

St George's Parish 1714---
In Essex County 1714-1721
In Spotsylvania County 1721---
In Stafford County 1964---
In the City of Fredericksburg 1879---

St George's Parish on the Rappahannock River was created in 1714 from the westernmost part of St Mary's Parish and the then Essex County in an almost unique way by an Act of the General Assembly (cp. the Journal of the House of Burgesses 1712-26 page xxvii and the Report upon the Parish Lines of the Diocese of Virginia) for Germanna at the mouth of the Rapidan River in the present Orange County. The Act was entitled "An Act to exempt certain German Protestants from the payment of levies for seven years and for erecting the Parish of St George". Dr Brydon wrote that "this Act was for the benefit of 42 (or thereabouts) German Protestants who had lately settled on the Rapidan River above the Falls of the Rappahannock at a place called Germanna in Essex County and St Mary's Parish". The Act stipulated

That the place called Germanna together with a precinct of land thereto next adjoining, extending five miles on each side of the said town or settlement of Germanna, is and shall be divided from and exempt from the Parish of St Mary in the said County of Essex. This first St George's Parish was created for the benefit of German Reformed, but in 1717 German Lutherans also settled at Germanna. This arrangement at Germanna is quite similar to that of an earlier time for the French Huguenots of King William Parish at Manakin in present-day Powhatan County.

St George's Parish was much enlarged by an Act of the General Assembly in 1720 (cp. Hening's Statutes IV page 77) when it was ordered that the whole county of Spotsylvania be made one parish, by the name of St George.

St George's Parish, therefore, not only annexed a very much larger area from St Mary's Parish in 1721 but also annexed the western parts of St John's Parish in King William County and St Stephen's Parish in King and Queen County. The enlarged St George's Parish thus united two prominent lines of parishes that derive from the earliest plantations of York County: the lines from Blisland Parish and from the Northumberland-Lancaster parishes. This enlarged St George's Parish was not long active at Germanna, for the German Calvinists (or Reformed) left Germanna for the present Fauquier County in 1721 (cp. Garrison's History of the Reformed Church in Virginia pages 21-24) and the Lutherans went to the present Madison County around 1724 (cp. Harrison's Landmarks of Old Prince William I page 216). No parish in Virginia is more significant as to parochial development than St George's, for it not only unites various lines from the plantation parishes, but it itself is the ancestor of all the parishes in the Valley of Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky (and in an irregular fashion certain parts of southwestern Pennsylvania). It is, therefore, quite a pivotal parish, as it were.

Only two parishes have ever been directly derived from St George's: St Mark's Parish on the west and Berkeley Parish on the south. Inasmuch as no parish has ever been created from Berkeley Parish, it is through St Mark's Parish and colonial Orange County that the line from St George's Parish continues to the Valley and beyond.

St Mark's Parish was created by an Act of the General Assembly in 1730 (cp. Hening's Statutes IV page 305):

That from and after the first day of January, which shall be in the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and thirty, the said pa-

rish of St George be divided into two distinct parishes; From the mouth of the Rapidan, to the mouth of Wilderness Run; thence up the said run, to the bridge; and thence south west to the Pamunkey River and that all that part of the said parish, which lies below the said bounds, shall forever thereafter remain, be called, and known, by the name of St George Parish; and that all that other part of the said parish, which lies above the said bounds, shall thereafter be called and known by the name of St Mark.

After 1730, the western boundary of St George's Parish ran along the Rapidan River and Wilderness Run and in a straight line from Wilderness Run southwest to the Pamunkey River (the present-day North Anna River)--- the present Spotsylvania-Culpeper county line and the present Spotsylvania-Orange county line. The other three boundaries are the present boundaries of Spotsylvania County.

Berkeley Parish was created by an Act of the General Assembly in 1769 (cp. Hening's Statutes VIII page 399):

That from and after the first day of March next, the said parish of St George be divided by the river Po, where it is intersected by the line of Caroline County, thence up the said river Po to the mouth of the run called the Robinson, thence up the said river whereon John Mitchell's mill now stands, until it intersects the line of Orange County, and that all that part of the said parish of St George that lies between the said river Po and Rappahannock River, shall be one distinct parish, and retain the name of St George, and all the remainder of the said parish of St George shall be one other distinct parish, and called by the name of Berkeley.

After 1770, therefore, the southern boundary of St George's Parish ran along the Po River and Robertson Run and embraced the present Courtland and Chancellor magisterial districts and the small, triangular section of Livingston magisterial district between Robertson Run and the Po River.

In the 19th century it seems that Christ Church Spotsylvania Courthouse was generally considered, reported, and represented as part of Berkeley Parish though it lay north of the Po River. Therefore, one has to assume an indefinite, generally southeast-northwest line across the county running north of the courthouse as the southern boundary of St George's Parish in that period despite the lack of any formal recognition of such a change.

The lines of St George's Parish were much altered in 1964 (cp. the Journal of the Diocese of Virginia 1964 pages 72-75). By this action St George's Parish surrendered to Berkeley Parish all of its territory below a line that begins on the Spotsylvania-Caroline county line on route 668 (just east of the hamlet of Summit) and follows routes 668, 608, 628, and 639 to latitude 38 degrees 15 minutes north, thence westward along that latitude to route 612, thence along routes 612 and 610 to route 3, and thence westward to the Orange County line. This line might also roughly be described as running from the hamlet of Summit in the east through the hamlets of Massaponax, Frazier's Gate, Leavells, Smith Station, Payne's Store, Chancellorsville, and Wilderness Corner to the Orange County line on route 3. At the same time by a somewhat uncanonical action St George's Parish gained a small but indeterminate portion of Overwharton Parish and almost all of Brunswick Parish that had remained in Stafford County since 1777. It was erroneously assumed in 1964 that Overwharton

Parish and Stafford County were coterminous. This was not true, for Overwharton Parish included only that part of the present Stafford County that lay west of Passapatanzy Creek (now in King George County) above the ridge between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers. The southern portion of the present Stafford County that lay along the Rappahannock River below the ridge between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers (and had been part of King George County until 1777) still belonged to Brunswick Parish. The part of Stafford County (only slightly from Overwharton Parish and largely from Brunswick Parish) that was annexed by St George's Parish in 1964 lies above the Rappahannock River and below the following line: Potomac Creek (from the mouth of Black Swamp Creek at the King George-Stafford county line), the R. F. and P. Railroad, routes 625, 626, 624, 627, U. S. 1, routes 652 and 616, and U. S. 17 to the Stafford-Fauquier county line. This line might also roughly be described as running from the mouth of Black Swamp on Potomac Creek (at Belle Plains) to the R. F. and P. railroad bridge, through Cranes Corner, the northern edge of Falmouth, Wallace's Corner, Payne's Corner, and Richlands to the Stafford-Fauquier county line.

In 1967 one error of 1964 was rectified (cp. the Journal of the Diocese of Virginia 1967 pages 195-196):

In determining the parish lines of Brunswick Parish, it is noted that the redrawing in 1964 . . . did; A. Include within the Parish of St George a portion of Brunswick Parish containing the site of the original parish church, Muddy Creek Church and the cemetery attached thereto, the title to which cemetery is vested in the Trustees of Lamb's Creek Church by deed recorded in 1912 in Stafford County Deeds, book 14, page 275 . . .

St George's Parish thereupon retroceded a small portion of Stafford County "in which the site of Muddy Creek Cemetery is located . . . bounded on the south by Virginia route 3, on the west by Stafford County route 601, and on the north and east by White Oak Run and Muddy Creek".

The present lines of St George's Parish are, as a result of the recent changes, exceedingly irregular on both the south and the north and even on the east,

Metes and Bounds

- 1714 at its creation from St Mary's Parish
 an enclave (with a diameter of ten miles) within St Mary's Parish at
 Germanna on the Rapidan River in present-day Orange County
 granted the German Reformed (and later also German Lutherans)
- 1720 at the addition of a large area from St Mary's Parish and smaller
 additions from St John's Parish (King William County) and St
 Stephen's Parish (King and Queen County)
 north---the Rappahannock River
 east---the present Spotsylvania-Caroline county line
 south---the North Anna River
 west---indefinite
- 1730 at the creation of St Mark's Parish
 north---the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers
 east---the Spotsylvania-Caroline county line
 south ---the North Anna River
 west---the present Orange-Spotsylvania county line
- 1770 at the creation of Berkeley Parish
 north---the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers

- east----the Spotsylvania-Caroline county line
 south---the Po River and Robertson Run
 west----the Spotsylvania-Orange county line
 around 1845 after the erection of Christ Church at Spotsylvania Courthouse
 north---the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers
 east----the Spotsylvania-Caroline county line
 south---an indefinite line running southeast to northwest from Caroline
 County to Orange County and north of the courthouse
 west----the Spotsylvania-Orange county line
 1964 at the cession of some territory to Berkeley Parish and the addition
 of a small portion of territory from Overwharton Parish and the
 addition of all of Brunswick Parish remaining in Stafford County
 north---from U. S. 17 at the Stafford-Fauquier county line along U. S.
 17, routes 616 and 652, along U. S. 1, along routes 627, 624,
 626, and 625, along the R. F. and P. Railroad, and Potomac
 Creek to the mouth of Black Swamp Creek
 east----the Stafford-King George county line, the Rappahannock River,
 and the Spotsylvania County line to route 668
 south---from the Spotsylvania-Caroline county line at route 668 along
 routes 668, 608, 628, and 638 to latitude 38 degrees 15 minutes
 north, thence westward along that latitude to route 612, thence
 along routes 612 and 610 to route 3, and thence westward to the
 Orange County line
 west----the Spotsylvania-Orange county line, the Spotsylvania-Culpeper
 county line, and the Stafford-Fauquier county line
 1967 at the retrocession of the small section of Stafford County around
 Muddy Creek Church to Hanover-with-Brunswick Parish
 north---from U. S. 17 at the Stafford-Fauquier county line along U. S.
 17, routes 616 and 652, along U. S. 1, along routes 627, 624,
 626, and 625, along the R. F. and P. Railroad, and along Poto-
 mac Creek to the mouth of Black Swamp Creek
 east----the Stafford-King George county line from Potomac Creek to Mud-
 dy Creek, along that creek and White Oak Run, along routes 601
 and 3 to the King George-Stafford county line, along that county
 line to the Rappahannock River, up that river to the Spotsylva-
 nia-Caroline county line, and down that line to route 668
 east of the hamlet of Summit
 south---from the Spotsylvania-Caroline county line at route 668 along
 routes 668, 608, 628, and 638 to latitude 38 degrees 15 minutes
 north, thence along that latitude to route 612, thence along
 routes 612 and 610 to route 3, and thence westward to the
 Orange County line
 west----the Spotsylvania-Orange county line, the Spotsylvania-
 Culpeper county line, and the Stafford-Fauquier county line

Ascendents: possibly Wicomico Parish; Lower (Lancaster) Parish; Upper
 (Farnham) Parish; Sittingbourne Parish; St Mary's Parish; and
 in part Blisland Parish, St Peter's Parish, St Stephen's Pa-
 rish (King and Queen County), St John's Parish, Brunswick Pa-
 rish, and Overwharton Parish

Descendents: St Mark's Parish; St Thomas's Parish; Bromfield Parish; Berkeley Parish; Augusta Parish; Frederick Parish; Hampshire Parish; Norborne Parish; Botetourt Parish; and the various post-colonial parishes descended from those parishes

Churches: St George's Parish Church and Trinity Church, both in Fredericksburg

From a Summary 1960-85 by Vernon Perdue Davis
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