

T E
OLD BRICK CHURCH,

NEAR
Smithfield, Virginia.

BUILT IN 1632.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1891,

By R. S. THOMAS, A. M., L. B.,

Smithfield, Virginia.

REPRINTED FROM
VIRGINIA HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS, VOL. XI.
1892.



THE OLD BRICK CHURCH,

NEAR SMITHFIELD, VIRGINIA.

BUILT IN 1632.

It is my object to prove that this Church was built in 1632, and I shall prove it,

1. By the existence at that early day, of such a strong, religious, sentiment, as demanded a house of worship to the living God.
2. By tradition.
3. By lately existing records; and—
4. By the bricks and mortar of the Church itself.

This last proof is absolutely conclusive, and I might rely on it solely and alone, but, in one or two hundred years hence, its genuineness might be questioned; and hence, whilst priceless records are still extant, and important witnesses still live, it is a matter of the gravest moment, and of the highest duty, to preserve their concurrent testimony.

1st. *The Existence of the Sentiment.*

The existence of a temple to the God to be worshipped proves the belief in that God, for, without a belief in him, there would be no temple for his worship. The stronger, and more enthusiastic, the belief, the surer, and more certain, it is to manifest itself in a house of worship. Did our ancestors, then, bring with them a strong, potent, courageous, belief in the God of Calvary, and a strong evangelical zeal in His behalf?

This question cannot be, correctly, answered, without some slight glance at antecedent history—enough only to arouse thought to action, and to enable you to bring, before yourselves, a mirror of the times.

In 1483, Hans Luther, a German miner, a citizen of the county of Mansfield, a slate-cutter by trade, had born unto him a son, who, displaying uncommon activity of mind, was, by manifold sacrifices of the father, placed at the Latin school of Eisleben in that county. The brightness of the boy, and the ambition of the father that the son should rise above his station in life, induced him to undergo still further privations and hardships, so that he might place the boy in the larger school at Eisnach. Poverty pressed hard on that father and son, and drove the son to go into the streets of Eisnach, and sing songs for alms that he might eke out a miserable existence. God had given him a sweet tenor voice, and that voice fell enchantingly upon the ears of Ursula Cotta, the wife of the Burgomaster of Eisnach, who, learning the history of the talented boy, sent him to Urfurst, where in 1505, he took his master's degree and graduated with distinguished honors.

At Urfurst, the bold and earnest preaching of Weinmann arrested his attention, stung and awakened his conscience, and sent him to a diligent and protracted study of the scriptures.

In 1507, the Elector of Saxony appointed him a professor in the recently (1505) founded university of Wittenburg, which he soon made famous by the severity of studies, the brilliancy of his chair, the perfect mastery of the early fathers of the Church, the profound knowledge of the scriptures, and the burning eloquence of his pulpit.

In 1517, John Tetzel sought to replenish the Papal exchequer by the sale of indulgences, and Martin Luther, shocked at the sale of the mercies of heaven for the money of man, nailed his ninety-five theses to the doors of Castle church, bade defiance to the Pope of Rome, summoned the world to denounce the errors of the Papal Church, and to correct and reform its creed.

The disputations of Luther at Augsburg with Cajetan, and at Leipsic with John Eck, ended with the Diet-at-Worms, Nuremberg and Spire, and the attention of the world was arrested and

centered upon the grandeur of the preacher, and the sublimity of the truths he boldly announced, and bravely defended.

Melancthon, Bucer and Oecolampadius rallied around the hero, and grandly aided in spreading the revived gospel.

Zwingli from the mountain heights of Switzerland, caught a glimpse of the new religion, and held up the torch to Calvin, of France, whose long, subsequent, residence at Geneva banishes from the general recollection his birth and manhood in France, and his ecclesiastical training in the Church of Rome.

John Knox heard the voice of Zwingli and of Calvin, and aroused all Scotland with his stubborn zeal and burning enthusiasm.

The new learning, and the new religion, crossed the Scottish border and the English Channel, and the English champions of the cross kept step with those of Germany, Switzerland, France and Scotland, and Rogers and Hooper, and Farrar and Ridley, and Latimer and Cranmer, in fire and in faggot, attested the divine truths, protested against the enormities of Rome, proclaimed the gospel, that founded in Judea, consecrated on Calvary, hidden in the darkness of the mediæval times, was resurrected by Luther, and proclaimed, anew, to the world by his gathering hosts of enthusiastic followers.

But Clement V, of Rome, did not yield the indulgences, the penances, the annates that supplied the coffers of his Church; the masses that appealed to the imaginations of the multitude; the auricular confessions that made the minister of the flock the priest of the household; the prayers for the dead; the actual corporal presence of God in the wine; and the traditions that hedged about and upheld his Church.

Charles V of Spain the Netherlands Naples and of Austria; Francis I, of France, Philip II, of Spain, Torquemada, Ximenes, the Inquisition, Catherine de Medici, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the reign of Bloody Mary, the persecutions of the Lutherans in Germany, the Huguenots in France, and the Protestants in England, all show the terrible rage of the Church of Rome, and the equally resolute energy of the revived faith to escape from the thralldom that had so long enslaved it, and its grand determination to plant the standards of the cross upon the ramparts of a nobler and higher religion, that appealed from the

fallibility of man to the infallibility of God, and from a faith in the Pope to a faith in Jesus Christ.

This energy, awakened in England in the time of Henry VIII, intensified in that of Edward VI and Bloody Mary, was powerfully augmented by the two editions of the book of Common Prayer in 1548 and 1552, and the rapid multiplications of the Bible.

The edition of Wickliffe of 1384 had been enlarged and enriched by the editions of Tyndall in 1530 and of Coverdale in 1535, whose labors and sufferings, in poverty and in alien lands, were crowned with such success, that from foreign and from native presses came the editions of 1538, the version of 1539, the Geneva edition of 1560, the Bishop's Bible of 1568, and the authorized version of 1611.

Whilst some of these editions were issuing from the press, Bloody Mary, in 1588, passed from the scenes of life, and Elizabeth ascended the throne of England.

Then Protestantism, bruised, mangled, and burnt, rose from the ground, nobler for its sufferings, and more resolute for its afflictions.

"Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to man," was its pæan, and "Go ye unto all the world and preach my gospel to every creature," was accepted as its divine mission.

Under the influence of these feelings, Christopher Newport, John Smith, Edward Maria Wingfield, Bartholomew Gosnold, John Ratcliffe, John Martin, George Kendall, and their associates, set sail on the 19th of December, 1606, from Blackwall, England, in the ship *Susan Constant*, of one hundred tons, in charge of Newport with seventy-one men; in the *Godspeed*, of forty tons, in charge of Gosnold, with fifty-two men, and in the pinnace, the *Discovery*, of twenty tons, in charge of Ratcliffe with twenty men, and landed at Jamestown on the 13th of May, 1607, bringing with them the sentiments of Englishmen, the laws of England, the Church of England in its minister, the Rev. Robert Hunt, and their charter, written by Sir Edward Coke and Sir John Doddridge. That charter declares, "their desires for the furtherance of so noble a work, which may, by the providence of Almighty God, hereafter tend to the glory of His divine majesty, in propagating the Christian religion to such

people as yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God, and may in time bring infidels and savages living in those parts to human civility, and to a settled and quiet government," and the adventurers are instructed "to provide that the true word and service of God and Christian faith be preached, planted, and used, not only within every of the said colonies and plantations, but also as much as they may amongst the savage people which do or shall adjoine unto them, or border upon them, according to the doctrine, rights, and religion now professed and established within our realme of England."

In the second charter of May 23, 1609, written by Sir Francis Bacon and Sir Henry Hobart, it is declared in its 29th article: "And lastly, because the principle effect which we can desire, or expect in this action, is the conversion and seduction of the people in those parts unto the true worship of God and Christian religion, in which respect we should be loath that any person should be permitted to pass that we suspected to effect the superstitions of the Church of Rome; we do hereby declare that it is our will and pleasure that none be permitted to pass in any voyage, from time to time to be made into the said country, but such as shall have taken the oath of supremacy," that the King of England was the head of the Church, and not the Pope of Rome.

Again, in the third charter of March 12, 1611, prepared by the same parties, "the power and authority was given to minister and give the oath and oaths of supremacy and allegiance, or either of them to all and to every person and persons which shall at any time or times hereafter go or pass to the said colony in Virginia."

And they brought with them not only the charter, but a magnificent letter of advice written by the Rev. Richard Hakluyt, prebendary of Westminster, historiographer of the East India Company, and the last sentence is in these words: "Lastly and chiefly, the way to prosper and achieve good success is to make yourselves all of one mind for the good of your country and your own, and to serve and fear God, the giver of all goodness, for every plantation which our Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted out."¹

¹Brown's "Genesis of the United States."

Just as soon as these adventurers landed at Jamestown, they offered up prayer, and extemporized a church, which, Captain Smith informs us, was only an "awning or old sail which we hung to three or four trees to shadow us from the sun; our walls were rails of wood; our seats unhewn trees till we cut planks; our pulpit a bar of wood nailed to two neighboring trees. In foul weather we shifted into an old rotten tent, for we had few better, and this came by way of advertising for new."

And there, in

"A wild and lonely region, where, retired
From little scenes of art, great Nature dwelt
In ample solitude,"

these men worshipped as primeval man worshipped when

"The groves were God's first temples. E'er man learned
To hew the shaft and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them. E'er he framed
The lofty vault to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems; in a darkling wood
Amid the cool and silence he knelt down
And offered the Mightiest, solemn thanks
And supplication."

"Compared with this, how poor's religious pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When mere display to congregations wide,
Devotion's every grace but the heart."

Their next church, Captain Smith informs us, was "a homely thing (the log church) like a barn set in crochets, covered with rafts, sedge and earth, and so were the walls." Others followed, from time to time, as circumstances dictated, until the one was built, the remains of which are still at Jamestown in an utterly abandoned condition.

Captain Smith, describing the habits of the adventurers, says: "First they enter into the church and make their prayers unto God, next they return to their houses and receive their proportion of food." (Vol. II, p. 5, of Smith's History.)

In 1611 they built a "new towne," which they called Henrico

after Prince Henry, "a handsome church, and the foundation of a better laid to be built of bricke," and near it on the other side of the river "a faire framed parsonage" for Master Whitaker.

In building churches they were stimulated not only by the zeal of the individuals and of the nation, but by the injunctions of King James I. (1603-25)

(Chas I - 1625-49)

As early as 1617 he addressed a letter to George Abbott, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, in which he said: "You have heard ere this time of the attempt of diverse worthie men an' subjects to plant in Virginia (under the warrant of our Letters-Patent) people of this Kingdom, as well as for enlarging of our Dominion as for the propagating of the Gospel among the Infidels, wherein there is good progress made and hope of further increase; so as the undertakers of that plantation are now in hand with the erecting of some churches and schools for the education of the children of those barbarians, which cannot but be to them a very great charge, and above the expense which for the civil plantation doth come to them. In which we doubt not but that you, and all others who wish well to the increase of Christian Religion, will be willing to give all assistance and furtherance you may, and therein to make experience of the zeal and devotion of our well-minded subjects, especially those of the clergy.

"Wherefore, we do require you, and hereby authorize you, to write your letters to the several Bishops of the Dioceses in your Province, that they do give order to the ministers and other zealous men of their Diocese, both by their own example in contribution, and by exhortation to others, to move our people within their several charges to contribute to so good a work in as liberal a manner as they may, for the better advancing whereof our pleasure is that these collections be made in the particular parishes for several times within these two years next coming; and that the several accounts of each parish, together with the money's collected be returned from time to time to the Bishop of the Dioceses, and by him be transmitted half-yearly to you, and so to be delivered to the Treasurer of the Plantation to be employed for the Godly purposes intended, and no other."

With such sentiments animating king, bishops and people in the mother country and in the Colony, the first legislative assem-

bly held on this continent was convened at Jamestown, in "the Quire of the Church," on Friday, June 30, 1619, and the second sentence in the record is this: "But forasmuche as men's affaires do little prosper where God's service is neglected, all the Burgeses took their places in the Quire till prayer was said by Mr. Bucke, the Minister, that it would please God to guide and sanctifie all our proceedings to his own glory and the good of this plantation."

That assembly enacted "that for laying a surer foundation of the conversion of the Indians to Christian Religion eache town, citty, Burrough and plantation do obtaine unto themselves by just means a certaine number of natives' children, to be educated by them in true religion and civil course of life."

That "all ministers shall duly read devine service, and exercise their ministerial functions, according to the Ecclesiastical laws and orders of the Church of Englande, and every Sunday, in the afternoon, shall catechise suche as are not yet ripe to come to the communion. And whosoever of them shall be found negligent and faulty in this kinde shall be subject to the censure of the Governor and Counsul of Estate."

That "the Ministers and Church Wardens shall seek to presente all ungodly and disorders, the committees whereof, if upon goode admonitions and mild reproof they will not forbear the said skandalous offences, as suspicions of whoredomes, dishonest company, keeping with women, and suche like, they are to be presented and punished accordingly."

That "if any person, after two warnings, does not amende his or her life in point of evident suspicion of Incontincy, or of the commission of any other enormous sinnes, that then he or she be presented by the Church wardens and suspended for a time from the church by the minister. In which Interim, if the same person do not amende and humbly submit him or herself to the church, he is then fully to be excommunicate, and soon after a writ or warrant to be sent from the Governor for the apprehending of his person ande seizing on all his goods, &c."

That "for reformation of swearing every freeman and M^r. of a family, after thrife admonition, shall give 5s. or the value

² Senate Document, Colonial Records of Virginia, 1874.

upon present demande to the use of the church where he dwelleth; and every servant, after the like admonition, excepte his M^r. dischardge the fine, shall be subject to whipping."

That "all persons, whatsoever, upon the Sabbath daye shall frequente devine service and sermons both forenoon and afternoon, and suche as beare armes, shall bring their pieces, swordes, poueder and shotte."

That "against excesse in apparell that every man be cessed in the churche for all publike contributions, if he be unmarried according to his owne apparell, if he be married, according to his owne and his wives, or either of their apparel."

And the very first act in the published statutes of Virginia is:

1st. "That there shall be in every plantation, where the people use to meet for the worship of God, a house or room sequestered for that purpose, and not to be of any temporal use whatsoever, and a place empaled in, sequestered only to the burial of the dead."

Such were a part of the laws relating to religion that were enacted by the very first legislative assembly that ever convened in this country—an assembly that convened seventeen months before the eternally lauded pilgrims ever landed upon Plymouth Rock, and ten years before the Colony of Salem and of Boston increased their meagre numbers beyond one hundred. And yet, the historians of that Colony are forever parading before the world for its worship the names of a Cotton, a Hooker, and an Eliott, who never set foot upon this continent until the Colony at Jamestown had for twenty-seven years blazed the way and taught them wisdom by their sad experience; who never from Puritanical lips proclaimed the glories of their Maker, until Hunt and Whitaker and Thorpe had laid down their lives as a sacrifice to their duty. The State and the Church that can boast of the evangelical services of a Robert Hunt, Richard Bucke, — Glover, Greville Poole, William Wickham, Alexander Whitaker, William Mease or Mays, — Macock, Thomas Bargrave, Robert Paulet, David Sandis, William Bennett, Robert Bolton, Jonas Stockton, Thomas White, Haut Wyatt, — Hopkins,

* Senate Document, 1874.

* Henning, Vol. I, p. 122.

— Pemberton, William Cotton, and others, who came between 1607 and 1622, animated by as pure a zeal as ever fired the breast of a Peter or a Paul, permits them to rest not only in oblivion, but covered with all the opprobrium that Puritanism can, by direction or indirection, heap upon them—ministers of the Cross of Christ, who by their lives and their speech said as did the brave and undaunted Whitaker, "Why is it that so few of our English ministers that were so hot against the surplice and subscription come hither where neither is spoken of. Doe they not wilfully hide their talents, or keep themselves at home for fear of losing a few pleasures; be there not among them of Moses his minde, and of the Apostles, that forsook all to follow Christ. But I refer them to the Judge of all hearts and to the King that shall reward everyone according to his talent." "Awake you true-hearted Englishmen, you Servant of Jesus Christ, remember that the plantation is God's and the reward your countries. . . . And you, my brethren, my fellow labourers, send up earnest prayers to God for his Church in Virginia, that since his harvest heere is great, but the labourers few he would thrust forth his labourers into his harvest: and pray also for me, that the ministration of his Gospel may be powerfull and effectuall by me to the salvation of many, and to the advancement of the Kingdome of Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father, and the holy spirit, bee all honour and glorie forever more, Amen."

Such were the sentiments that animated the missionaries of the early church, whom it is now fashionable to deride, and whose true Christian zeal is aspersed by the Puritans of the North, who, as early as 1629 shipped John Morton¹ and John and Samuel Brown² back to England for no crime save that of eating Christmas pies and using the book of Common Prayer; who, in 1630, took away the citizenship of the Rev. William Bloxton,³ and compelled him to sell his property at an enormous sacrifice and move away because he was a minister of the Church of England; who, by 1680, had exiled every Episcopal minister in all New England but one—old Father Jordon, who was too poor

¹ McConnell's Hist. of American Episcopal Church, p. 36.

² Bancroft's History of the United States, p. 349.

³ McConnell, p. 39.

and too "broken in fortune and in spirit to move;"¹ who in 1644, in the very depths of winter, drove Roger Williams² from his church in Salem, through the ice and snows of Massachusetts, to the Indian wilderness of Rhode Island, so that he did not "for fourteen weeks know what bed or bread did mean," and "had no house but a hollow tree;" who, in 1657, exiled Ann Breden, and whipped, imprisoned and mutilated her companions by slitting first one ear, then the other, and then "bored their tongues with red hot irons;" who, in 1659, imprisoned Wenlock Christison and twenty-seven of his companions, and rounded the catalogue of crimes by hanging Marmaduke Stephenson, William Robinson, William Seddra and Mary Dyer."

Hang the Culpeper brick on the gallows of Mary Dyer, and let, at least, the Puritan press close his mouth on the subject of intolerance, and the irreligious character of the early colonial ministers of Virginia!

And when it is remembered that the State of Virginia never, even in the slightest manner, punished one of her citizens, save and except for a premeditated and defiant violation of the law—a law that since 1689 only required the place of worship to be designated, and then only by a fine of a few shillings—let that brick be encircled, not with animosities, but with all the charities that ought to be extended to those who flagrantly violate, as well as to those who enforce her ancient and time-honored statutes.

The spirit that animated the early colonial ministers was the zeal of Hunt, Bucke and of Whitaker, which demanded churches for the worship of the God whom they adored, and these they built at Jamestown and everywhere else as rapidly as possible.

In 1621, if not before, they built a church on the Pembroke farm, in Elizabeth City county, the brick foundation of which was found by the Rev. John Collins McCabe, D.D., about the year 1850.

I come now to the date of the erection of the Old Brick Church, and I expect to prove that it was built in 1632.

¹ McConnell, p. 39.

² Bancroft, p. 367-77.

³ Bancroft, pp. 452 to 458.

2d. *The Tradition.*

The universal tradition everywhere, and at all times, universally, prevalent, in my county, is, that the Old Brick Church alluded to was built under the care and superintendence of one Joseph Bridger, the father of General Joseph Bridger, who lies buried on the farm now owned by James Davis, about a mile and a half distant from the old church—a farm that was called by General Joseph Bridger in his will in 1683, "The White Marsh Farm," and is so known, and so called, to this day.

This General Joseph Bridger was in his day the most prominent man in his county.

He was born in 1628, and in 1657,²¹ at the age of (29) twenty-nine, he, with John Brewer, represented this county in the General Assembly of Virginia. In 1663,²² he is again a member, and this year appears as Captain Joseph Bridger, and is a member of every important committee, but one.

In 1664, he is a commissioner to adjust the boundary line of Virginia and Maryland.²³

In 1666,²⁴ he is one of the commissioners of this State to confer with the commissioners of Maryland and of North Carolina, relative to their tobacco interests.

In this year²⁵ he is also a member of the General Assembly, and appears there as Adjutant-General Bridger.

In 1675,²⁶ he is a member of the Council of State, and a colonel in the Indian wars.

In 1676-'77,²⁷ he is a member of the court at Green Spring.

In 1676, his surrender is demanded by Nathaniel Bacon, Jr.,²⁸ characterized as "the rebel."

²¹ Hening, Vol. I, p. 431.

²² Hening, Vol. II, p. 197.

²³ Neill's *Virginia Carolorum*, p. 303.

²⁴ Neill's *Virginia Carolorum*, p. 303.

²⁵ Hening, Vol. II, p. 225, II. 249.

²⁶ Hening, Vol. II, p. 328, and Neill's *Virginia Carolorum*, p. 348-9.

²⁷ Hening, Vol. II, p. 548 and 551-7, 60.

²⁸ Neill's *Virginia Carolorum*, p. 363.

In 1677, he is a member of the court at the Middle Plantations, and is a witness to the will of Sir William Berkeley.²⁰

In 1680, he is a Councillor of State and Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Isle of Wight, Surry, Nansemond and Lower Norfolk; and Colonel Arthur Smith, of Isle of Wight, and Colonel John Lear and Major Milner, of Nansemond, are under his command.²¹

In 1683, he is a member of the Council of State and of the General Court, along with his Excellency, Thomas, Lord Culpeper, Governor, &c., Mr. Secretary Spencer, Mr. Auditor Bacon, Major-General Smith, Colonel Philip Ludwell, Colonel William Cole, Ralph Wormley, Esq., Colonel Richard Lee, Colonel John Page, and Colonel William Byrd.²²

The last codicil to his will bears date April 9th, 1685, and it is acknowledged in open court, which was then held at The Glebe, about a mile from Smithfield, where the court-house was located until 1752, when it was moved to Smithfield. In his will he makes special mention of his friends, Lieutenant-Colonel John Pitt, Mr. Thomas Pitt, and Colonel Arthur Smith, and of his brick house on the White Marsh farm, where he resided, the brick basement of which still exists to this day. And though the field has been constantly cultivated, from time immemorial, right up to the house, and right up to the very edge of the grave, yet, the innumerable bricks still lying scattered everywhere around, attest the largeness and the magnificence of that house. In 1890, Mr. Edward Pitt, a descendant of the Pitts above-mentioned, and a firm believer in the truth of the old tradition we are considering, now an aged man, a resident for many and many a long year on that White Marsh farm, as owner and as tenant, showed me the tomb of General Bridger, the basement of his house, and told me he had frequently picked up bricks with the prints of the feet of fowls and of dogs on them, made whilst they were soft, showing that they had been burnt on or near the farm.

²⁰ Hening, Vol. II, p. 548-51-7, 60.

²¹ Colonial Papers, No. 63, in Record office, London, as published in the *Richmond Dispatch*, July 6, 1890.

²² Hening, Vol. III, p. 557.

General Bridger died on the 15th day of April, 1686, the owner of a very large amount of personal property, and more than twelve thousand acres of land in Isle of Wight county, besides an unknown amount in Surry, James City, and in Maryland. He was buried in the field near his house, and on his marble slab there is this inscription, which is still perfectly legible:

SACRED
TO Y^e MEMORY OF
THE HON^{ble} JOSEPH BRIDGER
ESQ. COUNCEL^r OF. STATE. IN VIRGINIA
TO KING CHARLES Y^e 2.^d
DYING APRIL Y^e 15: A: D: 1689⁸⁶ ^{TV}
AGED 58 YEARES MOURNFULLY LEFT
His WIFE 3 SONS & 4 DAUGHTERS

Does Nature silent mourn & can. dumb. stone
Make his true worth to future Ages knowne
Excels exprefsi^on Marble fure will keep
His Mem'ry best y^t ever. on. his grave fhall weep
Here lies y^e late great minifter. of State
That Royal virtues had & Royal fate
To Charles his Counsels did. fuch. hon^{rs} bring
His own exprefs fetched him t^r attend y^e king
His Soul y^t ev^r did wth vigour move
Nimble took wing. soared like it felfe above
For y^e bright stars ner'e layfly. decline
But in an infant shoot y.^t ceafe to shine

His wife, Hester, was living as late as 1698, and as Madame Bridger witnessed the will of Colonel John Lear of Nansemond. His son, William, died in 1704. His son, Joseph, died in 1712. His son, Samuel, died in 1713.^m

^m I am indebted to W. G. Stanard, Esq., for the following information relative to the Bridgers:

Colonel Samuel Bridger, Justice of the Peace in 1691; William Bridger, Burgess, 1718; Joseph Bridger, Sheriff of Isle of Wight, 1732; James and Joseph Bridger, Burgesses, 1758, 1761; James Bridger, Burgess, 1765; James Bridger, Justice Isle of Wight, 1769; Joseph Bridger, Burgess, 1772; Joseph Bridger, Burgess, 1773-'4—vacated seat in 1774 to accept the office of sheriff.

His daughters were Martha Godwin, Mary, Elizabeth and Hester; and Elizabeth died in 1717.

I am particular, in giving, with some minuteness, the history of General Bridger, because the tradition of the building of the Old Brick Church is immediately associated with him and his father, and is handed down directly through many of their descendants and associates, who have always been of the very highest social and intellectual prominence in the Church and in State, in peace and in war. No tradition could possibly descend through them, which was not founded on an absolute fact.

The names of many of these descendants and associates, whose families still reside in the county of Isle of Wight, appear upon an old Vestry book of the Church now in the clerk's office of this county, which, commencing in 1723—only six years after the death of Elizabeth Bridger—was, until 1733, the Vestry book of the Bay Church alone, and afterwards, of it, and of the Old Brick Church, until its final entry in 1777. In the first entry in this book relative to the church it is then and there called "The Old Brick Church." It was hoary with age then; even then its white hair floated in the breeze. Treating this Vestry book, for manifest reasons, as an entirety, it shows that William Bridger, a grandson of General Bridger, was a vestryman from 1724 to 1730; that Major Joseph Bridger, another grandson, was a vestryman from 1735 to 1747; that Joseph Bridger, a great grandson, was a vestryman from 1747 to 1749; that Colonel Joseph Bridger, another great grandson, was a vestryman from 1757 to 1769; and that James Bridger, a grandson or great grandson, was a vestryman from 1766 to 1777.

This Colonel Joseph Bridger, the next most important personage in the tradition, was the associate and friend of Arthur Smith and William Hodsden, who were co-vestrymen of the old church, and co-trustees of the town of Smithfield in 1752.

It is a matter of absolute impossibility for any one to read the Acts of February, 1752, docking the entail of the Arthur Smith lands, and the Act of 1754, docking the entail of the Joseph Bridger lands, without instantly perceiving, that whoever drew those acts, were perfectly familiar with the entire history of both families.

Colonel Joseph Bridger died intestate in 1769, and left surviving him his widow Mary, and his daughters, Judith and Catherine.

Mary and her father, Thomas Pierce, on the 4th of January, 1770, qualified as the personal representatives upon his estate, and Robert Tynes and William Davis were the appraisers of that estate.

Mary, the widow, on the 17th of June, 1773, married Josiah Parker, who was a member of all of the Conventions of the State in 1775, afterwards a distinguished colonel in the Revolutionary war, and lived till 1810; and their daughter, Ann Pierce Parker, in 1802, married Captain William Cowper, United States Navy, of Nansemond, the gallant commander of the *Baltimore*, and the son, I think, of that Captain John Cowper of the same county, who nailing his flag to the masts of the brig *Dolphin*, sailed out of the waters of the Nansemond river into those of the Chesapeake, with a vow that he would attack the first enemy that he met, regardless of her size and armament, and never surrender, and went down at sea in a death grapple with two of the enemy, in full sight of Fortress Monroe, in that heroic manner so graphically portrayed in William Wirt Henry's splendid memoir of his glorious grandsire, Patrick Henry (Vol. 1, p. 480).

Mrs. Cowper died in March, 1849. She was a woman of extraordinary endowments and of superior cultivation, and had enjoyed, when her father was a member of Congress from 1789 to 1801, all the advantages that the best schools in Philadelphia could give. Dr. John R. Purdie, one of our oldest citizens, and always one of its most intelligent and distinguished, called by the late Rev. Philip Slaughter "the venerable Dr. Purdie, the most antique pillar of the parish," now in the eighty-third year of his age, knew her well, was her family physician, said of her: "Her intelligence possessed a State if not a national reputation." She was proud of her family, and thoroughly conversant with all of its history. I have in my possession her copy of the inscription on the tombstone of General Bridger. It is endorsed "Inscription on the tomb of the Honorable Joseph Bridger, Paymaster-General to the British troops in America

* *Suffolk Sun*, 1872.

during Bacon's rebellion, in the reign of Charles the Second of England. General Bridger was the son and heir of the Joseph Bridger, who superintended the building of St. Luke's Church, in Newport Parish, Isle of Wight county."

Mr. N. P. Young, now in the seventy-fifth year of his age, who, since 1841, has been the clerk of the courts of this county, says of her: "She was a lady of great intelligence and varied information, I was always delighted with her conversations. She frequently spoke of the Old Church, and of its ancient date, which she always fixed as in 1632."

Her copy of the inscription was made after 1827, for the Old Brick Church was never called St. Luke's until it was so called by the Rev. William H. G. Jones, its first rector after the Revolutionary war, in his report of that year to the Council of his Church; and her copy, therefore, has all the force and sanction that could possibly be given to it by family pride, by personal investigation, not only in the bloom but in the full maturity of her splendid powers. And the full weight of this sanction cannot be appreciated without the knowledge that Colonel Parker, by virtue of his marriage with the widow Bridger, became the custodian of a large quantity of very valuable papers that related to the family, and to the Old Church, the majority of which were seized and destroyed by Tarleton's men in 1781, when they endeavored to capture Colonel Parker at his home, and the balance were lost in the war of 1812. Mrs. Cowper was perfectly familiar with these papers, cherished them as the jewels of her household, and verbally, and in writing, transmitted the substance of them to posterity.

Judith Bridger, her half-sister, who had the same pride and the same facilities for knowing the contents of these papers, married Richard Baker; and Catherine, her sister, married Blake Baker—the sons of Benjamin Baker of Nansemond.

Richard Baker was the father of the late Richard H. Baker, who was born in 1788, and died in 1871, in the eighty-third year of his age. He was from 1834 (with the slight interruption occasioned by the late war) until his death, a period of thirty-seven years, the very distinguished judge of this the second judicial circuit. He, too, was proud of his descent, and had every opportunity, in the eighty-three years of constant association

with his kindred and people of this section, to apply his judicial mind to the traditions of his family, and of the church, in which he had an ancestral right to be interested. His mother, Judith Bridger Baker, survived until 1840 or 1841, and he had every opportunity of learning from her all that she knew of these matters.

The present Richard H. Baker, the son of the late judge, took especial pains to learn from his father and mother all that they had learned from his grandmother relative to the Bridgers, and the traditions of the Old Church, and committed to writing, during their lives, notes of the conversations he had with them, which notes (now before me) say, "My grandmother Baker was Judith Bridger of Macclesfield in the Isle of Wight county, great-granddaughter of the Sir Joseph Bridger who built St. Luke's Church in 1632." This statement, then, has all of the endorsement which it is possible to derive from the great names of Judge Richard H. Baker, and of his mother, Judith Bridger Baker.

In the will of the Elizabeth Bridger, who died in 1717, mention is made of her daughter Patience Milner, and of her granddaughters Elizabeth and Martha Norsworthy.

* The third George Norsworthy,²⁴ who died in 1724—the year after the commencement of the old Vestry book alluded to—married Elizabeth Bridger, the daughter of the Elizabeth Bridger just above spoken of.

Joseph Norsworthy, a descendent of this George, was born in 1771, and died in March, 1859.

Mr. Joseph C. Norsworthy, a grandson of this Joseph, who Dr. Purdie says, "was remarkable for his integrity, his memory and his intelligence," writes me that "he told me many times that the Old Brick Church was built in 1632; that in 1666 a Miss Norsworthy was buried in the aisle of the church, close to the chancel. He showed me the spot, and mentioned £5 as the burial fee. He also gave me a history of the re-shingling of the church as he received it from his father and grandfather; and he stated that there never was a doubt in the minds of any of them that the Old Church was built in 1632."

²⁴ Letters of J. C. Norsworthy and family tree.

The history of this re-shingling, as received by Mr. Joseph Norsworthy from his father and grandfather, and imparted by him to his son, Nathaniel, to his grandson, Joseph C., to his friend, Dr. Purdie, and others, was that the Old Church was not re-shingled from 1632 to 1737. And the old Vestry book, to which allusion has been made, which it is reasonable to suppose Mr. Norsworthy never saw (for the vestry was dissolved in 1777, and the courthouse moved to its present location in 1800), and if he did, never read, contains an important entry bearing directly on this point, and strongly confirmatory of it. ✓

It says that at a vestry meeting held on the 11th day of October, 1737, it was ordered "That Peter Woodward do the shingling of the church with good cypress shingles, of good substance, and well nailed, for 700 pounds of tobacco; 300 pounds being now levied; to be finished at or before the next parish levy, and the church wardens to take bond and security for the payment of the same."

The credit of the discovery of this entry is entirely due to the indefatigable research of Dr. Purdie, who, in an article in the *Southern Churchman* in 1882, commenting on this entry, says: "as the best cypress shingles are known to resist the elements more than one hundred years, the date of the building of the Old Brick Church, as derived from tradition, must receive support from this record." And Bishop Meade, in the second volume of his *Old Churches and Families*, p. 119, alluding to Christ Church, Lancaster county, Virginia, says: "the offer was cheerfully accepted, and the present house was completed about the time of Mr. Carter's death—that is, about the year 1732—and exhibits to this day (1838) one of the most striking monuments of the fidelity of ancient architecture to be seen in our land. Very few, if any, repairs have been put upon it; the original roof and shingles now cover the house, and have preserved in a state of perfection the beautiful arched ceilings, except in two places, which have within a few years, been a little discolored by rain, which found its way through the gutters where the shingles have decayed." When, in a few years afterwards the church was repaired, "the shingles, except in the decayed gutters, were so good that they were sold to the neighbors around, and will probably now last longer than many new ones just gotten from the woods."

In confirmation of these observations, it may be added that the Old Brick Church was not again re-shingled until 1821,²⁸ when a vestry—the first that was organized after the war—had it done, and made some material alterations in the interior arrangements of the church.

During all that period of profound silence and absolute disuse, from 1777 to 1821, save very rare and occasional services, the grand Old Church was left the prey to all the elements and to every despoiler who chose to raise his sacrilegious hands against it.

In 1642,²⁹ only ten years after the church was built, Mr. Falkner had charge of all the churches in the county of Isle of Wight. In that year the county was divided into two parishes, the Upper and the Lower; and the Old Brick Church was in the Lower Parish.

In 1680,³⁰ William Hodsden was the minister of the church in the Lower Parish, and also of the church in Chuckatuck Parish.

In 1746, William Hodsden, a descendant of this William, was a vestryman of this Old Church, and so continued until 1752. He was an intimate friend of Colonel Joseph Bridger; and was with him, a co-trustee of the town of Smithfield. He married Sarah Bridger, and died in 1797. He was the father of the Joseph Bridger Hodsden, who was born in 1776, and died in 1815; and he was the father of the Joseph Bridger Hodsden, who was born in 1811, and died in 1877; and he was the father of the Joseph Bridger Hodsden, who gave me these dates. Like the Norsworthys, they were the neighbors of the Bridgers, intermarried with them, resided in the same neighborhood, and have received and transmitted from father to son the same tradition of the construction of the Old Church.

Arthur Smith was a vestryman of the Old Church from 1736 to 1740; and Thomas Smith, his nephew and heir-at-law, was a vestryman from 1745 to 1751.

They were the descendants of the Arthur Smith, who with

²⁸ Joseph Norsworthy and Dr. John Robinson Purdie.

²⁹ Henning, Vol. I, p. 279.

³⁰ Senate Document, 1874.

George Hardy, represented the county in the General Assembly of 1644.¹⁰ He claimed descent from the Sir Thomas Smith,¹¹ who was so long the treasurer of the Virginia Company of London.

The first Arthur Smith died in 1645,¹² the friend of the first Joseph Bridger. He left a son, Colonel Arthur Smith, who died in 1696, the friend of General, the second Joseph Bridger, and was, together with Lieutenant-Colonel Pitt and Thomas Pitt, the adviser by his will of his widow, and like them, the recipient of a legacy for a memorial ring.

The second Colonel Arthur Smith, who died in 1696, left a son (Arthur) who died in 1755, and was the guardian of Colonel Joseph Bridger, under the will of his father.

The third Arthur Smith, who died in 1755, left the nephew Thomas, spoken of above, who was the father of the fourth Arthur, the Colonel Arthur Smith, who was a member of the General Assembly of Virginia in 1819, a member of the Council of State in 1809 and 1816,¹³ and a member of Congress from 1821 to 1825. He died in 1854, and the date of the construction of the Old Church was received by him from ancestors, who were the contemporaries of all of the Bridgers, and he transmitted the tradition as he received it.

Richard Hardy, the vestryman of the church from 1769 to 1777, was a descendant of the George Hardy of 1644, and was the father of George, William, and Samuel, and of Nancy, Hannah and Sarah.

Sam Hardy, as he was, and still is, familiarly called, was, perhaps, the most brilliant man that the county of Isle of Wight ever produced, and as everything but his name has been allowed to fade into oblivion, I will crave your indulgence for putting on record something more than the mere mention of his name. He was at William and Mary in 1776,¹⁴ during the presidency of the

¹⁰ Hening, Vol. I, p. 283.

¹¹ Miss Eliza Cocke's Genealogical Tree.

¹² Hening, Vol. VI, p. 308.

¹³ Furnished by R. A. Brock.

¹⁴ Catalogues, pp. 97, 80, 50; Vestry Book, p. 117.

Rev. John Camm, who was the rector of the Old Brick Church in 1745. He was, with Spencer Roane and John Page and John Marshall and Bushrod Washington, among the original members of the Phi Beta Kappa Society of that College. Hugh Blair Grigsby²¹ speaks of him as "the amiable and lamented Hardy," "one of the most popular and beloved of our early statesmen," "brilliant, profound, and suddenly snatched away," and Lyon G. Tyler²² calls him "the eloquent Hardy, whose early death extinguished the most brilliant expectations." He entered the House of Delegates about the close of the war, and remained an active member until he was sent to Congress in 1783. He died in Philadelphia whilst a member of Congress, on Monday, the 17th of October, 1785. His death was announced in Congress the same day, which resolved "that the members as a body would attend the funeral the following day with crepe around the left arm, and will continue in mourning for one month." Mr. Grayson, Mr. Read, and Mr. Kean were appointed a committee to superintend the funeral, and they were ordered "to invite the Governor of the State, the Ministers of Foreign Powers, the Mayor of the city, and other persons of distinction to attend the funeral."²³ The funeral expenses were £114 9s., and they were paid by William Grayson, who brought the matter to the attention of the State. On the 5th of December, 1785, Judge Tyler²⁴ addressed a tender and loving letter to Patrick Henry, the Governor, in which he said "his father has been much injured by the war; his family is large, and such a sum as £150 would distress him greatly, as I know he would most certainly encounter any difficulty rather than not pay it;" and it was paid by the State."

²¹ *History of the Virginia Convention*, Vol. II (Va. Hist. Colls. X), 1788, pp. 137, 226, and copy of Journal of 1785, furnished me by Senator John W. Daniel.

²² *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, Vol. I, p. 191.

²³ *Virginia Convention of 1788*, Vol. II, pp. 137, 226.

²⁴ *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, Vol. I, p. 191.

²⁵ On page 342, of the third volume of W. W. Henry's *Life of P. Henry*, is the letter of P. Henry, of December 12, 1875, to "The Speaker of the House of Delegates, urging the Legislature to pay the funeral expenses of the late Hon'ble Mr. Hardy, because of the merits of the deceased gentleman, and of the circumstances which make an application to his

His associates in Congress were Thomas Jefferson, William Grayson, Richard Henry Lee, Arthur Lee, and James Monroe. "Monroe and Hardy were about the same age, were in the Assembly together, were on terms of strictest intimacy, and boarded with Mrs. Ege in Richmond. When Monroe made his Southern tour, as President, he called to see his old landlady, who presently appeared, and though thirty-odd years had passed since the death of Hardy, as she threw her arms about the neck of Monroe, she sobbed for "Poor Hardy." His remains rest in Philadelphia, where those of Henry Tazewell, James Innes, Stevens Thomson Mason, Isaac Read, and other gallant and patriotic Virginians still repose."

On hearing of his death, Judge Tyler²² wrote the following beautiful tribute to his memory:

Ah, why my soul indulge this pensive mood,
 Hardy is dead: the brave, the just the good.
 Careless of censure, in his youthful bier
 The muse shall drop a tributary tear.
 His patriot bosom glowed with warmth divine,
 And Oh! humanity! his heart was thine.
 No party interest led his heart astray:
 He chose a nobler, though a beaten way.
 Nor shall his virtues there remain unsung—
 Pride of the Senate, and their guide and tongue.
 That tongue, no more, can make even truth to please—
 Polite with art, and elegant with ease.
 Fain would the muse augment the plaintive strain;
 Tho' the most flattering panegyric vain,
 When the brief sentence, youthful Hardy's dead,
 Speaks more than poet ever thought or said!

surviving friends improper." These circumstances are mentioned in Judge Tyler's letter.

So the funeral expenses of the budding statesman were ultimately borne by the State as the last tribute it could pay to his worth and to his genius.

²² Letters and Times of the Tylers, Vol. I, p. 191.

The elegy of Hardy[■] on the death of Michael Young, on March 26, 1782, the sole known product of his pen,[■] shows that he possessed great poetic powers.

"The curtain's drawn—the awful scene is past—
My once respected friend has breathed his last.
Exhausted nature sinks into repose,
A long, long sleep his feeble eyelids close.
Terrific death with all its dire parade,
A conquest of his mortal part has made.
Cold are those hands that tuned the pleasing lyre,
That rais'd the hero's ardor, and the patriot's fire,
That made old age awhile forget its years,
And eased the restless mind from anxious cares;
That soothed, enraptured, or distressed the mind,
Brightened the genius, and the soul refined;
Harmonious numbers never more to sound.
Alas! he's gone; he moulders in the ground.
Pale is the cheek that wore the blooming youth,
Silent the tongue that spoke the voice of truth.
Dried are those tears that ne'er refused to flow
In tender sympathy for another's woe—
Breathless the breast that glowed with filial love
For earthly parents and his God above.
Nor need we end the patriot here:
He was the tender brother, and the friend sincere.
From virtuous precepts to virtuous arts inclined,
His thoughts exalted, and serene his mind.
But death tyrannic aimed the fatal dart—
It flew unerring, and it reached the heart.
He fell beneath the cruel tyrant's power,
Nipped in his bloom, like some fair vernal flower.

■ Furnished by John R. Purdie and N. P. Young.

■ Since the above was written the third volume of W. W. Henry's *Life of P. Henry* has been published, and on p. 268, I find a letter from Hardy, dated New York, January 17, 1785, to P. Henry, Governor, "enclosing a memorial of some citizens of Virginia praying to be indulged with a separate government," and on pp. 273-7, I find a joint letter from Samuel Hardy and James Monroe, dated February 13, 1785, relative to the location of the Federal Capitol.

But why lament? Why draw the far-fetched sigh?
 We all are mortal, and we all must die.
 His mortal part has felt the tyrant's sway;
 To happier climes his soul has winged its way.
 On seraph wings he took a rapid flight,
 And seraph-like now revels in delight.
 Why then dread death? Why fear to pass o'er
 The gulf that parts from that happy shore?
 Where death stalks not in horrible array,
 Enrobed in terrors that produce dismay,
 But through verdant fields the kindred spirits glide,
 And flowery landscapes charm on every side,
 Whilst youth immortal blooms on every cheek
 With endless joy, and happiness complete."

Mr. Monroe, during the Convention of 1829, pronounced Mr. Hardy the most brilliant man of his age that he ever knew."

The State of Virginia, in 1786, cherishing his memory, named the county of Hardy, now in West Virginia, after him, and Hardy's Bluff, and Hardy District, in the county of Isle of Wight, show how his name and family have impressed themselves on her heart and on her memory.

Archer Carroll married Agnes Hardy of this family, and their son, George Carroll, married Miss Wrenn. N. P. Young married Virginia Carroll.

The traditions of the Old Church are fondly cherished in all the branches of this family.

Robert Tynes, the vestryman from 1746-1777, served with every vestryman whom we have or shall mention, except William Bridger, and could, therefore, repeat to JOHN DAY what he learnt from Lawrence Baker. He was, as we have seen, the appraiser of the estate of Colonel Bridger. Henry Tynes, a descendant of his, died in Chuckatuck in 1874, and Robert Tynes, his son, died there in 1891. I knew both of them well, but I do not remember to ever to have conversed with either on this subject. But as they were intelligent gentlemen, and lived only five miles from the Church, it is impossible for them to have been ignorant of its history.

^a Dr. John R. Purdie, from his father, John H. Purdie.

Nicholas Parker was a vestryman from 1760 to 1777. He was born in 1722, and died in 1789. He married Ann Copeland, who was born in 1723, and died in 1786. She was the daughter of Joseph Copeland and Mary Woodley, the daughter of Andrew Woodley. Joseph Copeland was probably a descendant of the Rev. Patrick Copeland, who was chaplain on the *Royal James* in 1617, and when near the Cape of Good Hope collected from her officers and men £70 "for the good of Virginia." He also, on the 18th of April, 1622, preached before the Virginia Company, of London, and "urged the promotion of the noble plantation that" tended so highly to the advancement of the Gospel, and the honoring of our dread sovereign." He spent fully £1,000 sterling in Bermuda for a school for the training of Indian children, and died between 1649 and 1655. The frequency of the intercourse between Bermuda and Virginia suggests the migration of the family to this country.

Nicholas Parker and Ann Copeland were the parents of the Colonel Josiah Parker, who married the widow Bridger.

Thomas Woodley, the vestryman from 1728 to 1755, was the brother of Mary and the son of Andrew Woodley, who came to this country in 1691 with his wife, Mary, and his sons, Thomas and Henry, and had born unto him here John, who married Francis Wilson, and Mary, who married Joseph Copeland.

Thomas had a son John, who married Catherine Boykin, the widow of Major Francis Boykin, who was Catherine Bryant, of Northampton county, North Carolina. They had a son Andrew, who married Elizabeth Hill Harrison, and their daughter Francis was my mother.

Jordan Thomas, the vestryman from 1746 to 1755, was a descendant of the Richard Thomas whose will bears date in 1681. He was the county surveyor and laid off the town of Smithfield in 1752 for Arthur Smith. He lived to a green old age and died in 1807.

My mother knew Mrs. Cowper intimately, and like her possessed a masculine mind and a fondness for genealogy. They were archæologists of highest order. I knew Frederick P. P.

^a Neill, *Virginia Company*, p. 251, 253, 254, 372, 374; Neill, *Virginia Vetusta*, p. 134, 193, 194, 195; Brown's *Genesis*, 973.

Cowper, the son of Mrs. Cowper, intimately, and from him, and from my mother, I have heard, repeatedly, the history of the Old Church, and in all the branches of our family the tradition of its construction is confidently believed.

Lawrence Baker, the vestryman from 1724 to 1757 was the father of Richard Baker, who was a vestryman from 1760 to 1777, and clerk of the county from 1754 to 1770.

It is believed that Benjamin Baker, of Nansemond, is a descendant of the Isle of Wight branch of this family.

John Day is the ancestor of Colonel C. F. Day, of Smithfield, and his wife is a granddaughter of General John Scarsbrook Wills, who was a member of all of the conventions of 1755 and 1776, and prominent in the Revolutionary war.

The traditions of the Old Church are preserved in this family.

From the vestrymen of the Old Church, and from every person and family who has ever had any official or unofficial connection with it, has descended the same invariable tradition. And the pregnant fact must be considered, that it has never been contradicted. It would have been contradicted, if contradiction had been possible. As everyone knows, Nansemond county was the early and the congenial home of the non-conformist. Its boundary line is only five miles distant; and it would have been perfectly natural and inevitable for them to have furnished willing witnesses against the tradition, if any witnesses at all, could by any possibility, have been found. Then, besides, Benn's church, the most famous Methodist church in this section, has grown upon the ruins of the Old Church, and antagonistic as it was in its early days, it has never furnished a person to suggest a doubt of the correctness of the ancient tradition. On the contrary, all of its members, like the Norsworthys and the Hodsdens are zealous supporters of that tradition.

The tradition, then, is the tradition of friends and of foes; is universal; is coeval with the Church; has always been asserted, never denied, and must be accepted as true. And it has been accepted as true by Dr. Hawks, by Bishop Meade, by Philip Slaughter, by the whole county of Isle of Wight, and by every person who has given to this subject the consideration that its importance demands.

3d. *The Lately Existing Records.*

Francis Young was deputy clerk of the county of Isle of Wight from 1768 to 1787; and clerk from 1787 to 1794. He was succeeded by his son, James, from 1794 to 1800; by his son, Francis, from 1800 to 1801; and by his son, Nathaniel, from 1801 to 1841; and Nathaniel P. Young, the son of Nathaniel and grandson of Francis, has held the office from 1841 to the present time, with the slight interval of the days when Virginia was a military district.

In 1781, when the courthouse of the county was in the town of Smithfield (Nathaniel Burwell, the clerk, having left this section of the State), the custody of the records of the county was in the hands of Francis Young, his deputy clerk. He being in the regiment of General John Scarsbrook Wills, was absent from the county; but his faithful wife, learning that Tarleton intended to make a raid on Smithfield to destroy the records, took and buried them on what is now the farm of John F. Scott, near the mill-pond, in a trunk that is now in the clerk's office. They remained buried for a long while.

Dr. John R. Purdie, the brother-in-law of the late Nathaniel Young, in an article in the *Southern Churchman* of October 19th, 1882, alluding to these facts, writes: "I have heard him (Nathaniel Young) say that when a boy there was in the office an old record book containing vestry proceedings, in which he noticed entries relating to the Old Brick Church, and his recollection was clear that they were of the date of 1632. At the time these entries were discovered the book containing them was in an advanced stage of decay, caused by the dampness whilst they were buried, as I have stated, and soon yielded to the tooth of time. Mr. Young was remarkable for the strength of his memory and accuracy of statement."

Dr. Purdie has always been remarkable for his antiquarian research, for the love of his section and State, for the strength of his memory, and for the accuracy of his statements.

Mr. N. P. Young, the present clerk, now in the seventy-fifth year of his age, writes me: "He (my father) said that for many years after he went into the clerk's office there were two old books there relative to the Church and the proceedings of the vestry, and that the older of the two, being greatly damaged by having been

buried in 1781, was destroyed by worms. In this book was, as stated by him, the proceedings relative to the erection of the Old Church. When I entered the office in 1836, nothing was left of this old book but the back and small portions of the leaves, so eaten by the worms that it was perfectly illegible."

The existence, then, of this old book, and the substance of its entries, relative to the Old Church must, upon the testimony of these living witnesses, and of the one so lately deceased, be accepted as an unquestionable fact.

4th. *The Bricks and the Mortar of the Church.*

In June, 1887, the Rev. David Barr, rector of Christ Church, Smithfield, attended a convocation held at Old St. John's Church near Chuckatuck. On the Sunday of that convocation a very severe storm of wind and rain came up, which, with its thunder, shook all that neighborhood. On Monday, as he was returning home, when he came in sight of the Old Brick Church, he observed that the storm had so shaken that Old Church that its roof had fallen in, and that a large part of the eastern wall had fallen on that roof. With a sad heart he stopped and surveyed the distressing scene, but, plucking courage from disaster, he resolved, then and there, that the Old Church should be rebuilt, and that the most ancient building in all America of European construction should be preserved to the State and to the Church which had erected it.

Mr. Emmet W. Maynard, formerly a citizen of Surry, had recently moved into the immediate neighborhood, and Mr. Barr at once engaged him, as chief workman, to remove the fallen roof and the encumbering bricks. Mr. Maynard entered promptly upon the work, and after he had removed the debris of the roof, he then began upon that of the fallen wall and the scattered bricks. Whilst so engaged, he, one day, found in the southeast corner of the Church, where the wall had chiefly fallen, a curious brick, which upon examination seemed to have something cut into it, which, by accident or design, was filled with mortar. With a sharp-pointed stick he removed the mortar until first dimly, and then clearly, and then still more clearly, was seen the figures 1632. Mr. Maynard had so recently become a citizen of the county, that I doubt, if he knew the significance of that brick; but as it came from that portion of the eastern wall that

had fallen in the Church, was peculiar in its character and shape, and had some figures on it, which, probably, were made whilst the brick was soft and before it had been burnt, he saved it, and when Mr. Barr next came to the Church he showed it to him and informed him when and where and how he found it. Mr. Barr told him rapidly and excitedly something of the ancient history of the Church and of the importance of the brick, and then, they both, with the zeal of the antiquary, fired by the discovery of the buried city or lost treasure—the proof of his faith—began a search inside and outside of the Church to see what further they could find. Presently they came upon a piece of broken brick inside of the Church, and not far from the spot where the whole brick had been found, with a figure 1 upon it. Being still more excited by this discovery, they increased the energy of the search, and after some hours of scrutiny and toil, they found on the southeast side of the Church, on the outside of it and near the tower, another piece of brick with a figure 2 on it. On putting these two pieces of broken brick together they were delighted to see that they fitted perfectly. The brick had been broken in two. On one part was the figure 1, on the other part was the figure 2, and the middle figures was destroyed by the violent separation of the brick in its fall. These broken pieces that belonged to the middle of the brick were too small to be then found, for nearly the whole of the rubbish had been removed and thrown away. But here were the pieces of the second brick, in its make and shape exactly like the first, with the same figures upon either end. The conviction was then, and is now, absolute, on inspection, that the middle figures were 6 and 3, making 1632, like its companion brick. Both had been made by the same parties, at the same time, from the same clay, burnt in the same kiln, put in the same wall near the same place by the same workman, and both had been deeply and firmly concealed from all human sight and knowledge from 1632 to 1887, when they were, simultaneously, disclosed to the world by the voice of God speaking in the storm.

And thus the Church, by its very brick and mortar, confirms the ancient tradition of the people, the truth of the crumbled record, and of the Vestry book still extant, and they all join in one consistent and harmonious acclaim that—The Old Brick Church was Built in 1632.

The ministers of the Old Brick Church, besides Falkner and Hodgen, so far as known, were:

The Rev. Thomas Bailey, prior to and during 1724.

The Rev. Mr. Barlow, from March 30th, 1725, to October, 1726.

The Rev. John Gammill, from March 9th, 1729, to November 25th, 1743.

The Rev. John Camm, from March 4th, 1745, to a few months only.

The Rev. John Reid, from March 8th, 1746, to April, 1757.

The Rev. Mr. Milner, from February, 1766, to May 3d, 1770. He was a descendant of that Colonel Thomas Milner, who was a Justice of the Peace and Colonel in 1680, who was clerk to the Assembly in 1684, and its Speaker in 1691, and probably the son of that Milner who married Patience, the daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth Bridger.

The Rev. I. H. Burgess, for the years 1773-'74, '75, and '76.

The Rev. — Hubbard, died on the Glebe in 1802.

The Rev. Samuel Butler, occasionally, 1780.

The Rev. William G. H. Jones, from 1826 to 1832.

Bishop Richard C. Moore confirmed a class of four in 1820—viz: Colonel Brewer Godwin, Parker Wills, Mrs. Ann P. P. Cowper, and Margaret S. Purdie.

The last marriage in the Church was that of George W. Purdie and Evelina Belmont Smith, on April 26th, 1836.

LIST OF VESTRYMEN FROM 1724.

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Lawrence Baker, | vestryman from | 1724 to 1757. |
| William Bridger, | " " | 1724 to 1730. |
| Thomas Woodley, | " " | 1728 to 1755. |
| Major Joseph Bridger, | " " | 1735 to 1747. |
| Arthur Smith. | " " | 1736 to 1740. |
| Thomas Smith, | " " | 1745 to 1751. |
| Jordan Thomas, | " " | 1746 to 1755. |
| Robert Tynes, | " " | 1746 to 1777. |
| William Hodsden, | " " | 1746 to 1757. |

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Joseph Bridger, | vestryman from 1746 to 1749. |
| Colonel Joseph Bridger, | " " 1757 to 1769. |
| Nicholas Parker, | " " 1760 to 1777. |
| Richard Baker, | " " 1760 to 1777. |
| James Bridger, clerk in 1753, | " " 1766 to 1777. |
| Richard Hardy, | " " 1769 to 1777. |
| John Day, | " " 1777. |

There was no election of a vestry from 1756 to 1777. It was then on the petition of "sundry inhabitants" of the parish of Newport, in the county of Isle of Wight, dissolved."

The names of the other vestrymen appearing in the old Vestry-book are Samuel Davis, Mathew Jones, Thomas Walton, William Kinchin, William Crumpler, JAMES DAY, George Riddick, Mathew Wills, Reuben Proctor, Nathaniel Ridley, John Goodrich, George Williamson, James Ingles, John Porson, John Davis, John Simmons, William Wilkinson, Joseph Godwin, Henry Lightfoot, John Monroe, Thomas Parker, Hardy Council, Henry Pitt, Richard Wilkinson, Henry Applewhaite, Thomas Day, John Lawrence, Hugh Giles, Thomas and John Applewhaite, Thomas Tynes, John Eley, John Darden, Dolphin Drew, John Wills, William Salter, Robert Barry, Charles Tilghman, Robert Burwell, Miles Wills, and Edmund Godwin.

One grand historic landmark of the old church-yard has recently yielded to the scythe of time, but its exact spot and its memory ought for many reasons to be perpetuated.

A grand old oak stood by the side of the road right between what is now the burial lots of William Gale and Walter B. Jordan. Under that oak Tarleton and his officers rested when they made a dash for Colonel Josiah Parker in 1781. Under that oak Lorenzo Dow preached, Joseph Norsworthy and others were converted, and he and they there joined the Methodists, and laid the foundations of the now famous Benn's church. Under that oak elections were held, and under it Samuel Hardy, Josiah Parker, James Johnson, Arthur Smith, Joel Holleman, Archer

⁴⁸ See Journal of the Convention, June, 1776, p. 40; See Journal of the Convention, December, 1776, p. 80; See Henning, IX., chapter XX, p. 317.

Atkinson and Robert Whitfield—all members of Congress from this county—discussed the engrossing issues of their day.

Dr. Purdie, in an article in the *Southern Churchman* in November, 1882, speaking of that oak, says: "oaks of gigantic proportions and of great age stand near this venerable Christian temple. One of them, the oldest and perhaps the largest of the vegetable kingdom family in the county, if not in Eastern Virginia, was more than twenty years ago measured by myself in company with the Rev. Silas Totten, D.D., of the faculty of William and Mary College, and its circumference five feet from the ground was more than eighteen feet. Under its expansive boughs men now old gamboled in childhood and in youth. In its extensive shade the past and the present generations have lunched on protracted religious occasions. On its grassy carpet Virginia militia have formed ranks and performed simple and eccentric movements. And the loud harangues of legislative aspirants and political declaimers were oftentimes heard from its rugged roots. On the afternoon of a calm autumnal Sabbath in 1875, this vegetable giant, this patriarch of the forest, succumbed to nature's laws, and its mighty fall never to be revived, and not to be replaced in ages, it became a huge mass, if may I say, sacred timber and fire fuel."

Not only was this grand old oak loved for the reasons given, but because it, more, perhaps, than any of its fellows, was in the universal heart intimately associated with the tenderest sentiments. On its huge knees, purposely designed by nature, many sat, who, "Like Juno's swans, still went coupled and inseparable," and those knees were so diverged and distant that what was said in love's low tones on the one side of the faithful tree did not reach the engaged ear on the other. Grand old oak, how we miss you! Under that old oak,

"Whose boughs were mossed with age,
And high top, bald with antiquity,"

how often have we gathered and carved names, and kissed the bark, and hugged its huge circumference, believing it to be inspired with the touch and feeling of her who had just left it. Broader than that which stood sentinel in Sumner-chase, it was

enshrined in sweeter memories, for as that had only one Walter and one Olivia, this had its hundreds.

And this whole grove, abandoned by the service of the Church, revered and loved for its ancient memories and its multitudinous dead here buried, its dense, extensive and sacred shade, its solemn hush and silence was our forest of Eden, where our melancholy Jacques and passionate Orlandos, "Sighing every minute and groaning every hour," hung "odes on hawthornes and elegies on brambles," saying—

"O Rosalind, these trees shall be my books,
And in their barks my thoughts I'll character;
That every eye which in this forest looks
Shall see thy virtues witnessed everywhere."

And now, having completed the history of this grand old church so far as it is known to me—not even having ignored its sentimental associations, let me express the hope that it will soon be restored to its pristine condition, and once again unite in harmony and in love with all other churches in the evangelization of the world.

R. S. THOMAS.



A PARTIAL LIST OF MINISTERS WHO CAME FROM 1607 TO 1622.

Robert Hunt came in 1607, died at Jamestown, 1609.

Richard Bucke came in 1610, died at Jamestown, 1624.

——— Glover came prior to 1611.

——— Poole came prior to 1611.

William Wickham came prior to 1611, died at Henrico, 1638.

Alexander Whitaker came prior to 1611, died at Henrico, 1617.

William Mease or Mays came prior to 1611, died at Henrico after 1623.

William Macock came prior to 1616, died at Henrico after 1626.

Thomas Bargrave came prior to 1618, died at Isle of Wight, 1621.

Robert Paulet came prior to 1620.

David Sandis came prior to 1620.

William Bennett came prior to 1621, died at Isle of Wight, 1624.

Robert Bolton came prior to 1621, lived in Accomac and Jamestown.

Jonas Stockton came prior to 1621, lived in Elizabeth City and Henrico.

Thomas White came prior to 1621.

Haut Wyatt came prior to 1621, lived in Jamestown.

——— Hopkins came prior to 1622.

——— Pemberton came prior to 1622.

Greville Pooley came prior to 1622.

William Cotton came about 1622.

The letter of the London Company to the Governor and Council of Virginia, dated September 11, 1621, speaking of books for the ministers, says: "As for books we doubt not you will be able to supply them out of the libraries of so many that have died."

R. S. T.