

Continued from page 7

places, avoiding crowds.

Toward the end of the trip, as Mrs. Marmion was enjoying the lavish hospitality of Haitian women, the bishop was visiting the medical facility supported by the Diocese of Upper South Carolina when, without warning, he suffered a stroke. As soon as possible, the bishop and his wife were rushed to a more modern hospital at Port-au-Prince, but the situation seemed hopeless. The Duvalier thugs were on the look-out for the Marmions. The bishop was dangerously ill. However, after many prayers and support from the American ambassador, the Marmions were able to return to Louisville.

Reminders of the Kentucky adventure

in Haiti can be found in homes across the diocese. Paintings in the Haitian style made by Susan Davenport, wife of St. Francis's rector, still hang on walls in family rooms. Examples of Haitian folk art and crafts still remind some Episcopalians of the excitement of the days when "our bishop" was standing up to "Papa Doc." Even some black and white photos of Kentuckians riding mules through the Haitian countryside turn up in shoe boxes and photo albums.

The most long-lasting tie with Episcopal life in Haiti was, perhaps, the continuation of the music school Kay Wilkinson and Nina Racine went off to support in 1970. Unhappily, the elementary school and the adjoining trade school, as well as Holy Trinity Cathedral, were totally destroyed in the January

earthquake. Julio Racine, his wife reports, thinks often of the ashes of Bishop Garnier, placed so carefully in the Cathedral many years ago, now scattered among the remains of the students who were working on their trade skills and their music at the moment the earthquake struck.

Of course every companion diocese relationship brings its own unique lessons and blessings, but surely few of our subsequent relationships have taught us so much or provided us with as deep an insight into the meaning of "being Christ to the world" as did this our first.

In addition to those named within the story, information was provided by Beverly Marmion and Virginia Raub.)

A 1973 teenager's view of Haiti

By Janet Irwin
EKQ Writer

Ties were strong between the Dioceses of Kentucky and Haiti in 1972 when teenager Anita Matton (later Streeter), a member of St. Francis in the Fields Church, was persuaded to join a mission group being assembled by the son of her rector, the Rev. Stephen Davenport. She thought her skill at speaking French was not adequate enough, but she agreed to go and thus became one of the young Episcopalians who followed years of mite box collections to Haiti.

As it turned out, Streeter was the only young person on the team who actually spoke French, so she and Davenport became the team translators. Many of the team members, she said, are still active Episcopalians in churches from Prospect to Paducah. "I know St. Francis still sends young people on 'mission trips' in many different countries, but I'll bet they don't have as much 'fun' as we had. I think maybe a 'work trip camp' is better than a 'mission trip,'" she asserted.

"It's really great to bond by sweating together."

From the beginning, Davenport made it clear they were on a "work" trip, she said. People who didn't work, wouldn't eat. Only one person had to go to bed hungry for the rest to know that he meant what he said about not playing. They had only two days off during three hot July weeks.

Twice they had memorably disquieting reminders that Haiti was run by a dictator. On their one trip to the beach, they discovered "their" beach adjoined Duvalier property and quickly deduced the serious-looking men watching them across the intervening wall were probably Tonton Macoute (Duvalier's secret service men),

The presence of the Duvalier family was felt everywhere, even in the countryside where they came upon a village that was eerily quiet, she said. The tidy houses seemed well constructed. Each displayed a poster-sized photo of "Baby Doc" by the front door. Each house was empty,

and the team found the uninhabited, potempkin-like village, inexplicable.

The Kentuckians discovered that the color of their skin was not the only thing that set them apart, as they learned about the culture. Only the Americans didn't want to rest each day during the three-hour lunch break. Large containers of water were carried more easily on the head than in the hands. Goat stew could be quite tasty, even after seeing the goat butchered. It was possible to brush their teeth and "bathe" with a cup and a half of water a day. Life can be full and fun without electricity, telephones or soft drinks.

The recent, Haiti-filled headlines and TV screens evoked for Streeter a string of memories: cutting sugar cane with machetes, building a sea wall, hearing far-off music from Voodoo worshippers, enjoying the colorful Fête des Fleurs, worshiping with enthusiastic Haitian congregations, and getting to know something of the customs and ideas of their diocesan companions.