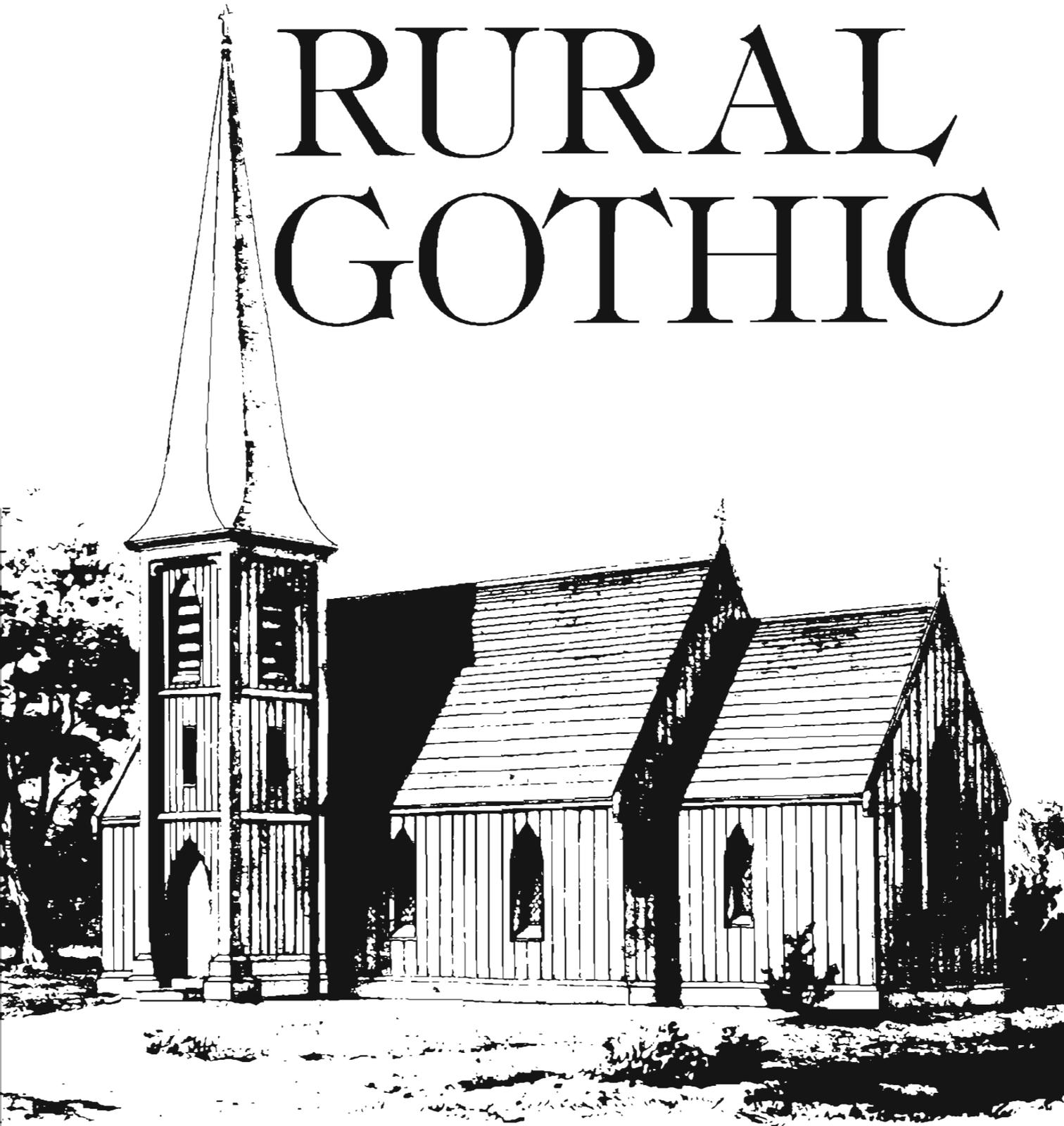


RURAL GOTHIC



CHURCH DESIGN, from Upjohn's Rural Architecture, 1852

Episcopal Churches on the Minnesota Frontier

Joan R. Gundersen

I am charmed with your little wooden churches above—which are models of economy & simplicity & yet perfectly true to Gothic rules. Unqualified praise, however, I fear might be deemed a little in the vein of Hoosier enthusiasm, and I am not sorry therefore that I can conscientiously declare that the vestry rooms are not constructed upon “liberal principles.” Indeed, “*Broad Churchmanship*” stands no chance in them whatever! I am satisfied that Bishop [Philander] Chase the greater, would have excommunicated the architect of that at Anoka, at sight! I trust that none of them symbolize the breadth & comprehensiveness of Minn. theology & Ch.manship!¹.

SUCH was the reaction of Bishop Joseph C. Talbot of Indiana in 1870 to the small Episcopal churches he visited in Minnesota. Take a drive through southeastern and central Minnesota’s small towns and you will find them still, small churches of frame or stone. Affectionately called the “Whipple churches” or “Whipple Gothic” in honor of Bishop Henry B. Whipple, who guided the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota from 1859 to 1901, many are occupied by the descendants of the Episcopal congregations that helped to build them over

a century ago. One sits on a county fairground; another is a private museum.² Several lie abandoned. Despite their varying fates and different construction materials, the churches have an architectural unity that gives mute testimony to a missionary impulse and vision linking the Minnesota frontier to the East.

The architectural unity of these churches sets them apart from other frontier church buildings in Minnesota. The unity was not an accident. It resulted from a vision shared by clergy and laity that found expression in the architectural plans of a small group of church architects from New York and New England. Although local parishes conveniently adapted these plans to fit their conditions and funds, they shared their dream with the Eastern Episcopalians who provided crucial financial support. Bishop Whipple helped to foster this unifying vision with both diocesan financial support and his own enthusiasm. The result was a remarkable architectural legacy forged in the first 20 years of Whipple’s long episcopacy. It was truly a case of the right people and the right architectural tradition meeting on the plains of southern Minnesota.

The story of these frontier churches begins in the East. Not until the 1820s did the Episcopal church turn its face toward the American frontier. At that time its general convention founded the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, which first began work on the immediate frontiers of western Pennsylvania, New York,

¹ Talbot to Whipple, June 25, 1870, Henry B. Whipple Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, hereafter MHS. Unless otherwise noted, all correspondence in this article may be found in these papers.

² Holy Innocents Church, originally in Cannon City, now sits on the Rice County fairgrounds and is the property of that county’s historical society; the church at Mantorville is a museum.

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and New England. Western New York was booming, thanks to the completion in 1825 of the Erie Canal, and in 1839 the new bishop of western New York, William Heathcote DeLancey, enthusiastically began a program of church building and clergy recruitment. In the counties lining the Erie Canal, small Episcopal churches began to appear. The decade between 1830 and 1840 saw the first major spurt in growth for the national church, due in large measure to growth in western New York.³

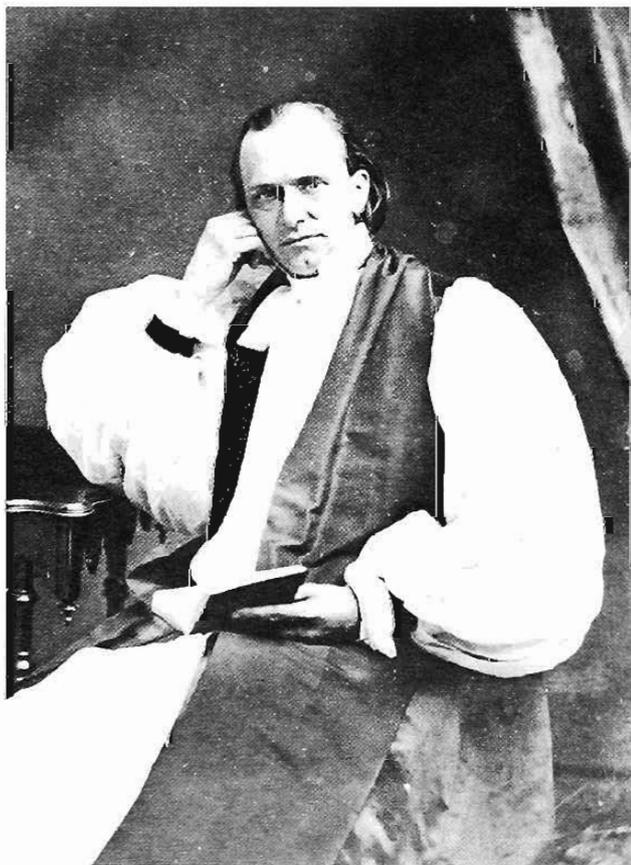
Richard Upjohn, an English cabinetmaker who had migrated to the United States in 1829 and who became one of America's most famous architects, designed many of the small churches erected in western New York. The buildings he designed reflected new currents in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States and its parent, the Church of England. Because of the particular circumstances of its history, the Church of England had retained Catholic tradition while sharing in the Protestant Reformation. Spurred by the romantic movement's fascination with the medieval period, the English church fostered two movements that returned to the Catholic traditions of the past. One, the Oxford movement, concerned ritual and doctrine; the

other, the ecclesiologist movement, involved church architecture. The ecclesiologists wanted a return to the Gothic with its emphasis on an altar, rather than a modest communion table and commanding pulpit, in order to fit high church emphasis on ritual, vestments, and the celebration of communion as the major service of the church. The Episcopal church had inherited both the "high" and the "low" church positions from England, and New York, which long claimed a high church tradition, was fertile soil for the Gothic revival in church architecture.⁴

Upjohn helped spread this revival to the United States with his famous work on Trinity Church, New York City, and a number of other major churches. More important for the architect's and the revival's over-all impact was the fact that Upjohn donated plans for many small churches and made it a policy to design one mission church each year. Eventually he gathered together plans—for a church, a chapel (a smaller and simpler building), a rectory, and a schoolhouse—that he published as *Upjohn's Rural Architecture* in 1852. New York came to be dotted with his work; there were at least 44 Episcopal churches in that state alone before 1861. Between Upjohn's willingness to provide plans for small churches and the publication of his book, the architect ultimately left his stamp on churches in every part of the United States.⁵

Upjohn's designs flowed from his own high church Episcopalism. Although he occasionally designed

BISHOP Henry B. Whipple, 1866

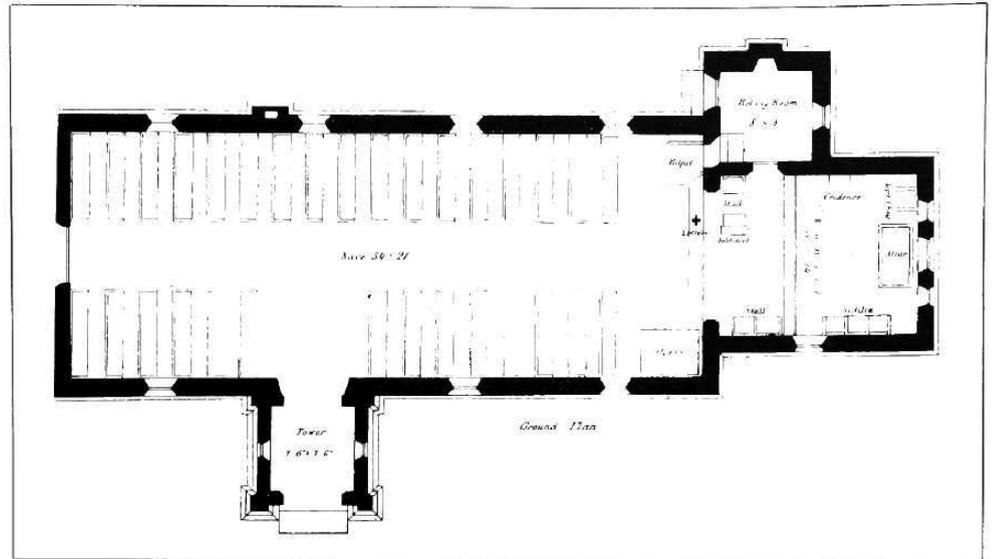


³ Raymond W. Albright, *A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 166, 178, 195-196; Walter H. Stowe, "Immigration and the Growth of the Episcopal Church," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 11 (Dec., 1942): 335-338, hereafter cited as *Historical Magazine*.

⁴ Everard M. Upjohn, *Richard Upjohn, Architect and Churchman* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 20-29; James L. McAllister, Jr., "Architecture and Change in the Diocese of Virginia," and E. Clowes Chorley, "Benjamin Tredwell Onderdonk, Fourth Bishop of New York," *Historical Magazine* 45 (Sept., 1976): 297-323 and 9 (Mar., 1940): 10. On the Oxford movement, see Albright, *History of the Church*, 230-231.

⁵ Charles Wells Hayes, *The Diocese of Western New York: History and Recollections* (Rochester, N.Y.: Scranton, Wetmore & Co., 1904), 230-232; Upjohn, *Richard Upjohn*, 90-120, 197-225; Richard Upjohn, *Upjohn's Rural Architecture: Designs, Working Drawings and Specifications for a Wooden Church and other Rural Structures* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1852); Susan Ebner, "All Saints' Episcopal Church: The Ecclesiologist Movement in Northfield, Minnesota," May, 1981, and Terry Pfoutz, "Two Episcopal Churches: All Saints of Northfield, Minnesota, and Holy Cross of Dundas, Minnesota," May, 1974, both senior theses, Carleton College, in the college archives, Northfield. On Upjohn's influence, see, for example, Loren N. Horton, "The Architectural Background of Trinity Episcopal Church," *Annals of Iowa* 43 (July, 1977): 539-548.

UPJOHN's plan for the interior of a rural Gothic church



places of worship for other denominations, he refused commissions from those whose beliefs were at odds with his own, such as the Unitarians. The Gothic style allowed Upjohn to emphasize awe and mystery, tradition, and liturgical space. He stressed the communion service as the center of worship by setting chancel and altar apart from the congregation, thus making these the focal point of the interior.⁶

THE NATIONAL CHURCH, meanwhile, turned its attention to the Midwest in 1835 by consecrating missionary bishops who would oversee frontier districts not yet organized into dioceses. The general convention elected as its first missionary bishop Jackson Kemper, who had been doing frontier missionary work for over two decades in western Pennsylvania and Ohio. Three years later the church expanded his midwestern district to include Iowa and Wisconsin territories. Kemper recruited three young students from the General Theological Seminary in New York, William Adams, James Lloyd Breck, and John H. Hobart, Jr., to found a mission in Wisconsin. The trio arrived in Delafield, Wisconsin, in 1841 to begin a combination mission, religious community, and seminary called Nashotah House. They brought Upjohn's architectural influence with them; both the parish church in Delafield and the Nashotah House chapel were built from Upjohn de-

signs. Nine years later, in response to congressional action carving Minnesota Territory out of Wisconsin and Iowa, Breck formed a new associated ministry with Timothy Wilcoxson and John Merrick to work in Minnesota.⁷

The three joined army chaplain Ezekiel G. Gear, who had moved to the Minnesota region in 1838 and had offered the first Episcopal services there. Over the next eight years, a handful of clergy worked with laity scattered throughout the frontier settlements to found parishes. In 1857 clergy and lay delegates met in St. Paul to organize the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota. One year later, the same year that Minnesota became a state, the first regular diocesan convention was held. In 1859 delegates to that convention elected Henry B. Whipple, then a parish priest in Chicago, as bishop. Originally from western New York, he had studied for the priesthood under Bishop DeLancey. In Minnesota

REVEREND James
Lloyd Breck,
about 1885



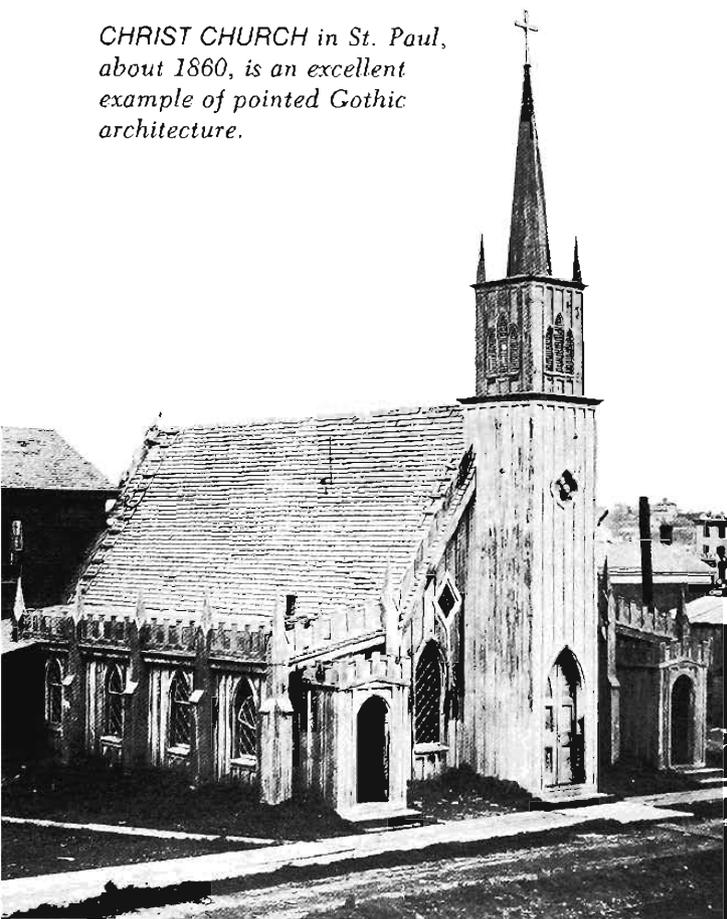
⁶ Upjohn, *Richard Upjohn*, 69-100.
⁷ Albright, *History of the Church*, 216, 219, 220. Upjohn's influence continued; Breck, Wilcoxson, and Merrick took vows for their associated mission in another Upjohn design, the Church of the Holy Communion, New York City. Donald H. B. Hallock, "The Story of Nashotah," *Historical Magazine* 11 (Mar., 1942): 3-17; George Clinton Tanner, *Fifty Years of Church Work in the Diocese of Minnesota, 1857-1907* (St. Paul: Committee of Publications, 1909), 9-14.

Whipple would undertake a building program surpassing that of DeLancey in western New York although tapping that area for financial support and architectural ideas.⁸

Whipple soon discovered that the diocese needed the oversight of a firm bishop to give direction to its building plans. Breck, Solon W. Marney, and David Sanford had started Bishop Seabury Mission in Faribault in 1857 as an expanded version of Nashotah House. Itinerant priests such as Timothy Wilcoxson walked thousands of miles through the state encouraging small clusters of Episcopalians to form parishes. The mission also had started a fund to purchase lots in new towns in order to get advantageous sites. The purchase of lots, however, was a risky business, for not every new town survived or attracted enough Episcopalians to found a church. Whipple was especially frustrated by the efforts of one minister, J. S. Chamberlaine, who had raised large sums of money in the East without giving any accounting, had left the church property in private hands, and had built four churches "where there is no congregation."⁹

The new bishop brought his own enthusiasm and organizational skills to the task. Whipple sent mission-

CHRIST CHURCH in St. Paul, about 1860, is an excellent example of pointed Gothic architecture.



aries to areas where he thought there would be support for a parish, but the initiative for building a place of worship had to come from the local area. He encouraged individual ministers and laity to conduct their own fund drives in Eastern dioceses, and he himself became the most skilled fundraiser of all. The contributions that poured in in response to his Eastern speaking tours, articles, and letters let him create an early version of matching-fund grants to encourage parishes to build. The sums that Whipple supplied, once local initiative had begun a church, provided incentive to push on with the building. For example, Whipple's pledge of \$100 to pay for carpentry spurred Basswood Grove Episcopalians to find the necessary money for the lumber needed to complete their building in 1867. By 1880 congregations could look to a low-interest loan fund called the Western Church Building Society. Whipple continued to supplement local efforts from private donations.¹⁰

The earliest Minnesota Episcopal building efforts were in "pointed" Gothic. Christ Church in St. Paul, for example, had a three-stage bell tower with ornamental spikes on the corners of the second level, buttresses stretching to points above the roof line, and crenelated eaves. Upjohn's earliest churches had been pointed Gothic, but he had moved away from that style by 1850. Whipple and Breck both knew the later, simpler, small-church designs of Upjohn. Whipple's first assignment as a priest had been to Rome, New York, where he oversaw the building of a simple Upjohn church. Breck, of course, knew the spare exterior lines of St. John Chrysostom Church in Delafield. More important, Whipple owned a copy of *Upjohn's Rural Architecture*. He had ordered it when preparing to move to a new parish in Chicago in 1857. Once the bishop and his book reached the Seabury Mission, seminarians and visiting priests could thumb its pages for inspiration and detailed plans.¹¹

The Upjohn plans for both a church and a chapel fit nicely with the needs of Minnesota parishes. While reflecting the latest trends in Eastern architecture and

⁸ William P. Haugeard, "The Missionary Vision of James Lloyd Breck in Minnesota," *Historical Magazine* 54(Sept., 1985): 241-252; Tanner, *Fifty Years*, 2-33.

⁹ N. J. T. Dana to Whipple, May 11, 1860, and letterbook, Whipple to _____, Feb. 27, 1861.

¹⁰ Letterbook, Whipple to the Rev. Dr. Dougherty, Mar. 4, 1861; Solomon S. Burleson to Whipple, Nov. 24, 1865; Martha A. DeLancey to Whipple, Nov. 15, 1861; Wilcoxson to Whipple, Nov. 22, 1867; George C. Tanner to Whipple, Dec. 18, 1880; Western Church Building Society stationery in Whipple Papers for 1880. Basswood Grove was in Washington County and St. Mary's Church is still in operation.

¹¹ Tanner, *Fifty Years*, 32, 35, 96, 135, 341; Upjohn, *Richard Upjohn*, 205, 208-209; letterbook, Whipple to Messrs. Bangs Brothers & Co., Mar. 26, 1857.

high church position, the buildings were plain, with little ornamentation except for the vertical lines of the board-and-batten exterior, pointed-arch windows and doors, and a plain three-stage tower. The simplicity of the lines reflected both the modest high church position of the Minnesota churches and frontier carpenter skills. Under Whipple's gentle leadership, the diocese took a middle course, incorporating some high church innovations such as crosses, vestments, and chanting, but maintaining Morning and Evening Prayer rather than Holy Communion as the standard Sunday services.¹²

Minnesota Episcopal architecture came to bear the stamp of the Upjohn plans. A few buildings, such as the Eastlake-style church designed by a Mr. Sands for Belle Plaine, followed other architectural traditions. Eastern architects James Renwick, Henry Congdon, and Henry Dudley provided plans for larger Gothic churches in Faribault and Red Wing. Congdon also supplied plans for the Church of the Holy Communion in 1870 in St. Peter, when the parish decided to replace its original plain frame building. Calvary Church, Rochester, and probably Trinity Church, Litchfield, were done directly from Upjohn plans sent from New York, but most of the churches simply adapted the plans in *Upjohn's Rural Architecture*. The influence is clear in the constant use of the phrase "rural gothic church" to describe the new buildings and in their proportions and lines. The frame churches all used vertical board-and-batten siding and pointed-arch windows and doors; they had chancels set apart from the nave and usually avoided

false buttresses or ornamental points. The stone versions tended to have the same lines. Uniformity of size and proportions was maintained because Upjohn included exact specifications for ordering materials to build his design, a godsend to inexperienced building committees.¹³

LOCAL INITIATIVE clearly was essential to these church building efforts. The experiences of congregations in Northfield, Cannon Falls, and Dundas illustrate the variations that this local effort could produce. The three neighboring towns were served by the same missionary, Solomon S. Burleson, during the last half of the 1860s. All Saints Parish, Northfield, sought Eastern funds and depended on its women to raise money; Cannon Falls salvaged materials to build the Church of the Holy Redeemer; and Dundas relied on a local patron to build Holy Cross Church. Burleson lived in Northfield until All Saints was finished in 1867, then moved to Dundas to oversee construction there. In 1869 he relinquished direct oversight to his assistant, William J. Gold, and returned to Northfield. Two years later Burleson moved to a new missionary station at Blue Earth, where he soon built churches at Blue Earth City and Wells.¹⁴ In every case the minister acted as architect. Each church is different, and yet all show marks of familiarity with the Upjohn designs. Where Burleson saw *Upjohn's Rural Architecture* is unclear. He had ready access to Whipple's library in Faribault, but given the numerous western New Yorkers among his congregations, a special copy could have come directly to him.

Burleson's success in erecting All Saints Church in Northfield was "due greatly to a band of loving daughters of the Church," according to Bishop Whipple. Breck had purchased a lot in Northfield in 1857 as part of the missionary scheme to get in early in new towns, but in 1865 when All Saints finally was ready to build a church, the ladies of the parish purchased their own lot closer to the town center. Women led the fund drive that had resulted in \$1,190 in pledges toward the building when Burleson reported to the bishop in 1865: "We have accepted a builder's bid. He is to do it for \$1600. finding his own material. We do the stone work, plastering, painting, and furnish the windows. You gave me a partial pledge of \$400 or \$500. Have you full assurance that it can be obtained? The entire cost of the Ch. will be about \$2100. When we started the subscription we expected that material would be much less than it is. But the work must go on. Please God, we shall ask you to consecrate a church for us next summer."¹⁵

The cost of the building weighed heavily on the Northfield congregation. Friends in New York, Geneva (New York), and Pittsburgh contributed \$300. Among the All Saints parishioners were relatives of Bishop De-

¹² Henry B. Whipple, *Lights and Shadows of a Long Episcopate* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 204, 211.

¹³ Renwick designed the Cathedral of Our Merciful Saviour, Faribault; Dudley planned Christ Church, Red Wing; and Congdon did the Chapel of the Good Shepherd at Shattuck School, Faribault, and the church at St. Peter. The Eastlake style, named for English architect and critic Charles Eastlake, featured vertical lines and a "profusion of jigsaw and lathe work in wood"; David Gebhard and Tom Martinson, *A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 249, 274, 275, 308, 408; Upjohn, *Richard Upjohn*, 215; *St. Paul Daily Pioneer*, July 18, 1871, typescript, WPA Writers' Project, Churches, MHS. On the architect of the Belle Plaine church, see T. F. Cook to Whipple, Nov. 19, 1867.

¹⁴ [Hugh L. Burleson], *An Officer of the Line in Conquest of the Continent* (Hartford, Conn.: Church Missions Publishing Co., 1911).

¹⁵ *Journal of the Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Minnesota* (St. Paul: The Diocese, 1867), 15; Burleson to Whipple, Nov. 24, 1865; Francis L. Palmer, "Sketch of All Saints Northfield," n. d., manuscript history, Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Minnesota Papers, 1823-1981, MHS. After All Saints Church was completed, the diocese sold Breck's rejected lot; Abstracts of Deeds for Northfield, 98-99, Rice County Courthouse, Faribault; Dana to Whipple, May 11, 1860.



REVEREND Solomon S. Burleson, above; "loving daughters" of All Saints, Northfield, Susan Collett, Margaret Orr (top row), Maria Whitford, Charlotte Wickham (bottom row).

Lancey of New York, who probably solicited the contribution from Geneva (DeLancey's home) and used it toward the stained-glass windows. One of the windows is in memory of John ("Grandpa") DeLancey, who had died in Northfield in 1863 and had been a faithful member of the parish. Sunday School children in Germantown, Pennsylvania, sent \$61.20 to All Saints to pay for the stained glass in the chancel. Gifts from women in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and Brooklyn, New York, provided altar linens and fencing around the church.¹⁶

Despite the best efforts of All Saints Parish to keep costs low—Burleson even donned overalls to help in the construction—the windows were an extravagance. Not only was the stained glass shipped from the George A. Misch & Bro. glassworks in Chicago, but Burleson overruled the parish building committee to insist on arched windows rather than square-topped ones. The original carpenter's bid was for square windows, and when Burleson asked for a bid on changing them, the building committee was "affraid [sic] of the expence and voted not to arch them and the matter was dropped." But not by the stubborn missionary. As car-

penter S. B. Hoag later wrote the bishop, "mr B came to me and said he was not satisfied to have the windows & doors put in Square, but as the majority of the committee were opposed to it, he could not order the change as a committee, but if I would take him personally responsible, he would have it done." Burleson promised to use some of the outside contributions for the added expense, but Hoag eventually had to turn to the bishop for payment.¹⁷

Burleson had his way with the windows and doors, but the parish settled for a stubby bell tower and no bell. Like other Minnesota parishes, Northfield also modified the Upjohn plans to use scissor-beam support rafters rather than the curved ones shown in *Upjohn's Rural Architecture*. (Scissor beams are straight beams

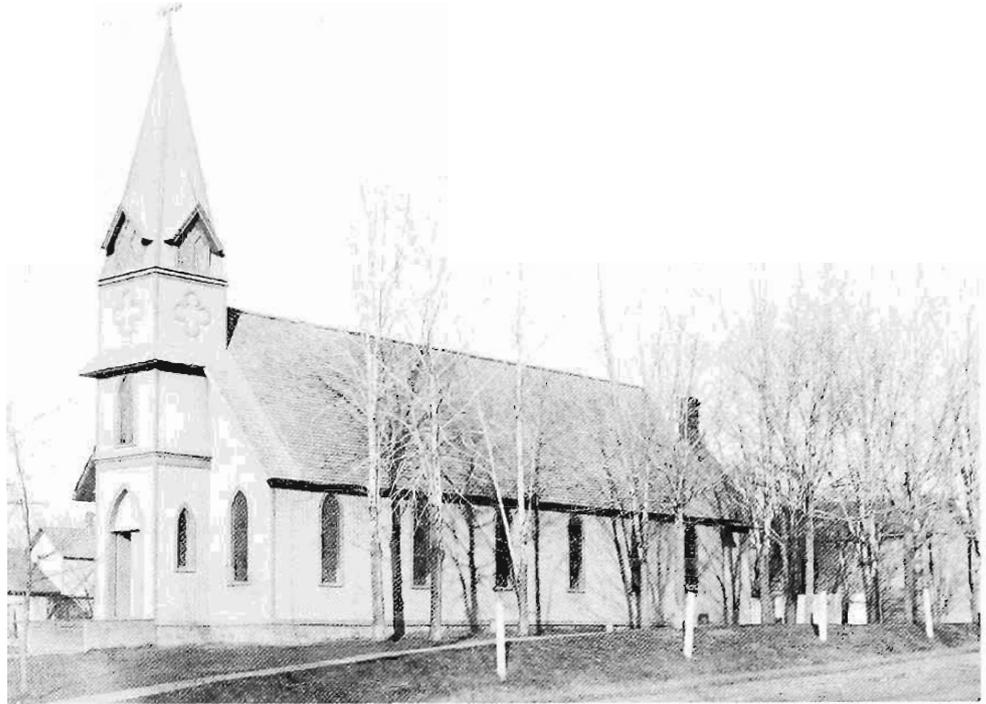
¹⁶ *Journal of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Red Wing, 1866), 34; "History," manuscript written into All Saints Parish Register, vol. 1; Jane E. Harris to F. M. Garland, April 28, 1917, All Saints Parish records, Northfield.

¹⁷ [Burleson], *Officer of the Line*, 27; Hoag to Whipple, Mar. 18, 1868; *Rice County Journal* (Northfield), Dec. 4, 1879. The same glassworks did the original windows and those in the 1879 expansion. Church records state that the 1879 glass came from Chicago, and evidence suggests the dealer there was George A. Misch; S. S. Schoff, *The Glory of Chicago—Her Manufactories* (Chicago, 1873).

INTERIOR view of All Saints about 1885



ALL SAINTS Church in
the 1880s, showing the
steeple addition



that form an "X" at the center.) That this change was made in Northfield is not surprising. Fourteen members of the parish were from Madison County, New York, where, among the three Upjohn churches, was St. Thomas's in Hamilton in which the architect had used scissor beams.¹⁸

A variety of delays pushed finishing work into 1867, and Bishop Whipple consecrated All Saints in April of that year. Two years later, the Sunday School raised the money for a 1,400-pound bell, and the parish rebuilt the bell tower to include a steeple.

¹⁸ Here and below, see Mrs. L. M. Hammond, *History of Madison County, State of New York* (Syracuse, N. Y.: Truair, Smith & Co., 1872); Upjohn, *Richard Upjohn*, 90-91, 210; *St. Paul Daily Pioneer*, Oct. 19, 1869, typescript, WPA Writers' Project, Churches, MHS; *Northfield News*, May 24, 1935, p. 3. Gebhard and Martinson, relying on the unpublished work of Terry Pfoutz, state that the steeple was added in 1879; however, a pictorial map of 1869 shows the steeple. *Bird's Eye View of Northfield Looking South East. Rice County Minnesota 1869* (Madison, Wis.: Ruger and Stoners).

¹⁹ Dunbar to Tanner, Sept. 5, 1888, Diocese of Minnesota Papers, MHS; Jos. E. Chapman to Whipple, Sept. 11, 1866; Dunbar and the Vestry of the Church of the Redeemer to Whipple, May 1, 1867; Burleson and Vestry of All Saints Parish to Whipple, April 11, 1867.

²⁰ Here and below, see excerpts from William J. Gold diary, Holy Cross manuscripts, Diocese of Minnesota Papers: J. S. Archibald to Whipple, Sept. 20, 1870, Oct. 22, 1874; *Journal of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (St. Paul, 1868), 10, 36.

BURLESON supervised the building of the Cannon Falls church simultaneously with the work in Northfield. Timothy Wilcoxson turned over the mission at Cannon Falls to Burleson in 1865. The two churches were very different in appearance. Whereas All Saints was a close copy of the Upjohn church plan and was a dark-brown frame building with vertical battens, the Church of the Holy Redeemer at Cannon Falls followed the chapel plan and was built of stone salvaged from an abandoned hotel. Parishioners reported using a disabled smokestack to make the church furnace. By September, 1866, the walls were up and the rafters in place despite a delay when the mason backed out of his contract and a new one had to be found. The parish finished the building just in time to greet its first resident rector, George W. Dunbar, who arrived April 20, 1867. Bishop Whipple dedicated the church on May 1, just three weeks after performing the same ceremony at Northfield.¹⁹

Construction at Holy Cross Church, Dundas, was more complicated. Dundas and Northfield were near neighbors and milling rivals. John Ames, who owned Northfield's major mill, attended All Saints. The Archibald family, owners of the Dundas mill, wanted their community to have its own Episcopal parish and building. They insisted that Holy Cross build in stone, going Northfield one better. The estimated cost was \$4,500, and Burleson began construction on Holy Cross in 1867 when just over half of the money had been raised. Most of that was a gift of the Archibald family.²⁰



HOLY REDEEMER Church, Cannon Falls

By 1868 a parish dispute and lack of money had brought work to a grinding halt. Only the walls were up. The high church principles embedded in Burleson's adaptation of the Upjohn plans had begun to bother John S. Archibald, so he had cut off support. Although the diocese was reluctant to grant Holy Cross parish status, it did send the Reverend Mr. Gold to be Burleson's assistant in charge of the Dundas mission. Gold healed the dispute by convincing Archibald that the plans were a copy of an old English church. Thus the miller arranged financing for the building through a bond issue that would cover finishing the church, as well as building the tower and a parsonage. In 1874 the work was finally finished at a cost of more than \$10,000.

The construction problems at Holy Cross illustrate that erecting a church building was a matter of both faith and civic competition. Denominations cooperated—and also competed—in frontier towns. Although small congregations of different faiths might initially share a meetingplace, eventually members flocked to those congregations that built their own places of worship. All Saints Parish, for example, had originally shared use of the town lyceum on Sundays with the Northfield Methodists and later with the Baptists. Once these congregations built churches, All Saints had to follow suit. Nearby towns jockeyed for the prestige that came to those who could claim impressive buildings and settled ministers. Dundas and Northfield had just that sort of competition in 1869.²¹

They were not alone. That same year Duluth and its twin port city, Superior, Wisconsin, had a similar

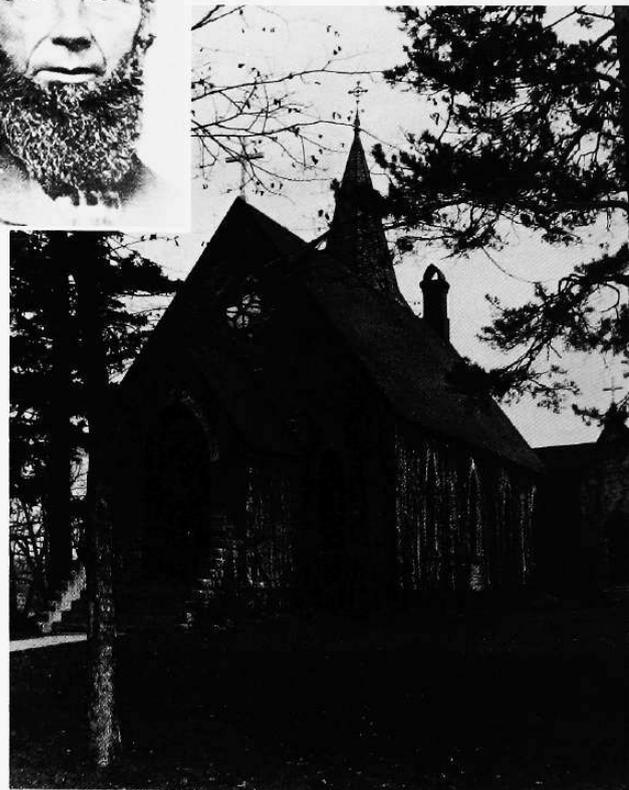
struggle. Duluth Episcopalians had nearly completed an \$8,000 building under the leadership of George B. Sargent. The venture had nearly been stopped by an offer of \$1,000 for the building fund from financier Jay Cooke; the offer was contingent, however, upon the building being open to all denominations. Competition won out, and the victorious Duluth Episcopalians insisted also that they not share a minister with Superior because each congregation “desires to have its own Rector, as another Aid in building up the City.”²²

THE EXPERIENCE of the three southeastern Minnesota parishes was typical of those elsewhere in the diocese. Women in other parishes duplicated the efforts of Northfield's All Saints. They held oyster suppers, church socials, offered concerts and plays, and hosted innumerable church fairs to raise money for building funds. In 1880, as Owatonna struggled to complete its Episcopal church, the Reverend George C. Tanner re-

²¹ Northfield Lyceum Minute Book, Nov. 11, 1857, June 16, 1858, typescript in Northfield Public Library.

²² William Armitage to Whipple, Sept. 13, 1869.

JOHN S. ARCHIBALD, about 1875, and the stone church, Holy Cross, he helped to build



ported to Bishop Whipple that the parish was \$900 short, "somewhat more than I supposed, as the Ladies' Fund had to be reckoned in to make the first payment of \$1000." Women also led the fund drives for building pledges. The Reverend Ezra Steele Peake reported to Whipple in 1884 that the congregation at Perham was interested in building. He had one pledge of \$100 and "Mrs. Phinney and Mrs Bowman have acted as collector the past [year] each on their own side of town and have paid over to me about \$50." In addition the parishes continued to rely on contributions from wealthy Easterners and ladies' missionary societies. Women actively sought Eastern contributions. Sarah A. Ruth, wife of Mantorville's Episcopal minister, raised \$4,000 for their church on a trip East in 1866. Worn out from her efforts, she died on her return trip and was buried in the churchyard.²³

There were other similarities. As in Dundas, most of the funds at Frontenac came from a major patron, Nathaniel McLean, and at White Bear Lake, from Laura Aubrey. Concern over the high church principles incorporated into the early Gothic style surfaced not only in Dundas but in Mantorville, where the local minister had to ask Bishop Whipple to tell the vestry that the church pews should include cushions, or stools called kneelers. The opportunistic use of building materials by Cannon Falls Episcopalians was repeated elsewhere as congregations used whatever source of building materials was available. The Whipple Papers reveal time and again the use of local carpenters, construction modification, and concerted efforts at fundraising that drew upon Eastern philanthropy, local money drives, and the efforts of the bishop.²⁴

The church buildings at Cannon Falls, Dundas, and Northfield illustrate the full range of Minnesota parish variations on Upjohn's plans. All three were built upon stone footings without basements. A small cellar dug into the earth under the churches allowed placement of a furnace. The heat rose through the cracks between broadly spaced floorboards. In addition to the scissor beams, All Saints made three modifications in the Upjohn plans: a bell tower and entrance at the west end rather than on the south side, a gable roof on the tower, and simplified furnishings. Burleson's clear image of "correct" Gothic church style kept the design for windows and doors close to the Upjohn plans. Holy Cross built in stone and switched the bell tower from the south to the north side, but otherwise the Dundas

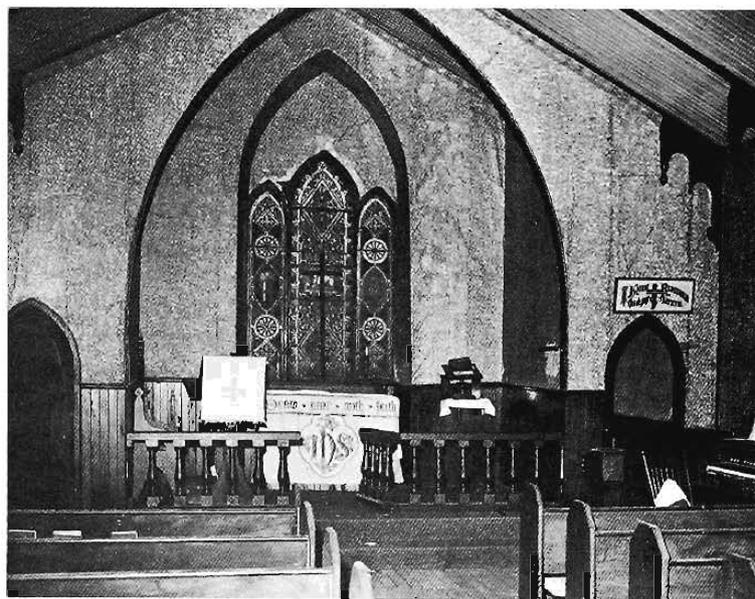
²³ Tanner to Whipple, Dec. 18, 1880; E. Steele Peake to Whipple, July 19, 1884; P. S. Ruth to Whipple, July 20, 1870; George Tanner, "History of St. John's Church, Mantorville," n. d., manuscript history, Diocese of Minnesota Papers.

²⁴ On McLean's role at Frontenac, see "Christ Episcopal Church," available at the church there; on the kneeler controversy, see Ruth to Whipple, July 20, 1870.

church followed the Upjohn plans. Cannon Falls followed the chapel plans (which did not include a "budding" chancel), but built in stone, adding a bell tower on the front gable.

Other congregations made similar small changes. Frontenac, Cannon City, and Farmington, for example, built frame churches with modifications. Frontenac started building Christ Episcopal Church in 1867, but a windstorm destroyed the church in December, necessitating rebuilding and delaying completion until 1869. A local carpenter constructed the church from logs floated down the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers. Their building had a truncated bell tower similar to that at All Saints but with a crenelated edge rather than Northfield's hip roof. Frontenac also set off its chancel with interior beaming rather than narrowing it. Farmington had a modified version of the All Saints plan. Rather than erect a budding chancel, Holy Innocents Church at Cannon City achieved the same interior effect by placing small robing rooms on either side of the chancel, thus narrowing the area and setting it off from the nave. Church of the Advent at Farmington was smaller and placed its bell on the gable over the front door rather than construct a front tower. Burleson's designs for the Church of the Good Shepherd at Blue Earth City and Nativity at Wells were near twins and very close to the Upjohn plans, with entryways added on the gable ends to both and buttresses to the building at Blue Earth. Churches at Waterville (St. Andrew's) and Janesville (St. John's) also had modifications in the tower shape and placement.

INTERIOR of Holy Innocents Church, Cannon City; note the doors leading to the robing rooms at either side of the chancel.



St. John's Parish in Mantorville, like Cannon Falls and Dundas, built its church in stone rather than wood; cost, however, forced the parish to shorten the chancel by eliminating one bay of windows.²⁵

BY 1880 the golden age of Minnesota's Episcopal rural churches was drawing to a close. The church claimed 22 chapels and 73 churches that year, most of them simple wood structures inspired by the Upjohn plans. The newly enlarged frame structure of All Saints in Northfield ranked 18th in value. All of those valued at less than the Northfield church were frame buildings. Among the 17 churches worth more than All Saints were the stone buildings of Holy Redeemer at Cannon Falls and Holy Cross at Dundas, both adaptations of the Upjohn design, and the buildings he had designed for Litchfield and Rochester. New styles of architecture, however, now competed with the Gothic revival nationally and in Minnesota. Ascension Parish, Stillwater, built a new church in 1880 in which Gothic detail was blended with the Eastlake style of architecture. St. Paul's, Owatonna, completed in 1885, mixed Queen Anne with carpenter Gothic, and by the late 1880s the influence of Cass Gilbert was evident in Minnesota churches.²⁶

Ironically, changing population patterns helped both to preserve the architectural heritage of the frontier Gothic churches and to be their undoing. The early settlers from New York and New England moved on to new areas. Immigrants with other religious traditions, especially Lutheran and Roman Catholic, replaced them. Although the Episcopal church continued to grow in Minnesota throughout the 1880s, this increase was in the northwest and in the larger cities. Congregations in towns such as Northfield, Dundas, and Cannon Falls stopped growing and thus had no need to replace their early Gothic buildings as city congregations were doing.²⁷

When Bishop Whipple died in 1901, his successor, Samuel Edsall, chose to reside in the Twin Cities, symbolically changing the focus of the church in Minnesota from small towns to a metropolitan area. For the next half century the diocese would follow a policy of closing and merging small-town and rural parishes. Holy Innocents in Cannon City was one casualty of this policy. Neither the diocese nor the parishes recognized the value of their Gothic buildings. All they saw were out-of-date, run-down, hard-to-heat frame buildings. Victor Pinkham, rector of All Saints Parish, for example, described the Northfield church building at the 1943 parish meeting as "an old building none too warm, none too neat or attractive." The diocese had long wanted to replace the building with a new stone church, and the vestry opened conversations with the diocese in 1943 in hope of replacing the Upjohn design

"after the war is over." Luckily, neither the diocese nor the parish had the funds to follow through, and the rural Gothic church still serves its congregation.²⁸ Not until the growth of the historic preservation movement in the 1970s would Minnesotans recognize the architectural heritage brought to the frontier by the early Episcopalians. These small, graceful legacies of pioneer faith and enterprise have survived to tell their stories to a more appreciative audience.

²⁵ *Goodhue County Republican (Red Wing)*, Nov. 29, Dec. 13, 1867, typescript, WPA Writers' Project. The Dodge County Historical Society has claimed that St. John's Church in Mantorville was built from plans by Sir Christopher Wren, a 17th-century English architect. This is highly unlikely, however; given the vestry records, correspondence with Bishop Whipple, and architectural evidence it is clear that Mantorville is another of the Upjohn churches.

²⁶ List and valuation of Church Property, 1880, Whipple Papers; Gebhard and Martinson, *Minnesota Architecture*, 105, 128, 144, 330.

²⁷ E. L. Sheppard, *The Second Fifty Years: The Diocese of Minnesota and the Diocese of Duluth from 1907 to 1957* (Minneapolis: The Diocese, 1972), 38, 59-61.

²⁸ Rector's Annual Report, Jan. 13, 1943, p. 11, and Vestry Minutes, June 30, 1943, both in Rector's Report Book. All Saints Parish: Pinkham to Bishop Hamilton Hyde Kellogg, June 7, 1956, Diocese of Minnesota Papers.

THE PHOTOGRAPH of the women on p. 264 is from the Bierman collection, Northfield Public Library; the pictures of All Saints Church on p. 264 and 265 belong to the church. All other illustrations are from the MHS audio-visual library.

A 1957 VIEW of Cannon City's Holy Innocents Church





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