A History of St. Thomas Church, Bath, North Carolina

By

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Volumes 1 and 2

A HISTORY OF ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH, BATH, NORTH CAROLINA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A HISTORY OF ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
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VOLUME I

VOLUME II

Exhibits (continued)

N. Interior of St. Thomas in 1924
O. Chancel Area in 1924
P. Interior of St. Thomas in 1946
Q. St. Thomas Church in 1955
R. St. Thomas Church in 1977

When Englishmen first attempted settlement of American shores late in the sixteenth century, it was only natural that they bring with them the Anglican faith of their homeland. As early as 24 August 1587, the infant Virginia Dare was baptized according to Anglican rites on Roanoke Island.[1] But the first house of Anglican worship in America appears to have been the rude structure erected at the Jamestown settlement in Virginia, soon after the arrival of its first group of colonists in 1607. Many years afterward, in writing his Advertisements for the Unexperienced Planters of New England, Captain John Smith would recall the building and use of this "church":

> When we first went to Virginia . . . I well remember, wee did hang an awning (which is an old sail) to three or four trees to shadow us from the Sunne, our walles were rales of wood, our seats unhewed trees, till we cut plankes; 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 the way of adventure for new. This was our Church, till we built a homely thing like a barne, set upon cratchets, covered with rafts, sedge, and earth; so was also the walls; the best of our houses of the like curiosity, but the most part farre much worse workmanship, that could neither well defend wind or raine, yet we had daily Common Prayer morning and evening, every Sunday two sermons, and every three moneths the holy Communion, till our Minister died. But our Prayers daily, with an Homily on Sundais, we continued two or three years after, till more Preachers came.[2]

Thus it was that the Anglican Church or Church of England was planted on American soil, roughly seven decades after its creation during the English Reformation under Henry VIII, and some four years before publication of the King James version of the Bible under James I.

During the remainder of the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth century, Anglican churches were erected all along the Atlantic seaboard from New Hampshire to Georgia; and until the ties between America and England were permanently severed by revolution, these churches were united in their common acknowledgement of ecclesiastical authority in the mother

country, by their use of the Book of Common Prayer, and by well established traditions of worship and practice. These early churches also shared certain physical characteristics which set them apart from dissenting chapels and meeting houses, especially with regard to interior arrangement and furnishings. Moreover, in many of the American colonies, as in England, the Anglican Church was given special prominence by its recognition as the officially established or state church. Even after the disestablishment of the Anglican Church as a purely English institution, the Protestant Episcopal Church which succeeded it continued as one of the strongest cultural links between America and other English speaking peoples.[3]

In North Carolina, as elsewhere along the Atlantic seaboard, it can be said that the Anglican Church owed "its first theoretical introduction . . . to the Englishman's characteristic desire to reproduce English institutions in every corner of the earth where he makes for himself a home. . . ."[4] The Carolina Charters granted by Charles II to the Lords Proprietors in 1663 and 1665, and the Fundamental Constitution of Carolina of 1669, expressly provided for the official establishment of a church in accordance with the ecclesiastical laws of England, and for the erection and endowment of individual churches, even though conformity was not strictly enforced and provision was made for the granting of toleration to those colonists who could not in conscience adhere to the Church of England.[5] Despite the fact, however, that the Church of England was "by law established," and theoretically entitled, therefore, to the sanction and financial support of colonial government, there was, as always in the affairs of men, a conspicuous disparity between theory and practice. It has been stated with ample justification that the real beginnings of the Anglican Church in North Carolina came not so much from official pronouncements

and the actions of government as from

> the Christian zeal of a few prominent colonial Churchmen, cooperating with the society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in endeavoring to supply the scattered colonists with the ministrations of their mother Church.[6]

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (or S.P.G.) was founded in London in 1701, chiefly through the tireless efforts and pious resolve of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Bray, an eminent churchman, educator, social reformer, and philanthropist. The paramount purpose of the S.P.G. was to provide Anglican missionaries to the growing number of English colonists suffering spriritual starvation "beyond the seas." Depicted on the seal of the Society's charter of 16 June 1701 was

> a ship under sail, making toward a point of land, upon the prow standing a minister with an open Bible in his hand, people standing on the shore in a posture of expectation.[7]

Through their unceasing labors and inexhaustible patience, the Rev. Dr. Bray and the S.P.G. endeavored not only to provide missionaries to the American colonies and elsewhere, but also to establish churches, libraries, and schools. It was inevitable that the results finally achieved should have fallen short of the initial inspiration and vision of Dr. Bray and his associates, but a very great deal was accomplished in the face of numerous and formidable obstacles. An eminent North Carolina churchman and ecclesiastical historian has written that, "Under God the Church in America owes more to the Rev. Thomas Bray than to any other one man who ever lived."[8]

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the S.P.G. was widely at work not only in America but also in Newfoundland, the West Indies, and on the Mosquito Shore of the Bay of Honduras. Later, the Society's work spread elsewhere around the globe, following the expansion of the British Empire.[9] Having received the royal blessing of William III in granting

its charter, the Society continued to enjoy the support of William's successors to the throne of England. Indeed, in order to help defray the Society's costs in supporting its missionaries abroad, William's successors went so far as to grant Royal Letters for a general collection throughout the parishes of England and Wales: Anne in 1711 and 1714, George I in 1718, George II in 1741 and 1751, and George III in 1779.[10]

At the outset, the Society agreed to pay its missionaries an annual salary of £50 sterling, to furnish a small library for their missions, and to supply each missionary with a quantity of religious tracts and pamphlets for free distribution. The Society also agreed to pay £20 toward the cost of transporting their missionaries to the various colonies. It was never intended that the £50 per annum should constitute the whole of the missionaries' remuneration. The colonial parishes were expected to provide the balance of their support; and, indeed, the Society endeavored to send its missionaries only to cures which were able and willing to do so. Every effort was exerted to assure that clergymen recruited for service abroad were worthy, competent, and orthodox men, well affected toward the English monarchy and the ecclesiastical polity of the Church of England. Each candidate for missionary duty was required to read and preach satisfactorily before members of the Society prior to his acceptance. Once accepted and sent to his cure, each missionary was required to submit regular reports on the progress of his work. Missionaries were strictly forbidden to leave their assigned fields of endeavor without prior authorization from the Society, and, indeed, an unauthorized removal was one of several offenses considered sufficient grounds for dismissal.[11] It has been calculated that, between 1702 and 1783, the S.P.G. sent to America alone no fewer than 353 missionaries.[12]

As early as February of 1702, less than a year after its founding, the Society purposed to send a missionary to North Carolina. During its meeting of the 27th, mention was made of recent "Letters from Roanoke North Carolina relating to sending one Missionary into those parts"; and later, during this same meeting, it was "Resolved that it is the Opinion of this Society that a Missionary be forthwith sent."[13] Despite this resolution, however, there is no evidence that a missionary was actually dispatched to the colony at this time.[14]

When, in 1704, S.P.G. missionaries did begin to come occasionally to North Carolina, they found themselves in a distinctly uncongenial environment, confronted by obstacles which were almost insurmountable. Indeed, throughout the colonial period, the Anglican clergymen of North Carolina were often obliged to live and work under conditions of dire poverty and discomfort, and subject, moreover, to the whims of short-sighted, obdurate, and stubbornly independent vestrymen and parishioners. Also standing in the way of effective and harmonious work by the early Anglican clergy of North Carolina was the significant presence of dissenting Protestants in several regions of the colony, especially the Quakers, who were numerous and frequently troublesome in the northeastern precincts of Perquimans and Pasquotank. During the early years of the eighteenth century, these Quakers were estimated by Anglican missionaries to constitute from one-tenth to one seventh of the total population, at least that of the Albemarle section. To the south, at Bath and along the shores of the Pamlico, Quakers do not appear to have been numerous. In Pasquotank Precinct there was also a small number of Presbyterian settlers in the early years of the eighteenth century, but these settlers presented little or no active opposition to the general sway of Anglicanism. With these exceptions, the early settlers of

North Carolina on both sides of Albemarle Sound and along the Pamlico were at least nominal Anglicans, although their zeal for the Church and their support of its ministry were often woefully inadequate.[15]

The impediments to an effective Anglican ministry and the generally impoverished condition of religious life in North Carolina were frequently described by missionaries and colonial officials during the early decades of the eighteenth century. On 21 October 1703, for example, acting governor Henderson Walker wrote to the Bishop of London, summarizing the history and present condition of the Church and the imminent threat posed by Quaker dissent:

> My Lord, we have been settled near these fifty years in this place and I may justly say most part of twenty-one years on my own knowledge, without priest or altar, and before that time, according to all that appears to me, much worse. George Fox, some years ago, came into these parts, and by strange infatuations, did infuse the Quakers' principles into some small number of people; which did and hath continued to grow ever since very numerous, by reason of their yearly sending in men to encourage and exhort them to their wicked principles, and here was none to dispute nor to oppose them. . . . I humbly entreat your Lordship to send some worthy, good man amongst us to regain the flock, and so perfect us in our duty to God, and to establish us by his doctrine, life, and conversation in the fundamentals of our Christian profession. . . .[16]

Less than three months after Walker's plea, the missionary John Blair came to North Carolina. Blair arrived in Virginia in mid-January of 1704, and then proceeded southward into North Carolina to begin his mission. Technically, Blair came not as a missionary sent by the Society, but as an itinerant missionary with the private support of Lord Weymouth.[17] Blair's lengthy account of his mission sheds considerable light on the state of religion and the conditions of missionary work in North Carolina in general, and provides an early indication of the difficulties involved in serving the spiritual needs of settlers along the Pamlico River, where the evolution of Bath Town had only just begun:

> I arrived amongst the inhabitants /of N.C./, after a tedious and troublesome journey. . . . I was then obliged to buy a couple of horses, which cost me fourteen pounds, one of which was for a guide, because there is no possibility for a stranger to find his way in that country, for if he once goes astray (it being such a desert country) it is a great hazard if he ever finds his road again. Beside, there are mighty inconveniences in travelling there, for the roads are not only deep and difficult to be found, but there are likewise seven great rivers in the country, over which there is no passing with horses, except two of them, one of which the Quakers have settled a ferry over for their own conveniency, and nobody but themselves have the privilege of it; so that at the passing over the rivers, I was obliged either to borrow or hire horses which was both troublesome and chargeable, insomuch that in little more than two months I was obliged to dispose of the necessaries I carried over for my own use, to satisfy my creditors. . . .
>
> Besides such a solitary, toilsome, and hard living as I met with, there were very sufficient discouragements. I was distant from any minister one hundred and twenty miles, so that if any case of difficulty or doubt should happen, with whom should I consult? And for my travelling through the country, I rode one day with another, Sundays only excepted, about thirty miles per diem in the worst roads that ever I saw; and have sometimes lain whole nights in the woods.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> You may also consider the distance that the new colony of Pamtico is from the rest of the inhabitants of the country, for any man that has tried it would sooner undertake a voyage from this city /London/ to Holland than that, for besides a pond of five miles broad, and nothing to carry one over but a small perry-anger, there are about fifty miles desert to pass through, without any human creature inhabiting it.[18]

By 1709 the infant town of Bath, in what Blair called "the new colony of Pamtico," had been incorporated for three years, and had begun its slow and short-lived process of growth. Writing to the S.P.G. in May of that year, the missionary William Gordon rendered a general overview of religion in North Carolina, alluding specifically to Bath and to the library sent in by Dr. Bray some nine years earlier:

> I have already delivered to your honourable board a short account of my voyage and journey to North Carolina, the effects of my mission, and the reasons which induced me to leave the place; and since you desire to know something further of the state of the country and condition of the people, in relation to their religion, principles, and practise, I shall . . . give you what satisfaction can be reasonably expected from so short a stay.
>
> . . . . . .

I shall now, sir, give you some small account of the particular precincts. . . . The roads are generally very bad, especially in Perquimans and Pasquetank, which makes it very troublesome work for one minister to attend two precincts.

Chowan is the westernmost, the largest and thinnest seated; they built a church some years ago, but it is small, very sorrily put together, and is ill looked after: and, therefore, I prevailed with them to build another, which they went about when I came away.

. . . . . .

The next precinct is Perquimans, under my care equally with the other. Here is a compact little church, built with more care and expense, and better contrived than that in Chowan, it continues yet unfinished. . . .

. . . . . .

The next precinct is Pasquotank, where as yet there is no church built; the Quakers are here very numerous; the roads are, I think, the worst in the country; but it is closer seated than the others, and better peopled in proportion to its bigness.

. . . . . .

Curratuck is the easternmost precinct, including the Sand Banks and some part of the south side of the Sound: a very incommodious place for damp colds in winter and musquitoes in summer. I never travelled through this Parish, so I can give but a very little account of it. They have no church. . . .

Bath county contains most of that land which lies to the southward of Albemarle Sound to Pamlico River, and about thirty or forty miles more southerly to Neuse River, which (being but lately peopled with a few French who left Virginia) is not laid down in the draft.

They have divided the whole into three precincts or parishes, though the inhabitants of all are but equal in number to any one of the other, most of which are seated on Pamlico River and its branches. Here is no church, though they have begun to build a town called Bath. It consists of about twelve houses, being the only town in the whole province. They have a small collection of books for a library, which were carried over by the Reverend Doctor Bray, and some land is laid out for a glebe; but no minister would ever stay long in the place, though several have come hither from the West Indies and other plantations in America; and yet I must own it is not the unpleasantest part of the country,--nay, in all probability it will be the centre of trade, as having the advantage of a better inlet for shipping, and surrounded by the most pleasant savannas, very useful for stocks of cattle.

. . . . . .

Thus, sir, I have, in obedience to your commands, given you this plain and, I am sensible, imperfect account of North Carolina, a country but wild and imperfect in its circumstances; and to all I have said to the disadvantage of the people in general, I must beg some exceptions, as few as you please, there being, here and there, a gentleman whose substance, sense in managing, and methods of living, somewhat exceed the rest; but they live at such distances, that, as by their example they have but little influence, so upon the same account, they can as little contribute to the

> easiness of a missionary's condition, who is forced to take up with what conveniences he can find not too many miles distant from the churches he is obliged to attend; and this will necessitate any minister who goes over to purchase land, buy servants, build a church and improve a plantation, before he can live tolerably; which will require more expense than the encouragement given will bear.[19]

Pessimistic and discouraging reports continued to issue from North Carolina regarding the Anglican Church and religion in general. In 1711 the chronically irascible missionary John Urmstone, of Chowan Precinct, complained that the few existing vestries were notoriously derelict in their duties, that the colony was rife with Quakers and political malcontents, and that the people in general were indifferent toward the welfare and financial support of the Church:

> We have neither Church nor Chapel in three of the precincts and those two we have in Chowan and Perquimans were never furnished /and are/ ready to drop down, that in the former precinct hath neither floor nor seats, only a few loose benches upon the sand, the Key being lost the door stood open ever since I came to the Country. All the Hoggs and Cattle flee thither for shade in the Summer and warmth in Winter. The first dig holes and bury themselves, these with the rest make it a loathsome place with their dung and nastiness which is the peoples regard to Churches. . . .[20]

Indeed, by way of summary, the embittered Urmstone characterized North Carolina as "a nest of the most notorious profligates upon earth."[21]

Others, less given than Urmstone to hyperbole and self-pity, also took a dim view of the Church's progress. In 1712 the newly appointed Chief Justice, Christopher Gale of Bath, reported to his father in England, and his father in turn to the Bishop of London, that the English colonists of North Carolina had previously endured a period of eight years without the services of a minister from their mother church.[22] In October of 1717 Governor Charles Eden reported to the S.P.G. "the deplorable state of Religion" in North Carolina in general, and called special attention to the fact that Bath County, having suffered greatly as a result of the Tuscarora Wars of 1711-1715, was "wholly destitute of any assistance."[23]

In 1728 William Byrd of Virginia ridiculed, with unveiled contempt, the spiritual torpor of North Carolina:

> One thing may be said of that Province, that they are not troubled with any religious fumes. They do not know Sunday from any other day--the people seem easy without a minister, as long as they are exempt from paying them. Sometimes the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has in charity to send [sic] over missionaries to that country, but unfortunately these Reverend gentlemen have always left their flocks as arrogant heathen as they found them.[24]

Finally, in 1732, only two years before construction was to begin on St. Thomas Church, Governor George Burrington reported to the Bishop of London that the spiritually impoverished colony of North Carolina could boast of only two ministers of the Church of England, and that one of these had declared his intentions of leaving after one year.[25]

With the population of North Carolina widely scattered and sparsely settled in the early eighteenth century, it is not surprising that insufficient provision was made for the erection of churches and the support of the clergy. Nevertheless, prominent men in the Colonial Assembly continually endeavored to promote legislation which would achieve these ends, with their efforts often opposed by Quakers and others, who were averse to the concept of an established church and clearly disinclined to provide for its financial support through taxation. The passage of the successive vestry acts for the benefit of the Anglican Church in North Carolina can be attributed to the unyielding desire to reproduce here an English institution deemed essential for the well-being and stability of the commonwealth, yet the legislation promulgated and passed inevitably fell short of the goals which its promoters had envisioned. Parish revenues were never adequate to erect the needed churches and support the clergymen to serve them.

The first vestry act in North Carolina, of which we have any certain knowledge, was passed in November of 1701, the same year which saw the founding

of the S.P.G. in England. Unfortunately, the text of this act has long been lost, but it appears to have divided the settled area on the north side of Albemarle Sound into four parishes, coterminous with the four precincts of Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank, and Currituck. It also established (or recognized) St. Thomas Parish, formed out of Pamlico Precinct in Bath County, embracing the area in which Bath Town was soon to develop.[26] In 1701 this parish included all of the present Beaufort and Pitt counties and the upper portion of Pamlico County as well.[27] The vestry act of 1701 appointed select vestries in each of the colony's parishes, empowering them to levy a tax of up to 5 s per poll for the purposes of building churches, purchasing glebes (farms for the ministers' support and residence), and employing ministers at a fixed salary of £30 a year.[28]

The act of 1701 was subsequently disallowed by the Lords Proprietors because it provided insufficient income for clergymen. However, similar legislation relating to the Church establishment was passed in 1703, 1708, and 1711. The last of these acts appointed new vestries in all parishes, altered the vestries' powers of dismissal over their ministers, and clarified the legal status of Protestant dissenters in line with the Toleration Act passed in England in 1689.[29]

In November of 1715, during the second year of Governor Charles Eden's administration, the Assembly passed a general revision of the laws of the province, including a new and expanded vestry act. Essentially, this act is believed to have been a re-enactment of those which had come before, but it increased the number of parishes from five to nine and provided that vestries should pay their ministers no less than £50 per annum in the currency of North Carolina. The vestry named for St. Thomas Parish at this time (the first of which we have record) was clearly one of conspicuous distinction: Governor Charles Eden, Chief Justice Christopher Gale, Secretary Tobias

Knight, former Councilman and Speaker of the Assembly John Porter, Attorney General Daniel Richardson, Assemblyman Thomas Harding, and John Lillington, Thomas Worsley, Captain John Drinkwater, John Adams, Captain John Clark, and Dr. Patrick Maule. Quite a few of these men are known to have been residents of Bath; and John Porter, John Drinkwater, and Thomas Harding also served as town commissioners. These vestrymen of St. Thomas Parish, like those of the eight other vestries, were charged in the act of 1715 to "use their best and utmost endeavour to procure an able and Godly Minister," to provide for a minister's salary through taxation, to purchase land for a glebe, and "to build one Church and one or more Chappels" within their respective parishes.[30] This law concerning the Church establishment in North Carolina remained in force until 1741, virtually unchanged except for the occasional addition of new parishes by the Assembly as settlement spread and population grew more dense.[31] Still, woefully inadequate provision was made for the purchase of glebes, the construction of churches, and the support of ministers. Moreover, the vestries were too little disposed to put the law into operation; and there were almost no clergymen available for service, even if the vestries had been more zealous and conscientious in carrying out their responsibilities.[32] Thus it was that throughout the colonial period in North Carolina, most of the burden of maintaining an Anglican ministry rested by default upon the shoulders of the S.P.G. and its often ill-rewarded and long suffering missionaries.

For several years before the actual founding of the S.P.G. in 1701, the Rev. Thomas Bray had contemplated the sending of missionaries to America and elsewhere and the means of supplying them with materials essential for their ministries. In the course of these deliberations, and as a result of his experiences with the poor parish clergy of England, Bray fixed upon

the idea of furnishing each missionary with a parochial library, recognizing full well that the clergymen available for missionary work would be men of modest means who could ill afford to provide and transport libraries out of their own resources. In an effort to raise money for missionary libraries, Bray published a pamphlet which drew attention to the need.

> By experience, as well as the Reason of the Thing, I'm convinced, That 100 pounds laid out in a LIBRARY, is what will best induce a Learned and Sober Minister to go into the Service of any part of the Church in the Plantations; And that the same is necessary Encouragement, considering that few Men of Fortunes, who are able to purchase Books of themselves, will go into such remote Parts.[33]

By mid-July of 1699, Bray had secured subscriptions of £2,483.15s for the establishment of these libraries. The Lords Proprietors of Carolina had pledged £30, and an additional £225 had been pledged on behalf of the "Colony of Carolina at present and in promise."[34] Having established this substantial library fund in England, Bray embarked for Maryland on the 16th of December 1699 to assume his newly appointed duties as the Bishop of London's Commissary for the Anglican Church in that colony. It is indicative of Bray's missionary zeal and selflessness that he was obliged to sell some of his personal effects in order to raise money for his passage.[35]

For reasons which are not entirely clear, Bray remained for only a few months in Maryland after his arrival in March of 1700, though it seems reasonable to speculate that he returned to England for the purpose of organizing the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. While in America, it appears that Bray had actually planned to visit the Albemarle section of North Carolina, but, in the event, this visit did not transpire.[36] According to acting governor Walker's report to the Bishop of London, however, Bray did send to the sparsely settled colony a small collection of books "of his own particular pious gift" for use in combating

the spread of Quakerism.[37] But a much larger and better known gift of books was soon to follow as a result of Dr. Bray's endeavors.

Shortly after his return to England, Dr. Bray began to put into effect his ambitious plans for parish libraries in America; and among the very early parishes to receive such a library was "St. Thomas Parish in Pamplico North Carolina." Why this library, valued at £100, was sent to St. Thomas Parish, and at whose request, the records do not reveal. In any event, it appears that on 2 December 1700 Dr. Bray placed this library in the hands of the Rev. Daniel Brett for delivery to North Carolina, and that Brett arrived safely in St. Thomas Parish with the library in the early months of 1701. Unfortunately, Brett came not only to deliver the library but also to serve as missionary in the settled portions of the colony.[38]

Little is known of the Rev. Daniel Brett's brief and troubled service in northeastern North Carolina, except that he soon succeeded in bringing disgrace upon himself and embarrassment to the Church which he represented. In August of 1703 the Albemarle resident William Gale bade good riddance to Brett's departure from the colony, describing him succinctly as "Ye monster of Ye Age."[39] Writing to the Bishop of London in October of the same year, Henderson Walker recalled at greater length the ill-fated course of Brett's scandalous ministry in North Carolina:

> He for about half a year behaved in a modest manner, but after that, in a most horrid manner, broke out in such an extravagant course that I am ashamed to express his carriage, it being in so high a nature. It hath been a great trouble and grief to us who have a great veneration of the Church, that the first minister who was sent to us should prove so ill as to give the dissenters so much occasion to charge us with him. My Lord, I humbly beg you to believe that we do not think that the Rev. Dr. Bray knew anything of the life and conversation of the man.[40]

It was undoubtedly true, as Walker surmised, that Brett's character was unknown to Bray at the time he was sent to North Carolina; but it is clear

that Bray did not long remain uninformed on that head. Indeed, Bray himself later referred to Brett as a "miscreant" and "Scandalous Vagrant."[41] It is not known whether Brett actually officiated in St. Thomas Parish during his rather brief stay in North Carolina, although this seems probable. The only documentary references to his service as a minister are in connection with two marriages performed in Pasquotank Precinct in August and November of 1701.[42]

The library which Brett delivered to St. Thomas Parish in the early months of 1701 was, in fact, two separate collections: one a parochial library for use by the minister, and the other, a layman's library for the general use of the parishioners. Although the two libraries had been separately catalogued by Bray, they seem to have been combined shortly after their delivery to the parish; and in subsequent references no distinction appears to have been made between them. The contents of the two libraries, as described in the catalogues, were carefully and clearly described by Dr. Herbert R. Paschal in his History of Colonial Bath (1955):

> The parochial library contained 153 titles in 176 volumes, while the "Layman's Library" contained 36 titles in 874 volumes. A large number of the volumes in the "Layman's Library" were mere tracts or pamphlets which could be given away or loaned out at the discretion of the minister. There were one hundred copies each of seven of the titles and five to twenty copies of the great majority of the rest. Only seven of the titles in the "Layman's Library" were represented by one volume. All of the thirty-six titles in the "Layman's Library" dealt with religious topics or problems. Representative titles included: Serious Invitation of the Quakers to Return to Christianity (100 copies), Earnest Exhortations to the Religious Observations of ye Lord's Day (100 copies), Short Discourses of the Doctrine of ye Baptismal Covenant (20 copies), and Dr. Ashton on Deathbed Repentance (5 copies).
>
> It was the 153 titles of the parochial library which formed the backbone of the Bath library and made it the envy of the rest of the parishes of North Carolina. This was a carefully selected library designed to enable the minister of a lonely colonial parish, in the words of Dr. Bray, "to Instruct his people in all things necessary to Salvation." To Bray

this meant a well-rounded library, rich not only in works of a religious nature, but containing as well the classics, biographies, general literature, history, descriptive works and geographies. It was with such an idea in mind that the parochial library of Bath was collected and prepared. While the majority of the works are religious in nature and specifically designed to aid the minister in his study of the Bible, in the preparation of his sermons, and in his general ministry, many of the works deal with such varied topics as history, biography, natural science, medicine, geography, classical literature, poetry, heraldry, sports, and general literature.

The volumes dealing with religion are chiefly those of the leading seventeenth century Anglican divines and included many of the collected works of the more noted ministers and scholars. Some of these were: The Works of Joseph Meade, George Gowmane's A Treatise of Justification, John Wilkin's Sermons Preached Upon Several Occasions Before the King, at Whitehall, and Nathaniel Whaley's two sermons. To aid the Church of England ministers in their fight against the Quakers, known to be strong in North Carolina, Bray included such works as Charles Leslie's The Snake in the Grass and the ex-Quaker George Keith's The Arguments of the Quakers . . . Against Baptism and the Supper Examined and Refuted. Also included were such aids to the ministers as Bibles, commentaries, Latin and Greek lexicons, and dictionaries.

Most interesting, however, were the non-religious works which formed a good portion of the library. Here the library user could find such varied titles as Lewes Roberts' defense of mercantilism, The Merchants Mappe of Commerce, John Guillim's A Display of Heraldry, travel and geographical works such as Le Conte's Memoirs and Observations . . . Made in a Late Journey Through the Empire of China and Bernhard Voren's Descriptio Regni Japoniae et Siam and Nasen's Geographia Generalis; Nicholas Cox's The Gentleman's Recreation . . . Hunting, Hawking, Fowling, Fishing; Gilbert Burnet's Abridgement of the History of the Reformation of the Church of England; Thomas Sprat's True Account . . . of the Horrid Conspiracy Against the Late King (Charles II); Edmund Wingate's Abridgement of all Statutes in Force and Use; Le Grand's Historia Naturae, Variis Experimentis et Rationiis Eleicidatae; and the works of such classical authors as Horace, Virgil, and Epictetus.[43]

Having arrived in St. Thomas Parish early in 1701, the library predated by five years the actual incorporation of Bath in March of 1706. Where the library was kept during this time, or even after the incorporation of the town, is not definitely known. Indeed, one authority observed that "The library given to North Carolina by Dr. Bray seems to have had a kind of peripatetic existence at first.[44] In any event, after what may have been some early meanderings, the library did come to rest in the newly established settlement.

In 1709 the missionary William Gordon made specific reference to its being there.[45] It is quite possible that during its early years in Bath the library was deposited in the home of Christopher Gale, himself the son of an Anglican clergyman and a strong advocate of the Anglican establishment in North Carolina. There is good evidence that worship services were being conducted in Gale's home by lay readers in 1711, if not earlier; and it is only reasonable to assume that the library would have been kept in the same location for the convenience of both the lay readers and those whom they led in worship.[46] If, indeed, the library was deposited in Gale's home, an interesting coincidence is worthy of note: one of the more arcane works contained in the library, Opuscula Mythologica, Ethica et Physica, was edited by Thomas Gale, Dean of York and Christopher Gale's uncle.[47]

Wherever the library was located in Bath, its presence there provoked strident and repeated complaints from the missionaries of the more populous Albemarle region. The library, they argued, was being wasted and neglected in Bath, which, they pointed out, was neither the seat of government nor the center of population, especially following the ravages of the Tuscarora Wars of 1711-1715. On 15 July 1712 the missionary Giles Rainsford alleged, in a vein of bitter complaint, that "Dr. Bray's public library is all dispersed and lost by those wretches that don't consider the benefit of so valuable a gift."[48] On 2 March 1714 the vestry of St. Paul's Parish in Chowan Precinct complained to the S.P.G. that Dr. Bray had, in fact, intended the Bath library for their use, and that its continuance at Bath was not only fruitless but frought with peril as well:

> The first Library of great Value Sent us by the Direction of the Reverend Dr. Bray thro' an unhappy inscription on the Back of the Books or Title page. Vizt. Belonging to the parish of St. Thomas of Pamlico in the then rising but now miserable County of Bath, falsely supposed to be the Seat of Government,

> was lodged there and by that means rendered useless to the Clergy for whose service it was chiefly intended, and in what Condition we know not. We fear the worst by Reason of the late war.[49]

Most covetous of all of the Bath library, however, was the vituperative John Urmstone, missionary in Chowan Precinct and surrounding areas from 1709 to 1721. Urmstone, too, maintained that the Bath library had been intended for the settlement on Queen Anne's Creek, which would later become Edenton. For several years he wrote repeatedly to the S.P.G. in an effort to have the library relocated. On 12 June 1714, for example, he expressed fear that a parish in Virginia, also possessing a library which he coveted, would care for it in no better fashion than the residents of the Bath area:

> They'l do by them as the gentry of Bath have done with that famous Library the Revd. Bray sent in here as of £100 value--make waste paper of their Books rather than the clergy should have them, such is their esteem of our [ministerial] functions. . . .[50]

On 22 September of the same year, Urmstone exploited fears of an impending Indian attack to stress Bath's vulnerability, and, in passing, to heap scorn upon the town and its few residents:

> We expect to hear that famous city of Bath, consisting of 9 houses or rather cottages, once stiled the Metropolis and seat of Government, will be totally deserted and yet I cannot find means to secure that admirable collection of Books sent in by the Revd. Dr. Bray for the use of the Ministry of this Province, but it will in all probability serve for a Bonfire to the Indians.[51]

Three years later, on 22 June 1717, Urmstone continued his animadversions upon the collection of books at Bath, and he laid the blame for his failure to obtain these books at the door of Chief Justice Christopher Gale, a man he regarded with overweening contempt:

> This is he that chiefly hindered me from having the Library sent in by the Revd. Dr. Bray in my custody as was intended by the Donor. . . . If he applies himself to the Society it will easily appear what a fit person he is to make a priest of and how much he hath benefited by that excellent collection of Books which have been injuriously detained from me.[52]

Finally, on the 18th of October 1718, in perhaps his last epistolary whimper regarding the Bath library, Urmstone wrote:

> I am denied one of the greatest Comforts of Life in conversation, with either the living or the dead, the Library at Pamptichoe, sent in for the use of Clergymen by Dr. Bray, in all appearance will be to all destroyed, that place being abandoned and so will all the country be in a short time, for fear of 7 or 8 Indians. . . .[53]

Despite the recurring efforts to have the Bath library relocated in the Albemarle region, and specifically in the settlement on Queen Anne's Creek which was soon to become Edenton, the books remained, as Dr. Bray had no doubt intended, the property of "St. Thomas Parish in Pamplico." Indeed, in 1715 the Colonial Assembly enacted detailed and comprehensive legislation, protecting the Bath library and providing for its day-to-day operations. The passage of this legislation (possibly a reenactment and modification of an earlier act) would seem to indicate that the alarms sounded by Rainsford and Urmstone were grossly exaggerated, and that the library remained essentially intact at the end of the Tuscarora Wars. This act, entitled "An Act for Appointing a Town in the County of Bath and for Securing the Publick Library belonging to St. Thomas's Parish in Pamptecough," was remarkable for the fact that it "was the only act passed during the proprietary period encouraging literature, and the only one relating to libraries passed in North Carolina before the Revolution."[54]

The preamble to the library section of the 1715 legislation reaffirmed the sometimes disputed fact that the books had been sent "at the Promotion of the Revt. Doctr. Thos. Bray . . . to Bath Town for the use of the Inhabitants of the Parish of St. Thomas's in Pamticough," and then went on to express the fear that they would "Quickly be embezzeled, Damaged or Lost except a Law be provided" for their "more effectual preservation."[55] To achieve the desired ends of protection and efficient circulation of these books,

the law of 1715 first made provision for a "Library Keeper" or librarian to preserve them from "Waste, Damages, Imbezlmts, and all other destructions (fire and all other unavoidable accidents only accepted)," with this librarian to be personally responsible for twice the value of the books in the event of loss or ruin.[56] The librarian was to be chosen by a distinguished board of commissioners, consisting of Governor Charles Eden, Chief Justice Christopher Gale, Secretary Tobias Knight, Speaker of the Assembly Edward Moseley, Attorney General Daniel Richardson, and ten members of the precinct court: Captain Fred Jones, John Porter, Joel Martin, Captain John Drinkwater, John Clark, Patrick Maule, Thomas Worseley, Lionel Reading, James Lee, and Thomas Harding. Further provisions were made for the annual cataloguing and inspection of the library by the commissioners or any five of them.[57]

The lending policies of the library were surprisingly lenient, with the "Inhabitants of Beaufort precinct" (presumably any adult) being at liberty to borrow the books of their choosing by giving a receipt to the librarian and promising to return them within the time prescribed. Folios were to be returned within four months; quartos in two months; and octavos in one month. Failure to return books brought on a cash penalty equivalent to three times the books' value.[58]

It was stipulated that the librarian appointed by the Commissioners was to serve "until the Settlement of a Minister in the said Parish, which said Minister or Incumbent shall (ex officio) be Library Keeper."[59] And it is interesting to note that the Library was "not to be removed out of Bath Town other than to the Incumbents House and not thither without Liberty first had and obtained from the said Commissioners or a Major part of them."[60] Regretably, we know the identities of none of the library keepers entrusted with the care of the Bath library. Nor have any of the catalogues come down

to us which were supposed by law to have been made on an annual basis.

Concerning the ultimate fate of the Bath library, we are utterly ignorant. The passage of the 1715 legislation is good evidence that much, at least, of the original library remained intact. Other evidence, however, indicates that some, perhaps many, of the books had already been lost or destroyed. Some measure of credence should probably be given to the repeated complaints of Rainsford and Urmstone that the Bath library had been reduced by neglect and mistreatment, although their complaints were almost surely exaggerated in hopes of securing the collection for themselves. But Governor George Burrington, presumably with a library of his own, also alluded to the unfortunate mistreatment of the collection. In commenting upon the law of 1715, he wrote:

> This, tho' a long Act only concerns a Town where little Improvements have been made, and for securing a small Library that was too much embezlled before the Act was made.[61]

Bishop Joseph Blount Cheshire and, initially, Professor Stephen B. Weeks concluded from their research, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, that the library which Edward Moseley offered the town of Edenton in 1723 consisted chiefly of the remains of the library formerly located in Bath.[62] Weeks subsequently altered his opinion, however, finally coming to the conclusion that the Edenton library may have included part, but certainly not all of the books remaining at Bath. It was Weeks's belief that Moseley gathered the Edenton library from various sources in the early 1720s--not from a single source. He further speculated that the obstinate and irascible missionary, John Urmstone, may at last have been successful in obtaining some of the books from the Bath library and in passing them on to Moseley prior to his hasty departure for England in March of 1721, at which time he is known to have left in Moseley's care his plantation and the settlement of

his affairs in the Albemarle region.[63] A comparison of the catalogues of the Bath and Edenton libraries tends to support Weeks's conclusion that only a portion of the former library could have been included in the latter. The two Bath libraries combined contained some 1,050 volumes (with hundreds of duplicates) while the Edenton library contained only 74. Moreover, it appears that the number of titles held in common by the two libraries was no higher than one might expect in the case of two collections so nearly contemporaneous.[64]

Weeks's inquiries led him to conclude at length that much of the Bath library probably remained in existence until the middle of the eighteenth century, and that its disappearance likely occurred between 1752 and 1765. As evidence for this, he pointed out that the first printed revisal of the laws of North Carolina, published in 1752, included the law of 1715, protecting the library at Bath and setting forth the procedures under which it was to operate. Weeks argued that the revised laws of 1752 were largely the product of Edward Moseley, who had worked at the task for many years prior to his death in 1749. He further reasoned that Moseley would have excluded the law regarding Bath's library had he, in fact, appropriated all or the major portion of it for Edenton in the early 1720s, or if the Bath library had for any reason ceased entirely to function by mid-century. When the laws of North Carolina were again revised in 1765, the act concerning Bath's library was excluded, but a note included in this revision was apparently intended as an explanation: "The books are mostly scattered and no library keeper appointed for many years."[65]

Regrettably, only one volume of the original Bath library is now known to exist--Gabriel Towerson's An Explication To The Catechism of the Church of England, a folio edition printed in London in 1685. The volume is bound

in leather and bears on its back cover the inscription, stamped in gold: "Belonging to ye Library of St. Thomas' Parish in Pamplico." This sole survivor of that "admirable collection of Books sent in by the Revd. Dr. Bray" was discovered in a pile of rubbish in the 1880s by the Rev. R. B. Windley of Bunyan, North Carolina--a small community between Bath and Washington. It was first exhibited to the public in Tarboro in May of 1890, presumably in connection with the centennial observance of the initial attempt to form the Diocese of North Carolina. Through the generosity of the Rev. Mr. Windley and the efforts of the Rev. Robert Brent Drane, rector of St. Paul's, Edenton, the volume was presented as a gift to the Diocese of East Carolina, which retains possession to this day.[66]

As interesting and significant as the lost library of Bath is as a subject unto itself, it should properly be viewed within the overall context of the work of Dr. Thomas Bray and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Between his visit to Maryland in 1700 and his death in England in 1730, Bray and the S.P.G. sent at least thirty-nine libraries to the American colonies in order to promote the Anglican faith and its forms of worship. Some of these libraries, like the one at Bath, contained more than 1,000 volumes. Thirty parish libraries were sent to Maryland alone, with the largest of these, called the "premiere library," being established at Annapolis.[67] England, too, was the beneficiary of Dr. Bray's munificence, with some eighty libraries being established there for the use of poor parish clergymen.[68]

It seems probable, in accordance with S.P.G. policy, that virtually all missionaries to America were supplied with at least a small quantity of books, Bibles, Prayer Books, and theological tracts for their own private use and for use in public worship within their mission fields. Missionaries also

received fresh supplies of books from time to time, although these shipments were often long delayed in coming.[69]

Here in North Carolina the Revs. Giles Rainsford and John Urmstone each sought for themselves, in addition to the Bath library, the much smaller one, valued at £10, which the Rev. James Adams had left with Richard Sanderson of Currituck in the summer of 1710. Urmstone also made frantic but frustrated efforts to secure a small library which had been brought over by the North Carolina missionary William Gordon, and which was subsequently and unaccountably appropriated by the parishioners at Keketan (Hampton), Virginia. Indeed, Urmstone claimed that a library of his own, valued at £50, had been lost in transit to North Carolina.[70]

Some mention should also be made of the distinct possibility that a rather large library, hitherto unnoticed, existed in the Albemarle region in the very early years of the eighteenth century, although it is apparent from the protestations of Rainsford and Urmstone that this library, if established, was totally dispersed or destroyed by the time of their arrivals in the colony. Lodged among the Thomas Bray papers of Sion College, along with the catalogues of the two Bath libraries, is a tantalizing document entitled, "A Catalogue of Books sent by Mr. Brett to Albemarle Settlement North Carolina towards Raising of a Layman's Library." The document is dated 2 December 1700--the very same date on which Bray catalogued the two libraries intended for St. Thomas Parish by the same unworthy bearer, Daniel Brett. Moreover, the contents of the Albemarle library were precisely identical with those of the layman's library of St. Thomas Parish.[71] Concerning this Albemarle library, nothing further is definitely known. It seems possible, however, that it was this library, rather than the Bath library, whose loss was bemoaned by Rainsford in July of 1712 when he wrote: "Dr. Bray's public library is

all dispersed by those wretches that don't consider the benefit of so valuable a gift."[72] It seems impossible to conclude with certainty which library he was referring to. For now, at least, the matter must remain a subject of speculation.

Surviving sources reveal only sparse and very fragmentary information regarding the condition of Anglican worship in Bath prior to the commencement of St. Thomas Church in 1734. Evidence suggests, however, that no house of worship of any kind was erected during the first three decades of the town's existence. This is not to say that no services were performed there to meet the spiritual needs of its predominately English settlers. In addition to occasional visits by S.P.G. missionaries, some of whom made Bath the base of their operations in the area, the Anglican faithful of the community met for services in the private residences of prominent citizens, most notably in the home of Christopher Gale. Gale, himself, was not only an Englishman but also the son of an Anglican clergyman, the Rev. Miles Gale, rector of Keighley Parish, Yorkshire. For more than three decades after his arrival in North Carolina, Gale distinguished himself in a number of important posts, including Justice of the General Court, member of the Provincial Council, major in the militia, commissioner to South Carolina, Collector of Customs, Attorney General, and beginning in 1712, Chief Justice. Over and above his service to the colony in public office, Gale seems to have been a man of considerable learning and a consistent and devoted patron of the Anglican Church. Indeed, both Gale and his father in England corresponded with the Bishop of London and others on several occasions, pleading for the services of missionaries in North Carolina. Although Gale was a resident of Edenton at the time of his death in 1734, he had, for most of his life in North Carolina, made his home at Bath.[73]

Late in the summer of 1711, in the midst of the political and religious upheaval of Cary's Rebellion, a young Anglican missionary, the Rev. Benjamin Dennis, arrived in Bath with Governor Edward Hyde, and remained there for some time after Hyde's return to Albemarle. Dennis's letter to the S.P.G. of 3 September provides a contemporary, though sketchy, account of the services regularly being held in Gale's home:

> I lodged at one Major Gale's, a very civil gentleman, at whose house the people met each Sunday, where a young gentleman, a lawyer, was appointed to read prayers and a sermon, they having no minister. I understand they had a gentleman sent them by the honourable society, but he could not live among such an unaccountable sort of people, and was removed up in the country.[74]

Gale was not alone in his solicitude for the colonial church and his desire to obtain for Bath the regular services of a missionary. As early as 1705 unidentified residents of the Bath area submitted a lengthy petition to "the Right Hon^{ble} the Lords Spiritual & Temporal in Parliament Assembled," in which they laid before the upper house of Parliament the difficulties they had met with in settlement and their need for spiritual sustenance and pastoral care:

> The Humble Petition of the Queen's Ma^{ties} most distressed Subjects Inhabiting near Pamplico River in the County of Bath, within her Ma^{ties} Dominions of North Carolina:
>
> Sheweth
>
> That your petitioners depending upon the Royal assurance which was given for their encouraging the Exercise of the Protestant Religion, and the benefit of the Laws of England, and the encouragements which were published for planting in the said parts, settled themselves and their families upon the said River, and going through incredible difficulties from the Indians, a vast labour and expense recovered and improved divers great quantities of land thereabouts, they made all due applications to the Governors and Council of the Lords Proprietors of these lands for being admitted into the privileges as aforesaid. But instead thereof they have been treated by the said Governors and Council with very great hardships, neither could your Petitioners obtain your favour of having a minister appointed them, though they offered with

> cheerfulness to be at the Charge of maintaining him, and by reason thereof your petitioners have been deprived of the means of grace which their souls earnestly longed after, and near two hundred of their children have not been admitted to the Sacrament of Baptism.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Your petitioners for the Sake and Tender Merseys of our blessed Jesus in all humble Earnestness Implore your Lordships consideration of the Premises and that out of your great Piety and Zeal for the propagation of the Protestant Religion you would Intercede with her Most Gracious Majesty on their Behalfs and that such speedy course may be taken for their Relief and Continuance as to your Lordships renowned piety and wisdom shall seem meet.[75]

Governor Charles Eden of Bath was also among those who endeavored to secure the regular services of a missionary for the area. When, in the fall of 1716, he was planning to settle his family at Bath, he requested that the S.P.G. send a missionary not only for the good of the people in general, but also for the sake of his "own particular happiness to have the conversation of such an one."[76] Within six months Eden was bemoaning the fact that the spiritual needs of Bath had been "altogether hitherto neglected."[77]

On 10 March 1717 the vestry of St. Thomas Parish again called upon the S.P.G. to send them a missionary. Their letter pointed out that there had been recurring rumors that a missionary was to be sent, but that their hopes and expectations were yet to be fulfilled:

> As yet we have not been so happy /as/ to have one Missionary resident in all ye county and of all those who have come to North Carolina it has yet been very rare that they have so much as visited these parts, so that many of the children of these parts are yet unbaptised even to ten or twelve years of age. Notwithstanding of which the people of this county are generally kept from dissenting from the Church of England by the care which has been taken to appoint Readers persuant to the Act of Assembly for establishing the church. . . .[78]

It has already been pointed out that the Rev. Daniel Brett probably ministered to the settlers of St. Thomas Parish around the time of his delivery of the parish library early in 1700 and, perhaps, during the six months thereafter

when he was still comporting himself in a seemly fashion.[79] It also seems probable that the Rev. Dr. John Blair passed through the area where Bath was about to spring up during his short-lived mission to North Carolina in 1704. This, at least, is the impression left by his account of the great difficulties encountered in traveling to "the new colony of Pamticoe."[80] The primary area of Blair's activities, however, was in St. Paul's Parish in Chowan Precinct. There he served as a minister for several months; but he was soon overcome by discouragement and embarked for England, asking that his unpaid salary be retained by the vestry of that parish for relief of the poor.[81]

Four years after Blair's brief visit to the colony, the S.P.G. sent to North Carolina the missionaries John Adams and William Gordon. Following their arrival in April of 1708, Adams took charge of Pasquotank and Currituck precincts, while Gordon undertook to serve the precincts of Chowan and Perquimans. All four of these precincts were located in the Albemarle region, and it is not known whether either man ever journeyed southward to officiate in St. Thomas Parish. It seems probable, however, from his description of Bath County, that Gordon had at least traveled through Bath and that he had been impressed by its apparent potential for growth.[82] Both Adams and Gordon seem to have served the Church well during their brief stays in North Carolina. Gordon returned to England after a few months, however, and Adams died late in the year 1710, after faithfully enduring repeated hardships and difficulties during the nearly three years of his ministry.[83]

It was during the winter of 1710-1711 that the Rev. John Urmstone arrived in Albemarle and settled in Chowan Precinct.[84] For a decade thereafter the settlers of that region were afflicted by his ministerial exertions and burdened with his pastoral care. For much of this period, moreover, he was the sole representative of the Church of England in the colony. Both Urmstone

and his remarkable career as a missionary in North Carolina were aptly characterized by Bishop Joseph Blount Cheshire:

> He was scurrillous, profane, intemperate, and mendacious. He did more harm to the cause of the Church in North Carolina than any man who has ever figured in our history, and it is utterly incredible that he should have been allowed for ten years to blast the prospects of the Church in the province by his presence.[85]

It should be said in Urmstone's defense that he traveled widely through the wilderness areas of northeastern North Carolina in a bungled attempt to bring some measure of religion to its scattered and often recalcitrant inhabitants. There is good evidence that Urmstone visited Bath at least on rare occasions. In May of 1723, two years after Urmstone's sudden return to England, the missionary Thomas Newman wrote, with reference to Bath County, that it had been "some years since the late Mr. Urmstone visited those parts. . . ."[86]

Between the visit or visits of Urmstone to Bath and his unexpected but unlamented departure from North Carolina in March of 1721, Bath enjoyed for a very brief period the more uplifting service of the Rev. Ebenezer Taylor, an aged and enfeebled man of God who might justly be called Bath's first minister. Having already served for a number of years as an S.P.G. missionary in South Carolina, Taylor was dispatched to Albemarle in October of 1717. During the year which followed he worked along the southwest shore of the Chowan River, while residing with the prominent settler, William Dunkenfield, holding services there on the Sabbath and endeavoring to instruct Negro and Indian slaves. Rejecting legal provisions for payment of the clergy, he lived, at least for a time, upon the voluntary contributions of the people. Thereafter, Taylor removed to Perquimans Precinct and subsequently to Bath, arriving there in the autumn of 1719 to minister to the fledgling town and to a vast area which lay to the south. Though poorly equipped to meet the

physical demands which these duties placed upon him, Taylor, nevertheless, seems to have labored diligently to alleviate what he saw as the spiritual deprivation and unruliness of the region. Unfortunately, his ministry was soon brought to a tragic end. While journeying in an open boat from Bath Town to Core Sound in February of 1720, Taylor was exposed to severe winter weather for a period of ten days running. It was presumably as a result of this exposure that he succumbed on Harbor Island near the mouth of the Neuse River. His body was interred there by a group of men allegedly hunting swine on the island, but grave suspicions were raised when it was discovered that these same men had taken possession of his money and personal affects, valued at £290. Indeed, Taylor's stolen property was eventually recovered by his administrators in a court of law.[87] His death left John Urmstone, once again, the sole representative of the Church in North Carolina.

For more than a year after Urmstone's return to England, the colony of North Carolina was totally bereft of missionaries. In 1722, however, the Rev. Thomas Newman arrived in Albemarle to take up the work of the Church. Newman appears to have traveled widely over a vast area, preaching in six or seven different places, separated one from the other by as much as 150 miles.[88] While little is known of Newman's work, Bath seems to have been one of the places he visited in the course of his ministry. Writing to the S.P.G. on 9 May 1723, he reported:

> Tomorrow I do design to sett out for Bath County where I am greatly wanted, there are at least, as I am informed, 300 Children waiting my coming among them to be baptized, it is some years since the late Mr. Urmstone visited those parts which now occasions greater Labour and pains to be taken by myself.[89]

Unfortunately, Newman's labors and extensive travels soon took their toll upon his health. He died in Edenton on 5 November 1723; and North Carolina,

consisting now of eleven nominal parishes, was again without a missionary.[90] Out of gratitude for the manful services he had rendered during his brief ministry in North Carolina, both the Assembly and the S.P.G. set aside funds for the support of Newman's widow.[91]

About the time of Newman's demise, St. Thomas Parish and neighboring Hyde Parish began to receive at least the part-time services of the Rev. Thomas Bailey, previously a minister of dubious character and effectiveness in Philadelphia and Virginia. Bailey was vigorously maligned by certain of his contemporaries, and he has been portrayed to this day as a scandal and embarrassment by students of the colonial Church and clergy in North Carolina.[92] This is probably as it should be; but, in fairness, it should also be pointed out that Bailey had the misfortune of becoming embroiled in the bitter and unseemly rivalry between governors Richard Everard and George Burrington. In the course of this unfortunate involvement, Bailey earned the commendations of Burrington and his political allies, but also the hearty execrations of Everard and his supporters. Whatever the precipitating factors may have been, matters seem to have come to a head in Edenton in November of 1725, when Bailey, with Burrington's alleged complicity, broke open the courthouse door in order to perform a service of devine worship which Everard had expressly forbidden. In a letter of 25 January 1726, an indignant Everard reported the outrage to the Bishop of London, while, at the same time, dialating upon the shabbiness of Bailey's reputed background:

> My Lord
>
> We have one Thos. Bailey who calls himself a Missionary, he formerly was in Philadelphia, and turned out there for a scandalous drunken Man. /He/ came to Virginia and /was/ turned there likewise out for his vile actions, then came into my province where if he could get credit or money would be continually drunk and breaking windows or be fighting. This Bailey lately came into Edenton, where I reside and for 2 days kept himself much disordered in liquor, on the next day

> being on a Saturday, he spoke to my son, to desire him to procure my leave for him to preach which I positively denied him, at which he was very uneasy and by the instigation of Burrington the late Govr he came to me on Sunday about 12 o'clock and demanded the Key to the Court house, which I also refused, on which he told me, if the court house door was not opened for him, it shall be broke open and immediately went to the Door and broke it open. In this court house are kept records, and the journals of the assemblies, on which the chief justice /Christopher Gale/, bound him over to our general court. Mr. Burrington is his bail. He is, I am informed in a distant part of this country call'd Pasquotank a preaching up rebellion, and /I/ begg your Lordship, if I prosecute him according to our laws here for his enormous crimes and his acting out of his sphere, Your Lordship will pardon me. . . .[93]

Lending his support to the censure of Bailey was the newly arrived missionary, John Blacknall, who reported that he had "heard a very vile and infamous character of the sd. Bailey" even prior to the courthouse incident.[94]

For their part, Bailey's adherents charged that he had been unjustly abused by the Everard faction. In an affidavit of 3 December 1725, sworn before Edward Moseley, Burrington expressed indignation over the manner of Bailey's treatment:

> On this 3rd day of Decr 1725. Before me Edward Moseley. Personnally came and appeared Geo. Burrington Esqr. who on his oath on the Holy Evangelists taken saith, that on Monday the 22nd of Novbr last the Revd Thomas Bailey came to this Deponents lodgings in Edenton and told this Deponent that Christopher Gale Esq. chief justice of this Province had granted a warrant against him and that he was in custody of a Constable and desired him to go with him before the chief justice which he, this Deponent readily did. That there were present with the sd. chief justice (then in the house of Mr. Wm. Badham of Edenton) Sir Richd Everrard Bart. Govr. of N. Carolina, Jno. Lovick Secy and others; that they questioned the aforesaid Mr. Bailey concerning his preaching the day before: to which questions Mr. Bailey gave modest answers, notwithstanding . . ./they/ did very much insult the sd. Mr. Bailey, treating him with base and scurrilous language such as this Deponent saith he never heard given to a Clergyman by any Magistrate before. The sd. Mr. Bailey was also threatened to be sent to prison, if he would not give security to appear at the general court: and this deponent verily believes they would have so served him if bail had not been given.[95]

In view of his troubles in Edenton and his previous ejections from the service of God in Philadelphia and Virginia, it is utterly unaccountable that Bailey's ministrations in Bath and St. Thomas Parish should have found favor with Anglican settlers there. Nevertheless, on 25 May 1726, the churchwardens and vestrymen of the parish, joined also by representatives from Hyde Parish, petitioned the Bishop of London to intercede with the S.P.G. in having Bailey's name added to its list of missionaries:

> May it please your Lordship
> To receive with clemency the humble Petition of the Churchwardens, Vestry, and Gentlemen of St. Thomas' Parish Bath Town, North Carolina, in behalf of Mr. Bailey our Pious and Exemplary Minister, who was recommended to us by our late Govr. Coll Geo. Burrington and has been in these parts almost 3 years, long expecting the usual Salary from the Royal Society. . . . The sense we have of Mr. Bailey's administration in the Gospel and the great pains and care he hath taken, since he hath been amongst us, obligeth us on this occasion to acknowledge the benefit this Province has enjoyed from the same and since he desires of continuing with us if assisted with the usual Salary. . . . Assuring your Lordship that we shall not be wanting to provide for him as honourable a support as possibly we can, but for as much as the late Indian wars have rendered us unable to raise a sufficient Subsidy for a decent maintenance of the Ministry, we unanimously and humbly petition your Lordship's assistance in the settling so pious and able a man as Mr. Bailey amongst us, under whose Ministry we esteem ourselves very happy. . . .[96]

Two weeks prior to the drawing up of the above petition, Bailey himself had written a letter from Bath to the Bishop of London, presenting a favorable (and doubtless selective) report on his service in North Carolina:

> This is the 3rd year that with great Labour and much pains I have officiated in North Carolina and have baptised above four hundred Children, many adult persons, three adult Indians, with many Negroes, and have brought many to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. . . .

Bailey indicated that he was forty-six years of age at this time; and he went on to speak of a wife and four children who were scarcely able to survive in the absence of a missionary's salary from the S.P.G.[97]

In the event, neither Bailey's letter nor the vestry's petition brought forth any assistance from the S.P.G. It appears, in fact, that the Society had had previous dealings with the disreputable clergyman. It was pointed out that Bailey

> was not employed nor sent by the Society, and that he had been formerly before this Society, and was discharged from any dependence on them for some irregularities. . . .[98]

It was also noted that £10 had previously been sent to Bailey "by way of charity."[99]

By 1728 Bailey had returned to the Colony of Virginia and was audaciously attempting to insinuate himself into the pulpit of Lynnhaven Parish in Princess Anne County. The outraged vestry of that parish complained bitterly that he had, "contrary to the desire of this vestry, insisted on being our minister." The vestry's complaint was subsequently presented to Governor William Gooch; and it appears that Bailey was once again ejected from the colony. Indeed, this time, the scoundrel may have been transported to England, whence he had come.[100]

For several years after Bailey's departure, Bath was again without the services of a minister. There is no indication that the town was even visited by a clergyman during this period. In 1731, after two years residence in North Carolina, the Irish naturalist and physician, John Brickell, commented upon the dearth of missionaries in the colony and upon the practical effects of that dearth:

> The want of protestant clergy is generally supplied by schoolmasters who read the liturgy, then a sermon, of some good practical Devine, every Sunday. It is common to see large numbers of men, women, and children baptised all together, and I have seen the grandfather, his son, and grandson receive this Sacrament at one time.[100]

It is of interest to note that Brickell, in a passage of doubtful accuracy, implied very strongly that Bath had a resident Catholic priest at the time

he was writing:

> /Roman Catholics/ are settled in many Parts of the Country, but mostly in and about Bath-town, they have likewise a Clergyman of their own Order among them at present.[102]

In January of 1734 there came to Bath the Rev. John Garzia, an Anglican minister who would at last establish his permanent residence in the town and supervise the construction of a church. Since 1724 Garzia had been serving as rector of St. Paul's Church in Elizabeth River Parish, Virginia, having arrived in that colony with glowing recommendations to Governor Hugh Drysdale.[103] During his years in Virginia, Garzia is also known to have taught and ministered among the slave population of his parish.[104]

It must be observed that Garzia seems to have come to Bath and St. Thomas Parish at least partially in response to promises which were never kept. Writing to the S.P.G. in June of 1739, Governor Gabriel Johnston stated quite bluntly that "the Inhabitants of St. Thomas's Parish, Pamlico, had induced /Garzia/ by fair promises to come from Virginia to them," and that now, several years later, he, his wife, and three children "were starving" for want of his "poor salary," which was shamefully in arrears.[105] For several years Garzia was forced to subsist only upon the meager salary grudgingly paid him by his parishioners, and both he and the St. Thomas vestry petitioned the S.P.G. to add his name to the list of missionaries and contribute to his support. The earliest of these petitions was sent to the S.P.G. by the "Church Wardens and Vestry of St. Thomas Parish" on 10 October 1734, with a nearly identical document sent the same day to the Bishop of London, Edmund Gibson. This somewhat lugubrious petition not only sought to have Garzia made a missionary, but also touched upon the history and present circumstances of Bath:

> The Honourable Petition of the Church Wardens, Vestrymen and other Inhabitants of St. Thomas's Parish on Pamplico River in the Province of North Carolina.
>
> Humbly Sheweth
>
> That whereas your petitioners (notwithstanding the many sects and parties in Religion settled amongst us) have had the happiness of being brought up in the Protestant Communion, but have been destitute of means (ever since our first settlement) to allow a decent maintenance of a protestant Minister by reason of our poverty. . . .
>
> And whereas that ever since the first day of January 1733 [i.e. 1734] . . . we have entertained the worthy and Reverend Mr. John Garzia who (in persuance to his License under the hand and seal of the Rt. Rev. Father in God Doctor Edmund Gibson, Lord Bishop of London) had preached the Gospel and acted as a parish minister in Virginia for nine years past; By which his Lordship's License and a Certificate of his sober Life and Conversation and diligence in his function from under the hand of Dr. Blear [sic, Blair], Commissary and attested by the Governor of Virginia, and having had upwards of one and twenty months experience, we are encourag'd and are very desirous to retain the said Reverend Minister, but to our extreme grief, the maintenance that we, by reason of our great poverty can afford him, is far short of our inclinations in supporting decently a man of his worth and merit.
>
> And whereas we were also encouraged to retain the said Mr. John Garzia with the hopes of having due provisions made for the Clergy, pursuant to his Majesty's Instructions to our Governor and Council . . . we find our Expectations therein defeated, by which means we in general are deprived of having the Gospel preached amongst us and very often as well antient as young persons die without Baptism.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> We therefore most humbly pray that your Honours will (out of your abundant Charity and Clemency) take the premises into consideration allowing our said minister to be enter'd into the List of missionaries, and endowing him with such maintenance as to your Honourable Society shall seem meet and your Petitioners (as in duty bound) shall ever pray.[106]

On Sunday, the 9th of February, 1735, the Rev. John Garzia performed divine service and preached before Governor Gabriel Johnston and the Assembly at Edenton, for which he received £20; but payment for his services on this one occasion was no substitute for the annual allowance of an S.P.G. missionary.[107] On 8 May 1735 Garzia himself petitioned the Society for entry upon its list of missionaries. By separate letter, he also relayed his request to Bishop Gibson. Garzia pledged his willingness to carry on with the

good work he had begun, but he begged relief from the poverty under which he and his family groaned, his salary being equivalent only to £24 or £25 sterling. Receiving no response to these overtures, he submitted a similar request during March of the following year.[108]

Despite the petitions of Garzia and his vestrymen, it was not until the spring of 1739 that he was finally entered in the list of S.P.G. missionaries, following the death of S.P.G. missionary, John Boyd, whose center of operations had been Edenton. In addition to the previous petitions, the Society had, by this time, received letters of recommendation for Garzia from the Bishop of London and Governor Gabriel Johnston. At its meeting of 18 May 1739 the governing board of the Society "Agreed that Mr. Garzia be appointed Missionary for North Carolina in the Room of Mr. Boyd deceased with a salary of £50 per annum to commence from Michaelmas last."[109] His territory was to include not only Bath but also all that area of coastal North Carolina "on the North-East Side of the River Newse."[110] To help facilitate Garzia's travel and that of other missionaries, the Assembly voted that all missionaries in the colony should henceforth be granted "free passage in the ferrys over the several Rivers within [their] Missions," with the expense to be borne by the public.[111] Certainly, his long-awaited appointment as a missionary, with its guarantee of £50 a year, must have come as a welcome financial relief to the struggling Garzia, for at the time of Governor Johnston's letter in his behalf, the Parish of St. Thomas had not paid him "his poor Salary . . . for two years and a half past."[112]

Garzia's appointment as a missionary did not come until five years after construction of St. Thomas Church commenced under his encouragement and supervision. There is no indication that a church building of any kind had previously existed at Bath, although this cannot be established with

certainty. The act of 1715, "for Appointing a Town in the County of Bath and Securing the Publick Library in Pamtecough," clearly specified that "Lands [should] be laid out for a Church," and that a church should "be built" on this land. This seems a clear indication that no church had been erected in Bath during the first nine years of its existence as a town.[113] It is also significant to note that the scattered references to existing churches in North Carolina, during the first three decades of the eighteenth century, make no mention of such a structure in or near Bath. In any event, it must be borne in mind that those few churches which did exist prior to St. Thomas, had fallen victim to desuetude and dilapidation by the time of its construction.

The earliest documentary reference to the actual construction of St. Thomas Church is in the petition of 10 October 1734, from the vestry and churchwardens of St. Thomas Parish to the S.P.G. Indeed, the work was then in progress:

> And whereas (as well as the frequent application of the said Reverend Mr. Garzia as of our own earnest inclination to carry on so good a work) we are now building at our own proper Costs a small Church (being the only one in the whole province) but, we fear that our abilities will be far short of compleating and adorning the same as becomes the temple of God.[114]

The subsequent petition from Garzia to the Bishop of London of 8 May 1735 informs us that the external fabric of the church had already been completed, but that Garzia's parishioners could not afford a number of books and interior appointments needed for proper worship:

> . . . having used my best Endeavours with the Vestry and Parishioners to undertake the building of a Brick Church (the walls and roof whereof is just now finished). And whereas your petitioner finds the inhabitants in generall well dispos'd to carry on so good a work, but that their disabilties must put a stop to their good intentions at least for some years: your Petitioner therefore thinks it his bounden duty to lay this their poor Condition and willingness before your

Lordship to intercede with the Society in our behalf, in order to obtain for us the severall necessaries annext hereunto. . . .:

A Bible
2 Common Prayer Books
1 Book of Homilies
Some Monitors agst. Profaneness etc. to
be distributed among my parishioners.
A Font
A Pulpit Cloth and Cushion
A Carpet for the Communion Table
Other conveniences as your Lordship shall
think fit (all being wanting).

By 9 March of the following year Garzia had received no response, and he again asked Bishop Gibson for the "Church bible and two church Common Prayer Books, etc. for the use of our new church being the only one in this Government. . . ."[116] Finally, at its meeting of 15 June 1739, the S.P.G. acknowledged recent receipt of a letter sent by Garzia in July of the previous year, in which he expressed appreciation for their sending him, at long last, "a Folio Bible and Common Prayer Book." These volumes had apparently been three years in coming. Concerning the several other articles requested by Garzia for the decent worship of God in the new church at Bath, the records, unfortunately, are silent.[117]

Regrettably, almost nothing can be learned concerning the actual construction of St. Thomas. We know that the church was begun in 1734 during the early ministry of the Rev. John Garzia. We know, further, the names of nine men who were serving as vestrymen and churchwardens at the time of its construction--Simon Alderson, James Singleton, Charles Odeon, John Odeon, Thomas Jewell, William Willis, John Barrow, Robert Turner, and Edward Salter.[118] Aside from these things, however, the sources offer scarcely a clue as to who the church's builders were, how it was financed, where the materials were obtained, or how it was originally furnished. Indeed, virtually no parish records survive from either the eighteenth or first half of the nineteenth century; all have been lost or destroyed. Nor was the loss of the early

records of St. Thomas a recent development. Their absence was noted by a rector who served St. Thomas in the late 1870s; and it is probable that they had been lost long before his time.[119]

It is almost certain that land for a church had been set aside in the original town plan, and that the construction of a church was prescribed in the act of incorporation of 1706--both documents long since lost. Apparently, the original plan called for a division of the town into seventy-one lots of one half acre each. This basic plan was later retained in the resurvey of the town ordered by the Assembly in 1715, at which time, the size of each lot was to be reduced by "four pole" (approximately 1/10 acre).[120] Three streets were laid out running north and south through the town: Bay Street (later Water and Main Street), running parallel to Bath Creek from Back Creek to the northern boundary of the town; Church Street (now Harding Street), running from the northern limits of the town southward about two-thirds the length of the town; and King Street, running the length of the town along its eastern boundary. It was at first intended that Bay Street should be 100 feet wide, and that Church Street and King Street should each be 66 feet wide. Three streets were also laid out running east and west from Bath Creek to the town's eastern boundary: Front Street, along the shoreline of Back Creek; Craven Street, nine lots to the north, running from Bath Creek eastward to King Street; and Beaufort (later Carteret) Street, twelve lots still further north, also running from Bath Creek eastward to King Street and the town's eastern boundary. Beaufort and Craven streets were also to be 66 feet wide. The intended width of Front Street is uncertain. The sites selected for the church and courthouse by the early town fathers were lots 61 and 62 respectively, on the southwest corner of the intersection formed by Craven and King streets.[121]

The lot on which St. Thomas was to be built (lot 61) was not the gift of Col. Edward Moseley in 1730, as is sometimes maintained.[122] On 7 October 1730 Moseley did indeed make a gift of two lots in Bath to "the church wardens and vestry men of St. Thomas Parish," but this gift consisted of lots thirty and thirty-one, located on Bay Street along the town's northern limits. These lots were separated from the land set aside for the church by two-thirds the length of the town. Moreover, the language of the deed itself implies an intention on Moseley's part that the lots be used for educational or charitable purposes associated with the work of the parish--not as the site for the construction of a church:

> Know ye that I the sd. Edward Moseley for and in consideration of the sum of five shillings to me in hand paid by the Church wardens and vestry men of St. Thomas Parish in Pamptico . . . have given granted and confirmed . . . forever all those two lots of Land in Bath Town with their fronts, known in the plan of the said Town by the numbers 30 and 31. . . .
>
> To have and to hold the same Lots and fronts thereof . . . for the use of a public schoolmaster or reader, or minister appointed by the said Church wardens and vestry which they shall think most proper, or for want of such, then for such other use as shall be by the sd. Church wardens and vestry judged most proper for any Charitable use or improvements of learning; rendering yearly to my heirs at law the sum of six pence at the feast of the maturity of our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.[123]

Like other colonial towns, Bath's early development and configuration did not precisely follow the plans originally drawn up. Although lot 61 had been set aside for the construction of a church, the building was actually erected about fifty feet to the north of its intended location, and in the middle of what was supposed to have been Craven Street. This is shown quite clearly on the Sauthier Map of 1769.[124] It may be that the misplacement of the church was caused by an earlier misplacement of the original courthouse--intended for lot 62, and constructed between 1720 and 1723. Perhaps the courthouse encroached northward onto the proposed site of the church; but this is

mere speculation. Between 1766 and the making of the Sauthier Map three years later, a second courthouse was built at the opposite end of Craven Street near Bath Creek.[125] In any event, it would eventually become necessary for the town commissioners of Bath to cede an additional strip of land to the church property in order to correct the error.[126]

Generally speaking, Anglican churches in Colonial America often reflected English prototypes, although frequently lagging behind in architectural style. They were essentially English in construction and feeling, but they also bore the imprint of pioneer conditions and, often, the lack of money and materials. Frequently they were rather austere in comparison with contemporary English churches, yet they were generally more elaborate than dissenting (non-Anglican) churches or meeting houses of the period in either England or America.[127] With respect to the interiors of colonial Anglican churches, there was a basic pattern to which most conformed: a wooden altar (usually a simple table) within a railed chancel at the east end; inscribed tablets within the chancel, usually containing the Decalogue, Apostles' Creed, and Lord's Prayer; a high pulpit near or amongst the people; high, square type pews, usually raised on a wooden platform one step above the aisles; a floor paved with brick, tiles, slate, or stone; windows of clear glass with rectangular panes in heavy muntins; white paint or whitewash on the interior walls; and galleries at the west end, often added after initial construction to accommodate growing congregations.[128] It is reasonable to assume that the interior of St. Thomas originally incorporated most if not all of these basic elements.

It is almost beyond doubt that the exterior of the original St. Thomas Church, substantially completed in 1735, looked very similar to the restored building of today, although significant questions must later be discussed

concerning a tower, which formerly stood over the entrance, and the possibility that the church originally featured a hip roof. It is apparent that St. Thomas was constructed along the simplest of plans and that its builders were relatively unsophisticated. Emerging from their yeomanlike labors was a plain, nearly rectangular brick building of four bays, with its exterior relieved by few embellishments other than a primitive brick pediment over the front entrance. The present (and presumably original) dimensions of the building are: nave length, 51 feet; nave width, 31 feet; nave height at the sides, 14 feet; bricks, 3" x 4½" x 9" (laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers); and thickness of the walls, 2 feet.[129] A rather obvious indication of St. Thomas's unsophisticated construction lies in the fact that the building is several feet out of square; and this feature was not overlooked by Sauthier in his map of 1769.[130]

Unfortunately, there is scarcely a clue as to the identities of the men whose hands constructed St. Thomas in the mid-1730s. It seems safe to assume, however, that the work was done by local builders who made the best use they could of their limited finances, materials, and skills. The records reveal the names of two Beaufort County men who may have played a role in the actual construction of St. Thomas; but their association with the building cannot be established as anything more than a remote possibility. In September of 1756, two decades after the erection of St. Thomas, the Beaufort County carpenter Frederick Hargott reported to the county court that he had recently completed work on the new courthouse and jail on the plantation of Thomas Bonner, near the future town of Washington. The commissioners who had hired him, at the court's direction, had been Edward Salter, William Spier, and John Hardee. Commissioner Spier testified that he had personally inspected Hargott's work and had found it

> very well done and the best in the Government that he had ever seen and that . . . /he/ at the same time saw Mr. Frederick Hargott deliver the keys of the sd. Court House and Prison.[131]

During this same session of court, a committee of county residents was also appointed to view the new facilities; and it is worthy of note that this committee included another local carpenter, one Richard Dunston.[132] These two carpenters--Frederick Hargott and Richard Dunston--may have had a part in the building of St. Thomas Church some twenty years before; but there is no substantiation of this whatsoever.

Brief mention has already been made of the possibility that St. Thomas originally featured a hip roof. Even to the untrained layman's eye, it is quite apparent that the gable ends of the church are not original. Both the color and size of the brick above the gable lines vary noticeably from those used elsewhere in the building. This variation has prompted one authority on early North Carolina architecture to state that St. Thomas was "Once almost certainly covered by a hipped roof. . . ."[133] Another architectural authority and noted student of churches and worship in colonial America, reached a similar conclusion, although expressed somewhat less emphatically: "In view of the alteration in the brickwork of the gables, it seems probable that it /St. Thomas/ was originally covered by a hip roof."[134]

To be sure, a hip roof would not have been unique to St. Thomas at the time of its construction. While in the neighboring colony of Virginia, churches contemporaneous with St. Thomas often featured steeply pitched roofs with high walls and gable ends, the churches of Maryland were frequently covered by hip roofs, sometimes splayed or "kicked up" at the eaves. Moreover, the colonial churches of Maryland were in general of greater width in proportion to their length, with roofs of a more shallow pitch. The churches of Virginia and Maryland also differed with respect to their windows: in Virginia the windows were tall, arched openings, which, taken with the high walls and gables, produced an overall effect

of lightness and verticality; in Maryland the windows were more nearly square, with segmental rather than rounded or pointed arches. In sum, the Maryland churches exhibited "a certain squat solidarity in contrast to the more vertical lines that characterize the Virginia buildings."[135] At least one noted authority on ecclesiastical architecture in colonial America has drawn attention to the curious fact that St. Thomas and other North Carolina churches shared distinct characteristics with the churches of Maryland:

> Oddly enough these few brick structures in North Carolina bear a much closer resemblance to contemporary Maryland buildings than to those of either of the neighboring states of South Carolina or Virginia. Both St. Thomas' and St. Philips' [Brunswick Town] were at one time strikingly similar to the low hip-roofed, southern Maryland type represented by St. James', Herring Creek. Moreover, St. Pauls', Edenton, has a number of characteristics not unlike those of St. Andrews, Leonardtown, Maryland, finished several decades earlier.[136]

Unfortunately, the question of whether St. Thomas ever bore a hip roof is vastly complicated by the fact that the roof and gables were completely demolished by storm on at least one occasion during the nineteenth century. A discussion of this damage and of the subsequent repairs will be presented at a later point in this report. Suffice it here to say that the variation in size and color of the brick now present in the gables does not of itself demonstrate that the basic configuration of the roof has been altered.[137]

Closely related to the question of the hip roof is the question of whether St. Thomas originally featured a brick tower above the main entrance. That such a tower existed in the nineteenth century is beyond doubt.[138] But whether this tower was a part of the original construction cannot be ascertained from surviving records. In both Virginia and Maryland, towers and steeples were relatively uncommon features of colonial churches. Moreover, those which were constructed were sometimes added long after the main portion of the church was finished.[139] St. Peter's Church in New Kent County, Virginia, for example, was constructed of brick

between 1701 and 1704, with specified dimensions of "Sixty feet long and twenty fower /sic/ feet wide in the clear and fourteen feet pitch with a Gallery Sixteen feet long. . . ."[140] For about twenty years this church remained unchanged. In 1722, however, a belfry was built at its west end, and in 1740 the vestry contracted with a builder "to Erect and Build a Steeple and Vestry Room according to a plan Delivered into the Vestry . . . for the Consideration of One hundred and thirty pounds. . . ."[141] At St. John's Church in Hampton, Virginia, a belfry was added in 1760, more than thirty years after initial construction. Moreover, this addition was demolished by a storm in 1844, about the time that the tower at St. Thomas was destroyed.[142] It may well have been the case that the tower at St. Thomas was also added well after the substantial completion of the church in 1735.

Although there is an almost total absence of documentary records relating to the planning, financing, and building of St. Thomas in 1734-1735, some things of relevance can be learned from information available on earlier and roughly contemporaneous churches in North Carolina and elsewhere.[143]

Some plans for early Anglican churches in North Carolina and her neighboring colonies may have been sent over by the S.P.G., but it seems probable that most were drawn by local builders or "undertakers" according to English models and the needs and instructions of the churchwardens and vestries. In April of 1752, for example, the churchwardens of Suffolk Parish in Nansemond County, Virginia, published the following advertisement for a contractor in the Virginia Gazette:

> To be let the Building of a new Brick Church in Suffolk Parish, near the old one in Chackatuck, on Wednesday the 20th day of May next: A plan of the same is to be produced by the Undertaker.[144]

A similar notice was published during the same month by the vestry of Dettingen Parish in Prince William County, Virginia:

> To be Let to Undertakers, at a Vestry in Dettingen Parish on . . . Tuesday the 20th of May next . . . two Brick or Stone Churches, each to contain in the Clear 1800 /Square/ Feet. Any person or persons inclinable to undertake one or both, may bring in their plans and proposals at that time.[145]

There was, of course, no newspaper being published in Bath or anywhere else in North Carolina in the 1730s; but it is quite possible that the vestrymen and churchwardens of St. Thomas Parish circulated or posted some sort of public notice to prospective builders prior to the beginning of construction in 1734.

That churchwardens and vestrymen could be quite precise in their specifications to the "undertaker" is illustrated in the surviving records of the "old Blanford Church" in Bristol County, Virginia--a church also begun in 1734:

> Order'd that a church be built of Brick on Wellses Hill to be 60 foot by 25 foot in the clear and 15 foot to the spring of the Arch from the floor which is to be at least 18 Inches above the highest part of the ground 3 Bricks thick to the water table and afterwards to the plate, the roof to be fram'd according to a Scheme now before us, the Isle to be 6 foot wide, Lay'd with white Bristol Stone, galerey at the west end as long as the peer will admitt a window in the same as big as the pitch will admit. 7 windows in the body of the Church of suitable dimensions glaz'd with sash glass the floors to be well lay'd with good Inch & ½ plank the Pews to be fram'd the fronts rais'd pannel and ½ round with a decent pulpit and type a decent rail and Ballister round the altar place and a table suitable thereto as usual, the roof to be first cover'd with plank and shingled on that with good Cypress Hart Shingles. Cornice Eves large board eves and Suitable doors as usual the whole to be done strong and workmanlike in the best plain manner to be finished by the last of July 1737. Stone steps to each door suitable.[146]

One can only wish that such detailed specifications had been preserved for St. Thomas.

Perhaps the most instructive comparisons to be drawn between St. Thomas and other colonial churches are those with St. Pauls, Edenton, begun in 1736. Although St. Pauls is a larger and more architecturally imposing church, the materials, financing, and methods of construction must have been similar in many ways. St. Pauls's nave is sixty feet long and forty feet wide, exceeding the dimensions of St. Thomas by nine feet in both respects. The side walls of St. Pauls are twenty feet tall, six feet taller than those of St. Thomas. The bricks used in the two churches are roughly similar in size--2½" x 4" x 8½" in St. Pauls, 3" x 4½" x 9" in St. Thomas.[147] Preparatory work on St. Pauls began in March of 1736 with the clearing of the lot on Broad Street in Edenton. From 1 May until the winter of 1737 the following expenditures were recorded by the vestry for materials and labor:

> 'May 10, 1736, to money for clearing lots, 12£; August 6, 1736, To paid for 215 bu/shels/. of shells at 1 shilling, 6 pence, 8£, 7 shillings, 6 pence; same date paid in part of bricks 100£. September 22, 1736, 100£; January 4, to Mr. Bonner, 36£. In 1737, the following items appear: paid for 3,874 /sic?/ bu. shells, ½ ton iron, 95£, (to make nails), and scaffolding rope 4£, 16 shillings, and hides for scaffolding, 9£; a hogshead to fetch water, 1£; the bricklayer 561£; 3½ days labor 2 Negroes each, 3£, 10 shillings; to money paid for Gabb'd /?/ work on East widnow, 20£. . . .'[148]

The above costs for material and labor reveal that the first stages of work at St. Pauls began with the clearing of land in March of 1736 and continued until 5 December 1737, when the sum of £561 was "paid the bricklayer." The total expenditures during this period were apparently £1,220, 17s, 6d.[149] This amount was probably twice the total cost of St. Thomas.

Surviving records relating to the Anglican churches of eastern Virginia indicate that the total cost of building an uncomplicated brick church ranged generally between £400 and £600.[150] Probably the cost of constructing St. Thomas fell roughly within that range, when all work and materials

had been paid for. It is also probable that most of this money was raised by private subscription, most of it coming from men of relative prominence in the Bath area. This was clearly the case with St. Pauls, Edenton, where men of wealth and influence contributed as much as £100 toward the building costs. Parishioners of lesser means also contributed to the costs of St. Pauls in accordance with their capacities and religious zeal.[151] Indeed, the Virginia Gazette of 15 October 1736 stated that a "a great part of the Charge" for beginning St. Pauls was "to be defrayed by the generous Subscription of well-disposed Gentlemen, and the remainder by the Parish." Additional monies for St. Thomas may have come from the levying of a tax of up to 5s. per poll on all taxable residents of the parish, but such a tax would undoubtedly have been widely resisted and poorly collected.[152]

It should be pointed out that St. Pauls, unlike St. Thomas, had not reached a stage of completion sufficient to allow worship services after nearly two years of work. In 1740 the Assembly, meeting in Edenton, authorized a tax within St. Pauls Parish for completion of the church. In point of fact, it was not until April of 1760 that the first meeting was held in St. Pauls, and not until 1774 that the finishing touches were finally applied to the interior.[153] By this time, St. Thomas had been in use for nearly four decades.

St. Thomas and St. Pauls, begun at approximately the same time, are the two oldest brick churches still standing in North Carolina, with St. Thomas clearly the older of the two. Only three other Anglican or Episcopal churches remain standing in the state built before 1807--all simple frame structures: St. Davids (Pettigrew's Chapel), near Creswell in Washington County; St. Johns, Williamsboro; and Trinity Church, Chocowinity.[154]

Time after time, it has been stated that the bricks used in St. Thomas were brought over from England. Similar statements have been made about

numerous other brick buildings erected along the eastern seaboard during the colonial period. In the absence of documentary records, it is nearly impossible to give these claims the lie; but it can be argued with reasonable certainty that they partake of more fancy than fact in almost every case. In the struggling colony of North Carolina, indeed in the area of Bath itself, bricks were being manufactured at a very early date. Writing of North Carolina in the first decade of the eighteenth century, Bath resident John Lawson informed the outside world that "We there make extraordinary good Bricks throughout the Settlement."[155] He also noted the fact that brick construction in Bath and elsewhere in coastal North Carolina was greatly facilitated by the abundance of oysters and other shell fishes used in the manufacture of lime.[156] Records pertaining to the construction of St. Pauls, Edenton, show that at least £200 were paid out for bricks; and the fact that these bricks were supplied by the same man who cleared the church lot produces a very strong presumption that they were manufactured locally.[157] Indeed, the presumption is strengthened still further by a notice which appeared in the Virginia Gazette of 15 October 1736: "Edenton, October 4. A large, handsome Brick Church, with a Steeple, is shortly to be built here, many of the bricks being already burnt. . . ."[158] The brick for St. Thomas may have been brought as ballast from England, as tradition asserts; but this is highly unlikely. After dealing with numerous similar claims for the colonial churches of Virginia, it was "confidently asserted" by one authority that "none . . . was built with English brick."[159]

Other legends are attached to St. Thomas Church and to particular features or articles associated with it. Perhaps the most notable of these is the tradition that the venerable bell now hanging in the churchyard was cast in England in 1732 and sent as a gift to the church as a part of the

good works accomplished by Queen Anne's Bounty--a fund established in 1704 by the last and most beloved of the Stuart monarchs. For many years this bell (recast and enlarged in 1872) has been constantly referred to as "Queen Anne's Bell." Whether the appealing story of the bell's origin is true cannot be ascertained with certainty. It should be pointed out, however, that Queen Anne's Bounty was established as a fund for the relief of impoverished Anglican clergymen in England. It seems doubtful that funds would have been drawn from this source for the purchase and shipment of a bell intended for a small port in colonial North Carolina. Moreover, it is obvious that a bell would not have been cast specifically for St. Thomas Church two years before construction began. Certainly the bell cannot be said to have any personal connection with Queen Anne herself, for she had passed into rest in 1714, only eight years after Bath's incorporation.[160]

Similar claims of a royal origin have long been made for the three-branched candelabra at St. Thomas, said to have been given about 1740 by King George II. This possibility cannot be dismissed out of hand, for it seems certain that some articles for colonial Anglican churches were indeed royal gifts, especially ornamental ware for use on the altar or in the administering of the sacraments: "Countless churches take great pride in their silver bearing the royal arms and monograms."[161] At least until the early decades of this century, Christ Church in New Bern retained possession of a silver communion service and alms basin, engraved, "Presented by George the II, King of England." It was the opinion of Bishop Joseph Blount Cheshire that these articles had been presented originally to the Royal Chapel of St. Philips, Brunswick Town, and that they were later given to Christ Church by Governor William Tryon, when New Bern became the seat of royal government.[162]

Another article which adorned the altar at St. Thomas during the early years of the church's existence is the silver chalice supposed to have been sent to the Rev. John Garzia by the Bishop of London, Edmund Gibson, about 1738. This chalice bears the simple inscription, "D. D. Johannes Garzia, Ecclesiae Anglicanae Presbyter."[163] Curiously, and for some unaccountable reason, this chalice was for 180 years in the custody of St. Pauls, Edenton. It was not until 1927 that it was finally returned to St. Thomas by the venerable rector of St. Pauls, the Rev. Robert Brent Drane.[164]

At its meeting of 16 April 1741, the S.P.G. acknowledged receipt of a letter from Garzia, requesting that

> a Silver Cup with the stalk and plate of any other proper Metal, may be sent him, for the decent administering of the Lords Supper, at his own Expense and payable out of his Salary.[165]

In September of 1743 Garzia had still not received the communion cup he had asked for, but the S.P.G. had long since sent it "to Mr. Commissary /Alexander/ Garden at Charles Town in South Carolina to be transmitted to him."[166] In fact, the silver cup did not finally reach Bath until 1747, three years after Garzia's death. At that time it was placed in the hands of Garzia's widow, Mary, by none other than the Rev. George Whitefield.[167] Apparently the surviving chalice is the "cup" so long awaited by Garzia and finally delivered by Whitefield. If Garzia had received the gift of a chalice as early as 1738, it is difficult to understand why he would still have been seeking a vessel "for the decent administering of the Lord's Supper" some three years later. Apparently, too, the chalice was purchased by Garzia rather than received as a gift from the Bishop of London.

At the time of its completion, St. Thomas, Bath, was the only church in North Carolina in which Anglican worship was being held; and the Rev. John Garzia was one of only three Anglican clergymen in the colony. Moreover,

in September of 1737 it was reported that Garzia in Bath and the minister in New Bern were living in "great poverty," and that missionary John Boyd in Edenton had made a reputation for himself as "one of the vilest and most scandalous persons in the government."[168] The condition of the church in North Carolina was not a happy one; nor were its prospects promising. In his speech to the Colonial Assembly at New Bern on 6 February 1739, Governor Gabriel Johnston animadverted upon the near prostrate and rather ironical state of Anglican worship in the colony--a colony settled primarily by Englishmen and one in which the Church of England was "by law established":

> The Establishment of the Public Worship of Almighty God, as it is the greatest Foundation of the Happiness of Society, and without which, you cannot expect his Protection, deserves your earliest Care. That in such a wide extended Province as this, inhabited by British Subjects, by Persons professing themselves Christians, there should be but Two Places /Bath and New Bern/ where Divine Service is regularly performed, is really scandalous: It is a Reproach peculiar to this Part of His Majesty's Dominions, which you ought to remove without loss of Time.[169]

It was within this virtual vacuum of Anglican worship in North Carolina that Garzia labored for the Lord at Bath and in the vast area which lay about it on all sides.

Even before assuming the additional duties of an S.P.G. missionary in 1739, Garzia had toiled manfully. From 1 January 1734 until 21 May 1738, it appears from his reports that he baptized 1,757 persons.[170] On 16 April 1741 Garzia, now a missionary for two years, reported that during that time he had baptized 519 persons, eleven of whom were converted Quakers. He estimated that there were 9,000 men, women, and children within his parish and mission field, but that of these, only 99 were communicants--27 within St. Thomas Parish and 72 residing outside the parish. He further reported that there were twelve Roman Catholics ("Papists") within his parish and about 200 "Infidels."[171] During the following year, Garzia bapitzed "623 Infants

besides 9 Adults and 3 Negroes," and the total number of his communicants rose slightly to 103. The number of "Heathen and Infidels" in his parish and mission field he estimated to be an alarming "two thousand or thereabouts."[172] By September of 1743 there were 40 "communicants in his Resident Parish of Bath Town, and in the other parts of his Mission 117."[173]

During the year 1739, the same year in which Garzia was finally added to the list of S.P.G. missionaries, Bath was visited by the great English evangelist, George Whitefield, whose eloquent and energetic sermons up and down the Atlantic seaboard were serving as a catalyst for the outburst of religious fervor known as the "Great Awakening." Despite Garzia's tireless efforts to serve his parish and vast mission field, it is reasonable to speculate that he would have regarded Whitefield's coming with mingled feelings of resentment and awe. For his part, Whitefield seems to have had a rather condescending attitude toward Garzia, giving him little credit for either the substance or delivery of his sermons. Indeed, Whitefield later alleged, in a letter to the Bishop of Oxford, that Garzia could "scarce speak English."[174] This almost surely was a gross exageration, for Garzia had been serving as a minister in Virginia and North Carolina for fifteen years by the time of Whitefield's visit. Moreover, his letters betray no severe lack of facility in the language of the American colonists.

Whitefield arrived in Bath on the evening of 22 December, made Garzia's acquaintance, and the next day delivered a sermon to those who had gathered to hear him. Whitefield's account of the visit, though possibly self-serving, clearly insinuates that Garzia's pulpit oratory was not in a league with his own:

> Sunday, Dec. 23. Sent to the minister of the place, and had some conversation with him last night. Preached about noon, to nearly a hundred people, which, I found, was an extraordinary

> congregation, there being seldom more than twenty at church. I felt the Divine presence, and did not spare to tell my hearers that I thought God was angry with them, because he had sent a famine of the Word among them for a long while, and not given them a teaching priest. All seemed attentive to what was spoken. After sermon, one poor woman came with a full heart, desiring my prayers. I asked her whether she knew Christ; she answered she had been seeking Him for some time, but wanted to find a minister who had understanding in Divine things. This case is not uncommon.[175]

It is not at all clear from Whitefield's account whether his sermon was delivered in St. Thomas Church itself; but it is at least possible that such was the case. It is certain that he occupied the pulpit of colonial Anglican churches on other occasions, despite his controversial propensity for preaching in open fields.[176] Whitefield's account does make it clear, however, that St. Thomas was in regular use by the time of his visit, and that its congregation was usually a rather small one.

During the last three years of Garzia's ministry, the Anglican establishment in North Carolina operated at least nominally under the provisions of the vestry act of 1741, an act which repealed the earlier legislation of 1715. This later act increased the number of parishes in the colony to sixteen, and included revised provisions for the building of churches, the support of the clergy, and the biennial election of vestries.[177]

The 1741 act was the first to call for the election of vestrymen by the freeholders of the parish, and this innovation should have had the effect of making the vestries more responsible and more easily held to account. Surprisingly, the relationship between the Rev. John Garzia and his vestrymen and parishioners does not appear to have been entirely harmonious at any time, however. All indications are that Garzia was a devoted and hard-working shepherd to his flock; nevertheless, his efforts were repaid, at least in some respects, with ingratitude and niggardliness. It will be recalled that in 1739 Garzia was reported to be "starving with his wife and

three children" some five years after being induced by "fair promises" to come from Virginia.[178] In 1741 the S.P.G. received the even more shameful tidings that Garzia had

> been obliged to have recourse to Law for the small Allowance to him of thirty seven Pounds ten Shillings per Annum, notwithstanding the great Extent of his Cure.[179]

During the following year, 1742, poor Garzia finally unburdened himself in a letter to the S.P.G., complaining bitterly of his shabby treatment and of the recalcitrant and unrepentent members of his vestry and parish who were responsible for his plight:

> I do beg the favour of you to inform their Honours with my endeavours, to promote goodness, christianity and the true Religion among the Inhabitants within my mission, but immorality has arrived to that head among so many, that it requires not only some time but great patience to conquer it; because upon my preaching upon any prevalent and predominant Sin, I must be prepared to stand the persecution of those who are guilty of it, especially in my resident Parish, in which adultery, Incest, Blasphemy, and all kinds of profaneness has got such deep root.
>
> I shall be more large in my next. In the meantime I stand the oppression of an inveterate and obstinate Parish, govern'd by twelve Vestry men, whose only endeavour is to hinder and obstruct the Service of God, and dissuading as much as possible others from it and who in a particular manner exercise their malice daily against me, by depriving me of my quietness of mind and enjoyment of the small Salary of £37:10s per annm allow'd by law, and which I am obliged to have recourse to recover, having had nothing these 4 years for the support of my Family, but what is allow'd to me by the Honble Society. . . .[180]

It certainly seems that Garzia should have received far better treatment than he did from his vestrymen and parishioners.

Outside the pastoral duties of his parish and mission field, Garzia involved himself, as all men must, in the secular affairs of the world. In 1735, the year following his arrival in Bath, he was granted title to a tract of land encompassing 1,280 acres on the east side of South Dividing Creek near Bath.[181] During this same year, on the 10th of June, he also acquired three contiguous lots in Bath itself--lots 49, 50, and 51, situated

in the northeast corner of town between Church and King streets. These three vacant lots had formerly belonged to one Michael McDonagh, but they had reverted for sale by the town commissioners due to McDonagh's failure to improve them. Garzia purchased the three lots for £4.10s, and he, too, fell under the obligation to build "a habitable house" on them. Presumably, Garzia maintained a residence on one or more of these lots during most of his ten years' ministry at St. Thomas.[182]

In October of 1744 the Rev. John Garzia was fatally injured in a fall from his horse while visiting the sick of his parish. His death was reported to the S.P.G. by the Rev. Clement Hall of Edenton, who had recently returned from England with a missionary's appointment of his own.[183] Garzia's death was also reported to the S.P.G. by his widow, Mary, in the first of several letters pleading for assistance for herself and her children. The letter was written on Christmas Eve of 1744:

> Rev. Sir
> My husband the reverend John Garzia is dead and i am left a poor widow in a strange land with three children and veri much in debt . . . [with] not anything to live upon my condition is veri deplorable. foreign goods and provisions are veri dear in this place since the war [King George's War] the salary this contri allows the clergy is a triffle and that veri ill paid[.] Mr. Garzia was forced to go to law for it and recovered it but is not yet paid[.] he died of a fall of his horse as he was comin at some distance from home. . . . Pray good Sr be so good as to lay these few lines before the honourable Society and i humbly beg their lordships will please to answer a poor minister's widow so as to help me to get over my troubles which are very great at this time.[184]

As events unfolded, the widow Garzia and her fatherless children were to live on in Bath for many years in an impoverished and pitiable condition, unrelieved by either kindness or charity, save that of the S.P.G.

During the summer of 1748 the Rev. Clement Hall of Edenton was moved to write to the S.P.G. on behalf of Garzia's destitute family, even though the Society had already extended at least some assistance to them:

> I learn that the widow Garzia is but in low circumstances, chiefly by reason of her deceased's Husband's Expenses and trouble in sueing for his Dues, which occasioned him to be very much behind hand in the world and ye creditors of late have sold all both Lands and Houses. She returns hearty thanks to ye Honourable Society for their former bounty to her and desires to know whether there is anything allowed yearly for Missionaries Widows--Since the war commenced Goods are excessively dear and besides ye Industry of herself and children she hath but little left to support herself withal. She humbly prays ye Worthy Society to consider her helpless condition and allow her some further supply as they shall think proper, whereby she may be able to redeem her Lots and Houses and to maintain herself and three children (with their own care and industry) from penury and contempt.[185]

In May of the following year Mary Garzia again wrote to the S.P.G., expressing gratitude for past relief, but asking that additional assistance be given so that she and her children might "not perish in a strange land."[186] She had, by this time, lost the house which her husband had built in Bath, and was now renting from the very creditor who had seized it.[187] During the ensuing months the plight of the Garzias apparently worsened still further. At its meeting of 19 April 1751, the Society considered another of her supplications:

> A Letter from Mrs. Garzia, Widow of Mr. Garzia, late one of the Missionaries in North Carolina, Dated Bath Town in North Carolina, Jan. 8 1750/51, setting forth that her condition was so very deplorable, that she had not at that time a Farthing to relieve her wants, and that she had already sold almost all her goods out of mere necessity for subsistence, having lost her health for 12 months past, and was in danger of having her Bed taken from under her, that she must utterly perish, if not releived by the Society, which she hopes out of their great goodness will grant some present relief to help her pay her small debts and keep her from starving.[188]

In response to this plea, the Society agreed that the Rev. Clement Hall should "make a particular Enquiry into the Circumstances of Mrs. Garzia, and if he finds her in the condition represented in her Letter, he be Impowered, to relieve her as far as five pounds."[189] There can be little doubt that the widow Garzia's circumstances were found by Hall to be pitiable, and that

they remained so for many years. As late as May of 1760, the Rev. Alexander Stewart took it upon himself to inform the Society that Mary Garzia was "really an Object of Charity."[190] Indeed, according to her own letter, which accompanied Stewart's, her circumstances were now rendered even more wretched by the creeping infirmities of age and by approaching blindness. Once again, and possibly for the last time, the Society "Resolved to give Mrs. Garzia the Sum of Five Pounds."[191] She does not appear again in the records.

Notwithstanding her long and grinding poverty, there is good documentary evidence that Mary Garzia was somehow able to regain possession of at least some of her husband's properties in and near Bath. In 1794, fifty years after the death of his father, John Garzia, "of the State of Rhode Island, Mariner," executed a deed in Bath in which he conveyed town lots 49, 50, and 51 and the South Dividing Creek tract of 1,280 acres to William Farris for a recited consideration of 400 silver dollars. In this conveyance it was specifically stated that these properties had been "patented in the /year/ 1735 by John Garzia, Father of the present conveyor."[192] Whatever may have led the younger John Garzia to take up the life of a seaman, it is hardly surprising that he did not follow his father into the ministry.

For a period of nine years following Garzia's death, Bath and St. Thomas Church were without the regular services of an Anglican clergyman. In 1747, however, the town, and perhaps the church, again rang with the inspired oratory of the Rev. George Whitefield. According to Mary Garzia, Whitefield was the first minister to visit Bath since the death of her husband three years before.[193] From 6 October to 11 October, 1747, Whitefield wrote no fewer than eight letters from Bath--letters which reflect a generally gloomy assessment of the area's spiritual well-being. In several of these letters

he referred to the area as an "ungospelized wilderness"; but, nothing daunted, he exhibited a firm resolve to strike a blow for righteousness. On 11 October, for example, he wrote:

> At present I am hunting after poor lost sinners in these ungospelized wilds. People are willing to hear, and blessed be the Lord of all lords, I am willing to preach.[194]

In another letter of the same day, he expressed a similar resolve, while embellishing somewhat his previous descriptions of the region:

> I am now proclaiming it /the Word/ in these Uncultivated ungospelized desserts. People hear with great attention, and I trust ere long news will be heard in heaven, that some North Carolina sinners are born of God. I stayed but a small time in Virginia and Maryland, that I might give this province more time.[195]

Whitefield departed from Bath in poor health, his body "weak and crazy," and he may not have been able to devote as much time as he had hoped to the "ungospelized wilderness" so much in need of his preaching. According to one source, Whitefield passed through Bath twice more (in 1764 and 1765) in the course of his extensive evangelism along the eastern seaboard of America; but he does not seem to have preached there on either of these occasions.[196] The well known legend that Whitefield placed a curse on Bath for its inhospitality, so that it would never grow beyond the size of a village, does not seem to have any basis in fact. There is no indication that Whitefield suffered ill treatment at the hands of Bath's citizens. Moreover, he visited the town on at least two and possibly four occasions.

Although the pulpit at St. Thomas was unoccupied during the late 1740s and early 1750s, the leadership of the church was not entirely moribund during this period. In 1748 its vestrymen and churchwardens petitioned the S.P.G. for a missionary and they again held out fair promises for his adequate compensation and support. Apparently, earlier attempts to secure a missionary through Governor Gabriel Johnston had proved unavailing:

> We the Churchwardens and Vestry Men of the Parish of St. Thomas in the Province of North Carolina, Having taken into our Consideration the deplorable state of our Parish for these four years past; for want of a goodly Minister amongst us to Preach the Holy Gospel and Baptise our children and administer the Holy Sacrament to such good Christians as is desirable of it, and to instruct Youth and sett a good example to the people in general, . . . we think it our indisputable duty to use all possible means to gett a good Minister as soon as possible . . . being assured we never can expect the blessing of God Almighty upon us without using the means contained for obtaining the same.
>
> We therefore as soon as possible the state of our Parish would permit after the death of our late Parson the Revd John Garzia applied ourselves to his Excellency Gabriel Johnston our Govr and ordinary of this Province for his advice and assistance in what measure we should supply our want in getting a good Minister. His Excellent /sic/ with great willingness immediately gave us the assurance of the assistance of his power accordingly wrote to his Lordship the Bishop of London on our behalf which gave us great hopes of being supplied with a goodly Minister in a short time. But to our great misfortune and grief about six monthsago His Excellent /sic/ advised us he had no account from his Lordship . . . and likewise advised us to apply any other way we could think most proper to get our want supplied--And indeed worthy Sirs wee could not think of any way so likely for success as applying ourselves to your Hon/ora/ble Society. . . .
>
> The encouragement that is in our power at present to give a good Minister is Fifty pound proclamation Money as by Law of this Province Established, and a good Glebe containing 300 acres of good Land, a Dwelling House and Kitching /sic/ in good repair, on the said Glebe and Twenty pound Sterling Money as at present when arrived at the Parish Church of St. Thomas. This Gentlemen with your assistance and the prospect of doing good to so many Souls we hope will be a suffcient motive to move some good man to come to us, and as our Parish is daily increasing we hope in short time to be able to add something to the yearly stipend, thus Gentlemen having laid our case before you, wee heartily begg God's blessing and your kind assistance upon our endeavours which will lay a lasting obligation upon the whole Parish. . . .[197]

This petition failed to mention that the glebe lands had not been cleared and that no glebe house or kitchen had been built. Nor did it allude to the fact that the Rev. John Garzia's salary had long gone unpaid, and that his widow and three children had been reduced to near starvation. But Governor Gabriel Johnston was doubtless aware of these circumstances; and the S.P.G. was having to assist the Garzias during the very period that the St. Thomas petition was being submitted for its consideration. Whether this

petition was greeted in London by skepticism is not recorded; but, in any event, it was to be five more years before St. Thomas received another minister.[198]

Although the petition of 1748 spoke of St. Thomas Parish as "daily increasing," the relative importance of Bath within North Carolina was already well on the wane. At the time of St. Thomas's construction, Bath had been surpassed in size only by Edenton. During the next three decades, however, it was surpassed in both size and importance by five or six other towns. The governor and his council met in Bath on several occasions during the 1730s and 1740s, and the Assembly met there in 1744 and 1752; but Bath's nearest approach to political supremacy came during the summer of 1746, when it was nearly chosen instead of New Bern as the seat of colonial government.[199] Had Bath succeeded in her aspiration of becoming the colonial capital, the history of St. Thomas Church might have been very different.

Finally, during the fall of 1753, the parishioners of St. Thomas were blessed by the arrival of the Rev. Alexander Stewart--an Irish minister who was to serve them faithfully and well until his death in 1771. Stewart had come to North Carolina as chaplain to the household of the new governor and fellow-Irishman, Arthur Dobbs. It had been his intention to occupy the pulpit of Christ Church, New Bern; but finding that pulpit already occupied by the Rev. James Reed, he accepted instead the call to Bath, where he assumed his duties on 1 October. Upon the recommendation of Governor Dobbs, and at the request of the vestry and churchwardens, Stewart was subsequently entered upon the rolls of the S.P.G. as a missionary to St. Thomas Parish, with a salary of £50 per annum. In addition to his salary as a missionary, it was agreed that he be paid £75 a year by the parish.[200] Stewart's coming to North Carolina may have involved a considerable sacrifice on his part,

for he had given up a curacy in Ireland with a guaranteed salary of £40 and, more importantly, the prospects of a bright and secure future in the Church of Ireland.[201]

Alexander Stewart had been born at Lisburn in County Antrim, Ireland, in 1723. The precise date of his birth is not known, but he was baptized in Lisburn Cathedral on the 15th of April. His mother is thought to have been the former Rose Hall, daughter of Roger Hall, Esquire, of Narrow Water Castle, Scotland. His father was Captain Charles Stewart, formerly of Pertshire, Scotland, and a man of considerable prominence and wealth. Young Stewart was educated at Dr. Johnston's school in Dublin and at the University of Dublin, where he took his B.A. in the spring of 1744 and an M.A. within the next two years. From 1746 until 1748 he served as curate in Glenavy Parish, County Antrim; and from 1748 to his departure for North Carolina he served as curate in Loughguile Parish of the same county. It seems probable that he was related to Governor Arthur Dobbs, although the nature of the relationship is not known.[202]

There is some reason to believe that the Rev. Alexander Stewart brought with him to Bath a wife and two sons, all three of whom died shortly after his arrival.[203] If so, however, it is curious to note that none of his surviving letters makes reference to this tragic loss. Indeed, the whole question of Stewart's marriages is one which is veiled in obscurity. Although the records are sketchy and confusing, it seems possible that he was married to five different women during the eighteen years of his ministry at Bath. Even allowing for the possibility that several of his marriages were terminated by the early death of his consorts, this would certainly seem to have exceeded the bounds of both propriety and moderation.

Whether or not Stewart did, in fact, lose a wife shortly after his

arrival in Bath, he was by 1755 married to Elizabeth Porter, widow of John Peyton Porter, who had died in April of 1754. Porter had been the owner of the plantation on Durham's Creek known as the "Garrison"; and it was through his marriage to the widow Porter that Stewart came into possession of that rather extensive estate. Born to this union in 1757 was a daughter and only child, Rosa; and it was from this child's future marriage to the English official John Kewell, that all of Stewart's descendants were to issue.[204] It seems very likely that Elizabeth Stewart died during or shortly after Rosa's birth. In any event, Stewart soon married, in the person of Penelope Johnston, a young lady who represented one of the most prominent families then extant in colonial North Carolina. Penelope Johnston was the niece of former Governor Gabriel Johnston (1734-1752). Moreover, her father, Samuel Johnston, had himself been a man of considerable prominence and wealth. Among the positions he held were those of surveyor general, justice of the peace, and public treasurer. At his death in 1757, he left an estate of some 10,000 acres in Craven and Onslow counties, including his New River plantation near New Bern. No less distinguished were the brothers and sisters-in-law gained by Parson Stewart through his marriage to Miss Johnston. One of her sisters married the prominent Edenton merchant, George Blair. Another died shortly before her slated marriage to Joseph Hewes, merchant and future signer of the Declaration of Independence. Still another married the Edenton lawyer James Iredell, who would later become a United States Supreme Court Justice. Among Stewart's brothers-in-law was Samuel Johnston, long time member of the Colonial Assembly, patriot leader, representative to the Continental Congress of 1780-1781, governor of North Carolina (1787-1789), and United States senator (1790-1793). These were luminous connections indeed for the parson of a small colonial church. Unfortunately, however, this marriage, too, was soon

brought to a close.[205] By 1763 Penelope Stewart was dead, and the ever ardent Stewart had taken to wife the former Sarah Coutanch, widow of Captain Michael Coutanch of Bath--builder of the Palmer-Marsh House and a vestryman of St. Thomas Parish.[206]

During the summer of 1764, the Reverend Alexander Stewart suffered the loss of yet another wife, presumably the former Sarah Countanch. In a subsequent letter to the S.P.G. of 20 November, he reported that she had been carried off by "the Flux," an epidemic affliction which had "raged with uncommon violence since I wrote you last and been more mortal than ever I knew any other Distemper. . . ."[207] Finally, Stewart is said to have married a Miss Hobbs.[208] She was presumably the widow named Elizabeth who survived him in 1771, and successfully defended his estate against a claim by Robert Palmer for £100 in the Superior Court of the Edenton District.[209]

When Stewart came to the pulpit of St. Thomas and to the mission field surrounding it, he took upon himself an exhausting and difficult responsibility. The vast area under his pastoral care as a missionary included all or most of present-day Beaufort, Hyde, and Pitt counties. In addition to his parish church, he served an eventual total of thirteen widely scattered chapels. Throughout much of his ministry, he kept two regular monthly appointments on each side of the Pamlico River, preaching on alternate Sundays at St. Thomas Church and on the south side of the river some five miles distant by water. Nor were his labors confined to the white settlers alone. Much of his work was done among Negroes and the pathetic remnants of the several Indian tribes which had once been present in far greater numbers. He visited the "Attamuskeets," the Roanoke, and Hatteras Indians of Hyde County whenever he was able, endeavoring to spread among them the teachings of Christianity. Beginning in 1763, as an agent of the benevolent

society known as "Dr. Bray's Associates," he also established a school in Hyde County, obtaining books and employing a school-mistress to assist with instruction in the area.[210]

The surviving reports which Stewart submitted to the S.P.G. help to reveal the vastness of his task and the apparent incessancy with which toiled. In November of 1754 he reported that he had baptized 395 white persons and 27 blacks since the first of the year, and that he had administered the sacrament of Holy Communion to 220 individuals. At this early stage in his ministry at St. Thomas, Stewart estimated that there were within the parish about 3,000 inhabitants, most of whom were "well affected to the Church." There were, however, "a few Ignorant Anabaptists," intermingled with the nominally Anglican settlers, and Stewart requested that the Society "send him some good books, more especially on the Excellency of the Common Prayer and on the importance of Infant Baptism to distribute among them."[211] In 1758 Stewart published his own defense of infant baptism against the Anabaptists' heresy. His Validity of Infant Baptism was published at New Bern by James Davis, and over 400 copies are believed to have been circulated within North Carolina. Only one copy of this work is known to exist today, located in the library of Harvard University.[212]

On 10 October 1760 Stewart reported that during the past year he had baptized 203 white infants, 39 black infants, 4 white adults, and 14 black adults. He had also administered the Lords Supper to 235 communicants during this same period. The number of residents within his parish he now estimated to be 2,100, and he again noted the annoying presence of Anabaptism among them.[213] On 22 May of the following year, 1761, Stewart had reason to report that a "material alteration" had been made in the extent and population of his parish, for the Assembly had recently passed legislation creating Pitt

County and St. Michaels Parish out of what had previously been part of Beaufort County and St. Thomas Parish. As a result of this division, Stewart reckoned that he had "lost the better half of his white parishioners, so that the whole number of whites in the Parish of St. Thomas' is not now quite 1,000 besides about 400 taxable negroes." He was, however, continuing to serve within the newly formed county and parish, in the absence of a resident minister there.[214] Similar reports by Stewart on his pastoral activities survive from the mid and late 1760s.[215] One of these reports makes a fleeting reference to St. Thomas Church itself--that 34 "orderly communicants" had partaken of the Lord's Supper within its walls on Christmas day of 1768, and that 38 communicants had presented themselves at the altar the following Easter.[216]

Early on in his ministry at Bath, Stewart acted to supply the want of a library, the original library sent in by Dr. Bray in 1700 having apparently been lost to the parish by this time. This second library was by no means on a scale with the first, but its presence in Bath should nevertheless be noted. In his report to the S.P.G. on 12 November 1754, the first since his arrival at Bath, Stewart included not only his request for books "on the Excellency of the Common Prayer and the importance of Infant Baptism" for combating the Anabaptists, but also "a folio Bible and Common Prayer book for the Church and a Library for the use of the Missionary of which he had great need." In response to this request the Society

> Agreed to . . . send Mr. Stewart a folio Bible and Common Prayer book for the Church in Bath Town and Forty Shillings worth of small Tracts, among them Bishop Beveridges Sermon on the Common Prayer and the abridgement of Mr. Wall on Infant Baptism, and a Library of ten pounds Value for the use of the Missionary at Bath Town for the time being.[217]

By January of 1755 Stewart had received a shipment of pamphlets sent by the Society, and by May of 1757 he had received "the books for a Missionary's

Library." In subsequent shipments of books to Stewart, the Society is known to have sent "Stackhouse's History of the Bible" and "twenty shillings worth of small Tracts."[218] Armed with this small library, together with his own publication in defense of infant baptism, Stewart endeavored to check the spread of heterodoxy and promote the doctrinal positions and forms of worship espoused by the Church of England.

Although Governor Arthur Dobbs may have been predisposed to look upon Stewart's labors with favor, his letter to the S.P.G. of 13 December 1754 provides useful information concerning St. Thomas Church, the parish in general, and Stewart's early acceptance:

> At Bath Town the Church is finished and Devine Service performed in it. There are about 20 Families in that Town, but the Parish which is very large has several distant Chapels where Mr. Stewart officiates in their towns and discharges his Duty to the Satisfaction of his Parishioners, they allow him £75 Sterling per annum and it gives Mr. Dobbs pleasure, that Mr. Stewart answers the good Character he gave him to the Society.[219]

Dobbs's letter also provides valuable first-hand information on the state of the Anglican Church in North Carolina as a whole, and on the condition of its individual churches. Soon after his arrival in the colony, Dobbs had made a special effort to

> traverse the whole Country near the Sea Coast from the Northern Boundary to the mouth of the Cape Fear River near the Southern Boundary, and he had made the best inquiry he could into the State of Religion and the Established Church in the Province

He reported that there were in the colony about 80,000 inhabitants and only six Anglican clergymen to carry on the ministry among them. He stated that the church in Edenton was not yet finished, "but when done it will be a neat brick church." Edenton was said to contain about fifty families--more than twice the number in Bath. The church in New Bern, "a pretty neat Brick church," was reported finished, with worship services being held regularly.

In Wilmington, the largest town in the province with ninety families, worship services were being held in the courthouse, but a house of worship was in the process of erection: "[The] Church will be a Brick one, more than 60 feet long and 40 broad." Old St. Philips at Brunswick Town was also reported to be underway: "The Inhabitants of Cape Fear are building a brick Church at Brunswick 76 feet long and 56 broad. . . ." Dobbs pleaded with the Society to provide additional clergymen for North Carolina, especially for service in the interior and along the expanding western frontier.[220]

Only shortly after his arrival in North Carolina in 1754, Governor Dobbs ushered through the Assembly a new vestry act, providing for the erection of twenty-four parishes, the election of vestries, and the selection and support of clergymen. This legislation, however, was overturned by the British Privy Council because of its provision that the right of "presenting" or employing ministers be exercised almost exclusively by the local vestries. This was seen as fundamentally incompatible with the rights of the crown and with established lines of ecclesiastical authority. During the next ten years, four other vestry acts were passed by the Assembly at Dobbs's urging, and against strong opposition from dissenters and some Anglicans as well. But these, too, were disallowed upon reaching England. Not until 1764 did Dobbs succeed in securing the passage of a vestry act which met with the approval of the King, the Privy Council, and the Bishop of London. This act closely resembled the earlier ones, but skirted the issue of "presentation" altogether. The issue was largely moot in any case, for at the time of the act's passage Dobbs reported that there were still only a half dozen clergymen in the province; and only four of these were men of reasonable piety who regularly performed their duties.[221] The scarcity of Anglican clergymen was even more serious, given the rapid increase in population which had occurred

during the decade since Dobbs's arrival. He now estimated that the number of white taxables (males over sixteen) had risen to 24,000, and that the total population had grown to 100,000 whites and 10,000 blacks.[222]

In 1765 Dobbs' successor, William Tryon, made a similar report on the near lifeless state of the Anglican Church in North Carolina. Writing to the S.P.G. on 31 July of that year, he pointed out that there were now thirty-two parishes in the colony, with only five provided with a minister. Moreover, of the five churches built or under construction, only Christ Church in New Bern was in good repair.[223] Conditions improved slightly during the seven years of Governor Tryon's administration, with the number of Anglican clergymen rising from five to eighteen.[224] But the population and area of settlement were constantly growing during this period as well. As a matter of practical fact, the extreme disproportion between the number of Anglican clergymen and the colony's increasing population rendered the proforma claims of a church establishment not only vapid but absurd. In the fullness of time, revolution would silence these claims forever.

Surviving records provide only fleeting indications of the physical condition of St. Thomas Church during the long period of the Rev. Alexander Stewart's incumbency. On 13 December 1754 Governor Dobbs reported that the church was "finished" and that services were being conducted there on a regular basis.[225] However, in a letter of 12 November 1754, one month earlier than that of Dobbs, Stewart himself reported to the S.P.G. that he was officiating "at the Church in Bath Town which at his arrival was very ruinous, but is now repairing."[226] Here is a strong indication that St. Thomas had fallen into disrepair since its construction in 1734-1735--probably during the decade which separated Garzia's death from Stewart's arrival. The evidence provided by the Dobbs and Stewart letters leads to the conclusion

that repairs of some sort were made late in 1753 or early in 1754. The nature of the repairs is a matter of speculation, but it could well be that an original roof of cypress or cedar shingles had deteriorated to the point of requiring extensive patching or replacement.

On 6 October 1762, Stewart reported to the S.P.G. that his parishioners had "finished their Church in the best manner they are able."[227] It is uncertain whether Stewart was here speaking of work which had been accomplished well in the past, or whether he was referring to the recent completion of interior details. The context, however, would seem to indicate the former.

During the next few years the fabric of St. Thomas again began to deteriorate. In July of 1765 Governor Tryon reported that the church was in need of "considerable Repairs."[228] Unfortunately, there is no indication as to the nature of these repairs or whether they were made.

The sources are somewhat more informative concerning the construction of a glebe house for Stewart during his incumbency at St. Thomas, although uncertainty and some degree of puzzlement surround its precise location. Writing at about the time of Bath's incorporation in 1706, John Lawson, one of the town's founding fathers, made reference to the fact that some provision had already been made for the support of a minister:

> The Lords-Proprietors, to encourage Ministers of the Church of England, have given free Land towards the Maintenance of a Church, and especially, for the Parish of S. Thomas in Pampticough, over against the Town is already laid out for a Glebe two hundred and twenty three Acres of rich well-situated Land, that a Parsonage-House may be built upon.[229]

In 1709 the missionary William Gordon also reported that land had "been laid out for a glebe" at Bath, though he added gratuitously that "no minister would ever stay long in the place."[230]

In the earliest vestry act still extant (that of 1715) it was specifically stated that vestries were authorized "to purchase Land for a Glebe" and to

provide for a minister's support.[231] Presumably, this provision had been embodied in the lost vestry act of 1701 as well. The act of 1741, in addition to its reference to glebe lands, also stated that vestries were to "erect Convenient buildings thereon, and to keep the aforesaid Edifices in repair, as Need shall be, from time to time." Moreover, this legislation specifically set forth the duties of resident clergymen with regard to their glebe lands and buildings:

> And be it further Enacted . . . that every Minister within this Government, shall during his Incumbency, keep and maintain the Mansion-house, and all other the Outhouses and conveniences that shall be erected on his Glebe, in tenantable Repair, and shall so leave the same at the time of his Death or Removal out from the said Parish (the Accidents of Fire and Tempest only excepted), and shall not suffer any Waste, by cutting down of Timber, or otherwise, to be committed on his said Glebe, except for necessary Repairs, Fences, or other Improvements, and Fire-Wood to be used thereon: And in case any Minister shall fail to keep his said Glebe and buildings thereon in tenantable Repair, or shall suffer any Waste to be committed thereon as aforesaid, such Minister, his Executors, and Administrators, shall be liable to the Action of the Church Wardens of the Parish for the time being, whereby the Value of such Repair or Waste shall be recovered, in Damages, with Costs of Suit; and the Damage so recovered shall be laid out according to the Directions of the Vestry and Church Wardens, in making necessary Repairs upon the Glebe.[232]

The ministers' responsibilities were similarly stated in the disallowed vestry act of 1754; but the minimum number of acres for a glebe was set at two hundred in this legislation, and the required buildings were listed as, "a Convenient Mansion house, Kitchen, Barn, Stable, Dairy, and Meet House."[233]

Notwithstanding these enactments, however, the parishes of colonial North Carolina did little or nothing to provide improved farm land for their ministers' residence and support. Like many other provisions of the vestry acts, those relating to glebes were not carried into effect in any systematic or conscientious fashion. Lands were, indeed, set aside within some parishes for use as a glebe, but they apparently were not built upon or even cleared for cultivation. In this respect St. Thomas Parish stood out as an exception, albeit belatedly and somewhat ungraciously.[234]

When the S.P.G. appointed the Rev. Alexander Stewart its missionary to St. Thomas Parish in 1754, Governor Arthur Dobbs had promised to "have the Glebe Land set out for the Minister of that Parish, cultivated, and have an House Built upon it, with all convenient speed."[235] In the event, it was nearly a decade before this was accomplished.

It was apparently between March and November of 1763 that Stewart's glebe house was finally finished. In a letter of 6 November, addressed to the S.P.G. from a "Glebe near Bath N. Carolina," Stewart reported, "I have nothing to add to the Society but that I am now living in the 1st Glebe House ever finished in this Province."[236] In a subsequent letter to the Society of June, 1768, Stewart provided additional information on the glebe land, the eventual construction of his glebe house, and its place in the overall work of his ministry:

> My Glebe is the most valuable one in this Province at this time, it was granted to this parish in 1706 at the first settling of the Country it is good Land and about 300 acres, yet this Glebe remained in that condition till within these 7 years that upon the Vestry's agreeing to build me a tolerable House, I obligated myself to clear and improve 25 acres, and to give £40 towards furnishing the house. This accordingly was done, and I lived there two years and some times reside there yet, yet this Glebe I say and house which some time ago would have sold for 400 sterling, will not at present bring £5 sterling Rent, and is of no further use to me than a place for Saturdays when I preach at the Church, as I was advised to leave it on my health's account, and to reside on a more open plantation on the South side of Pamlico as much in the centre of my business as the Glebe.[237]

Thus it appears that Stewart lived permanently in the new glebe house for only two years, that he thereafter used it during the two weekends of each month when he preached in St. Thomas, and that during the rest of the time it stood vacant, with the possible exception of a housekeeper or servant.

The precise location of Stewart's glebe and glebe house is now unclear. Early in the eighteenth century, Lawson had said that the glebe land was situated "over against the town"--an expression implying, perhaps, that the

land lay on the outskirts of town, contiguous with its corporate boundaries. Yet, the preponderance of evidence is that the glebe and Stewart's glebe house were located across Bath Creek and just upstream from town. In November of 1723 John Lovick received a proprietary grant with the following boundary description:

> 375 acres on the West side [emphasis mine] of Bath Town creek, joining a small creek, John Nelson, Sr., the Savanna, the Glebe, and the Glebe Creek.[238]

Further evidence that the glebe was located on the side of Bath Creek opposite the town is provided by a deed of 8 September 1761 in which John Thomas Meekins, for a consideration of £17 proclamation money, conveyed to the Rev. Alexander Stewart

> a certain messuage or parcel of land . . . in the fork of Nevil's Creek, containing 300 acres more or less, lying at the uppermost fork of Nevil's Creek, within the patent, running up the main branch of the creek to the upper corner of the patent, thence along the back line to the next branch, thence down the said branch to the first station.[239]

This land was located just upstream from Bath on the opposite side of Bath Creek and almost exactly opposite Ferry Point (or the present outdoor theater). It appears to be the same land identified as the "glebe lands" on a survey drawn for the Bath town commissioners in 1837.[240] Indeed, at least until the early years of this century, one of the small streams bordering this land was known locally as "Glebe Creek."[241]

When, after two years, the Reverend Alexander Stewart moved from the newly constructed glebe house to "a more open plantation on the South side of the Pamlico," he was undoubtedly moving to the plantation known as "the Garrison" on the east side of Durham's Creek--a well developed estate which he had acquired through his marriage to Elizabeth Porter, relict of John Peyton Porter. In June of 1756 it is recorded that Stewart and Nathaniel Richardson had given bond of £1,000 proclamation money to act as guardians

of Porter's orphaned daughters, Mary and Sarah.[242] About this same time Stewart was also granted "two rounded ears for his mark: and for his brand the . . . letters A.S.," presumably for use on this plantation.[243] On 26 November 1757 Stewart petitioned successfully for a resurvey of this 540 acre tract, "commonly called 'Garrison's Point,'" in order to determine its proper boundaries.[244] And in 1758 he was granted permission "to keep a ferry over Durham's Creek from Garrison Point to Ware Point," and "to take eight pence proc[lamation] money for man and horse, giving bond according to Law."[245] Finally, on 6 August 1759, "the Garrison" property was sold at public auction at the courthouse in Bath by Sheriff Thomas Bonner, probably because of the death of Stewart's wife, the former Elizabeth Porter. At this time Stewart purchased the place in his own right for £80 proclamation money. The conveyance to Stewart acknowledged the fact that he had been in possession of the plantation for quite some time.[246] The actual home of Parson Stewart on this plantation is said to have been a brick structure located on Garrison's Point itself--a house which reportedly burned during the nineteenth century.[247]

There are scattered references to Stewart's involvement in other legal and secular affairs during the period of his ministry at St. Thomas. Following his marriage to Sarah Coutanch, he and his new wife surrendered all claim to certain lands formerly belonging to Michael Coutanch, deceased, including a 255 acre tract along the creek just north of Bath and eight lots in Bath itself.[248] In addition to this, Stewart purchased other Beaufort County real estate (mainly in the area of Durham's Creek), acquired property in New Bern, was involved to some extent in money-lending, and apparently acted as a litigant in several court cases, primarily involving guardianship and the administration of estates.[249]

A major source of confusion with regard to Stewart's secular affairs (and perhaps even his marriages) lies in the fact that there was in Bath, during the same period as Stewart's ministry there, a merchant who was also named Alexander Stewart. Parson Stewart died in the spring of 1771; the merchant Stewart passed away during the following year, apparently in Pitt County. It was almost surely the merchant Stewart who served as clerk of the Beaufort County Court and entered bond with James Bonner and others to act as agents in the sale of Granville lands.[250]

During the last several years of his ministry at Bath, the Rev. Alexander Stewart suffered from recurring poor health. His letters to the S.P.G. during these years abound with references to his various ailments, the most serious and debilitating of which appears to have been a progressive and excruciating rheumatism. It is probable, as Stewart believed, that much of his sickness and decrepitude was the result of his extensive traveling and exposure to the elements. As early as 1763 he complained that he had "much impaired" his health by "fatigues and duty in so large a district" as his mission field.[251] Within the next few years his physical condition deterriorated rapidly. Several times he begged the S.P.G. for some temporary relief from his duties, that he might regain his health; but permission for a missionary to leave his cure was seldom granted.

In all likelihood Stewart would have returned to England with Governor Dobbs in the spring of 1765; but Dobbs expired shortly before his planned departure, and Stewart was accordingly obliged to alter his plans. In a rather lugubrious letter to the Society of 2 April 1765, he explained both his desperate need for recuperation and his resolve, with God's help, to persevere:

> I was in hopes to have come over with him /Dobbs/ for my health and throw myself at the Society's feet for transgressing their orders, for certain I am, when they had seen me they would have granted me the indulgence so long requested and not to have confined me here to a certain death after spending the vigor and flower of my youth in a constant but painful attendance on my duty, but however that is now over, while therefore it pleases God to spare me I will to the best of my endeavours prosecute the discharge of my duty and when strength fails I trust in his mercy that grace will abound, to my own edification of those for whom I am sent.[252]

In October of 1765 he was prostrated by an illness and fever which deprived him of the proper use of his limbs and severely curtailed his work. In December of the following year he was conveyed to New Bern in a horse litter, scarcely able to support himself on crutches. Again, he was fervently hoping to sail for England come the spring; and, again, he was deceived in his hopes.[253]

As long as he could "make a tolerable shift to get about" with "the assistance of a chair or boat," Stewart strove to serve the needs of his parish and mission field. Like Garzia before him, however, he suffered abuse and ingratitude at the hands of his lay leaders. During the fall of 1766, he was dreading the approach of winter and reflecting upon the shabby treatment afforded him during his last period of affliction:

> /I/ trust in God if the return of Winter does not bring on the Rheumatism that for some time longer I may be useful in my station and most gratefully acknowledge the goodness of the Society in honouring my drafts /for money/, for without their assistance I must have sunk more of my little Interest than I ever have done, the Vestry of my parish having been so ungenerous that for the whole time of my sickness they would not allow me one Penny Salary and tho' the law would I imagine have supported my Cause, yet I chuse to part with my right rather than make use of the disagreeable remedy of suing my parishioners.[254]

On 7 September 1769 Stewart suffered both physical and financial injury from a violent and devastating storm. Writing from New Bern, where he was under a physician's care, he described this tempest and its results in a letter to the S.P.G.:

> On the 7th of Sept.[r] at night we had the most violent Gale of wind and the highest tide that has ever been known since this country has been inhabited. The tide rose in a few hours at my house [presumably, the Garrison] 12 feet higher than I ever before knew it, and the wind blew so violent nothing could stand before it. Every Vessel, Boat or Craft were drove up in the woods and all the large Oaks, Pines, etc., broke either off or torn up by the roots. Our Indian Corn . . . was mostly destroyed and in many places together with the Cattle, Sheep, Hogs, etc. washed quite away. . . . I had the misfortune to have one of my legs hurt the night of the storm in endeavouring to save some of my Houses. By neglect and by the rheumatic humour in that Leg, I am once more here under the Doctors hands. . . . My private losses in the Hurricane in Houses and Stores in this Town [New Bern], and at my plantation is upwards of £600--this currency, and I question whether these lower Inhabitants will ever get over it these seven years.[255]

It is doubtful that Stewart ever regained his health completely. Presumably, however, he returned to the Garrison and to St. Thomas Parish to carry on the work of his ministry as fully as possible during the two years of life which were left to him. In the spring of 1771, he finally succumbed to an unknown illness; and in a letter of 2 July the Rev. James Reed of New Bern informed the S.P.G. of its loss: "the Rev. Mr. Stewart, the Society's missionary at Bath, died last spring, and has left a widow and four children, and his affairs in great confusion."[256] The place of Stewart's interment is not definitely known; but it is said that he was laid to rest within St. Thomas Church--the church which he had served for nearly two decades.[257]

The full implications of Reed's statement that Stewart's affairs had been left "in great confusion" are not clear. It is certain, however, that Stewart's property holdings were rather sizable and that he died intestate. On 25 October 1771 his widow Elizabeth was summoned to appear in the Superior Court for the Edenton district to answer a claim by Robert Palmer against the estate for £100 proclamation money. Mrs. Stewart was awarded the judgment in this case; but Palmer's claim may have been one of several against her late husband's estate. His most valuable property, the Garrison plantation, had

evidently grown considerably beyond the 640 acres which it had encompassed at the time of Stewart's purchase. At least, it had done so within a few years of his death. On 28 March 1779, it is recorded that Charles Stewart, of Beaufort County, conveyed to Thomas Respess, of the same county, all his "Estate, right, title, and interest." in the Garrison property, now consisting of 1,420 acres. The recited consideration was £6,000 "current money of the state"—a rather handsome sum despite the inflation brought on by the American Revolution, then in progress.[258]

For several years prior to his death, and while he was wracked by illness, the Rev. Alexander Stewart had been assisted in his ministry by Mr. Peter Blinn of Bath, formerly a representative for the town in the Colonial Assembly, a justice of the peace in Beaufort County, and a commissioner for the Port of Bath.[259] Blinn appears to have been related to the Bath merchant Daniel Blinn (d. 1742), whose widow he married in 1761.[260] In 1763 and 1764 Blinn purchased two lots in Bath and a one hundred acre tract of land on the east side of Bath Creek a short distance upstream from town.[261] It is also apparent that Blinn was maintaining a residence in New Bern by 1768, for in January of that year the Assembly ordered that £7,774.9s.7d., applied to the sinking fund, should be "burnt at the House of Mr. Peter Blinn in New Bern," and that this burning be witnessed by the governor's council and by the assembled members of the lower house.[262]

Despite his relative prominence and his considerable involvement in public life, Blinn evidently held the message and interests of the Anglican Church in high regard—so much so that in 1769 he resolved to take up the work of the ministry and to journey to London for ordination by the Bishop of London. In this decision he was supported by the Rev. Alexander Stewart, who provided him with a personal letter of recommendation to the S.P.G.:

> This letter will be handed to you by a Mr. Peter Blinn, who has been these twelve years a Parishioner of mine, and most part of the time has read prayers, etc. in the Church of Bath during my absence at the Chapels. He is now recommended to the Bishop of London by Governor Tryon for Orders as a well meaning man and of good character, being late Member of the House of representatives for the Town of Bath, and several years a Magistrate. Though he has not had the happiness of a Collegiate Education, yet he is as worthy (in my mean opinion) of the Function as many that have lately been sent out having a small Interest in the Country to confine himself to it, and a sober disposition.
>
> In justice to this Gentleman, I have made free to make his character known to the Society. If I have erred by doing so, I hope it will be excused as it is the first from . . . /me/.[263]

As indicated in Stewart's letter, Blinn also carried with him to London a recommendation from Governor Tryon, although it appears that Tryon's enthusiasm was not unrestrained:

> At the particular intercession of the Speaker of the House of Assembly and several other gentlemen, I take the liberty to request your Lordship's indulgence in giving the bearer Mr. Peter Blinn letters of ordination. He is an honest moral man, tho' without learning. If your Lordship will dispense with this defect, in other respects I am persuaded he will conduct himself in a commendable manner. He will stand much in need of the Society's liberality which one word from your Lordship will obtain for him.[264]

According to S.P.G. records, Blinn and his letters of recommendation received a favorable response when they arrived in London. Agreement was reached

> that Mr. Peter Blinn be recommended to the Lord Bishop of London for Holy Orders, that he may be employed as a Missionary in North Carolina and have the Society's bounty on that occasion.

It was also "Resolved that Mr. Blinn have a salary of £20 per annum for 2 years, commencing from Michaelmas last and that the Treasurer advance him £10."[265]

Unfortunately, it is not at all certain that Blinn ever preached in St. Thomas Church after his ordination in 1769. S.P.G. records for that year indicate that a "Mr. Blinn" was one of four unattached missionaries in North Carolina assigned to serve "where His Excellency Governor Tryon shall be pleased to place them."[266] He was also listed as an unattached missionary in 1770 and 1771.[267] This last entry would not have been made, however, if

communications between North Carolina and England had been more rapid, for the agents of providence had directed that Blinn would die even before his decrepid mentor, Stewart. Almost nothing can be learned concerning the circumstances of his death; but it almost surely occurred in 1770. During that year one Daniel Maxwell was named a commissioner for the Port of Bath, "in the Room of Peter Blinn, deceased."[268] Not until 1772 was Blinn's name finally removed from the list of S.P.G. missionaries in North Carolina.[269] By this time, Stewart, too, had gone to sleep in Zion.

During the very few years which separated the deaths of Blinn and Stewart from the outbreak of the American Revolution and the permanent dissolution of ecclesiastical ties between the colonial Church and the Church of England, one other man rose up in Beaufort County to serve St. Thomas Church and the surrounding area. This man, Nathaniel Blount, was to survive the Revolution and endeavor, with a few other stalwarts, to fashion a new episcopal church in North Carolina from the scattered remnants of the old.

Nathaniel Blount was the third of five sons born to Reading Blount of Beaufort County. The date of his birth is not known. In 1770 he received from his father a plantation of 285 acres on the south side of the Pamlico, east of Chocowinity Creek, possibly as a wedding present.[270] There is a tradition that young Blount was guided into the Anglican ministry by the Rev. Alexander Stewart, but the extent of Stewart's influence cannot truly be ascertained. Blount was a member of Stewart's congregation on the south side of the Pamlico, however, and evidently had substituted for him in St. Thomas Church and elsewhere in the parish as a lay reader. Two years after Stewart's death, Blount embarked for England to be ordained by the Bishop of London. In January of 1773, prior to Blount's departure, the vestry of St. Thomas Parish wrote glowingly to Governor Josiah Martin on his behalf, asking that he be recommended for placement on the list of S.P.G. missionaries to North Carolina:

> We the Vestry and Rectory /sic/ of St. Thomas's Parish in Beaufort County North Carolina Trusty Loyal Patriots Humbly present unto you Mr. Nathaniel Blount whose life and conduct we have known for the space of three years last past, during which time he has pay'd great and strict regard to the worship of God and has officiated as a Reader at the Places appointed for publick worship in the said parish to the satisfaction of us and the many Congregations he has attended.
>
> We therefore humbly request that you will recommend him to His Lordship the Bishop of London to be ordained and licensed to officiate as a Minister of Christ in the said Parish which is now vacant and into which we will gladly receive and induct him after his return. And as the said Mr. Blount is unacquainted with the Languages, we beg that your Excellency will desire his Lordship to be as favourable as possible. . . .[271]

Governor Martin did as he was asked, but his recommendation of Blount to the Bishop of London was almost embarrassingly lukewarm:

> The Bearer hereof Mr. Nathaniel Blount who is a gentleman of good life, and sound moral character, and allied to some of the principal persons of this country is recommended to me by the Vestry of St. Thomas's Parish in the County of Beaufort as a person they would gladly receive in the character of a Minister. He has long been inclined to enter into the Church, and his conduct in life I understand to have been praiseworthy. He is entirely unacquainted with the dead languages, and I fear has little learning of any sort. I have therefore discouraged him, by my opinion, that Your Lordship will not think him qualified for holy orders: but he persists in his resolution of offering himself to Your Lordship, and I therefore do myself the honour to give him this introduction.
>
> I confess My Lord I should more interest myself in the success of this Gentleman, if I did not consider, that the multitude of Sectaries continually springing up here, require men of more learning, and abilities, to combat their pernicious doctrines. I flatter myself, however, that Your Lordship will condescend to indulge his wishes, and to make all reasonable allowance for his want of a learned education.[272]

Despite the rather faint praise bestowed upon Blount in Governor Martin's letter of recommendation, the S.P.G. responded favorably when it

> Agreed that Mr. Nathaniel Blount be recommended to the Lord Bishop of London for Holy Orders, in order to go /as/ Missionary to N. Carolina and in such case, that he be allowed £20 a year for two years.[273]

Blount was ordained by the Bishop of London in St. Paul's Cathedral in September of 1773; and, shortly thereafter, he returned to North Carolina and to St. Thomas Parish to begin his ministry.[274]

Laboring diligently from the time of his return until the outbreak of the Revolution less than two years later, Blount brought about the construction of Blount's Chapel on Chocowinity Creek near his plantation home. By so doing, he filled the growing need for an Anglican house of worship on the south side of the Pamlico. This church was built under Blount's inspiration and direction by Giles Shute and John Harrington. Originally, it stood on the east side of the present Chocowinity-to-Greenville road, just south of that road's intersection with Chapel Branch. There it remained until 1939, at which time, because of isolation and recurring vandalism, it was moved to Chocowinity. Still in use following restoration, it ranks in age second only to St. Thomas among the existing churches of Beaufort County.[275]

Blount could scarcely have foreseen that he would be the last clergyman to be ordained in England for service in the colony of North Carolina. Destiny had decreed that his ministry would begin on the very eve of a revolution which would dissever not only the political but also the ecclesiastical bonds which formerly had united England and her American colonies. Like many another Anglican clergyman in America, he soon found himself in a position of considerable ambiguity and delicacy.

The coming of the Revolution served to emphasize fundamental weaknesses which had subsisted within the Anglican Church in America from the very beginning. Despite repeated calls for a resident bishop in America, none was ever sent. The lack of an American bishop to ordain ministers and govern ecclesiastical affairs presented an insurmountable obstacle to the development of a native clergy and to the growth and vigor of the Church in general. Because prospective clergymen from America were compelled to journey to England for ordination, there was always a severe shortage of well qualified ministers, indeed, ministers of any description. The journey was, in fact, not only expensive and time consuming, but hazardous as well:

> Many a noble spirit crossed the ocean from America stirred by a holy ambition of returning as a herald of the Cross, to whom God, in His inscrutable wisdom, denied that privilege. The perils of the ocean, the accidents of travel, the infectious diseases then so terribly destructive, the great length and expense of the journey, all these were a sad hindrance to the increase of American ministers on this continent. It is said that at least ten per cent of those who undertook the journey for ordination died without having been able to return to take up the work.[276]

With respect to North Carolina in particular, the difficulties of the Church were, in several ways, compounded even further. News of the colony's rather primitive and uncongenial conditions of life, for example, had loomed large in the minds of many missionaries who faced the prospect of being sent here by the S.P.G. Moreover, the Anglican Church in North Carolina had always been burdened by resentment and popular abuse because of its special privileges under the law, its imposition of taxes, its aristocratic flavor, and its alleged trappings of popery. Another factor leading to the relative decline of the "established" Church in North Carolina was the rapid growth and proliferation of dissenting sects throughout the colony, especially Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, German Reformed, Moravians, and Methodists. Finally, with the rise of patriotic fervor which preceded the Revolution, the Anglican Church incurred additional odium from its undeniable association with English government and perceived tyranny.[277]

Ever since its formation in 1701, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts had done everything in its power to supply the ever growing need for Anglican ministers in America; but the coming of the Revolution brought this crucial assistance to an unhappy end. By 1778 only one missionary was listed as still receiving the Society's support in North Carolina--the Rev. Daniel Earl of Chowan County. The same was true for South Carolina and Georgia.[278] Earl was finally dropped from the list of S.P.G. missionaries in 1782.[279] As late as 1783 the Society was still supporting nineteen missionaries in America,

but ten of these were in Connecticut and only one was located in the southern states (in South Carolina). After 1783 and the winning of independence, America dropped from the sphere of the Society's activities completely and forever.[280]

When, at length, it had become apparent that the conflicts of ideals and interests between England and her American colonies would only be resolved by force of arms, many Anglican clergymen in this country felt compelled to seek asylum in Canada or across the sea. Many others chose to persevere in the work of the Church under whatever conditions the Revolution might bring. It was the Rev. Nathaniel Blount's decision to join this latter group. His path, however, was strewn with difficulties and uncertainties.

Just prior to the outbreak of hostilities, Blount had entered into a contract with the vestry of St. Michael's Parish, Pitt County, to serve as their minister for a period of twenty years. In this capacity he continued to serve after the Revolution began; but, in doing so, he stirred considerable controversy. At its meeting in Martinsborough on 29 July 1775, the Pitt County Committee of Safety requested that Blount withdraw from his agreement, "as the only method to Unite /the/ People of the Country"; and Blount had little choice but to comply with the committee's request.[281] Despite the dissolution of this agreement, however, there is no evidence that Blount's behavior had in any way appeared openly disloyal or subversive from the Patriot point of view. Indeed, on several occasions he was called upon to conduct worship services in support of the Patriot cause. On the 20th of July 1775, at the request of the Pitt County Committee of Safety, he preached at the courthouse in Martinsborough in observance of "a Day of Publick Fasting and Humiliation agreeable to the appointment of the Conti-

nental Congress."[282] Three years later, on 22 April 1778, he preached in Christ Church, New Bern, in a similar observance, and at the request of the North Carolina House of Commons.[283]

Long after the winning of American independence, Blount continued and expanded the ministry which he had begun as a representative of the Church of England. At its widest extent, this ministry reached five places of worship in Craven County, one in both Hyde and Pitt counties, and five in Beaufort County, including Blount's (or Trinity) Chapel and St. Thomas, Bath.[284]

At least two contemporary descriptions of Parson Blount and his preaching have survived. In 1784 a Methodist minister recorded his impressions in the following words:

> /He is/ one more, hearty friend to the religion of Jesus Christ,--His solemn countinance, & serious deportment--gave considerable weight to the Gospel Truths He delivered: and upon the whole; I have reason to think He is a liveing witness, of the power of true religion--.[285]

A somewhat lengthier description was left by William Attmore, a visiting Philadelphian who, on the 9th of December 1787, attended the funeral services for John Bonner, near the growing settlement of Washington:

> When we arrived at the house we found it crowded with a mixt Company of Men and Women, sitting and standing round the Corpse, which was nailed up in a coffin and cover'd with a Sheet, Parson Blount was standing with a Tea Table before him, to hold his Books, and an Arm Chair for him to sit down if he choose it--He went thro' a long service from the Liturgy of the Church of England Prayers, Creeds, Psalms, etc. and afterwards preach'd a very excellent Funeral Sermon; and instead of a fulsome eulogium on the deceased, he very pathetically exhorted his hearers to consider the shortness of life, the certainty of death and the necessity of a preparation for the World to come--I staid till the Sermon was over.[286]

Although the vestry of St. Thomas Parish and Governor Martin each expressed reservations concerning Blount's lack of a formal education, it is probable that he was self-educated to a considerable degree. Without this preparation,

he would scarcely have been able to grasp the niceties of theological doctrines and to explicate them as clearly as he did. His letters to his good friend the Rev. Charles Pettigrew are filled with discussion of theological issues, as well as such topics as the need for an episcopal organization in the United States, the threat of heterodoxy and deism, and contemporary developments in America and Europe.[287]

As a representative of a prominent family and a man of independent means, Blount seems to have had little difficulty in supporting himself and his family, despite the meager earnings from his ministry. From 1775 until 1783 he was the owner of lot 22 in the newly formed town of Washington.[288] By 1789 he had acquired an estate of 1,187 acres, largely through inheritance and gifts from his father.[289] Unlike the vast majority of his Blount relations, however, he seems to have taken little interest in the accumulation of wealth and property.[290]

Regrettably little can be learned of Blount's personal and family life. By 1779, and possibly by 1770, he had taken as his wife a woman known only as Ann. By the time of her death in 1798, their union had produced at least five surviving children: Selina, Edward, Rebecca, Levi, and James.[291]

For upwards of three decades between the close of the Revolution and his own death in 1816, Parson Blount's ministry was a solitary and in many ways thankless one. All about him the tattered remnants of the colonial Church lay scattered in disarray, weakness, and confusion. Now bereft of even the titular leadership of the Bishop of London and the assistance of the S.P.G., there was no source to which the clergy could look for direction and support, save that supplied by their parishioners and vestries:

> At the close of the Revolution, the Church was in a most depressed condition in all the colonies, and certainly it was so in North Carolina. It was without an Episcopate, without

> revenues, without influence, without a united organization, with but few clergy, and its members and friends were in Parishes comparatively inaccessible to one another.[292]

Moreover, the dwindling faithful of the colonial Church now worshiped beneath clouds of popular abuse and suspicion even more billowy than before the Revolution:

> To the student of Church history, there have been but few spectacles within the past two centuries more affecting than the persistent devotion with which--in the face of overwhelming prejudice and aversion--the sons of the Church in America at the close of the Revolution, clung to her. . . . Because of its identification in the minds of the people with the political government and its oppressions, the Church had become an object of suspicion and finally of intense hate; and when the Revolution closed it was regarded with more hostility than Royalty itself. Left to struggle against this feeling, which dominated the minds of a majority of their fellow citizens, and without an Episcopate of their own, they were compelled to see the Church which they loved decline into numerical insignificance. . . . But their faith in the Episcopal form of Church government was honest and deep-rooted, and their love for the grand and noble Liturgy to which they were accustomed, was sincere and hearty; and not prejudice nor hate, nor ridicule, nor abuse could shake their loyalty to their convictions, or induce them to abandon their hope of rebuilding and strengthening the shattered walls of their Zion.[293]

In many cases the walls of Zion were in need of rebuilding in a literal as well as a figurative sense, for the Revolution and its aftershocks had not spared even the church buildings and lands formerly attached to the Church of England. Many glebes were confiscated and many churches burned or pillaged throughout the former colonies.[294] Such acts as these against the physical body of the Church may have been checked to some degree in North Carolina by a protective ordinance of 1776, entitled "An Ordinance of the State of North Carolina to secure the Titles of Church Lands and Houses of Public Worship, to the Proprietors thereof, and to quiet them in the peaceable possession of the same." This ordinance simply provided that all churches and church properties erected or acquired prior to the Revolution would remain the property of those who had formerly held possession.[295] However, even the

churches in North Carolina and elsewhere which escaped malicious and intentional damage, fell victim in many cases to desuetude and abandonment in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as a result of declining membership.[296]

The hopeful dawning of a new era in the history of the Church in America had come as early as 1784 with the consecration of Bishop Samuel Seabury in Scotland. Three years later, in 1787, two other American clergymen were consecrated in Lambeth Palace. Now, at long last, the line of Apostolic succession was extended across the sea, and it became possible for a native episcopacy to be established within the confines of American shores.[297] But the establishment of an episcopal structure in America was to prove a long and tortuous process. Only in the fullness of time would the Episcopal Church in America gain cohesion and forward momentum.[298] The same would be the case in the State of North Carolina.

Between 1790 and 1794 the Rev. Charles Pettigrew of Edenton organized four separate conventions in Tarborough for the purpose of forming a diocese in North Carolina. These attempts not only failed, but failed badly. Only six to eight Episcopal clergymen could be located in the entire state during this period, and by no means could all of these be induced on any one occasion to leave their homes and farms in order to attend such a meeting. Nor was the response of lay delegates any more heartening. Working closely with Pettigrew in these vain attempts to form a diocese was the Rev. Nathaniel Blount. Between them, they embodied most of the clerical energy and initiative still extant in the state. Blount attended three of the four Tarborough conventions, and played a prime role in establishing important procedural and constitutional guidelines.[299] Still, Blount felt that his efforts had come to nought, and as he reflected on the condition of the Church in the late 1790s, he shared with Pettigrew the depths of his despondency:

> Oh! the deplorable situation of the Episcopal Church in this state! What a handle is it to those who may wish its downfall! which we have so much reason to believe are not a few. Glad would I be to see a revival from its decline and languid state; to see Order and Discipline established upon the most permanent Basis. But alas! what reason have we to expect it; What further attempts could be made that wou'd probably have any desirable effect.[300]

It was a source of no little disappointment to Blount that Pettigrew, once elected bishop, was unwilling or unable to journey northward for consecration. Had Blount rather than Pettigrew been elected, the establishment of an episcopacy in North Carolina might have been accomplished much earlier than 1817--the year following Blount's death.[301]

The surviving sources do not indicate the frequency with which Parson Blount held services in St. Thomas between the close of the Revolution and his death. These were desperate times for episcopal worship throughout the state, but it is reasonable to conclude that Blount served the congregation at Bath on a fairly regular basis, despite the extent of his duties in Beaufort and Pitt counties and despite the deterioration of his health in later years. There is no indication that St. Thomas was abandoned at any time or that it was allowed to fall into a condition of serious dilapidation.

During the last years of his long and indefatigable ministry, Parson Blount, like Stewart before him, suffered progressive debilitation from rheumatism and other afflictions. These sufferings he continued to bear, all the while attempting to serve his scattered congregations as far as his health would permit. When death finally came to him in September of 1816, he was laboring among the faithful of Pitt County. The place of his burial is not definitely known; but there is a strong and appealing tradition that he was borne downstream in a canoe and interred among his ancestors near Chocowinity.[302] For upwards of forty years he had carried the message of the Church, witnessing its disestablishment and precipitous decline with the coming of

American independence. He was the last surviving representative of the colonial clergy in North Carolina; and it was he whose "faithful ministrations" made possible the survival and eventual recrudescence of the Church in the area of Pitt and Beaufort counties.[303]

Had he but lived just seven months longer, Blount would have seen at last the formation of an enduring episcopal structure in North Carolina--a foundation upon which the church might be rebuilt. The Diocese of North Carolina was formed at a meeting of clergymen and laymen at Christ Church, New Bern, in April of 1817. Only four churches were represented at this historic meeting: St. James, Wilmington; St. Johns, Fayetteville; Christ Church, New Bern; and St. Pauls, Edenton.[304] No attempt was made to elect a bishop at this time, but Bishop Channing Moore of Virginia accepted an appeal for his episcopal supervision over the newly formed diocese, and this he continued to provide until 1823 and the consecration of John Stark Ravenscroft as the first Bishop of North Carolina.[305]

Following the formation of the Diocese of North Carolina, and throughout the antebellum period, the Episcopal Church slowly gained in vitality and membership. At the accession of Bishop Ravenscroft in 1823, it was reported that there were seven clergymen and 480 communicants in the state.[306] When Bishop Levi Silliman Ives assumed jurisdiction over the see in 1831, the number of clergymen had risen to fifteen and the number of communicants to 809.[307] At the time of Bishop Ives's scandalous defection to Rome in 1852, there were some forty clergymen and more than 2,000 communicants.[308]

Although the Church had sunk very low even in the eastern portions of the state where settlement had first occurred, it was there that the firmest basis for a rebuilding process lay. It was there that an ancient tradition of Episcopal worship had put down deep roots. This fact was duly noted by Bishop Ravenscroft in his address to the diocesan convention of 1825:

> Dividing the Diocese into three sections, running from north to south, it is evident that the present strength of the Church is in the eastern section. The principles of the Church are there better understood, more heartily received, and more unhesitatingly acted upon; and so far as human judgment is permitted to act, there is a greater degree of liveliness, a deeper interest manifested for the purity and consistency of faith and practice.[309]

During his address to the previous year's convention, Ravenscroft had made specific reference to Beaufort County and to the churches at Bath, Washington, and Chocowinity:

> In the section of country through which I have just passed, it glads my heart, brethren, to find the affections of so many of its inhabitants still strong towards the Church of their fathers; and it were truly a rejoicing spectacle to me, in a country, which, judging from the roads, hardly contained inhabitants, to find such members, quite at home in our Liturgy, and prepared and desirous to profit by those apostolic services, which they had learned to revere, as wise appointments of the great Head of the Church, for the increase of his grace in their hearts, and for their establishment and assurance in the one hope and faith of the gospel.[310]

Although Bishop Ravenscroft did not mention him by name in this context, he was undoubtedly aware of the fact that the survival of Episcopal worship in this part of the state had been assured through the dutiful ministrations of the late Nathaniel Blount.

St. Thomas, Bath, had not been one of the four congregations represented in New Bern when the Diocese of North Carolina was formed, but if the congregation was dormant, it had not been so for long. It is probable that St. Thomas did not frequently enjoy the regular services of a clergyman during Parson Blount's last years, and there may well have been a brief period following Blount's death when no clergyman visited the church. From 1818 to 1822, however, the area formerly served by Parson Blount was taken under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Phillips. Phillips seems to have been a simple and pious man who labored diligently in the Lord's vineyard. After three years of service in Beaufort and Pitt counties, however, he returned

to his native Virginia with failing health. There he died in 1831.[311]

The earliest reference to St. Thomas Church in the journals of the diocesan conventions occurred in 1823--six years after the diocese was formed and the same year which saw the election of Bishop Ravenscroft. This reference reveals that the Rev. R. S. Mason, rector of Christ Church, New Bern, had "occasionally visited Washington and Bath in Beaufort Co." Indeed, he had baptized fifteen persons at St. Thomas during the preceding year; and he pointed out the crying need for a missionary to serve regularly in Beaufort, Pitt, and Lenoir counties.[312] During this same convention, St. Thomas was one of seven churches formally accepted into the diocese. Two other Beaufort County churches, Trinity Chapel (formerly Blount's Chapel) and Zion Church, were also accepted into the diocese at this time. In lieu of a regular minister or missionary, James B. Marsh of Bath, owner of the Palmer-Marsh House, was authorized by the convention to act as a lay reader at St. Thomas. He was also appointed to solicit funds from the congregation at St. Thomas for the support of the diocesan Missionary Society.[313]

On 28 January 1824, St. Thomas Church received a visit from the recently elected Bishop Ravenscroft. This was apparently the first time that the chruch had been honored by the presence of a bishop. On the whole, Ravenscroft's impressions seem to have been favorable:

> On Wednesday the 28th [of January], [I] proceeded to Bath, where a large congregation was assembled in the venerable old Church (of that once more populous town) built in the year 1732 [sic], and yet in tolerable repair; and where I preached, baptised three adults, fifteen children, and confirmed twenty-five persons.[314]

After spending the night in Bath, Ravenscroft proceeded the next day to Zion Church near Washington. There, too, he was well received by an eager and attentive congregation; and he later commented upon the effective service being rendered by the lay readers in both churches:

> Here I must take leave to remark, that the lively condition of these two congregations, and the deep interest felt for the revival of the Church, is owing, under God, to the zealous and persevering, and discreet exertions of the two lay readers who officiate amongst them--Mr. Buxton /at Zion/ and Mr. Marsh /at St. Thomas/, aided by the occasional visits of the Rev. Mr. Mason: an example, which, I trust, will be fruitful in encouraging others to go and do likewise.[315]

In 1825 James B. Marsh moved from Bath to Washington, thereby ending or severely curtailing his services as a lay reader at St. Thomas. This same year, however, saw the coming of the Rev. Joseph Pierson to St. Peters, Washington, as its first rector. Though Pierson was to serve in Washington for only one year, he assumed pastoral care of the congregation at Bath during this time. Pierson came to Washington from Massachusetts, and was ordained priest by Bishop Ravenscroft in St. Peters on 24 April 1825. During his brief rectorate there, he served as a missionary to Zion Church and Trinity Chapel as well as St. Thomas.[316]

It was during Pierson's brief tenure as missionary that St. Thomas was at last consecrated by a bishop. On 15 April 1826 Bishop Ravenscroft performed this ceremony and afterwards preached to the assembled congregation:

> My previous appointment at Zion Chapel for the forenoon of the 14th being interrupted by the wetness of the day, I proceeded to Bath, and on Saturday the 15th consecrated the old Episcopal Church in that place, erected in the year 1734. . . . to the service of Almighty God, by the name of St. Thomas Church.
>
> I here confirmed six persons, preached and administered holy communion. These services were attended by a large collection of people, who manifested a suitable degree of seriousness, and appeared to be favorably impressed by the solemn and appropriate character which distinguishes them.[317]

Less than a month later, on 8 May, Ravenscroft came again to St. Thomas with the Rev. Joseph Pierson:

> May 8th, divine service was performed in the forenoon, at Bath, by the Rev. Mr. Pierson, after which I administered the rite of confirmation to twenty-six persons, preached a sermon and administered the holy communion. During the whole of the services, I was much gratified with the orderly deportment

> of a large congregation, and with the devout and deep interest manifested by the members of the Church in all that pertains to her order and worship.[318]

On the following day, Ravenscroft and Pierson proceeded together to Durham Creek (now Bonnerton), where they consecrated the newly erected St. John's Church.[319] Within a few months of these events, however, Pierson's ministry was brought to close. During the summer of 1826 he died in Washington, D. C., while away on vacation.[320] St. Peters had lost its first rector, and St. Thomas, a promising young missionary.

It seems apparent that both St. Peters and St. Thomas were without the regular services of a minister for about one year, when the rectorate of St. Peters and its associated missionary duties were assumed by the Rev. George Washington Freeman. Freeman remained until September of 1829, when he resigned to take charge of Christ Church, Raleigh. Later, in 1844, it is of interest to note that he became Bishop of Arkansas. He died in 1858 at the age of sixty-nine.[321]

Between the departure of Freeman in 1829 and the outbreak of the Civil War more than three decades later, the pulpit at St. Thomas was occupied by at least twelve different ministers, only one of whom served for more than five years. Some of these men had as their primary duty the rectorate of St. Peters, Washington; others were full-time missionaries to several rural churches in Beaufort County, who preached regularly at St. Thomas on one Sunday each month.[322]

Three of these ministers are of special interest and significance. The Rev. N. C. Hughes, who served St. Thomas at least on occasion between 1852 and 1856, founded historic Trinity School at Chocowinity about 1850. This Church-affiliated institution distinguished itself as both an educational facility and a molder of youthful character during the latter half of the

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moreover, at least some of its graduates went on to prepare themselves for the Episcopal ministry.[323] The Rev. Alfred A. Watson, who served St. Thomas on a regular basis between 1852 and 1854, was later elected first Bishop of the Diocese of East Carolina, at its formation in 1883.[324] Finally, there was the Rev. Israel Harding, who came to the pulpit of St. Thomas in 1857, served the church until the outbreak of the Civil War, and again, for brief periods after the War ended. Harding had begun his adult life as a farmer and carpenter in the area of Chocowinity. Through his membership in the congregation of Trinity Chapel, however, he was inspired to begin private study for the ministry under the Rev. N. C. Hughes's direction. For thirty-five years thereafter, until his death in 1891, Harding ministered to numerous churches in Beaufort, Pitt, Craven, and Lenoir counties. In addition, he helped to plan, build, and furnish several of the churches in which he preached. His nephew, the Rev. Nathaniel Harding, served as rector of St. Peters, Washington, for more than forty years.[325]

Only occasionally do the records allude to the condition of worship at St. Thomas during the antebellum period, except for the raw statistical information contained in the annual parochial reports. When these references do occur, however, they present a picture of a small, determined congregation, sharing the services of an overworked minister and often poised on the verge of dissolution. Writing of the year 1831, for example, the Rev. John H. Norment appended the following remarks to his parochial report:

> In the early part of the year, a Sunday School was established in St. Thomas's Parish, Bath, but for want of Teachers, and an interest in the subject, on the part of parents, it soon became extinct.
>
> From the scattered population in each of the /Beaufort County/ Parishes, and the impracticality of meeting together with any degree of convenience, I have not been able to

> institute Bible Classes, and Lectures, or classes in the Catechism.
>
> So far as I have been able to learn from observation and experience, there appears to be a prepossession on the part of the people generally, towards our communion; and there can be little doubt, that ministerial labour will be well rewarded here at some future period.
>
> I regret to state, that with the exception of the amount due from Trinity Parish, the assessments on the several Parishes above enumerated /Trinity, St. Thomas, Zion, and St. Johns/ have not been paid for the last two years.
>
> From the amount at present contributed by the Congregations, it will easily be seen, that their dependence for future ministrations must be upon the Missionary Society of this Diocese. To this source they confidently look for help; while efforts will be made on their own part, to contribute what they can to the support of a faithful and self-denying Missionary.[326]

During the mid and late 1830s, there were periods during which St. Thomas was totally deprived of ministerial services.[327] Again, during the mid-1840s, the venerable church was denied even the occasional visits of a missionary. When, in 1846, Bishop Ives took note of the lack of missionaries in several "destitute places" around the state, Beaufort County was one of the areas to which he was referring. Moreover, the small churches of the county could not afford to contribute substantially to the support of a missionary at this time, despite their desperate need. It was reported that "St. Thomas's Bath, Zion Chapel, and St. Johns, Durham's Creek, Beaufort County, /were/ too poor to pledge more than $100."[328]

Notwithstanding its chronic poverty and the recurring lack of ministerial services, the congregation at St. Thomas seems to have grown slightly, though erratically, throughout the antebellum period. During the 1820s the congregation was pitifully small, with less than twenty communicants. In the 1830s the number of communicants generally fluctuated between twenty and thirty, although twice dipping below twenty in the middle of the decade. The number of communicants during the 1840s also ranged between twenty and thirty, but in 1841 plunged to a low point of fourteen. The early and mid-1850s also saw

the number of communing members varying widely between twenty and thirty; but in the last years before the Civil War, during the early ministry of the Rev. Israel Harding, the number of communicants hovered rather steadily around thirty or a little more. Statistics are also available for most years on the number of baptisms, marriages, and burials at St. Thomas during the antebellum period, but these statistics vary so widely that no general patterns can be discerned. The number of baptisms ranged between a low of one in 1841 to twenty nine in 1826. Recorded marriages never climbed above one or two. Burials ranged from none or one during most years to a high of nine in 1826.[329]

It was during the antebellum period that St. Thomas began to face serious competition from the Methodists of Bath. When the local Methodist congregation was first organized is unknown, but services were being held in a small frame church on Carteret Street by the 1830s and perhaps before. About 1840 a second Methodist church was built to the rear of the Palmer-Marsh House on land reportedly donated by William and Samuel Marsh. Little is known of this church, but it is said to have had a slave gallery and attached belfry.[330]

In March of 1844, about four years after the construction of the second Methodist Church, Bath was the scene of a large revival meeting, presumably Methodist. Among those who came a considerable distance to attend this revival was one Robert Oswald of Weldon, North Carolina. The account which he sent to his wife is interesting both for its description of the event and for its references to Bath and St. Thomas Church:

> I have been here since last Saturday. /We have/ had preaching every day up to this time. . . . /The/ congregation /is/ increasing and the spirit of God deeply moving the hearts of the people. . . . Here they have not had a revival for 20 yrs.--some say 40 yrs. I hope its influence will extend through this country. Bath is the oldest settlement in this state. Here lived Govr. Eden whilst we were colonies of G. Britain. I took tea with

> Dr. Hodges who resides in the house once occupied by the Governor. Here stands an old Brick Church built 110 years ago . . . by his majesty George 2nd. The Episcopalians claim it. But in law it belongs to the public as the glebes were sold and the connection of church and state was then disolved to remain apart forever I trust.[331]

The Methodist congregation has now endured in Bath for a century and a half or more, coexisting with the much older congregation of St. Thomas. Their present church, the Bath United Methodist Church on South Main Street, was built between 1890 and 1892 on property donated by one Morgan Gibbs. The church constructed about 1840, to the rear of the Palmer-Marsh House, was for many years used as a school in Bath. Eventually this building was pulled down, but as late as 1940, its bell was still in existence and was reported to be in good condition.[332]

During the 1850s, there developed within the congregation and leadership of St. Thomas Church an internecine dispute concerning the relative responsibilities and privileges of those members who lived on opposite sides of Bath Creek. This dispute may well have been simmering for quite some time, though the records do not make this clear. In reporting on his ministry at St. Thomas in 1853, future bishop Alfred A. Watson made mention of the fact that he had "appointments not only in the old Church in Bath, but also in the country on the other side of Bath Creek, where indeed the greater part of the congregation reside."[333] In December of 1857 this crosscreek rivalry developed into a decided split within the vestry, especially between Joseph Bonner, builder of the Bonner House, and G. W. Odin, a prominent resident on the west side of Bath Creek. At some point during the vestry meeting of December 20th, Odin rose up during the course of the discussion and departed in a high dudgeon. On the 7th of January following, "a portion of the vestry" is recorded to have met in the Union School House, but Odin refused to attend because of an insult

which Bonner had allegedly offered him. Four days later, "a portion of the vestry" met again, and during this meeting some sort of settlement was apparently arrived at. The first item of business was the adoption of a seemingly noncontroversial resolution, "that the Vestry of this Church are responsible to the Rev. Israel Harding in the sum of one Hundred & fifty dollars, for his services during the present year, to be paid him quarterly." It was next resolved, however, "that the Vestry of this Church shall hereafter act in common without any regard to the different sides of Bath Creek, & that the services continue on each side as heretofore." Finally, Joseph Bonner and G. W. Odin were able to achieve a rapprochement, though the diplomatic language of the settlement was almost comically stilted and disingenuous:

> Mr. Joseph Bonner regretted that any misunderstanding had occurred between the Vestry and Mr. G. W. Odin and, as Mr. Odin has disclaimed any intention of insult to them in leaving the meeting while engaged in business, he would cheerfully retract whatever he might have said while under the impression that Mr. Odin intended an insult, and should be willing to meet him as before.[334]

It may be of interest to note that the vestry at this time consisted of: Joseph Bonner (senior warden), G. W. Odin, W. H. Odin, B. W. Hodges, John H. Archbell, John I. Rowland (treasurer), W. R. Boyd (honorary member), and H. G. Hilton (secretary and future rector).[335]

It has already been mentioned that at some point during the first half of the nineteenth century, St. Thomas Church was severely damaged by a storm which wrecked the gable ends, the roof, the brick tower over the front entrance, and, probably, much of the interior furnishings. The fleeting and rather vague references to this damage were all recorded long after the fact, and the dates given for it range from "early nineteenth century" to "about 1840." It is probable that the latter date is very close to correct.

When Bishop Ravenscroft first visited St. Thomas in January of 1824, he noted that the "venerable old Church" was "in tolerable repair."[336] Two years later, when he consecrated the church, he observed that it had "now [been] put in complete repair."[337] Presumably, the repairs he referred to at this time were not the extensive ones which followed the near destruction of the building. A subsequent reference to repairs, however, made by the Rev. William Edward Snowden, may well have pointed to such work. In 1842 Snowden reported to the diocesan convention that "The venerable Church of St. Thomas, at Bath, is about to be thoroughly repaired."[338] Snowden had just begun his services as a missionary to St. Thomas, as well as to St. Johns, Zion, and Trinity churches, and in 1844 he was to become rector of St. Peters, Washington.[339] His 1842 reference to the work which was about to be done at St. Thomas would seem to coincide with the rather strong evidence that Joseph Bonner was its prime mover.

The most nearly contemporaneous discussion of Joseph Bonner's crucial role in restoring St. Thomas Church appears in the Church Messenger of 17 November 1881, in an article written by the Rev. H. G. Hilton. Hilton had been rector of St. Thomas from 1868 to 1877, and a member of its vestry as early as 1857.[340] His article illuminates an important but hitherto undiscovered page of St. Thomas's history:

> This is the oldest church, now occupied, in this Diocese. It was erected by our Colonial ancestors, A.D. 1734. It stands near the center of the little village of Bath, in Beaufort County, N.C., and in full view of the bright and sparkling waters of the Pamlico River. . . .
>
> For many years it was the only church edifice in all that region of the country. . . . It came near falling into ruins several times, and about the year 1840, the entire roof and gable-ends were carried away by the violence of a storm. At that time, there was but one man in the entire parish, (and he, then, not a member of the Church,) who felt a sufficient interest in the church to make an effort to restore it. That man was Joseph Bonner, Esq., who was moved by the daily

> tears and entreaties of his excellent wife [Sallie Ann] to the noble sacrifice for its restoration. Since then it has been used at least once a month.[341]

A much later and less reliable source adds, independently, that "Mrs. Bonner was watching the church at an upstairs window when the gables fell in."[342]

The task of restoring St. Thomas included the replacement of the roof and possibly the alteration of its basic design from a hip roof to the present configuration. The work done at this time must account for the obvious difference which now exists between the bricks above and below the gable lines. This work must also have involved the repair or replacement of much of the church's interior fabric and furnishings, although the extent and nature of interior changes cannot be discerned from surviving records. The brick tower which stood over the main entrance was not reconstructed, but was later replaced by a wooden tower either just before or, more likely, just after the Civil War.[343]

Apparently, and unaccountably, further work was necessary inside the church within fifteen years after the storm damage had been repaired. When Bishop Thomas Atkinson first came to St. Thomas on 25 May 1854, he observed that the building was in desperate need of work which the congregation could ill afford to undertake:

> The Church at Bath is venerable from age and association, but has become so dilapidated as to approach ruin. The village, once the capital of the State, and possessed of comparative population and wealth, is now nearly stripped of both, and it will therefore be a serious effort on the part of the present residents to put the Church in good repair, but it is one which they design to make, and in which they ought to be assisted by others, and especially by those who, though no longer residents, are connected with this interesting spot as their former home, or that of their forefathers.[344]

Some work at least was begun soon after Atkinson's visitation. Church records indicate that in September of 1855 the following expenses were incurred for work done under the supervision of vestryman B. W. Hodges: "10 casks of lime,

$25.00; 2½ bushels of hair, $1.10; 10 yards of lining, $2.50; and expenses in employing workmen, $1.75;"[345] Judging from the materials used, it seems very likely that this work involved a complete replastering of the interior.

It should, perhaps, be mentioned that the land adjoining St. Thomas to the south was being cultivated as early as 1860. Meeting during that year on the fourteenth Sunday after Trinity, the vestry

> Resolved that Dr. Samuel M. Goelet be furnished with a Leese for the Lot to the right or South side of the Church for ten years, upon his agreeing to pay one dollar per year to the vestry--the said lot to be subject to the call of this vestry at any time by paying the said Dr. Samuel Goelet the cash value of the crop should he have any on it at the time.[346]

In the event, this farming of the land on the south side of the church continued well into this century, and had an unfortunate effect on the overall appearance of the churchyard and cemetery.[347]

On the eve of the Civil War, St. Thomas was one of several Episcopal churches in Beaufort County under the devoted pastoral care of the Rev. Israel Harding. The venerable structure had been restored some two decades earlier and had recently been put in further repair. The number of its communicants had stabilized at about thirty after a long period of gradual though eratic growth, and in 1860 its monthly services were reported to be "well attended."[348] On the whole, it can be said that St. Thomas was in reasonably good shape to withstand the upheavals and dislocations which lay ahead.

During the early stages of the war, worship at St. Thomas seems to have been carried on in near normal fashion, but after 1862 the Federal occupation of Washington and the surrounding area began to exercise a baleful and disruptive influence. Indeed, both the Rev. Edwin Geer of St. Peters, Washington, and the Rev. Israel Harding soon felt compelled to flee from Beaufort County and forsake their congregations. At the diocesan convention of 1863,

Geer reported that, "During the past Conventional year I have been in exile from my Parish, the town being in military possession of the enemy."[349] Geer had, in fact, taken up residence in Wilmington, where he served for the remainder of the War as a chaplain and school teacher.[350] Harding, for his part, had moved inland from the coast to carry on missionary work in a less threatening environment:

> On the first of January last /1863/ I was compelled (by reason of the encroachments of the invaders of our country) to leave my parishes in Beaufort County, and to take refuge in the town of Wilson, N.C. where after a short time, I took charge of St. Timothy's Church in that place, and also of St. Paul's Church, Greenville, Pitt County.[351]

Moreover, Harding reported that the War had had deleterious effects on Zion and St. Johns churches, as well as on St. Thomas:

> These /three/ parishes have suffered greatly by the prevalence of the War, and have been deprived of Ministerial services the greater part of the time.[352]

From January to July of 1863, St. Thomas was indeed without the services of a minister. In the latter month, however, the Rev. Luther Eborn was sent by Bishop Atkinson to occupy the pulpit "made vacant by the removal of the Rev. Mr. Harding." Thereafter, until the War's end, Eborn held regular services at St. Thomas and Zion churches, while at the same time holding occasional services at St. Peters, Union Chapel, Barrow's Fork, and St. Johns.[353] It need hardly be said that his ministry was spread very thin, and that it was carried on under the most difficult of conditions. Understandably, he was not able to furnish reliable data on the number of communicants at St. Thomas during this period; nevertheless, he did report a surprising total of seventeen baptisms, and a less surprising total of eight funerals.[354] At its meeting on 20 May 1866, the vestry of St. Thomas pledged itself to compensate the Rev. Mr. Eborn as soon as possible for the valiant services he had performed during and just after the War:

> Resolved that this congregation will remember the services of the Rev. Luther Eborn with feelings of gratitude rendered during the absence of our beloved Rector during the war and when our means & opportunity will afford it we will cheerfully contribute our mite to his pecuniary interests.[355]

At the conclusion of the Civil War, Beaufort County, and especially Washington, was left prostrate and impoverished. Nor had the congregation of St. Thomas Church been spared the crippling effects of the conflict so sadly concluded. Presumably, several of its young men and future leaders had been struck down; and it is beyond question that its basis of financial support had been almost completely destroyed. In the parochial reports submitted to the 1866 diocesan convention in New Bern, fifty-two churches reported an average of $264 in yearly offerings for a total of $13,754. To this total the congregation of St. Thomas had contributed $3.50. There is little wonder that the churches finances were said to be in "a low state."[356]

Despite its impoverishment, the congregation was fortunate in the return of the Rev. Israel Harding in 1866 as missionary to Beaufort County. The Rev. Luther Eborn remained as Harding's assistant until the following year, at which time his place was filled almost immediately by the recently ordained native son of Bath, the Rev. Horace G. Hilton.[357] Appended to St. Thomas's parochial report for 1867 was a note by Hilton which indicates that the congregation had already begun to rebound from the effects of the late war:

> Having been ordained but a short time, I have but one official act to communicate, viz. one marriage.
>
> Since my ordination, this Church has been open and services performed every Sunday but one, on which occasion I filled Brother Israel Harding's appointment at Zion Church in this county. The services have been well attended, and the Sunday School is now quite promising. I trust that, by the Grace of God, with constant earnestness and zeal, to be instrumental in His hands in reviving the former interest in the old Church here, and in the promotion of her welfare and prosperity, to the good of souls and the glory of his great name.[358]

The Reverend Israel Harding apparently did not officiate at St. Thomas after the commencement of Hilton's ministry. He died in Kinston many years later (in 1891), his health having been broken by overwork in the Lord's vineyard. St. Thomas had been one of many parishes which he had served during the long course of his ministry.[359]

All across the Diocese of North Carolina, there was a slow but steady recovery from the devastation of the Civil War. In 1873, after twenty years under the stalwart leadership of Bishop Thomas Atkinson, the number of clergymen stood at fifty and the number of communicants at 3,742.[360] By 1883 and the creation of the Diocese of East Carolina, the number of clergymen and communicants had risen to seventy-six and 5,889 respectively.[361]

During all but the very last years of the Rev. Horace G. Hilton's ministry, from 1867 to 1877, the congregation at St. Thomas enjoyed a period of remarkable rejuvenation and growth. Between 1867 and 1875 the number of communicants rose from thirty-two to sixty-five, reaching a high point of seventy-one in the early 1870s.[362] On two occasions, in 1870 and 1875, Hilton's ministerial efforts were singled out for special mention in Bishop Atkinson's annual address to the diocesan conventions.[363] Moreover, in addition to his primary duties at St. Thomas, Hilton also served the congregations at St. Johns, Durham Creek; Zion Church, near Washington; and St. James, Pantego, while doing considerable mission work in Hyde County as well.[364]

In 1876, however, there apparently developed within the congregation at St. Thomas a set of unfortunate and highly divisive circumstances, the nature of which is unclear. For some reason, ten communicants left the congregation during that year. Two others passed away, one of whom being

Joseph Bonner--long a leader in the vestry and the man primarily responsible for restoring the church in the early 1840s.[365] In the parochial report presented to the diocesan convention of 1876, a disheartened Hilton alluded to the recent sad developments at St. Thomas:

> This parish has suffered seriously during the past Conventional year, in the removal of many of its most active and efficient members, by death, and various other causes, and also by the reduction made in its ministerial services in consequence of the removal of its Rector.[366]

Hilton had, in fact, decided to resign; but he apparently continued to serve the congregation, at least on an occasional basis, until the following year. At its meeting of 3 February 1877, the vestry formally received and accepted Hilton's resignation. His salary of $200 a year was badly and shamefully in arrears.[367] In writing an historical sketch of St. Thomas Church in 1881, several years after his departure, Hilton included a rather vague and wistful reference to its sad decline in the mid-1870s:

> From this time [1867] the congregation increased as it never had before, for several years. But sad changes have taken place. Nearly all of the old communicants have gone to their reward, and most of the younger ones have moved away. The present population of the village and vicinity is made up almost entirely by strangers who know nothing of the sacred traditions of its past history and the peculiar features of the English branch of the Catholic Church. . . .[368]

The Rev. Horace G. Hilton passed away in Plymouth, North Carolina, on the 21st of November 1887. In accordance with his wishes, he was returned to Bath for burial at St. Thomas.[369]

Upon the acceptance of Hilton's resignation in February of 1877, it had appeared that his immediate successor would be the Rev. Nymphus E. Price. Price was chosen unanimously by the vestry, and it was decided that the church would pay him $75 a year to conduct two services each month. According to this initial agreement, he was to preach more often if additional funds could be found, and St. Thomas was to be one of three Beaufort County churches to

share his services.[370] For some reason, however, Price was passed over in favor of the Rev. Luther Eborn, who had served the congregation from 1864 to 1866 during the Rev. Israel Harding's absence. Price did, nevertheless, serve as Eborn's assistant during at least the latter part of his ministry; and in 1884 Price finally became rector in his own right.[371]

Despite the disruptive and rather mysterious circumstances which had troubled the last year of Hilton's ministry and apparently led to his resignation, the second ministry of the Rev. Luther Eborn seems to have begun on a reasonably firm foundation. Indeed, he appears to have had the early support of Hilton in assuring as smooth a transition as possible. On 19 April 1878, for example, Bishop Theodore B. Lyman joined with both men in conducting services at St. Thomas. Moreover, Lyman found that the congregation was in a reasonably sanguine condition:

> Good Friday, April 19th, in St. Thomas' Bath, after Morning Prayer by the Rev. Messrs. Hilton and Eborn, I preached, confirmed ten persons, addressed them, and administered the Holy Communion. The church was densely crowded, with a most attentive congregation, and a growing interest in the services of the church is plainly apparent.[372]

During this second ministry of the Rev. Luther Eborn, from 1878 to 1882, the number of communicants remained constant at slightly more than fifty, falling from a high of sixty during his first year.[373] On 26 February 1882, however, Eborn resigned from his duties at St. Thomas, and from those at St. James and Zion churches as well, in order to accept the rectorship of St. Davids Church in Washington County.[374] The records are not specific as to the reason for this decision, but it appears that Eborn's duties had been too onerous and his pay too little in Beaufort County. In speaking of the vacancies which he had left there, he said that he had "heretofore served them all . . . by travelling in a buggy during four years, the distance of six thousand and eight hundred miles."[375] Bishop Lyman also commented on

the vacancies created in Beaufort County by Eborn's resignation, acknowledging that after more than a year of searching, it had "been very difficult to find anyone to undertake the duty, with the very insufficient salary which has been provided."[376] In any event, St. Thomas was to experience some difficult years following Eborn's departure.

In terms of its physical appearance and surroundings, the period from the Civil War to the formation of the Diocese of East Carolina in 1883 was one of the most interesting and dynamic eras in the long history of St. Thomas Church. It was during this period that lasting benefits were achieved through the expansion of the church property; but it was also during this period that many things were done to the church itself which would later need to be undone in the course of restoration. The well intentioned alterations which occurred at St. Thomas can be seen as examples of the all-too-numerous "improvements" visited upon colonial buildings in America during the latter decades of the nineteenth century, as the simplicity of the original architecture was cast aside or drastically altered in favor of much busier and ornate elements of Victorian architecture and decor.

One of the more conspicuous changes in the outward appearance of St. Thomas came with the construction of a wooden tower and belfry at the front entrance, presumably to replace the brick tower destroyed by storm about 1840. This project had been planned even before the Civil War, but the plans were apparently not carried into effect until afterwards. Meeting on the 14th Sunday after Trinity in the year 1860, the vestrymen of St. Thomas had voted

> to authorize Mr. Wm. Walling to collect the present subscriptions & to build a belfry to this Church with the same & to solicit still further subscriptions to enable him to erect a suitable one if he can possibly do so, provided the whole does not amount to over $250--in which case the surplus fund must be subject to this vestry.

> Resolved that Rev. Israel Harding be requested to cooperate with Mr. Walling in regard to the style, finish and completion of the said belfry and that the Rev. Mr. Harding and Mr. Walling determine the price of the whole.[377]

Apparently there was some reluctance on the part of the vestry to become further involved with this project. Indeed, the vestry took pains to absolve itself of any financial obligations:

> N. B. It was also Resolved, that this vestry as a body are not responsible for any part of the expenses of the aforesaid belfry, and consequently not subject to any draw from any person for means to pay any part of the cost of the same, each one being left to pay for himself just what he pleases.[378]

The eventual construction of the wooden tower and belfry appears to have come in 1868-1869, under the supervision of the same William Walling who had earlier been charged with responsibility for the project. Writing in 1881, the Rev. Horace G. Hilton commented upon the work accomplished by Walling, not only on the tower but on the church as a whole:

> About the year 1868 it /St. Thomas/ was again repaired and very much improved by the addition of a tower erected of wood, and rearrangement of the chancel by a young man from England (Mr. William Walling), who by his superior knowledge and skills in church architecture and the mechanical art, and his noble generosity, has been of great value to the Church in the eastern part of this Diocese.[379]

Little can be learned of William Walling--the rather obscure resident of Bath who played such an important role in the history of St. Thomas. The census of 1860, however, reveals that he was indeed a native of England. Additionally, it discloses that Walling had a wife, Elizabeth, aged 35, and two children: Walter, aged 7, and Sarah, aged 3. He was listed as a "mechanic," with real estate valued at $2,000 and a personal estate valued at $3,000.[380] In the census of 1870, it is significant to note that Walling was listed as a "House Carpenter."[381] Even more significant, perhaps, is the fact that he was now the owner of a lumber mill in Bath, powered by a twenty

horsepower steam engine and employing an average of seven workmen.[382] It should also be noted that he and his wife Elizabeth had a third child by this time--a daugher named Maud.[383] From the order of visitation in both 1860 and 1870, it appears that Walling's residence was on Main Street in Bath, between the Glebe House and the Bonner House.[384]

In close conjunction with Walling's construction of the tower and his rearrangement of the chancel area, was his addition of a small frame building to the rear of the church for use as a vestry room. This building was provided with a passageway to and from the chancel area by converting a window into a doorway to the right of the altar.[385] This small structure, long detached from the church, is now situated in the side yard between the Parish House and the A. C. D. Noe Library. Ghost marks on the rear of the church clearly indicate that the vestry building was situated so that the end with the door was flush with the church and the end with the belfry stood away from the church.[386]

It was not until the early 1960s that "Queen Anne's Bell" was removed from the belfry of the detached vestry building and placed in an open belfry nearer the church.[387] This removal later proved a fortuitous one. Very recently, on 1 August 1980, a large black walnut tree, toppled by a storm, heavily damaged the shingle roof of the vestry building and completely destroyed its small belfry.[388]

Aside from rearranging the chancel area and installing an entrance to the attached vestry room, it is difficult to discern what other changes Walling may have made to the interior of St. Thomas in the late 1860s and early 1870s. It appears fairly certain, however, that the pulpit (possibly the original one) was removed from the left-hand side of the church during this time. In 1916 an old-time Bath resident and parishioner recalled that "until after the

Civil War there was a sounding board over the pulpit which was removed by Mr. William Walling when he almost rebuilt the church. . . ."[389] Writing somewhat earlier, in 1893, another venerable citizen of Bath recorded her memories of the pulpit which had once held the rectors and missionaries at St. Thomas:

> I can remember, thirty-five or forty years ago, the high box pulpit to which the minister gained access by a flight of small steps. The 'sounding board' over the pulpit was in the shape of a huge umbrella and painted red.[390]

This same individual also recalled that the pews had been "renewed once in my remembrance of forty years."[391] It is possible, therefore, that the pews were also replaced during Walling's extensive repairs and renovations. If so, it is also possible that the replacement pews were then placed upon the wooden platforms upon which they rested until the major restoration of St. Thomas which began in the late 1930s.[392] Whatever the full extent of Walling's work might have been, much of it seems to have been accomplished before the spring of 1870. On the 19th of April of that year, Bishop Thomas Atkinson was favorably impressed by both the effectiveness of Hilton's ministry and the condition and appearance of the church:

> In this parish the results of Mr. Hilton's labors, under God's blessing, have been remarkable and most encouraging; the venerable old Church has been thoroughly repaired, a vestry room built, the interior of the church neatly fitted up, the congregation large, and the confirmations numerous.[393]

Meeting on the second Sunday in August, 1870, the vestry of St. Thomas "authorized the Minister to have the necessary mason work executed upon the church & became responsible for the cost of the same."[394] The masonry work referred to may have been the subsequent installation of at least two of the small marble tablets which now surround the front entrance of the church. On the right hand side is a tablet placed there by William Walling in

commemoration of the founding of Bath. It reads as follows: "Erected by Wm. Walling, Esqr. A.D. 1871. In Memory of John Lawson, Joel Martin and Simon Alderson, Founders of Bath Town in 1706."[395] Flanking the entrance on the left side is a second marble tablet in honor of Thomas Boyd:

> Thomas Boyd. Born March 7, 1774. Died near Long Acre Bridge, Beaufort County, January 3, 1864. He was an honest man. The Sweet Remembrance of the Just Shall Flourish when he sleeps in dust.[396]

It would appear that Thomas Boyd had long been a faithful parishioner at St. Thomas. Probably he was closely related to the W. R. Boyd who served the vestry both before and after the Civil War, and who was elected treasurer in 1868 and 1870. A third marble tablet, surmounting the entrance of St. Thomas, may also have been placed there by William Walling in the early 1870s as a finishing touch to the extensive work he had accomplished in repairing and remodeling the church. This tablet reads simply: "St. Thomas Church Built A.D. 1734."[397]

William Walling's extremely important and largely unsung contributions to St. Thomas Church also included the sizable expansion of the church property. The need for this expansion had its origins in the 1730s, when the church was built on land which had been intended as a part of Craven Street.[398] In June of 1873, Walling, Samuel L. Ormond, and Joseph Y. Bonner (son of Joseph Bonner), acting in their capacities as commissioners of the Town of Bath, conveyed a strip of land to St. Thomas in an attempt to rectify the mistake made in the building's original placement. For a recited consideration of $25.00, the commissioners granted,

> . . . for the use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in St. Thomas Parish Bath a certain piece or parcel of land 60 feet wide running from Church Street [now Harding Street] to Front St. in which the Church stands. Together with all and singular the hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in

> any way appertaining. The said land being a part of what is known on the plat of the town as Craven St. . . . for the above named use and benefit forever.[399]

At the same time that Walling and his fellow town commissioners made possible the expansion of the church property along its northern boundary, he also provided the Town of Bath with the means of widening Craven Street along its northern side, so that the street would no longer be obstructed by the church. For an identical consideration of $25.00, Walling and his wife Elizabeth conveyed

> . . . for the use of the Town of Bath as a street, a certain piece or parcel of land 40 feet wide on the North side of Craven St. adjoining, and running parallel with the said Craven Street from Church St. to Front St. as laid down in the plat of the sd. town of Bath. . . .[400]

At the time of acquisition of the additional land from William Walling and the Bath town commissioners, St. Thomas was pleasantly situated to the south of a relatively large area of open land on the opposite side of Craven Street. Indeed, during much of the latter half of the nineteenth century, the wooded area between St. Thomas Church and the Palmer-Marsh House (then owned by William M. Marsh) was uncluttered and largely undeveloped. The Palmer-Marsh House itself was commonly referred to as the Marsh "farm house," even though situated on Bath's principal street.[401] Along Craven Street stood a row of stately elm trees, which further enhanced the surroundings of St. Thomas to the north. These remained until well into the twentieth century, when they finally fell victim to the further broadening of Craven Street.[402]

The congregation's vistas to the south and east of the church were somewhat less pleasing during the latter half of the nineteenth century. As early as 1860 Dr. Samuel Goelet had been leasing land in this area for farming; but subsequent farming or gardening by L. B. Williams to the rear of the Williams or Glebe House seems to have encroached onto land which the

parishioners would have preferred in a landscaped or natural state. At its meeting on 21 August 1876,

> The vestry took into consideration the trouble between the vestry and Mr. Williams, he (the said Williams) having put his fence upon the church lot.[403]

At the time, William Gaylord was appointed a committe of one "to call upon Mr. Williams and see what he will do."[404] In the event, this matter of encroachment does not seem to have been solved until well into this century. A photograph from the mid-1920s shows quite clearly that cultivation to the rear of the Williams House verged very near to the church building at its front and along its southern side. Moreover, a crude and unsightly wooden fence formed a barrier between the cultivated area and the churchyard.[405]

Early photographs show that the churchyard at St. Thomas, was, itself, enclosed by fencing during the last decades of the nineteenth century, if not before. An undated photograph, possibly dating from the 1870s, shows that a white board fence was already in place. This fence may well be related to a brief and isolated entry in the vestry minutes for 3 February 1877. At this time, "the Committee on the Ch./urch/ Fence asked further time, which was granted."[406] Unfortunately, the vestry minutes make no further reference to this committee's work. Subsequent photographs show that this board fence remained standing until at least the 1890s, and perhaps longer. By the early 1920s it had been replaced by a heavy wire fence mounted on wooden posts.[407]

Even the ancient bell at St. Thomas was embraced within the improvements undertaken by William Walling and others during the ministry of the Rev. Horace G. Hilton. Within a few years of its construction, the frame tower erected at the church entrance seems to have been removed or destroyed, and the bell placed in a small belfry atop the recently constructed vestry building at the rear of the church. A few years prior to its placement

there, however, the bell was recast and enlarged. The general course of these events was recalled by the Rev. Luther Eborn, some three decades after they occurred:

> When I first knew St. Thomas Church at Bath it had no tower, but it had a small sweet-toned bell bearing the inscription 'London 1732.' When Rev. Israel Harding was its rector, immediately after the Civil War, I think, he caused the tower to be built in front, and the bell placed therein.
>
> In the year 1872, by the instrumentality of the Rev. H. G. Hilton, the bell, having become cracked was sent to Troy, N.Y. and recast with the addition of more metal, he receiving /a/ certificate that the old bell was recast and used in making the new one, having the inscription now 'London 1732. Troy 1872.' Being absent for years I do not know when this tower was removed, but probably about 1875.[408]

Eborn went on to state that the vestry room was built "about the year 1879," and that the bell was then hung in the belfry of that structure.[409] Other evidence, however, indicates that the vestry room was built in 1869.[410] It is quite possible that the belfry was added to the vestry room several years after its initial construction, to accommodate the bell formerly housed in the tower.[411]

Given the many aspects and apparent thoroughness of the repairs and remodeling which went on at St. Thomas in the late 1860s and early 1870s, it is altogether unaccountable why the edifice should have required similar attention only a few years later. Nevertheless, this was undoubtedly the case. Indeed, the need for repairs soon burgeoned into a rather widely publicized plea for Episcopalians across the state to come to St. Thomas' rescue.

When assistant Bishop Theodore B. Lyman visited St. Thomas in April of 1876, plans were already afoot to perform needed repairs. Moreover, Lyman's impressions of the church and congregation gave rise to a brief explication of the relationship which subsists between the physical and spiritual aspects of Christian worship:

> Sixth Sunday in Lent, April 9th, in St. Thomas' Church, Bath, after prayers by Rev. Mr. Hilton, I preached, confirmed four persons, addressed them, and administered Holy Communion.
>
> Preached again in the evening. It was very gratifying to see this venerable Church, the oldest in the Diocese, crowded with interested worshippers, and to observe the kindling of a becoming zeal in caring for the church building and grounds. It is proposed to put the edifice in good repair, and make some greatly needed improvements. These venerable relics of the olden time deserve to be carefully guarded, and where a proper interest is manifested in this direction, its fruit is sure to be seen in spiritual growth and prosperity. There is no more certain proof of spiritual indifference and deadness, than when church buildings are left in a neglected and dilapidated condition. It argues a lack of reverence for the Divine Majesty; and where this is the case, no spiritual blessing can be looked for, in any parish. The outward and the inward are very closely united, and indifference to the one will surely bring evil to the other.[412]

Upon returning to St. Thomas in 1878, Lyman was again encouraged by the work which was planned; but, apparently, little or no repairs or improvements had been accomplished during the preceding two years:

> Good Friday, April 19th, in St. Thomas', Bath, after Morning Prayer by the Rev. Messrs. Hilton and Eborn, I preached, confirmed ten persons, addressed them and administered the Holy Communion. The church was densely crowded, with a most attentive congregation, and a growing interest in the services of the church is plainly apparent. It gratified me to learn that an effort would shortly be made to put this venerable building--erected in 1734--in complete repair. It is one of those old landmarks which ought to be carefully preserved.[413]

Finally, on 17 November 1881, a major effort to gain support for extensive work at St. Thomas was launched with the publication of an historical sketch in the diocesan newspaper, the Church Messenger. Written by the Rev. H. G. Hilton, former rector, the article contained a plea for financial assistance for the work which needed to be done:

> /St. Thomas Church/ is a valuable relic of antiquity, and the property of the whole Church in this great country, and as such loudly appeals to all for their 'prayers and alms.' Five hundred dollars is wanted immediately to put it in a good state of comfort and preservation. The few churchmen resident there will do what they can, but they are too poor to do much, and

> must have assistance, or the church will go down. May it please our Heavenly Father to open the hearts of His faithful children all over this land to contribute cheerfully, to this worthy object.
>
> All who may feel called on to aid in this good work will please send their contributions to the Rev. Luther Eborn, Haslin, Beaufort County, N.C., who will promptly acknowledge the same in the Church Messenger.[414]

Accompanying Hilton's plea was a brief editorial by the editor of the Church Messenger, joining in the call for funds to carry on the necessary work at St. Thomas.[415] Unfortunately, the response to these solicitations seems to have been disappointing. The first acknowledgement of financial assistance did not appear in the Church Messenger until 23 March 1882:

> Notice
>
> The undersigned gratefully acknowledges the donation of $20 from 'A Churchman,' for repairing St. Thomas' Church, Bath, N. C.
>
> He respectfully and earnestly solicits more aid for this holy and praiseworthy object.

This acknowledgement was signed by Hilton's successor, the Reverend Luther Eborn. In his parochial report of 1882, Eborn had commented on the need for work at St. Thomas:

> An effort has lately been made to repair the venerable church edifice in this parish, which praiseworthy and important object has been encouraged by contributions within and without the parish. It is to be hoped that this ancient and interesting building, which has served as the blessed sanctuary of four generations past, will be remembered by churchmen so as not only to preserve, but also beautify it for generations to come.[416]

Ironically, Eborn himself had recently left St. Thomas to assume the rectorship of St. Davids in Washington County.[417]

Now bereft of a minister, with its membership in decline, St. Thomas seems to have realized little tangible benefit from the drive to raise money from Episcopalians throughout the state. Moreover, St. Thomas Church was, like many others, about to be embraced within a new and initially controversial system of ecclesiastical organization with the formation in 1883 of the Diocese of East Carolina.

By 1883, after an existence of sixty-six years, the Diocese of North Carolina had grown to include some 5,889 communicants and sixty-six clergymen, with its member churches spread across the state from the seashore to the mountains. Inevitably, the questions arose as to whether the diocese had grown too large and populous to be embraced within the jurisdiction of a single bishop, and whether the time had come for the older eastern parishes to coalesce into a separate diocese, under the jurisdiction of their own bishop. These questions were finally decided at the diocesan convention of 23-26 May 1883, held in St. Peters, Charlotte. When the crucial vote was taken, an overhelming majority of the parishes represented came down in favor of the division, with the number for and against being twenty-nine and ten respectively. Of the fifty-three clergymen casting a vote, forty-two voted in favor of the division, and only eleven against. St. Thomas had no clergyman at this time to cast a vote; but it is significant to note that the parish as a whole was one of only ten which voted to retain a single diocese for the entire state. Nevertheless, having been on the losing side on the division question, St. Thomas was now a part of the newly created diocese.[418]

In December of 1883 the primary convention of the Diocese of East Carolina convened in New Bern for the purpose of electing a bishop. St. Thomas's delegates to this important convention were laymen Jesse Cutler and George Pilley. In the event, the man chosen as the first bishop of the new diocese was the Rev. Alfred Augustin Watson, rector of St. James, Wilmington, and formerly (1852-1854) rector of St. Thomas itself.[419] During the following spring a second convention was held in St. Peters, Washington, only sixteen miles from Bath. The St. Thomas delegates to this convention were laymen Joseph Y. Bonner and James F. Carrow.[420] Until very recently, and for nearly two years, St. Thomas had been without a minister and in a state of severe decline, enjoying

only the occasional services of lay reader, Penner Stickney. Her prospects, however, had begun to improve.

By the time of the Washington convention of May, 1884, St. Thomas had come under the pastoral care of the Rev. Robert B. Windley. But Windley served the church for only a few months, and during this same period was also responsible for Zion Church, near Washington; St. Stephens, Goldsboro; and St. Thomas, Windsor. It was not, therefore, within his power to accomplish very much for the small church at Bath; nevertheless his brief tenure seems to have stabilized the congregation and prevented its further decline for the time being.[421]

Somewhat later in 1884, St. Thomas Church was blessed with the arrival of the Rev. Nymphas E. Price, who would carefully guide its recovery during the next eight years. On the 20th of May, Bishop Watson personally interceded with the vestry in arranging for Price's coming to Bath; and he took the occasion to reflect on St. Thomas's historical significance, and on its significance to him personally:

> At St. Thomas', Bath, assisted by Messrs. R. B. Windley and N. E. Price, said Morning Prayer, preached and celebrated the Holy Communion, renewing the associations of thirty-one years before, when this old parish was in my charge as a priest. Bath was, in colonial times, a fenced town with gates and bars, and holds still its ancient common from which its inhabitants are privileged to cut their firewood free of cost. It has, I think, the oldest church edifice in the Diocese, the date upon its wall being 1734, while I understand that of 1732 is, or was inscribed upon its bell. This was at one time one of the seats of the Colonial Legislature and the residence of a Colonial Governor. I was glad to find the building in comparatively good repair.
>
> After service I met the vestry of the parish and made arrangements to secure the services of the Rev. N. E. Price. I licensed two persons to act under him as Lay Readers.[422]

It was agreed by the vestry that Price would be paid a salary of $150 a year.[423]

The Rev. Nymphas E. Price, apparently one of St. Thomas's most beloved and effective ministers, was born in Greenville, North Carolina, on 12 December

1840. He was educated at Trinity School, Chocowinity, and at the University of North Carolina, which he left during his junior year in order to serve the Confederacy. While minister at St. Thomas, he was active in the work of the Convocation of Edenton--an association within the Diocese of East Carolina which included St. Thomas as one of its member parishes. On at least two occasions, on 22 November 1885 and 27 November 1891, the Convocation of Edenton assembled in Bath; and in the early 1890s Price rose to the position of secretary within this association.[424]

During Price's ministry the number of communicants at St. Thomas doubled, from thirty in 1884 to sixty in 1892, dipping to a low of twenty-seven in 1886 and reaching a high of sixty-five in 1890. The Sunday school also flourished under Price's leadership, increasing from fourteen in 1884 to thirty-three in 1892.[425]

It is also apparent that significant and probably extensive repairs and alterations were made at St. Thomas Church during the pivotal years of Price's incumbency. A precious few of these are alluded to in surviving records; others can only be the subjects of speculation and plausible inference.

There seems little doubt that the roof of St. Thomas was completely reshingled in the mid-1880s. Meeting on Easter of 1884, "the vestry present were each authorized to collect what amount they could to shingle St. Thomas Church. . . ." At the same time, the newly elected treasurer, Ransom Woolard, was instructed "to sell a certain lot of lumber at Reidsville for the benefit of St. Thomas," indicating that money was being raised for this or other projects.[426] One other bit of evidence indicates that the roof was replaced at least at some point in the later half of the nineteenth century: writing in 1893, an old-time resident of Bath recalled that the roof had been "renewed once in my remembrance of forty years."[427]

Interior changes during the 1880s are more difficult to specify with any degree of certainty, although extensive changes seem to have been carried out. Photographs of the interior as it appeared in the mid-1920s reveal a number of elements which might well have been introduced in the 1880s. Among these are Victorian furnishings within the chancel rail, a very ponderous and richly detailed altar, and a massive canopy suspended above the altar by means of steel cables. Other features probably dating from the 1880s are the Queen Anne style windows, trimmed in stain glass, a beaded board ceiling (possibly installed in conjunction with the new roof), several oil lamps suspended from the ceiling and corners of the altar canopy, and, above the center of the nave, a large and extremely ornate chandelier.[428]

Fortunately, there is one contemporary document which definitely links the Rev. Nymphas E. Price with what appears to have been these extensive interior renovations, although the nature of the work is not clearly revealed. On 9 December 1885 Price corresponded with the Rev. Robert Brent Drane, rector of St. Pauls, Edenton, concerning the work which was underway at St. Thomas:

> Dear Bro./ther/
>
> Your favor at hand. Do not think any tablets are obscurred in the East end of St. Thomas Ch. by the panneling. There is a tablet in that end erected to the memory of Mrs. Palmer 'the wife of her /sic/ Majestys Surveyor Genl.' but it is open to view. As to placing the altar in /sic, and?/ the pulpit /I/ think that the present platform had better be cut down to a level with the foot of the chancel rail wh/ich/ will be about 3 or 3½ inches. The altar should be, I think, about 4 ft. long, 20 in/ches/ broad, & 3-4 or 3-6 high. We might then let a part of the seat at present in rear of the pulpit, remain for a credence table. What do you think of that? Suggest any better plan if you choose. How can we best procure a Lectern & a Prayer desk— We will need both.[429]

It was during Price's ministry that the vestry voted to convey a small portion of the churchyard to the Williams family (owners of the "Glebe House") for use as a family cemetery. This land, subsequently enlarged, is stillexempted from the church property which surrounds it. Meeting on 19 August 1888, the vestry

> agreed to sell G. B. Williams a small slip of land something in the shape of a V for [burial] privileges the price agreed upon by the vestry was $10--ten dollars. J. F. Carrow was impowered to confer & make sale for the same with G. B. Williams--the burial lot should only be (8) eight feet on the walk running to the Church.[430]

With respect to burials within the churchyard itself, it was "suggested and carried that those who wanted burial lots in the church yard provide them by paying (1) one dollar per foot with the walk running to the fence."[431]

In 1885 it was reported that a new church was underway at Pantego and that a mission had been formed at the "comparatively new but flourishing town" of Aurora, where "a neat and appropriate church edifice [was] approaching completion."[432] Over these new congregations Price extended the pastoral care begun at St. Thomas. By the end of his ministry he was serving a total of four churches.[433] Price's good work was brought to a premature end on 22 May 1892, when he passed away at the age of fifty-one. On the day following his death, he was interred in the churchyard at St. Thomas.[434]

From 1892 to 1901 St. Thomas enjoyed a decade of continued progress under the leadership of Price's, successor, the Rev. Francis Joyner. During Joyner's ministry the number of communicants grew steadily from sixty to ninety, with not a single year showing a decline from the one which preceded it. The Sunday school also throve, with more than sixty students by the turn of the twentieth century.[435]

It was during Joyner's ministry, also, that several new Episcopal churches were spawned in Beaufort County. In 1899 he established a mission at Pinetown, where Shiloh Church was soon completed.[436] During the following year St. Matthew's Chapel was consecrated in Yeatesville.[437] Finally, in 1901, a new Episcopal church was completed at Belhaven.[438]

At least initially, the Rev. Mr. Joyner officiated at St. Thomas on only one Sunday each month.[439] Moreover, he was hard pressed to eke out a living

from the small Beaufort County churches under his care. When Bishop Watson visited Bath on 12 June 1894, he cited Joyner's poverty as an example of a phenomenon all too common in the Diocese of East Carolina and elsewhere:

> At St. Thomas', Bath, the congregation filled the old church (it is more than 160 years since its erection). . . .
> The attendance here, at Yeatesville and at Pantego, bears witness to the work of the faithful Minister. But the very meagre contributions to his support are lamentable and discouraging. Yet his is only one case of many. How can Christian people who care too little of their Lord to support His work expect His blessing on the last great day.[440]

In April of 1901 the Rev. Francis Joyner departed from Bath, "prostrated by bad health," once again leaving St. Thomas Church without a minister. During the next year, however, its vacant pulpit was filled on a part-time basis by the Rev. Nathaniel Harding, rector of St. Peter's, Washington, since 1873. Harding had been born at Chocowinity in 1847, and had received his early education at Trinity School. He was the brother of the Rev. Israel Harding, who had served the congregation at St. Thomas from 1857 to 1863 and in 1866-1867. It is also important to note that he was the father of humorist Edmund H. Harding, whose flamboyant leadership and tireless labors would result in the preservation and restoration of historic Bath a half century later. Indeed, the seeds of Edmund Harding's future accomplishments at Bath may well have been sown on those numerous occasions when he accompanied his ailing and partially crippled "preacher daddy" from Washington to Bath for services in St. Thomas.[441]

From 1901 to 1907 the Rev. Nathaniel Harding cared as best he could for St. Thomas and other Episcopal churches in Beaufort County, deprived of a minister since Joyner's departure--this, in addition to carrying out his primary responsibilities at St. Peters. Indeed, his selfless exertions were especially commended by Bishop Watson following the latter's visit to Bath in 1901:

> Let me here pay tribute to the faithful, unselfish help I have received in the care of the parishes and congregations in and around Bath, Bunyan and Yeatesville (left vacant since the removal of Rev. Mr. Joyner), from my faithful Presbyter, Rev. Nathaniel Harding, who, in the absence of a pastor of their own, has cared for these sheep of the Lord's fold regardless of his own comfort.[442]

Much to Harding's credit, the size of the St. Thomas congregation was not only maintained but slightly increased during his ministry, with the number of communicants rising from 90 to 110 between 1901 and 1907.[443] It should also be noted that Harding's efforts in behalf of St. Thomas were aided considerably in 1905 by the services of Bath resident Ellis L. Roper as lay reader--a fact gratefully acknowledged by newly elected bishop, Robert Strange, following his first episcopal visitation to Bath during that same year.[444]

For nearly three decades following the ministry of the Rev. Nathaniel Harding, St. Thomas Church suffered from enervation and a rapid turnover in the ranks of its clergymen. Between 1907 and 1936, nine men occupied the pulpit for relatively brief periods of two or three years. At times, the venerable church was without the regular services of a minister altogether. During these torpid and uninspired decades, there was only one minister whose tenure exceeded three years (and his only slightly)--the Rev. Stephen Gardner, rector of St. Peters, Washington, who served St. Thomas in 1922-1923 and again from 1928 to 1931.[445]

Membership fell dramatically from 1907 to 1908, with the number of communicants plummeting from 110 to 43. Between 1908 and 1936 the number of communicants varied widely and rather erratically. By the close of the First World War, the number had risen to a plateau of around seventy. In 1920, however, the number fell to thirty-eight; and during the 1920s and early 1930s it generally fluctuated in the twenties, thirties, and forties. The

size of the Sunday school also varied widely, from a high of thirty-three in 1933 to a low of twelve only four years earlier.[446] The parochial reports between 1907 and 1936 convey the overall impression that St. Thomas reached its nadir in the mid and late 1920s, despite the efforts of its two ministers during this period: the previously mentioned Stephen Gardner (1922-1923 and 1928-1931) and the Rev. Joseph N. Bynum (1924-1927).[447] Moreover, at least in 1927, services were being held in the church only one Sunday each month.[448] In the fullness of time, the gravely serious conditions at St. Thomas would finally provoke concern throughout the diocese and generate the efforts necessary to restore the edifice and rejuvenate its congregation.

By way of digression, some mention must be made of an oft-told and rather inconsequential story which was spawned in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This story concerns the small brick tile which still surmounts the main entrance of the church (above a larger marble plaque) and bears the inscription: "Bath 1705. Church 1734." There are various versions of this tale. The most bizarre of these begins with the tile's alleged removal by a mysterious businessman from New York, who arrived at the scene of the theft by sailing his palatial yacht up Bath Creek. After absconding to New York with the tile, this man is supposed to have deposited it in a museum, where it was subsequently recognized by a visiting Tar Heel dignitary, Secretary of State J. Bryan Grimes. Following his fortuitous discovery, Grimes is reputed to have had the tile ceremoniously returned to St. Thomas through the cooperation of the governors of both North Carolina and New York.[449]

A second version of this story, verified by the research of a reputable Beaufort County historian in the 1920s, maintains that the tile was removed by vandals and brought to nearby Washington, where it was subsequently dis-

covered at the Hotel Louise by one F. A. Emerick, a well-to-do businessman from Oswego, New York. Recalling the tile's provenance from a recent visit to Bath, Emerick used the good offices of Miss Lida T. Rodman, Beaufort County historian, to return it to Bath, whereupon it was remounted above the door by senior warden, Joseph Y. Bonner, on 12 July 1905. Indeed, on the following day Bonner reported the accomplishment of the task to Miss Rodman:

> According to promise I write to inform you that I had the brick, that you was so kind to bring me, replaced on St. Thomas Church yesterday. Accept my kindest regards for the interest you took in returning the old brick with the date of a building that my ancestors for two generations have worshipped in.[450]

According, however, to the testimony of Edmund H. Harding, son of one rector of St. Thomas and nephew of another, the dated tile at St. Thomas is a mere hoax, with no historical association with the church whatsoever. Harding maintained that the tile was made in 1903 by the Washington resident, Todd Maxwell, who afterwards used it as a door stop. Again, according to Harding, there had never been a dated tile over the front entrance until the solemn placement there of Maxwell's "door stop." The 6" x 6" hole above the door, where the tile now rests, had been previously used to hold one end of a large beam which was a part of the wooden tower and belfry erected after the Civil War and subsequently removed. In support of this contention, Harding made reference to a photograph of the front of St. Thomas Church taken in 1892, pointing out that no such tile was in evidence at that time.[451] An examination of this photograph seems to verify Harding's contention. Similarly, another undated photograph, possibly dating from the late 1870s, also shows a square indentation with no tile.[452]

It is certainly possible that the hollowed-out square above the door was a part of the tower structure, rather than the receptacle for an historic,

dated tile. However, if it is true that the tile was not of historic value, it is extremely doubtful that Joseph Y. Bonner (born in 1840) would have considered its return a matter of importance. Perhaps the riddle of the tile can never by answered fully.

Considerable attention has already been given to the rather extensive renovations and changes made at St. Thomas during the quarter century following the Civil War. Unfortunately, the sources shed little light on the work done between that time and the commencement of the thorough restoration begun in the late 1930s. Presumably, the changes brought about during this period were few and relatively minor, with one known exception. In 1926 a new shingle roof was put on the church, replacing a similar roof which had probably been installed in the 1880s.[453] Another major project was contemplated but never carried out: in 1927 it was reported that "One loyal woman has been trying for years to raise money to restore the tower," but that her "fund is growing slowly." The tower referred to was the brick tower destroyed almost a century earlier.[454] There can be no doubt, however, that the deteriorating condition of the church building and the declining size and vigor of its congregation were attracting considerable attention for quite some time before major restoration work was finally begun in the late 1930s. Moreover, with the advent of more rapid and convenient transportation, St. Thomas started to draw increasing numbers of visitors from both near and far.

As early as 1913, the congregation at St. Thomas began keeping a guest register--a practice which is still followed today.[455] By the mid-1920s the flow of visitors had already swollen considerably. It was reported that "more than 5,000 visitors were shown through the church in 1925," including "several from England and two from Bath, England."[456]

Perhaps the most celebrated visitor of 1925 was the novelist Edna Ferber,

who stayed briefly in Bath in the course of gathering material for her novel Show Boat. It is recalled, with mingled feelings of pride and resentment, that she signed the guest register of St. Thomas but declined to make any contribution to the church. In her novel, as it was subsequently published, Miss Ferber reproduced verbatim the epitaph on the memorial tablet to Margaret Palmer, which is situated in the church to the left of the altar. Only the names were altered for literary purposes, with "Mrs. Suzanne Ravenal" substituted for Mrs. Palmer and "Jean Baptista Ravenal, Esq." for her husband, Robert Palmer.[457]

The sizable flow of visitors to St. Thomas in 1925 was one of the most important aspects of a growing and general interest in the historic church, despite its small congregation and increasingly serious structural deterioration. Indeed, St. Thomas came to be represented at this time as a sort of Mecca for a pilgrimage of Episcopalians and others from across the state. This pilgrimage was later described in glowing terms by the incumbent rector, the Rev. Joseph N. Bynum:

> St. Thomas' had perhaps the biggest day in its history on November 12, 1925, when the Church people of the State were invited to make a pilgrimage to the State's oldest church. Led by the Rt. Rev. Thomas C. Darst, D.D., Bishop of the diocese in which the church is located, and the Rt. Rev. Joseph Blount Cheshire, D.D., Bishop of the diocese of North Carolina. Some three hundred attended.[458]

The pilgrimage of 1925 was, in fact, the first of several annual pilgrimages to St. Thomas during the episcopate of Bishop Darst, who took a personal and abiding interest in restoring the old church. In at least a few of the years which followed, these pilgrimages were observed on the 14th of each November in commemoration of the consecration of Bishop Samuel

Seabury on that date in 1784--the event which, at long last, had officially established a basis for episcopal government on American soil.[459]

The pilgrimage of 1925, in addition to launching an annual observance, also had as a prime objective the formation of an organization to assist the small congregation at St. Thomas in preserving and restoring the venerable and historic church building. Following services and the celebration of Holy Communion, a group of men was organized as "The Association for the Restoration and Preservation of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Bath," under the chairmanship of John G. Bragaw of Washington, with S. S. Nash of Tarboro its vice-chairman, and the Rev. J. M. Bynum, secretary.[460]

Under the leadership of Bishop Darst, there was also an attempt to enlarge and invigorate the vestry of St. Thomas, and to elevate the church to a position of unique ecclesiastical significance within the diocese. During the forty-third annual convention of the Diocese of East Carolina, held at St. Johns, Wilmington, in January of 1926, a resolution was adopted making St. Thomas a diocesan parish or quasi cathedral, with Bishop Darst as its rector and the Rev. J. N. Bynum his vicar. Moreover, a vestry was appointed which included not only local residents but also prominent individuals from outside the Bath area.[461]

Late in 1927 there occurred an event of considerable moment to the Bath congregation when, at the instigation of the Rev. Robert Brent Drane of Edenton, the silver chalice formerly belonging to the Rev. John Garzia was returned to its rightful place at St. Thomas. This chalice, bearing the simple inscription, "D. D. Johannes Garzia, Ecclesiae Anglicanae Presbyter," had been mysteriously absent from St. Thomas for roughly 180 years.[462]

On 2 July 1929 an important meeting was held in Raleigh to lay plans for the complete restoration of St. Thomas. In conjunction with these plans,

an effort to raise some $20,000 was to be mounted. It was reported that over 5,000 people had visited the church in 1928 and that 6,500 had already passed through its doors during the first six months of 1929. Under the persistent leadership of Bishop Darst, another organization for the restoration of St. Thomas was formed out of representatives from various protestant denominations. Darst was chosen honorary chairman of this new group, with Josephus Daniels, chairman, W. A. Erwin, treasurer, T. B. Attmore, secretary, and the Rev. Stephen Gardner (now rector at St. Thomas) corresponding secretary.[463]

From the time of the first pilgrimage to St. Thomas on 12 November 1925, it was hoped that the planned restoration of the church could be completed in time for the 200th anniversary of its construction in 1734.[464] This hope was kept alive during the next few years, but tangible results were slow to be realized.

On the 26th of November 1929, as part of Bishop Darst's fifth annual pilgrimage, Josephus Daniels delivered a lengthy but vague oration in St. Thomas Church on the subject of its great historical significance and the urgent need for its restoration. The edifice was now envisioned as a kind of religious shrine for patriotic Christians of all denominations. In appealing for the funds necessary to achieve the goal of restoration, Daniels assumed a posture of resolution and hopefulness:

> I dare to declare that the day of neglect and indifference has come to an end. . . . We begin today the work of reconstruction of St. Thomas Church and invite all history-loving North Carolinians to share with us the duty and privilege of having a part in this sacred undertaking.[465]

In 1932 the Diocese of East Carolina received about $5,000 in the settlement of the disputed will of John Robert (Captain Bob) Bonner of Bath.[466] Under Bishop Darst's direction, it was decided that $1,500 of this amount

would be set aside "as a nest-egg for the planned restoration of . . . /St. Thomas/ before the bicentennial anniversary celebration in 1934."[467] Apparently the restoration plans had now become less ambitious, however, for Darst estimated in 1932 that only $5,000 would be needed. The scope of work was somewhat uncertain at this time, and, indeed, experts were divided as to whether the church could be saved at all:

> Just what will be done at the church is not yet known, as that depends primarily on the amount of money in sight when the work is undertaken. Architects recently at the church were of the opinion that the church should be rebuilt almost completely. Others have stated that not so much reconstruction work is actually necessary.[468]

As a part of the exterior and structural restoration, it was planned to rebuild the brick tower and to place within it the bell which had long hung in the frame vestry room to the rear of the church. It was also planned to restore the two small windows on the front of the church, which had been bricked-up at some point in the distant past. With regard to interior work, preliminary plans called for the reconstruction of the "old inside upper gallery" and for the overall restoration of the interior to its original appearance.[469]

Despite the best of intentions, the bicentennial year 1934 arrived with little having been accomplished. In the fall of that year it was reported that restoration of the interior was about to be started, but that only $2,000 was available for the work, including a $500 grant from the North Carolina Society of Colonial Dames. Alexander B. Andrews of Raleigh was now chairman of the committee to promote the restoration of St. Thomas, but the group had been forced to give up entirely its hope of doing anything more than a partial restoration of the interior:

> For several years it had been hoped to be able to raise enough money to undertake the restoration of the entire church during its bicentennial year. But it has seemed impossible to get sufficient funds. . . .[470]

With respect to this limited interior work, it was stated that

> first attention will be given to the chancel, which will be restored to its original condition, including a Colonial pulpit and two tablets for the altar containing the 10 commandments and the Apostles Creed.[471]

It is doubtful that even this much work was actually undertaken in 1934 or, indeed, in the next few years. The hopes for a complete bicentennial restoration had progressively diminished and, at length, had probably gone aglimmering altogether. Despite continued disappointment, however, Bishop Darst resolutely persisted in his plans for the restoration of St. Thomas Church; and he was soon to find a rector who wholeheartedly shared that goal. This rector arrived in 1936 in the person of Alexander Constantine Davis Noe.

The Rev. A. C. D. Noe was born in Beaufort, North Carolina on 31 January 1881, the son of fisherman John T. Noe and his wife Susanna. He received his early education at Miss Emma Morrison's school in Beaufort, later attending Trinity School, Chocowinity and St. Pauls School in Beaufort. Having completed his elementary and secondary education, he enrolled in the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee, where he prepared for his life's work as an Episcopal minister.[472]

Remarkably, Noe was one of four brothers who would dedicate their lives to the Episcopal ministry; together, they would serve the Church for more than 150 years.[473] One of these brothers, Walter Raleigh Noe, was to hold positions of considerable importance within the Diocese of East Carolina, including editor of the Mission Herald, secretary of various diocesan conventions, and treasurer and executive secretary of the diocese.[474] In these positions he would be well situated to work with Bishop Darst and his brother in the difficult and expensive task of restoring the state's most venerable church.

In 1907 the Rev. A. C. D. Noe assumed his first pastoral duties as rector of St. James Church, Belhaven and missionary in Hyde County. Leaving his first station in 1910, he subsequently served in Portsmouth, Virginia (1910-1911), Mount Airy, Germanton, and Walnut Cove (1911-1912), various churches in Hyde County (1913-1919), Farmville and Snow Hill (1919-1923), Batesville, Arkansas (1923-1924), Erwin (1925-1928), and Ayden, Grifton, and Winterville in Pitt County (1928-1936).[475]

On 14 July 1909 the Rev. Mr. Noe took as his bride the former Elizabeth Barber of Lake Landing in Hyde County. The marriage ceremony was performed by the bride's uncle, the Rev. Milton H. Barber, in St. George's Church, Lake Landing.[476] For nearly seven decades to come, Mr. and Mrs. Noe were to work hand-in-hand on behalf of the Episcopal Church, especially so during their long years of association with St. Thomas, Bath. Indeed, they took upon themselves its restoration and preservation as a true labor of love.

When the Rev. A. C. D. Noe arrived in Bath in 1936, he came at the behest of Bishop Darst with the responsibility of doing what he could to succeed where others had failed in the mission of saving St. Thomas for posterity.[477] For a decade now the historic church had enjoyed a special status within the diocese as Bishop Darst's personal parish; and several initiatives had been launched to restore the structure. Yet, these efforts had all fallen short of their goal, and most of the essential work remained to be done. In addition to his paramount duties in Bath, Noe was also priest in charge at Trinity and Zion churches in Beaufort County, both of which he served, with St. Thomas, until his retirement.[478] As compensation for his duties during the early years, he received $180 per annum from St. Thomas and Zion churches, $200 from Trinity Church, and $1,175 from the Diocesan Board of Missions, amounting to a total salary of $1,735 a year.[479]

The scope of work to be accomplished at St. Thomas was nearly all encompassing, particularly with regard to its restoration. All of the changes wrought since the completion of the church in the mid-1730s had marked progressive departures from its original design, arrangement, and furnishings. The Victorian elements introduced during the latter half of the nineteenth century were especially incompatible with its original Georgian features. Moreover, the building had become structurally unsound due to the erosion of its foundations and the conspicuous bulging of its side walls. Indeed, several consultants determined that the edifice could only be saved through careful dismantling and complete reconstruction.[480] It was, therefore, a Herculean task which faced Noe and those whose help he enlisted.

By the summer of 1937 a committee to restore St. Thomas had already been formed under the aegis of Bishop Darst and the chairmanship of the Rev. Mr. Noe. This group, The Bath Restoration Committee, also hoped to restore the Glebe (or Williams) House in front of the church, surround the churchyard with a wall of ballast-rock, plant a "colonial garden," and erect a small museum. An effort was begun initially to raise $150,000 for these ambitious projects.[481] During the years which followed, these plans became embellished even further in an abortive attempt to create a "waterfront Williamsburg."[482]

Although the plans for Bath came to have numerous facets in the late 1930s, it was always recognized that the restoration of St. Thomas Church was the project of highest priority. This began in earnest in September of 1939 after three years of work and preparation by Noe and others. By mid-October the activity was said to be "attracting wide attention."[483] The actual restoration work was being directed at this time by a small operating

committee under Noe's leadership. Also members of this committee were his brother, the Rev. W. R. Noe of Wilmington, William A. Tankard of Bath, and Dr. Christopher C. Crittenden, Secretary of the State Historical Commission. The larger group, of which this committee was a part, was under the chairmanship of A. B. Andrews, a Raleigh attorney.[484]

The initial step taken in the actual restoration of St. Thomas was the stabilization of the structure's foundations and side walls. This work, declared impracticable or impossible by some who had examined the church, was boldly undertaken by a group of men from Bath under the direction of Robert B. Davis, a self-taught architect and builder. Others playing important roles in the actual work of stabilizing and restoring the church were Donald Carrow, Harvey Tankard, and Dewey Skittlethorpe.[485] Davis reckoned that there was little to lose in attempting to straighten the walls, since the alternative was to demolish and reconstruct them. The initial step undertaken was to construct a network of braces on either side of the church using 4" x 6" timbers, with twelve of these placed vertically and four horizontally. Through the use of steel cables and screw jacks, these braces were forced inward in such a way as to bring the bulging walls (22 inches thick) back into plumb. To further stabilize the walls at their foundations, 12 inches of concrete were poured along their bases on both the outside and inside, the tile flooring having been taken up to facilitate the process. In close conjunction with straightening the walls, a new shingle roof was installed and fastened more securely to the walls than had previously been the case.[486]

In addition to straightening the walls and replacing the roof, an essential feature of exterior restoration was removal of the frame vestry room and belfry long attached to the rear of the church. When this was accomplished, there remained the task of reconverting the doorway to the

right of the altar into a window, as it had been prior to the vestry room's construction. When first removed, it appears that the vestry room was initially slated for destruction.[487] Instead, however, it was pulled well away from the church and relocated a short distance from where it stands today.

When restoration was begun in the fall of 1939, it was still hoped that the brick tower at the front of the church could be reconstructed. This feature had been absent now for about a century. During the early phases of work, it was reported that the "exact location" of this tower was one of several significant discoveries.[488] Indeed, some evidence was found of what may have been the tower's foundation, measuring roughly 10' x 12'.[489] The tower was never reconstructed, however, presumably because of the expense involved and the lack of certainty as to its original appearance.

Inside the church, extensive restoration work was required to recreate what was thought to be its original configuration and appearance. As a first step in this formidable task, it was necessary to remove almost all of the building's furnishings, take up the floor, and tear away all existing plaster. It was also necessary to pull down the beaded board ceiling and remove the ornate oil lamps and the Queen Anne style windows, which had probably been installed in the 1880s.

By mid-October of 1939 workmen were busily engaged in taking out the beaded board ceiling and removing plaster from the walls. While the basic configuration of the ceiling was retained, the beaded boards were replaced by plaster. The oil lamps, formerly suspended from the ceiling, were removed and electric lights installed.[490] In early November it was reported that the "plaster is down, so that architects may obtain an accurate idea of . . . /the interior's/ first arrangements."[491] With as much information as possible

having been gleaned from the bared brick of the interior walls, the inside of the church was then completely replastered by workmen brought in from Beaufort, the Rev. A. C. D. Noe's hometown.[492] Photographic evidence indicates that the replastered walls were painted white, as they remain today.[493]

Perhaps no other feature of the restoration of St. Thomas is at once more intriguing and frustrating than the work which was done to its floor, consisting of brick tiles, two inches thick and eight inches square.[494] The central question with regard to the church's floor is whether or not parishioners of the eighteenth and, perhaps, early nineteenth century were interred beneath it. Unfortunately, the evidence regarding this question is unreliable, confusing, and inconclusive.

Numerous secondary sources have recounted the story of how the dead were buried within the church, sometimes with the accompanying assertion that this was common practice in England and colonial America, other times maintaining that this expedient was followed at St. Thomas in order to protect the dead from desecration at the hands of marauding Indians.[495]

The latter explanation can be dismissed out of hand, for the threat of an Indian attack in the Bath area had passed nearly two decades before construction of St. Thomas was even commenced. The former appeal to custom is more difficult to dismiss, however.

There can be no question but that burials within churches was no unusual practice in England; but individuals so buried were generally of considerable prominence, rather than ordinary parishioners. The same may well have been the case in colonial America, where burials within Anglican churches undoubtedly occurred in some cases. For example, during the course of restoring Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg early in this century, some

twenty-eight graves were found beneath the aisles, nine of which were identified by markings on the coffins.[496] At St. Pauls, Edenton, too, it is clear that burials took place beneath the floor. Indeed, several graves are marked by large flat stones, some of which indicate that burials occurred before the church was finally finished in 1774.[497]

The assertion that parishioners were buried beneath the floor at St. Thomas has sometimes been stated in fairly specific terms. In a newspaper account of 1932, for example, an estimate was placed on the number of persons reposing within the edifice:

> That the early churchmen in this province conformed to the old custom of burying their dead, at least a part of them, within the crypt of their churches is well attested by the number that rest beneath the crude pavement of St. Thomas Church. The number so buried in this church is estimated to be about sixty.[498]

Another source alluded to the precise positioning of the dead:

> The tiles were originally imbedded in soil so they could be removed more easily when coffins were placed beneath them. Persons were interred with their feet to the aisle under the pew which they had customarily occupied.[499]

The most tantalizing reference to burials in St. Thomas, however, is the statement that "wooden tomb markers" used to be inside the church, but that they were subsequently placed in the churchyard and "carried off by souvenir hunters."[500]

Unfortunately, a survey of all available evidence, both physical and documentary, leads to the positive identification of only one person buried within St. Thomas--Lady Margaret Palmer, whose grave is marked by a memorial plaque just to the left of the altar. In addition to this, there are vague traditions that the Rev. John Garzia and the Rev. Alexander Stewart rest in the walls of the church or beneath its floor. There is also a possibility that Thomas Boyd was buried within the church in 1864. A marble plaque

to his memory was placed on the front of the church to the left of the entrance. Aside from these individuals, there is no clue whatsoever as to the identity of those who may repose inside St. Thomas.

In considering the possibility of other "intramural burials" at St. Thomas, there exists an important piece of evidence which seems to have gone unnoticed—namely, the Sauthier Map of Bath drawn in 1769. This map clearly indicates a rather large "Burial Ground" well to the north and east of the church, located beyond King Street.[501] As far as this researcher is aware, no attempt has ever been made to locate this cemetery or verify its existence. It is quite probable that burials were performed within this cemetery throughout the colonial period and possibly into the nineteenth century as well. This could explain the fact that recorded burials in the churchyard date back no furher than the 1820s, when fourteen persons were interred there. Form that time to the present, burials in the churchyard have apparently continued without intermission, although there is an unaccountable gap in the surviving records of slightly more than a half century between 1834 and 1887.[502] Finally, careful attention must be paid to the changes which have occurred in the church flooring, and to the rather contradictory and inconclusive findings which came about during the early stages of the church's restoration.

When work began in earnest in the fall of 1939, it had been decided beforehand that the "Graves of early settlers, buried under the floors . . . will be retained there."[503] Still in evidence on some of the brick tiles of the flooring were the "unique designs of dragon heads, flowers and other shapes," although most of the tiles had been rubbed smooth by two centuries of wear.[504] Long before this time, probably since the 1870s or 1880s, the pews in the church had been raised on wooden platforms which covered the floor beneath.[505]

As a first step in restoring the floor, it was, therefore, necessary to remove all pews and the platforms upon which they rested. This was done during the first two weeks of October, 1939.[506] Testimony as to what was revealed by the subsequent removal of the tiles themselves is contradictory and inconclusive. The widow of the Rev. A. C. D. Noe, who was intimately involved in the restoration of St. Thomas with her husband, recalls that no evidence of intramural burials was discovered when the tiles were taken up—this, despite a contemporary newspaper report that the earth beneath the tiles was "being carefully sifted."[507] It must be noted, however, that one of the workmen involved in the restoration of St. Thomas recalls that, indeed, traces were found of several burials within the church. According to Donald F. Carrow, a long-time Bath resident, graves were located under each window of the church (including the marked grave of Mrs. Palmer), and three others were revealed beneath the center aisle.[508]

It should also be noted that, according to Carrow, extensive work involving the floor had been carried out long before 1939. Carrow maintains that his father, James F. Carrow, had worked with others in removing the tiles several decades earlier. At that time, according to Carrow, the congregation was continually bothered by the seepage of water into the church. To remedy this condition, the floor is supposed to have been raised several inches and the tiles placed on a bed of sand and clay. During the course of the restoration work begun in 1939, the tiles were fixed more permanently on a five inch base of concrete, with many of the original tiles being replaced by new ones.[509]

In close conjunction with the work done to the tile floor was the replacement of the pews and the removal of the wooden platforms beneath them. The pews removed in 1939 were apparently those installed by William Walling and

others during the renovations of the late 1860s and 1870s--not the original pews, which might possibly have been destroyed as a result of the same storm which destroyed the roof and gable ends of the church about 1840.[510] The pews installed in the fall of 1939 or shortly thereafter are the ones which remain today. In comparison with the ones they replaced, they are somewhat less narrow and austere, with their ends featuring inset panels and their tops and sides carrying a gently rounded molding.[511]

One of the features thought to be revealed during the fall of 1939 was the original position of the pulpit on the left side of the church about midway the length of the nave. Such a positioning of the pulpit was a common feature of colonial Anglican churches. Moreover, it had been recalled by an elderly resident of Bath in 1905 that "Thirty-five or forty years ago" there had been a "high box pulpit" with a "sounding board" on one side of the nave; this pulpit had apparently been removed during the renovations of the late 1860s and 1870s.[512] According, once again, to Donald Carrow, an octagonal foundation for a pulpit was located when the wooden platforms beneath the pews were removed. As a result of this finding, an octagonal pulpit was reconstructed on this spot.[513] Indeed, a photograph of the interior in 1946 clearly shows the raised pulpit as reconstructed, though without a sounding board. Unaccountably, this feature of the restoration was subsequently eliminated, possibly as a result of extensive termite damage.[514]

On the east end of the church, and along its side walls, the Queen Anne style windows were mercifully removed and replaced by the Georgian style windows which remain today. The present windows, with nine over nine sash, reproduce those which are shown in the earliest known photograph of St. Thomas, probably dating from the 1870s. This early photograph also shows, however, that the windows were once flanked by white shutters. For some

reason, these shutters were not remounted when the windows were returned to their earlier appearance.[515] It should be noted that one of the windows along the southern wall (the third from the front) was determined in the course of restoration to have been a doorway originally; and it was therefore restored as such.

With regard to the chancel area, the most notable changes occurring during restoration were its considerable enlargement and the extension of its railing to include two pews on either side. It is also apparent that the height of the altar platform was substantially reduced and, of course, the Queen Anne furniture was removed.[516] Since 1946 the chancel railing has been changed once again, so that it now extends in a straight line across the full width of the church.[517]

The ornate Victorian altar was also removed from the chancel area during the course of restoration. It was replaced by a small altar table belonging to the Rev. and Mrs. A. C. D. Noe.[518] The massive paneling and canopy were left in place behind and above the altar, although some restoration work was necessary because of termite damage.[519]

From the outset of the restoration work which began in the fall of 1939, it was intended that a small "slave gallery" would be restored in the western end of the church. The removal of plaster and the attendent inspection of the interior walls clearly revealed the former location of this feature and that of the stairway which had led up to it from the northeast corner of the nave.[520] These features were carefully reconstructed in line with the existing physical evidence.[521] It was also patently obvious that two small windows above the gallery had been bricked up at some point in the distant past, and these, too, were restored.[522]

Beautification of the grounds surrounding St. Thomas seems to have fallen

short of expectations in the late 1930s and early 1940s, especially with regard to two projects: the planting of a colonial garden and the construction of a wall from ballast rocks. The proposed colonial garden, to the rear of the church, was envisioned as a part of the overall restoration of St. Thomas as early as 1937.[523] In May of 1940, however, this colonial garden was still in the planning stage.[524] The ballast rock wall seems to have been a project to which the Rev. A. C. D. Noe attached considerable importance during the early years of his association with St. Thomas. In the summer of 1937, it was hoped that the entire church property could be surrounded by such a wall.[525] Within two years a vast quantity of ballast rocks had already been gathered from Bath Creek:

> Already dug from Bath Creek and piled in a huge mound are great quantities of ballast rocks brought on vessels from England and the West Indies in years gone by. They will be used for the wall fence around the churchyard.[526]

According to Mrs. Noe, those who gathered the rocks were paid a modest fee, and the project even helped in some small way to furnish work and income for Bath's unemployed.[527] In the event, these rocks remained in a massive pile in the churchyard for many years. Indeed, the rock wall which today surrounds the churchyard was not finally erected until August of 1979, a year after Mr. Noe's death.[528]

Also contemplated as an original feature of the overall restoration plan of the late 1930s, was the establishment of a Thomas Bray Memorial Library, in commemoration of the historic library which had been provided to St. Thomas Parish at the beginning of the eighteenth century. On 22 March 1937 the General Assembly passed legislation establishing the Thomas Bray Memorial Library and Museum Commission to oversee this project. The commission was to consist of eleven members, with Mrs. Mollie M. Brooks chairman and the Rev. A. C. D. an ex officio member. The commission was authorized "to

establish and maintain a public library and an historical museum in the town of Bath," and "to expend any moneys donated to it in erecting a building or buildings or in the purchase of books, documents, or other projects. . . ."[529] The commission initially hoped to "secure funds for the erection of a small colonial building" to house this library and museum facility; and it was projected "that between five and six thousand dollars would suffice with W.P.A. labor to see the project completed."[530] Apparently, this ambitious project was soon laid aside and abandoned. The idea of a library in Bath continued, however, and would subsequently lead to the establishment of a small library in the rear of the Glebe House and, finally, to the construction of the A. C. D. Noe Library on the church grounds.[531]

No attempt can be made here to describe in detail the sources of financial support for the restoration of St. Thomas. These sources were both numerous and varied. On 26 February 1940, for example, a "pyramid of pennies" was begun on the church lawn, with the first penny being a coin of about 1800, found during the course of excavations at the church. Taking part in this particular fund-raising effort were representatives of the Bath Garden Club, the Colonial Book Club of Bath, and other churches in the Bath area. By the end of the day several thousand pennies had been gathered.[532] By the 4th of November 1941, with restoration of the church virtually completed, it was reported that "about 2,000 persons, representing practically all religions in the entire state, have contributed to the restoration funds."[533]

As early as 1937, a close association was formed between the restoration of St. Thomas Church and the acquisition and eventual restoration of the Glebe (or Williams) House, situated just to the front and south of the church on lot fourteen. From time to time it has been stated or implied that this house dates from the colonial period, and that it served as a residence for the early ministers of St. Thomas--specifically, the Rev. Alexander

Stewart.[534] In reality, the house seems to have been built between 1827 and 1832 for Joseph Bonner's business partner, Samuel Lucas. Subsequently, it was owned between 1847 and 1850 by the agricultural reformer, Dr. John F. Tompkins, Joseph Bonner's son-in-law.[535] In 1877 it was purchased by Granbery B. Williams, in whose family it remained for the next sixty years. On 22 March 1937 the Rev. A. C. D. Noe purchased the Glebe House from Ella Williams and others for a recited consideration of $3,000. The Williams family cemetery to the rear of the house was excepted in this initial transaction; and was later enlarged somewhat to accommodate additional burials.[536]

In related transactions of March and April of 1937, Noe purchased additional parcels of land adjoining the church and Glebe House properties, as part of the overall plan for the restoration of St. Thomas and the eventual restoration of the Glebe House.[537] Eight years later, on 3 January 1945, Mr. and Mrs. Noe conveyed all of these properties, including the Glebe House, to Bishop Thomas C. Darst and the trustees of the Diocese of East Carolina, for a recited consideration of $10.00.[538]

When the Noes first came to Bath in 1936, they had taken up residence in the Price House on Front Street, between Mrs. Noe's present residence and the Bonner House. Later, they had an apartment in the Palmer-Marsh House. Apparently, it was not until the mid-1940s that the Glebe House became the Noe's home and the rectory of St. Thomas Church. It continued as such until 1953 and Mr. Noe's retirement.[539]

In 1956, three years after the Noes' move from the Glebe House, the Bath P.T.A. sponsored the opening of a small library in Bath, "located in the summer kitchen of historic Glebe House, with a separate entrance and breezeway."[540] This small library remained in operation until the early 1970s.[541]

With respect to the main portion of the Glebe House, it does not appear

that restoration was attempted until long after the Noes' departure. In 1967, however, an old friend to St. Thomas Church, Mr. Samuel G. Jones of Ocracoke, graciously offered to finance the restoration and complete the furnishing of the structure. By January of 1969 the restoration work had been completed and the house began to be filled with the numerous antiques which it still contains.[542] The Glebe House yet remains the property of the Diocese of East Carolina, under the care of the St. Thomas vestry. Although the house has no historically authentic association with the church other than that of propinquity, it is a handsome and significant structure in its own right. It is greatly to be hoped that some means will be found to preserve and interpret it as an integral part of Bath's history.

Long before the eventual restoration of the Glebe House, the major phases of the restoration of St. Thomas had been completed. This was achieved during two years of continual activity under the Rev. A. C. D. Noe's leadership between the fall of 1939 and the fall of 1941. In early October of the latter year, Noe proudly announced that the major phases of restoration were coming to a successful conclusion with the installation of the remaining interior furnishings and appointments. At the time of this announcement, Noe estimated that the total expenditures had been $20,000.[543] The money, however, had been well spent, and the historic church had been preserved for posterity.

On 3 November 1941, in commemoration of the work which had been accomplished, a "Restoration Pilgrimage" was observed at Bath, led by Bishop Thomas C. Darst. Arrangements for the pilgrimage had been made by the Rev. A. C. D. Noe, the man mainly responsible for the restoration, and by his brother, the Rev. Walter Raleigh Noe, executive secretary of the Diocese of East Carolina. The principal address of the day was delivered by Judge John Darden of Plymouth, North Carolina.[544]

Within five years of his coming to Bath, the Rev. A. C. D. Noe had accomplished the goal of saving St. Thomas Church as an historic structure; but his manifold efforts were also directed toward reviving the spirit of worship and expanding the congregational life of the church. In these areas, too, he achieved conspicuous success. From 1936 to his retirement in 1953, the number of communicants at St. Thomas rose steadily from forty-three to eighty-nine. So steady was the rise that only in one year was there a decline from the year preceding.[545] Noe also did a great deal to increase his parishioners' awareness of St. Thomas's unique historical significance. Indeed, he helped to spread this awareness throughout the state of North Carolina and beyond.

In 1944, Noe began in "Bride and Groom Day" an observance which quickly became a tradition, and one which is likely to be carried on for many years to come. On the second Sunday of each June, couples married at St. Thomas return to the church to renew their wedding vows. Led by Mrs. H. N. Roper of Bath, married in the church in 1905, the returning couples or surviving partners proceed solemnly up the center aisle to the familiar music from Wagner's Lohengrin. Once assembled before the chancel railing, these couples, young and old, repeat their vows in unison, some having come a great distance to participate in the ceremony. Sometimes the returning couples are accompanied to the church by friends or relatives who attended their weddings years before, and very often the children or grandchildren of the participants are numbered among the congregation. Traditionally, these services are followed by a picnic dinner on the church grounds. Long after his retirement in 1953, Noe continued to participate and assist in the annual observance which he had established.[546]

On 7 July 1953, after seventeen years of devoted service, the Rev. A. C. D.

Noe retired from the pulpit of his beloved St. Thomas.[547] His had been one of the longest and most influential periods of service ever to occur in the annals of the church. Moreover, he had been largely responsible for saving and restoring the venerable structure, and for expanding its small but faithful congregation. Even after his retirement, he continued as rector emeritus to be vitally interested in the church and to assist in its services and activities as far as his health would permit. Records of the church indicate that he continued to conduct and assist in services, on an occasional basis, at least as late as 1966, some thirteen years after his official retirement as rector.[548]

When in the fall of 1955, the town of Bath celebrated the 250th anniversary of its incorporation, St. Thomas Church naturally became a focal point of the activities. Open houses, exhibits, a dance, church services, a mock pirate invasion, a concert, picnics, and, of course, speeches, all played their parts in the anniversary celebration; but the climax of the festivities, and far and away its most important and successful event, was the highly acclaimed production of Edmund Harding's historical pageant, "Queen Anne's Bell," which took as its theme Queen Anne's gift of a bell to the fledgling colonial town and the continuing significance of that bell throughout the community's long history. The production was staged on 4 October in a specially constructed amphitheater on the shores of Bath Creek, and only a short distance from St. Thomas Church--permanent home of the bell itself.[549]

On 24 March 1963 a "Forefather's Service" was held at St. Thomas in connection with the Carolina Tercentenary observance. The service was conducted by Thomas H.Wright, Bishop of East Carolina. The Book of Common Prayer used in the service was printed in 1662, a year before the signing of the Carolina Charter; and the Bible used was a rare "Breeches Bible," printed

in London in 1599. Assisting Bishop Wright were the Rev. Charles I. Penick, and, of course, the Rev. A. C. D. Noe.[550]

Four years later, on 19 November 1967, a "Noe Day" was observed in Bath to honor the man who had done so much for St. Thomas Church and for Bath as a whole. Again, the principal speaker was Bishop Thomas H. Wright. Tributes to the Rev. Mr. Noe were also delivered by several visiting clergymen, the mayor of Bath, and by representatives of the Historic Bath Commission, of which Noe was a charter member. Services in St. Thomas were followed by a picnic on Bonner's Point and by tours of the Bonner House, the Palmer-Marsh House, and the Glebe House. As Edmund Harding observed, the tribute to Noe was not only richly deserved but long, long overdue.[551]

Restoration work and related projects of improvement and beautification at St. Thomas did not end with the completion of the major phases of work between 1939 and 1941. The Rev. Mr. Noe had instilled in the congregation and, indeed, in many North Carolinians across the state, a deep appreciation of the church's heritage and significance. From 1941 and the achievement of his initial goals, until his death some thirty-seven years later, Noe witnessed and encouraged a continuation of the tasks which he had begun.

In 1953 and 1954 a good deal of work was undertaken in an attempt to beautify the church grounds. Plantings for a garden were donated by several members of the congregation "to help encourage others of the church to make and keep the grounds of the historic church as beauftiful as possible."[552] In early February of 1954, vestryman Joe B. Brooks gave "several days of hard work" in "ploughing, harrowing, and levelling the church yard"; and this work was to "form the basis upon which all subsequent work on the Garden was done."[553] In addition to his labor, Brooks contributed 100 dogwood trees and as many cedar trees to the beautification project. Between January and

April of 1954, in related landscaping work, an azalea and camelia garden was planted on the grounds of the Glebe House.[554] In 1957 a new brick walkway was laid to the front entrance of the church; and during the following year rows of English boxwoods were planted along its sides.[555] Work began again in 1958 on the long-proposed colonial garden. Placed within this garden was a stone bust of one of the bishops of Bath, England. This statuary was obtained from the Marquis of Bath, and had formerly been a part of the friezework on Longleat Castle.[556] As evidence that the work at St. Thomas remained an ongoing process, it was reported at this time that

> The whole restoration program, which was started by the Rev. A. C. D. Noe, now Rector Emeritus of the parish, is proceeding as fast as funds are available, and will include complete restoration of the Church and Glebe House, and a Colonial Garden surrounded by a ballast rock wall. It is hoped interest will continue until the project is completed.[557]

In 1971 construction began on the A. C. D. Noe Library which stands today between St. Thomas Church and the Glebe House. A library building had been planned as early as 1937 and the establishment of the Thomas Bray Memorial Library and Museum Commission.[558] Expenses for erecting and furnishing the Noe Library were borne by Samuel G. Jones, who had earlier financed the restoration and furnishing of the Glebe House.[559] This library, superseding the one maintained in the Glebe House kitchen since 1956, was dedicated on 9 January 1977 in ceremonies conducted by the Rt. Rev. Hunley A. Elebash, Bishop of East Carolina.[560]

In 1976 a small building was constructed just to the south of the church for use as a Sunday School. Originally a frame structure, this building was covered by brick veneer in 1977. It is now being used as a parish house.[561]

Improvements in the church itself also continued through the last years of the Rev. A. C. D. Noe's life. Indeed, some have been made even since his passing. In 1975 a new roof was put in place. Two years later, repairs and

maintenance inside the church included the patching of plaster and the application of a fresh coat of white paint. In either 1978 or 1979 the comfort of the congregation during winter months was greatly enhanced by the installation of electric baseboard heating.[562] And, finally, within the past year, a handsome new electric organ was installed just in front of the chancel area on the left side of the nave.[563]

It was with a justifiable sense of pride and accomplishment that the Rev. A. C. D. Noe observed the work going forward at St. Thomas which he had begun in the 1930s. For nearly a quarter century after his "retirement," and for eleven years after the long-overdue "Noe Day" in his honor, he continued to reside in Bath near the church he loved. When death finally came to him on 7 December 1978, in the ninety-eighth year of his age, it was entirely appropriate that he was laid to rest in the church cemetery. Since his passing, the parishioners of St. Thomas have erected a white marble plaque to his memory. Situated on the southern wall of the nave near the side entrance, its inscription reads as follows:

> In Grateful Memory of the Life and Work of Rev. Alexander C. D. Noe
> 1881-1978
> Who served this parish for a period of more than 42 years and whose vision strengthened by the faithful support and aid of Robert B. Davis, Builder, William A. Tankard, Historian, and others insured the preservation of this sacred place of worship from ruin in the 1930's and served as inspiration and impetus for the general restoration of Bath historic treasures.[564]

Mr. Noe's wife and helpmeet of sixty-nine years, Mrs. Elizabeth Barber Noe, lives on in Bath and still continues to worship at old St. Thomas Church.[565]

After the retirement of the Rev. A. C. D. Noe in 1953, the pulpit at St. Thomas was initially filled on a temporary basis by lay reader L. W. Hewett. From 1956 to 1960 the ministerial duties at the church were assumed by the Rev. Stanleigh E. Jenkins. Since that time, it is a regrettable fact that no minister has served for more than two years.[566]

Membership, too, suffered during the years which followed Noe's retirement. From 1953 to 1975, the number of communicants fell rather steadily from eighty-nine to fifty-six, reaching a low point of twenty-eight in 1965.[567]

Within the past few years, it became increasingly apparent that the survival of St. Thomas as an active church was being seriously threatened by the chronic lack of a regular minister, the dearth of financial resources, and the dwindling size of its congregation. But St. Thomas was only one of many small Episcopal churches in northeastern North Carolina which had fallen on hard times. As a consequence of this, and nearly at the eleventh hour, a plan was devised whereby these struggling churches could draw upon a common pool of ministers, lay leadership, and financial support, under the auspices of the Diocese of East Carolina. This plan, called "Coalition 16," was subsequently implemented and is now in operation. Under "Coalition 16," services are being held at St. Thomas on a regular basis each Sunday, with lay readers alternating with retired ministers and seminarians.[568] Moreover, the lay leadership of St. Thomas is now demonstrating a deep appreciation for the church's heritage, and a determination to preserve that heritage for future generations.

Nearly two and a half centuries have now elapsed since the construction of St. Thomas by the Anglican settlers of Bath. During that time the church and its successive congregations have witnessed the early decline of Bath as a port and center of political influence, the severance of political and ecclesiastical ties with Great Britain, the slow emergence of a native episcopacy in North Carolina, and the subsequent division of that episcopal structure along regional lines within the state. The church has, moreover, endured through periods of severe deprivation, neglect, and military conflict, and through the destructiveness of time and the elements. It remains today as a link with our colonial past, and as a major attraction for the

visitors who come to historic Bath each year. Despite a host of countervailing circumstances, it still continues to serve as a house of worship for a small but faithful congregation. It is the author's hope that this report will provide a meaningful historical perspective on the venerable edifice, and foster a feeling of gratitude toward those who have kept it alive.

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SELECTIVE INDEX

Selective Index (continued)

Selective Index (continued)