

THE COLONIAL CHURCHES OF SPOTSYLVANIA AND CAROLINE COUNTIES, VIRGINIA

by GEORGE CARRINGTON MASON*

PART I

Colonial Churches in Spotsylvania County

OF the fifteen or more colonial churches in the counties of Spotsylvania and Caroline, none has survived and only one of their sites still has a church building upon it, as the result of its location in the thriving city of Fredericksburg. Much of the history of these vanished churches may be gleaned from the records of both counties, which have fortunately been preserved, back to the dates at which the earliest courts were held within their borders. There are also two colonial vestry books for the parish originally coterminous with Spotsylvania County, covering all but the first half dozen years of its entire colonial existence and extending down to the year 1817.¹

In the history of Spotsylvania and Caroline, we are not dealing with the familiar mother-and-daughter county relationship, but with two sister counties, formed successively from the heads of three older counties, but in just the reverse of the usual order, the more remote frontier having been cut off several years sooner than the section closer to the original settlements.

The motivation for this unusual procedure can be found in the preamble of the Act of Assembly of 1720, forming Spotsylvania County, which shows that the new county was set up as a buffer state to protect "the frontiers towards the high mountains" against "danger from the Indians and the late (i.e., recent) settlements of the French to the westward of the . . . mountains." To this end, the Act appropriated £1,000 in money to be distributed among the frontiersman who should go to seat the new county, in the form of arms and ammunition for its defense.²

Spotsylvania County was formed from the upper parts of King William, King and Queen, and Essex Counties by this Act of 1720, and it extended westward to the Shenandoah River, including all of what are now the coun-

*Mr. Mason is Historiographer of the Diocese of Southern Virginia.

¹First St. George's Parish Vestry Book, 1726-45; second St. George's Parish Vestry Book, 1746-1817; both deposited by their owners, the rector and vestry of the parish, at the Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

²Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 77.

ties of Spotsylvania, Orange, Madison, Culpeper, Greene, and Rappahannock, together with part of the present counties of Page, Rockingham, and Warren.

The original St. George's Parish was erected by an act of assembly passed in 1714, for the benefit of the Calvinistic German miners imported by Governor Alexander Spotswood in that year, as a circular area extending five miles in every direction from their settlement at Germanna.³ In 1717, Spotswood imported more Germans, this time of the Lutheran faith, whom he also settled at Germanna, but as his servants rather than miners.

Although made tax-free for ten years by the Act of 1720, and allowed to have a minister of their own religion, all of the Germans soon became so dissatisfied with Spotswood's treatment of them they left Germanna, the Calvinists going to found Germantown in what is now Fauquier County in 1721,⁴ and the Lutherans migrating to the upper forks of the Rappahannock in the present Madison County, about 1724.⁵

Several years before the Germans' departure, the parish of St. George was enormously enlarged by the Act of 1720 and made coterminous with Spotsylvania County's original vast extent. The frontier of the county and parish was cut off in 1730 as St. Mark's Parish⁶ and in 1734, this new parish was set up as Orange County,⁷ whose upper area was not restricted to Spotsylvania's original bounds, but had an indefinite westward extension "to the utmost limits of Virginia." St. George's Parish was divided in 1769 and its southern part erected as Berkeley Parish,⁸ but both divisions remained within the county of Spotsylvania.

The first of the two colonial vestry books that have fortunately been preserved, for St. George's Parish in Spotsylvania County, opens in 1726. An early entry dated 27th June, 1727, shows that there were then three churches within the parish and county and identifies them all by name. This entry records the vestry's order "that one set of Book's sent for by Col. John Waller be appropriated to the use of Mattapony Church, the others to the use of Rappahannock Church, And the Vestry do request the said Col. Waller to send for another set of Book's, plate, &c. for Germanna Church."

³Harrison, *Landmarks of Old Prince William*, I, 209. A contemporary example of such a circular area will be found in the Nottoway Indian reservation in Isle of Wight (now Southampton) County, which was a tract of land six miles in diameter.

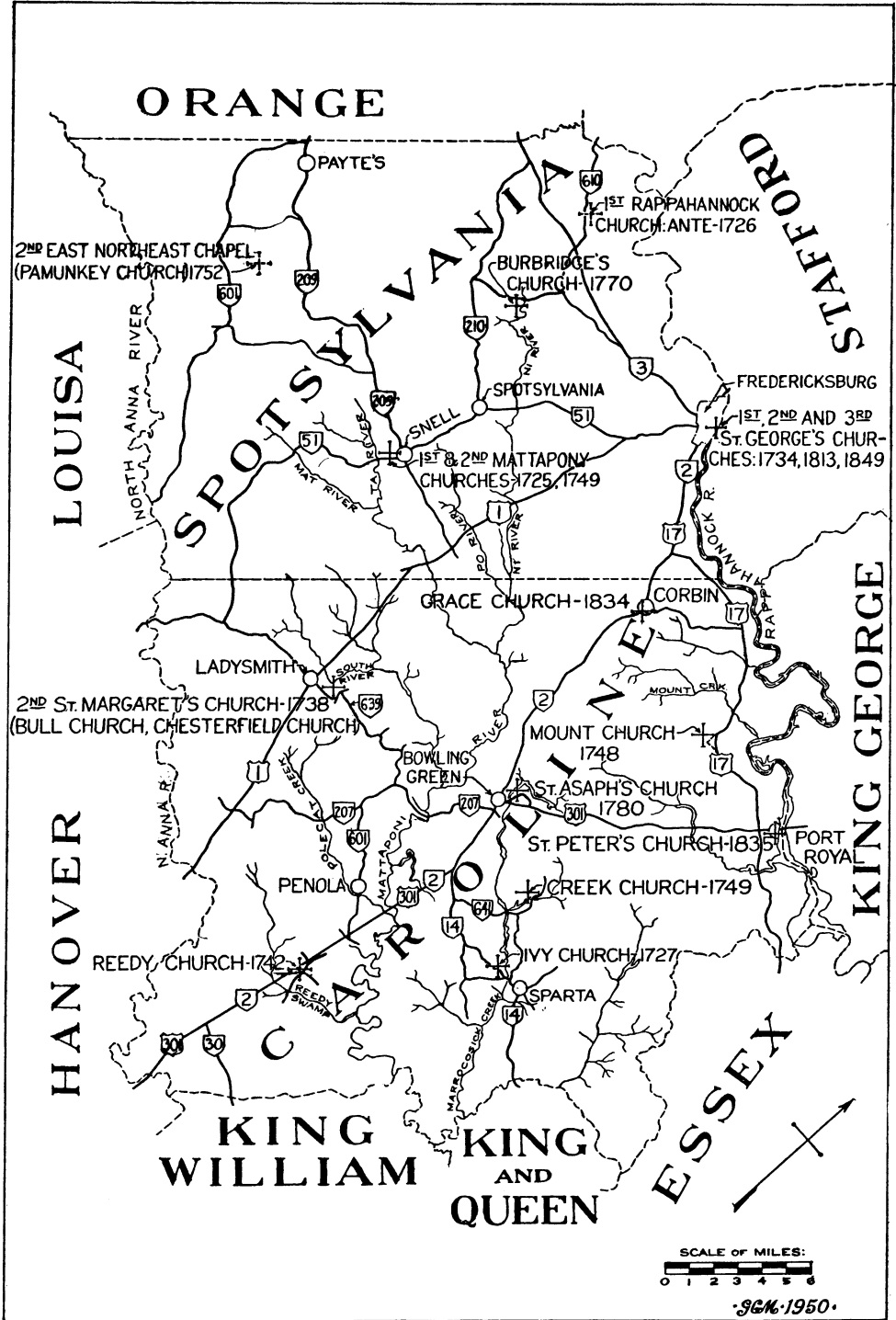
⁴Garrison, *History of the Reformed Church in Virginia*, 21-24.

⁵Harrison, *Landmarks of Old Prince William*, I, 216.

⁶Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 305.

⁷*Ibid.*, IV, 450.

⁸*Ibid.*, VIII, 400.



It seems probable that the oldest of these three churches, designated elsewhere in the vestry book as "the Lower Church on Rappahannock" and called Rappahannock Church in the order just quoted, antedated the county's formation and had served as a frontier chapel of St. Mary's Parish in Essex County, although no evidence has been found to confirm this conjecture. This church may have been erected for the enlarged parish of St. George soon after its formation in 1720, but the county records, which open in 1722, contain no reference to it as a new church at that period.

Rappahannock Church is believed to have been the building mentioned in a communication from the Rev. A. G. Grinnan, published in an early issue of the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, which states that "One of the first churches of St. George's Parish was built on the road between Chancellorsville and Ely's Ford, which crosses the Rapidan near where it joins the Rappahannock. The building has long disappeared, but vestiges of the site and the surrounding graveyard can still be traced."⁹

This church appears to have stood about ten miles above Fredericksburg, only a mile or so from the south bank of the Rapidan, and less than five miles from that of the Rappahannock. A series of references in Spotsylvania County deeds of 1725,¹⁰ 1727,¹¹ and 1749¹² to the Church Path, Church Road, and Chapel Road, in connection with the Hazel Run, which passes south of Fredericksburg to flow into the Rappahannock River, has led to the belief that this early Rappahannock Church stood very close to the present site of Fredericksburg. However, the Hazel Run actually rises several miles to the southwest of Fredericksburg, and a colonial Church Road often extended for many miles, so that these deeds do not invalidate the above conclusion. The Church Road in this case is believed to have been the colonial predecessor of the existing State Route 3, from Fredericksburg to Chancellorsville.

In keeping with its presumptive character as a frontier chapel, it is evident that the first Rappahannock Church was a plain and simple frame building. On the same date as the order already quoted, the vestry desired Captain John Taliaferro "to purchase Glass and Lead sufficient to Glaze the Church windows at rappahannock and to bring in his Charge at the laying the parish Levy." This order strongly suggests that the church's windows had previously been closed only by shutters, and that it was now intended to replace

⁹*Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, III, 189.

¹⁰*Spotsylvania County Deeds*, 1722-29, A, 170.

¹¹*Ibid.*, A, 212.

¹²*Spotsylvania County Deeds*, 1742-51, D, 421.

these with windows (possibly casements), having diamond-paned, leaded glass. In a later order of 14th October, 1729, the churchwardens were ordered "to agree with workmen to block the church at Rappahannock," showing that this building was set up on wooden blocks and had no masonry foundation.

The presentment of three men "for not frequenting their parish church," returned by the first grand jury for Spotsylvania County on 6th November, 1722,¹³ indicates that old Rappahannock Church did duty as the parish church of St. George, from the establishment of the county and its coterminous parish in 1720, until it was superseded by a new church in 1732.

The county records, which begin in 1722, show clearly that the second building listed in the previously-quoted vestry order of 27th June, 1727, under the name of Mattapony Church, was the first house of worship erected for the parish and was first placed in service in 1725. Divine service for the upper inhabitants of the parish was held in the house of Capt. Larkin Chew until the completion of the church, which stood partly on Chew's land, near the bridge over the Middle or Ta River, which later came to be known as the Mattapony Church Bridge.

This pioneer church derived its name from its site between two of the Mattapony River's four headwater tributaries, which have been known from early colonial times as the Mat, Ta, Po, and Ny Rivers. Mattapony Church stood on the north side of the Ta River, often identified as the Mattapony in early records, and on the east side of the old road from Snel to Richmond. In terms of the county's present-day geography, the site of Mattapony Church is on the west side of State Route 51 and about six miles south of Spotsylvania Court-house, in second-growth woods.

The first evidence that church services for the upper inhabitants of St. George's Parish were started in a private home near the new church's site is found in a presentment of 3rd November, 1724, to the county court "By the information of Thomas Chew church warden of St. George's parrish against John Pigg for absenting himself from the place appointed at Capt: Larkin Chew's for devine service,"¹⁴ and a later order, fining Pigg, states that he had been absent "ever since May last" (1724), which may indicate the beginning of such services.

The county records also contain an order of 6th October, 1724, granting a "Petition of William Russell . . . to have a Road from Franklyn's road to the

¹³*Spotsylvania County Wills, Book A, 1722-49, 10.*

¹⁴*Spotsylvania County Orders, 1724-30, 31.*

new chapel now a building,"¹⁵ followed by further orders of 2nd March, 1724/5, and 4th May, 1725, granting similar petitions "by Henry Goodloe, gent., for a road to be cleared from his house to the new Church that is built on the river Ta, alias midle river,"¹⁶ and "by Mr. Harry Beverley for a road from his house to the Church on the River Ta."¹⁷ These records establish that Mattapony Church was under construction in the year 1724 and was completed early in 1725, as a chapel and not as the parish church.

The documentary evidence quoted above effectually disproves the Rev. Philip Slaughter's statement, in his classic history of St. George's Parish, Spotsylvania, that in 1732, Mattapony Church was "called the 'Mother Church,' probably because it was the place of worship for the inhabitants of the frontier before the parish of St. George was erected" (in 1720).¹⁸

It is obvious that Dr. Slaughter obtained most of his information from the St. George's Parish vestry books, but close examination of these records reveals that the first book contains no reference whatever to Mattapony Church as the "Mother Church," while the second book gives it this name in only one vestry order.

This order, dated 21st April, 1769, near the close of the colonial era, requires "that Application be made to the General Assembly for a division of the Parish" at the River Po, and states that "The Church called the Mattapony Church on the South Side of the River Poe being the oldest or Mother Church, It is the Request of the Vestry that the Parish on that Side the said River retain the name of St. George's Parish."

The above appears to be a very early example of the modern usage of "Mother Church" to denote the oldest or original church of a parish or denomination. In early colonial usage, the term did not have the slightest implication of priority in time, but was merely a standard name for the parish church, often the newest and latest house of worship in the parish.¹⁹ It seems possible that Dr. Slaughter misread as "Mother Church" the words "Matta Church," commonly used in the first vestry book as an abbreviation of "Mattapony Church," in keeping with the forms "Rappa" and "Germa" for the names of the other two churches in the parish.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁸Slaughter, *History of St. George's Parish*, 9.

¹⁹For example, the vestry of Christ Church Parish, Middlesex, in 1666, ordered that "a Mother Church be built" for the new parish, on a new site, midway between its two older churches, which then became "chapels." The Lynnhaven Parish vestry book designates the third and last parish church of Lynnhaven as its "Mother Church," although its first church had been built a whole century earlier.

As a matter of fact, Mattapony Church was not the oldest church in the parish in 1769, for it had been built in the same year as the church in Fredericksburg, but it did occupy the oldest church site then in use in the parish, dating back to 1724-25, as that of the first church built for St. George's.

The Act of 1720, creating Spotsylvania County, also appropriated £500 "for a church, court house, prison, pillory and stocks" within the county "and the governour to imploy workmen, provide materials," etc. It is apparent that Governor Spotswood discharged the duty imposed on him by the Act by locating the church, court-house, and other structures for the county at his own settlement of Germanna, and it is equally evident that this location for their new church was bitterly opposed by the people of St. George's Parish.

The earliest expression of this popular disapproval of the governor's selection of a church site is found in a complaint made to the colonial Council in 1724, against Colonel Alexander Spotswood (who had been succeeded in the lieutenant-governorship by Hugh Drysdale, two years earlier), rehearsing that the General Assembly had appropriated £500 to build a church and court-house in Spotsylvania, and stating "1st that Col. Spotswood has laid the foundation of a church at Germanna in a place so remote that few or none other [than] his menial Servants can ever frequent it."²⁰

The complaint further cites the clause in this Act by which "foreign protestants are exempted for 10 years from paying the minister's dues and they being the chiefest of the inhabitants in that part of the country have sent for a minister of their own nation, so that few or none will resort to that place of worship" [i.e., the new church]. This article of the complaint was aimed at the German Lutherans at Germanna, and was fully borne out, less than a year later, by their migration to the upper forks of the Rappahannock in the present county of Madison, where in 1740 they built their own house of worship, called Hebron Church, which is still standing today as the oldest Lutheran Church in America.

The erection of Spotswood's "Germanna Church," as it is called in the 1727 vestry order previously quoted, was begun in 1724, since it was reported on 17th July in that year by Commissary Blair to the Bishop of London that "All the Parishes have churches, except a new erected Parish in Spotsylvania, where the foundation is laid, but the Church not yet built."²¹

²⁰*Calendar of State Papers*, I, 208.

²¹Perry, *History of the Colonial Church in Virginia*, 258.

The Commissary was evidently speaking in terms of the new church ordered by the Act of 1720, and ignored the existence of the old frontier chapel on the Rappahannock (which had been serving as a parish church for St. George's) as well as of the new Upper Chapel just started at Mattapony.

In a letter of 17th December, 1736, in answer to criticism by Sir John Randolph of Spotswood's performance of the duties imposed on him by the Act of 1720, the former governor states that he left this church at Germanna "almost completed" before he went to England,²² probably in 1726.

On a visit to Germanna in 1732, Col. William Byrd of Westover, after describing "Col. Spotswood's enchanted castle" and the "ruinous tenements . . . where . . . German families had dwelt years ago," states that "There had also been a chapel about a bow-shot from the Colonel's house, at the end of an avenue of cherry trees, but some pious people had lately burnt it down, with intent to get another nearer their own home."²³ This chapel was undoubtedly the Germanna Church mentioned in the vestry book.

Although Bishop Meade, after quoting Byrd's account, dismisses it as not to be taken for historical fact,²⁴ its correctness is confirmed in a letter written by Governor William Gooch, dated 18th July 1732, saying: "I have issued two proclamations: one offering a reward for the discovery of the persons who burnt the parish church of St. George, in the county of Spotsylvania . . . There is no doubt the church was wilfully and maliciously burnt . . . and great reason to suspect a set of people who had projected to have another instead thereof, in their neighborhood. I hope the reward of £100 will have the desired effect in bringing the actors to their deserved punishment."²⁵

Governor Gooch was nevertheless wrong in speaking of Germanna as still the parish church of St. George's in 1733, for it had been cut off with St. Mark's Parish in 1730. The recorded text of this proclamation correctly refers to the burned building as "the parish church of St. Mark."²⁶ After its destruction, it was soon replaced by the new parish's vestry on a more convenient site, not far from Germanna, but since it then lay outside of the present Spotsylvania County, it need not be further discussed in this account.

On the 16th June, 1729, the vestry of St. George's Parish had appointed readers at the Fork Chapel and the Mountain Chapel. Since the vestry book contains no orders for the construction of these two church buildings, it

²²*Virginia Gazette*, Friday, 17th December, 1736.

²³Slaughter, *History of St. George's Parish*, 8.

²⁴Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, II, 75.

²⁵Gooch Papers, *Virginia Historical Society*, II, 297-298.

²⁶McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, IV, 468.

seems probable that, like Rappahannock Church, they were both former frontier chapels of St. Mary's Parish in Essex County. Both of these frontier chapels were cut off with St. Mark's Parish in the ensuing year and therefore need not be further dealt with in this article, but the Fork Chapel was evidently the fore-runner of the existing Little Fork Church in Culpeper County.

Since the old Rappahannock Church and new Mattapony Church were both of the simplest type of construction and the first-named building was apparently of considerable age, the vestry soon called for their replacement by new structures, in the following order of 13th March, 1731/2: "It is agreed and Resolved . . . that two Churches be built in this parish 60 feet long & 24 feet wide (Each) within the Clear & to be well built with wood well shingled, to be underpinn'd with Brick and Each gable end to be hip't. And it is further ordered that one of the said Churches be built at Fredericksburg and It is Ordered that the other Church be built where the Church at Mattapony now is."

A supplementary vestry order of 10th April, 1732, calls for the foundation of each of the two new buildings to be of brick or stone two feet high above the ground and 18 inches thick. Each church was to have ten windows, 7 by 3 feet in size, with 18 panes in each window, and pine floors 1½ inches thick. The hipped roof had an overhang of 12 inches above "a handsome Modillion Cornice." Most of the timber scantlings were of massive proportions, ranging from 5" by 4" rafters and 9" by 4" studs up to 9" by 12" corner posts and plates and 12" by 12" sills. The pews were paneled and so were the side walls, to the height of the pews. The doors, windows and cornice were to be painted white "and all the rest of the outside well Tarr'd," probably with a solution of tar thinned with turpentine to produce a brown stain of preservative character. The ceiling and interior walls above the wainscoting were plastered and whitewashed.

On the above date, Henry Willis, a leading citizen of the new town of Fredericksburg, established in 1727, agreed with the vestry to build both of the projected churches for 150,000 lbs. of tobacco, to be paid in three equal instalments in 1732, 1733 and 1734.

As in the case of Germanna Church, opposition to the location of these two new churches was shown by the people of St. George's Parish, through a petition by the inhabitants of the southern or upper part of the parish to the governor and council, "complaining that the Vestry of the said Parish

have ordered two new Churches to be built, neither of which are any way convenient to the upper Inhabitants of the said parish."²⁷

The council gave this complaint a full hearing and on the 17th October, 1733, side-stepping the controversial issue of convenience, rejected the petition on the ground that no complaint had been made until long after the churches had been begun, and that they were now so far advanced that their construction could not be interrupted without great loss to the parish, "but Nevertheless that the said Vestry . . . do with all convenient Speed cause a Chappel of Ease to be built for the use of the upper Inhabitants of the said Parish."²⁸

Although the builder was to forfeit the final payment of 50,000 lbs. of tobacco if both the churches were not finished by Christmas, 1734, it is recorded in the vestry book that they were still unfinished, in the full sense of the specification requirements, in March, 1741. Since the contractor, Henry Willis, had died in the meantime, his executors were given until July, 1741, to finish the churches as agreed, and the churchwardens were directed to prosecute the contractor's bond, if this was not done, and then to employ workmen to complete the buildings.

In accordance with custom, ornaments for the two new churches had been provided by a vestry order of the 2nd October, 1733, "that Colonel John Waller send to England for Pulpit Cloaths and 2 cushions for each church in the parish, to be of crimson velvet with Gold tassels [and] a Cypher upon each pulpit Cloath St. G. P. & two silver Chalices to contain a Quart each [and] to be Insured."

As a further improvement in the two church properties, the vestry in 1743 "ordered that the Churchwardens agree with workmen to Rail in the Churches at Rappahannock and Mattapony," but this project was not carried out until 1750, at which time a sundial was ordered for each of the three churches in the parish. These were reordered in 1753 and the vestry then fixed "the time . . . for the going into . . . Churches at Eleven of the Clock from 10th March to 10th September and half after Eleven from 10th September till 10th March."

In compliance with the order of Council of 17th October, 1733, previously quoted, the vestry took steps to provide religious services for the upper inhabitants of the parish by an order dated 4th March, 1734/5, "that a Chappell of Ease be built and Erected near Col. Moore' Quarter, between

²⁷The full text of this petition is recorded in the minutes of the vestry meeting held 2nd October, 1733, in the first vestry book.

²⁸McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council*, IV, 306.

the main road and East North East [Creek] at the best and most convenient spring . . . to be of the same Demensions of the Old Churches," [i.e., the first Rappahannock and Mattapony Churches recently replaced by new buildings]. Mr. John Holladay having agreed to build the new chapel, this order provided that he "have liberty to take down and make use of all or any part of the two old Churches in this Parish," which definitely terminated the existence of the two old churches which had been superseded by new structures in the preceding year.

It is evident, however, that the names of these two old churches were perpetuated by being given to their successors. Since Mattapony Church was replaced by a new house of worship on a closely adjacent site, it was only natural that this later structure should bear the same title, but it is more remarkable that the parish church at Fredericksburg continued to be called Rappahannock Church throughout the remainder of the two vestry books, although it stood some ten miles from the site of its predecessor of that name.

East North East Creek, near which the new chapel ordered in 1734/5 was to be located, is still shown on modern maps as North East Creek, although also locally known as Knight's Branch. Since this stream was a tributary of the North Anna River, one of the two main headwater forks of the Pamunkey River, this new chapel was named the Pamunkey Chapel and is first so designated in a vestry order of 7th October, 1735, appointing readers for Rappahannock Church, Mattapony Church, and "Pamunkey Chapel." It is generally designated by this title throughout the first part of the second vestry book, although twice called "Pamunkey Church" before being cut off by the division of St. George's Parish in 1769.

It is apparent from the first vestry book that the vestry contemplated the replacement of this chapel in 1735 as early as 1745, when it had given barely a decade of service. On 14th October of the latter year, it was ordered that John Minor and Joseph Hawkins "view the Most Convenient place to build a New Chappell on the branches of Pamunky in this Parish and . . . report the same . . . to the next vestry."

Nothing having been done by the above committee, on 11th July, 1748, it was "Ordered that John Chew, Francis Taliaferro and Richard Tutt, Gent. be appointed to View the Several places proposed by the Inhabitants . . . for the building of a Chappell." On the strength of their report, made on 10th October, 1748, the vestry "Agreed that the sd Chapple be Erected and Built in William Lee's old field." A year later, on 15th September, 1749, the vestry met "at Wm. Lee's old field . . . to View and agree on a place to Build

a Chapple” and to meet the workmen who were to “undertake [i.e., contract for] the new building.”

Even after all these preliminary steps had been carried out, it was not until 17th April, 1750, that the vestry actually “Ordered . . . that there be a Church Built on the place called William Lee’s old field . . . 48 by 24 feet and 12 feet pitch [i.e., height of side walls] with two doors one in the front [i.e., south side] the other in the West End, with six Windows, three of them to be in the backside and one in the East End and the other two to be on each side the Front Door; to be weather Boarded with good Feather Edge plank of Pine or Popler and to be Covered with good Pine or Popler Shingles . . . the floor to be laid with inch and quarter pine plank . . . to be under pinned with good Brick or Stone, 18 inches from the ground.”

There is ample evidence that the erection of this second Pamunkey Chapel was promptly begun, following the vestry’s final order for its building. The county records contain a court order of 4th June, 1751, “that William Robinson, Gentleman, John Holladay, Benjamin Holladay and Henry Chiles . . . do View the most Convenient ways For Roads to be Cleared for the Inhabitants to Go to and from the New Chapple on East North East river in this county and to return their report to the next court.”²⁹ A similar order of 6th September, 1753, appoints viewers for “a Way from the Main road near to Wm. Gatewood’s to the new Church on East North East.”³⁰

The second vestry book and the county records both refer to the site of this chapel as “William Lee’s old field.” Through the painstaking research of Miss Dorothy V. McC. Powell, former historian of the Washington-Lewis Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, at Fredericksburg, it is known that the owner of this land was actually William Lea, who sold it to Thomas White in 1752.³¹

A deed to the new chapel’s site was given by Thomas White and Betty his wife to John Thornton and William Waller, churchwardens of St. George’s Parish, on 3rd February, 1754, conveying for 640 pounds of tobacco “all that tract of land containing 144 square poles on each side lately laid off for a churchyard at the New Church at East North East, including the said church, which stands in the center thereof, also a way or path bearing S. 58° W. from the west door of the church 27 poles to include a spring.”³²

²⁹*Spotsylvania County Orders, 1749-55*, 120.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 359.

³¹See article by Miss Powell on “Colonial Churches of Spotsylvania County” in files of the Historiographer, Diocese of Virginia, at Mayo Memorial House, 110 W. Franklin St., Richmond, Va.

³²*Spotsylvania County Deeds, 1751-61*, E, 146.

The building of the new Pamunkey Chapel had been undertaken by George Stubblefield, to be completed by 30th June, 1752, but he died about that time and the chapel was not finished until after the 6th August, 1755. On this date, the vestry ordered that it be received, after the "undertaker's" executors had amended some faulty work, "and that in the mean time the Minister perform Divine Service in the said Church Every Third Sunday."

According to Miss Powell, "the old road by East North East still bears the name of 'the Chapel Road'". As described by her, this old road starts at Olivet Methodist Church, near Jones Store P. O., goes through the woods and past the iron mines and comes out near Panier P. O., on the highway from Post Oak to Payte's. She describes the old chapel's site as lying twenty feet to the left of the old road, at a point one half mile beyond a bend where a later road forks off from it to the left, and as still being marked by "a pile several feet high of brick and stone, and scattered about are some larger field stones." The chapel spring is still in evidence near the site.

A similar deed to the one conveying the site of Pamunkey Chapel, given in 1754 by Thomas White and his wife, had been obtained by the vestry, three years earlier, to the site of Mattapony Church. This latter deed was given by William Brock and Larkin Chew, whose lands cornered at the churchyard, to Mosley Battaley and William Waller, churchwardens of St. George's Parish. It was dated 3rd September, 1751, and conveyed "for £4 Current Money of Virginia . . . all that tract of land Containing 16384 Superficial feet, Being a Square of 128 feet on Each side, lately laid off for a Churchyard at Mattapony, Including the said Church."³³

The vestry books show that the St. George's Parish vestry were exceptionally conscientious about the upkeep and improvement of the church properties. They installed stone steps at both doors of Mattapony Church in 1748, and horse blocks and benches in its churchyard in 1750. "A stone horse stile" was built at the Fredericksburg churchyard in 1752 and bars, staples and padlocks provided for securing the doors and windows at both churches. In the same year, a bell presented by John Spotswood, Esquire, was hung at Rappahannock Church, Fredericksburg, and six years later, this churchyard was secured with two large wooden gates with iron hinges. In 1757, the Pamunkey Chapel spring was "stoned in" and a causeway was built for better access to it.

A project for the enlargement of the parish's two older churches was undertaken on the 8th November, 1753, when the vestry "Ordered that an

³³*Spotsylvania County Deeds, 1742-51, D, 549.*

Addition be made to the Churches Rappahannock and Mattapony the full Weadth of Each Church [i.e., 24 feet in the clear] and 32 feet in Length and placed in the form of a T." The same order provided for a frame vestry house to be built at Mattapony Church, to be "sixteen feet square, with an outside brick chimney."

The undertakers of the above additions, Mr. John Goodloe for Mattapony Church and Mr. Benjamin Davis for Rappahannock, were given until 1st October, 1756, to complete them, but since the enlarged churches were both plastered and painted in December, 1757, it seems likely that they were not completed until then.

Upon completion of the new addition to the Fredericksburg church, two of its front pews were sold in 1758 to Benjamin Grymes for 3,000 pounds of tobacco, with leave to alter them for his family use, and a single pew in this wing was sold to Roger Dixon, Gent., for half that sum. In the next year, Fielding Lewis and Charles Dick, Gents., were given leave to build a gallery in the west end of the older part of this church, at their own expense, and a parish gallery was erected in the new wing in 1770.

A similar gallery was built in the Pamunkey Chapel in 1762 and an addition 26 feet square was ordered to be erected on the (north) side of this church on the 21st April, 1769, just before the final division of the parish.

At the same vestry meeting, the last colonial church erected for St. George's Parish was ordered to be built "convenient to some Spring not more than one mile and a Half from Burbridge's Bridge (fifty foot long and twenty six feet wide)." This church appears to have been constructed with less delay than usual, since the vestry met on the 26th June, 1770, and ordered that Robert Smith be paid £100 for the New Church and that it be tarred and painted where necessary, and provided with window shutters. A private gallery was authorized to be built in the new church at the same meeting. This church is later designated in the vestry minutes as the Upper Church, Burbridge's Church, or simply the New Church.

The vestry having applied to the General Assembly for a division of the parish in 1769, it was thereupon divided at the River Po and its branch, Robinson's Run. The upper part of the county was erected as Berkeley Parish, in spite of the vestry's previously-quoted request that this part of the original parish retain the name of St. George. By this division, both Mattapony Church and Pamunkey Chapel were lost to the mother parish, leaving only the Fredericksburg Church and Burbridge's Church within its borders.

In several successive issues of Rind's Virginia Gazette, for 1768-69, there

was announced "A SCHEME of a LOTTERY, for raising 450 pounds . . . towards building a new church in the town of Fredericksburg, and in the purchase of an organ for the said church"³⁴ but, as in so many other colonial lotteries, the drawing was postponed again and again, over a period of nearly a year, and appears never to have been held, since no new church was built.

The project for erection of a new parish church was not abandoned, and in February, 1772, the vestry secured the passage of an act of assembly, citing the fact "that the churchyard in the town of Fredericksburg . . . is inconveniently situated, lying on the side of a hill, and . . . Is so broken that there is no part thereof proper to erect a new church on, which is become necessary," and enacting "that so much of the said churchyard as has not been heretofore . . . used as a burying ground be [sold and] . . . the money . . . applied toward purchasing a more convenient piece of ground in the . . . town of Fredericksburg for the purposes aforesaid."³⁵

Although £100 was levied in 1774 to be paid "To Colo: Fielding Lewis for a Square of Lotts to Erect a New Church upon," and 10,000 lbs. of tobacco was appropriated, a year later, "towards Building of a Church in Fredericksburg," execution of the building project seems to have been prevented by the onset of the Revolutionary War and the disestablishment of the English Church in Virginia.

At their meetings on 16 December, 1772, and 27th November, 1774, the vestry ordered that part of the churchyard be sold, in accordance with the act of assembly, and the extremely restricted churchyard adjoining the existing St. George's Church on Princess Anne Street, suggests that this order was actually carried out and that the lower half of the churchyard, on Main Street, was sold, since this part of the original site, which extended from one street to the other, had not yet been used for burials.³⁶

In 1787, a committee of the city council of Fredericksburg raised money for a much-needed enlargement of old Rappahannock Church, and a wing was added opposite to the one erected in 1756, making the building cross-shaped. There was a gallery in each of the two wings, for seating purposes, and an organ gallery in the west of the nave.³⁷ The vestry book records that

³⁴Rind's *Virginia Gazette*, July 6, Nov. 17, 1768; Mar. 23, 1769.

³⁵Hening, *Statutes at Large*, VIII, 609.

³⁶On March 21, 1776, three deeds made by Lewis Willis, and others, Vestrymen of St. George's Parish, Spotsylvania County, were recorded by which the unused parts of the Church lot directed to be sold by Act of Assembly 12 George III (February, 1772) were conveyed to Alexander Blair (by deed dated October 23, 1775), to John Lewis (by deed dated February 24, 1776) and to George Thornton (by deed dated February 26, 1776). These deeds are recorded in Spotsylvania Deed Book J, 1774-1783.

³⁷*Minutes of the Fredericksburg City Council.*

permission was granted by the common council for the enlargement of the church on the south side, "on the street," as the vestry thought proper, on the 20th April, 1789, and since the new wing was not authorized until this date, it can hardly have been placed in service before 1790.

Burbridge's Church was repaired at minimum cost in the years 1791-94, and is not recorded in the second vestry book as having been used after this date. It is said to have been still in existence as late as 1847, but was taken over by the Baptists at an unrecorded date and replaced by them with a later church on the same site, known as "the Yellow Church."

The colonial Rappahannock Church at Fredericksburg was superseded by a new building on the same site in 1813 and this in turn was replaced by the existing St. George's Church in 1849, so that the present churchyard on Princess Anne Street has been the site of three successive Episcopal church buildings for the parish of St. George.

The following clergymen served the parishes of Spotsylvania County during the colonial and post Revolutionary periods:

ST. GEORGE'S PARISH, 1720 to date: Rev. Theodosius Staige, 1726-28; Rev. Lawrence DeButts, 1728, supply; Rev. Rodham Kenner, 1729-30, and supply, 1731-32; Rev. Francis Peart, 1731-32, supply; Rev. Patrick Henry, 1733-34; Rev. Mr. Smith, 1734, supply; Rev. James Marye, 1735-67; Rev. James Marye, Jr., 1768-1780; Rev. Thomas Thornton, 1788-91; Rev. John Woodville, 1792-93; Rev. James Stephenson, 1794-1805; Rev. Abner Waugh, 1806.

BERKELEY PARISH, 1769 to date: Rev. James Stephenson, 1769-83, Rev. Hugh Boggs, 1784-1811 et post.

PART II

Colonial Churches in Caroline County

CAROLINE COUNTY was cut off from the heads of King William, King and Queen, and Essex Counties in 1728,³⁸ eight years after the formation of Spotsylvania County from the same three counties' still more remote frontier.³⁹ Additional areas from the upper end of King and Queen County were added to Caroline County in 1742⁴⁰ and 1762⁴¹ by successive acts of assembly, which left its boundaries as they are today.

³⁸Robinson, *Virginia Counties*, 202.

³⁹Hening, *Statutes at Large*, IV, 77.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, V, 185.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, VII, 620.

Unlike Spotsylvania, Caroline County was not organized as one parish, but continued to be composed of either the upper end or the entire area of four parishes then existing in the three parent counties. These parishes were St. Mary's, which had been formed from the upper end of Old Rappahannock County in 1677, and was restricted to the upper end of Essex County in 1713;⁴² St. Anne's, set up in the latter county in 1704;⁴³ St. Margaret's, erected in King William County in 1720;⁴⁴ and Drysdale, erected in King and Queen County in 1723.⁴⁵

An Old Rappahannock County deed of 6th July, 1677, from William Baltrope of Stafford County to William, John, and Maxfield Brown for land "in the parish of St. Marie's and in the County of Rappahannock,"⁴⁶ proves that St. Mary's Parish existed at that date. Since the frontier settlers in that same area had styled themselves "the Inhabitants of the Upper parts of Citternborne [Sittingbourne] parish in the County of Rappahannock" in a petition dated only four months earlier, on the 8th March, 1676/7,⁴⁷ it is apparent that the new parish was cut off from Sittingbourne during this interval, or in the spring of 1677.

St. Mary's Parish at first extended on both sides of the Rappahannock River, but its northern half, in Richmond County, was set up as Hanover Parish in 1713,⁴⁸ so that the reduced parish of St. Mary's, lying south of the Rappahannock, was wholly included in Caroline County at the latter's formation.

Since St. Margaret's Parish lost all of its territory in King William County by the formation of St. David's Parish in 1744,⁴⁹ it is evident that St. Margaret's also lay entirely within Caroline County after that date.

Drysdale Parish continued to be in both King and Queen and Caroline Counties throughout the colonial era, but its upper part, comprising most of its area in Caroline County, was cut off as St. Asaph's Parish in 1779.⁵⁰ Only an insignificant part of St. Anne's Parish was ever included in Caroline County, and this part contained no churches or chapels.

The Act creating Hanover Parish in 1713 ordered that the parishioners of "St. Mary's Parish as it will be . . . doe meet at the Church" to elect a new

⁴²*William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 109.

⁴³*Ibid.*, XVIII, 108.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, XVIII, 110.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, XVIII, 110. Note: First syllable of Drysdale pronounced as "Driz," not "Dries."

⁴⁶*Rappahannock County Deeds, Wills, 1676-82*, VI, 50.

⁴⁷*Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, III, 35.

⁴⁸*William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 109.

⁴⁹Hening, *Statutes at Large*, V, 254.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, X, 209, 213.

vestry, proving the existence at that date of a parish church of St. Mary's within what later became the county of Caroline. Evidence of the continued existence of this church is found in a report of 1724 made to the Bishop of London by the Reverend Owen Jones, then rector of St. Mary's Parish, in which he reveals his church's almost complete lack of "church ornaments such as pulpit cloth, communion table cloth, and communion silver."⁵¹ The church is further mentioned in an Essex County court order of 17th August, 1725, "that Francis Hay clear the back road which goes from the Church in St. Marie's Parish to Mr. Charles Taliaferro's gate the most nigh and convenient way."⁵²

The exact site of this first parish church of St. Mary's is unknown, but it is again reasonable to suppose that it lay nearer the river and further down stream than the later church which superseded it, about the middle of the eighteenth century.

This later building was the Mount Church, a large cruciform structure erected on a height of land between Goldenvale Creek and the Mount Creek, for the latter of which streams the building was named. The site lies a mile and a quarter west-southwest of a sharp bend in the Rappahannock and five miles above the town of Port Royal, on the south side of Route 17, as more fully described later in this article.

The earliest recorded mention of this church appears to be in a Caroline County court order of 13th January, 1748/9, appointing John Glanton to be "Overseer of the road from the [sign]post above Mary Powell's to the Mount Church."⁵³

Bishop Meade quotes a letter from an unnamed clergyman who had "long ministered in this region," stating that "the Mount Church . . . was one of the first [i.e., foremost] country-churches in the state. It was in the form of a cross, with galleries on three of the wings, in one of which was the largest and finest-toned organ in Virginia. This organ was sold, under an Act of the Legislature, and the proceeds applied to the purchase of a library for the use of Rappahannock Academy. It is now in a Roman Catholic church in Georgetown [District of Columbia]. The aisles [of the Mount Church] were paved with square slabs of sandstone. The enclosure around the church was used as a burial-ground, and . . . the forms of the graves were apparent."⁵⁴

Although St. Mary's Parish continued to have a rector, the Reverend

⁵¹Perry, *History of the Colonial Church in Virginia*, 310.

⁵²Essex County Orders, 1723-25, VI, 298.

⁵³Caroline County Orders, 1746-54, III, 128.

⁵⁴Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 410.

Abner Waugh, until 1805, the parish became completely dormant after his resignation in that year. In 1808, the parish glebe lands were sold and, by an act of assembly⁵⁵ passed on 11th January, 1809, the proceeds were devoted to the purchase of land on which there was to be established an academy. If the three other parishes in the county, St. Margaret's, St. Asaph's, and Drysdale, should decide to unite their funds with those of St. Mary's for the purpose of the act, this school was to be called the Caroline Academy, but otherwise by a name to be selected by the trustees appointed in the act.

The other three parishes having refused this union of funds, an amending act of assembly⁵⁶ was passed on 31st December, 1810, which provided that the academy should "be fixed at the Mount Church . . . and . . . be called 'The Rappahannock Academy.'" The academy thus established became one of the most noted schools in the state and, except for a short lapse, just prior to 1835, when it was without a master, was in active operation down to the Civil War.

In the original act establishing the academy, it was also stated "that an organ of considerable value in the said parish of Saint Mary is already damaged and likely to be destroyed and that the parishioners wish to dispose of the same for the purpose aforesaid." It was therefore enacted that the "trustees . . . shall attend at the church where the organ is placed [i.e., the Mount Church] and receive the votes" of the parishioners, for or against the disposal of the organ, the proceeds of whose sale, if made, were to be applied toward the support of the academy.

Many conflicting accounts have been published regarding this organ. A tablet on the existing St. Peter's Church at Port Royal, now the parish church of St. Mary's, states that to this parish "came from England the first pipe organ used in America."

A story in the *Cathedral Age* magazine for Spring, 1949, illustrates this so-called Port Royal organ as in no wise remarkable for size, for a colonial instrument, and describes it as "said to have been brought to the new world in 1700" and as having been sold to Christ Church, Alexandria, in 1760.⁵⁷ Since the organ was almost certainly purchased for the large and costly new Mount Church, which replaced the primitive first parish church of St. Mary's about 1748, and the Christ Church records make no mention of the Port Royal organ as being in Alexandria before 1810, it is evident that both the above dates for it are a half century too early. The latter date follows so

⁵⁵*Acts of Assembly*, 1808/09, 58.

⁵⁶*Acts of Assembly*, 1810/11, 87.

⁵⁷*Cathedral Age* (Washington, D. C.), XXIV, 26.

closely after that of the act of assembly for the sale of the Mount Church organ that it identifies the Alexandria instrument as the one covered by the act, and shows that the vote taken was in favor of its disposal.

Several such organs are recorded as having been installed in the large and expensive new churches erected as a result of the marked increase of both population and wealth in colonial Virginia during the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Since St. Mary's Parish was evidently too impoverished even to afford the standard "church ornaments" reported by its rector as lacking in 1724, it is incredible that its first parish church could have had an organ installed as early as 1700. Surviving parish records of the period show clearly that the cost of such improvements was then so far beyond any vestry's resources that it had to be contributed by the government or raised by popular subscription, even in such wealthy churches as Bruton at Williamsburg and Petsworth in Gloucester, during this same period.⁵⁸

Bishop Meade's account of this organ as "now in a Roman Catholic church in Georgetown" is also erroneous, for it was actually sold by the Christ Church vestry to an Episcopal church in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, where it remained until shipped west by canalboat up the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, about 1863, to St. Thomas's Church at Hancock, Maryland. The vestry of this church, in 1903-06, presented the organ to the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, D. C., where it is now on exhibition under the title of "the Port Royal Organ."⁵⁹ Even this name is erroneous, for the organ left St. Mary's Parish before there was any Episcopal church at Port Royal, and has never been in use at that place, which is fully five miles distant from the site of Mount Church. This designation obviously was derived from the fact that the trustees carried out the organ's sale from Port Royal, then the only town in the parish.

Since there was an imported English organ in King's Chapel, Boston, in 1713,⁶⁰ and one in Petsworth Church, Gloucester County, Virginia, in 1735,⁶¹ no priority can be established for the Mount Church organ of 1748 or later, either for Virginia or America.

Rappahannock Academy was abandoned, after the Civil War, and the old church went to complete ruin and was finally demolished. Since U. S. Route 17 was relocated at this point in 1933, this highway no longer passes the church site, which lies on the west side of the former road, a quarter mile

⁵⁸Mason, *Colonial Churches of Tidewater Virginia*, 241, 251.

⁵⁹Files of Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.

⁶⁰*Historical Magazine of Episcopal Church*, XIV, 17.

⁶¹Mason, *Colonial Churches of Tidewater Virginia*, 251.

south of its fork with the present Route 17, where there is an historical highway marker commemorating Rappahannock Academy. The church site is marked by a large old cedar tree by the roadside and further back by an apple tree of more recent origin, in the midst of a dense growth of honeysuckle. There are two old wells, one of which probably served both school and church.

Following the revival of religion in St. Mary's Parish, at the close of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, two brick churches were erected in the parish, both of which are still in service. The first of these, called Grace Church, was built at Corbin about 1833,⁶² and the other, St. Peter's Church, was erected at Port Royal in 1836. St. Peter's was badly damaged at Christmas, 1849, by a fire which destroyed the belfry and church bell, but it was not demolished, as erroneously reported by Bishop Johns to the diocesan convention of 1850. A new bell was donated in that year by Silas Wood, who had given the first bell at the church's erection in 1836. No earlier church is known to have stood on the site of St. Peter's Church and it is believed to have been the first Episcopal church at Port Royal, in spite of the statement on a tablet in the entry that it replaced "earlier buildings destroyed by fire."

The two earliest churches of St. Margaret's Parish both lay in King William County and their story has already been told in the author's account of the colonial churches of that county.⁶³ In the act of assembly forming St. Margaret's Parish out of the upper end of St. John's Parish, the inhabitants of the new parish were required to "meet at the Chappell in their said parish" and elect their first vestry.⁶⁴ The building thus designated was a frontier chapel of St. John's Parish, whose vestry in 1720 patented the site "on which the Chappell stands," together with 300 acres surrounding it, for a parish glebe farm, no location being given in the patent.⁶⁵

Since this frontier chapel was obviously the only church building in the new parish of St. Margaret's as its formation in 1720, it became its first parish church and served in that capacity until superseded, about 1738, by a second St. Margaret's Parish Church on a site near the upper end of the present Caroline County.

The exact location of the first parish church of St. Margaret's is not known, but it seems reasonable to conclude that its site on the 300-acre glebe

⁶²Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, 310.

⁶³Mason, *Colonial Churches of Tidewater Virginia*, 313, 319.

⁶⁴*William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 110.

⁶⁵*Land Patent Books*, XI, 25.

farm was the same one that was later used for the church required to be built by St. Margaret's Parish, after its division in 1744, for the new parish of St. David.⁶⁶ If so, this site is still occupied by the existing colonial Cattail Church in King William County, which is believed to be the church so built in 1751, and is now occupied by a colored congregation as Mt. Sinai Baptist Church.

The act creating St. Margaret's Parish in 1720 contained a provision similar to the one just mentioned, since it required that the mother parish, St. John's, King William County, as reduced by this division, should levy 25,000 pounds of tobacco "for the use of the . . . parish of St. Margaret's towards building them a New Church."⁶⁷ It is believed that this "New Church" is the existing Mangohick Church in the upper part of King William County, built prior to 1732⁶⁸ and several times mentioned as "the Chapel" of St. Margaret's Parish in Caroline County records of 1735-39.⁶⁹ It has been occupied by a colored Baptist congregation for the past eighty years. Both of these early churches of St. Margaret's Parish passed to St. David's Parish at its erection in 1744, and need not be further discussed in this account.

The second parish church of St. Margaret's was a brick building constructed on a site half a mile east of the South River (a tributary of the Mattaponi) and eight miles west by south of Bowling Green. Since this building stood about six miles north of the colonial village of Chesterfield, it was first known as Chesterfield Church. The earliest reference to it, under this or any other name, appears to be in a Caroline County court order of 9th June, 1738, appointing a committee to "veiu [view] the old road that leads from Chesterfield Church to the gleeb house in St. Margaret's Parish and the new one turned by . . . John Brunskill"⁷⁰ [then rector of the parish]. The fact that an old road passing both church and glebe had just been changed by the parish rector at this date, for his greater convenience in reaching his church, suggests that the latter was then a new building and no earlier record of its existence has been found.

Toward the close of the colonial period this structure also became known as the South River Church,⁷¹ from its situation near that stream. It is further

⁶⁶Hening, *Statutes at Large*, V, 254.

⁶⁷*William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 110.

⁶⁸Note: A flat brick inset over the south door of this church appears to be inscribed with the date 1731, divided and combined with the initials WV or WY, but it is indistinct.

⁶⁹*Caroline County Orders*, 1732-40, I, 317, 532.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, I, 486, 506.

⁷¹*Caroline County Orders*, 1746-54, III, 250, 271.

mentioned in the county records as the Upper Church of St. Margaret's Parish,⁷² which it became after the erection of a Lower Church, a few years later.

Chesterfield Church received still another designation, by which it is perhaps best known, when it was nicknamed the Bull Church. This last title is not to be found in the colonial records of the county, being first mentioned in a Caroline County court order of 14th March, 1782, for a list of taxable persons to be taken from "Anderson's Bridge . . . down the Church Road to the Bull Church,"⁷³ but it occurs frequently in later records.

A possible origin for this nickname is given by a modern historian of Caroline County, the Reverend Marshall Wingfield, who quotes an undated letter from the late Colonel Fleming Wood, former superintendent of the Virginia State Penitentiary, describing the Bull Church as having had "the shape of an 'L'; the bottom of the 'L' was not used and was left to go to ruin when I first recollect the church. Some said it was the newest part of the church. It had the figures 1755 in the brick over the door. It was said that the workmen who built this addition lived on bull meat during the time of construction and that they named it Bull Church. The skull and horns of the bull were placed in the fork of one of the large oaks in the churchyard and in time the oak grew over them. The points of the horns could just be seen in 1858, I having seen them myself."⁷⁴ Since the building undoubtedly took several years to complete, more than one bull must have been involved, but this does not invalidate the tradition.

The date 1755, on the wing described above, identifies it as indeed "the newest part of the church," and it must have been an addition made when an increase in population required the enlargement of the parish church.

Following the Revolution, St. Margaret's Parish continued to have the services of a minister, the Reverend Archibald Dick, until 1801, but was represented only by lay delegates at diocesan conventions from 1787 until 1797.⁷⁵ Upon the general revival of religion in Virginia at the close of the nineteenth century's first quarter, the Reverend Leonard H. Johns, who had recently become the rector of St. Margaret's Parish, Caroline County, reported to the diocesan convention of 1827 that "This parish has been in a destitute condition for the last thirty years, till within six months past. Like many of the old churches in the diocese, this was fast sinking to ruin, when,

⁷²*Caroline County Orders, 1741-46, II, 271, 351.*

⁷³*Caroline County Orders, 1781-85, XII, 44.*

⁷⁴Wingfield, *History of Caroline County*, 295.

⁷⁵Hawks, *Convention Journals of Diocese of Virginia*, 18, 70.

about a year ago, subscriptions were obtained sufficient to repair the fallen wall" [presumably in the wing, as suggested by Col. Wood's account] "and secure the outside of the building. Much is yet necessary to be done to make it comfortable."⁷⁶

In 1828, the old church was reported as "still very much out of repair; and during the wet weather of last winter," the congregation "frequently were obliged to abandon it entirely."⁷⁷ In 1834, it was reported to have been "thoroughly repaired during the past year,"⁷⁸ and it continued in regular use (except during the Civil War years) until 1872, when its rector, the Reverend William W. Greene, reported to the diocesan convention that "a new roof has been put upon this venerable building." Following two more decades of occasional services in the old church, its woodwork was completely burned out by a woods fire in the 1890's and it stood a roofless ruin until it was demolished to make its bricks available for local building purposes.

The colonial St. Margaret's Church was replaced in 1895 by a simple frame building at Ruther Glen, after mission services had been held for five years in a hall in that village, under the name of St. Margaret's Chapel. The new building of 1895 was called St. Margaret's Church, like its colonial predecessor, but, oddly enough, it was associated with Drysdale Parish, although it actually lay within the ancient bounds of the dormant St. Margaret's Parish.

The site of the last colonial St. Margaret's Church, commonly called the Bull Church, lies in second-growth woods on the west side of State Route 633, about 120 yards northwest of its junction with State Route 639 to Milford and Bowling Green and a mile and a half each of Ladysmith on U. S. Route 1. No part of the old building now remains, but the trenches dug for removal of its foundation are still well defined and the site is further marked by the piles of broken bricks and dirt from the trenches, thrown up parallel with them, within the area once covered by the church. Measurements taken along the inner sides of these trenches reveal that the building was originally 60 by 30 feet, inside, and that a north wing, of the same width as the church and extending 25 feet from its north wall at its eastern end, had been added to the structure, making it L-shaped, as described in the account already quoted.

The Reedy Church, which was the colonial Lower Church of St. Mar-

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 203.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 218.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 310.

garet's Parish, was erected about 1742, since it is first mentioned in the county records in an order of 12th March, 1741-42, appointing Daniel Coleman to "be surveyor of the new road from Sutton's ford to the new Church."⁷⁹ This church continued to be called "the new Church" in these records for the next five or six years, but the fact that the road leading to it is also called new in this order indicates the church's recent erection and this is confirmed by a subsequent order of 9th April, 1742, that "the road be cleared from the new Church . . . as the same is laid off,"⁸⁰ since such road clearing was only required for access to a new building on a hitherto unused site.

Since this new church stood a mile north of the Reedy Swamp, it soon became known as the Reedy Church, and its location three miles west of the colonial mill at the mouth of this stream later brought it the title of Reedy Mill Church, although this name does not seem to occur in the colonial records of the county. A court order of 1747, that "a road be Cleared from Chesterfield road to the new Church on the reeds"⁸¹ refers to the fact that the building's site lay within the great Corbin family plantation called "The Reeds."

A petition of 14th June, 1739, to the colonial council, by divers vestrymen and inhabitants of St. Margaret's Parish, shows that the erection of the Reedy Church was first projected some years before this date, but was cancelled on the 2nd October, 1738, and reordered on 24th April, 1739, at a vestry meeting at which only seven vestrymen were present, of which irregularity the petition complains.⁸² The council ordered construction of the building to be suspended, pending a hearing of both sides to the dispute, and the construction order was obviously upheld, for the church was placed in service only three years later.

An alternative version of this petition, said to be "a copy of the original in the Virginia State Archives" strongly suggests that the Reedy Church was originally ordered at the same time as Chesterfield Church, since in this version the council suspends "all further proceedings towards the Erecting either of the Churches proposed" instead of "the said Church" as in the official journal of council.⁸³

If so, both churches were probably ordered in 1735 and, Chesterfield Church having been built first and completed in 1738, the second church

⁷⁹*Caroline County Orders, 1741-46, II, 93.*

⁸⁰*Ibid., II, 98.*

⁸¹*Caroline County Orders, 1746-54, III, 23.*

⁸²McIlwaine, *Executive Journals of Council, IV, 440.*

⁸³*Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XIV, 341.*

was then cancelled by the vestry, perhaps from motives of economy, this order in turn being voided in 1739 and the church completed in 1742.

No trace of the foundation of the Reedy Church has been found, but its site apparently lies at the edge of the woods north of the existing Edmund Pendleton High School,⁸⁴ which stands just east of State Route 2 (U. S. Route 301), about eleven miles south of Bowling Green and near the cross-roads known as Dogged Forks. If so, the site is now marked only by a dense patch of honeysuckle and three large old oak trees.

A Caroline County surveyor's plat of 16th September, 1820,⁸⁵ shows the old church as still standing at that date, in the point between the existing colonial road running south from Dogged Forks and crossing Reedy Swamp a mile below the high school, and an old woods road just north of the school grounds. This woods road was formerly the main road past the church and the point once made by it with the road to Reedy Swamp bridge, as shown on the 1820 plat, has long since been cut off by the modern north-and-south highway in front of the school and hence no longer exists. This is a good illustration of the difficulty encountered in trying to locate long-vanished colonial church buildings by means of ancient maps.

The old Reedy Church appears to have been abandoned after the parish became dormant, around 1800, and was not repaired and returned to service at the general revival of religion, a quarter century later, and hence went to ruin long before the Bull Church did. An unnamed correspondent of Bishop Meade reported to him in 1857 that "within my recollection, the walls and roof [of the Reedy Church] were entire. About thirty years ago [i.e., in 1827 or earlier], the roof fell in, and immediately the bricks were carried away by the neighbors."⁸⁶ As a result of its early destruction, the Reedy Church has become so completely forgotten that some of the oldest residents of Caroline County seem to be unaware that it ever existed.

The act erecting Drysdale Parish out of the upper end of St. Stephen's Parish, King and Queen County, in 1723, clearly shows that there were then no churches existing within the area of the new parish, the reason for whose formation is given in the act as the great distance of its inhabitants from any church or chapel in the parent parish.⁸⁷ As described in a previous publication by the author, the first parish church of Drysdale was built in King and Queen County, soon after 1723, and was a large, cross-shaped

⁸⁴Wingfield, *History of Caroline County*, 294.

⁸⁵*Caroline County Plats, 1770-1840*, 162.

⁸⁶Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 410.

⁸⁷*William and Mary Quarterly* (2), XVIII, 110.

building known as the Park Church, which stood two miles west of Newtown, on the south side of the colonial road which is now part of State Route 14.⁸⁸

It is apparent from the Caroline County records that a chapel of ease for Drysdale Parish was later built in Caroline County and may even have been standing when this county was formed. This chapel was known as the Ivy Church, and was probably a frame building, which stood near a bridge over Marrocosick Creek, on "the Church Road" down the county. It is first mentioned in a county court order of 14th May, 1736, appointing Thomas Bullard to "be Overseer of the Church Road from Thomas Durrums to the Church and from thence to the bridge, and to assist with his gang the overseer in King and Queen County in Makeing the said Bridge."⁸⁹

It is obvious from the above order that the bridge in question crossed Marrocosick Creek where it formed the boundary line between Caroline and King and Queen Counties at the above date; however, a highway surveyor appointment of 1743 (one year after the county line had been moved further east) refers to "the Church road" and "the Church bridge . . . and from thence . . . down the Creek to the county line,"⁹⁰ showing that this bridge was above the new boundary established in 1742, when additional area from the upper end of King and Queen was added to Caroline.

The Ivy Church's site is further identified in a court order of 1744, referring to "the two roads that leads to the Ivey Church,"⁹¹ and in one of 1759 which mentions "the Fork of the road by the Ivy Church."⁹²

The only site that meets all the above conditions is at the bridge on the present State Route 14, which crosses Marrocosick Creek just west of the village of Sparta in eastern Caroline County. The topography is such that the old church probably stood on the high point overlooking the creek, northwest of the bridge, especially as the more northerly of the two roads which met near the bridge was clearly "the Church Road" and coincided generally with the present State Route 14.

The colonial bridge stood some fifty yards further down stream than the existing one, so that the two roads forked even closer to the bridge than at present, and the more southerly one passed just north of the old White Plains house, built in 1770 by Edmund Pendleton for his nephew and namesake and now owned and occupied by Mr. R. L. T. Beale. A lower

⁸⁸Mason, *Colonial Churches of Tidewater Virginia*, 308.

⁸⁹*Caroline County Orders, 1732-40, I, 345.*

⁹⁰*Caroline County Orders, 1741-46, II, 177.*

⁹¹*Ibid.*, II, 270.

⁹²*Caroline County Orders, 1759-63, V, 16.*

site for the church would have been subject to periodic flooding by creek freshets, but nevertheless may have been occupied by it. If so, the yearly floods may have been the cause of its early abandonment, after not more than a quarter century of use.

The Ivy Church, which served as the Upper Church of Drysdale Parish, was superseded about 1749 by a new church more centrally located in the county. The fact of the Ivy Church's replacement is first made apparent by a county court order of 12th April, 1759, "that the old road by the old Ivy Church be cleared and that Eusebius Stone Gent. be surveyor of the said road from the fork of the road below Colonel Baylor's to the bridge by the said old Church."⁹³ In colonial records, the designation "old Church" usually implies the existence of a "new Church" by which the older building has been superseded and from which it is desired to distinguish it.

The above order suggests that the Ivy Church had by then been out of service long enough for one of the two roads leading to it to have become overgrown with brush, and this disused "old road from the three knotted road by the Ivy Church by Burk's Bridge" had to be opened again in 1763.⁹⁴ The final record in the story of the Ivy Church is found in a court order of 13th June, 1765, appointing the same Eusebius Stone as "Overseer of the road from the Bridge over Morocosick Creek near where the old Ivy Church stood on the old road Opposite to Colonel Baylor's plantation,"⁹⁵ showing that the old building had by then been demolished.

The new Upper Church of Drysdale Parish, which succeeded the Ivy Church about the middle of the eighteenth century, was built near a bridge over a stream which thenceforth was called the Church Creek, while the church itself became known as the Creek Church. The new building is first mentioned in a county court order of 10th November, 1749, "that John Newton . . . clear the road from the Court house to the fork of the road that goes to the new Church,"⁹⁶ one of the first duties of the county commissioners in connection with a newly erected house of worship being to order roads to be cleared for access to it.

The Creek Church is first identified with the creek for which it was named in a grand jury presentment, dated 10th May, 1751, of "the overseer of the road from the Courthouse to the Creek going to the new Church,"⁹⁷

⁹³*Caroline County Orders, 1759-63, V, 6.*

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, V, 456.

⁹⁵*Caroline County Orders, 1765-67, VI, 3.*

⁹⁶*Caroline County Orders, 1746-54, III, 179.*

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, III, 255.

and is placed at a bridge over this creek by a court order of 8th September, 1757, that "Francis Coleman . . . Clear the road from the Court house to the foot of the bridge this side by the new Church."⁹⁸ The new building is first mentioned by name in 1762, when a court order of 12th November appoints the same man as "Overseer of the road from the Courthouse to the Creek Church."⁹⁹

A further clew to the location of the new church of 1749 is afforded by a highway surveyor appointment of 12th May, 1768, referring to the road "forks below the creeke church,"¹⁰⁰ while the court-house, church, bridge, and creek are all definitely linked together in a grand jury report dated 13th May, 1773, presenting "the surveyor of the road from the Court house to the Creek Church for not keeping the Creek Bridge in repair."¹⁰¹ The final links in the chain of evidence establishing the existence and location of the Creek Church as well as the Church Creek are found in a county court proceeding of 10th March, 1774, against "The Overseer of the Road from the Church Creek Bridge . . . for not keeping the said Road in repair,"¹⁰² and in a later court order of November, 1781, appointing Philip Johnston "Overseer of the Road from the Court House to the Church Creek."¹⁰³

A close study of past and present roads and waterways in Caroline County has led to the conclusion that the Creek Church stood beside the old road running northwesterly from the existing Poorhouse Corner to the former Carter's Corner, at a point just northwest of the bridge on which this road once crossed the upper end of the present Smoot's Millpond, formed by damming the colonial Church Creek at its junction with Marrocosick Creek.

The above road intersected, at a place formerly called Broaddus, the ancient Court-house Road which once led from Bowling Green past the site of the last colonial court-house of Caroline County, which stood two miles east of the town and was abandoned when the county court was moved to Bowling Green in 1794.¹⁰⁴ This Court-house Road, although relocated in various places, coincides generally with the present State Route 608, and the colonial court-house appears to have stood about a quarter mile east of the latter route's intersection with the modern U. S. Route 301.

⁹⁸*Caroline County Orders, 1755-58, IV, 308.*

⁹⁹*Caroline County Orders, 1759-63, V, 380.*

¹⁰⁰*Caroline County Orders, 1767-70, VIII, 137.*

¹⁰¹*Caroline County Orders, 1772-76, X, 212.*

¹⁰²*Ibid., X, 497.*

¹⁰³*Caroline County Orders, 1781-85, XII, 29.*

¹⁰⁴Shepherd, *Statutes at Large, I, 310.*

On this basis, "the fork of the road going to the new Church," in the first order quoted above, under date of 1749, was the intersection at the former Broaddus corner. Furthermore, "the Creek going to the new Church," in the order of 1751, is the present Smoot's Millpond, while the 1757 order shows that the church lay near the north end of the bridge or on "this side," relative to the court-house where the order was issued. The "forks below the creeke church," mentioned in 1768, were at the present Poorhouse Corner. Since all of the roads and sites involved lie within the U. S. Army's A. P. Hill Military Reservation, confirmation of these conclusions by actual exploration has not been practicable. No evidence has been found to indicate that the Creek Church was anything but a simple frame building, and the probability that it was of wooden construction is strengthened by its prompt abandonment when Drysdale Parish was divided, toward the close of the Revolutionary War.

A letter dated the 22nd November, 1779, from Edmund Pendleton to William Woodford, states that the "Parish [i.e., Drysdale] is divided and ours, the new one, called St. Asaph's, where we may probably have Mr. Sheild [Rev. Samuel Sheild, then rector of Drysdale Parish] and a new Church near your Mattaponi plantation; we intend however to be humble and build them of wood, for we must have another about Mr. Baylor's Mill and sink the present one."¹⁰⁵

The "present one" mentioned above was undoubtedly the Creek Church, and it actually was abandoned in favor of a new church built for St. Asaph's Parish about 1780 on the west side of Marrocosick Creek and about three quarters of a mile north of Bowling Green, on the left bank of the colonial road leading to the former Caroline County Court-house, two miles east of Bowling Green. As already mentioned, this Court-house Road, relocated in parts, is now State Route 608, which turns left off from U. S. Route 301, just outside of Bowling Green, and the old St. Asaph's Church site is now cultivated as a garden by Mr. Charles Broaddus.

This new church, almost certainly a frame building, as forecast in the above letter, seems to have been known only as St. Asaph's Church, and was reported to Bishop Meade in 1857 by an unnamed correspondent as having been "in good condition about forty or fifty years ago, and services held in it. The Hoomes, Pendletons, Taylors, Battailes, Baylors, and other old families attended it."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵Letter in files of Historiographer, Diocese of Virginia, at Mayo Memorial House, 110 West Franklin St., Richmond Va.

¹⁰⁶Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 410.

This last house of worship to be built for the Established Church in Caroline County was superseded in 1835 by a brick church erected in Bowling Green, called Trinity Church or St. Asaph's, which was sold in 1876 for \$500.00, having lost its last communicant, and the money used to purchase and furnish a rectory for St. Peter's Church at Port Royal, in the adjoining parish of St. Mary's.¹⁰⁷ The church building, now 114 years old, still forms the center part of the Bowling Green Methodist Church.

Bishop Meade's correspondent also gave him a traditional account of some of the old churches in Caroline County, including "One which stood on the south side of Maricopie or Massacopie Creek, in the eastern part of the county, and was, I think, called Joy Creek Church, from a small rivulet close by. Every vestige of it had disappeared before my father's recollection, so that it must have been one of the most ancient of our churches."¹⁰⁸

The word "Joy" in the above title is manifestly a misreading of "Ivy" in colonial script, and this erroneous name for the Ivy Church was then combined with that of the Creek Church, which was a later building on a different site, as described earlier in this article. The resulting designation, however, is no more inaccurate than this same correspondent's badly garbled versions of the name Marrocosick Creek.

The following ministers appear to have served the various parishes of Caroline County during the colonial and post-Revolutionary periods:

ST. MARY'S PARISH, 1677 to date: Rev. William Andrews, 1702; Rev. Owen Jones, 1704-26; Rev. Rodham Kenner, 1731-35; Rev. Musgrave Dawson, 1751-62; Rev. Jonathan Boucher, 1764-70; Rev. Abner Waugh, 1771-1806.

ST. MARGARET'S PARISH, 1720 to date: Rev. Francis Fontaine, 1721-22; Rev. John Brunskill, Sr., 1726-58; Rev. Archibald Dick, 1773-1801.

DRYSDALE PARISH, 1723 to date: Rev. Adam Dickie, 1731-45; Rev. Robert Innis, 1754-58; Rev. Andrew Moreton, 1774; Rev. Samuel Sheild, 1776-79; Rev. Jesse Carter, 1780-1804.

ST. ASAPH'S PARISH, 1780 to date: Rev. Samuel Sheild, 1780-86; Rev. James Taylor, 1786-88; Rev. George H. Spierin, 1796-99.

¹⁰⁷Manuscript in files of Historiographer, Diocese of Virginia.

¹⁰⁸Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, I, 409.