

Historical Sketch

Christ Church

Red Hook, N. Y.



Consecrated July 21st, 1855 . .

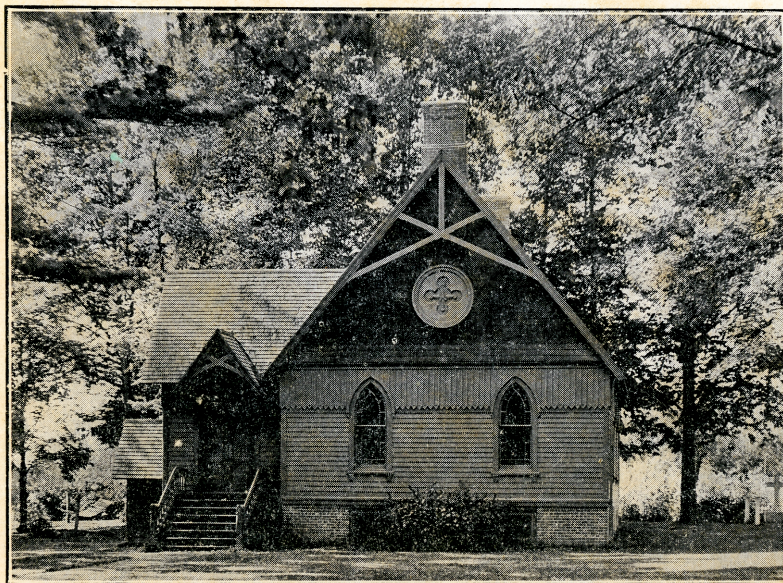
Incorporated Aug. 28, 1867 . .

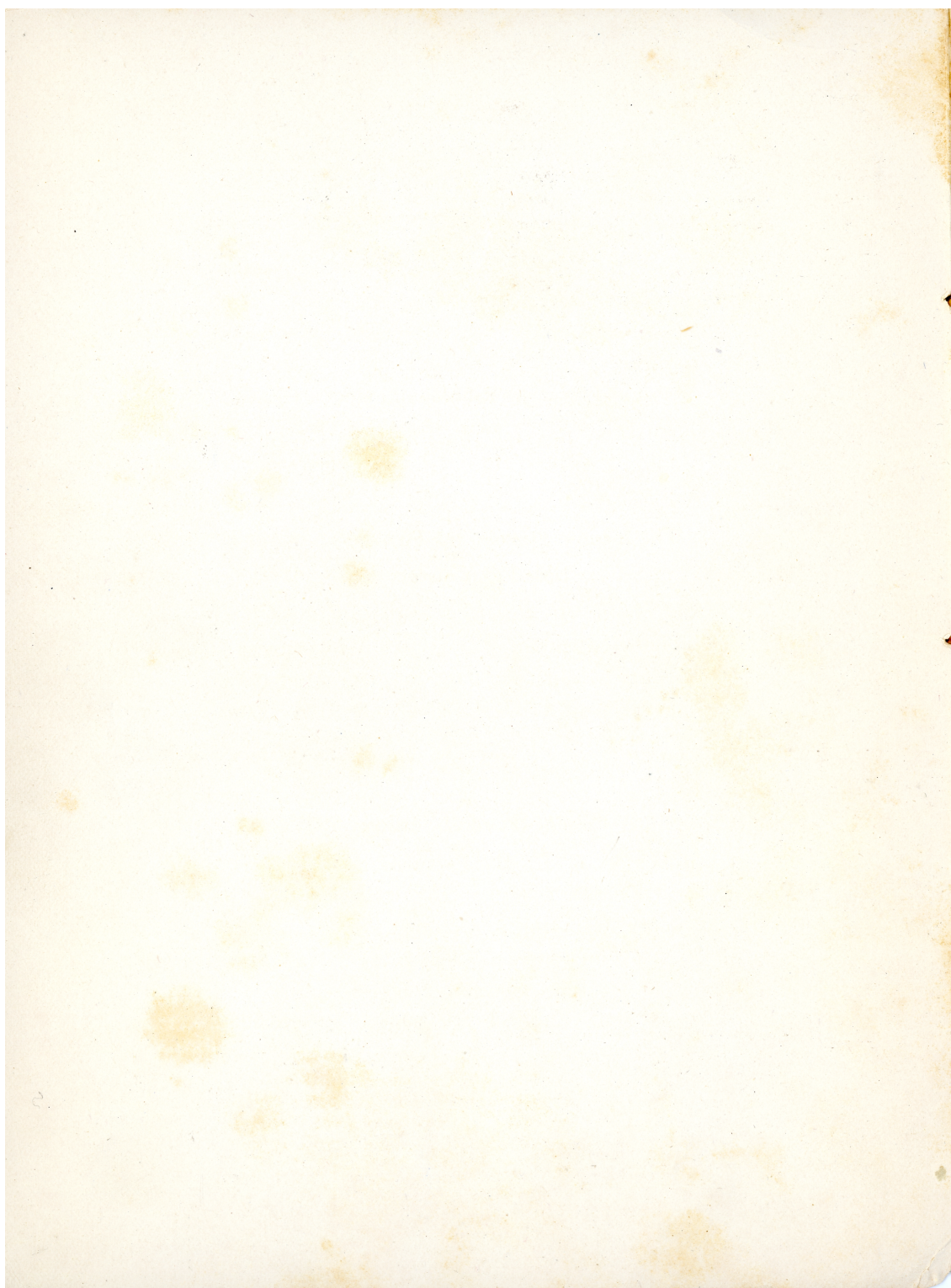
Fiftieth Anniversary Oct. 1, 1905



Mrs. R. Slafey

HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF CHRIST CHURCH
RED HOOK, N. Y.





Rectors of the Parish

The Rev. Henry de Koven, 1854—1861

The Rev. Frederick Sill, (Associate) 1855—1859

The Rev. John Wells Moore, 1861—1885

The Rev. John Richards Lambert, 1885—1899

The Rev. Robert Van Kleeck Harris, 1899—

The Incorporators of the Parish and the First

Board of Trustees 1867

Rev. John W. Moore, President and Secretary

Hon. John W. Chanler

Mr. Andrewes Crane

Mr. William L. Chamberlain

Mr. Henry Astor

Mr. John H. Lord

Dr. John Bates

Present Board of Trustees 1905

Rev. Robert V. K. Harris, President

Mr. Oliver D. Rider

Mr. Winthrop A. Chanler

Mr. Lewis S. Chanler, Sec'y and Treas.

Mr. Charles E. House

Miss Margaret L. Chanler

Mr. Walter M. Van Steenburg



IN the year 1817, St. Paul's Parish, Red Hook, was organized. It was situated in the present village of Tivoli, and there the church families in Red Hook, Upper Red Hook, Barrytown and Annandale attended service. It was while the Rev. Henry DeKoven was the Rector of that Parish that the first services of the church were held in the village of Red Hook. For some months during the Spring and Summer of the year 1850, regular services were maintained in the Methodist church which was kindly placed at our disposal; but as winter approached, the hour when that building could be used by our congregation proved unsatisfactory, and they were discontinued.

About this time St. Margaret's Home for orphan girls was established by Mrs. William B. Astor, and a house was built for its accommodation on the post road about a mile south of the village. As a rule charities are the offspring of the church; but in this instance the former fostered the latter. For fifty years and more this home has been a blessing not only to the immediate community but to the whole county; and many have been the useful lives that have been developed here under Christian influence. No one can measure the blessings it has brought. From twelve to fifteen girls have at all times found a home here amid surroundings calculated to develop the highest type of womanhood. It has always been a part of the Parish work, and has along with its difficulties brought encouragement and satisfaction to the successive Rectors of the Parish.

In the Spring of 1854, the Rev. Henry DeKoven resigned the Rectorship of St. Paul's church, Tivoli, and determined to establish the Church in Red Hook on a permanent basis. On Whitsunday, June 4th of that year the first service was held in St. Margaret's Home and the Holy Communion was celebrated. During the summer the services were so well attended and the prospects of success were so encouraging that the erection of a church was decided upon. About an acre of land was bought from Col. Henry B. Armstrong and through the liberality of a few individuals friendly to the undertaking the present church was built. The well known church architect of that day, Mr. Richard Upjohn, furnished the plans and the church was completed free of encumbrance, at a cost including the land of about \$5,500. On July 21, 1855, it was consecrated to the service and worship of Almighty God by the Rt. Rev. Horatio Potter, Bishop of the Diocese. The original communicants of the Parish enrolled at that time were Mrs. Margaret R. Astor, Miss Symmons, Mrs. Armstrong, Miss Mary Armstrong, Mrs. Charlotte DeKoven, Dr. and Mrs. Gamaliel Wheeler and Mrs. Imogen Stevens.

From the first the church in Red Hook became the centre of missionary work and the Rev. Mr. DeKoven called as an Associate Rector, the Rev. Frederick Sill. The latter entered upon his labors Nov. 15, 1855. He was an earnest Priest and an enthusiastic missionary, carrying the ministrations of the church as opportunity offered. He established the church in Clermont village and at Pine Plains and regular services were maintained at both these places until they became strong enough to warrant independent organizations. The Church of the Regeneration, Pine Plains, was organized as a Parish in 1859; and St. Luke's church, Clermont, in the following year, though continuing in charge of the Rectors of Christ

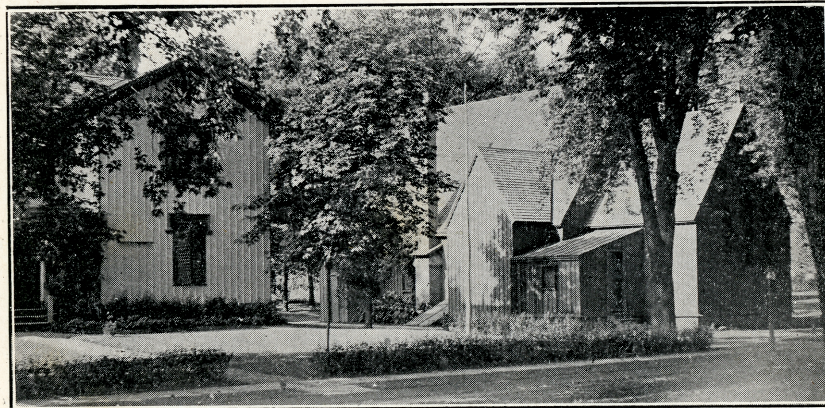
Church until 1862. Occasional services were also held at Rock City and at Baker's Mills at the request of residents of these communities. Mr. Sill's energy and zeal left a permanent impression throughout the wide region in which he ministered. Over eighty were baptized by him and thirty-one were presented for confirmation. On July 1, 1859, he resigned his position as Associate Rector to become Vicar of St. Thomas Chapel, New York. The Rev. Mr. De Koven who had spent two years with his family in Europe, had meanwhile returned and resumed the charge of the parish continuing as Rector until Easter, 1861. Having then resigned, he, as sole Trustee, called the Rev. John Wells Moore to succeed him.

The Rev. Mr. Moore entered at once upon his rectorship, one which covered nearly a quarter of a century. He found in Mr. Chanler, who had been a schoolmate with him at St. Thomas' Hall, Flushing, and a fellow classmate at Columbia, a warm friend and an active supporter, and the friendship of early life was ripened in the closer drawing together of their lives in the work of the Parish. A rectory adjoining the church was built by Mrs. William B. Astor and was occupied by the Rector's family in June 1861. On Aug. 28, 1867, the Parish was organized as a Free Church under the act of the Legislature passed April 13, 1854. The Incorporators of the Parish who thus became its first Trustees were the Rev. J. W. Moore, Mr. J. W. Chanler, Mr. William L. Chamberlain, Mr. John H. Lord, Mr. Andrewes Crane, Mr. Henry Astor and Dr. John Bates. Mr. DeKoven then transferred the church property which he had held in trust to the Trustees of the Parish. During this year the Church and Rectory were painted and put in thorough repair. In the autumn of 1870 the rectory was enlarged and the present rector's study was added through the liberality of Mrs. Astor. On Feb. 15, 1872 the Parish sustained a severe loss in the death of Mrs. Astor who had been one of the most liberal contributors in the establishment and maintenance of the church. Mr. Moore in his notes says that she was full of good works and alms deeds which she did. She was very much interested in the prosperity of the church, an interest which has ever been continued by her family. But for their liberal support the church could hardly have existed through all these years. The next few years the Parish suffered very heavily from the deaths of Trustees and influential members. Mr. William B. Astor died in 1875; Mrs. Margaret Astor Chanler a month later; Mr. John W. Chanler in 1877 and Mr. William L. Chamberlain in 1880. In the Spring of 1875, the church was painted and redecorated and put in perfect order and a few years later a new furnace and carpet were provided.

On May 3, 1885, the Rev. Mr. Moore died after a rectorship of a little more than twenty-four years, dearly beloved, beloved not only by the people of the Parish but by the people of the community. To quote from the minutes of the Board of Trustees "he had always been a guide, a counsellor, and a friend, a helper of the helpless and a comforter of those in affliction. His purity of life and the beauty of his character have by their example been a powerful influence for good among us." He was a student, of a family of scholars, and devoted much time to his books, yet he found time to do an active work. During his rectorship the Parish

had steadily developed, appealing more and more to the community. He had baptized 185 persons and presented 89 for confirmation, while the number of communicants had grown from 26 to 67.

During the summer of 1885 the Rev. John R. Lambert assumed charge of the Parish and entered upon a Rectorship which lasted nearly fourteen years. At once he set himself to the task of building a Parish House where the Sunday School and the other activities of the Parish might find a home. Work was begun on the structure in the autumn of 1886, and it was dedicated May, 16, 1887 as a memorial to the life and labors of the late Rector by the Rt. Rev. H. C. Potter, Bishop of the Diocese. The Parish continued to grow during the years that followed. The Sunday School work was emphasized and the number of teachers and scholars was doubled. A branch of the Woman's Auxiliary was organized which has been the means of interesting the women of the parish in missionary work and every year a barrel of bedding and clothing is sent to the needy beyond



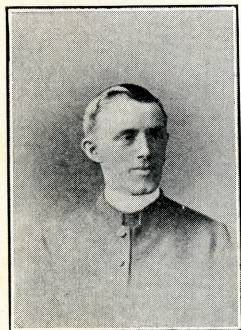
our borders. In 1893 the present organ was purchased and placed in the church. In 1895 the meetings of the congregation were instituted. Heretofore the responsibility for the maintenance of the church had rested solely on the Board of Trustees. In order to secure the interest of all the members of the Parish, and their co-operation in its work and to keep them informed of the condition of the Parish, these meetings are held every year during the first week in January. A great deal of the new life and interest in the Parish is due to the feeling of responsibility thus devolved upon every individual. At the annual convention of the Diocese held in the church of the Holy Trinity, New York, Sept. 1895, application was made by our Parish for admission into union with the convention and all the papers being in due form, the Parish was admitted and its delegates were seated. Those representing the Parish that year were Mr. Charles E. House, Mr.

Campbell N. Hicks and Mr. William Aucock. On April 16, 1898, the Rectory and one half acre of land on which it was situated was deeded to the Trustees by Miss Margaret Livingston Chanler and the congregation then proceeded to make necessary repairs, installing a hot water heater and a bath room and renovating the whole interior.

On Nov. 1, 1896 the Rev. Mr. Lambert was appointed by the Bishop to the pastoral charge of all Saints Chapel, Upper Red Hook, and on April 1, 1899, the property was transferred by the Trustees of the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Barrytown, to the Trustees of Christ Church, Red Hook. Thus the original boundaries of the Parish were restored, for among the first communicants enrolled were the names of Dr. and Mrs. Gamaliel Wheeler and their daughter, Mrs. Imogene Stevens. A few years later Mrs. Atwill and her son, Edward, now the Bishop of Kansas City, and in more recent times Mrs. Howland and her daughter, Mrs. E. C. Perrine, are among those of the upper village to be identified with our Parish.

On Sunday, Feb. 26, 1899, the Rev. Mr. Lambert died after an illness of several months. He came here a young man and he gave to the Parish the best years of his life. His ministry was one of marked influence. His was a kindly, genial nature which gave him a ready welcome in his social intercourse, and a sympathetic disposition which made those who knew him love him and through which he was able to bring himself close to men. The number of communicants had grown during his rectorship from 67 to 92; 119 had been baptized and 76 confirmed.

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees held May 28, 1899, a call to the Rectorship was extended to the Rev. Robert Van Kleeck Harris, Rector of Zion Church, Manchester Centre, Vermont, which was accepted by him and he entered upon his duties July 16. Events of the last six years are of too recent occurrence to merit mention here. The Parish has lent its energy towards improving its property. The Rectory has been painted and resingled, the sidewalk has been flagged and curbed, the property has been graded and seeded and this year the Parish House has been resingled and re-decorated. The Altar Guild which was organized in 1900 has enriched the chancel with beautiful hangings which add very much to the beauty of God's sanctuary. A parish house at Upper Red Hook was built, the necessary funds being largely furnished by Dr. Wheeler of Hudson, and the hall is named after his family who had been such earnest church people in the community, Wheeler Hall. During the six past years there have been 78 baptized and 52 confirmed.



Thus fifty years of the Church's life have passed by. They have been years of growth and development and our Parish has shared in the general advance of the church. In 1855 there was one church in the township with 34 communicants. Today there are seven churches and chapels with an aggregate communi-

cant list, not much below 500. The seven original communicants of our Parish have now become 123, in addition to 31 at All Saints Chapel, a total of 154 for the Parish. There have been 483 baptized and 276 confirmed which shows that our Parish has like all other small country villages suffered heavily by removals. Yet with the exception of a very few years the additions have more than offset the losses, while the church elsewhere has been strengthened by those who have learned to love the church here in our midst. There is no person living in the Parish today who has been identified with it for the whole fifty years but our assistant treasurer, Mr. William Aucock, has already served her faithfully for over 45 years. Such years of service are worthy of notice.

You and I in our generation have inherited the blessings of the Church. Those who have gone before us have labored for her and enjoyed the privileges she gave them. They have now passed on from the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant. But, ere they left us, they threw their mantle upon us, and it is our privilege to carry on their work, to make the Church a source of light and blessing for the community and the guide of men to the Father's home.





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