

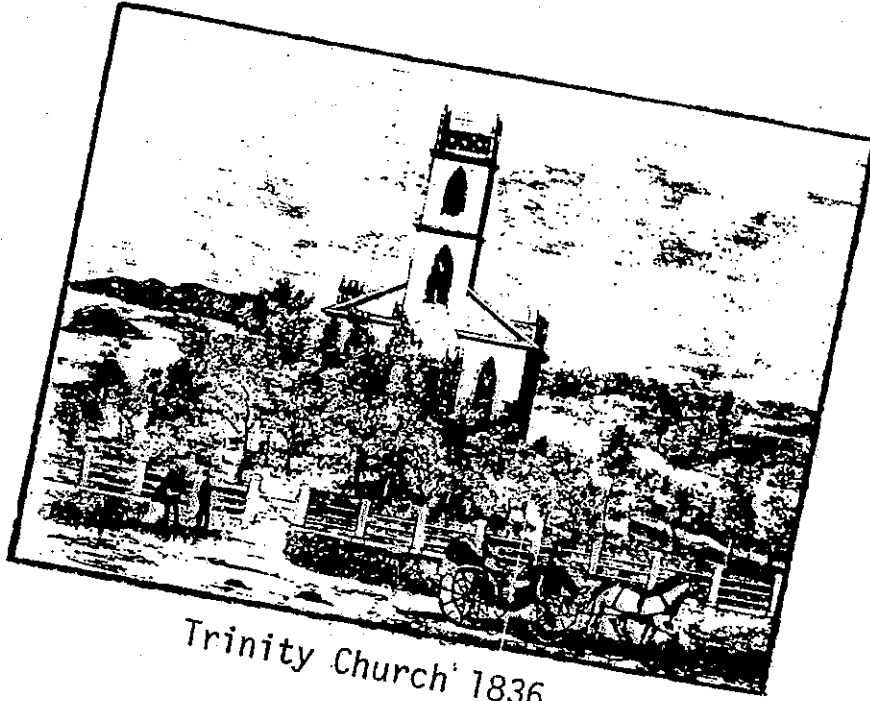
TRINITY CHURCH POTSDAM, N.Y.

A RETROSPECT

1835-1985

Arthur L. Johnson

to Mollie Bicknell
loyal parishioner



Trinity Church' 1836



Trinity Church 1896-1985

FOREWORD

My thanks to Russell O'Coin, Mollie Bicknell, Verner & Ethel Ingram, Catherine Hamilton, Elizabeth Hamilton, Mary Hamilton Kaufman, Frank Lyon, Pierre & Ruth Rozon, Mildred Stiles, Kathleen Champney, Mae LaBrake, Kay Wyant and the Potsdam Museum and others who have contributed knowingly or not to this history. I am indebted to Annie Clarkson's HISTORY OF TRINITY PARISH (1896) for much of the 19th century information. I consulted parish records including registers of communicants, of services and minutes of the vestry. My written sources included newspaper articles, service programs and a pamphlet history done for the 125th anniversary in 1960. In addition, I have interviewed informally the people above-named for their memories and impressions of where we have been and where we are going.

There are gaps in this history. I have not told it all. Limitations of time, space, writer and reader endurance have combined to make this selective as most histories are. I believed that a detailed chronology, rector by rector, would simply put people to sleep by page three. Instead, I have tried to paint with broad strokes, highlighting those events in the life of this parish which reveal its character and its place in the community.

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On 23 March 1835, a small band of Episcopalians in a mostly Presbyterian frontier village called Potsdam met, organized a parish dedicated to the Holy Trinity and requested the services of a priest, Richard Bury (see picture #1). Trinity Parish was born in a village barely thirty years old itself and very different from the Potsdam of 1985. The river was there, of course, and without the Niagara Mohawk and village dams. Route 11 was then the Canton Turnpike, a dirt track which crossed the river on two wooden bridges. It was a horse-and-buggy world of farmers and lumberers in which clocks were not very important. People lived by the sun and the seasons. They had hard work but few pressing engagements. Railroads had been invented, but Potsdam would not see one until the 1850's. It was a quiet world of hard work and a very dark one at night.

Most Potsdam people were of New England origin and recently so. After the American Revolution, a tidal wave of New England pioneers had left their native hills for lands of promise along the Mohawk River and its tributaries. After 1800, some of that tide, a small branch of it, began washing into the "North Country" (I'm using that term to mean from the eastern shore of Lake Ontario down the St. Lawrence Valley and around the Adirondacks to Lake Champlain). The Mohawk Valley was the scene of great revivals spearheaded by the famous preacher Charles Grandison Finney. The revivals sometimes spilled over into bizarre cults and enthusiasms well outside the ordered liturgical spirit of Anglicanism. These movements

made few ripples in the North Country. Universalism, the popular variant of Unitarianism was taking root over in Canton but this was relatively sedate and intellectual.

When Trinity Parish began its existence, the Republic itself, rejoicing or groaning (depending upon whether you were Democrat or Whig in persuasion) under the presidency of a Tennessee planter-military hero named Jackson, was only sixty years old. There were people living who remembered the Revolutionary War. The Republic was already showing early signs of coming apart over the slavery issue. It was a small country in population and smaller in territory than it would be, reaching only to the Rockies in the west. In the first two years of the life of Trinity Parish, Americans living in the Mexican state of Texas would rebel, declare their independence and begin the process that would make them an American state and put the seal of approval on imperial expansion. The troubled provinces of nearby Canada would break into rebellion and American adventurers along the border would get into the act in 1837 and 1838.

Potsdam enjoyed a certain isolation from these storms. Indeed it enjoyed a certain isolation from everywhere at a time when a trip to Canton and back was an all-day project. The handful of farmers, millers, storekeepers and developers (speculators) had their own concerns. The farmers from New England and the developers from New York agreed on two concerns: education and the Christian faith must shine out in the North Country.

In the the early years, one building, the "Old Academy", served both purposes. Episcopalians, Presbyterians and others met on Sundays for service in the school building. In 1818, they formed the Trinity Church Society, a name chosen to distinguish them from the Universalists in Canton (the founders of St. Lawrence University) who denied the Trinity.

Episcopalians, mostly the group from New York City, retained their identity, and in 1818 they welcomed the visit of Father Daniel Nash (see picture #2), the missionary to the North Country from the Diocese of New York which then covered the entire state. Father Nash rode his circuit on horseback, bringing the sacraments and preaching in the villages. His visitations helped to keep the church alive in the Valley of the St. Lawrence. The earliest valley congregations to become parishes were Waddington and Ogdensburg. They shared a resident priest after 1818, and St. Paul's Church, Waddington, dates from that year.

Bishop John Henry Hobart (see picture #3) visited the North Country in August 1818. Hobart, the third Bishop of New York, did more than any of them to build churches in the vast region called "Upstate". He burned with zeal and communicated it to the priests in his charge. A devout high churchman, Bishop Hobart not only propagated the faith, but he reminded Episcopalians of what was unique and precious in their heritage. Consider the difficulty of visiting the North Country from New York City in 1818. The fastest leg of the trip and the easiest would be the

Hudson River steamboat to Albany. After that, it was overland by horsedrawn vehicle. Greyhound would have seemed an incalculable luxury.

Amos Baldwin, rector of Waddington and Ogdensburg, made regular visits to Potsdam and Canton on weekdays. In 1820, the Trinity Church Society changed its name to the First Presbyterian Church Society, and the Episcopalians were on their own. The Episcopal Church, though ceremonially austere at that time, was suspect to the Yankee Puritans for its Catholic doctrine and structure (bishops) and perhaps for the taint of loyalism left over from Revolutionary times. The attachment of many priests to the Crown and the subsequent departure of so many Anglican loyalists in 1784 nearly did in Anglicanism in America. A faithful remnant had rebuilt the church as the Episcopal Church, in communion with the Church of England but with its own presiding bishop, no longer subordinate to the Bishop of London.

The history of Trinity Parish is bound up with the history of the Clarkson family. After the Revolutionary War, the state put its public lands up for sale. This had already been done down in the Mohawk Valley under the British provincial government, but the North Country had been part of the Province of Quebec and remained so until 1763 and the Treaty of Paris which drew the present borderline. Even after that point, the short growing season and harsh winters deterred settlers until the more desirable areas had been occupied. The Clarksons were

Among the early purchasers of North Country lands, part of the proprietors of the township of Potsdam, incorporated in 1806. John and David Clarkson, the proprietors, were descendants of Matthew Clarkson who had come from England as Secretary to the Province of New York for their Majesties William and Mary of England. The main family remained in New York City where they were parishioners of Trinity Parish, Wall Street (see picture #4). Potsdam must have looked a promising site because of its location. The soil near the southern edge of the St. Lawrence Valley was fertile, and the Racquette River provided a floatway for logs and the necessary power for mills to grind the grain and saw the logs. At some point, the proprietors discovered the red sandstone just up the river near Hannawa Falls. Below the falls at Potsdam, the river was navigable for small craft all the way to the St. Lawrence.

We think of speculators and landed proprietors as people mainly interested in money and power. At that time, the aristocracy in the new land still had a considerable role to play. They founded the churches, built the libraries, endowed the colleges and patronized the arts. The Clarksons were in the best of that tradition. They believed that wealth carried with it a duty to the community of faith and to the community of citizenship. The squirearchy did many things we look to the state to take care of today. The proprietors of Potsdam hoped to make money through sale of the lands to settlers and from the potential for lumber milling and sandstone. Like the early colonists

of North America and elsewhere, they came for profit, but they also brought their faith. The Clarksons led the small community of Episcopalians during the early years when they rarely saw a priest but gathered to recite the offices under lay leadership.

Bishop Hobart's successor, Benjamin T. Onderdonk (see picture #5), visited Potsdam in 1833 and administered confirmation to a class of 11 prepared by Father Aaron Humphrey of Ogdensburg. It caused a sensation among the local Puritans and encouraged the small band of Episcopalians to get up a subscription list and call Richard Bury to be their priest. John and Augustus Clarkson were among the charter subscribers. They became the first wardens of the parish formed in 1835. Potsdam by that time was beyond the pioneer state. Log houses were giving way to frame and sandstone. In this new sense of permanence, the small congregation of Trinity laid the cornerstone of the church on the Fall Island land given by the Clarksons. They gathered on 3 June at the site of the Old Academy and processed to Fall Island, symbolizing the move of their place of worship. The cornerstone contains a large lead box with some artifacts including a Bible, a Book of Common Prayer, portraits of the first three bishops of New York, a copy of the St. Lawrence Republican of Ogdensburg (a Democrat paper actually because the word Republican meant the old party of Jefferson, not the later one of Lincoln). Bishop Onderdonk returned to consecrate the completed church on 7 August 1836. The

certificate of consecration declared the building "separated from all unhallowed, wordly and common uses". John Clarkson wrote:

The formation of a parish with prospects so encouraging must be a pleasing circumstance to the friends of the Church who regard her as presenting in her reasonable doctrines and scriptural liturgy a strong barrier to the progress of heresy and error which seem to be everywhere undermining the Christian system.

Pictures of the building in its original state reveal a plain structure with a small central tower and a porch in the symmetrical "federal" style so popular in the northeast. It was an imitation of the original Trinity, Wall Street. Family pews were in the box style of the time. Many families purchased pews although a few were reserved for transient worshippers. The altar was a white wooden table, free-standing and unadorned, a style which has returned of late to many churches. Crosses and candles were then considered too "Romish" and elaborate interior decoration was not to the frontier taste. The windows were of plain glass. The choir, in civilian garb, sang from a gallery at the rear of the nave. Light came from candles in tin reflectors along the sides of the church when evening services required. The custom then was to have morning and afternoon services, Morning and Evening Prayer, with a monthly celebration of the Eucharist. A pulpit and lectern stood within the communion rail. The walls were white. Four wood stoves warmed the Sunday congregation in winter. Some supplied their own cushions in their pews.

There was no organ at first. Choir and congregation may have had some instrumental accompaniment or possibly sang a capella.

The Clarksons financed several changes in the building during the 1800's. By 1867, the recessed "Hobartian" chancel had been added and a high gothic roof replaced the original. A furnace and central heating replaced the four wood stoves. The stone wall out front was finished in 1870. The chapel wing was built in 1883. The present facade and clock tower was a Clarkson donation (Thomas S. and sisters, Frederica & Lavinia) in 1885. The gothic look was complete. A Hook and Hastings organ and the first of the remarkable Tiffany windows were added in 1894 and 1895. The facade of red sandstone with its disregard of classical symmetry in favor of romantic elaboration is a period piece. It gives the church a unique appearance. On foggy or snowy evenings, it seems to brood on the passing traffic like a bit of old England and a reminder of the eternal amid the "changes and chances" of this life.

Parishioners from the beginning did a lot of the maintenance and grounds work themselves. A vestry in 1839 decreed:

that with a view of carrying into effect the work of decorating the church grounds, a bee consisting of the male portion of the congregation be held on said ground at eight o'clock in the morning.

The "Slam-Bang Construction Company" of the 1980's is in the founders' tradition as was Father Pennock's spring muster of brushcutters.

The new parish had its personalities like the sexton, Peter Thompson, "whose robust presence in camelot cloak was a standing terror to the mischievous small boy". Was not Arthur Brown of recent memory a standing terror to interlopers? Does not Russell O'Coin keep stern watch over the acolytes today?

Numbers increased and the parish flourished. It was not so far north as to be untouched by the controversy surrounding the Oxford Movement which led to the restoration of Catholic thought and practice within the Anglican Communion. Bishop Onderdonk faced charges in the House of Bishops and was actually removed for his high church views. Nathan Monroe, rector of Trinity, Potsdam (see picture #6), resigned because of hostility to his high church views. The widespread and pervasive Protestant suspicion of Rome caused a determined resistance by some to any restoration of Catholic practice and piety beyond what already existed in barebones form in the Prayer Book. A two-party system arose within the church which has only recently faded as new issues divide along different lines.

The railroad opened the village to the world and changed it irrevocably. The revolution began locally with the building of the Northern Railroad between

Ogdensburg and Rouses Point in 1851. This line missed Potsdam by four miles, running through Norwood, then called Racquetteville. Local citizens in the grip of railroad fever helped raise the capital for the Potsdam & Watertown Railroad which would connect at Watertown for Rome and New York City. The first train chugged into Potsdam in 1857, and the quiet village would never be the same. The "urban corridor" had arrived. Suddenly, New York City was an overnight trip. The Watertown Times came off the train the same day it came off the press. Land values rose and commercial possibilities opened up. All this was just in the offing when Dr. William Staunton (see picture #7) arrived in 1852 to take up his duties at Trinity.

The parish had 63 families and a total membership of about 250. Dr. Staunton wanted a rectory, so the parish bought the house on Elm Street which would serve until 1960. It now houses the Clarkson University ROTC unit. Dr. Staunton was of definite high church views regarding the centrality of the Eucharist in the church's worship. He added celebrations on holy days, on Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent and daily during Holy Week. His rectorate saw the addition of the recessed chancel. High church views often went with a taste for gothic architecture, the style of the northern European Middle Ages. Bit by bit, Trinity became more gothic. Among the changes at mid-century were a new octagonal pulpit, a colored window

in the chancel (now hidden by the organ) and a crimson carpet. The "Mammoth" furnace was a big improvement over the greedy wood stoves. Kerosene lamps replaced the candle lanterns. So did Potsdam enter the modern world with Dr. Staunton: the railroad, kerosene and central heating accompanied the eucharistic revival. The railroad, of course, was just the beginning of a never-ending search for more and better technology whose latest manifestations have been the automobile and the jet aircraft. Change has become the only constant of the secular world, but the Racquette still flows around Fall Island and the Eucharist is offered within the old red stones.

The Civil War affected Potsdam as it did all the towns and villages of America. Father James LaTourette (see picture #8) preached during a national fast day on 4 August 1863:

Is it not a double curse upon us when today we strike down our brother, make his wife a widow and his children fatherless while but yesterday for that brother we would have spilt our blood if his smallest right had been infringed by a foreign enemy?

The very fact of a national fast day, proclaimed by the president, says something about the pervasively Christian ethos of the time and also that in that time even Protestants (most of the country) saw value in fasting. What would happen if a president proclaimed a fast day today?

Just after the Civil War, it became apparent that the

Diocese of New York was too big to be a single see. Western New York had already split off in 1838. The Diocese of Albany formed in 1866, and the first convention elected William Croswell Doane, rector of St. Peter's of Albany, to be the first bishop. He was only 37.

Occasional flooding washed over the Island and prevented Sunday services. On 7 May 1871, the dam let go and the river roared through taking out two shops on the north side of Fall Island. About 40,000 logs broke loose from their booms and went swiftly down to Norwood. There were no services at Trinity on Sunday the 9th. One account has it that Trinitarians used the Catholic Apostolic Church on the corner of Pine and Maple (see picture #9) when the river drove them out.

Father Henry Howard, formerly of Milford Connecticut (see picture #10), came to be rector in June 1871. Annie Clarkson took note of his "ritualistic tendencies" approvingly. He offered the Eucharist daily in Lent and adorned the altar with a white hanging, and most drastic of all, a brass cross. To imagine the reaction this caused, consider the reaction of some to the use of incense in our own time. Things which were once fighting issues have long since ceased to be. Even Presbyterians have altar crosses today, a thing which would have given their Puritan forebears fits. During Father Howard's rectorate, Trinity became briefly the center for church work with the deaf in Northern New York. Four times a

year, a priest came to officiate and preach in sign language. The work ceased when he left the diocese. Few could use the sign language in those times. The Sunday School numbered over 200 pupils in the 1870's, and North Country clergy formed the Convocation of Ogdensburg (now the Deanery of the St. Lawrence) and elected Father Howard as its archdeacon (later changed to dean).

Just as Trinity Parish in New York had assisted with the founding of other parishes, so did Trinity, Potsdam help to spawn other North Country parishes. In 1883, for example, the parish and the Clarksons contributed heavily to building St. Thomas' Church, Lawrenceville which regrettably no longer exists. The mission at Colton was revived under the auspices of Trinity, and Mrs. Elizabeth Clarkson left \$10,000 in 1883 for Zion Church, Colton.

Trinity's new facade capped a series of changes so complete in their totality that they seemed to amount to a new church. Bishop Doane came and reconsecrated the church on 26 February 1886. The certificate hangs near the side door into the nave from the chapel wing. The bishop would have arrived by train on the Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg Railroad.

One of the long rectorates was that of Dr. Reynold M. Kirby (see picture #11) who came in 1882 and stayed

until his death in 1906. He seems to have been much loved in and out of the parish. The diocese of Nevada called him to be its bishop, but he declined at the urging of parishioners. Dr. Kirby organized the first boy choir in 1889.

Annie Clarkson, who liked Dr. Kirby and the progress under his rectorate, was also pleased with the completion of the church. She commented on its interior:

As the lights and shadows upon the coloring are required to perfect the harmony of the whole, in like manner are mingled in the history of the parish the joys and sorrows, the gladness and the sadness necessary to complete the Christian character.

Her history ends in 1896 with this retrospect:

From a few scattered communicants, unhoused and without a shepherd, it has grown to be one of the strongest parishes in the diocese, with a beautiful stone church, fitted, furnished and finished with most accurate completeness, 'Thrust out a little from the land,' and founded upon a rock, may it ever point the way to heaven and allure men and attract them, win them, fit them and train them for the temple that is not made with human hands.

The history was not the least of the gifts from the patronal family. They included in 1894, from Thomas S. Clarkson, the lands on the north side of Fall Island, the "rents, issues and profits" of which were to go to the parish.

Dr. Kirby's death in 1906 was an occasion of great grief. A memorial booklet in the file at the Potsdam

bishops as well as local parishioners and villagers.

An interesting institution whose strange history would converge with that of Trinity was the Catholic Apostolic Church. Founded by a deposed minister of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the sect took root in Kingston, Ontario and in a few places in the United States. Potsdam had the first American parish in 1837, just two years after the founding of Trinity. The CA Church had charismatic elements within a Catholic structure similar to Anglicanism. It never drew large numbers. At its height, there were 11 congregations in North America. Unlike most such sects, it attracted literate and middle class people, and its clergy seem to have been well disposed toward Anglicanism and to have regarded Trinity as a sister parish. Its membership dwindled in the late 1800's and the church, located at the corner of Pine and Maple, closed around 1912. The last pastor is said to have told his parishioners to go to Trinity and become Episcopalians. A number of them did, including the late Herbert Bicknell whose father had been a priest in the Catholic Apostolic Church. Apparently, the properties of the defunct church were liquidated and at least partly donated to Trinity because the vestry minutes for November 1912, 1913 and 1915 show a series of receipts of \$100 from the Catholic Apostolic Church. (The history of this church is the subject of an article in the Quarterly of January 1974 by Martin Kessler and Robert Shaw.)

The longest of the four long tenures at the altar of Trinity was that of Father William J. Hamilton, from 1912 to 1942. Father Hamilton was born in Ontario and educated at McGill Theological Seminary in Montreal. His was an active ministry in the diocese and the national church as well as the parish. A special interest of his was church schools, week-day and Sunday. With the assistance of Mrs. Mollie Bicknell, he not only had a large turnout of children on released time in the village but visited the rural schools of the preconsolidation days. Large confirmation classes bore witness to his success, and the parish flourished. Father Hamilton had three Sunday services: an eight o'clock Eucharist, and eleven o'clock with choir plus an Evensong later in the day. He revived the boys' choir as a men and boys' choir in addition to the large regular choir of mixed voices. During his rectorate, the parish celebrated its centennial with a festive service on 15 November 1936 and a dinner dance at the Civic Center.

Churchgoing was more "in" among the young in those days, and students were a much larger portion of the Sunday congregation. Clarkson held its baccalaureate service at Trinity for years, partly because both institutions had ties to the same founding family.

Mrs. Emilie Clarkson Moore gave the money for a new organ in 1934 as well as a new roof, a tile floor in the chancel and the marble altar. Five of the Tiffany windows are of Clarkson donation, most of them early in the century.

The last physical addition was the parish hall, dedicated by Bishop Frederick Barry on 20 July 1955.

The third of the long rectorates was that of John T. Travis, from 1942 to his death in 1956. Mr. Travis' style was low church, but he carried on much of the work of his predecessor. His tenure spanned the years of World War II and the early Cold War period. He served as rural dean during part of that time.

In 1956, the vestry called Father James W. Pennock, then rector of Trinity, Troy. He was duly instituted on 15 November by Bishop Frederick Barry. Father Pennock was a priest of decided Anglo-Catholic views. He moved to make the Eucharist the principal Sunday service by instituting a nine o'clock "family service" which was the Eucharist every Sunday, while retaining the eleven o'clock which alternated between morning prayer and the Eucharist. Whether because of devotion to Blessed Sacrament or because the hour was more convenient, the nine soon outdrew the eleven and gradually became the main service with its own youth choir.

The church bulletin for 1 October 1961 reveals an active parish life. Along with Sunday services, there was a Eucharist and breakfast for students at 6:45 a.m. on Wednesday, five sessions of week-day church school for the various age groups, the Episcopal Young Churchmen and the Canterbury Club for students. During the late

fifties and the sixties, the rector had the assistance of Father Kaulfuss of Zion, Colton, of Father W.A. Perkins in 1965 and 1966 and Father Richard Reid in 1966-1969. After this, Zion, Colton was attached to Norwood. Father Reid left to become rector of St. Mary's, Fall River, Massachusetts. Two informal assistants during the 1970's were Father St. Clair Vannix, a retired priest living in the parish, and Father Nelson Skinner, a Veterans' Administration representative in the area. These men filled in from time to time or assisted at Sunday services. By 1971, the numbers attending the eleven had dropped off to the point where they no longer seemed to warrant a separate sung liturgy, and there was concern about dividing a shrinking congregation more than necessary. Beginning in April, the two services were merged into a single sung Eucharist at ten, a compromise which seemed to satisfy most. Later, the rector instituted a Saturday afternoon vigil Eucharist for Sunday travellers. Active in diocesan affairs, Father Pennock was made a canon, that is an honorary member of the cathedral staff. This is the Anglican equivalent of monsignor.

Father Pennock was rector until his death after a brief illness on 25 September 1983. For the last three years, he was also Mayor of Potsdam. He led the parish in the liturgical renewal, adopting the modern English

rite as soon as it became an option. He avoided extremes of churchmanship with a sure sense of the need for a change which was yet faithful to the best Anglican and Catholic tradition while responding to the needs of the time. Lay ministers of the Eucharist and girl acolytes were part of the change. The fuel crisis of the mid-1970's faced the parish with mundane problems. The congregation had shrunk, and there were no more wealthy Clarksons to carry the parish over the emergency. A massive effort was required to raise money to rebuild the organ, a job done by Hill, Norman and Beard, and now the fuel crisis. By that time, all the property across the street had been sold except for the square stone office building. Reluctantly, the vestry decided to put the building up for sale and move the office to the chapel wing. The chapel came into use for mid-week services.

A source of joy during the Pennock era was the number of young people to go into religious life: four priests and a nun. They include Fathers Dayton Dewey, Michael Swan, Leslie Hughes, Gary Parker and Sister Elaine, ASSP.

In the long interval between Father Pennock's fatal illness and the arrival of his successor on 1 March 1985, the parish has had the services of a number of able priests; and the organizing abilities and efforts of Verger Russell O'Coin, Senior Warden Alfred Rothermel and Clerk Anne Howlett, as well as the vestry members and other lay people who have come forward to do their part in the

vacancy emergency. Priests have included Father Payne of Brockville, Father Kenneth Robinson also of Brockville, Father Raemond Fletcher now rector at Hawkesbury, Ontario, Father Peter Francis of Lake Placid and most recently Father Thomas James of Ottawa. Thomas Anderson came as a deacon in January 1984 to be interim pastor, was ordained to the priesthood at Trinity in April and left in June to assume his own parish duties in Richfield Springs. The parish status as an informal temporary "mission" of the Canadian Anglican Church is one more indicator of the close relationship of northern New York and Ontario. If a political border divides us, geography has made us a single region, and Ottawa and Montreal have more reason than most to feel strong and warm crossborder ties.

On 16 December 1984, the congregation, after the Eucharist, learned that its long wait was over and that Father Congreve Quinby of Kansas City had accepted the call to become its rector and would arrive on 1 March 1985. Father Quinby is a descendant of Bishop Benjamin Onderdonk who consecrated Trinity Church in 1836. The timing of his arrival is a happy coincidence. In accordance with his wishes, the vestry has put the Pierrepont Avenue rectory up for sale. This building was acquired in 1959 and served the Pennock family. It is a very large house for a couple, and, increasingly, clergy would rather arrange their own housing on allowance.

The parish has been a happy mix of college and village, of professionals and working people from local businesses and their families. Students have been a smaller presence since the sixties, but a continuing one in both congregation and choir. Examination of the parish records indicates a decline in numbers on all fronts after the 1960's. In 1943, for example, there were 552 communicants on the books compared with the roughly 250 in 1984. Sunday school and confirmation classes have dipped drastically. There seems to have been a levelling or bottoming out in the 1980's, but the decline to that point has been fairly rapid. The 1950's seem to have been a kind of peak. Easter attendance in 1945 was 450; in 1955 it was 462; in 1965, 330; in 1975, 167 and in 1983, 181. Regular attendance at Sundays such as Advent I and Lent I fell off less sharply than that of the high holy days and seems to have levelled off at somewhat under 100 if the eye does not deceive. This might be a source of comfort were it not such a tiny portion of the village population of several thousand.

Confirmation classes are another if less reliable index of decline. Recent classes have been smaller than the first one of 11 in 1833. Father Hamilton had some large classes (38 in 1929) and so did Father Pennock (39 in 1960). Recent classes have been fewer than ten. We must be careful about this, however. In the 1970's, confirmation ceased to be a required rite of admission to communion. First Communion is quietly arranged by parents and priest and confirmation is no longer a rite of passage for twelve

year olds, for better or worse. Even so, it is obvious, even without looking at the Sunday school lists, that there are fewer children in church in the last few years. The 1966 Sunday school had 68 pupils. The latest census indicated 30 and that may be optimistic.

In assessing reasons for the decline, it is difficult to know how much is demographic. Transfer figures show a net loss of 20 between 1972 and 1982, but these only reflect the formal withdrawals who ask the rector for a letter of transfer. There is no accurate way of knowing how many have simply left without a word or why they left. Undoubtedly, part of it is that Trinity is not immune from the trends of the times. The countercultural movements of the sixties and early seventies drew many young people away from the church, which they identified as at best "square" and at worst part of an iniquitous "establishment" and guilty by association of racism and warmongering. The return of political conservatism has not led many back to the traditional churches but rather to fundamentalism with its concrete and simplistic answers. Father James has suggested that this is a function of the anxiety of our times, a search for simple answers and security.

For whatever reason, the average Sunday congregation is what Father Ed Rorke has called an "inverted Christmas tree". The relatively small number of young adults and children is ominous for the future. This is the challenge the parish and its rector face in 1985. For inspiration they could

do worse than to look back to the tiny band who founded the parish in the gray month of March 1835. Their times were discouraging also for the church, but they were full of hope.

HISTORY OF TRINITY PIPE ORGANS

Records indicate that the first instrument was a gift of Thomas A. Clarkson, purchased from Hall of New York in the 1840's. It may be seen in the illustration showing the 1884 interior view of Trinity Church. It was a tracker action mechanism powered by a hand-operated bellows. Tracker action employs a series of wooden slats of varying lengths about 5/8" wide by 1/8" thick. These slats extend from the manual to the air chest, and their function is to cause the valves on the pipes to open when a key is depressed. This organ was approximately ten feet long and five feet wide. This Hall organ was moved to the chapel when it was replaced by the Hook and Hastings organ in 1890.

As seen in the illustration of the 1896 church interior, the Hook and Hastings instrument was positioned with the console built into the organ . . . a reversal of the manner in which the Hall organ had been placed. The organist made use of a mirror for observing the choir since he/she was at floor level facing the outside wall. It was from Mrs. Elizabeth Clarkson's Memorial Fund that the purchase of this tracker action, two manual organ was made. It had a full pedal board and a hand-powered system which was later adapted to water power, and still later to an electrically-operated system. The name plate which was removed from the case is being placed in the care of Trinity Church for preservation due to its historical significance by James Jannette, a twenty-five year choir member.

The present organ was designed by Gilbert Macfarlane, Trinity organist. It was built by the Frazee Organ Co.

of Boston. The frame and molding from the tower of the Hook and Hastings organ was used. While this three-manual organ was being installed in 1931, the original Hall organ was put into use. There is no record as to what became of the Hall organ. Mr. McFarlane's plans called for: (1) an antiphonal organ in the chapel--formerly used to enable the choir to hear the processional and recessional hymns while in the choir room (now the church office). It was used on special occasions in hymns and anthems in which an echo effect or antiphonal arrangement was indicated; (2) an echo organ in the attic consisting of pipes, chimes and harp; and (3) the main organ.

Mrs. Emily Clarkson Moore paid \$17,000 to the Frazee Co. originally and an additional \$3,000 later for adjustments and necessary changes. An experimental and complicated electric action proved to be somewhat unreliable and was replaced with a simpler device.

Since its initial installation, the Frazee organ has undergone extensive renovations by Hill, Norman & Beard of London. This was done in the 1960's at a cost of approximately \$24,000.

The stops on the present organ are:

Great

Principal 8
 Proc. Diapason 8 (in chapel)
 Stopped Diapason
 Chimney Flute 4
 Octave 4
 Fifteenth 2

Pedal

Sub bas 16
 Open Diapason 16
 Bourdon 16
 Bass flute 8
 Principal 8
 Fifteenth 4

Swell

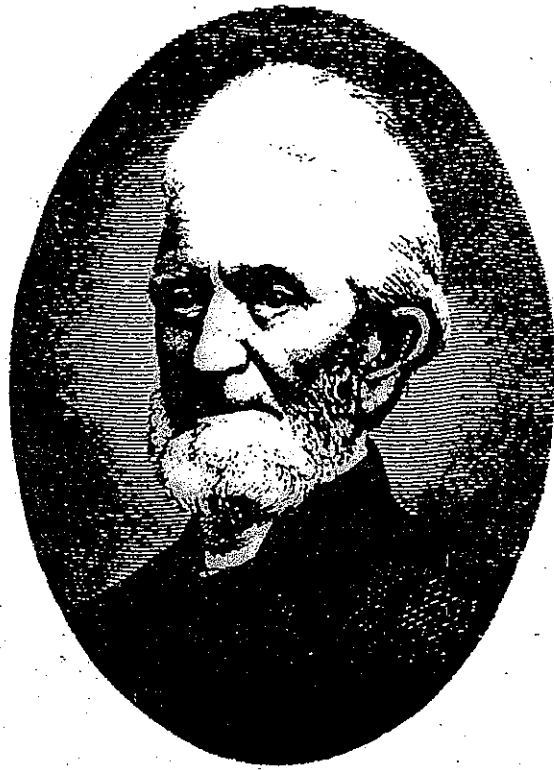
Sub Octave
 Voix celeste 8
 Gedeckt 8
 Salicional 8
 Octave
 Spitz Flute 8
 Principal 4
 Gemshorn 2
 Sesqui altera II
 Mixture III
 Tremulant
 Trompette 8

RECTORS

Richard Bury 1834-37
Albin Putnam 1839-44
Nathan Munroe 1844-45
Isaac Hubbard 1847-51
Kendrick Metcalfe 1851-52
William Staunton 1852-59
James La Tourette 1860-65
John S. Kedney 1866-71
Henry Howard 1871-81
Reynold Kirby 1881-1906
R. M. Sherman 1906-11
William Hamilton 1912-42
John T. Travis 1943-56
James W. Pennock 1956-83
Congreve H. Quinby 1985-

1835

1985



RICHARD BURY

(#1)



Gave up to the world

Daniel Nash

FATHER DANIEL NASH

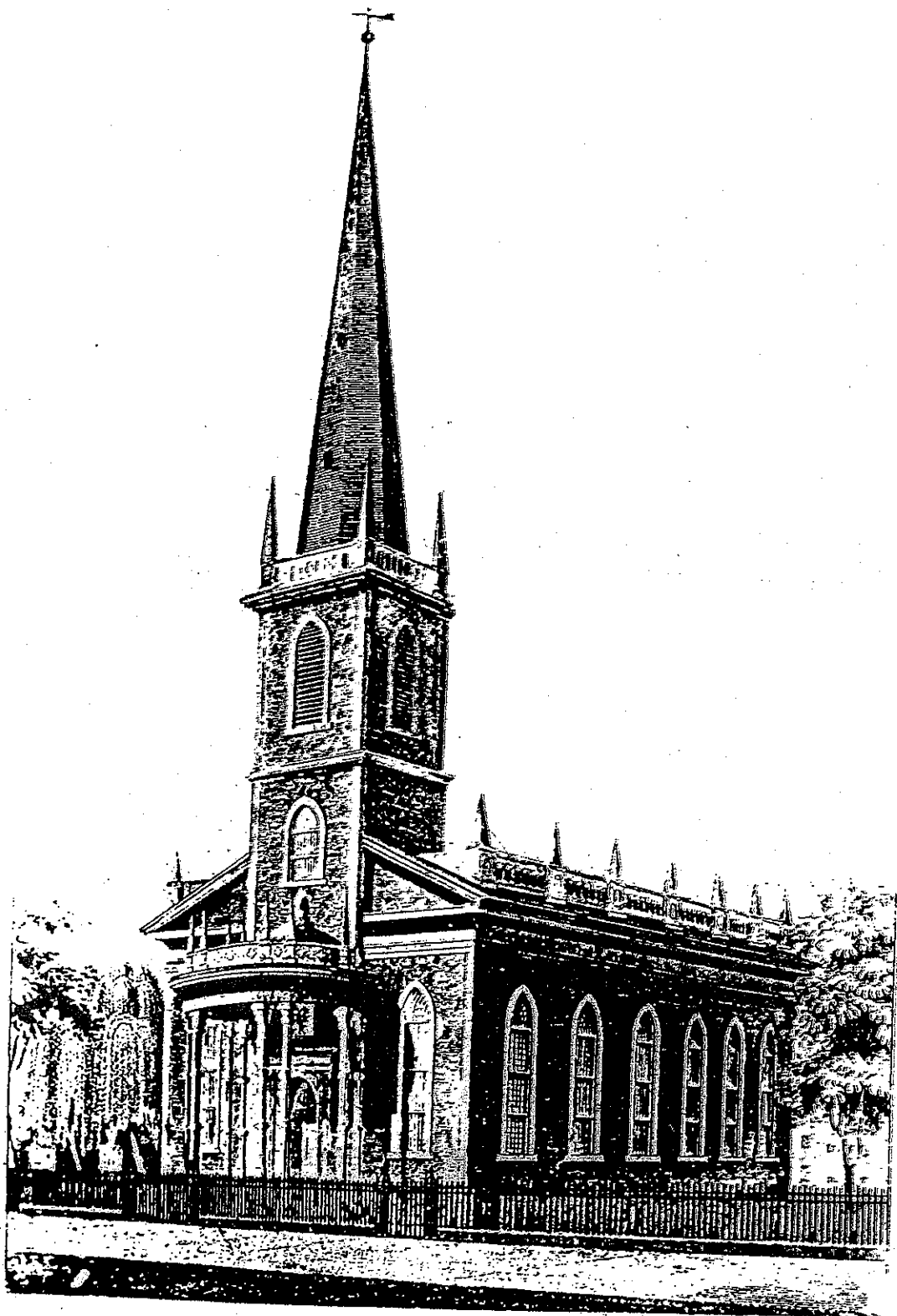
(#2)



John Henry Hobart

BISHOP JOHN HENRY HOBART

(#3)



TRINITY CHURCH, WALL STREET

(#4)



BISHOP BENJAMIN T. ONDERDONK

(#5)

Benjamin T. Onderdonk
Bishop of New York



Nathan Monroe

NATHAN MONROE

(#6)



William Staunton

DR. WILLIAM STAUNTON

(#7)



James La Tourette

FATHER JAMES LA TOURETTE

(#8)



Catholic Apostolic Church at Maple Street, Potdam, (Picture loaned by Potdam Museum.) (19)



FATHER HENRY HOWARD

(#10)

Henry R. Howard



The Rev. Albin Putman



R. M. Kirby.

DR. REYNOLD M. KIRBY

(#11)



H. Minton



J. W. Hubbard.



The Rev. William Hamilton



J. Stewart Healey



The Rev. John T. Travis



The Rev. Canon James W. Pennock



The Rev. Congreve H. Quinby

