



The Rev. Alexander Anderson, retiring today as rector of the landmark church of Santa Cruz, Calvary Episcopal.

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In 1876, Calvary Episcopal Church looked a bit forlorn, standing in the middle of a large field. It was painted white and it looked like it was sitting in an unpopulated countryside, in old photos.

The church structure, which is truly one of the city's landmarks, was built in 1864, due mainly to the determination of one small and slender woman.

This page today seems to be devoted to small determined women, and Mrs. Joseph Boston certainly would fit that description if she were alive now.

She was Eliza Bull — a girl whose family feared for her health and sent her to California where her brother was in banking in San Francisco. Eliza arrived on the West Coast in 1861 and by the following year was married to Joseph Bpston. The wedding took place in the First Congregational Church of Santa Cruz.

Boston, who had come west from New York also, operated a store in Monterey, then in Santa Cruz, before entering the tannery business here with Kirby and Jones.

Santa Cruz must have seemed like a real frontier town to Eliza, after New York and San Francisco.

However, the climate and marriage agreed with her. She regained good health and

became the mother of a family of five and pushed Joseph into building Calvary Episcopal Church along the way.

Not only did she push to get "her church" started, she gave the one and one-third acres of land on which the church was built at the corner of Center and Lincoln Streets.

The Episcopalians had survived some rugged early years here, meeting upstairs in the Flatiron Building (junction of Pacific and Front) when it contained the County Court House. First services were in May of 1862.

They later moved to Temperance Hall on Mission Street hill, next to an old schoolhouse formerly used by the Methodists. For special occasions like Christmas and Easter they used the new Methodist Church on Church Street.

After several years of this the Episcopalians were weary of it and decided to form a new Parish with Joseph Boston as secretary and the Rev. C.F. Loop as missionary rector.

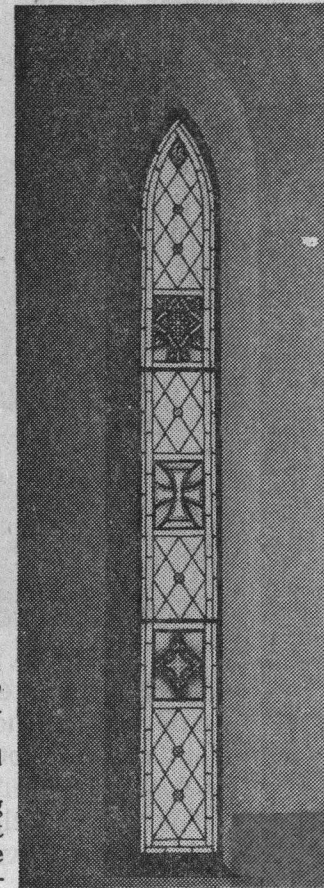
With pledges of \$4000 the church building was started, following an architectural plan drawn up by Joseph and said to be a copy of a church in England.

The cornerstone was laid June 29, 1864.

In January of the following year the little congregation sat through the first service in the church minus heat and win-

dows, altar and pulpit.

The new church struggled with nickels and dimes for years — paying its rectors' salaries with pew rents and



Landmark: What Now?

Oldest Church Building in Santa Cruz

Sunday collections. Once the church even rented out its surrounding acreage to a farmer who raised potatoes and alfalfa on it, paying the church one-half his crops for rent.

Into the early 1900s the church struggled with its budget. It wasn't until 1902 that pew rental was discontinued and a proud sign was posted that read: "Seats Free." In fact the church did not recover its financial equilibrium until after World War II when a brisk, energetic rector, the Rev. Norman H. Snow, took over. He served until 1956 when the present rector, the Rev. Alexander Anderson came to the church.

The two men, Snow and Anderson, are really responsible for putting the church onto firm footing as far as money goes. Today there's a modern rectory and church library, school and parking lot.

A few years back, the old sanctuary was threatened with demolition in the name of progress.

The battle raged — with decorum — but nevertheless there were distinct differences of opinion. The "save the building" group won out and money was allocated to make certain repairs and maintenance.

Word of the church and its unique and beautiful curved apse containing fine stained glass windows, reached the ears of others...

And in June of 1972, Calvary Episcopal Church was awarded a bronze plaque by the California Heritage Council. Its future was secured with that presentation.

The last two remaining plain glass windows in the church were replaced with stained glass, the gift of Mrs. Maude Sharpe, Mrs. Barbara Harris and Mrs. Lorene M. Ward, in November of 1974.

One of the early rectors is buried beneath the church — he requested that spot.

The bell tower had to be shored up a few years ago to hold the 1000-pound bell that dates from 1875.

Originally the church had a simple doorway entrance — Gothic in shape, to be sure. The double entry was added in later years.

For those who wish to pursue

Calvary's history in more detail, there is a church booklet compiled and written by Ian McPhail.

REFERENCE

HISTORY