

Documents

Early Immigrants Sought Aid From England

*Contributed by Charles A. Morris**

As early as 1818, Englishmen began to settle in Scott Township, Vanderburgh County, Indiana. Among these immigrants was John Ingle, a native of Huntingdonshire. On April 26, 1819, he laid out Saundersville, but by 1830 this little village had practically disappeared except for the post office.¹ Fourteen years later, however, there were still Englishmen in the vicinity of the town who sought aid from England for a church in their adopted country. Two letters were written in their behalf in 1844 by Bishop Jackson Kemper and Reverend William Vaux.

Jackson Kemper was born at Pleasant Valley, Dutchess County, New York. After graduation from Columbia College in 1809, he began the study of theology. The West appealed to him and in 1834 he made a journey to the Indian mission at Green Bay, Wisconsin. In the following year he was elected the first missionary bishop of the Protestant Episcopal church with jurisdiction over Missouri and Indiana. He came to Evansville, Indiana, in December, 1835, to preach, and a few Episcopalians who were there met the following January at the store of Goodsell and Lyon to discuss the possibility of building a church. An organization was effected and in 1839 St. Paul's Episcopal Church was constructed at the corner of First and Chestnut streets and consecrated by Bishop Kemper in January, 1840.² Four years later he wrote a letter to England for assistance in the amount of one hundred pounds sterling for Trinity parish located near Evansville in Scott Township at the intersection of Seven Mile Road and the Princeton and Evansville State Road. The old cemetery still remains, but the church has long since disappeared.

* Charles A. Morris is president of the Elberfeld State Bank, Elberfeld, Indiana. The letters here reproduced were among other documentary material in his possession and were brought to the attention of Professor Albert L. Kohlmeier of Indiana University.

¹ Brant & Fuller, *History of Vanderburgh County, Indiana* (n.p., 1889), 578-583.

² *Ibid.*, 285; Katharine Jeanne Gallagher, "Jackson Kemper," *Dictionary of American Biography* (20 vols., New York, 1943), X, 321-322.

Reverend William Vaux who served this parish was born and educated in England and had been admitted to holy orders by Bishop Kemper. Upon the resignation of Reverend N. A. Okeson about 1846, the Reverend Vaux also took charge of St. Paul's parish in Evansville for about a year officiating every other Sunday. Just when the Reverend Vaux left Trinity parish for Minnesota or when he became a chaplain in the army at Fort Laramie is not known.³

Diocese of Indiana
27th Feb 1844

A little body of Englishmen, the greater part of whom are from Cambridge Shire, residing in a woody district of the state of Indiana. Poor but attached to the church of their forfathers they are anxious to erect a plain building in which they can assemble to set forth the most worthy praise of their heavenly father, to hear his most holy word and to ask those things which are requisite and nessicary as well for the body as the soul. The desire of their hearts can be accomplish'd they think for one hundred pounds sterling. In the full belief that a small church will be a great blessing to those people and that whatever is collected by friends at home will be expended in the most judicious manner I hereby cordially commend them and their cause to the kindness and attention of christian bretheren.

The missionary who officiates among them, the Revd Wm Vaux was born and educated in England, I admited him to holy orders a few years since, and am happy to testify to his self denial, duties, and faithfulness

Jackson Kemper
Missionary Bishop, & Bishop in
Charge of the Diocese of Indiana

Saundersville Vanderburgh Co Ia
March 25th 1844

To the Revd the Clergy & Faculty, and Gentlemen of
the University and Colleges of Cambridge

Revd Brethren and Friends

³ Joseph P. Elliott, *A History of Evansville and Vanderburgh County, Indiana* (Evansville, 1897), 254.

Encouragd by the uniform success of many others who have reap'd so liberally of the bounty of English Christians, and claiming as well the natural as the sympathetic ties of holy brotherhood, we humbly venture to plead our necessity, and hope to "gather some of the crumbs that fall from our masters tables"; praying that the missionary spirit which is being so largely poured out from our native home, and the bosom of our own mother church may extend one of its heavenward beams to the far distant sheep of Christs fold.

Led hither as we trust by a proper motive to seek for our families a home, we still feel a void;—but it is a want which has been frequently supplied to foreigners.—and we earnestly emplore it now for Englands own Children. There is a school of disciples numbering 15 communicants,—a little scatterd flock,—with a sheperd sent to us by your daughter church of America, and we call home to our mother to help us to a fold. In our necessity we have made bold to lay our cause before the christian bretheren in Cambridge;—and would respectfully sugest the propriety of a subscription list being open'd in your various colleges &c. We would wage this course, as well in respect to the readiness with which our hearts desire could be accomplishd as from the fact that some among us have been formerly engaged in an humble capacity as servants of your household, our most aged member had once in the days of her youth assisted in robing the late Wm Pitt. Forbearing to press our need to an unseemly extent we commit our cause to the great head of the church, and fervently pray his blessing in the extension of his kindness. "But this wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose and of the increase of his govornment and peace, there shall be no end."

In behalf of the members, and congregation of "Trinity Parish"

I am, Revd Bretheren & Gentlemen

Your servant in Christ

William Vaux

Missionary of the Protestant Episcopal Church
in the United States of America