

# Anglo-Catholicism in Antebellum North Carolina: Levi Silliman Ives and the Society of the Holy Cross

By Lewis Wright

He has instituted at Valle Crucis a monastic order . . . composed of persons bound to him by a vow of celibacy, poverty and obedience. . . . He has given to the members, as their peculiar dress, a black cassock extending from the throat to the ankle. . . . He allows to be placed on the altar a pyx, in which are reserved the remaining consecrated elements after a communion . . . there is used at Valle Crucis in a little manual of devotions . . . prayers to the Virgin Mary and the Saints. . . . He has announced to two of his clergy an intention to send a “penitentiary” through the parishes in the Diocese to receive the confessions of the people.<sup>1</sup>

THESE CRITICISMS of the Rt. Rev. Levi Silliman Ives (1797-1867), bishop of North Carolina, were made in 1849 by George Edmond Badger, a prominent layman, lawyer and United States senator from Raleigh, North Carolina. Several accounts have been written of the life of Bishop Ives, a cradle Presbyterian who converted to the Episcopal Church. Ives served as the second bishop of North Carolina (1831-1852) and spent the last fifteen years of his life as a Roman Catholic layman (1852-1867).<sup>2</sup> These accounts have included few details of the Society of the Holy Cross and of the bishop’s beloved mission-monastery outpost in the wilderness of the North Carolina mountains, which he called Valle Crucis Abbey.<sup>3</sup>

On an evening in late October or early November, 1847, at St. Luke’s Church, Hudson and Grove Streets, New York City, Ives received the life vows of poverty, chastity and obedience from the Rev. William Glenney French and first annual vows from Oliver Sherman Prescott, who had recently been ordained

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<sup>1</sup> [George Edmond Badger], *An Examination of the Doctrine Declared and the Powers Claimed by the Right Reverend Bishop Ives in a Pastoral Letter to the Clergy and Laity of his Diocese* (Philadelphia, 1849), 68.

<sup>2</sup> Marshall Delancey Haywood, “Levi Silliman Ives, Second Bishop of North Carolina.” *Lives of the Bishops of North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1910), 91-139; Michael T. Malone, “Levi Silliman Ives: Priest, Tractarian, and Roman Catholic Convert” (Ph. D. dissertation, Duke University, 1970); John O’Grady, *Levi Silliman Ives, Pioneer in Catholic Charities* (New York, 1933); Richard J. Purcell, “Levi Silliman Ives,” *Dictionary of American Biography*, Dumas Malone, ed. (New York, 1932), v. 9, 521-522; Blackwell P. Robinson, “The Episcopate of Levi Silliman Ives,” *The Episcopal Church in North Carolina*, Lawrence Foushee London and Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, eds. (Raleigh, 1987), 171-221.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Blount Cheshire, “Levi Silliman Ives,” unpublished biographical sketch, Charles Van Noppen papers, Duke University, c. 1890; Mrs. H. H. Prout, “Recollections of the First Mission at Valle Crucis.” *Messenger of Hope*, February 1909, 1.

deacon.<sup>4</sup> It was a dramatic scene, lit by a single candle. The men had been inducted into a recently founded Anglican monastic order, the Society of the Holy Cross. French was to serve as superior. These matters were carried out in utmost secrecy. Ives was at the time visiting his brother-in-law, the Rev. John Henry Hobart, Jr., who in 1841 had been one of the founding members of the monastic-like mission in Wisconsin that later evolved into Nashotah House.

Ives was one of the most respected bishops in the American church and was an acknowledged leader of the high church party. Born in Meriden, Connecticut, on 16 September 1797, he was the son of Levi and Fanny Silliman Ives and the oldest of ten children. The family, of modest circumstances, moved in his infancy to Turin, New York, where his father obtained work in a saw mill. Ives studied for a period at Lowville Academy in Lewis County.<sup>5</sup> On 11 October 1814 he enlisted as a private in the Sixth Regiment of Mounted Dragoons of the New York Militia, and served at a salary of twenty dollars a month during the final months of the War of 1812.<sup>6</sup> Ives's father is thought to have committed suicide by drowning in a creek in 1815.

Ives entered Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, in 1816 with the intention of becoming a Presbyterian minister.<sup>7</sup> He completed five semesters of study but left in the second semester of his third year because of an illness. In 1819 he was appointed the second principal of the St. Lawrence Academy at Potsdam, New York, at a salary of four hundred dollars a year.<sup>8</sup> So satisfactory were his services that he was given a raise of a hundred dollars for 1820 and an assistant was provided. Ives also served as a lay preacher because there was no Presbyterian minister in town. His interest in the Episcopal Church began after he received a Book of Common Prayer as a gift from a clergyman.<sup>9</sup> By 1820 he was confirmed in the Episcopal Church. He then wrote the Rt. Rev. John Henry Hobart, bishop of New York, telling him of his desire to become a priest.

Ives's actual seminary education extended over only two semesters. Initially he enrolled in 1821 as a second-year student at the New York Theological Academy, a diocesan institution founded by Hobart earlier that year.<sup>10</sup> By the end of the year it had been decided that the General Theological Seminary would move

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<sup>4</sup> *Historical Notes, 1820-1939*, St. Luke's Chapel, Trinity Parish (New York, 1939), 18.

<sup>5</sup> *Lowville Academy, Semi-centennial anniversary celebrated at Lowville, N.Y., July 21st and 22nd, 1858* (Lowville, 1859), 8.

<sup>6</sup> National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

<sup>7</sup> *Hamilton Literary Monthly* 2, no. 6 (1868):191; personal communication, Frank K. Lorenz, Curator of Special Collections, Hamilton College, 5 September 1996.

<sup>8</sup> George H. Sweet, *St. Lawrence Academy, Historical Sketch 1816-1869* (n.p., 1916), 6.

<sup>9</sup> William Hooper Haigh diary, 7 February 1842, p. 61 of typescript, unpublished manuscript in the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>10</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New York, 1821* (New York, 1821), 33.

from New Haven to New York and the two institutions would be consolidated. Ives continued his studies at General Theological Seminary, enrolling with the first students on 13 February 1822. He left the seminary in July 1822 “in consequence of his expectation to shortly take orders.”<sup>11</sup> He did not graduate and received no seminary degree. The practice of ordaining young men who had attended but not graduated from seminary was not unusual at the time.

On 4 August 1822, Ives was ordained to the diaconate by Hobart at St. John’s Church, New York. His first post was as missionary to Batavia in Genessee County. In 1823, he was elected rector of Trinity Church, Southwark, Philadelphia, and on 24 December was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop William White. In 1824 Columbia College (now Columbia University) awarded Ives an honorary Master of Arts degree.<sup>12</sup> His mentor, Hobart, had served as a trustee of Columbia College since 1801. On 15 February 1825, Ives married Hobart’s daughter, Rebecca. In 1826-1827 Ives served as co-rector of St. James Church, Lancaster, St. John’s in Pequa, and Christ Church, Leacock. In 1827 he returned to New York as assistant rector of Christ Church. He resigned in less than six months to become rector of St. Luke’s, New York, on 19 February 1828. The parish grew steadily under his leadership. In 1831 Columbia College honored him again with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree. In May 1831, much to his surprise, Ives was elected bishop of North Carolina at the annual convention of the diocese. The election had been unanimous with the exception of one ballot that was returned blank.

At the time the Episcopal Church was at best borderline in North Carolina. The vast state stretched more than four hundred miles from the ocean to its westernmost edge adjacent to Tennessee. Parts of North Carolina were actually west of Detroit. Although attempts had been made in the early eighteenth century to establish the church, by 1739 there were only two parishes in which Episcopalian services were regularly held.<sup>13</sup> After a period of gradual growth the church virtually disappeared following the Revolution. Charles William Janson, an English visitor in 1806 to the Carolinas, observed, “. . . religion is at a very low ebb . . . there is a total neglect not only of religion but also of moral duties . . . the baptism and burial services are dispensed.”<sup>14</sup> There seemed little interest of any sort. Baptist and Methodist congregations began to grow, but by 1816 there was

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<sup>11</sup> *Proceedings Relating to the Organization of the General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America* (New York, 1854), 133, 137.

<sup>12</sup> *Columbia University Alumni Register 1754-1931* (New York, 1932), 435.

<sup>13</sup> William L. Saunders, ed., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1886), v. 4, 357.

<sup>14</sup> Charles William Janson, *The Stranger in America 1793-1806* (Reprinted from the London Edition of 1807). (New York, 1935), 104.

not a single Episcopal priest who resided in the state.<sup>15</sup> Within a year there were three. Formally organized in 1817, the diocese of North Carolina elected John Stark Ravenscroft, a high churchman from Virginia, as the first bishop. Ravenscroft remained until his death in 1830. During those years the Episcopal Church in the state grew to sixteen congregations and over nine hundred communicants.<sup>16</sup> Only one parish in the state, however, St. James, Wilmington, had more than a hundred communicants.

On 22 September 1831, at the age of thirty-four, Ives was consecrated bishop at his former parish church in Philadelphia. The consecrators were bishops William White, Henry Ustick Onderdonk of Pennsylvania, and Benjamin Tredwell Onderdonk of New York. Returning to New York for a period, Ives delayed his trip south until the summer heat had passed and in October he traveled from New York to North Carolina. The journey took a week.

In North Carolina he initially maintained residences in Raleigh, the capital, and in Salisbury, to the west. Ives approached his work with zeal. Congregations were widely separated and travel was arduous. Roads were primitive and often barely passable, for at the time maintenance of roads was left to the discretion of each county. Ives traveled widely and was keen on extending the church to rural areas and small towns and ministering to the poor and the slaves. For the latter he encouraged missionary efforts, wrote for blacks a special catechism, encouraged special services for them, and supported a few new parishes that had been formed by freed slaves. According to the 1840 and 1850 census reports Ives himself owned no slaves. Lack of clergy and lack of funds were the major problems of the diocese. Low salaries and torrid summers made recruiting clergy from other areas difficult. Moreover, the costs of sending candidates for holy orders from North Carolina to the seminary in New York were prohibitive. Ives became convinced that priests should be recruited from local young men and that they should be trained in the state.

In 1833 the Ives' only child, John Henry Hobart Ives, died while visiting in New York with his mother. That year also saw the opening of the Episcopal School in Raleigh after two years of planning. It was to be modeled on the Flushing Academy in New York, and Ives had persuaded Joseph Cogwell of the highly respected Round Hill School of Northampton, Massachusetts, to accept the position of headmaster.<sup>17</sup> The school flourished for a period but ultimately failed to

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<sup>15</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina, 1818* (Wilmington, 1818), 8.

<sup>16</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina, 1830* (Fayetteville, 1830), 9-14.

<sup>17</sup> Michael T. Malone, "The Episcopal School of North Carolina, 1832-1842," *North Carolina Historical Review* 49, no. 2 (Spring 1972): 178-194; James McLachlan, *American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study* (New York, 1970), 31-101.

achieve financial stability. The buildings were purchased by Judge Duncan Cameron, one of the trustees, and were leased in 1842 to the Rev. Albert Smedes of New York, who opened St. Mary's School, which continues today. In 1840 Ives had traveled to New York to give the commencement address at General Theological Seminary. Among the members of the class was his brother-in-law, John Henry Hobart, Jr. Bishop Hobart had died in 1830.

Relations with the adjacent diocese of Virginia were less than cordial. In 1829 Bishop Ravenscroft had opposed the election of William Meade as assistant bishop of Virginia because of differing theological views. Ravenscroft even refused to attend Meade's consecration. Although the seminary in Alexandria, Virginia, had begun admitting students in 1823, few from North Carolina enrolled. In its first thirty years there were only three students from North Carolina.<sup>18</sup> Both Ravenscroft and Ives were strong supporters of General Theological Seminary and were wary of local diocesan seminaries that taught evangelical doctrines.

In 1842 Ives made perhaps his only official visit to Virginia when he was invited to preach at the consecration in Richmond of the Rt. Rev. John Johns as the assistant bishop.<sup>19</sup> This led to the strongest public condemnation of Ives to date when a North Carolina clergyman, the Rev. Bennett T. Blake, published a review of the sermon.<sup>20</sup> Ives was accused of viewing all churches but the Episcopal Church as heretical and schismatic and as being unduly influenced by the "Oxford tract writers." Ives heartily endorsed the *Tracts for the Times* that had resulted from the Oxford movement over the years 1833-1841 in his address to the diocesan convention in North Carolina in 1842.<sup>21</sup> In 1841 the annual convention in adjacent Virginia had strongly condemned these and the Oxford movement in general.<sup>22</sup> At the General Convention of 1844 bishops Moore and Meade of Virginia sought to persuade the church in America to do likewise and introduced a resolution.<sup>23</sup> Only three other dioceses favored it—Georgia, Ohio, and Maine. The remaining dioceses, including North Carolina, refused to support it.

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<sup>18</sup> Virginia Theological Seminary Alumni Database, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives.

<sup>19</sup> L. Silliman Ives, *The Christian Bishop Approving Himself to God. The Sermon at the Consecration of the Rt. Rev. John Johns, D.D., Assistant Bishop of Virginia* (Richmond, 1842).

<sup>20</sup> Bennett T. Blake, *Review of the Sermon of the Rt. Rev'd L. S. Ives at the Consecration of the Rt. Rev'd John Johns, D.D., Assistant Bishop of Virginia* (Raleigh, 1843).

<sup>21</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina, 1842* (Fayetteville, 1842), 17-18.

<sup>22</sup> T. Grayson Dashiell, *A Digest of the Proceedings of the Conventions and Councils in the Diocese of Virginia* (Richmond, 1883), 158-159.

<sup>23</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in a General Convention, 1844* (New York, 1844), 63.

It has been related that a botanist named Henry Schrum met Bishop Ives in New York around 1840 and told him of a desolate valley of rare beauty along the Watauga River in western North Carolina which he discovered while collecting specimens.<sup>24</sup> Ives visited the area in 1842 and found the local inhabitants completely unchurched. He had traveled in June 1832 to Tennessee, which had not yet elected its first bishop.<sup>25</sup> He preached, baptized, and confirmed in Knoxville and surrounding towns. The route he took is not known but it is likely that he used the road built in colonial times over the Cherokee Path to Virginia, an old Indian trail which passed near the present communities of Boone and Valle Crucis. In the fall of 1842 Ives appointed Henry Hudson Prout, an 1836 graduate of General Theological Seminary who had been the priest at St. Matthew's in Hillsboro and St. Mary's Chapel, Orange County, as missionary to the area.

Ives returned the following year to confirm a class prepared by Prout and to acquire land for the mission. He chose as the site a knoll at the base of Beech Mountain with an elevation of about three thousand feet. The farms were to be in the valley below. In the valley creeks intersecting the Watauga River formed an X-shaped cross in the style of a St. Andrew's cross, and he chose the name Valle Crucis for the mission. He may have known of the ruined Cistercian abbey in Wales of the same name, which existed from 1201 until the dissolution of the monastery by Henry VIII in 1535. The annual convention of the diocese in 1844 approved the bishop's mission at Valle Crucis in principle but no funds were available for it. Ives used personal money and contributions given for the project, including donations from individuals and parishes in New York. The first land at Valle Crucis, then in Ashe County, was acquired in October 1844 when Ives and Joel Mast, a native of the area, received in a grant from the State of North Carolina one hundred and ninety acres for a fee of five dollars per hundred acres.<sup>26</sup> An additional tract of four hundred acres was acquired the next month when Ives and the Rev. William Thurston purchased it for fifteen hundred dollars.<sup>27</sup> More than a hundred acres of this land had been cleared; it included a saw mill and a grist mill. Thurston, who had attended General Theological Seminary and served as rector of St. Bartholomew's, Pittsboro, was appointed to head the mission. Additional land was acquired until the total holding was about two

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<sup>24</sup> Susan Fenimore Cooper (ed.), *William West Skiles: A Sketch of Missionary Life at Valle Crucis in Western North Carolina, 1842-1862* (New York, 1890), 1-10; E. P. Holmes, "Watauga's Valle Crucis, Mission Founded There After Botanist's Visit." *Greensboro Daily News*, 7 September 1952, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Right Rev. Bishop L. I. (sic) Ives, North Carolina, Report of his Visit to Tennessee in June, 1832, transcribed by P. M. Radford. Theology Special Collection, the University of the South.

<sup>26</sup> State of North Carolina, Land Grant No. 4144.

<sup>27</sup> Ashe County, N.C., deed book N, 468. At the time of its founding Valle Crucis was in Ashe County. In 1849 the lower portion of Ashe County, where the mission was located, became Watauga County. Some deeds in the courthouse were destroyed in a fire in 1872.

thousand acres. Ives later estimated that the mission had cost about five thousand dollars of his personal money and one and a half thousand dollars contributed by others.

Under the direction of Thurston a boarding school for boys was established. Initially the emphasis was on vocational and agricultural studies. Some of the boys were unruly and were sent to the school because of disciplinary problems at home. The emphasis later changed to classical studies and preparation of young men for ordination. Older students were allowed to hunt and fish and sometimes permitted to build huts in the woods. Boot-leg whiskey, also known as “moonshine,” which the boys procured from the mountaineers, was a problem. When Thurston died of tuberculosis in 1846, Jarvis Buxton, Jr., the son of a priest who had been in charge of parishes in Elizabeth City and Fayetteville, and who was a graduate of the Flushing Academy in New York, the University of North Carolina, and General Theological Seminary in 1842, replaced him as head of the mission.

In 1847 Ives decided to organize a monastic community based at Valle Crucis. Some of the brothers were to be assigned to parishes in North Carolina and possibly elsewhere. There had been two earlier attempts at monasticism in the Episcopal Church. In response to a visit by bishop Jackson Kemper to General Theological Seminary in 1840 to recruit missionaries for the West, several students formulated plans for a religious community.<sup>28</sup> They discussed this with William R. Whittingham, professor of church history, who had recently been elected bishop of Maryland, and with William Augustus Muhlenburg, winning the approval of both men. They were to live by a rule of celibacy, obedience to the bishop and the order, have communal goods, teach catholic principles, and act as missionaries, conducting services throughout a rural circuit. There were, however, to be no permanent vows. Following ordination to the diaconate in 1841 James Lloyd Breck, William Adams, and John Henry Hobart, Jr., set out for Wisconsin. Richard Caudle, a missionary, was to be superior. They wore cassocks, had five daily services in the chapel, and addressed each other as “brother.” In the absence of vows members gradually left and all eventually married. The emphasis of the mission shifted to the school, which evolved into the seminary now known as Nashotah House. The second attempt was by Edgar P. Wadhams, Clarence E. Walworth, and Harry McVicker, a deacon, who formed a monastic community in

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<sup>28</sup> *James Lloyd Breck: Apostle of the Wilderness*, as excerpted from *The Life of the Reverend James Lloyd Breck, D.D.*, compiled by Charles Breck (Nashotah, 1992); Thomas C. Reeves, “James Lloyd Breck and the Founding of Nashotah House,” *Anglican and Episcopal History* 65, no. 1 (1996): 50-81.

Essex County, New York, in the fall of 1845.<sup>29</sup> This was short-lived and in the spring of 1846 they were received into the Roman Catholic Church.

Much of the information that has been preserved about the Society of the Holy Cross and the monastery at Valle Crucis was recorded in Susan Fennimore Cooper's account of the life of William West Skiles, in the diary kept by William Glenney French, and in a brief unpublished manuscript by Kenneth Abbott Viall, S.S.J.E.<sup>30</sup> Skiles was born in 1807 at Hertford, Perquimons County, North Carolina. He had been working as an overseer at lumber mills near Plymouth. When he arrived at Valle Crucis in 1844 there were four daily services in the chapel of the mission. A devout layman, he offered his services as a missionary and was also to oversee the crops, livestock, and buildings of the mission. With a grammar school education he embarked on a self-study program in theology and medicine to better equip himself for service to the community. He was later appointed as postmaster and frequently served as scrivener for the mountaineers who were unable to write. He was ordained a perpetual deacon by Ives in August 1847 under a canon passed by the church in 1844 stipulating that a classical education was not necessary for ordination to the diaconate. It is uncertain whether Skiles or French was the first to take monastic vows in 1847. Skiles stated that Ives first encouraged Buxton to become superior of the proposed monastic community. He declined and probably suggested the name of his seminary classmate William Glenney French.

French was born in 1813 at Milford, Connecticut, and studied at Washington College (now Trinity College), Hartford. In the fall of 1838 he entered General Theological Seminary. To cover expenses he had received a personal loan from Whittingham of the faculty and had arranged to teach on a part-time basis. In 1840 he was tutor for several months at Leeds Manor in Clarke County, Virginia.<sup>31</sup>

French graduated from seminary in 1842, was ordained deacon the next year, and was ordained priest in 1844. As a student he had served on a committee which had unsuccessfully petitioned the staff and faculty of the seminary to institute a weekly celebration of the Eucharist. During his student days copies of *Tracts for the Times* had reached America. He had considered joining the group of

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<sup>29</sup> Clarence E. Walworth, *The Oxford Movement in America; or Glimpses of Life in an Anglican Seminary* (New York, 1895), 114-118.

<sup>30</sup> Cooper, *Skiles*; William Glenney French, "History of the Order of the Holy Cross at Valle Crucis, North Carolina, under Right Rev. Levi Silliman Ives," unpublished manuscript in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (microfilm); Kenneth Abbott Viall, "The Society of the Holy Cross," unpublished manuscript, c. 1920, in the archives of the Monastery of St. Mary and St. John, Society of St. John the Evangelist, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

<sup>31</sup> William G. French to William R. Whittingham, 14 August 1838, 26 November 1838, 21 July 1840, William R. Whittingham Papers, Archives of the Diocese of Maryland.

seminarians who went to Nashotah but decided against it because of the infirmity of his parents. Until 1846 he served parishes in Connecticut, and in 1847 he taught at a boarding school in New Jersey.

It seems likely that the idea of a monastic community arose with a group of young men who approached Ives. On 28 September 1847, a letter from William Harison to William Glenney French requested him to come to New York to discuss a matter of such secrecy that it should not be mentioned in a letter. French went to New York and met with Harison and William R. Gries, then a deacon, and they outlined the bishop's plan for Valle Crucis which would include a monastery, a theological school, a training school for boys, and which would provide a mission to the region. French recorded that a monastic order known as the Society of the Holy Cross had already been formed. By this statement he suggested that others might have already taken monastic vows in North Carolina—perhaps Skiles and Gries. French returned to New York to meet with Ives, who was in New York attending the General Convention, which was meeting over the period 6-28 October. They met at the home of Ives' brother-in-law, the Rev. John Henry Hobart, Jr.

On 7 November 1847 French, his brother, Louis French (then sixteen years of age), Oliver Prescott, and Hezekiah Thomas, a divinity student, assembled in New York for the trip to North Carolina. Visiting a Roman Catholic bookshop, they purchased a crucifix, religious pictures, a book of devotions, an Ursuline manual, and letter paper imprinted with the likeness of St. Xavier. They then visited a church to obtain patterns for cassocks, vestments and altar cloths. Their route was a circuitous one—by steamship from the Battery in New York to Ambey, then by train to Philadelphia, and by steamboat again to Baltimore. There they visited the Roman Catholic cathedral, finding a number of solitary worshipers, and regretted that several Episcopal churches were locked. They boarded another steamship for Portsmouth, Virginia, where they in turn boarded another steamer to Petersburg, Virginia. In Petersburg on a Sunday they attended a local church where parishioners found their action of bowing in the creed curious. From Petersburg a train took them to Raleigh, North Carolina. Here they met William R. Gries and began arrangements for their overland journey. Gries had been a medical student and was to assist Skiles in his duties as physician.

The group of five and two black servants (who were possibly freed slaves) left Raleigh on 18 November 1847. Hiring a two horse wagon to carry supplies they were allowed to use the bishop's span of large white horses to pull the load. They walked alongside the wagon. Spending the first night in a country tavern they found that candles and lamp oil were often inaccessible in the rural South and that illumination in the evening was produced by burning strips of "fat light wood"—strips of dried wood from the patch pine (*Pinus rigida*), which was rich in resin. Travel from Raleigh to Chapel Hill took two days. The men often sang chants as they walked along. On an exceptional day they covered twenty-eight miles.

Prescott, one of the members of the order, was to be assigned to a parish in Mocksville, and left the group at Greensboro. The others departed from Salem (now Winston-Salem) on 22 November 1847. Thanksgiving dinner was by the side of the road. After crossing the Yadkin River they caught their first glimpse of the Blue Ridge Mountains. They reached Valle Crucis in the evening of Saturday, 27 November 1847, the eve of the first Sunday in Advent. Word of their progress had somehow reached the mission and the evening service was delayed for them.

On arrival French found a letter from Ives outlining his duties as superior. He was to be in charge of the entire mission complex, including the monastery, school, farm, the mills, etc. Absolute obedience to him was required and he was to be addressed as “father.” When others approached him they were to do so demurely and with their hands crossed. In the monastic order Ives had taken the title of “general.” He required every monk on approaching him to bend a knee to the floor and receive a brief benediction, “God bless thee, my son.” Priests when officiating were to wear a surplice, and deacons and lay brothers were to wear albs. By this time about three hundred acres of land had been cleared. At the mission was a log farm house and its brick kitchen. Other outbuildings included houses or shacks for storage of corn and a laundry. The long building, sixty by twenty feet, served many purposes. It contained the student dormitory on the second floor, classrooms and living quarters for two teachers on the main floor, and a brick-lined chapel in the basement. The mission house built of brick was reserved for the bishop and important visitors. William Skiles lived in a one room house on the grounds and, in another, a hired hand. The mill and smithy were also of log construction.

In 1845 several thousand brick had been purchased from nearby Tennessee. Those used in the mission house began to crumble as they had never been fired but cured only by exposure to the sun—that is to say, adobe bricks. By the fall of 1847 repairs were necessary, adding to the arduous work schedule of those at the mission. Cattle brought from Pennsylvania by the bishop failed to thrive and meat was scarce. French’s diary over the winter of 1847-1848 reflected the poverty. A repetitious menu of buckwheat cakes and pork simmered in milk (which they called “sup”) was served at breakfast. Hog meat, corn bread and boiled apples were the usual lunch. The evening meal was typically mush and milk.

In late 1847 French prepared a devotional manual based on the Ursuline manual for students in the boarding school. The following year Ives and French decided to phase out the boarding school and have only divinity students at the mission. Some of these manuals were taken home by the boys and would later fall into the hands of Ives’ critics. No known copy of the manual survives today.

As they lacked a bell, they used a bugle to summon members of the community to church. Since buildings were scattered over distances of up to a quarter of a mile it took ten minutes for all to assemble. Bishop Ives had originally

insisted on having the seven canonical hours daily in the chapel. French found this impossible because of the laborious tasks required, and three or four services a day became the rule.

In January 1848 a new postulant, William Passmore, arrived, bringing with him an elaborate silver communion set, a gift from Bishop George W. Doane of New Jersey to the monastery. He was to be the “penitentiary” of the diocese, not only hearing confessions of the monks but traveling throughout the diocese to hear those of the clergy and laity. Twenty-eight when he arrived at Valle Crucis, he was a graduate of St. Paul’s College, Flushing, N.Y., and had studied law in Washington, D.C. During this period he also taught Greek and Latin at the Virginia Theological Seminary. He enrolled at General Theological Seminary and graduated in 1846. Initially Ives had assigned him to a parish in Beauford County but in early 1849 he was stationed at Valle Crucis on a permanent basis.

The humid basement chapel was proving to be unsatisfactory. Its brick walls became covered with moss and the floor had an inch layer of wet earth. Wetness was controlled in part by keeping constant fires in its fireplace. Even then in rainy periods services sometimes had to be shifted temporarily to a school room on the main floor of the long building. In February 1848 French erected a life-size wooden cross on the lawn in front of the chapel. About the same time Charles Bland, a divinity student with carpentry experience, constructed, assisted by French, a large rustic bishop’s throne about seven feet in height. It was made of massive branches of the great rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*) and mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*). These grew in abundance and to a gigantic size in the area. On its completion it was carried in procession from the mission house to the chapel. Ives was to use it when he was at Valle Crucis and it was to represent him in his absence.

A visitor to Valle Crucis over the winter of 1847-1848 observed, “Being greatly pleased with what I saw I prolonged my stay for more than a month . . . the clergy officiate at the valley and for a distance of 80 miles . . . those who conduct the mission have given up their all even to their books to the mission. They have common property in everything. . . . They receive neither fee nor reward. . . . How little the Church at large knows of Valley Crucis.”<sup>32</sup>

On the morning of 22 February 1848, the basement chapel caught fire—probably from the constant fire required to control its dampness. Smoke was first discovered by Millie, the cook, and she rushed in to save the books in the vestry. French and two of the divinity students broke through an unused side door that had been nailed shut and rescued the altar, altar cloth, holy vessels, lectern, and

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<sup>32</sup> [Correspondent of Church Times], “North Carolina—Valle Crucis.” *The Churchman* 18, no. 20 (July 1849): 79. (The correspondent was from *Church Times* which was published in Baltimore 1846-1852. The well-known Church of England publication by that name began in 1863.)

the bishop's throne. The entire building was lost and a temporary chapel was set up in a room in the farm house. Before the community was the laborious task of cleaning up the debris, including removing mortar from brick that might still be used, and filling the hole with earth.

French, in his diary, recorded the schedule of services for Ash Wednesday, 8 March 1848, held in the temporary chapel. The altar and lectern were draped in black. Morning prayer was at 6 AM and was followed by a portion of the commination service of the English prayer book. At 9 AM the sixth and one hundred and second psalms were sung along with the bidding prayer and litany. At noon the one hundred and forty-third psalm was sung, ante-communion celebrated, and there was a sermon. At 3 PM there was a Litany of the Passion taken from a Roman Catholic source. Evening prayer was at 6 PM and this was followed by a reading from St. Alphonsus Mary Liguori on the passion. During Lent regular meals were reduced to two daily and meat was served only on Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

Another visitor to Valle Crucis during the period the temporary chapel was in use described it: “. . . the (altar) cloth in common use is green satin embroidered with gold-color fleur-de-lys, covering the top and six inches of the top and sides; the other four canonical colors are used for the appointed seasons—violet for Lent, and black for Good Friday—covering the whole altar and having large white crosses worked in front. . . . The candle sticks are of silver gilt low and massive. At the time of the Holy Eucharist, the sides and top of the Holy Table are covered with a linen cloth damasked with monogram and cross, and edged with lace. . . . The body of the chapel is surrounded with religious prints . . .”<sup>33</sup>

William French probably designed the new chapel which was a freestanding wooden building in the Gothic style. Two long timbers of seasoned wood were available. These had been cut two or three years previously for a proposed house for the late Rev. William Thurston. The sawmill began cutting wood on 15 March 1848. On 4 April 1848 the framework was raised in a single day and in the late afternoon the community assembled around it and sang the *Gloria in Excelsis*. Most of the actual construction was done by French, Skiles and Bland.

Though only a shell the new chapel was used for the first time on Maundy Thursday, 12 April 1848. On Good Friday French's diary lists the services. At 9 AM there was the Litany and the fortieth and one hundred and third psalms. The service at noon was the ante-communion and sermon. The Litany of the Passion was at 3 PM. Vespers were at 7 PM. On Easter Eve a watch before the reserved sacrament was kept until midnight and the altar was then draped in white. On Easter the church was packed, several children were baptized, and the community

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<sup>33</sup> *Puseyite Developments or Notices of the New York Ecclesiologists Dedicated to their Patron the Right Rev. Bishop Ives of North Carolina* (New York, 1850), 8.

had twenty-five of the local inhabitants for a mid-day dinner. Included were several slaves. Men and women ate separately.

Work on the church continued. Glass was unavailable because of the remoteness and poverty of the mission. French fashioned thin planks in an oblique lattice pattern which formed diamond-shaped spaces in the window frames. Over each window frame canvas was nailed. At the apex of the east window over the altar he painted figures of St. Peter and St. Paul on the canvas. In the lower diamond-shaped segments he painted symbols of the passion—hammer and nails, a spear, a seamless coat, a purse and a sponge. In these spaces on the side windows he painted sheaths of wheat, grapes, a chalice, and in some he created quatrefoil and trefoil designs. The style and interior decorations of the rustic chapel clearly reflected the tastes of the ecclesiologists (the so-called Cambridge movement) at that time in England.<sup>34</sup> About this time French severely chastised a farm hand for instructing a carpenter to mount a cross atop the “privy.”

French had established a choir of men and boys, and it is said that mountaineers (many of whom could not read) often sang Anglican chants as they walked along the mountain paths. Two of the paths were dubbed “St. John’s Way” and the “Via Dolorosa.” In warm weather baptisms by immersion were often performed in the Watauga River. Lack of food and scarcity of money continued. Fleas infested the living quarters. Horatio Glenney French edited his father’s diary after his death in 1895 and elected not to include entries between December 1848 and June 1849, stating, “. . . there was little of interest to relate, merely a repetition of work, etc. . . .”

By 1849 knowledge of the monastic community had spread. In 1848-1849 the bishop had preached a series of sermons endorsing private confession, the real presence in the Eucharist, and the invocation of saints. These were published and circulated. In March 1849, the Rev. Donald McLeod, a non-resident member of the society, published a pamphlet, “The Voices of the Anglican Church on Confession.”<sup>35</sup> Although the title page listed no author it bore the inscription that it was “edited by the Bishop of North Carolina.” This provoked further controversy. In a letter to the Rev. Samuel F. Jarvis of Middletown, Connecticut, Ives replied to criticism of the society:

. . . that what you say about a secret society is substantially false. The fact is a society called “The Holy Cross” was established two years ago, to sustain the interests of the mission school at Valle Crucis. Quite a number of young clergymen offered themselves for the service of that school as celibates. The society however consists of persons, married and unmarried,

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<sup>34</sup> James F. White, *The Cambridge Movement: The Ecclesiologists and the Gothic Revival* (Cambridge, 1979), 178-197.

<sup>35</sup> [Cornelius Donald McLeod], *The Voice of the Anglican Church on Confession* (New York, 1849).

male and female, clergymen and laity. Not one of whom out of my own diocese is under any more authority to me than to yourself. Two clergymen, in Alabama, authorized me to add their names to the lists of the society's members. They are the only members not belonging to my diocese. And their only obligation to me is to come to the school at Valle Crucis when I want them and to do what they can in the meantime to sustain its interests.<sup>36</sup>

Ives had spent a period in the spring of 1849 at Valle Crucis. As he departed, the group from the monastery-mission traveled on foot the forty-five miles to Wilkesboro for the dedication of St. Paul's Church. One of the brothers, William Gries, was then rector of the church. Joe, the community mule, carried fresh clothing and vestments in panniers. They stopped on the edge of town to don these and marched in procession into the town.

By the time of the annual convention of the diocese many clergy and delegates were suspicious and angry. Throughout the early 1840s conventions had been quiet and stressed the paucity of clergy and funds. Ives claimed illness again and was able to attend only the first two days. The report of the Committee on the State of the Church had ". . . the impression that doctrines had been preached not in accordance with the Liturgy and Articles of the Church, or in plain violation of its rubrics." Before the convention ended Bishop Ives sent a message from his sick bed that the monastic society at Valle Crucis no longer existed.

After the convention Ives returned again to Valle Crucis. In July he received a letter from the Rev. Cameron McRae, an evangelical priest in the diocese who was a graduate of the seminary in Virginia, stating that he had reviewed one of the devotional manuals prepared by French in 1847 for students in the boarding school. He objected to some of the contents, including invocations to the saints, prayers to the Virgin Mary, and prayers for the dead. In August 1849 Bishop Ives issued an eighty-page pastoral letter in reply to the accusations.<sup>37</sup> He emphasized that illness at the time of the convention had made it impossible for him to think clearly. Moreover he deplored the fact that the convention had presumed to determine matters of faith. He again reaffirmed the practices for which he was condemned. This was circulated widely throughout the diocese and nation.

The restructuring of the mission at Valle Crucis did not happen at once and the monastic order probably continued for a period under a revised rule. Poverty was extreme and French writes of an overcoat made from an old blanket. French and Passmore, the remaining priests, began to quarrel over the advisability of

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<sup>36</sup> Levi Silliman Ives to Samuel F. Jarvis, 27 April 1849, Samuel Farmar Jarvis Papers, Diocese of Connecticut.

<sup>37</sup> Levi Silliman Ives, *A Pastoral Letter Addressed to the Clergy and Laity of his Diocese* (New York, 1849).

borrowing money. French resigned and returned to Connecticut in early 1850.<sup>38</sup> The U. S. Census of 1850 records two clergymen, Passmore and Skiles, and four students remaining at Valle Crucis.

The diocese was more tranquil before the 1850 convention. At the suggestion of his brother-in-law, the Rev. John Henry Hobart, Jr., Ives had prepared answers to a series of questions and had requested that a committee be appointed to investigate the difficulties in the diocese. They were unable to meet with the bishop and requested that another committee be appointed for this purpose. According to the report of the second committee at the 1851 convention, the bishop had retracted virtually all of his controversial opinions. The report concluded that the bishop had been for several years in a state of mental excitement that had impaired his memory and judgment. Once again Ives claimed illness and attended only a portion of the convention.

At the diocesan convention of 1852 there were no more major disputes. Ives' last official duties as bishop were the ordinations to the diaconate, on 15 August 1852, of Richard H. Mason and Arthur F. Neville Rolfe.<sup>39</sup> He requested a leave of absence and an advance of six months salary because of ill health. He received the sum of nine hundred and twelve dollars in September and left for Europe with Mrs. Ives. Over the fall there were rumors of his reception into the Roman Catholic Church. On 22 December 1852 he wrote a letter of resignation to the diocese of North Carolina and shortly thereafter was received by Pope Pius IX. His wife followed in several months.

In mid-nineteenth century North Carolina, as in the rest of America, relations between the Roman Catholic Church and other Christians were not good. Yet the Roman Catholic presence in the state was minimal and most Carolinians would never have encountered a member of that church. When thirty-three years of age, John England, an Irish immigrant, was appointed as bishop of Charleston (the diocese covered both Carolinas and Georgia) in 1820, there were no Roman Catholic churches and no resident priests in North Carolina. Traveling priests had occasionally visited and by 1838 one resided in the state.<sup>40</sup> Anti-catholic bias followed the increasing numbers of immigrants from predominantly Roman Catholic countries in the nineteenth century, but few of these came to North Carolina. The publication of the book *Maria Monk*, with its tales of horror and supposed promiscuity in a Montreal convent, enhanced anti-catholic feelings in the mid-nineteenth century, and by the time of the Civil War more than three hundred

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<sup>38</sup> Cooper, *Skiles*; French, "Diary"; Viall, "Holy Cross," passim.

<sup>39</sup> George Burgess, *List of Persons Admitted to the Order of Deacons in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, From A.D. 1785 to A.D. 1857* (Boston, 1874), 41.

<sup>40</sup> Guion Griffis Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina, A Social History* (Chapel Hill, 1937), 368.

thousand copies of the book had been sold. When Ives established the Anglican monastic community at Valle Crucis there were no Roman Catholic monasteries or convents in the state. In North Carolina by 1860 there were 3036 Episcopalians, 350 Roman Catholics, and more than 60,000 members each of the Baptist and Methodist churches.<sup>41</sup> The first Roman Catholic convent was established at Wilmington in 1869 by the Sisters of Mercy from Charleston, and the first monastery opened in Gaston County in 1876 with brothers from the Benedictine community of St. Vincent in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.<sup>42</sup>

There is no complete list of members of the Society of the Holy Cross, but partial lists from several sources suggest that there were probably about twenty members.<sup>43</sup> Both priests and students were actively encouraged to take vows—either temporary or permanent—and married priests were allowed to become associate members. Data on those who were associated with the Valle Crucis mission over the years 1847-1853 have been gathered from clerical directories, diocesan convention proceedings, and alumni directories.<sup>44</sup> In addition local parish histories and archives have been of value.

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>42</sup> J. J. O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia* (Westminster, 1964), 400, 480.

<sup>43</sup> Peter F. Anson, *The Call of the Cloister* (London, 1955), 535-540; Cooper, *Skiles*; French, "Diary"; Haywood, "Levi Silliman Ives," 111; William L. Hayward, *The C.S.S.S. The Quest and Goal of the Founder, the Right Reverend William McGarvey* (Philadelphia, 1940), 34-35; Sister Hilary, C.S.M., "The Revival of Monasticism," *The Holy Cross Magazine* 16, no. 7 (1945): 199-203; Michael T. Malone, "Levi Silliman Ives"; Father [Roland Ford] Palmer, S.S.J.E., "Brother William Skiles of Valle Crucis," *Cowley* 17, no. 67 (1944): 83-86; Henry Edwin Stamm IV, "The Episcopal Church in Watauga Country, North Carolina, 1842-1898" (M.A. thesis, Appalachian State University, 1989).

<sup>44</sup> *The American Church Almanac and Year Book, 1850-1905* (New York, 1850-1905); *Bulletin of the General Theological Seminary, Alumni List Corrected to December, 1962*, 49, no. 1 (1963); George Burgess, *List of Persons Admitted to the Order of Deacons*; Joseph Blount Cheshire, *The Church in the Confederate States. A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States* (New York, 1912); Joseph Blount Cheshire, ed., *Sketches of Church History in North Carolina: Addresses and Papers by Clergymen and Laymen of the Dioceses of North and East Carolina: Prepared for the Joint Centennial Convention at Tarborough, May 1890* (Wilmington, 1892); E. H. Dowling, *List of Persons Ordained Deacons in the Protestant Episcopal Church From Jan. 1, 1858, to Jan. 1, 1885* (New York, 1886); Norvin C. Duncan, *Pictorial History of the Episcopal Church in North Carolina, 1701-1964* (Asheville, 1965); *Journal of the Annual Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of North Carolina, 1830-1854* (Fayetteville, 1830-1854); *Lloyd's Clerical Directory for 1898* (Hamilton, 1898); Lawrence Foushee London and Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, eds., *The Episcopal Church in North Carolina, 1701-1959* (Raleigh, 1987); James B. Sill, *Historic Sketches of Churches in the Diocese of Western North Carolina: Episcopal Church* (Asheville, 1955).

The later lives of the men who had made up the Valle Crucis community reflected a profound spiritual commitment, although not all of them remained within the Anglican fold. William French, the superior, served several parishes in New York. He married and had a family. He was City Missionary for New York on Blackwell's Island from 1872-1885. Three members of the society, Cornelius Donald McLeod, Ferdinand White, and Hezekiah Thomas were received into the Roman Catholic Church. McLeod was reordained with the name Donald Xavier McLeod. William Johnson Alston, an Afro-American divinity student from North Carolina, became rector of parishes in Philadelphia and New York. Richard Wainright Barber, Charles Theodore Bland, Jarvis Buxton, Joseph Caldwell Huske, and Thomas Frederick Davis, Jr., remained in the North Carolina-South Carolina area. William Dafter later graduated from Nashotah House and Louis French from General Theological Seminary. Others included Frederick Fitzgerald, William Richards Gries, William Henry Harison, Joseph W. Murphy, William Passmore, George Papatthakes Patterson, Henry Prout, and Jonathan Avery Shepherd. After leaving North Carolina these men served parishes throughout the country, from Florida to New England, and as far west as Texas and California. Oliver Sherman Prescott took monastic vows a second time. He moved to England in 1869, and joined the newly formed monastic order, the Society of St. John the Evangelist. In the 1870s he returned to America and with two brothers established an American branch of the society. To date no record has been found of the Rev. W. R. Jones, whom Hayward reported as being stationed at Valle Crucis in 1848. Several divinity students left without being ordained. Clearly, Ives had attracted a remarkable group of young men to this venture.<sup>45</sup>

After 1853 only the permanent deacon, Brother William Skiles, remained at Valle Crucis. The land of the mission had been sold by Ives, as the deed was in his name rather than that of the church. The new owner, Robert Miller, a grandson of the Rev. Robert Johnstone Miller, who had been the first rector of St. James, Lenoir, was sympathetic and allowed Skiles to live there and operate the mission. Often traveling on horseback to considerable distances he conducted services, ran Sunday and day schools, and served as friend, physician and scrivener to the mountaineers. Convinced that another church was needed in the lower Watauga settlement, he gave seven hundred dollars (a third of the cost) for construction of the Church of St. John the Baptist. A wooden church in the Gothic style, it incorporated stained glass windows, and was dedicated by Bishop Thomas Atkinson, the third Bishop of North Carolina, in 1862. Skiles, ailing from an abdominal malignancy, died a few months later and was buried in the churchyard.

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<sup>45</sup> Before coming to North Carolina Davis, Gries, McLeod and Prescott had attended General Theological Seminary, and Buxton, William French, Harison, Passmore, Prout, and White were graduates. Honorary doctoral degrees were later awarded to Dafter, Patterson, and Shepherd by several institutions.

The church was moved to a higher site above the Watauga valley in later years. Skiles' remains were disinterred and reburied there. Though not an active parish today, the building is carefully preserved and used for occasional services. Peter F. Anson, the twentieth-century English historian, said of Skiles, "So died in faith and patience the first man in the Anglican communion since Reformation days to persevere in the dedicated life of poverty, chastity and obedience, under vows . . ."<sup>46</sup>

Mrs. H. H. Prout, the wife of the missionary to the area, later wrote:  
. . . the Bishop lost the confidence of the country people who did not trust him, while the confidence of the Church in the Valle Crucis Mission was rapidly failing . . . and now became the subject of the harshest criticisms, while terrible stories were told of its Romanizing tendencies, and although these stories were mainly false, or greatly exaggerated, still the extremes into which Bishop Ives rushed were fatal to the institution. . .<sup>47</sup>

Ives' letter of 22 December 1852 to the Diocese of North Carolina announced his resignation as bishop. He did not, however, resign from the House of Bishops. At the General Convention of 1853 a canon was passed for the automatic deposition of a bishop who abandons his office by virtue of joining another church. In the spring of 1854 he published a book, *Trials of a Mind in Its Progress to Catholicism: A Letter to His Old Friends*, in which he attempted to explain his conversion.<sup>48</sup> Reviews were mixed. Those in Roman Catholic publications were generally laudatory while those by Anglicans stressed his mental imbalance, some reviewers even using the word "insanity." After two years in Rome the Iveses decided to return to America. Initially they booked passage on the ill-fated *Arctic*, which sank with their luggage on board. At the last minute they had decided to return on another ship that was carrying a friend, the Rev. Hugh Gallagher. For a period Ives taught English at St. John's College, Fordham, N.Y., and also lectured at St. Joseph's Seminary and the convents of the Sacred Heart and Sisters of Charity. He later founded the Catholic Male Protectory and was active in other charitable organizations. Ives died on 13 October 1867. The cause of death is unknown and no death certificate is on file in New York. In his will, however, he seems to have remained on good terms with his Hobart in-laws and some of his personal possessions were left to them.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Anson, *The Call of the Cloister*, 539.

<sup>47</sup> Prout, "Recollections."

<sup>48</sup> Levi Silliman Ives, *The Trials of a Mind in its Progress to Catholicism: A Letter to His Old Friends* (Boston, 1854).

<sup>49</sup> New York, Surrogate's Court, will book 5, 255-259.

In the late nineteenth century Bishop Joseph Blount Cheshire became interested in restoring the mission at Valle Crucis and in 1895 accepted as a gift three acres of land at the original site. A chapel, classrooms and dormitory were constructed and a school was opened. In 1898 the Missionary District of Asheville was created and Junius M. Horner was installed as the first bishop. This became the Diocese of Western North Carolina. In 1903 another four hundred and thirty-five acres of land were purchased. The school was expanded and orchards and farms were installed as well as a wagon factory. In 1925 the present Holy Cross Church was built, the third on the site; it continues today as an active parish. The school was discontinued during World War II and the facility was used for training for town and country ministry. In the 1960s and 1970s the present-day conference center was completed. Today it maintains an active schedule of conferences and retreats. The large chair or throne made for Ives is in the sanctuary of the church. Ives' log house at the mission was moved across the road and serves as the rector's office and parish library.

The contemporary author Romulus Linney has written both a novel and a play which are largely fiction but are loosely based on the story of Bishop Ives and Valle Crucis. These are both entitled *Heathen Valley*.<sup>50</sup> The true story of Valle Crucis is far more interesting than its fictional counterpart.

Although little known today, the Society of the Holy Cross and Valle Crucis Abbey were among the earliest ventures of the Anglo-Catholic movement in America. Established in an area where most of the inhabitants were unchurched, poor, and illiterate, the movement fostered, from its beginning, dual goals of mission and advancing catholic principles in the church. Bishop Ives was a restless churchman whose personal journey in faith took him from protestantism to pre-Tractarian high church Anglicanism. Greatly influenced by the *Tracts of the Times*, he introduced into his diocese, which was considered high church at the time, controversial practices. These included monasticism, auricular confession, reserved sacraments, prayers for the dead, and prayers to the Virgin Mary and to the saints. Impatient and depressed by criticism, he resigned and entered the Roman Catholic Church. Short-lived institutions of the church are not necessarily failures. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the Anglo-Catholic movement reached its zenith, all of these practices would be recognized in that branch of the church. Decades of discussion and debate followed. With the emergence of liberal Anglo-Catholicism both issues and practices changed. But that is another story.

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<sup>50</sup> Romulus Linney, *Heathen Valley* (New York, 1962); *Heathen Valley* (New York, 1988).