

Historic Greenwich Village Church to be site of June 15-17 Show

NEW YORK CITY—St. Luke's in the Fields, located at Hudson and Grove Streets in Greenwich Village will open its doors to the public on Friday, June 15 through Sunday, June 17. St. Luke's Church, which is the third oldest extant chapel in Manhattan, was founded in 1822 by the Episcopal Bishop of New York.

In the early 1820's, Greenwich Village was a rural, farm community. Encouraged by "quite respectable attendance" held at worshippers' homes and later in the watch house of the state prison, the Episcopal Bishop had Trinity Parish give a parcel of land on which to build the church. Later, two additional lots were donated for a churchyard, and an annual contribution of \$400 was also appropriated for the salary of a rector.

On July 4, 1821, Bishop Hobart laid the cornerstone for the new church. The 48 by 65 foot church was designed by Clement C. Moore at a cost of \$7,500. Part of the expense of the church was met by the sale of pews, 120 in number, and the sale of vaults in the churchyard.

Reverend George Upfold, M.D., a graduate of Union College, Schenectady, New York, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York City, first a medical doctor and then a minister, became its first rector. He served in this capacity for eight years. The 1822 Diocesan Convention Journal described St. Luke's Church as follows: "The building is a neat and commodious edifice of modern dimensions. The desk, the pulpit and the chancel are constructed with great judgment and taste; and its chancel is so elevated in front of the former that the congregation may see with convenience all the services performed there."

During this period of NYC's history, the center of culture and commerce was the Battery area. With the center city becoming overcrowded and a yellow fever epidemic spreading, more families started to flee to less crowded, healthier country areas, such as Greenwich Village. The combined migration, and the hard work of its rector, George Upfold, led to the growth of the parish from thirty families to over 60.

The chapel at its inception was as in English tradition: a simple, rectangular structure with a very plain interior. In later years, elaborate changes were made.

With the great expansion of lower Manhattan, drastic

changes came to the Village area. The one-time farm community became a village, and was surrounded by a poor and very dense population. On January 2, 1886, the chancel was destroyed by fire, and the church badly damaged by fire and smoke. It was restored and reconsecrated on June 27, 1886 by Bishop H.C. Potter. The present lady's chapel was added in 1917.

St. Luke's in the Fields was always considered a mission church. It rarely had a wealthy family connected with it, thus was not supported by its members alone. Only through the annual contribution of large sums by the Corporation of Trinity Church was St. Luke's able to keep its doors open and not be abandoned.

In 1891, faced with a changing community and financial stress, the congregation moved uptown and built a new St. Luke's Church at Convent Avenue and 141st Street. The old church and property was bought by Trinity Church for \$150,000 and became a part of the Trinity Parish.

Between 1920 and 1930, under the wing of Trinity Church, this lower Manhattan area became prestigious again, with fashionable townhouses being built around this four block complex. Bret Harte, author of stories about the Old West was brought up in one of these townhouses. This very same dwelling is the present day parish house.

Education and community involvement have always been important at St. Luke's. The school, a vital part of the St. Luke's block, grew out of an earlier Parish School for Boys and a later athletic and summer camping program. St. Luke's School began in 1945 with a few elementary grades scattered in various buildings. Ten years later, classes from nursery through 8th grade occupied every nook from choir room to gymnasium. In 1955, a spacious modern school was built at a cost of \$800,000 to accommodate more than 200 students. The St. Luke's School was part of the five year, \$1,000,000 renovation which ended in 1958. The four block renovation called for the destruction of some of the residential townhouses, preserving ten townhouses for use by the Vicar, church, school, staff and parish-related projects. With the addition of the gardens and trees, and the return of many of the buildings to their original reddish-tan colored Holland brick, the complex has taken on the look of a miniature Williamsburg, Va. or the Georgetown section

of Washington, D.C. architect Thomas M. Bell designed and build the school, and supervised its restoration.

The present rector of the church is Leslie I. Laughlin Jr., who has been minister for seven years, and the present school principal is Katharine Taylor, who has served in this system since 1945.

The parish reverted back to St. Luke's in the Field in 1976. This West Village community-minded facility has always served its constituents and is presently involved in work with the Caring Community (a golden age group), Women's Activist Organization, and social reform groups. St. Luke's Church symbolizes the social consciousness of Greenwich Village.

On June 15, 16 and 17, the Parent's Association of St. Luke's School is opening its gates to the public to raise money for its scholarship fund by holding an antiques show and sale. For further information, contact Marv Morgenstein, (914) 634-9663 or Jane Munsell, administrative assistant, (212) 924-5960.

1814

CLASS OF 1814

REV. GEORGE UPFOLD, formerly of Albany, was elected rector of
St. Thomas's church, New York. Feb. 11, 1828

Munsell's Annals of Albany p. 163

CLASS OF 1814

REV. GEO. UPFOLD resigned the rectorship of St. Thomas's church in New York, and accepted that of Trinity church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Munsell's Annals of Albany p. 231

George Upfold, first Protestant Episcopal bishop of Indiana, and 50th in succession in the American Episcopate, was born near Guilford, Surrey, Eng., May 7, 1796. In 1804 his parents emigrated to the United States and settled in Albany, N. Y. He was graduated from Union College, Schenectady, in 1814, and from the College of physicians and surgeons in 1816. In 1817 he began the study of theology under Bishop Hobart, who, on Oct. 1, 1818, ordained him deacon in Trinity church, New York, and on July 13, 1820, ordained him priest in Trinity church, Lansingburg, N. Y. After two years of pastoral work in Lansingburg, he became rector of St. Luke's church, New York City, and in 1830 rector of St. Thomas's church, New York city, and in 1831 rector of Trinity church, Pittsburg, Pa. On Dec. 16, 1849, he was consecrated bishop in Christ church, Indianapolis. On Jan. 1, 1850, he removed to Lafayette, where he was for one year rector of St. John's church, but in 1857 returned to Indianapolis. He received the degree of S. T. D. from Columbia college in 1831, and that of LL. D. from the Western university of Pennsylvania in 1856. Among Bishop Upfold's published writings are "The Last Hundred Years" (1845), and "Manual of Devotions for Domestic and Private Use" (N. Y., 1863). He died at Indianapolis, Ind., Aug. 26, 1872.

The N. C. of A. B. Vol. III, Page 466.

GEORGE UPFOLD, MD., DD., LL.D., was born at Guilford, England, May 7th, 1796, and came to this country at the age of six years. He was ordained as an Episcopal minister and is now Bishop of the diocese of Indiana. He received his degree of M. D. from the College of Physicians and Surgeons at New York.

From: The Evening Star July 29, 1864

Rev. GEORGE UPFOLD, A.M.M.D. Coll Med. et Chir. Nov. Ebor, 1814, a resident of New York City, was a member of the Philomathean Society. (Died: 1872)

Philomathean Catalogue 1830.