

# TELLING OUR STORY

Trinity Lime Rock – June 25, 2006

The material following is a transcription, expansion, and (where errors of fact can be determined) correction of the Rev. Dr. Joseph Krasinski's notes taken during the "Telling Our Story" program conducted by the Rev. Erik Larsen, with the Rt. Rev. Andrew Smith, Bishop of Connecticut. The principal source for this document is the flip charts Fr. Krasinski prepared while the parish recounted its history, the author of this document's memory of the evening's discussion, and in some instances, particularly for the early history of the parish, published sources. All instances where corrections or additions have been made are footnoted with the source used.

Following a short service appropriate to the occasion by Bp. Smith, Fr. Larsen polled the congregation to determine how long each of us had been at Trinity. Of the approximately 50 parishioners attending, we found some who had come to Trinity within the current year, and one who had been here more than 90 years.

Fr. Larsen called upon the Parish Historian for a capsule history of the founding of Trinity and the years that preceded the earliest memories of those present in the room.

## Trinity's beginnings:

The parish's early history traces back to its parent parish, St. John's Salisbury, and to the two families who were responsible for Trinity's founding, the Barnums and the Richardsons. The existing parish history<sup>1</sup> tells us that the cornerstone of Trinity was laid on July 10, 1873 by Bishop Williams, assisted by the Rev. William A. Johnson of St. John's and other clergymen<sup>2</sup>. A tale, possibly apocryphal, that a rainbow appeared in the sky on this occasion, has been frequently recounted<sup>3</sup>. The parish history further notes that Lime Rock at that time was the prosperous hub of a local iron industry, indeed a "veritable iron empire"<sup>4</sup> that is today known as the historic Salisbury Iron District<sup>5</sup> perhaps the largest manufacturer of railroad car wheels in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Goodwin, Julia Emmons, *A History of Trinity Church*, (Lime Rock, 1949).

<sup>2</sup> Goodwin, page 1

<sup>3</sup> Fales, Edward D., Jr., unpublished mss "Born Under a Rainbow" citing files of Faith (Mrs. David) Campbell of Salisbury. This is corroborated by an article in the *Connecticut Western News*, dated Friday, July 18, 1873, which is quoted in the service bulletin for July 10, 1973.

<sup>4</sup> Kirby, Ed, *Echoes of Iron in Connecticut's Northwest Corner*, (Sharon, 1998), p 27

<sup>5</sup> Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, *The Iron Heritage Trail* (map and brochure), (undated, circa 2003)

<sup>6</sup> Keith, Herbert C., and Rufus Harte, the Early Iron Industry of Connecticut (New Haven, 1935), page 16. During the evening's discussion it was mentioned that the Salisbury iron industry was responsible for much of the heavy ordinance in the American Revolution, and it was also stated that this iron was used to construct the chain across the Hudson River in that war. While the cannon information has been corroborated, it appears that the connection between Salisbury iron and the Hudson River chain is simply legend. The authors are clear that the iron for this chain came from the Franklin, New Jersey iron district.

It is clear that the Barnum and Richardson families, and the Barnum Richardson Company, substantially funded the construction of the church<sup>7</sup>, and it is also clear that the women of Trinity, led by Mrs. W. H. Barnum, secured the necessary pledges of support from the Protestant families of Lime Rock (as well as from her husband, Senator William H. Barnum, considered the wealthiest man in Northwest Connecticut at that time<sup>8</sup>) so that the project could proceed.<sup>9</sup>

The land for Trinity Church was donated by James and Julia Goodwin Ensign<sup>10</sup>, from a portion of the Goodwin farm. Due to the shape of the land and its orientation between what is now Route 112 and Dugway Road, the church was constructed with the altar at the north end of the building, contrary to usual Anglican practice<sup>11</sup>, which dictated an eastern placement.

On November 5, 1874, Trinity Church was consecrated by Bishop Williams and the Johnson organ was installed.<sup>12</sup> On May 3, 1875, a Parish organization was formed<sup>13</sup>.

At this time, services were being held by the Rev. A. S. Clark and other clergymen, until 1876 when the Rev. Milledge Pendril Walker, a Canadian, was called to the first rectorship, which he commenced on February 27 of that year.<sup>14</sup>

## **Fr. Walker's rectorate through the demise of the iron industry:**

Several long-time parishioners commented on how Trinity has always been a welcoming church and that they believed that it had been so since the beginning.

A series of articles in the *New York Times* in the latter half of 1883 revealed how welcoming and tolerant the church, as personified by its Senior Warden, Senator Barnum, actually was. The *New York Times* articles recounted that Fr. Lynch, the Roman Catholic priest in Lakeville, had erected a crucifix on the lawn of St. Mary's church, which enraged many local Protestants. Ex-Governor Holley led a delegation to Fr. Lynch to ask him to remove the offending crucifix, and when he did not do so, called on Senator Barnum to ask him to discharge his Roman Catholic workmen, which he declined to do. During the course of these articles, it was disclosed that Sen. Barnum had donated between \$6000 and \$8000 to St. Mary's church in the spiritual interests of his Roman Catholic workmen, which disclosure also enraged other local Protestants.

An example of the integration of Trinity Church within the Lime Rock community, was that Trinity made use of the Lime Rock Casino, a social and civic betterment club for Barnum and Richardson workmen and their families, as the church's parish hall.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Kirby, page 99

<sup>8</sup> Goodwin, page 1

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Goodwin, page 1

<sup>11</sup> Fischer, David Hackett, *Albion's Seed*, (New York and Oxford, 1989), page 118

<sup>12</sup> Goodwin, page 2

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

In 1894, a woman first cast a vote in a parish election of a Rector.<sup>16</sup>

## **After the iron industry – the bad years:**

After World War I, Barnum and Richardson failed, and with that, the financial lifeline of Trinity Lime Rock. During this period, the parish was served by part-time clergy, from St. John's in Salisbury, from Christ Church in Canaan, and from the Salisbury School.<sup>17</sup>

The tradition of the women of Trinity providing much of the support structure for the parish continued with the creation of the Ladies Auxiliary (now the ECW), which was founded in 1919. In 1940, the first woman was seated on the Vestry of Trinity Lime Rock.

Finances were extremely tight during the period, and for a time church services in the Winter were held in the parish barn, near the site of the present garage/storage building.

Also significant in this period was the rise of Lime Rock as an artists' colony, probably due to the low prices houses commanded locally due to the demise of the iron industry, but also due to the entrepreneurial efforts of a New York City real estate investor, Alfred Stone, who had purchased 326 acres, 27 remaining houses, and assorted other buildings from the bankrupt Salisbury Iron Corporation in 1925. The Arts and Crafts movement found an outpost in Lime Rock, with a foundry being converted to a paper mill, the Casino making prints on linen, a third building making etched books, and the former Leonard Richardson house becoming the Institute for General Semantics<sup>18</sup>. Also, in the 1930s, Trinity began to be something of a weekend community as it was convenient to New York City by rail and by the new parkways radiating north of the city.

In 1942, under the priest in charge from the Salisbury School, in the dark days of World War II, the Trinity Lime Rock Christmas Pageant was created and still continues today.

## **The current era:**

In 1945, after a period of 28 years without resident clergy,<sup>19</sup> the Vestry concluded that Trinity had recovered sufficiently to be able to afford a full-time priest, due in no small part to parishioners whom the automobile enabled to attend although they resided in Falls Village and Cornwall, which did not have Episcopal Churches<sup>20</sup>. Thus, they retained Fr. VanWyck, a priest straight from seminary, to serve as Resident Priest in Charge of Trinity, his first

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<sup>15</sup> Goodwin, page 7

<sup>16</sup> Goodwin, page 4

<sup>17</sup> Goodwin, page 9

<sup>18</sup> Gordon, Robert B., *A Landscape Transformed: The Ironmaking District of Salisbury, Connecticut*, (Oxford, 2001), page 105.

<sup>19</sup> Dartford, Gerald P. *Trinity Parish 1875 – 1975: An Historical Perspective*, an address for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Trinity Church, page 4.

<sup>20</sup> Dartford, page 5

parish. Fr. VanWyck substantially revitalized the Sunday School, which won the Diocesan St. Alban's banner in 1947 and was pictured in the Connecticut Churchman.<sup>21</sup>

Fr. Flockhart and Fr. MacIntosh followed Fr. VanWyck as full-fledged Rectors of Trinity Church.

It was noted that the Antiques Fair that has since become the Salisbury Fall Festival was begun by Trinity Church, and held in the old Town Hall. People in the meeting place the beginning of this annual event in 1946, although the Chairman of the Centennial Committee dates its beginnings as 1957 and identifies its founders as Ruby Howell and Alice Christian.<sup>22</sup> It was conceded by both those in attendance at the meeting and by the Chair of the Centennial Committee<sup>23</sup> that this event quickly became a principal source of the church finances, producing \$15,000 annually, more than 25% of the church budget.

A prevailing theme throughout the evening was the Sunday School and its variable fortunes, which seem to have come in waves. While our Sunday School has experienced many great successes, we have had our low points as well, when there seem to be no children at all in the congregation. One speaker noted that in the 1950-55 period, the few children Trinity had attended Sunday School at the Salisbury Congregational Church. The speaker noted that she had been awarded a perfect attendance pin by Trinity Lime Rock for attending the Salisbury Congregational Sunday School.

Another speaker remembered Fr. Bruce LeBaron, a tall thin man with a cape. They also recalled that at that time the children were responsible for ringing the church bell, and that it gave them quite a ride if they held onto the bell rope.

Lime Rock Park, across the street from the church, in what had been a gravel pit, became a matter of much interest soon after its creation in 1953. Destroyed by the flood of 1955, it began operation in earnest in 1958, and Trinity became the church closest to a significant auto race track in the United States. That distinction was marred by community complaints about track noise, which led to legal action by the Lime Rock Protective Association, in which Trinity initially did not participate.

After one memorable Sunday when Lime Rock Park held practice during church hours, the church joined in the legal action, and an injunction prohibiting Sunday racing and limiting other uses of the Lime Rock Park property ensued. For many years relations between Lime Rock Park and Trinity were poor at best.

The church, however, continued to grow. When the basement space that had become the church hall became too small, a new church hall was built. In 1962, Bishop Esquirol dedicated the present Walker Hall, which named for Scott Walker, the Senior Warden at the time the building was constructed. He was also the son of Trinity's first Rector.<sup>24</sup> When a

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<sup>21</sup> Goodwin, page 10

<sup>22</sup> Dartford, page 5

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

financial shortfall delayed its completion, the ECW again stepped up to the challenge and donated the funds for completion from its treasury.

In the 1960s, the ECW also began what has become an annual Memorial Day weekend tag sale and bake sale that continued to this day.

The parish had hoped to raise \$100,000 for an endowment by its centennial in 1975. Unfortunately, it fell short of the mark, raising only \$32,000, which included one \$10,000 bequest<sup>25</sup>.

The next Rector of Trinity, Fr. Newton Howden, was called on a part time basis due to the financial downturn of the late 1960s. He began the traditions of Simnel cakes for Mothering Sunday, the Ash Wednesday macaroni and cheese supper, the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, and the Maundy Thursday lamb dinner. He later became full time, and was in charge for the change to the “new” Prayer Book.

In another innovation during Fr. Howden’s tenure, Lucy Cooney was invited to organize a nursery and elementary school for the community. This activity remained at Trinity Lime Rock for a number of years, with children of several present parishioners having attended it or its summer day camp adjunct.

And, during the period beginning July 1973 and culminating in May, 1975, Trinity Church celebrated its Centennial.<sup>26</sup>

The Barnum Richardson Company and its principals had been the church’s major financial contributors early on, but that source of funds had dried up with the demise of the Salisbury iron industry. However, in the 1980s, a final bit of financial largess came to Trinity from the Barnum and Richardson families in the form of the Richardson-Harwood Trust. This bequest, of \$105,000, came from the family that had previously donated many of the furnishings of the church, and has represented a source of revenues for the church.

At this time, and as a result of the income from this trust, Fr. Howden was able to assume a fulltime position. In other matters, the new (1982) Hymnal was introduced, and the Art Show began (under Mrs. Howden’s leadership), drawing on the tradition of the Lime Rock Artists Association shows of the 1920s.

Following Fr. Howden’s retirement in 1985, and after Fr. Manderbach’s first term as Interim Rector, Fr. Holcomb came to Trinity in 1986,. His rectorate began with some discord as he left for a previously arranged month in Africa shortly after he arrived at Trinity. However, his outreach efforts included founding a large chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous at Trinity that continues today. He also is remembered as having re-started the Sunday School, having instituted the custom of a coffee hour after every Sunday 10:30 AM service, and as being a great preacher.

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<sup>25</sup> Dartford, page 6

<sup>26</sup> Dartford, page 1

Fr. Holcomb made a major effort at bridging the gap between Trinity and Lime Rock Park. He was very successful at this, and was eventually designated as the Chaplain of Lime Rock Park, the only priest at Trinity ever to have held that distinction. He and the parish also participated in a pulpit exchange with an English church, which brought Fr. Moore to us for several months.

The 1990s began with Trinity in a precarious financial situation, not because it did not have income, or because of the stock market decline of that period, but because 30% of its income came from one donor. As so often happens in situations like this, that donor became dissatisfied and left Trinity. A period of internal strife, both spiritual and financial, ensued.

Fr. Manderbach came to us then in the second of his two terms with us as Interim Rector. He was, appropriately, spoken of by many in the group as the “beloved Interim”. His service to Trinity continued long after his second term as Interim, as he served voluntarily as the “back-up priest”, conducted the Sunday School worship services, and generally functioned in a support capacity for several more years.

In 1993, the Rev. Mitzi Noble, our first woman priest, was called as Rector, bringing her husband Paul as a bonus. She was with us five years, and began her tenure by entertaining all the parishioners, in groups of eight, for dinner in the Rectory.

Mitzi’s tenure was marked by an improvement in the music (this was the specialty of her husband, who held a PhD in the subject), greatly increased attendance, to the point that the average Sunday attendance (ASA) exceeded 100 at least one year. Her commitment to making every worship service a memorable event in all ways was notable. (It should also be noted that there were serious problems at St. John’s, Salisbury at this point, however.)

These successes were significantly undercut by the ill-considered decision of the Diocese to permit the creation of a new Episcopal chapel in Cornwall, creating a fifth Episcopal congregation in what was already a grossly over-churched area, a rural area with sufficient population to support perhaps one decent-sized Episcopal church.

Other notable events of Mitzi Noble’s tenure as Rector included the purchase of Trinity Field, the seven(?) acre expanse adjacent to the church proper, from the Goodwin family – a family that had donated the original property to Trinity, and provided us with a Senior Warden and many parishioners over the years. Through the generosity of the family, the field was purchased at a generous discount from fair market value.

In 1998, the growing Sunday School made it apparent that we needed more space, and a capital campaign to add a Sunday School and administration wing to the building was begun. During Mitzi’s rectorate, a rising stock market had loosened donor purse strings, but, more importantly, had provided significant market value appreciation for the endowment, permitting the church to fund shortfalls from the endowment without reporting a significant decrease in total endowment.

Br. Randall Horton, an Episcopal hermit monk, was retained as organist following the departure of an organist based at Hotchkiss. The parish undertook Blessing of the Animals

in the church on St. Francis Sunday (with horses and other large animals being blessed outside) and the tradition continues. Adult education in the area of spirituality also increased. The use of young people as acolytes grew by leaps and bounds, to the extent that we would frequently see four, five, six or even more young people in an ordinary Sunday morning procession. The Christmas Pageant also increased in grandeur and professionalism of the young performers.

The Rev. Noble left for an early sabbatical, due in part to her need to recuperate from surgery. While on sabbatical, her husband was offered a position in suburban Washington, DC, that included a pension, something he lacked, and which in general was too attractive to decline. Since he had put his own career on hold for his wife to come to Trinity, the Nobles left for him to undertake that assignment.

Fr. Rob Clements came as the Interim Rector at that point. Fr. Clements was noted for his dynamic preaching, and during his short tenure with us, he continued the programs of his predecessor and continued to build attendance, both of adults and of young people.

In 1999, the Rev. Beth Long was called as the 13<sup>th</sup> Rector of Trinity – and the second female Rector in a row, the first time this has occurred in the Diocese of Connecticut. A former Roman Catholic nun, Beth brought an introspectively spiritual perspective to the pulpit and was quite unlike her predecessors in both her preaching and her management style. Both for these reasons, but also because a significant number of parishioners died or moved away, ASA and membership declined. The spectacular end of the “dot com” bull market significantly reduced the financial flexibility of the parish at this time, and difficulties in funding the operating budget became a major – at times, overriding -- concern of the parish.

Beth’s rectorate was marked by several positive developments, most notably her hiring of Christine Gevert as organist and choir director. The organ committee had previously concluded that options like rebuilding the Johnson organ or purchasing a new pipe organ were financially impossible, and had concluded that a digital organ would be needed, and needed soon as the Johnson organ was increasingly undependable. When an appropriate Rodgers digital organ became available, the funds to purchase it were raised in less than a month, and Christine and the new organ arrived at Trinity virtually simultaneously. The original Johnson organ was sold to an organ rebuilder, with an ultimate destination in a Congregational church in Bar Harbor, ME.

Christine began rebuilding the choir, demanding of the members more than they thought they could produce, yet always somehow producing the desired result. Soon after her arrival, she began a series of concerts, both contemplative Saturday morning “Concerts for Peace” and more elaborate baroque concerts incorporating both the stronger Trinity singers and outside professionals. She also undertook joint performances with choirs of other churches in our area, including the Millerton Presbyterian Church, the Salisbury Congregational Church, St. John’s Church in Salisbury, and choristers joined us from many other congregations for occasional services. This as well led to several inter-church and inter-denomination worship events.

Christine also initiated and led a major outreach effort, called “Crescendo!”, for which Trinity was the incubator, source of backup resources, and nurturer. This organization,

“Telling Our Story” (with addenda).

which stages concerts of performers of national and world stature in the Northwest Corner and beyond, conducts master classes, and sings difficult choral works, has now matured to the point where it is legally an entity independent of Trinity, but is still based here. Crescendo served as the basis for an area-wide Hurricane Relief Concert, with more than 100 singers, held under Christine's direction at the Hotchkiss School.

The choir of Trinity Church, Wall Street began a series of annual visits to Trinity Lime Rock during their annual weekend workshop at the Trinity Conference Center in West Cornwall. This choir, a professional organization of around 20 voices, particularly enjoys attending on St. Francis' Sunday in conjunction with the blessing of the animals and providing us with a preview of their repertory for the upcoming year.

During Beth's rectorate, the parish grew greatly in self-management and administrative abilities. The committee structure Mitzi had put in place diminished significantly, and in its place the Wardens, Vestry, and individual Trinity members and groups became empowered to both superintend day-to-day operation of the parish and undertake major initiatives. Among the parishioners, mutual trust and support of these operations and initiatives became the rule.

As an early example, when it was discovered that the initial parish website included unexpected and unwanted pop-up ads for on-line gambling and other unsavory pursuits, the Senior Warden was able to simply say "make it happen" in order to get a brand new parish website produced that within a year ([www.trinitylimerock.org](http://www.trinitylimerock.org)) won recognition in a national church publication as the parish website in Province I most worth visiting.

In other self-managed initiatives, the Wardens initiated the Northwest Cluster, an informal organization of the five Episcopal churches and one Lutheran church in the area with an eye to economic efficiencies and simply getting to know each other better. Trinity undertook to host an EFM (Education For Ministry) curriculum, which has now completed its first successful year. A Men's Group was established that now meets monthly to do buildings and grounds-related tasks and then repair to a local restaurant for dinner and fellowship. Observing that the children seemed to be at loose ends in the summer, an innovative program called Summer Sunday School Soccer was created to give them something to do at church during that season and to try to involve the less-committed and the un-churched, while making constructive use of Trinity Field. Other activities for children were instituted as well, including Easter Egg dyeing and an Epiphany pantomime. Two consecutive confirmation classes of more than five young people each were prepared and confirmed. Many more babies were baptized than funerals were held. When Lime Rock Park decided to charge for parking, the parish mobilized to serve this need, raising money for the church and welcoming Lime Rock Park patrons.

Most memorably, perhaps, the Sunday School and Administration wing, the renovation of Walker Hall, and the refurbishment of the sanctuary was completed without cost overruns. The addition received an award from the American Institute of Architects.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED

Following a pot-luck supper, the group re-convened to attempt to extract lessons from the history we had discussed before dinner. The bullet points below apply generally to the most recent rectorate, unless otherwise indicated.

- **Sunday School support system decreased.** During the past few years, the Sunday School has suffered from significant decreases in its adult support structure. An example was the loss of Fr. Manderbach, who conducted the worship services regularly. Yet even while the support structure for religious education of our younger children was declining, Trinity produced two consecutive confirmation classes of more than five confirmands each, and baptisms far outpaced funerals.
- **The clergy spouse's role is important here.** This was clear in a positive way during the rectorate of Mitzi Noble, and, unfortunately, in a negative way during the rectorate of Beth Long. At least one anecdote earlier in the evening referred to the wife of an earlier rector who felt Lime Rock was howling wilderness, and that the ECW had welcomed her with high tea to disabuse her of that notion.
- **We have a small number of people doing lots of work.** Several parishioners were mentioned by name as always being there and doing all the work, while other parishioners appeared only when something interesting was going on and seemed to do little. Regrettably, our New York parishioners, since they have only two days per week in this area, usually cannot contribute the hours of work required to maintain the parish that the year-round resident parishioners can (and do).
- **Walk up to the abyss – the Holy Spirit pulls us back.** The history of Trinity is in many ways a narrative of near-disasters, usually financial – but each disaster is prevented (or at least mitigated) by an heroic effort on the part of the congregation or a few of its members.
- **Resources are there.** This point was made in financial terms. It was noted that we do not give enough money to Trinity, and that more people in the pews were not as important as the present population digging deeper for money to contribute.
- **Hospitality.** While we have many things to offer, our most ingrained characteristic is our hospitality, going all the way back to the Barnum Richardson days when this was a company church and a laborer in the foundry was as welcome as a Barnum or Richardson. While many people think of the Episcopal Church as snooty, snootiness and pretentiousness are perceived as gross social errors at Trinity.
- **Trinity draws from a wide community, from many towns.** Unlike the days when this was a company church in a company town, today we draw parishioners from three states, most of whom pass at least one other Episcopal church to get to

Trinity. Evaluating Trinity by the demographics of Lakeville/Salisbury does not accurately represent us.

- **Leadership is inspired/we respond to leaders who motivate.** Inspirational leadership is very important here, whether the leadership comes from lay or ordained leaders. We experienced our most dynamic growth in ASA under the leadership of a dynamic priest, and today we are fortunate to have energetic lay leadership that carries us through our troubles and gives each of us the confidence to do what we do not think we possibly can.
- **We have unknown and unseen talents.** Perhaps because we do not all belong to the same geographic community, we are often unaware of talents that each of us has that could be critically important to Trinity. The example was given of Summer Sunday School Soccer, which was started by three parishioners with very limited soccer backgrounds – only to discover after the first year that Trinity already had “in inventory” two of the leading prep soccer coaches in all New England. As a result of discovering these “hidden in plain sight” assets, the Summer Soccer program has improved by an order of magnitude.