

**Extracts from Records of Vestry Meetings of Falls Church, Truro Parish, Fairfax County,
Virginia 1733 to 1784**

The Old Colonial Church.

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Court records establish the fact that there was a church on the present site of the Falls Church in 1746. On March 20th of that year John Trammell, in consideration of the sum of fifty shillings sterling, transferred, by deed of bargain and sale, to the Vestry of Truro Parish in Fairfax County a certain parcel of land containing two acres "where the Upper Church now is." John Trammell owned at that time the greater part of the land upon which the town of Falls Church is now situated. In June, 1745, he leased to Walter English his plantation of 244 acres "near the head of the north of Holmes' Run extending to Four Mile Run, excepting two acres for the use of the church." [Pg 34]

The vestry book of Truro Parish commences about 1732. This book is in the possession of Mr. H. H. Dodge, of Mt. Vernon, a vestryman of old Pohick Church. Through the courtesy of Mr. Dodge, the Editor was permitted to make a careful examination of its pages, and to copy from the minutes of the vestry meetings therein such entries as appeared to throw any light upon the early history of the Falls Church.

Some apparently trivial entries have been copied, such as the payment of a sexton's salary for a number of successive years, but the name of the sexton in such cases has an important bearing upon the subject, when it is not improbable that the churches indicated as the "Upper Church," the "New Church," etc., may be the church later designated as "The Falls Church."

June 10, 1733:

Capt. Francis Aubrey, towards building the chapel above Goose Creek, 2,500 pounds of tobacco.

October 13, 1734:

To Mr. Robt. Blackburn, for his plans for building church, 16,750 pounds of tobacco.

To John Trammell, for grubbing a place for the church, 320 pounds of tobacco.

To Jos. Johnson, to read at the chapels, 1,300 pounds of tobacco.

November 18, 1735:

Jos. Johnson, Clk. of the New Church, 1,000 pounds of tobacco.

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May 21, 1745:

At a vestry held for Truro Parish, May 21, 1745, present Rev. Mr. Cha. Green, minister, and church wardens and vestrymen.

Ordered, that a church be built at or near the spring nigh Mr. Hutchinson's on the mountain road, of the following dimensions: 40 feet long, 32 feet wide and 13 feet pitch. To be weather boarded with $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch feather-edge plank, quartered and beaded; shingled with 18-inch pine shingles; sawed frame, and frame work ceiled with quartered plank, beaded, and floored with $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch plank, with proper cornice under the eaves, with pulpit, desk, communion table, etc. With doors, windows & seats, after the manner of the Upper Church, and all the proper facings and mouldings; and window shutters, to be shingled with single tiers, weather boarded with eights, and filled with tens or brads; locks and hinges that are necessary for the same.

Ordered, That the Clerk of the Vestry prepare deeds for Mr. Andrew Hutchinson conveying two acres of land to this Parish for house of the Church to be built thereon, and church yard.

Hugh Thomas undertakes to complete the aforesaid church and to enclose it by the last day of October, next, and to finish and complete it by the last day of October, then next following, for 24,500 pounds of tobacco, to be paid him at two payments, and the clerk of the vestry is ordered to prepare articles of agreement and bond for the performance of the same.

Cha. Green, }

John West, }

Ch. Wardens.

Teste: { Wm. Henry Terrett,

{ Clk. Vestry.

October 12, 1747:

Philip Howell, sexton, Pohick, 400 pounds of tobacco.

Mary Bennitt, sexton, Upper Church, 400 pounds of tobacco.

Mary McDowell, sexton, Goose Creek, 400 pounds of tobacco.

Wm. Grove, sexton, New Church, 172 pounds of tobacco.

Mr. W. W. Kinsley Mr. W. W. Kinsley

October 10, 1748:

Bennitt, clk., 1,200 pounds of tobacco. Wm. Chautneys, clk. at the New Church, 1,200 pounds of tobacco.

Mary Bennitt, sexton at Upper Church, 400 pounds of tobacco.

Alexander, sexton at Goose Creek, 400 pounds of tobacco.

Wm. Grove, sexton at New Church, 400 pounds of tobacco.

October 10, 1749:

Truro Parish divided.—Upper Parish called Cameron.

John Wiber Danty, clk. Upper Church, 1,000 pounds of tobacco.

Mary Bennitt, sexton, Upper Church, 460 pounds of tobacco.

Mr. H. A. Fellows Mr. H. A. Fellows

February 19, 1749-50:

Present: Rev. Mr. Cha. Green, Minister, Mr. Hugh West, Mr. Geo. Mason, Mr. Jas. Hamilton, Mr. Cha. Broadwater, Mr. Danl. McCarty, Wm. Payne, Abra. Barnes, Thos. Wren, Robt. Boggess, and John Turley;

Ordered: That an addition be built to the Upper Church according to the plan produced to the Vestry; and Cha. Broadwater, gent., undertakes to do the same and finish and complete it by the laying of the next parish levy, for the sum of 12,000 pounds of tobacco, which is then to be levied for him.

October 9, 1749:

John Wiber Danty, clk. at Upper Church, 1,000 pounds of tobacco.

Mary Bennitt, sexton, ditto, 460 pounds of tobacco.

Jacob Remy, for paling in the New Church, making horse blocks and tarring church, etc., our proportionable part, 1,950 pounds of tobacco.

Ordered: That the Vestry do meet the third Monday in February next, at the Glebe house, in order to see what repairs are wanted to it and the New Church, and the Church Wardens are ordered to give notice to workmen to appear there to undertake the work and also to repair the Pohick Church and the Vestry House.

October 8, 1750:

John Wiber Danty, clk. Upper Church, 1,000 pounds of tobacco.

Mary Bennitt, sexton Upper Church, 460 pounds of tobacco.

Residence of Mr. G. A. L. Merrifield Residence of Mr. G. A. L. Merrifield

October 14, 1751:

John Wiber Danty, clk. Upper Church for 7 months attendance, 581 pounds of tobacco.

Mary Bennitt, sexton, Upper Church, 560 pounds of tobacco.

October 2, 1752:

John Wiber Danty, clk. Upper Church, 1,000 pounds of tobacco.

Mary Bennitt, sexton, Upper Church, 560 pounds of tobacco.

Ordered: That the clerk of the Upper Church read prayers every intervening Sunday, and that he be allowed 1,200 pounds of tobacco per annum for his salary.

Mr. Cha. Broadwater and Mr. Abraham Barnes are appointed Church Wardens for this parish for the ensuing year.

October 22, 1753:

Mary Bennitt, sexton at the Upper Church, 560 pounds of tobacco.

John Wiber Danty, clerk at the Upper Church, 1,100 pounds of tobacco.

November 22, 1754:

Wm. Donaldson, Clk. Upper Church, 1,000 pounds of tobacco.

Mary Bennitt, sexton at the Upper Church, 560 pounds of tobacco.

September 17, 1755:

Ordered: That the several tracts of land that have their beginnings[Pg 53] between Hunting Creek and the Potomac, the road that leads from Aubrey's Ferry to the Upper Church, and the road that leads from Cameron to the Upper Church, be processioned sometime in the month of December, next, and that John Dalton, Thos. Harrison, John Hunter and Nathan'l Smith attend to see the same performed, and that they take an account of their proceedings therein and return the same to the next Vestry after the same shall be performed.

Cottage of Mr. G. A. L. Merrifield Cottage of Mr. G. A. L. Merrifield

November 27, 1755:

Wm. Donaldson, Clk. at Upper Church, 1,000 pounds of tobacco. James Palmer, sexton at Falls Church, 560 pounds of tobacco.

November 29, 1756:

Mr. Lumley, Clk. at Upper Church, 1,000 pounds of tobacco. James Palmer, sexton, Upper Church, 560 pounds of tobacco.

November 28, 1757:

Jas. Palmer, sexton at Falls Church, 560 pounds of tobacco.

November 27, 1758:

Jas. Palmer, sexton at Falls Church, 560 pounds of tobacco.

November 12, 1759:

Thos. Lewis, Clk. at Falls Church, 1,050 pounds of tobacco. Gerard Trammell, sexton, at Falls Church, 560 pounds of tobacco.

Mr. Frank M. Thompson Mr. Frank M. Thompson

October 25, 1762:

Ordered that Geo. Washington, Esq., be chosen and appointed one of the Vestrymen of this parish in the room of Wm. Peake, gent., deceased.

Ordered that the sexton at Falls Church be allowed 560 pounds of tobacco.

October 3, 1763:

At a Vestry held for Truro Parish, October 3, 1763, present: Rev. Mr. Green, minister; Wm. Payne, jun'r., and Henry Gunnell, Ch. Wardens; Geo. Wm. Fairfax, Thos. Wren, Wm. Payne, Abra. Barnes, Cha. Broadwater, John West, and Geo. Mason, Vestrymen.

Mr. Thomas Hillier Mr. Thomas Hillier

Truro Parish.

Dr., Lbs. Tobacco

To Revd. Mr. Green, minister 17,280

Sexton at Pohick Church (Eliz Parce)	560
Sexton at Falls Church (Gerard Trammell)	560
Sexton at Alexandria (John Rhoads)	500
John Barry, Clk. 3,000	
John West, Junr. Clk. Vestry	500
John West, Junr. Amt. for providing-Elem'ts etc.	1,200
Matthew Bradley, for support of his son	1,000
Jos. Wilson, towards support of himself and wife	500
Robt. Mills, towards his support	630
Elizabeth Palmer, for support of her idiot son, (to be laid up for her use by Church Wrdns.)	1,000
John Posey, for 11 parish levies overchd. last year	242
Edwd. Bates, for his levies the two last years, (Tho' a Patroller)	48
Gerard Trammell, constable, one levy overchd. last year	22
Philip Trammell, patroller, one levy overchd. last year	22
Edwd. Bates, for his levies the two last years, (Tho' a Patroller)	48
Gerard Trammell, constable, one levy overchd. last year	22
Philip Trammell, patroller, one levy overchd. last year	22
Saml. Russell, towards his support until October, 1764	1,000
Eliza. Young, for boarding Charlotte Lindsay 2 mo.	1 £. 10 s.
Saml. Conner, for assistance to Saml. Russell	500
Hugh West, Deputy Atty. on acct.	913
Grafton Kirk, on acct.	600
Peter Waggner, Clk. Cur. on acct.	837

Peter Waggner, Clk. Cur. on acct. 837 [Pg 56]

Tobacco levied towards building Falls Church, to be sold for cash by the Church Wardens for the best price they can get 30,000

Dr. Jas. Lawrie for Mason and Jane Evans 4 £ 7 s 6 d.

Dr. Jas. Lawrie for Eleanor Swallow 700 5 £ 7 s 6 d.

Dr. Jas. Lawrie for Sparrow 0 £ 7 s 5 d.

John Muir, on acct 3 £ 17s 4½d.

61,614 15 9 10½

To Acct. of Collection of 61,614 lbs. tobac. 3,696

Total 65,310

To the fraction in collectors' hands 1,549

To the fraction in collectors' hands 66,859

Truro Parish Cr. by 1807 tithables at 37 lbs. tobac. on acct. poll 66,859

Mr. J. S. Riley Mr. J. S. Riley

Ordered: That the Clerk of the Vestry proportion the parish levy when he shall receive the list of tithables.

Ordered: That Geo. Wm. Fairfax, & Geo. Washington, Esqs., be appointed Church Wardens for the ensuing year.

Ordered: That the Vestry meet at Alexandria on the third Tuesday[Pg 57] in March, next, in order to agree with workmen to undertake the building a church at or near the old Falls Church, and that the Church Wardens advertise the same in the Virginia and Maryland Gazettes, to be continued six weeks, and that it will be then expected of each workman to produce a plan and

estimate of the expense.

Cha. Green,}

G. W. Fairfax.}C. W.

Truly Recorded:

Teste—John West, junr.,

Cl. Vestry.

Mr. O. H. Billingsley Mr. O. H. Billingsley

March 28, 1763:

At a Vestry of Truro Parish held at the Falls Church March 28, 1763; present: Henry Gunnell, Wm. Payne, jr., Ch. Wardens; John West, Wm. Payne, Chas. Broadwater, Thos. Wren, Abra. Barnes, Dan'l McCarty, Robt. Boggess, and Geo. Washington; who being there met to examine into the state of the said church, greatly in decay and want of repair, and likewise whether the same shall be repaired or a new one built, and whether at the same place or removed to a more convenient one, and likewise to view the addition built by Mr. Chas. Broadwater, and what he hath been deficient in the work.

Resolved: It is the opinion of this Vestry that the Old Church is[Pg 58] rotten and unfit for repair, but that a new church be built at the same place.

Mr. A. O. Von Herbulis Mr. A. O. Von Herbulis

Resolved: That Jas. Wren and Owen Williams do view the work to be done by Mr. Broadwater on the new addition, that is, the price of glazing three windows, plaistering the said house, together with the materials necessary for the same, and make report to the next Vestry.

Ordered: That the Clerk of the Vestry advertise in the Virginia and Maryland Gazettes for workmen to meet at the church on the 29th day of August, next, if fair, if not the next fair day, to undertake the building of a brick church to contain 1,600 feet on the floor, with a suitable gallery & bring plan of the church and price, according to the same.

Ordered: That the Church Wardens employ workmen to repair the windows of the north side & the east end of the old church & repair the shutters of the new addition.

Henry Gunnell,

Wm. Payne.

(N. B.) This Vestry was held when I was sick and could not attend—above orders were sent as

above, signed by Messrs. Gunnell and Payne, and I thought fit to record the same, tho in point of time it should have been before the last one.

John West, junr.

Mr. Andrew M. Smith Mr. Andrew M. Smith

April 26, 1765:

Vestry records of this date state that Truro Parish had been divided from Col. Washington's mill to John Monroe's and thence to Difficult Run, the upper parish called Fairfax.

February 3, 1766:

In the record of a Vestry meeting held for Truro Parish at Wm. Gardner's the 3rd and 4th of February, 1766, is the following: It appearing from an order of the Vestry bearing date the 25th day of March, 1763, that there was a deficiency in the work which ought to have been done on the Falls Church, by Mr. Chas. Broadwater, and that persons were appointed to view the same and report and no report appearing upon the records of this parish, it is ordered that the Church Wardens do inquire into the same and report accordingly. [Geo. Washington was present at this meeting. Ed.]

Major Jos. T. Hiatt Major Jos. T. Hiatt

July 10, 1766:

At a Vestry held for Truro Parish July 10, 1766, Mr. Edward Payne, one of the Church Wardens, having reported to this Vestry that he had applied to the persons formally appointed to view the work which ought to have been done on the Falls Church by Mr. Chas. Broadwater, and that they denied having any order to view the same and refused to concern themselves;[Pg 60]

Ordered: That Thos. Price do view the work done to the Falls Church and report what deficiency appears in the same, and that Mr. Edward Payne do apply to the Vestry of Fairfax Parish to appoint a workman to view the same and that the said do report as aforesaid, and that Mr. Edward Payne attend the viewing on behalf of this parish and to apply to the said Vestry to appoint one of their members to attend the same on behalf of their parish.

February 23, 1767:

At a Vestry held for Truro Parish at the Glebe the 23rd day of February, 1767, at which Geo. Washington was present, it was ordered: A report being made to this Vestry by Jas. Wren and Thos. Price, two workmen empowered by a formal order of this Vestry to view the work done to the Falls Church and to report what deficiency appeared in the same, etc., by which report there appears to be a deficiency of 9 £ 14 s. 6 p.

Ordered: That the Church Wardens of this parish apply to Maj. Chas. Broadwater, the undertaker of said work, for the said sum, and account with the Vestry of Fairfax Parish for their proportion of the same when it is received.

Ordered: That a Vestry House be built at the New Church of the dimensions and in manner following * * (Capt. Ed. Payne agreeing with the Vestry to build said house).

Mr. George Stambaugh Mr. George Stambaugh

September 9, 1768:

At a Vestry held for Truro Parish September 9, 1768, at which Geo. Washington was present, the following entries appear:

That the Vestry being convened at the New Church in order to view and examine the work, and having done so do find the same completed and finished according to the articles of agreement between Capt. Ed. Payne, the undertaker * * *

Ordered: That Col. Geo. Mason pay him the sum of 193 pounds out of the money in his hands belonging to the parish the same being the last payment due to the said Payne, for the said church. (This was probably known as Payne's Church; the church near the Fairfax C. H.)

November 28, 1768:

At a Vestry held for Truro Parish November 28, 1768, at which Geo. Washington was present, it was ordered: That Geo. Washington, Esq., pay to Alex. Henderson the sum of £. 8, being the balance of £ 9 14 s., 6 p., received from Maj. Chas. Broadwater for a deficiency on the Falls Church.

February 24, 1784:

At a Vestry held for Truro Parish at Colchester, the 22nd day of February, 1784, John Gibson, gent., is elected for a member of this Parish in the room of his Excellency General Washington, who has signified his resignation in a letter to Dan'l McCarty, esq.

Falls Church in the Civil War.

The Old Church from a war-time Photograph The Old Church from a war-time Photograph

In May, 1861, the Union troops moved into Virginia and occupied Arlington Heights and Alexandria. On June 1 an engagement at Fairfax Court House between a company of Union cavalry and Confederate troops resulted in the loss of six Union and twenty Confederate soldiers. The Union forces under General McDowell occupied the town of Fairfax about the middle of July, inaugurating the first Bull Run Campaign. The battle of Bull Run was fought July

21, 1861.

After the first battle of Bull Run, a systematic plan for the defense of the National Capital began to take shape. At that time the commanding heights four miles west of Alexandria and six miles from Washington were occupied by the Confederates, Falls Church being the headquarters of General Longstreet.

In October, 1861, the hills were again taken possession of by the Union troops. The system of works for the defense of Washington[Pg 63] on the south began with Fort Willard below Alexandria, and terminated with Fort Smith opposite Georgetown, comprising in all twenty-nine forts and eleven supporting batteries, besides Forts Ethan Allen and Marcy at the Virginia end of Chain Bridge, with their five batteries of field guns.

Mr. Charles A. Marshall Mr. Charles A. Marshall

Falls Church was the most advanced post of General McDowell's corps, when on August 3, 1861, a correspondent of Harper's Weekly writing from here to that paper described the old Church as it appeared at the beginning of the Civil war as follows:

"On this page we illustrate Fall's Church, Fairfax County, Virginia, from a sketch by our special artist with General McDowell's 'corps d'armee.' This is the most advanced post of our army in Fairfax County, and has been the scene of several picket skirmishes. Falls Church was built in 1709, and rebuilt, as an inscription on the wall informs us, by the late "Lord" Fairfax, whose son, the present "Lord" Fairfax, is supposed to be serving in the rebel army. The title of "Lord," we may observe, is still given to the representative of the family. The inscription on the old church reads as follows:

'Henry Fairfax, an accomplished gentlemen, an upright magistrate, a sincere Christian, died in command of the Fairfax Volunteers at Saltillo, Mexico, 1847. But for his munificence this church might still have been a ruin.'

Service was held in the old church two Sundays since, Rev. Dr. Mines, Chaplain of Second Maine Regiment, officiating, and most of the troops in the neighborhood being present."

Source: A Virginia Village by Charles A. Stewart