

## ***Beginnings of St. Richard's of Chichester Episcopal Mission (As Compiled in 1987)***

*In the beginning many like-minded people met in various private homes. One such home was that of Horace and Marie Caldwell at 321 Old Plantation Road. Horace was better known as the Director of the Jekyll Island Authority. He also had the distinction of bringing to Georgia the present Eighth Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Georgia, the Right Reverend Harry W. Shipps. But, there were many more supporters of an Episcopal Church on Jekyll Island – namely Jacobs, Stafford, Negley, Wehner, Yeager, Hood, Patton, Scott, Griffith, Walwork and others who wanted an Episcopal Church on Jekyll some seventeen years ago. Yes, you will still see some of them on the Island.*

*The year 1970 was a fruitful year to start our church. It was the year Bishop A. Stuart led the Church Convention on Jekyll Island. He listened to the “seedlings” of a new church mission which was designed to be a part-time, vicar-led church. When Bishop Reeves gave the new church his blessing, he also suggested the name St. Richard's of Chichester after a thirteenth century Anglican bishop in southern England near Brighton.*

*The first service was held on April 5, 1970, Easter, at the Jekyll Island Methodist Church where services have been held for seventeen years. There were 50 present, 38 received Communion and \$53.00 was in the collection plate. Father Robert H. Wright was Celebrant and preacher. Durward (Pete) Williams was the first lay reader and server at the 8:30 Holy Communion service. The following week Bishop Reeves was celebrant and preacher. Father Wright also served private communions at the old Dolphin Motel on June 6 that same year.*

*The first non-resident, part-time vicar of the new mission was Father Wright who divided his time as Vicar of Holy Nativity on St. Simons Island. Father Wright retired this year (1987), but for the first five years of the new mission's life, he spent one-half time commuting between the islands, sometimes in a boat -- according to Helen Yeager who was the first president of the Women of the Church. Father Wright received payment for housing, utilities and travel, but no salary.*

*Many other retired and full-time priests in the Diocese helped the young mission – Father Talbert Morgan of St. Mark's in Brunswick, Father Junius Martin of Christ Church on St. Simons and Fathers Birt Sams, H. Huff, John Harper and others. Many of these dedicated priests also filled in for the two years of illness of the first resident part-time vicar, Father Sam West who has retired to Richmond, Virginia. Father West served the new mission from November 12, 1978 through September 7, 1986. Father Huff served from September 14, 1986 to November 30, 1986 after which Father Robert South assumed the duties of vicar for several months.*

*Attendance, according to Father Wright, was 20 to 25 in the summer and 30 to 35 in the winter. On this past Easter Sunday there were over 100!*

*During the “early” days things were hard to come by according to the first Altar Guild president, Lillian Williams, wife of Pete. “We borrowed a veil and burse for the altar from the Diocese Altar Guild”, Lillian recalled, “in addition to linens, season's colors. There were donations of silver for the Communion services from communicants who had their memorials inscribed on the lave bowls.” Lillian now lives on St. Simons Island, and still teaches elementary school in Brunswick. Many Women have followed in*

*Lillian's steps – Helen Yeager, Julia Horton, Vera Wallwork, Katie Bosler, Jan Steffan, Mary Griffith and many more dedicated women.*

*Early Senior Wardens rotated that office among Pete Williams, Ed Wehner and Fred Griffith. Our present Senior Warden is John Tritsch. Lay readers such as Sam Richman, who visits Jekyll each year from his home in New Hampshire, have helped the new mission as well (especially during) the two years of Father Sam West's major illnesses.*

*All these "seedlings" planted an idea of a new church on a barrier island populated by unique people who want to serve their God amid the roar of the Atlantic Ocean in perfect peach.*

Note: Minor editorial changes have been made in transcribing this compilation. Most significant was substituting the word "mission" for "church" in those instances where St. Richard's was incorrectly referenced.