



# Christ Church Looks Back

by Joseph A. Tomberlin

Michael Joseph Kippenbrock, Vicar of Christ Church beginning on May 1, 1953, was a Texan, born in Austin on September 29, 1903. He was the eighth of nine children and the fifth of the six sons of Francis Lewis Kippenbrock and Josephine Bernardine Brown Kippenbrock.

Little historical information about Michael Kippenbrock, other than that relating to his stint at Christ Church, 1953-1963, is readily available. The first concrete item appears in the 1930 Federal Census, which shows him living with his first wife, Annabel Mae Coffman Kippenbrock, in Fairbanks, Alaska, where he was Vicar of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. Annabel Mae Coffman was born on September 14, 1904, and she married Kippenbrock on June 7, 1928. Their first child, David Michael, was born in Fairbanks on December 27, 1931. The second, Anne Virginia, also was born in Fairbanks on February 3, 1935, and her mother died the same day.

Kippenbrock remarried on April 21, 1937, slightly more than two years after Annabel's death. His bride was Virginia Lee of Norfolk, Virginia, who was born on February 1, 1898. He apparently was a chaplain in the United States Army during World War II. Robert G. Macks, Clerk of Christ Church's Vestry and a retired Army officer, addressed him as "Padre" [a title often applied to military chaplains] in letters concerning his move from Saint Thaddeus Church, Aiken, South Carolina, to Christ Church. In

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addition, Kippenbrock was an officer in the Army Reserve when he came to Valdosta, and one of his first requests to the Vestry in the meeting of July 5, 1953, was for vacation time between August 16th and 30th, 1953, "to attend Reserve Officers Camp" at Fort Gordon, Georgia. As noted, his position immediately before his move to Christ Church was Rector of Saint Thaddeus in Aiken, South Carolina, from May 23, 1949, until March 31, 1953.

Fr. Kippenbrock served at Christ Church until his departure on September 30, 1963. Volume III of the Christ Church Parish Register shows the same brief note next to his name and that of his wife:

"Transferred to All Saints, Enterprise, Fla. 9/30/63." David Kippenbrock, then in the U. S. Army, already had transferred to Trinity Episcopal Church, Columbus, Georgia, on April 23, 1959, and Anne, who had married George William Tudor in 1959, transferred to All Saints, Enterprise, Florida, on June 23, 1965. When Kippenbrock died on February 24, 1973, he and his wife were residents of Orlando, Florida. He and Virginia, who died on December 23, 1974, in Norfolk, Virginia, were buried next to each other in Oakwood Cemetery, Norfolk.

During Fr. Kippenbrock's first Christ Church Vestry meeting on May 3, 1953, Senior Warden Jamie Carroll raised the possibility of selling the old "Rectory" at 115 West North Street as the first step toward acquiring new housing for the Vicar and his family. On an Omer Franklin motion, however, Vestry tabled the

question until the June meeting. On June 7, 1953, the same action occurred again: "Possible sale of the Rectory tabled to the next meeting."

What also occurred in the same session was the Vestry's turning again to the idea of expanding the physical plant to provide new Sunday School rooms, which initiated significant discussion. As the Minutes relate, "The Vicar was kind enough to subordinate action on a new Rectory to the definite needs of the Sunday School." Some vestrymen stressed the urgent need for additional teaching spaces, but there were also calls for unanimity on the issue. The immediate decision was that Vestry Clerk Bob Macks approach the American Church Building Fund Commission anew about "securing in the immediate future a loan of \$7,000.00 on projected cost of approximately \$10,000.00." Other vestrymen were to "check on local financing."

Macks wrote Richard P. Kent, Jr., Secretary of the A.C.B.F.C., on June 8, 1953. He emphasized that Clifton White had been called to a church in Lakeland, Florida, that Christ Church "had been fortunate" to obtain "the services of the Rev. Michael J. Kippenbrock," and "happily that we have every indication of having a thoroughly united congregation supporting our new Vicar." Moreover, Christ Church now was debt free. As he said, "We do not owe any money." Then he got to the point, which was the Vestry's desire to borrow \$7,000.00 from A.C.B.F.C.: "Is there any possibility of early action through the Fund?"

More to follow in the December issue of the *Vineyard*.