

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAINT JAMES' PARISH
LIVINGSTON, ALABAMA
by Dr. Joe B. Wilkins**

Written in 1986 on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the parish

THE STORY OF Saint James' Parish, Livingston, Alabama, is a story rich with personal sacrifice, dedication, hard work, and a love of God and Church. The saga begins with the efforts of a small group of parishioners who sought to plant in the newly created state of Alabama the Episcopal form of worship. It is a story interwoven with the establishment and activities of the Episcopal Church in Alabama as well as with the development, customs and history of Alabama and of the Nation.

Soon after Alabama became a state in 1819 the Episcopal Church began efforts to serve its members and advance the work of the Church. In 1825 Christ Church in Mobile was organized as the first Episcopal parish in Alabama. Mobile had experienced a brief experiment with Anglicanism in 1765, shortly after the French forces had left Mobile; but the priest, after experiencing a series of rebuffs, returned to Charleston, South Carolina that year. Christ Church had originally been organized in 1822 as an Anglican parish, but this was short-lived. The first minister was the Reverend Henry Shaw, who arrived to begin his ministry in December 1826.

However, it would be in the Black Belt area of the state, that region of rolling black topsoil that would produce some of the finest cotton land in the world, that the Episcopal Church would concentrate its activity in the next several decades. In 1827, the Rev. Robert Davis of New York City was

directed by the Episcopal Church of the United States "to visit the State of Alabama and advance the interest of the Society and religion." In late 1827 he arrived in Tuscaloosa and on January 8, 1828 he organized Christ Church in that city. Missionary efforts would then branch out from that parish into other areas of the Black Belt. In January 1830 the then rector of Christ Church, Tuscaloosa, the Rev. Robert A. Muller, recently arrived from Mississippi, organized a congregation at Greensboro, and a compact was signed with the Vestry in March 1830.

In 1829, at the request of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, the Rt. Rev. Thomas C. Brownell, Bishop of Connecticut, made an inspection tour of the state in which he visited Mobile, Tuscaloosa and Greensboro, and preached at Selma and Montgomery. While in Mobile in January 1830 he presided over the primary convention composed of delegates from the three parishes in Mobile, Tuscaloosa and Greensboro. The convention organized the Diocese of Alabama, adopted a Constitution, and appointed a Standing Committee with Bishop Brownell becoming the Provisional Bishop of Alabama. In New York City in October 1832, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church received the newly created Diocese of Alabama into its union and seated its delegates as members of the Convention. A special canon was also adopted by the General Convention allowing the Dioceses of Alabama and

Mississippi and the churches in Louisiana to proceed to the formation of the "Southwestern Diocese," which the churchmen of the three states deemed the only practicable scheme for ensuring constant episcopal oversight. Alabama joined this diocese in early 1836, but the Church was growing so rapidly that it withdrew from the newly created diocese in May of that year, and maintained its own autonomy.

As the newly formed diocese was unable to subsist without help from general missionary appropriations, the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society agreed to continue to help fund the efforts in Alabama. The Rev. Caleb S. Ives was sent to Alabama as a missionary by the Society in September 1833, and arrived in the state in December. On Christmas Eve 1833 he reorganized the Church at Greensboro as St. Paul's Parish, and on January 9, 1834 he conducted services at St. John's in-the-Prairies, about nine miles southwest of Greensboro, which he organized as a parish in April. Also in December 1833 he officiated for the first time in Demopolis, and as a result of his efforts Trinity Church was organized on January 31, 1834.

The Rev. Mr. Ives observed in his report to the Missionary Society that there was a fertile field for the church as emigration was streaming into the Black Belt from Virginia and South Carolina to create cotton plantations out of the educated and intelligent part of the community: He noted, "and those from the above mentioned states have been mostly reared in our own communion; so that a Virginian gentleman has already remarked to me, that to say a family is from Virginia or South Carolina is almost synonymous with saying it is a family of Episcopa-

lians. Hence the importance of clergymen here . . . men of education, intelligence, and above all, men of discretion, industry, and devotion, who will visit from house to house, who will preach in private houses, in school houses, and wherever two or three can be gathered together. At this time we want not so much churches, but men; godly, energetic, laborous men, who love their Saviour and His Church, and desire to glorify God in the salvation of their fellow men."

In March 1835, the Rev. Mr. Ives relinquished his work as a missionary to accept a teaching position at a girls' school in Mobile, and the Rev. Jobs Avery, formerly of Edenton, North Carolina, assumed Ives' missionary work. In January 1836 the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society made Demopolis a missionary station of the Church.

It was in this background of missionary efforts in the Black Belt that St. James' Livingston was founded. Settlers had moved into the Livingston area shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek between the Choctaw nation and the United States government in 1832, in which the Choctaw nation ceded this land to the United States. Early tradition notes that Episcopalians moved into this area shortly after 1832 and began meeting, but no records have been found to support this tradition. The town of Livingston was laid out in 1834 and by 1936 a parish was organized. On March 26, 1836, at the 5th General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Alabama meeting in Mobile, "The Hon. James Martin laid before the convention documents showing that a church, to be known by the name of St. James'

Church, had been organized in the town of Livingston, Sumter County, and in behalf of said church, petitioned that it be admitted into union with the Convention. The question being taken, said church was admitted by the convention.”

On May 24, 1836, the Rev. Lucien B. Wright of Maryland, a missionary with the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Episcopal Church, announced in the local newspaper the *Voice of Sumter* that he would perform the services of the church at the house of Mr. Duncan, the service to begin at half past ten o'clock, with a vestry meeting following the service. The Rev. Mr. Wright remained in Livingston for several more months, and on November 23, 1836, the Society allowed him to move to Demopolis. By May, 1843 the parochial records indicate that he was Rector of St. Paul's, Selma.

No parochial records exist for the parish until 1840, when the Rev. Deacon J. J. Scott arrived as minister of St. James'. The Rev. Mr. Scott, in his parochial report to the Ninth General Convention of the Episcopal Church reported that the parish had 28 communicants. The Rev. Mr. Scott observed in his report that one of the major tasks of the parish was the building of a proper church structure and already, he noted, funds had begun to be collected for that purpose.

The Rev. Mr. Scott was able to report in May of 1841 that a collection had been made to build a church for the parish. As he observed, it was the ladies of the church who had held a fair, “the proceeds of which, \$414.12, they have deposited in the hands of our Treasurer, as an appropriation toward building a church edifice.”

Apparently during the spring and summer of 1841 other monies were collected. As the Rev. Mr. Scott observed in February of 1842, “the vestry contracted for the building of a neat, though small church edifice during the last summer, which is now enclosed and shingled, and may be so far completed in a month, as to admit of its being used for public services. It is of sufficient dimensions for our ordinary congregation — 46 by 30 feet — with gallery and vestry room ten feet square.” Services were probably begun in the church structure in late March or early April of 1842.

The additional funds necessary to complete the church structure could have been donated by Mrs. Jane Martin Dalton, a member of the Church of St. James from the late 1830s to the 1840s. According to the historian of St. John's parish, Aberdeen, Mississippi, Mrs. Dalton, the former Jane Martin, had married a Dr. Robert Dalton of North Carolina and had moved to Livingston shortly after the formation of the town. She could very well have been the daughter of Judge James Martin, the lay delegate who petitioned that St. James' be admitted into the Diocese. The history of St. John's, Aberdeen, observes, that “Finding no altar of her household of faith in Livingston, she resolutely addressed herself to the task of erecting one. The present St. James' Church is the outward evidence of her labors.” This could very well have been the case, but the author has found no records to document this tradition.

The building was completed and ready for consecration by the Provisional Bishop of Alabama/Missionary Bishop of the Southwestern Diocese, the Rt. Rev. Leonidas Polk. The Rev.

Mr. Scott was proud to announce in his parochial report of May 1844 that Bishop Polk had consecrated the church on March 8, 1843. In his report the Rev. Mr. Scott observed that the parish had grown to 30 communicants and due to the efforts of the young ladies of the church, the Dorcas society, the church had furnished and beautified, as well as an organ being purchased for the church. The parish, Scott concluded, “was in a flourishing condition that it has been from its foundations,” and that while the parish had lost communicants because of removals to western lands, “the remaining portion have improved in religious character, and they seem now more earnest than ever in striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

The lot identified as the “northeast half of lot thirty-one in the Town of Livingston,” on which the church was built, was given to St. James by a Presbyterian, Willis Crenshaw and his wife Amanda. The Bible used in the consecration of St. James' and for many years thereafter was donated by Samuel N. Gowdy, whose uncle, G. C. Gowdy was for many years the president of the Bank of York.

It was during the rectorship of the Rev. Mr. Scott that St. James' Parish officially incorporated. The wardens and vestrymen who signed the act of incorporation were as follows: William H. Green, Charles R. Gibbs, Wardens; R. T. Gibbs, Stephen Day, S. W. Murley, Henry R. Thorton, Thomas L. Wetmore, Robert H. Smith, Alex M. Garber, Vestrymen.

The Rev. Mr. Scott resigned the rectorship at St. James' in the spring of 1844 to take a position in Milton, Florida. Bishop Nicholas Hamner Cobbs, who had been recently elected

first Bishop of Alabama by the General Convention in October 1844, remarked in his first annual report to the Diocese that when he first visited St. James' in June 1845, the church was “in a healthy and flourishing state,” and that the vestry was making every effort to secure another rector.

In December 1846, the Rev. J. A. Massey, former Assistant Priest at Christ Church in Mobile, had agreed to serve as Rector of St. James'. In his parochial report of 1847 he observed that the Parish contained 37 communicants and that one fourth of his time and dedication were spent in ministering to the congregation in Sumterville. The Rev. Mr. Massey was satisfied, “by evident signs of its increasing prosperity, and he thinks the prospects of the church in the Parish, and in the county generally, are such as call for devout thankfulness, and warrant the expectations of a large increase to her ranks at no distant day.”

Under Massey's leadership the parish grew to 43 communicants despite an epidemic which struck the town in the summer of 1847. The epidemic, never clearly identified, but probably malaria or yellow fever due to the season of the year, took the lives of 5 communicants and almost the life of the rector. Massey at the end of the epidemic was so hopeful about the future growth of the parish that he predicted that three more ministers would be needed in the county to serve the needs of the Episcopalians there.

Massey's optimism was short lived. He left the parish before the summer of 1848, perhaps to avoid another outbreak of the fever. In October 1842 the parish obtained the services of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Savage. Dr. Savage officiated twice a month in

Livingston and twice in neighboring parts of the county at Sumterville and Liberty. The Sundays when Dr. Savage was absent, the Rev. Mr. Hays, who was in charge of the classical school at Livingston, officiated at the service as well as conducting Sunday School.

The Rev. Dr. Savage in his parochial report of May 1849 observed that when he arrived he found the parish in debt, owing several hundred dollars to one of the Vestrymen who had been instrumental in building the church. This problem was cleared up when the Vestryman in question relinquished his claims and the congregation was able to raise enough money to satisfy the other outstanding debts of the church, thus freeing the church from debt.

Another problem which Dr. Savage encountered on his arrival at St. James' was one which would plague the parish throughout its history. "I am unable," Savage declared, "to report favorably on the spiritual condition of the Parish. The very unstable character of the population of the region operates unfavorably. Several worthy communicants and energetic supporters of the Church have removed with the tide of emigration westward, and others it is expected will soon follow. Whether others will come in to supply their places, is known only to the Head of the Church. But His promise is on record — 'let us not be weary in well doing, for in due Season we shall reap if we faint not.'"

Apparently one of those who felt the urge to move was the Rev. Dr. Savage, as no rector is recorded for St. James' in 1850 in the records of the Diocese. During this period, S. U. Smith was the lay reader of St. James', and through his efforts, services were conducted on a regular basis. Smith,

who at this time was reading for Holy Orders, would later be ordained. He would become the Rector of St. James' on several occasions, and in other areas throughout Alabama, becoming one of the most prominent nineteenth century Episcopal figures in the region.

In February 1851 the Rev. J. H. Ticknor became Rector of St. James'. The parish by 1851 included Livingston, Gainesville and Sumterville. In Gainesville the services were usually held every 3rd Sunday of the month in the Methodist church. The Rev. Mr. Ticknor, as did previous Rectors of St. James', noted the steady drain that the westward movement produced upon the congregation, but was able to report that the spiritual condition of the church was favorable. The westward migration had reduced the number of communicants to 28.

Under the efforts of the Rev. Mr. Ticknor, five new communicants were added to the parish in 1852 as well as the beginning of a missionary station at Pushmataha, Choctaw County. Bishop Cobbs observed in his report to the Diocese in 1851 that he held high prospects for the parish under the guidance of the Rev. Mr. Ticknor.

One of the most important events in the history of the parish during this time occurred when S. U. Smith, the former lay reader of St. James', was ordained. His father was Stephen Smith of North Carolina, who died while the Rev. Mr. Smith was very young. His mother was a sister of Col. James Rhodes of Livingston. Among Smith's many brothers and sisters were several who would be prominent members of St. James' and the community. They were James R. Smith, John T. Smith, Captain E. W. Smith, and Dr.

John A. Smith, one of the earliest physicians in Livingston. The Rev. S. U. Smith and his brother Dr. Joseph Smith never married.

By May 1854, under the leadership of the Rev. Mr. Ticknor, the communicant rolls had increased to 52. His missionary endeavors had been fruitful. At Pushmataha a separate parish was being formed, and Grace Chapel had been erected at Sumterville.

The productive rectorship of the Rev. J. H. Ticknor ended in May 1857 when he took the rectorship of St. Paul's, Selma. The new rector at St. James' was its former lay reader, the Rev. S. U. Smith. He began also to administer to St. Mark's, Fork of the Greene. By 1859 he preached in Livingston on the first and third Sundays of the month and the parish used the services of a lay reader the other Sundays. Smith noted that the church was now carpeted, thanks to the efforts of the ladies of the church.

With the increase of the tensions between the North and the South, which would erupt into the most terrible and tragic war in the history of the United States, the parishioners of St. James' would have their world shattered by this conflict. Bishop Nicholas Hamner Cobbs, who had guided the Diocese of Alabama since 1844, died on Jan. 11, 1861, the same day that Alabama seceded from the Union. The Rev. Richard Hooker Wilmer was elected to take Bishop Cobbs' place.

The war quite naturally disrupted normal life in the parish and the town, and while the Rev. Mr. Smith continued officially to be rector of St. James' until 1863, the records for this period of time are extremely sketchy. The Rev. Mr. McCoy, who apparently was the rector by the following year, in his

parochial report for 1864 expressed his thanks to the parish for the loan of a house and lot since he had been in Livingston. The effects of the war on the town and parish were clearly revealed by the Rev. Mr. McCoy's comments in the 1864 report. The Rev. J. C. Waddill was Assistant to the Rector.

A Christian School had been established by the parish to educate all classes of children and the proceeds of which, the Rev. Mr. McCoy stated, "are to be devoted to feeding, clothing, and educating, religiously, morally and intellectually, in agricultural and mechanic arts, the destitute orphans of soldiers." Every fourth Sunday McCoy visited Pushmataha, which by 1864 was listed in the reports of the convention as Calvary Church, Pushmataha, Choctaw County, Alabama.

One of those affected by the ravages of war was the former rector of St. James', the Rev. J. J. Scott of Pensacola, Florida. His wife was the widow of Lt. Alex C. Maury, a relative of H. R. Thornton, a prominent member of St. James' and vestryman on many occasions. He had married her while rector at St. James'. They sought sanctuary in Montgomery, Alabama, after Federal groups had taken Pensacola. It was while he was in Montgomery that Scott, under the guidance of Bishop Wilmer, helped organize the Church of the Holy Comforter, which became a parish in 1865.

The war's end in the spring of 1865 found St. James' without a rector. Perhaps the presence of Federal troops at Livingston and Gainesville in May of 1865 proved to be too much for the Rev. Mr. McCoy. It was not until January of 1867 that the former Assistant Minister, the Rev. J. C. Waddill, returned to take over the parish. He

officiated three Sundays a month at St. James' and one Sunday a month at Calvary, Pushmataha. Surprisingly, despite the ravages of war, St. James' was able to list 34 communicants in May of 1867. Captain B. F. Herr, an ex-Confederate soldier who had moved into the area and became editor of *The Livingston Journal*, took over the duties of Lay reader while Waddill was absent. For the next thirty years, Capt. Herr would be one of the most prominent members of the parish and community, holding many county offices after reconstruction. Herr was originally from Pennsylvania and had moved to Missouri when a young man. He fought for the Confederacy, and because of the unsettled nature of Missouri after the war came to settle in Livingston.

The Rev. Mr. Waddill remained at St. James until 1869, when he moved to Selma to take up the Rectorship of St. Paul's. During the period of reconstruction, 1869-1875, when the new rector the Rev. W. J. Lemon arrived, St. James' was led by a small corps of dedicated parishioners. Capt. Herr, as mentioned earlier, was lay reader, and on various occasions the following were vestrymen: W. R. DeLoach, Major Thomas Cobbs, J. G. Whitfield, Garrett Minor Quarles, James B. Cobbs (son of Major Cobbs), and H. R. Thornton.

In April of 1872 the Vestry of St. James' was reorganized with Rev. William A. Stickney of Faunsdale presiding. The purpose of this meeting was to set in motion a major effort to secure the services of a full-time rector. It was resolved by the new Vestry, composed of Major Thomas Cobbs, Sr. Warden, J. G. Whitfield, W. R. DeLoach, and Capt. B. F. Herr, "that

the church be opened for lay reading until the regular services of an ordained minister can be obtained." The vestry also authorized the purchase of a new organ at this time.

Major Thomas Cobbs, Senior Warden, noted in the May 1972 parochial report that St. James' had 29 communicants on her rolls. The Senior Warden observed that St. James' had not been able to secure the services of a rector but that the prospects of the church were good. "The members are generally poor, and do not pay much," Major Cobbs observed, but, "if we were able to secure the services of an energetic, earnest Rector, we would soon have a larger and prosperous church. The Church is open and the services read every sabbath by Capt. B. F. Herr, lay Reader." The efforts to secure the services of a Rector was the number one priority of the vestry during this period, and in order for the parish to become more desirable for a Minister to locate in, the vestry made the decision to build a rectory. The monies for this undertaking came from an unexpected source, from the Episcopal Church at Gainesville, which by 1878 would become St. Alban's. This issue is much too complex for this short history, but a few words of explanation are in order.

Dr. L. H. Anderson of Gainesville, who had been involved with the small group of Episcopalians in the antebellum period, left the bulk of his estate to the Church at Gainesville in October 1862. This estate included several pieces of property including one known locally as the Mansion House. Also a Mr. Everett of Gainesville in 1851 left to the Ladies of the Episcopal Church at Gainesville \$423 in gold: by the 1870s the income with interest

from these and other smaller bequests totaled \$2,500. The vestry at Livingston, solicited Bishop Wilmer for part of this money to be used to build a rectory in Livingston. The Bishop advocated this, seeing no prospect of having a church built at Gainesville considering the deserted nature of the village in 1872. In May 1875, Bishop Wilmer observed in his report to the Diocese that he had received a letter from the few remaining ladies at Gainesville, "expressing their willingness, that the money should be appropriated on request by the Church at Livingston."

With prospects for a rectory good, St. James' secured the services of the Rev. Deacon W. J. Lemon in 1875. Beginning in June of 1875 efforts were made to buy a lot, and by September 1875 a contract for building a Rectory was made with Stephen G. Grant. This contract was formally adopted by the vestry in November 1875 on a motion by Capt. B. G. Herr that the Building Committee be authorized "to contract for the building of a kitchen, servant's room, store room, and the requisite fencing, leaving to them the adoption of a suitable place, not to cost, however, more than the amount of funds now on hand."

Despite the efforts of the vestry to secure a rectory, the Rev. Mr. Lemon left the parish in early 1876 and the vestry agreed to rent out the rectory for \$15 a month or \$180 per year. By April 1876 the Rev. S. U. Smith who was at that time Rector at St. Mark's Fork of the Greene, agreed once again to serve as provisional Rector at St. James'. The Rectory cost \$1,023.82, as this was the amount authorized by the ladies of the church of Gainesville to be released for the purchase of the

Rectory.

The Rev. S. U. Smith served less than a year as provisional rector and resumed his work at St. Mark's Fork of the Greene in March of 1877. Capt. B. F. Herr resumed his duties as full time lay reader until the arrival in January 1878 of the Rev. Deacon A. Kinney Hall as Rector of St. James'.

It was during the rectorship of the Rev. Mr. Hall that the substantial remodeling of the Church structure at St. James' took place, leaving the church much as it appears today. During the years 1878-1879 the church was painted, seats in the gallery were erected for black parishioners, a new organ was purchased, the vestibule was repaired to allow only one main entrance, a spire was added, and stained glass windows were donated by members of the parish. As the Rev. A. Kinney Hall reported in the May 1879 parochial report, "During the year the church has been presented with handsome stained glass windows, given by parishioners in memory of departed friends. The church building has recently been extended, thus gaining a seating capacity for ninety more persons. We have also added a vestibule and spire, and rejoice to state that we have contracted no debt in the above improvements." St. James' listed 37 communicants in this report and salary of \$780.40 for the rector.

The stained glass windows in the church beginning on the north side (top right as you enter the Sanctuary from east to west or from front to rear) are memorials to Henry R. Thornton, Mrs. Mary Maury, Miss Constance L. Rhodes, Bessie Garber, Margaret Thornton, and several Cobbs children (Maggie, Bettie, George, Julia, and Wilmer). On the south side, west to

east (front to rear), Mrs. Rebecca Chapman, Judge Samuel Chapman and his wife, Bishop Nicholas Hamner Cobbs, Bishop Leonidas Polk, William King Abrahams, and Kate Lucretia Abrahams. All the windows were donated by members of long-standing in St. James'. Henry R. Thornton was a long-time member, and held various positions in the Vestry. His son, H. R. Thornton, Jr. was on the Vestry in the 1970s during the remodeling of the church. Major Thomas Cobbs was also a member of the Vestry. His wife was the sister of H. R. Thornton and Margaret A. Thom, who also had a window dedicated to her. Mrs. Mary Maury cannot be positively identified, but the author believes that she is connected to the Thornton family as the wife of Lt. Alex Maury, who died in Livingston in the 1840s and was related to the Thorntons. Miss Constance Rhodes was probably the daughter of Col. James Rhodes, a parishioner. Another one of Col. Rhodes' daughters married Dr. Garber, Bessie Garber, to whom a window is dedicated, was probably a daughter of this marriage. Dr. Garber had come to Livingston in 1833 and was a prominent member of the community and parish for many years. One of the Garber daughters married a Browder and in later years inherited the Garber homestead which was located near Browder Springs off the old Bellamy road. The several deceased Cobbs children were children of James A. Cobbs, son of Thomas Cobbs, or the brother and sisters of James A. Cobbs. Mrs. Reuben Chapman was the first wife of the Hon. Reuben Chapman of Livingston, a legislator from the area at this time. He was a son of Judge Samuel Chapman, who was a brother of the former gover-

nor Reuben Chapman, who also have windows dedicated to them. Bishop Nicholas Hamner Cobbs was the first Bishop of Alabama, and Bishop Leonidas Polk was the Missionary Bishop of the Southwest Diocese, Provisional Bishop of Alabama and Bishop of Louisiana. During the Civil War, Bishop Polk became a Lieutenant General in the Confederate Army and died in combat in 1864. The Abrahams (pronounced Abrams) were a prominent family of Livingston and the parish of St. James'. James Abrahams owned one of the first frame stores in Livingston and conducted one of the largest businesses in the community. The Abrahams Hall, built in 1875, had a store on the bottom floor and served as a hall for all kinds of community events upstairs. James Abrahams, the patriarch of the family, was viewed with suspicion by many in the community because of his pro-Unionist views and the fact that he became a Republican probate judge after the war.

James Abrahams' sons, however, did fight for the Confederacy. His wife and one of his sons, W. T. Abrahams, were prominent members of St. James'. James Abrahams is said to have remained a Presbyterian; however, his name appears on a bond document for the parish in 1859. William King Abrahams and Kate Lucretia Abrahams have not been positively identified by this author, but could be the children of W. T. Abrahams.

Shortly after the remodeling of St. James', the Church at Gainesville, St. Alban's, began a major effort to construct a church there. Bishop Wilmer in his report to the Diocese in March 1878 observed that "It will be remembered that the late Dr. Leroy Anderson left certain properties to the Church at

Gainesville, but up to the present time I have hesitated to put up a Church Building there. But at my recent visitation, I was satisfied that the time had come to make a movement, and I hope to report in my next annual address the completion of a Church Building at Gainesville."

By May 1879, Bishop Wilmer was able to report that St. Alban's, Gainesville, was almost completed. "It affords me much satisfaction," Bishop Wilmer noted, "to state that since last convention, a Church Building, Gothic in design, has been erected. It is nicely pewed, and supplied with stained glass windows, part of them as memorials. The church is not yet completed for lack of funds. St. Alban's in the parochial reports for the year 1879 listed Charles Cooke as Senior Warden, and reported 13 communicants.

Unfortunately for Livingston, the Rev. A. Kinney Hall resigned as Rector in October 1880 and went to the Diocese of Kentucky. Sadly, Senior Warden Thomas Cobbs reported in May 1881 that St. James' had "been without the services of a Rector since the resignation of Mr. Hall in October, 1880. Since then the Church has been closed. The foregoing is as full and as complete as I can make it for the dates accessible to me. We have no immediate prospects of obtaining the services of a Rector." The church's property at this time was valued at \$1,600 for the church building and \$1,300 for the Rectory and lot. There were 29 communicants in the parish.

In December 1882, the Rev. S. U. Smith once again became rector of St. James', dividing his time between St. Mark's Fork of the Greene, now removed to the railway town of Boligee. The Rev. Mr. Smith resigned his part

time role at St. James' in May 1885 when Rev. W. T. Allen became the new rector.

St. James', like other Black Belt communities and parishes, experienced a major setback economically, and suffered a population decline beginning in the mid 1880s. This would continue into the twentieth century. As the mineral areas in the north of Alabama opened up and as Birmingham developed as a major iron and steel town, St. James' and other parishes throughout the Black Belt lost parishioners. "Gone to Birmingham" was all too often heard in the diocese and parish records of the time.

A succession of rectors followed the Rev. Mr. Allen. In 1889 the Rev. W. R. Dye replaced Allen and remained at St. James' until 1890, when he went to St. Stephen's, Eutaw. The Rev. John J. Harris came to Livingston. Harris apparently officiated at St. James' only on one or two Sundays a month, as he listed Tuscaloosa as his home address in the parochial reports. By 1893 St. James' listed only 17 communicants with Miss B. Ennis as Treasurer of the parish. The Rev. Mr. Harris had left to take up a position with the University of Alabama.

In 1894 the Rev. Thurston Turner served St. James', along with St. Stephen's, Eutaw, St. Mark's, Boligee, and St. Alban's, Gainesville. Between the summer of 1894 and May 1897 there were no parochial reports for St. James' until the Rev. T. J. Beard, D.D., formerly Rector at the Church of the Advent, Birmingham, became a missionary to the western Alabama Black Belt with St. James' as one of his charges.

Two years later in June, 1899, the Rev. J. J. Harris returned to St. James',

apparently only officiating one or two Sundays a month. In the 1900 parochial report the Rev. Mr. Harris listed only 11 communicants, but 30 parishioners. In 1901 he moved to Faunsdale and the Rev. T. J. Beard, general missionary for the west Alabama region, served Livingston. At the 70th convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Montgomery, St. James' was officially declared a mission.

St. James' remained a mission throughout this period before World War I with the Rev. T. J. Beard officiating sixteen times a year at St. James', with the other Sunday services being conducted by lay reader Woodson Ennis. Ennis was a prominent businessman of Livingston, who resided at "the Ennis corner," and had married the former Miss Tempie Scruggs. They had two sons, Woodson and Robert.

The revival of St. James' in the twentieth century begins with the arrival of Fred G. Stickney from the faculty of the University of Alabama to head the English Department at Livingston Normal School, a position he would hold until 1945. Mr. Stickney and his family, along with J. M. Browder, Mrs. J. M. Branch, Mrs. R. B. Calloway, Miss Olive Gage, the Grubbs and Patton families, and Mrs. B. Brown formed a corps of devoted Episcopalians. They solicited the services of the Rev. C. F. Penniman to become Rector of St. James' in November 1927. The Rev. Mr. Penniman, who was rector at St. Paul's, Meridian, began to hold services every third Sunday evening in the month. This relationship continued until Penniman left St. Paul's in the early 1930s. During the 1930s, until the end of World War II, Dr. Livingston of Trinity, Demopolis officiated one Sunday a

month. Due to pressing commitments to his parish in Demopolis, Dr. Livingston ended his relationship with St. James'. The Rev. Ralph Kendall of St. Stephen's, Eutaw began to officiate one Sunday a month at Livingston, as well as St. Alban's, Gainesville, and St. John's, Forkland until 1955.

The major change which brought life back into the parish was the domestic and social events which followed World War II. Livingston State Teacher's College, which had struggled for enrollment before the war, and in fact was recommended by the Governor's Council on Education to be closed, experienced a rebirth with the influx of veterans returning to college after World War II and the Korean Conflict under the GI bill. With the growth of the college, a revival of the parish took place. As Bishop Carpenter observed in his report on the mission of the Rev. Mr. Kendall, written sometime in the early 1950s at Livingston, "there is real possibility of growth. One of the state teacher's colleges is located at Livingston. The College has not amounted to much, and when I was on the Governor's Commission to study education in Alabama, with others, I recommended that it be closed. However, the increased demand for College degrees following the war gave Livingston a little boom, and I imagine this college will be continued for some time, and may even grow. Livingston is a good little community, and we should push the work of the church ahead there. There are a number of faculty who are communicants and form a healthy nucleus. The church is in good condition, and I always have a good congregation when I go there for services."

This renewal of growth brought

the first full-time rector in the twentieth century to St. James', the Rev. Charles McKimmon, Jr. who arrived in July 1955. The 31 years since 1955 have witnessed many ups and downs in the parish, but as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of St. James', the parish is healthy, stable and vital, having added in recent years a parish hall

and rectory to its property. This is due in large part to the dedicated priests who served St. James since 1955.

The history of Saint James' is an inspiring one. It is a record of the dedication over many years of parishioners and priests who sought to glorify God in worship according to the faith and traditions of the Episcopal Church.

RECTORS OF SAINT JAMES' CHURCH

The Rev. Lucien B. Wright, May 24, 1836 - November 23, 1836
The Rev. J. J. Scott, 1840 - Spring 1844
The Rev. J. A. Massey, December 1846 - Summer, 1848
The Rev. Dr. Thomas Savage, October 1848 - 1850?
The Rev. J. H. Ticknor, February 1851 - May 1857
The Rev. S. U. Smith, 1857 - 1863
The Rev. Mr. McCoy, 1864 - 1865
The Rev. J. C. Waddill, January 1867 - 1869
The Rev. Deacon W. J. Lemon, 1875 - 1876
The Rev. S. U. Smith, April 1876 - March 1877
The Rev. Deacon A. Kinney Hall, 1878 - October 1880
The Rev. S. U. Smith, December 1882 - May 1885
The Rev. W. T. Allen, May 1885 - 1889
The Rev. W. R. Dye, 1889 - 1890
The Rev. John J. Harris, 1890 - 1894
The Rev. Thurston Turner, 1894
The Rev. Dr. T. J. Beard, 1897 - 1899
The Rev. J. J. Harris, June 1899 - 1901
The Rev. Dr. T. J. Beard, 1901 - ?
The Rev. C. F. Penniman, November 1927 - 1932?
[Visiting clergy with one service monthly, 1932? - 1955]
The Rev. Charles McKimmon, Jr., July 15, 1955 - October, 1959
The Rev. Robert Davis, July 16, 1961 - July 31, 1962
The Rev. John H. Harwell, September 1, 1963 - July 31, 1965
The Rev. William Parrish Chilton, February 1, 1968 - March 31, 1970
The Rev. Richard A. Parks, June 1970 - August 1971
The Rev. John Blow, September 1971 - May 14, 1972
The Rev. Deacon Herbert Gear McCarriar, Jr., July 1, 1972 - July 1, 1974
The Rev. Canon Edward Thomas Cate, September 1974 - April 1982
The Rev. Walter Leroy Elam, III, July 4, 1982 - June 30, 1985
The Rev. Milton T. Glor, July 1, 1985 - 1990
The Rev. Lewis Fitzhugh Shaw, 1991 - 1992
The Rev. Richard R. Losch, January 1, 1994 - June 30, 2003
The Rev. Joe M. Chambers, September 2004 - February 2006