



Epiphany some time between 1915 and 1940

Excerpts from Epiphany History

by Lane McGovern
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I. The Early Years (1882-1911)

Not many churches in America can trace their formal beginnings to a place called Harmony Hall. The Parish of the Epiphany can. On Friday, February 24, 1882 a small paragraph in the Winchester Star, on an inside page, carried a modest announcement:

“A few members of the Episcopal Church and other persons interested have decided to hold Sunday services for three months, beginning Feb. 26th, in Harmony Hall, at 10:30 O' clock A.M. It is hoped that out of these services a permanent movement may grow...”

A Cambridge minister, The Rev. Charles P. Parker, was engaged for this carefully circumscribed three month effort. Harmony Hall, located in the old Brown & Stanton block, on the corner of Mount Vernon and Main Streets, touching the center, where the Swanson Realty Firm now is, apparently was a large room for lectures, music recitals and the like, available to the public for hire.

An advertisement in the same February 1882 issue of the Star shows that the then current Harmony Hall performer was a Mr. Isaac J. Osburn lecturing on the “Science of Common Things.” Four lectures, at 25 cents each, were scheduled on “A Lump of Salt,” “A Pound of Sugar,” “A Loaf of Bread” and “A Cup of Tea.” It was in these alien surroundings that the Episcopal Church in Winchester struggled to gain a foothold.

There had been, it would seem, some earlier and unsuccessful struggling. Legend has it that in the years leading up to the Revolutionary War isolated groups of “Prayer Book Christians,” as the Anglicans were called, met now and again under the Benjamin Simonds elm in Wobum, on the road to Cummingsville, for occasional outdoor services. The war with England put an end to even these fragile activities for many years thereafter. It also seems likely that for a short time in the 1860's Episcopalians in this area held home services to read the Prayer Book and sing hymns.

Then came 1882 and Harmony Hall. The services flourished and by October of that year the rector of the relatively new parish in Arlington, the Rev. Charles Morris Addison, accepted full responsibility for a new Winchester “mission” (for this is what it was)—soon to be designated the “Mission of the Epiphany” in the Journal of the Diocesan Convention for 1883.

By 1884 the growing little band of Epiphanyites (there were 28 at the start) had left Harmony Hall behind. Services were now held on Sunday after-

Excerpts from Epiphany History

noons in the Methodist Church on Mt. Vernon St., at the site of what is now the grassy plot of land in front of the Mill Pond Building, between Converse Place and the Town Hall Duck Pond. Sunday School at 3 P.M.; Church services at 4.

That same year, 1884, a fund drive was launched to gain the money necessary for the Mission's own church. It was Epiphany's first successful stewardship campaign.

By October 31, 1884 construction of a small wooden chapel was almost completed (cost \$5,330). The *Star* approvingly labeled the newcomer "a charming little edifice." It was located across Mt. Vernon St. from what would soon be the Town Hall. It contained 13 rows of pews, had 200 seats, and featured a front semi-circular glass window of dubious monetary, but inestimable emotional, value.

In later years, after the Episcopalians had moved on to larger quarters (in 1905), the little chapel became the first church of the Christian Scientists, who prior to that had been worshiping in the Town Hall for several years. Later still in 1958, it became the home of the Knights of Columbus. It was finally torn down in the 1960's, when the present larger brick Knights of Columbus building was constructed on the same site. According to very well founded rumor, at the time of the tearing down, three loyal Epiphany stalwarts—Shirley Potts, Charles Potts and William Everett—improvised a removal of the old semi-circular chapel window and it found its way to our present building where it has resided ever since in a dusty basement closet.

An Epiphany church at last! The first service was held on January 25, 1885. One is compelled to ask, however, "Why so late?" The Congregational Church had existed in Winchester 45 years earlier, in 1840; the Baptist Church in 1864; the Unitarian Church in 1869; the Methodist Church in 1876; and St. Mary's Catholic Church in 1876. The little Epiphany chapel, in 1885, was very much at the end of the line. Why? Perhaps the answer lies in part in the fact that the Congregationalists, successors to the old Puritan traditions, played a very dominant role in the early history of this town. Perhaps, as well, the anti-Anglican hostility of the post Revolutionary War years took a long time to fade away.

The little church faced a rebuff of sorts at the start. Charles Morris Addison, the Arlington rector in charge of the Winchester Mission, was asked to be Epiphany's first rector at a salary of \$800 per year, but he declined. Instead, a young 25 year old named John W. Suter, freshly graduated from ETS, stepped to the fore. Suter had been assisting Addison and now, probably upon Addison's recommendation, assumed the role of minister-in-charge of the tiny Mission.

At the time he was ordained a deacon only; his ordination as a minister was to come a year later. Harvard graduate, member of a proper Bostonian family of substantial means, Suter may have had an interest in our town that was

Excerpts from Epiphany History

more than theological. Not too long after his call to Epiphany he married Helen Jenkins of Winchester—one of a long list of significant actions by Epiphany women in the Parish history. More on this later.

For three years the little Mission struggled for financial independence. Finally, on April 10, 1888, it severed the umbilical cord to the Diocese and became an independent Parish. This is the date we will be commemorating with our 100th-anniversary in 1988.

Financial concerns were immediately, and constantly, in evidence. As one browses through the records of these early years the costs seem ludicrously small. Don Swanson would certainly chuckle at the 1888 budget of \$1,328—\$1,000 for the Rector, \$100 for the Sexton (cut to \$96 the following year), \$40 for an organ blower, and so on. Joe Georgis would flash a broad smile at the 1889 vestry's refusal to bring a water line into the church because the estimated cost (between \$75 and \$175) was deemed too prohibitive. Steve Poulos would, I am sure, quietly relish an 1890 vestry vote "to paint the church outside where necessary at a cost not to exceed \$25."

But in the late 1880's these figures were significant to our Epiphany predecessors, and they coped with them in two ways: pew rentals, and plate collections. What did a season ticket to the Epiphany Church cost in the late 1880's? Which pews were considered most desirable to rent? The answers are revealed in the vestry minutes for September 7, 1889. The little church had 13 rows of pews. The prime pews were in rows 4 through 9; the bleachers, as one would expect, were in row 13. The first row rate was \$8 per seat per year; for rows 2 and 3, it was \$10; for rows 4 through 9—probably the repository of the Parish establishment—the rate schedule reached a pinnacle of \$12 per year. Then the amounts tailed off, with the 13th and last row reserved for free seats. For superstitious Episcopalians this situation was unquestionably an inducement to rent a pew.

The prestige associated with the pew selection process must have been considerable. In June of 1891, in an unusual move expressing appreciation for her many long years of service to the Epiphany choir, the vestry authorized Mrs. C. G. Thompson and her daughter to "occupy such seats in the church as you may choose without any question of rental."

The plate collection method of financing was soon recognized to be unreliable and "spasmodic." In the fall of 1890 a landmark vestry vote deemed it "expedient to adopt a system of pledges to be handed in envelopes." This "weekly envelope system," as it was called, met with only modest success. For years the wardens urged the frugal parishioners to expand its use.

"No weekly offering is too small to be regular," proclaimed the Parish Year Book for 1893. "For a weekly offering of five, or even one cent, envelopes will be provided, and persons so contributing will always be promptly supplied with seats by the ushers."

However, old ways die hard. Years later, in 1907, annual envelope income

Excerpts from Epiphany History

was still running a poor second to pew rentals, \$3,776 to \$1,694.

The late 1890's and early 1900's were boom times in the nation, the town and the Parish. Large manufacturing corporations were being formed; railroads and street cars were stretching out into the countryside; electricity was revamping life-styles; cities were suburbanizing themselves.

Electric lights came to Winchester in 1885. Electric street car lines reached out for our town from Woburn in 1896, and from Arlington a year later. (They would remain until 1928.) Telephones arrived; Reverend Suter's number at the church, in 1900, was 27-2. Approximately a thousand persons from foreign lands settled in the town between 1890 and 1915. There had been virtually none before. Real estate developers worked feverishly to develop the untapped west side, then known as the "Wyman Plains." Between 1890 and 1910 the town doubled its population, to approximately 9,500 people. The little Parish of the Epiphany, which had started with 28 communicants in 1882, was at 158 and rising in 1892. By 1900 the number was 250 and the little 200 seat wooden chapel no longer would do.

In 1893, foreseeing the rise, the Parish purchased on an installment payment basis, a lot of land at Central and Church Streets. The records of the years that followed show a constant, wearing effort to complete the purchase bit by bit. The final land installment payment was made in 1899, after six years—only to be succeeded by immediate pressure for funds for a new church building.

Several years later, on April 20, 1904, when the pace of the building fund drive was still depressingly slow, Rev. Suter sat down and wrote a memorable letter to his Parish. Five thousand more dollars were needed. He called for his flock to "finish and leave behind the Building Fund *NOW*." Raising money should not, he warned, become a "weariness." The Building Fund had become "a sort of monster, swallowing all our gains." We need, he urged, to "advance other projects" and to move in "new directions" where giving will be "more spontaneous and less grinding." He pledged \$2,000 of his own money toward the \$5,000 that was needed. Within 13 days, by May 3, 1904, Epiphanyites had pledged \$3,885 and the Fund Drive was over the top. The cornerstone of the new church—a grand church, 400 sittings in size—was laid on October 20, 1904. Marion Wright and Harrison Chadwick, I am told, were looking on. Total cost: a little less than \$50,000.

Suter resigned at the close of 1911. The event marked the end of an era, the end of the Parish's beginning. Given more time we would certainly want to lean back, put our feet on the table and talk about this man in more detail. Suter and turn-of-the-century Winchester were a good match. Proper Bostonian though he may have been, he was more things as well. He rode horseback to call on his parishioners. Sensing the expansive mood of the '90's, he held half-hour "bicycle services" on Sunday mornings at 9 A.M.—to catch the cyclists before they disappeared over hill and dale. The custom continued for years. He was—are you listening?—the very first President of

Excerpts from Epiphany History

the Winchester Country Club, a position he finally resigned in 1913, a year *after* his resignation as Epiphany rector.

He was a member of the Winchester School Committee for 12 long years, from 1889 to 1901. He was generous with his money, and generous in spirit too. The first sermon at our present church was delivered not by Suter but by Charles Morris Addison, his friend and former superior from Mission days, 20 years before.

When he resigned in 1911, he was only 51 years old; he had devoted 25 years to Winchester and wanted to pursue some different goals. In the period that followed he moved back to Beacon Street in Boston, lectured on liturgics at ETS, authored various liturgical books, and (to use the ecclesiastical phrase) “supplied parishes” in Concord, Milton and Lincoln when their regular rectors were away. His son, Dr. John Wallace Suter, Jr., later served as rector of the Church of the Epiphany in New York City during the 1930’s and ’40’s.

But what about Suter's *parishioners*? What were they like? Browsing through brittle Parish records admittedly has drawbacks as a way of sizing up flesh and blood people. The truth beneath the surface can be obscured by the flow of routine, mellifluous church language. Even so, those old papers can tell us quite a bit. Three points, in particular, should be mentioned.

First, it would appear to be true that in these early years our Parish—like our Diocese and perhaps the American Episcopal Church as a whole—was replete with, and to a large extent run by, prominent wealthy people. For example, included among Epiphany's wardens and vestrymen for this period were Samuel W. McCall, Epiphany's very first vestryman, later Governor of Massachusetts; Irving S. Palmer, partner in the Harrison Parker mahogany lumber business; Arthur H. Russell, Boston lawyer and Town Moderator; Alfred S. Higgins, owner of R. P. Higgins Co., Oysters, Northern Avenue, Boston; Dr. Ralph Putnam, Harvard-trained physician, who took on the job of Winchester's first school physician and medical inspector; Herbert S. Underwood, editor of the Boston Record; Theodore C. Hurd, State Representative and Clerk of Courts of Middlesex County; Marcus B. May and Addison R. Pike, also Boston lawyers, both active in town affairs. Mrs. Addison R. Pike was Winchester's first Commissioner of Girl Scouts. The list could go on and on.

The minutes kept by these people exude at times a mood of authority and exclusivity. It is not difficult to see how the Episcopal Church acquired its reputation (or, rather its former reputation) as the religious haven for the privileged and the well-to-do.

Second, the paper record leads one to believe that, in Epiphany's case, there may have been more of a mix of people than one might think. Consider the Parish's first 25 recorded marriages, beginning in 1905. (The records of marriage and baptisms before 1905 were mislaid and lost years ago.) These

Excerpts from Epiphany History

marriage records include: a 29 year old physician marrying a 29 year old school teacher; a 29 year old house painter from Lancashire, England marrying a 27 year old housemaid from Newfoundland; a 34 year old architect and a 31 year old nurse; a 34 year old carpenter and a 32 year old "at homer." In the same initial group of 25 couples are grooms listed as telephone operators, draftsmen, clerks and painters. One match was a 55 year old salesman and a 47 year old matron of an old person's home.

That the Parish probably had a significant number of parishioners of ordinary means is indicated by one other track in the paper trail. One can't help leaving the history of the Parish's first thirty years without an almost overwhelming sense of the frugality of these people. Most of the Parish's financial objectives were achieved only after years and years of scrimping, shaving costs, and saving. Probably the highest accolade that could have been bestowed upon an Epiphany lay person during this period was that given to Charles W. Bradstreet in 1909, when he resigned after 19-1/2 years as a warden:

"In the erection of this church as one of the committee in charge, he was painstaking in the inspection of details of construction and watchful of every item of expense."

Third, Epiphany women. What does the record show about them? They were not permitted to be church officers (that wouldn't happen until 1957), but they were the driving force that energized this institution.

It was their sewing society that led to the first home services and ultimately to Harmony Hall and the Mission. It was they who in a large part precipitated the move from dependent Mission to independent Parish. This was done by staging a successful bash in 1887 called a "Kermesse—an indoor Fair with six national booths, a gypsy kettle, a Mother Goose booth for children, a soap bubble contest, eight Spanish Dancers, and much, much more.

Repeatedly, when the frugal church fathers balked, it was the Womens' Guild who supplied the money for the thing that obviously had to be done. It was they, for instance, who in 1890 eventually provided the funds to bring a water line into the church, one year after the vestrymen couldn't bring themselves to act. Fairs and entertainments in these years were marginally acceptable at best; Suter frowned a bit on them and the vestry strictly insisted on rights of veto. But they were no match for the women. Undaunted, the Guild forged ahead, filling the years from 1882 to 1912 with a never-ending parade of lawn parties (not lawn sales), Venetian fetes, Dickens Carnivals, Mikado festivals, Cranford parties, quilting bees and whist contests. In addition, there were rummage bags galore, "plain sewing" for pay for neighbors, and countless Parish suppers, musicals and food sales.

In 1910 "A Mile of Pennies" was started. At the rate of "16 pennies to a foot," it reached only "56 rods, 4 yards, 1 foot, 6 inches" (not quite a fifth of a mile), making \$150 for the Parish—but the quest for funds continued in

Excerpts from Epiphany History

other ways.

The spirit and drive that marked the Epiphany women of this period were commemorated at a Parish supper on the night of January 6, 1909. In response to a toast to “The Women of the Epiphany,” a rousing poem entitled *The Ballad of the Epiphany Women* was read to the accompaniment of cheers and chuckles. Edith Sache was the author, and her verses deserve a place in Epiphany history.

The Ballad of the Epiphany Women

Of all Winchester women
from East Side or West,
the ones in the parish
are surely the best.

When a fair’s to be given
or a church there’s to build,
the women are ready,
led off by the Guild.

If the rector or vestry
some new plans have laid,
they call on the women
to lend them their aid.

One touch of their hand
—one word in their ear—
and the women respond.
You may witness it here.

For come they to work then,
or come they to play,
Epiphany women
will carry the day.

If the men are discouraged,
and finances are low,
they exclaim with one voice,
“Give the women a show!”

Oh, these men they will fret,
and these men they will fume,
but success is assured
with the bonnet and plume!

For with smile on their lip,
and a gleam in their eye,
Epiphany women will never say die!

We are offered a toast.

Excerpts from Epiphany History

Let us all take it up.
We'll quaff it in spirit
If not in the cup.

Long life let us wish them,
prosperity, joy.
A zeal and an ardor
that nothing will cloy.

Ah—you'll talk of your Clubs
and Epiphany men.
But Epiphany women—
we toast them again!

Edith H. Sache

They worked hard, these people, and their crowning accomplishment was the building we now are in. Although today we might smile perhaps at the stilted style of expression, the following passage from the Womens' Guild Year Book of 1905 strikes a chord. Hearing it, we get a glimpse, I think, of the qualities of dedication, industry and justifiable pride that marked our turn-of-the-century Epiphany forbears. The writer is Alice Glover, Assistant Secretary of the Guild.

“As we stand in the beautiful edifice to the rearing of which we have given our best thought and effort, nay, more, even the best years of our lives, and gaze upon the dignity and loneliness of the great east window, from which the glory of the Epiphany story will one day shine down upon us, let us realize, collectively and individually, that in spite of our grand accomplishment in the past, our work is but just begun, and that we have been told earnestly and impressively, from the pulpit of that same sacred edifice, it is well that it should be so.”

II. The Twenties (1923 -1931)

By far the most intriguing passage in Bradford Eddy's history of our Parish, *According to this Beginning* (1954), is his introduction to the decade of the 1920's. He characterizes this period as one of “churning disillusionment” and “shifting values”—yet also one “with an overpowering will for the restoration of things as they had been before the war.” The “resulting tensions and confusions” account, he says, for much of the “spiritual malaise,” the “hot antagonism,” and “cold indifference” which prevailed. “Small wonder,” he adds, “that the Parish of the Epiphany was infected by the emotional unrest of the time and experienced an adversity of spirit which shook it to its foundations.” “The era closed,” he sorrowfully concludes, “upon a parish anguished in spirit, shrunken in membership, retrogressing in its activities, and carrying a debt of almost unbearable proportions.”

What in the world went on? What took place here that triggered such an outpouring of mournful and provocative innuendo? Unfortunately, the carefully

Excerpts from Epiphany History

neutral style and laconic incompleteness of the Parish's records effectively shroud most of the "hot antagonisms" that Eddy dangles before us. Not all of them, however. A few slip through. And, as we shall see, better than the records proved the memory of Marion Wright.

Allen Evans, Jr. was rector from 1923 to 1927. In his short four year stay



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Epiphany has a Bell Tower: November 1940

young people. He apparently left on good terms, moved on to a larger church on Long Island, and eventually, fourteen years later, became Dean of the Philadelphia Divinity School. One of Evans' community involvements in Winchester was his service as chaplain for and member of the Winchester Post (No.97) of the American Legion. The tensions, antagonisms and unrest

Excerpts from Epiphany History

to which Eddy refers must have come, and did come, a little later.

The process of selecting a replacement for Evans was in keeping with the mood of the times. In April of 1927 the stock market's Black Friday (October 28, 1929) was still more than two years away. Coolidge was President; business appeared to be flourishing; securities trading (much of it on margin) was active. What could have been a more suitable *modus operandi* than to have Epiphany's Treasurer (Grush) and Warden (Higgins) invite the Bishop to lunch in the dining room of Boston's Chamber of Commerce Building, along with other vestry members? There, where so many of Massachusetts' key business decisions were daily being made, the essential groundwork could also be laid for the appointment of the Parish's new rector.

There evolved from the process a most interesting choice. At first glance the resume of Truman W. Hemingway seems conventional in the extreme. A New Yorker, he had been educated at a proper boarding school, Harvard College and ETS. He had served as Chaplain of St. George's School in Newport, R.I., one of a select group of New England Episcopalian private schools. So what else is new? There are some "what elses"—and they deserve mention because they have some bearing on what happened here, during Hemingway's stay.

The *Winchester Star* article that announced his coming to Winchester mentions that Hemingway had dropped out of Harvard College after a year (both his parents had died) and had gone off to the wilds of Calgary, in the province of Alberta, Canada. There, with a friend, he had established a cattle ranch. He spent almost six years in this endeavor. It would be necessary to say—and the article does say—that the venture was commercially successful. While there he married a young teacher, English by birth, the daughter of an Anglican priest. During the long Canadian winters he read a lot, "along various lines"—only "eventually" coming to religion. His grandfather, Reverend Harwood, rector of Trinity Church, New Haven, had been, the *Star* article states, "one of the great Episcopal clergymen of his time." Gradually there formed in young Hemingway's mind the conviction that he should devote himself to God and to the ministry.

He returned East, talked himself into ETS (even though he had not completed college) and, although not a brilliant student, he was a hard worker and gradually caught up with his class. After graduation he assisted at a Providence church for two years, served as Chaplain at St. George's for two years, and then accepted the call to Epiphany.

When he arrived in Winchester, Hemingway was a young man in his mid-thirties, soon to sport a full black beard, with a wife and four children. Marion Wright recalls that he wore his long black robes everywhere, around town as well as in the church, and that he preferred to be addressed as "Father" Hemingway. Based on Marion's memory, plus intimations in the written record, he seems to have been a rector who placed a very high degree of

Excerpts from Epiphany History

emphasis on the contemplative, self-denying and liturgical aspects of religion, with distinctly less emphasis on such matters as good works and social service. Marion Wright, who liked him, says he was a good man who may well have been “too holy” for the Epiphany folk of the late 1920’s. In another era, she feels, he would have governed a monastery in the Italian Alps with contentment and success.

It is not an exaggeration to say that even an amalgamation of Martin Luther, Billy Graham and Samuel Seabury would have had a tough time surviving as rector of this Parish in the years 1927 to 1931. During those years the depression struck with all its fury. New houses in Winchester, for example, declined from 123 in 1928 to 4 in 1932. Many homes were defaulted to the banks, and relief roles swelled. Attitudes toward religion were shifting. The Scopes Trial, Sigmund Freud, the escalating prestige of science—all had had an effect by the late 1920’s.

Hemingway faced all this. In addition, he inherited substantial mortgages on the church and rectory and a slowly eroding church attendance, which had been decreasing under Evans and continued to do so. To cap matters off, the Prayer Book was revised in 1928. By the end of his 3-1/2 year stay, even the church roof was leaking. What more could a young rector look forward to?

The serious money problems of 1927 rapidly became more serious. More borrowings were needed in 1928, 1929 and 1930, including a second mortgage on the church for \$5,000 in 1929. By the end of 1930 the Parish was paying annual interest on a total debt of \$34,000. Within six months after his arrival Hemingway and his vestry had made attempts to cut down expenses, but these pruning efforts were not easily consummated. One obvious pruning target, for example, was the superb but expensive paid choir. Standing in the way, however, was the formidable figure of J. Albert Wilson, Epiphany’s organist and choirmaster of many years. Hemingway and the vestry appointed a committee of three “to wait upon the organist and choir master for the purpose of securing, if possible, his cooperation in the matter of a reduced expenditure for music.”

Mr. Wilson, however, would have none of it. He reported to the vestry that “he had nothing to discuss and did not care to meet the Committee.” A meeting was held, however—a long one. Under consideration was a reduction either in the amount of the appropriation for music or in the number in the choir. Warden Stanley G.H. Pitch called attention to the fact that the choirmaster’s salary was not to be reduced [in the new proposal] and “that the Cathedral choir [in Boston] was less in number.” Choirmaster Wilson’s response was that there should be “a reduction in the salaries of the Rector, Deaconess, Sexton and Secretary, as well as his own, for the purpose of leaving sufficient money to maintain the choir on the present basis.” Ultimately Choirmaster Wilson resigned and went down the street to play for the Congregational Church. Even so, major revisions in the choir’s make-up were not put through until after Mr. Hemingway had himself departed. It would appear that he tried. A quiet entry in the March 3, 1930 vestry minutes

Excerpts from Epiphany History

leaps off the page:

“The Rector mentioned the desirability of a wholly voluntary choir instead of a paid one, and asked that this be given consideration at some future time, together with the possibility of including women and girls in it.’

He pointed the way. And later, of course, but not with him, the Parish took the steps he recommended.

Other small signs of alienation between rector and parishioners sift through the cracks. In December of 1929, despite the Parish’s poor financial position, Hemingway asked that the Christmas offering be devoted to non-Parish purposes. The vestry, pointing to the deficit, voted that the offering be applied to the current expenses of the church. At the January 1930 Annual Meeting, the church’s declining attendance was a subject of discussion. Mr. Hemingway observed “that in numbers the Parish was holding its own, but that numbers are only an indication, and that there is much responsibility on the laity of the Parish.” Hovering over the page is the mental image of a black-bearded, black-robed, devotional young priest becoming increasingly uncomfortable with his secular, “low church” and financially hard-pressed flock.

In December 1930, he suddenly submitted his resignation. It is likely—although the record doesn’t show it—that the resignation was asked for. At a heated Parish meeting the resignation was accepted—two-thirds voting in favor, one-third against. One week later, in his final annual report to the Parish, Hemingway stressed the need for more work with the girls and then (to quote the Annual Meeting minutes):

“In concluding his remarks he cautioned the meeting in these words, ‘Do not think of religion entirely in terms of social service.’”

That one recorded sentence reveals a lot. “Do not think of religion entirely in terms of social service.”

The Annual Meeting ended with the passage of a resolution proposed by Mrs. Marcus B. May, one of his supporters. The resolution started by expressing the Parish’s “heartfelt gratitude” for the ministrations of Truman W. Hemingway, and then concluded as follows:

“Coming to us imbued with a passion to spread the teaching and examples, and to inspire us in the service, of Christ, his Master, he strove regardless of self in our behalf, and it is to our regret that he met with no greater visible response from us. Yet he may be assured that he leaves with us a deeper spirituality and a renewed determination to express in our lives the faith which he has imparted to us.

“In leaving the Parish, both he and his dear courageous wife take with them our admiration and affection, and our prayers that in the

Excerpts from Epiphany History

work which calls them they may see the fruition of all their hopes.”

By March 1931 the Hemingways were gone.

Many years later, in the mid-1950's, Marion Wright visited briefly with Mr. Hemingway and his family. She recalls that Mrs. Hemingway and the children spoke with bitterness of Winchester and what had transpired there. They were living in Sherburne, Vermont, in a valley near Killington, the ski area. There, for twenty-five years, ever since he left Epiphany, Hemingway had been serving as priest of a tiny, gray stone Episcopal church, the size of a large chapel, the Church of Our Savior. A farm was an integral part of the church. The congregation was sparse and irregular. A pamphlet which Mrs. Wright obtained at the time of her visit says this:

“Through these years the Farm has been a place of quiet work and prayer. It has attracted... groups and individuals... who have come to share for days, weeks or months in its way of life. This life centers around the Altar of the little white church. Farming is carried on for good subsistence living by the present missionary, who with his family has endeavored under God to create here a small unit of Christian and Catholic community living.”

Three weeks ago the Hemingway story ended here. This was all I could find—bits and pieces from which we can only speculate—concerning the specific events and conflicts that led to his leaving. But three weeks ago I happened to be thumbing through old issues of *The Three Crowns* from the 1950's and 1960's when I had a surprise. There in front of me, out of the blue, was a biography of Truman Hemingway, published by The National Council of the Episcopal Church. Jack Ellison, our rector during that time, had reprinted it, by installments, in the January 1961 issues of the Parish paper. According to Ellison's introduction, the National Council was engaged in those years in publishing a series of brief biographies of “outstanding personalities and leaders of the American Episcopal Church since 1607.” Sixteen had been published. Hemingway's was one. Ellison pointed out that although many parishioners know about Dr. John W. Suter, the Parish's first rector, “fewer know of the nation-wide recognition given this priest who lived in Winchester only four years, and over whom this Parish was bitterly divided.”

The National Council's little biography fills the historical gaps as much as they will ever be filled. Hemingway was an unusual and difficult man—no question. The biography describes him as high-spirited and high-tempered, impatient of crowds and the restraints of society. He was an incessant talker—never dull, his family said, but often maddening. He was not a good listener. His close, personal friend and mentor in his early formative years was an elderly monk, the Reverend James Otis Sargeant Huntington, founder of the Order of the Holy Cross.

And what of Winchester, and the Parish of the Epiphany? What were they like? What happened there? Even for the exalted National Council, specific-

Excerpts from Epiphany History

ty and forthrightness do not come easily. But the scenario is sketched in and the rest can be imagined. The little biography refers to the fact that Hemingway at an early stage became rector of a “church in Massachusetts,” and that since it was “a well established and substantial parish” one could have supposed that the young rector would stay settled for some years. At this point Jack Ellison had inserted an Editor’s Note, “This is the Parish of the Epiphany in Winchester.” The article then continued:

“Truman Hemingway, however, could not bear the constraint of what most would consider a normal American community. He could not accept the ideals of a neighborhood in which a man’s thoughts, his home, his clothes, and his children were supposed to be just like everyone else’s. Though gifted with a personality which would make him welcome at any social gathering, he did not wish to spend his evenings with people who thought it bad manners to argue about religion or politics. His rejection of the conventional pattern of parish ministry was not a purely negative reaction. He longed for a deeper life of prayer and spiritual growth, and he was willing to accept the difficulties and privations which it might entail.”

When Hemingway left Winchester in March of 1931, he drove north with his wife into Vermont. His friend, the Reverend Samuel B. Booth, Bishop of Vermont, had offered him a church. The National Council’s biography describes how the couple wound their way down a muddy, country road splitting a narrow valley framed by steep, mountain slopes, when they came across it—“a little gray stone church [standing] desolate in the rain.” Across the road was “a rambling old farmhouse, forlorn and shabby after... years without an occupant.” This was The Church of Our Savior; this was the Mission Farm.

“Bishop Booth,” the article says, “did not pretend his offer was an attractive one: a church without a congregation, a stipend of several hundred dollars a year, and whatever one could grow on a neglected farm.” The young couple “bravely decided that since they liked the place even as they then saw it, they could like it ever afterwards.” The priest who had been so restless elsewhere “was to stay here until the day of his death.”

There isn’t time to tell you the rest of the Hemingway story. If there were, it would surely include observations about life on the farm, a hard primitive life; the daily rhythm of prayer, work and discussion; the discouraging attempts over many years to build a meaningful congregation; the occasional moments of happiness and success as students and academics began to drop in and to participate in the Mission life for days, and sometimes for weeks; the loneliness of the World War II years; the onset of heart trouble in the 1950’s, requiring a curtailment of farm work; and the resulting bouts of depression. Many people, the National Council writer says, particularly young people, looked to Hemingway for guidance. What guidance did this man give? The biographer answers:

Excerpts from Epiphany History

“Simply by being his own inimitable self he helped others see that by the grace of God they could be themselves. Just by the fact that he persevered so long in this place, struggling with his prayers, his thoughts, and his work, without loss of faith or humor, just this made him a man with whom other men wanted to talk.”

In 1957, two years after Marion Wright visited with him, he died of a heart attack while beginning a service at a neighboring church. He was 62.

Turning back now, to April of 1931, one month after the Hemingways drove north toward Vermont, Epiphany’s vestry (guided this time by a watchful advisory committee), after a short survey of seasoned rectors already serving in surrounding towns, called the Reverend Dwight W. Hadley, rector of Grace Church in Medford, to be the Parish’s new rector. But that’s another story, for another time.