held at Calvary Church, Smithland; a small community on the Ohio River about 10 miles up river from Paducah and 200 miles from Louisville. This was truly "on the frontier" in those times.

At that convention Bishop Smith reported, "Saint Matthew's parish, located 5 miles East of the city of Louisville, had erected a 'neat little Church edifice' that was consecrated May 11, 1839, and the Vestry had called the Rev. Charles H. Page of Virginia as its' Rector." Father Page reported, " a neat and commodious church has been erected and consecrated to the worship of God and the prospect of rearing a good congregation is flattering." Page was listed as an honorary member of the 10th convention, the year before, as he was visiting Kentucky from another Diocese. He may well have been looking over the situation.

It is interesting to note that Bishop Smith speaks of Saint Matthew's as a parish and Page as rector, no indication being given that it was considered a mission. As the church was consecrated soon after being built, it must have been paid for in full. Again, I suspect, but can't prove that Helen Massie Martin was a generous contributor.

By the convention of 1841 Page reported that Saint Matthew's had 10 communicants, a Sunday School of about 30 children, and there had been 10 baptisms, 1 confirmation, as well as 2 marriages since the last convention.

In 1843, Mr. Page reported to the convention in Lexington that a "commodious vestryroom had been erected and furnished with a handsome gown through the liberality chiefly of two ladies of the communion." I have not been able to figure out what the "gown" is, unless it is meant that they had the room built and included a set of vestments as a part of the donation.

By 1846 we find Mr. Page had moved to Jeffersonville, Indiana, and the Rev. R.M. Chapman of Massachusetts officiating at Saint Matthew's. He was still officiating in 1849, but reported that the Sunday School was not as prosperous as heretofore because of irregular attendance of the teachers. By the following year the Diocesan Journal shows the Rev. R.M. Chapman "residing in Louisville" and lists no report for Saint Matthew's. The years 1851, 52 & 53, show Saint Matthew's "vacant".

In 1851 the United States Post Office Department established a Post Office at a point 6 miles East of Louisville and named it St. Matthews. Although I can not find any written document that shows it to be named for the church, I feel we can make that assumption and be fairly safe. The Post Office remained as an independent office until 1931 when it became a branch of the U.S. Post Office at Louisville.

In February 1854, the Rev. George Beckett arrived at Saint Matthew's from Grace Church, Hopkinsville and reported to the convention that Spring that the Sunday School now numbered 50 children. He did note that the Parish had been without pastoral care for several years. In those days the Diocesan Conventions seemed to be held in May or June.

Beckett, who was to guide Saint Matthew's through the Civil War before leaving for Columbia, Tennessee, was an Englishman by birth. He was shown in the 1850 census for Christian County (Hopkinsville) as aged 29. His wife, then 28, was named Ann. Also, living in his household were 11 young ladies, one named Anna Beckett, aged 16, possibly a sister or niece. He was not only rector at Grace Church, but also operated a school for young ladies, as he did later at Saint Matthew's and in Tennessee.

Under George Beckett, Saint Matthew's continued to grow slowly, but the Sunday School appears to have really prospered. In 1855 he reported 6 teachers, 36 scholars and 30 colored scholars.

In 1859 the Protestant Episcopal Orphan Asylum reported to the convention that "Saint Matthew's Parish is the only congregation in the Diocese that has ever aided our work." This institution was located on 5th Street, between Broadway and Chestnut, and was one of the predecessors to what is today the Home of the Innocents.

Throughout this period, from the early 1840's on, the lay delegate (they were not yet called deputies) to Diocesan Conventions, was Theodore Brown. He lived in the home now facing the new extension of Hubbards Lane, just South of Alton Road. His first wife died and he remarried, I think in the 1850's; his second wife was named Susan. Altogether, Theodore is said to have had 20 children. There is a record of the Baptism of nine of the children of Theodore and Susan Brown in an old record book from Saint Matthew's in our Diocesan archives. Brown built this house in 1853 on 250 acres that he inherited from his father James, one of our first Vestrymen. Theodore passed away in 1899, and his wife Susan in 1917.

In November 1862 fire destroyed Saint Matthew's Church and due to the war, replacement had to be postponed. Beckett reported that they were meeting in the Methodist Church, but I haven't been able to determine where that was.

By 1866 Beckett officiated very little at Saint Matthew's, but assisting at other Episcopal churches in the area. He officially left Saint Matthew's on August 2, 1866 for Columbia, Tennessee where he ministered and operated a school for about 25 years. He died in New York City in 1907 at aged 90.

The Rev. Carter Page arrived in Jefferson County in 1866 to take charge of the Institute for Young Ladies near Louisville, that had heretofore been conducted by the Rev. George Beckett. In 1867, the school was referred to in the Journal as, "The Rev. Carter Page's Institute for Young Ladies at Saint Matthew's." I don't know whether the school was on the land near the church, or in another location. It doesn't appear in the 1878 Atlas of Jefferson County, as do both the church and rectory.

Page was the son of Henry Page of Virginia and had a brother James, who was a Confederate Chaplain, and later ministered in Western Kentucky.

Again we had a period of 2 or 3 years where Saint Matthew's was not represented at convention .. 1868, 69 & 70. However, the 1870 Convention heard a report that Saint Matthew's was delinquent in the payment of it's assessment for 1868 & 69, at \$ 20 per year. However, in spite of being behind in payments to the Diocese and non-appearance at convention was busy. Work commenced on October 1, 1869 on a new church to replace the one destroyed by fire in '62.

Many people contributed money, materials and labor to build this fine new church, which would accomodate 250 persons. It appears that Helen M. Key, (I believe she is the Helen Massie Martin who donated land for the first church 30 years before) donated 2 acres and \$4,000. Theodore Brown gave \$ 300, while others contributing included Joshua Bullitt, Dr. Henry Chenowith, Richard Ten Broeck, Mrs. L.L. Dorsey, Miss Mary Anderson, Mrs. Floyd and Thomas W. Bullitt, who had ridden with John Hunt Morgan's 2nd Kentucky Cavalry during the War. You can see from these names that many of the leaders of the community were Episcopalians and supporters.

The first service in the new church was conducted on October 2, 1870 by the Rev. William Perkins. Services were continued with clergy from the area assisting, until the second Sunday of June 1871, when the Rev. William Meade Nelson of Virginia came as the new rector. He reported later, "for this new and tasteful church the community is chiefly indebted to the late Mrs. Helen Key of Louisville, who also, before her decease, added to this good work the gift of a rectory for the parish with ten acres of land attached, as a home for the rector."

June 25, 1871, the 3rd Sunday after Trinity, the Rt. Rev. George David Cummins, the Assistant Bishop of Kentucky, consecrated this new church, assisted by the Rev. Dr. Perkins, the Rev. Messrs Page and Hulliken of this Diocese and the Rev. Mr. Matlack of Pennsylvania and the Rev. Mr. Thome of Connecticut. This is certainly impressive for a country church.

The Young Ladies Institute at Saint Matthew's apparently continued until about 1874 when Carter Page left the Diocese.

In 1873 the value of Saint Matthew's Church property was listed as \$ 12,000 and the number of communicants as 12. Keep in mind however that the church seated 250.

In spite of a new church building, apparently Saint Matthew's had only a few good years under Father Nelson. By 1876 again there was a vacancy in the pulpit and the report to the Diocese showed only 4 families, and "whole number of souls, 29." In 1877 the Journal carried this report, " the church and rectory are sadly out of repair. The rectory is now vacant, with no probability of renting it. She (the church) is struggling for existance. The Rev. Mr. Flowers has been officiating for us most of the winter and spring, also the Rev. Mr. Leacock has very kindly volunteered his services."

I don't think Saint Matthew's, as a parish, ever really recovered, but I am not sure and have much additional work to do before I am through. We do know that the rectory was later used by the YMCA and was still standing in the late 1940's, when the St. Matthews Fire Department used it for practise.

Tradition tells us that what was left of the Saint Matthew's congregation went to St. Mark's, however as that church was not organized until 1891, either there was a revival of Saint Matthew's, or the few people left went to other churches in the city before St. Mark's was built. Hopefully I can find some of the answers over the next year or so.

We have a bit of a clue in a portion of a letter Ursula found while doing research at Saint James' in Pewee Valley last year. The letter is dated 21 January 1909 and addressed to Mrs. C.L. Pindar,

St. Matthews, Kentucky. (Mrs. Pindar was the widow of the Rev. C.L. Pindar, the rector of St. James', who died in 1906. Both he and his wife, who died in 1937, are buried in back of the church, along with their daughter who died in 1958. There are only 4 graves in this little cemetery, just outside the wall behind the altar.)

The letter reads:

"Dear Madam,

I wish to thank you for your letter of Jan. 8. I can not find out exactly what the intention is regarding the old church in St. Matthews, except that the Bishop (that would have been Bishop Woodcock) has given Mr. Mc Cready promises to have it torn down, and the property sold, subject to certain conditions..."

Unfortunately, there was a second page to this letter which was not to be found. We do know that the rector at St. Mark's about that time was named Mc Cready.

From Saint Matthew's Church, came St. Matthews, the community. There is only one other community of St. Matthews in this country, in South Carolina. In that case, the church was established about 1765 by royal edict and the area called "The Parish of St. Matthews". That church is still active, having a congregation of about 150, in a building that was built in 1840.

Several people have mentioned to me that there was a Saint Matthew's church in the area in the 1920's. There was...it was Saint Matthew's Mission, established in the early 1920's on South Shelby Street, for the colored of that area. It was active about 10 years and during all or most of it's active life had a colored vicar.