

History of St. Andrew's Parish

150 Years

After the First Mass

1848 – 1998

The Catholic religion was the only official religion in California until the time of the American conquest. During the Spanish and Mexican occupancy of Alta California, the Catholic Church established a chain of missions up the coast of California as far as Sonoma. This missionary work was also extended inland.

Most of what we know of California before the Gold Rush comes from the diaries and papers of the mission padres, and it is in these papers that many of California's place-names have their origin. Father Narciso Duran, president of the southern missions, first wrote the name "Mokelumne" in 1817.

Ensign Gabriel Moraga, the great Spanish explorer and protector of the California missions, was probably the first white man to visit the region that is now known as Calaveras County, where thousands of native Americans had lived for thousands of years. In 1806, Moraga came to this area for the purpose of locating a site for an inland mission. Father Pedro Munoz who acted as diarist and chaplain accompanied him. They discovered and named the Calaveras (which is Spanish for skulls), Mokelumne (means "the place of the Mi Wok people, in the Mi Wok language), Stanislaus (named after St. Stanislaus), and Tuolumne (means "place of the Tuol people or cave people) Rivers, and continued south. This name was given to the Calaveras River because of the large number of human skulls found there near the river at Stockton. They

were either slaughtered in a battle with valley Indians, or perished as a result of an epidemic.

The first American to visit the Calaveras region was probably Jedediah Story Smith. Historians say that he was a brave leader who made religion an active principle.

In 1821, California was officially declared a territory of the Mexican Republic. Smith with a party of trappers explored the area in the fall of 1826. He made a successful crossing of the Sierra by way of Angels Camp, Murphys, and Ebbetts Pass. In 1831, the Mexican Congress decreed the secularization of all the California Missions. The Indians and padres were dispossessed of all their field, water works and pastures which were given to corrupt government officials in official grants. In 1835, the United States offered to buy California.

Captain John C. Fremont and his exploring party, led by Kit Carson, came through Calaveras County in February 1844, camping in West Point. They couldn't go further west because of the steep terrain, thus the name "West" point.

In 1846 Father Gonzales Rubio of the Franciscan Order was acting Bishop of the San Francisco diocese, which included the Calaveras area. Such was the general condition of affairs in Northern California up to the discovery of gold in 1848.

A group of Mexican gold miners began working the placers of what we now call San Andreas Creek, probably as early as the summer of 1848. As the year progressed, the size of the camp grew to a significant number and a priest named Father John Bobard arrived. Father Bobard's parish was to extend from Angels Camp as far north as the Consumnes River, including the territory afterward known as Amador County. There were no churches in the northern territory during this period and

services were held in other buildings. The community welcomed the priest with enthusiasm. It was more important that the priest get in touch with the Catholics throughout the area before attempting to put up a church in San Andreas.

The first church in San Andreas is thought to have been located near the corner of Gatewood Ave. and St. Charles Street. The church was a canvas structure supported by pine poles, differing little from the rest of the buildings there in appearance, except for a small wooden cross surmounting the roof over the door. The only fitting up of any kind in the interior was the altar, which occupied the end further from the door, and was decorated with as much display as circumstances would permit, being draped with the commonest kind of colored cloths, and covered with candlesticks—some brass, some of them wood, but most of them were old claret and champagne bottles. There were no seats. This crude structure became the St. Andrew's Catholic Church, the first church in Calaveras County.

The first mass was held on November 30, 1848 – St. Andrew's day, for whom the church and the town were then christened by Father Bobard. We know of no other name that was used for that place. Andrew is pronounced "Andres" in Spanish, and "Andre" in French, "Andreas is an Italian derivative (dialect of Torino, Italy). The community adopted the name San Andreas to honor their multi-ethnicity.

San Andreas accumulated a population of nearly 1,000 by the winter of '49, and what had been mostly a Mexican camp was beginning to see a rush of immigrants.

Consequently the military government and the remnants of the Mexican system of government were completely inadequate to cope

with the problems. The miners set up their own local governments known as mining districts.

During the period between 1851 and 1854, Father Bobard is known to have received assistance in attending to these missions from Father Blave, who was stationed at Stockton.

After three years of what must have been a very trying pastorate, Father Bobard departed from the San Andreas mission, and was succeeded in July 1854, by an Austrian priest, Father Francis Foretnick. The new missionary found himself the pastor of both Calaveras and Amador counties. In the meantime, mining camps multiplied throughout this whole region.

In Mokelumne Hill the percentage of members of the Catholic Church was high. A church was soon erected down in the gully near the site of the present house of worship. There was never a resident priest at Mokelumne Hill, as priests served it from San Andreas, Volcano, and of late years from Angels Camp. We must remember that in those times the trails were long and winding, the methods of transportation were slow and primitive, and the missionary, to complete a long journey such as Father Foretnick often made, required two or three weeks of continuous riding on the back of a mule.

In May 1856, the town of San Andreas was burned, including the residence of Father Foretnick. Father Foretnick at this time moved to Volcano and gave his attention to the work in Amador County, and two priests, Father Joseph Gallagher and Father Charles Delahunty took over in San Andreas until Father Jacobus Motter arrived in July 1856. Father Motter was given all of Calaveras County as his pastorate, and was faced with problem of building churches. His success in building churches in San Andreas, Angels Camp, Albany Flat (near Calaveritas), Murphys,

and Campo Seco certainly qualified him for the title of the great church builder.

It is claimed that when the people decided to build a new church, a woman stood out in front of the vacant lot holding a gold pan and telling the miners as they returned from work that we are going to build a house of worship. As the men went by they would put gold dust in the pan and soon there was enough to buy materials for construction of the church. Later the same method was used to furnish the church. The church at San Andreas was erected costing about \$5000. It was dedicated on August 9, 1857, by Archbishop Alemany of San Francisco, followed by High Mass and a sermon by Reverend Father McFeeley. The church occupied the same site as the present church and was located on the hill to the south of town with an inspiring view over the surrounding country. It had a cupola, surmounted with the cross, and carved in a white marble tablet over the door was the following inscription in Roman letters: "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism."

By 1853 San Andreas was beginning to form some semblance of a town structure, with three main streets, one of which was China St. (St. Charles). San Andreas received official recognition in 1854, when the area post office was moved there from Third Crossing, where it had been established just two years previously. Prior to San Andreas' boom years, Kentucky House by the old cement plant at Third Crossing served as the commercial center for this section of the county, and provided a popular "road house" rest stop for travelers heading south to Angels Camp and Sonora.

For six years Father Motter unceasingly made his way over the trails in the rugged hills and gulches of Calaveras, and never was a pastor more devoted to the welfare of a flock entrusted to his care. Even though some of the camps had thinned out to but a few hopeful

residents, production was on the decrease by the beginning of 1860. He still made regular trips throughout the length and breadth of his parish, lest any of the faithful should be deprived of the consolations of their religion. As the Gold Rush subsided, so did the congregation and St Andrew's lost its status of a "parish" and became a Mission of St. Patrick's Parish in Angels Camp in 1856. But St Andrew's retained a resident priest until the year 1900, when Angels Camp was deemed large and prosperous enough to have a resident pastor of its own. St. Andrew's remained as a Mission Church for approximately 100 years.

In May 1862, Father Motter was recalled to San Francisco to become the secretary to Archbishop Alemany. His zeal had resulted in the achievement of more than any other apostle who covered the early trials of Calaveras.

Father Ynacio Yzguierdo, a refugee priest from Mexico was the pastor at San Andreas for the next three years. He leaves a definite record of his work, a rare thing for these early priests to do. In his final report on May 1, 1865, he states that he had churches in San Andreas, Campo Seco, Lancha Plana, Angels Camp, and Murphys under his supervision. The good priest had also established a Catholic school in San Andreas with over sixty children in attendance, both Catholic and non-Catholic.

In 1866, the town of San Andreas contained about twelve hundred people. After Father Yzguierdo left San Andreas in 1865, the parish was taken over by Father John F. Cassidy, who remained there until the Fall of 1868, when he was succeeded by Father Timothy Fitzpatrick, who in turn was succeeded the following year by Father E. D. Morrissey. These priests continued to visit the larger of the remaining camps in Calaveras County. Father Morrissey remained as pastor from 1869 to December 1872.

About the 16th of December, 1872, Father Julius Herde came to San Andreas to succeed Father E.D. Morrisey, remaining in that capacity until February, 1874, when he was replaced by Rev. Patrick Gallagher. Father Michael O’Riordan succeeded Father Gallagher in the pastorate in February 1878, after he had called in a Dominican priest, Rev. William Dempflin, to assist him and give missions throughout the county. Besides attending to a score of missions, Father O’Riordan held services in the churches at Mokelumne Hill, Murphy’s, Angels Camp, and Copperopolis, and in a community church at West Point.

Father P. McGuire, who seems to have been acting only as administrator until the arrival of Father Santandreu, succeeded Father O’Riordan as pastor of San Andreas in December 1878. Father O’Riordan came to San Andreas in the spring of 1879, remaining until the month of May 1880. Father Santandreu had been sent from his native Spain to Ireland to finish his studies for the priesthood by Archbishop Alemany, with a view of bringing him to California in order to work among the Spanish people in his Archdiocese. Having served at Mission San Jose in 1877 and Folsom in 1878, he now came to be pastor in San Andreas (he died in San Francisco in 1944 while pastor of the Spanish church there.) After Father Santandreu left the parish of San Andreas, Father Patrick O’Connell became pastor, remaining until May, 1884, when we notice him baptizing a certain Aman Treat, a member of one of the pioneer families of Calaveras County.

After Father O’Connell left there does not seem to have been any fixed pastor assigned to the parish, as Father A. Geyer was constituted administrator in 1885, and Father Van Schie and Father John Quinn served there in the year 1886. In the year 1885, Archbishop Riordan succeeded Archbishop Alemany. The county of Calaveras having been incorporated into the new Sacramento Diocese, with Bishop Manogue as

the head, San Andreas probably at the time was under the care of the new pastor of Sutter Creek, Father Van Schie until March, 1887, when Father Michael O'Reilly was made resident pastor. In February 1888, Father O'Reilly was succeeded by Father Bernard McFeeley, who remained as pastor until December 1892, when Father Jeremiah Gleeson succeeded him.

When Father Hunt took up his residence in Angels Camp in 1900, the pastor of San Andreas gave over to him the care of the missions in the area, retaining the missions of Mokelumne Hill, West Point, and Camanche, with other small stations. From 1901 to 1922, Father J. Vaughan was pastor of Angels Camp.

In 1896 we find Father Michael O'Reilly back in San Andreas, where he remained pastor until 1915, when he was succeeded by Father Fitzgerald. In 1916, Father Fitzgerald was succeeded by Father James O'Flanagan, who remained until 1922, when he was appointed pastor in Angels Camp. Father Michael O'Flanagan succeeded him in San Andreas. In 1926, with the departure of Father Michael O'Flanagan, San Andreas ceased to have the ministrations of a resident priest, and from then on became a mission of the pastor of Angels Camp. The care of the whole of Calaveras County came under the jurisdiction of Father James O'Flanagan the pastor of Angels Camp. From 1921 to 1930 with no staff, he is remembered as holding catechism classes and visiting parishioners. Father James O'Flanagan was succeeded as pastor of all Calaveras County by Father John Maguire, who was in Angels Camp from 1932 to 1948.

Father Maguire had the foresight to purchase the land behind the parish house up to Sunset Ave. for St. Andrew's future use. Mary Loomis, then in High School, began her long dedication to CCD teaching under the direction of the Daughters of Charity who were

transported to and from San Francisco by parishioners. After the departure of the Daughters of Charity, Father Maguire arranged for the Sisters of the Holy Names to hold CCD during the summers.

On Father Maguire's departure comes Father James Kenny from 1948 to 1960. He became pastor of Angels Camp, serving the missions of St. Andrew's, Our Lady of Fatima and St. Thomas Aquinas. In 1956 he organized the building of the new St. Andrew's Church. Following is a list of the members of his committee who raised \$40,000 for that purpose.

Honorary Chariman:

Most Reverend Robert J. Armstrong, Bishop of Sacramento

Honorary Co-Chairman: Reverend James Kenny

General Chairman: Ralph C. Treat

Executive Council: Joseph Brown

Don Cuneo

Joseph Gardella

George Huberty

Henry Lavaroni

Joseph Queirolo

Neal Sears

John Squellati

Campaign Organization: Ed Buchanan

Walter Etzel

Charles Goodell

Theodore Kravitz

John Merow

John Miller

Albert Pargett

John Pargett

Frank Sandretto

Dave Serra

Morris Ward

Tormey Ward

Marvin Waters

Auxiliary Services:

Mrs. John Squellati, General Chair

On November 25, 1956 St Andrew's parishioner's celebrated the dedication of the third St. Andrew's Catholic Church building where it still "affords a most beautiful view of the 'camp' and surrounding country."

During 1961 to 1962 Father Carl Wellman served as Pastor in Angels Camp. Father Edward Donohoe served the missions of Calaveras County during 1962 to 1963 as an assistant.

In 1963 the Diocese of Stockton was created with the first bishop, Hugh Donohoe and St. Andrew's regained parish status in October. It is of this date that all official records are "registered" in the record books as St. Andrew's Parish. Prior to that date, all official records were kept at St. Patrick's in Angels Camp.

Father Martin Starc was assigned as the first pastor of St. Andrew's, serving in that capacity from 1963 to 1981. Father Starc was born in Yugoslavia in 1907. Politics and the rise of Communism caused Father Starc and many others to come to America, and he began serving as priest in Oakland, California. As St. Andrew's was elevated to the status of parish, it adopted as its missions St. Thomas Aquinas in Mokelumne Hill, and Our Lady of Fatima in West Point. The property donated to the Parish in the Valley Springs area has no church on the property. The parish territory covers about half of Calaveras County and reaches from West Point to the San Joaquin County line.

In 1969 our new bishop was Most Rev. Merlin Guyilfoyle.

While the parish rectory was being built, Fr. Starc took up residence in a nearby apartment in San Andreas. In 1972, Fr. Starc was named a Monsignor by Pope Paul VI. He served as Pastor of St. Andrew's until his retirement in 1981. He continued to reside in the parish house and served the new pastor, Father Edward Donohoe from 1981 to 1984, in an unofficial capacity, visiting the hospital, convalescent homes and to serve wherever needed. He passed away Oct. 29, 1996. During the pastorate of Fr. Donohoe, retired Fr. George Marengo also in residence in San Andreas provided additional pastoral service.

Father Edward Donohoe was known for very friendly visits to parishioners and was well known and respected by the entire community. He had made sure that the CCD program in Angels Camp continued after the nuns left. He did the same for St. Andrew's. He had lay people come and teach parishioners, one of whom was Mary Loomis, on the instruction of CCD. Mary Loomis was very involved during years of both Fathers Starc and Donohoe as CCD coordinator.

Roger Mahoney was Bishop of Stockton from 1980-1985. Then Bishop Montrose 1985-1999 and then Bishop Blaire in 1999.

Upon the departure of Father Donohoe, Father Oliver O'Grady was assigned by Bishop Roger Mahoney to the parish from 1984 to 1992.

He was replaced by Father William L. Kraft who served from 1992 to 1997. Father Kraft was born and raised in Waterloo and was no stranger to this area. As an energetic and much needed personality, Fr. Bill was well liked and appreciated by all parishioners. He was assigned to St. Patrick's in Sonora in 1997.

Upon Father Kraft's departure in the spring of 1997, Father Sabri Yusef spent several months as Interim Administrator. He was a native of Iraq and originally a priest of the Chaldean rite. He celebrated a Mass in Aramaic, presented a fascinating historical scripture study, and a session with a video on the Chaldean rite.

In the summer of 1997 the Bishop assigned Father George C. Campos to St. Andrew's. He quickly settled into the parish community and completed several projects. He added a Saturday evening Mass, and supported youth activities and the Spanish speaking parishioners. He touched many with his gift of delivering meaningful homilies and his friendliness.

LATER PASTORS

Fr. Michael Kelley, Sept. 10th 2000 to August 2002.

Fr. Matthew O'Donnell, August 2002 to January 8th 2004.

Fr. Pat Curran January 9th 2004 to July 31st 2012.

Fr. Lonachan Arouje, Aug 1st 2012 to present.

MEMORIES
AND
ACTS OF FAITHFULNESS

According to Mary Taylor of Our Lady of Fatima in West Point, Mr. and Mrs. John Parmeter spearheaded the construction of this church in 1947 to 1948. The land for the future church was donated by the Johnson's (Raymond and Berry). Previous to the church being built, Mass was held in the Timberwolf Tavern's upstairs dance hall on Sundays.

The priest was Father Clarence Corcoran, a young energetic well-loved person. He was once heard to remark that there were only three places he wanted to be- Heaven, Ireland, or the Mother Lode. The good Father often walked the streets of the town swapping yarns and getting acquainted with the people of West Point.

*

In the 1950's the Daughters of Charity from San Francisco came to teach the children catechism in the basement of the church in West Point. Their nickname was God's Geese. Father Donohoe recalls them driving in the convertible car through town appearing to look as if they were flying. They wore the very high white starched coifs, which were so distinctive of their order.

*

Mary Jane Garamendi of Chili Gulch relates to us that Kate Haggeman in beautiful riding clothes and an elegant hat rode on a white horse from her home on the banks of the North Fork of the Calaveras

River to attend Mass. Kate, nearing seventy, carried a white altar cloth, very carefully, on her outstretched arm as she rode. This was a routine that she carried out through many years.

*

Fred Cuneo recalls that over the door of the new St. Andrew Church is the marble statue of Saint Andrew. It was imported from Italy and donated by the faithful departed couple, John and Adeline Squellati.

*

Fr. Bill Kraft hired John Tirapelle, a parishioner from Moke Hill, who built the ramp for easier access into the church at West Point in 1997.

*

Fr. George Campos did many things to improve and repair Our Lady of Fatima. Jim Hills and his brother Bob Hills have donated much of their time to improve the church.

*

For at least 30 years, Lorraine Beckman and her husband Lee faithfully cared for the church grounds, the inside and outside of the church. It was written in 1998 that there were thirty-five to fifty people who attended Mass at Our Lady of Fatima Church. Mary Taylor, Ramona Spicer, John and Phyllis Barth and Lorraine Beckman remembered when only eight to ten people attended Mass in their little church at West Point in the 1950's and 1960's.

*

One of the early priests of special note was Father Ygnacio Yzquierdo. In his final entry in the Baptismal Record of St. Andrew Church, just prior to his departure in May 1865, he remarked it cost \$40

for a ton of hay to feed his horse. His final statement was: "I am going to leave this house to the priest of San Andreas improved in this way. It now has seven rooms, four beds and in a word, it has all the necessary things for a comfortable housekeeping."

*

Father Donahue loves to relate how one time Father Lenahan offered to take four nuns from the Daughters of Charity, with their big, wide veils, in his convertible car to the countryside. In crossing Calaveritas Creek his car got stuck in the middle of the creek. With water rushing in the car the good nuns had to wade ashore with their shoes and habits dripping wet.

*

Madeline Cavagnaro remembers when she was a child, that Father O'Reilly often rode his horse from San Andreas to Camanche to serve monthly Mass. What hardships these priests endured!

*

Louise Greenlaw relates about Father O'Reilly staying overnight at the Costa home in Calaveritas in order to be ready to serve Mass the next morning. During the night another guest, Ed Kelly of Sheep Ranch, accidentally fell over the banister of the outside porch and crushed his skull on the cement below. Father O'Reilly was awakened by the moans of the dying man and rushed down in his bare feet to help and administer the Last Rites to the poor man.

*

Tormey Ward of Valley Springs, remembers when he was a teenager he often “cranked up” the family car and brought Father Flynn to serve late Mass in Camanche.

*

We can never forget Unelda and Ralph Treat. For years Unelda repeatedly cooked dinners in her home for visiting nuns and also for priests and their guests. She is one person we dearly miss. “Nelda’s” husband Ralph had a beautiful voice and always sang a solo at Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve at St. Andrews.

*

For many years Benito and Pete Freccero traveled each Sunday all the way from their ranch in Old Gulch to attend Mass at St. Andrew’s. These two elderly gentlemen were a picturesque sight dressed in dark clothes and dark hats traveling by horse and cart. What is interesting is they often served as altar boys, something they had learned to do in their native Italy.

*

Bonnie Danielson’s great aunt Mayme told of when Father O’Reilly had supper once a month and stayed with her parents, Tom and Mary Ellen Tynan around 1910 in Mokelumne Hill. It was a family joke that Mr. Tynan seemed to always fall asleep during the priest’s sermons. The Tynan’s were great friends of the McSorelys.

*

John and Phyllis Barth remember Father Starc as a reverent, loving person whose Masses and homilies were very special. They always knew when Father Starc was at Our Lady of Fatima when they saw his

famous little blue Volkswagon. Fr. Starc was responsible for the building of the parish house and the Parish Hall at St. Andrew's.

*

Mary Loomis recalls the beginnings of the Altar Society in St. Andrew's during Msgr. Starc's Pastorate. Mary also recalls how Msgr. Starc used the Legion of Mary to help take the Parish Census. Mary Loomis, Jesse Hernandez and Hannah Kent completed the census in two years by visiting all the parishioners throughout the entire parish. Father Mulligan originally started the Legion of Mary in Angels. These women who helped with the census also were responsible for the care of the altar, fresh flowers, altar linens, and cleaned the church as part of their love and respect for their church.

*

Frank and Christina Huberty and family used to walk from their ranch on Mountain Ranch Road to sit in the front pew for Sunday Mass in days gone by.

*

Flossie Sabatini remembers the Altar Society, which started in 1947 in Moke Hill. After many fund raising events, they refurbished the church completely.

*

Father Donohoe remembers several priests who served the community. Fathers John Maguire, Thomas Bracker, P.F. Keane, Michael Hogan, Daniel Cullinan, John Dowling, Patrick Lanigan, Joseph Carton, P.V. Lenehan, John Burke, and Donald Cefalu.

*

When the Gold Rush began, the hill where the Catholic cemetery is now was used for burial. In 1851, it was officially certified as a Catholic Cemetery.

*

Dorothy and Henry Lavaroni tell of when during the demolition of the old church and the construction of the new church Sunday Mass was to be held in the San Andreas town hall. They were requested to be the keepers of the altar stone, a polished square of marble stone in which is embedded a sacred relic of St. Andrew. Following serious conversations it was decided that there was really only one safe place to keep the altar stone, under their bed. For the duration of the construction of the new church they made their little pilgrimage each Sunday. The church was finally completed and they were pleased to see the altar stone permanently set in the new altar.

Dorothy graduated from college with a BA in music and was the church organist from 1950 to 1999.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Joy, Emmett P., *Chronicles of San Andreas*.

Mace, O. Henry, *Between the Rivers*.

Walsh, Henry J., S.J., *Hallowed Were the Gold Dust Trails*.

Wood, Richard Coke, *The Land of Skulls*

Thanks to:

Lorrayne Kennedy & Santa Marrone (Calaveras County Archives)

Willard Fuller & Dee Tipton (Calaveras Historical Society)

Calaveras Public Library (Main Branch, San Andreas)

Lodi Public Library (California Room)

St. Patrick's Church, Angels Camp (Records from 1856 to 1963)

Rev. George C. Campos

Frances Clements, St. Andrew's Parish Secretary

Mr. Fred Cuneo

Roger Ebbett, Ebbett Printing

Annabel Greaney

Martin and Victoria Grimm

Darlene Ward Heller

Mary Loomis

Lane Raider

Patricia Ruthrauff

Barbara Snow

Char Stanton

Cheryl Zeigler, St. Patrick's Parish Secretary, Angels Camp