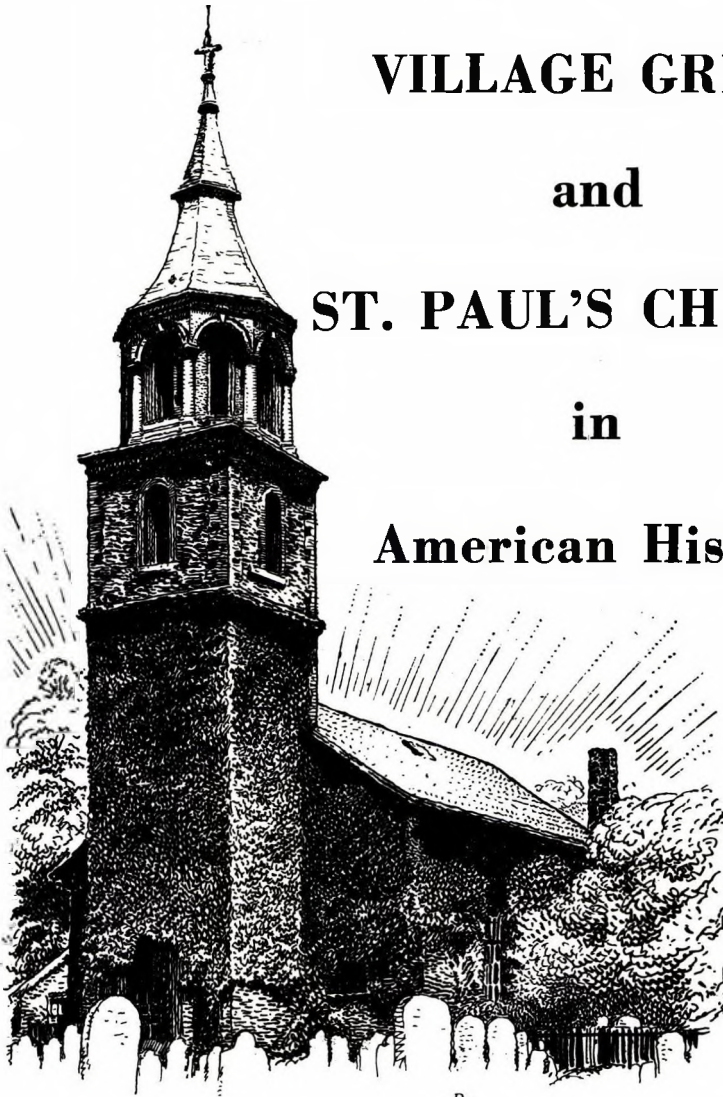


The Place of Mount Vernon's
VILLAGE GREEN
and
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH
in
American History



By

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THE VILLAGE GREEN TODAY



ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, EASTCHESTER

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH WAS FOUNDED
IN THE NEW SETTLEMENT OF
EASTCHESTER IN 1665. THE PRESENT
BUILDING, BEGUN IN 1763, SERVED
FOR A TIME AS HESSEAN TROOP QUARTERS
DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.
COMPLETED ABOUT 1790, IT HAS BEEN
RESTORED TO ITS APPEARANCE AT THAT DATE.
IT IS ONE OF THE FINE SURVIVING
ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS OF THE
RENAISSANCE REVIVAL IN OUR COUNTRY.
ON THE TOWN GREEN WAS HELD THE
ELECTION OF OCTOBER 29, 1733,
FAMOUS FOR ITS CONNECTION WITH THE
PATRIOT PRINTER, JOHN PETER ZENGER,
AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN
AMERICAN FREE PRESS.

NATIONAL
PARK SERVICE



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



The Place of Mount Vernon's VILLAGE GREEN and ST. PAUL'S CHURCH in American History

I: Religious Freedom

Anne Hutchinson, one of the earliest American apostles of religious freedom, was the first white settler in what is now Westchester County. She and her followers made their homes on or very near land which was later included in the site of St. Paul's Church. The region was heavily wooded, inhabited by hostile Indians, and owned by the Netherlands Dutch. Anne and her group came here in 1642, seeking a haven from the intolerable thought-control exercised by the despotic theocracy of Puritans in the Boston Bay Colony.

The first recorded document from a settler in what is now Westchester County is a letter written by Anne Hutchinson in 1643. It remains one of the most significant, influential, and prophetic documents in the whole literature of the struggle for religious freedom in America. The judge who had presided over her "trial" in Boston for non-conformity wrote her a gloating and sneering letter in which he sarcastically asked the "Haughty Jezebel" what was to become "of the light you once shined" now that her "heresy" had gained her naught but a home "in the wilderness among savages". Anne replied in part: "I am sure that the Author of the Light and maintenance thereof is God and He from 'this wilderness among savages' shall (cause) it to break forth more and more unto the perfect day". Indeed, she pointed out, her position was not unlike the woman in Revelations who "clothed with the sun--fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God."

Anne was brutally massacred by the Siwanoy Indians only six months after the above letter was written. While the Bay Colony exulted that God's hand was evident in the massacre of the "heretic," the other colonists and England blamed Anne's death on Puritan cruelty. A reaction set in against intolerance. More and more grew the demands for religious freedom. The Puritans tried to suppress the movement by hanging and torturing the leaders. But Anne's ashes, mixed with the soil that is Mount Vernon's St. Paul's, were more eloquent for religious freedom than were all the nooses of the Bay Colony for thought control and uniformity. The bars to religious freedom were gradually broken down. It is now a basic freedom expressed in the Bill of Rights.

Thus this basic American freedom received its greatest initial impetus here in our community. Anne's association with this region undoubtedly influenced other Dissenters to settle here. Surely it is no happy circumstance of history that most of our early settlers in Westchester County were Presbyterians and Quakers. And who can determine to what extent they became imbued with her spirit? The spirit which led them later to fight for separation of church and state, for freedom of the press, and for a free nation was so akin to Anne Hutchinson's own that it seems to flow through our colonial history like a stream emanating from one fountain-head.

II: Our Colonial History is St. Paul's

The history of Eastchester Township from its founding to the Revolution is virtually that also of St. Paul's. The two are inseparably connected. Known first as "Hutchinson's", the colony in 1666 by Royal Charter was given "ye name of Eastchester." As early as 1665 one reads in the town records "that all and every one of us, or that shall be of us, do pay unto the minister according to his mead". In 1670 the minutes carry this resolution: "That whereas, we being a Society of Christians, living together, have agreed that all those of our association shall join together on Lord's days to tell about the worship of God."

At the expense of all freeholders "a small wooden building" was built in 1665. It was located on the very site of the present edifice. In 1692 it was decided to replace the original church with a larger frame one measuring "twenty-eight feet square and about eighteen feet to the eaves." This too was at taxpayers' expense. It was situated a little to the north of the present building about where the memorial flag-pole now stands and was used until the present church was started in 1763.

The building was both a place of worship and a public "meeting house" for the discussion and transaction of public matters. The freeholders on July 31, 1696 decided "To lighten the meeting house by a lantern to every seat of the same". On March 20, 1711, the minutes tell us that the freeholders decided to "repair the meeting house, in making a pulpit and pew in it, and also make seats as far as the boards that are already bought will go."

A rather extensive area to the north of the church was set aside as the "Commons" (Unfortunately through the laxity of public officials over the years, private industry somehow was allowed to so encroach upon the Commons that now only a small part of the original area remains.) The inhabitants of 1711 "agreed by vote to meet at the meeting house on the 10th day of August ensuing, at sun half an hour high in the sky, in order to the cutting brush about the Commons

in Eastchester woods, and to appear at the beat of the drum". The sexton had the duty of "beating the drum" on the Lord's days and on all public occasions; for this service, each freeholder was taxed "9 pence a piece, everyone." All public notices were nailed on the door of the church.

All out-door community affairs were held on the Village Green. Here were the stocks, the pillory, and the flogging post for the punishment of offenders. (Until recently there could be seen buried in the overgrowing bark of a towering locust tree the staple which held the flogging post chains). Elections for public officials were conducted on this Village Green and were "by division". At the beat of a drum the various candidates took up stations on various parts of the Green. The freeholders would then assemble around the candidate of their choice. The candidate with the largest crowd was declared to be the victor. Here too on the Green the militia were assembled and drilled; thence they departed to fight the Indians, the French, and later the British and Hessians.

III: Separation of Church and State

St. Paul's Church also played a leading role in creating that frame of mind which in 1791 led to the Bill of Rights-prohibition against Congress' making any law relative to the establishment of religion. As noted above, the "meeting houses" of our early colonial days were church edifices erected at public expense. The people here were almost all Presbyterians, and thus the erection and maintenance of a building for both public and religious purposes was a natural development of their ways and customs.

All went well until 1702 when Lord Cornbury, governor of the royal province of New York, decided to invoke the law that all church edifices erected at public expense belonged to the church of England and that only Episcopal services could be tolerated in them. This high-handed ruling shocked the "Independents", or those not "of the faith" (the established Church of England). Cornbury attempted to evict some Long Island congregations from their churches and to install Episcopal ministers in them. His forcible methods resulted in riots, shootings, burnings, and some blood-shed.

The situation here in Eastchester was no less explosive. The Presbyterians, numbering about four hundred, were prepared to resist seizure of their "meeting house" and church. Threats were openly made against the minister, a Mr. Bartow, who was sent from England for the express purpose of taking control of St. Paul's. Very early on one Lord's Day, Mr. Bartow appeared at St. Paul's while the Presbyterian services were

in progress. He was fully aware of the temper of the people and the threats made against his person; yet he came alone. He quietly walked into the church and stayed "through the whole time of the service without interruption".

This wise man made no demand that the church be turned over to him and that all non-Episcopal services in the edifice cease from that date onward. In fact, he made no demands at all. He sought to gain his purposes by patience and goodwill. In time the Presbyterians relented sufficiently to allow him to utilize the edifice for Episcopal services on one Sunday afternoon each month. Mr. Bartow continued under this arrangement for three or more years. All the time he was gaining converts and endearing himself to the inhabitants of the area. Where force had utterly failed, this peaceful, conciliatory servant of the Lord won by love. He was finally allowed, with governmental support, to become installed and to take full possession of the church, the grounds, and the glebe.

The victory was notably that of a person and assuredly not that of the royal government as represented by Governor Cornbury. As such, it is an object lesson for those who read history for enlightenment on the nature and temperament of our colonial ancestors. The Bartows became numerous and respected in our community; their names appear in many town records and on many grave stones in St. Paul's Cemetery. What rankled in the minds and hearts of the Presbyterians was the unjust and arbitrary action of the government in taking their church from them and forcing them to pay taxes for the upkeep of a church to which they did not belong. This deep-seated resentment was an important factor in the inhabitants of Eastchester becoming revolutionists in 1776 against the Government and its established state religion. With victory and independence won, the Eastchester inhabitants refused to sanction the creation of any national government of any kind whatsoever unless it was specifically prohibited from establishing a state religion.

IV: Origin of Political Parties in America

V: Origin of Elections by Party Lines

VI: Origin of the Freedom of the Press

The Village Green and St. Paul's Church are best known in history for being the setting of an event which led directly to the freedom of the press. The event has been labeled "The great Election of 1733". From it arose also two other aspects characteristic of our American way of life, namely, the origin of political parties and elections by party lines.

In 1732 a dull, greedy, and thoroughly dishonest fellow named William Cosby arrived in New York City to assume the royal governorship to which he had been appointed the previous year by King George. Cosby had been obliged to stay in England to hush-up or settle several suits arising from his brazen embezzlement of some 10,000 pounds while he was royal governor of Minorea. His friends and highly-placed in-laws had secured the New York governorship for him with the expectation that they would recoup the money which they had advanced him to settle the suits. There would be "easy pickings" in America, and Cosby was in a hurry to reap the harvest and get back to the court life of England.

During Cosby's absence, the acting governor had been Rip Van Dam, president of the Council. Cosby demanded that Van Dam hand over to him half of the salary he had received as acting governor. Van Dam refused; Cosby brought him to court. The Chief Justice of the Court, Lewis Morris, was ordered to return a verdict in the governor's favor or be removed from office. Morris instead outlawed the claim and was promptly removed by the governor. In his place Cosby appointed James De Lancey. De Lancey was young (30 years of age), ambitious, and wealthy. He was the eldest son of Stephen De Lancey and Anne Van Courtlandt and as such represented the entrenched interests of the older and intricately intermarried rich families of the province. Backed by a handful of Tories (wealthy landowners, the rich, conservative Dutch, and supporters of the Church of England), Cosby and De Lancey started on a career hardly matched in the colonies for bare-faced theft, graft, and corruption. (One of their speculations, and by no means the smallest, involved 50,000 acres!). The merchants, lawyers and farmers - the so-called "common people" of the times - became aroused. Cosby brushed aside their complaints with a comment worthy of Marie Antoinette: "What do I care for the grumbling rustics?"

Morris, long in office, did not take his dismissal lightly. He was highly respected and wealthy, being the Lord of the Manor of Morrisania in Westchester County. (Westchester County in those days extended down to the East River. The part now in the Bronx was known as Westchester; the part lying to the east was called Eastchester. The hub of the entire region was the Village Green and St. Paul's Church in Eastchester). Morris decided to take his fight to these "grumbling rustics". He decided to organize them into an opposition party. This marks the first time in colonial history that a royal governor was openly opposed by an organized political group. Up to now contests were largely personal.

The first clash between two political groups in America came when Morris and his "People's Party" decided to contest the Cosby-De Lancey selection of William Forster as Assemblyman from Westchester County. It was an open secret that Forster, a former schoolmaster, had bribed

JOHN PETER ZENGER



Model by Joseph Kiselewski;
Statue by Mario Tomassi of A.T.Petrillo Co., Mt. Vernon, N.Y.

Cosby into appointing him to the Clerkship of the County Court. He was a "safe" man, apt to do the governor's bidding. The Village Green was to witness the first election in America between two candidates sponsored by two political parties.

In characteristic fashion, Cosby tried to rig the election. First he appointed, contrary to law, a non-resident of Westchester as High Sheriff. This worthy tacked on the door of St. Paul's a notice calling for an election for assemblyman to be held on October 29, 1733. He omitted to state the time. This was most significant. His scheme was to appear on the Green at the most propitious time for his candidate, call for a vote, declare the winner, and that's that.

The People's Party was not to be caught off-guard. The farmers of Westchester County saw through the crude trick. They planned to be on the Green for the entire twenty-four hours of Election Day. Some fifty of them arrived on the night of the 28th and camped on the Green. All night too about 250 others rode over the hills of Westchester and just before dawn assembled on a knoll to the north of the Green. (Probably where Mount Vernon's Memorial Field now stands). At sunrise they mounted their horses for a grand parade down to the Green. Judge Morris rode in their van preceded by "two trumpeters and three violins and freemen bearing a banner inscribed in letters of gold - on one side King George, on the other, Liberty and Law". At the edge of the Green the procession was joined by the fifty horsemen already there. Three times they circled the Green shouting "No tyranny" and "Liberty and Order". Never before were these sentiments heard on American soil in protest against the royal government. They were to be repeated some 42 years later, at Lexington and Concord.

It was eleven o'clock before Forster appeared. He was fortified by James De Lancey in person, attended by another Tory Judge, Frederick Philipse, and followed by 170 horsemen. Cosby was "all out" for this election. He not only sent up here two of the richest men in the colony but had rounded up a number of hoodlums from the waterfront dives of New York City. The honorable High Sheriff, who managed the election machinery, would see to it that they were allowed to vote. The 500 persons present was the largest gathering at any public affair north of New York City in the history of the province.

At noon, gloriously mounted and bedecked in scarlet and silver lace (the Governor's very own), the High Sheriff (one Nicholas Cooper) arrived. He dismounted, walked to a little mound in front of the church, and bawled: "I bid the electors proceed to the choice". The count was taken by the usual manner of having the voters line up behind their candidates who had taken opposite positions on the Green. Morris' group to the left (or west side of the Green) was obviously the larger by far. But the Sheriff stalled and refused

to declare the winner. He was figuring another dodge. At last he declared that every voter be polled.

Chairs and tables were set up at the edge of the Green in front of a tavern. Each voter was required to step up and declare his choice. Cooper's purpose was soon learned. He had noticed that the Quakers were on the Popular Party's side. They were easily distinguishable by their dress, which lacked the silver buckles and buttons worn by the other men. In time one of the Quakers advanced and declared himself for Morris. He was challenged by a member of the Tory party. The claim was that the man was not eligible to qualify as a freeholder because he did not own in Westchester County a house, or an estate, or cattle worth forty pounds. Some of his friends vouched that he owned many times the minimum requirement. "Bring a Bible and let him swear to it then", ordered the Sheriff. A bible was fetched from the church. The Quaker refused to swear the oath, as the Sheriff had surmised. The tenets of the Quaker faith forbade all oaths on Scripture. The Quaker offered to give his "affirmation". The Sheriff refused: "If you wouldn't swear, you can't vote".

A howl went up from the People's Party. The Sheriff's ruling was contrary to the law which allowed the Quakers to "affirm" in lieu of an oath on Scripture. The Sheriff persisted and disqualified 38 Quakers in all. The hoodlums had no qualms about swearing, even to untruths, when they were challenged. The Sheriff, of course, permitted them to vote. The arguments and bickering continued to sundown. The determined farmers of Westchester were going to stick with this thing to the end. Bonfires and lanterns were lighted. At eleven o'clock the Sheriff finally gave in and announced the vote: For Morris, 231; for Forster, 151. Morris had won even without the 38 disqualified Quaker votes. The news electrified New York City. A week later Morris was given a tremendous welcome in New York City replete with a parade up Broadway and a banquet.

The common people had now found their strength in organization under capable leadership. The question arose: How could they be kept vigilant and informed of any encroachment on their rights by a rapacious governor? The only newspaper in town, the Weekly New York Gazette, enjoyed the Governor's patronage. Its owner, William Bradford, was now old, grown tired and cautious, and needed the printing subsidies. Besides, there were drastic laws against writing or printing anything designed to alienate the affections of His Majesty's subjects. It made no difference whether the material was false or true. In either case it was libel and the penalty for it was having one's ears cut off and a public whipping. If what was printed induced the people to break the peace, to tumults and riots, then the libel was "sedition" and the penalty thereof was death by hanging.

There was an obvious need for another newspaper. Morris and his followers had brought up to Eastchester to witness the election an immigrant German printer and a former apprentice and protege of Bradford, named John Peter Zenger. It is not certain whether Zenger agreed to publish a rival newspaper before or after his visit here. At any rate, a week after the election, on November 5, 1733, the first issue of the New York Journall appeared. It bore an account of the Eastchester election written either by Zenger himself or from his notes by his more gifted wife, Anna Catherine. For the first time in colonial history a newspaper dared to accuse a royal governor of malfeasance in office. The account of the Eastchester election charged Gov. Cosby with the taking of a bribe (to elevate Forster to the County Clerkship and with violating the law by depriving Quakers of their right to vote. In every subsequent issue the Governor was plentifully vituperated in doggerel rhymes, lampoons, low satire, and occasional well-written political articles. Most of the articles were from the pens of Morris, James Alexander (whose son, Lord Stirling, was to served as a general under Washington), and William Smith. The public "relished it exceedingly and Cosby and his counselors were driven almost to madness".

The Governor finally could endure it no longer. He risked public wrath by clapping Zenger in jail. The Grand Jury refused to indict Zenger; not to be denied, Chief Justice De Lancey, ordered Zenger tried on the Attorney General's "information". Alexander and Smith, acting as Zenger's lawyers, attacked the competence of the court on the ground that being appointees of the governor and subject to his power of removal, the Judges could not but be prejudiced. De lancey promptly disbarred both. He then let Zenger languish in jail while he juggled the jury lists.

Nine months later Zenger was brought to trial. The charge was that Zenger had published "many things tending to sedition and faction -- to bring His Majesty's Government into contempt -- and to disturb the peace thereof". It was "false, scandalous, and seditious libel". The trial lasted all summer. The lawyer for Zenger was the aged and brilliant Andrew Hamilton from Philadelphia. The accepted rule in libel cases was that the truth or falsity of the libel was not the jury's business. Hamilton decided that it was. He pointed out that the presentment carried the word "false". He argued, therefore, that the bare printing of statements did not constitute a libel; they had to be proven false. If the people felt oppressed and could not utter nor newspapers print their grievances and complaints, then government officials could act secretly and punish anyone who complained. "It is not the cause of a poor printer, now of New York alone, which you are trying. No! It is the best cause -- it is the cause of liberty. Every man who pre-

fers freedom to a life of slavery will bless and honor you as men who have baffled the attempt of tyranny. By an impartial and incorrupt verdict (you would) have laid a noble foundation for securing to ourselves and to posterity - the liberty both of exposing and opposing arbitrary power by speaking and writing truth". The jury found Zenger "Not Guilty". Hamilton was feted from one end of the city to the other.

Zenger's Journal published an account of the trial. Later a reprint of the proceedings was widely circulated in America and England. The first legal precedent establishing the freedom of the press was well advertised. The verdict was freely quoted all through the colonies in subsequent libel cases. Freedom of the press became entrenched as a basic freedom in the Bill of Rights.

Every December on the anniversary date of the adoption of the Bill of Rights, the publishers and editors of the American press make a pilgrimage to the Village Green and St. Paul's to pay tribute to the immigrant German printer who dared to believe that telling the truth in print was not a crime but a necessity of free government. It was more than the freedom of the press that ensued from the Village Green Election of 1733. Speaking on the site, the Hon. James M. Beck told an obvious truth. "No republic can ever be constituted or maintained without freedom of thought." He then added: "It is the peculiar glory of this spot, the Village Green in Eastchester, that it witnessed the dawn of civil liberty in America".

VII: St. Paul's and the American Revolution

Prosperity came gradually and modestly to St. Paul's. The old Boston Post Road, part of which still remains on church property, passed close by. Coaches ran regularly between New York City and Boston (time for a round trip: 28 days). The county began to fill. In 1763 the third Episcopal rector of St. Paul's (Mr. Milner) was able to write back to England: "The people of Eastchester have laid the foundation of a new church of stone, seventy-one feet by eighty-eight in the room of a small decayed wooden building erected in the infancy of the settlement." (The 1665 building?).

The inhabitants determined to build an edifice that would last for centuries - and indeed it has. It was a tremendous undertaking both financially and physically. The settlers lived on widely scattered farms and manors. It took a long time to reach the Village Green on horseback or with slow-moving carts drawn by oxen over frightful roads. The settlers did the work themselves. They dug the fieldstones out of the ground of Eastchester; they laboriously mixed oyster and clam shell with sand from along the banks of East-

IN MEMORY OF THE PATRIOTS
OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
WHO LIE BURIED IN THIS CHURCHYARD

HEZERIAH DAVIS

PHILIP FELL

GEORGE HAMILTON

COMFORT SANDS

CAPTAIN THEODOSIUS FOWLER

LIEUTENANT DANIEL SEARING

CAPTAIN GILBERT LYONS

CAPTAIN CHARLES TURNBULL

MAJOR SAMUEL FELL

CAPTAIN MOORE

COLONEL DAVID I. FELL

STEPHEN WARD

ISAAC WARD

AND MANY UNKNOWN

ERECTED BY BRONX CHAPTER,
DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.
MAY 30, 1924.



chester Creek; for timber they fell and seasoned the huge oaks; from the nearby forest they made flooring from the pines. They spent 700 pound sterling and then reached their limit. From the smaller congregation of St. Peters, four miles to the south in Westchester, their new rector, the later-to-be famous Rev. Samuel Seabury, lamented in a letter: "They have erected and just completed the roof of a large well-built stone church...but their ability seems exhausted and I fear that I shall never see it finished."

What caused the Rev. Seabury to "fear" were perhaps the rumblings of the American Revolution. The newspapers were filled with controversial articles. On every hand there was fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. Rev. Seabury, a Tory, in a region where anti-British feeling ran high, insisted on saying prayers for King George III in St. Peters. (It is not known whether he ever conducted services in St. Paul's, his other parish). He was the author of newspaper articles signed "Westchester Farmer". They were so cogent that no less a person than Alexander Hamilton sought to answer them. Up on the Village Green a military company was organized to fight for the colonists. War soon broke in earnest. Rev. Seabury fled to New York City where he joined up as Chaplain in a British regiment. Later he was to become the first Bishop of the Episcopal Church in America.

St. Paul's fared badly. Situated on the main road linking New York with the New England colonies, it was the tramping ground of first one side and then the other. When it was neither, it was part of the "Neutral Ground" ravished by friend and foe alike. Our history books and novels are full of the real and fanciful deeds of the "cowboys and skinners" in this part of lower Westchester County. Fortunately, precautions had been taken to preserve the treasures of the church. Early in the conflict, the bell was secretly removed from the belfrey and with the silver, the bible and prayer-book carried to a nearby swamp and buried. There they lay safely hidden while the area was repeatedly pillaged and plundered. They are the ones in use today.

A battle that was fought in the immediate vicinity caused St. Paul's to be used as a hospital for Hessian wounded. On October 18, 1776 a large British force consisting of several thousand Hessian mercenaries under Gen. Knyphausen landed on Rodman's Neck in hot pursuit of General Washington's troops who were in ragged retreat after their disastrous defeat on Long Island. Ruin faced the Americans should this British force catch up with them to attack their flank or block their escape route to the rendezvous in White Plains. To Col. Glover was given the task of delaying the advance of the Hessians until Washington could effect his retreat.



Col. Glover and his six regiments on a knoll to the north of the Village Green watched the British as they disembarked. (It was possibly the same hill, beyond Memorial Field, in Mount Vernon, on which Judge Morris assembled his followers on another October morning in 1733). Glover then marched his men southward, across the Village Green and the marshes into what is now Pelham Manor. He then deployed his men among the trees and stones along both sides of the road along which the Hessians were marching in line formation. Firing thus protected, the Americans were able to inflict terrible casualties among the Hessians and to delay them appreciably. Their mission completed, Glover then withdrew from the engagement and marched back to his camp at Hunt's Bridge.

Gen. Kayphausen hurried on to White Plains leaving his wounded in St. Paul's. The unfinished edifice with no windows and no floor offered poor protection from the elements. To keep warm the Hessians knocked down the old frame church nearby (which had been built in 1692) and built fires on the earth floor. To make the place more habitable, they cut down some trees, lined the trunks against the walls, and used them for benches (Later when the Americans returned, these logs served as beams to which the present flooring of 14 inch planks were then nailed). Due to exposure and improper medical care, many, perhaps almost a hundred, of the unfortunate Hessians died. Their bodies were crudely and hastily buried in an old sand-pit which had been previously opened to provide building sand. A D.A.R. tablet today marks the spot in the church cemetery where the Hessians are buried. Nearby is the common grave of some "unknown" Revolutionary dead who lost their lives in a skirmish in Tuckahoe.

VIII: A Classic Colonial Church in Our Midst

When peace was restored, the inhabitants, veterans and refugees, returned to their Eastchester homes. All was desolation. Their farms had been damaged or totally destroyed. There were no crops nor cattle. Even their old church had been destroyed and the "new" one still unfinished and unfit for services. Like their ancestors they had to start "from scratch". In 1787 the old members of St. Paul met and passed a resolution in which they said, "We have found the inconsistency of seeking true felicity where it cannot be found." They expressed the belief that they would never be able to re-establish any kind of prosperity in Eastchester unless they built it around the church. They resolved that the very first thing which they must do was to finish the church.

Plans and specifications were drawn up by a committee. Each father was to contribute a definite amount for the rental of a

pew. As the young nation had not yet established a monetary system, all of the money contributions were given in pounds, shillings, and pence. The church was finally completed. It was the joy and the pride of the community. It was so impressive that the County of Westchester, which did not have a public building suitable for a court house, petitioned the Vestry for permission to use it on week days as a Court of Dyer and Terminer. As it was in the earliest days of the colony, St. Paul's again became a "meeting house" and a place of worship. In the archives of the church is a summons issued by Aaron Burr when he practiced there. The summons called upon a certain person to appear "at the church in Eastchester, in the County of Westchester to testify to the truth". In 1804 a gallery was added to the original plans. It was built by Gideon Gogeshall whose ancestors had left Rhode Island with Anne Hutchinson in 1642. There have been no other changes.

A committee of eminent citizens in 1931 undertook to raise a fund for the restoration of St. Paul's to its original charm and beauty. The committee was headed by Mrs. Sara Delano Roosevelt, mother of the President of the United States, whose ancestor, James Roosevelt, in the early 1800's owned a pew in St. Paul's and served for several years as Vestryman. Fortunately available in the archives of the church were the original floor plans of 1787. To do the restoration the committee selected the architectural firm of Perry, Shaw and Hepburn, who were responsible for the restoration of Williamsburg, Virginia.

The restoration was completed in 1942. Today one steps into a church of classic colonial design with tall box pews, antique glass windows, a clerk's "pew", reading desk and pulpit of authentic 18th Century dignity and purity. Inscribed at the entrance of both pews are the names of the original owners and donors. The well-informed, however, will note one difference - a most unique one - between the interior of St. Paul's and that of other Episcopal churches, colonial or modern: the pews in St. Paul's face the high pulpit rather than the altar. It was that way in the original church and undoubtedly reflects the influence of the early Presbyterians of Eastchester who became Episcopalians at the time of the Rev. Mr. Bartow.

Everything else corresponds with the rules of the Church of England which governed the erection of all Anglican churches in this country from its settlement to 1829. These rules required a church to be erected on an east-west axis with the Holy Table and communion rail in the east end, the baptismal font in the west end and a pulpit arising from the floor and standing against the north or south wall usually near the center of the building. Every church was also required to have the Ten Commandments painted upon wooden

tablets. To this usually were added the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer, one to each side. The tablets in St. Paul's were the gift of the family of Mother Seton.

IX: The Association of Presidents

Three presidents of the United States have been associated with St. Paul's. It is not widely known that the "White House" of the nation for three months was located here in Westchester County. In 1797 a yellow fever epidemic raged in Philadelphia. John Adams, then President, was advised to leave the City. He sought safety here in Eastchester at the home of his son-in-law, Col. W. S. Smith. The house, known as the Vincent-Halsey House, was only a five minute walk from St. Paul's. (It has since been moved across the road from its original site; a part of the structure has been removed and its exterior covered with stucco.) There is a curious letter from John Adams dated October 12, 1797 and addressed to "T. Pickering, Sec. of State" which advises him that the President "shall make this house my home until we can go to Philadelphia with safety". The letter also gives instruction for the forwarding of his mail: "If you address your letters to me at Eastchester and recommend them to the care of my son, Charles Adams, Esq., at New York, I shall get them without loss of time, but if a mail could be made up for Eastchester they might come sooner. I know not whether this can be done without appointing a postmaster at this place, and I know of no one to recommend". He concludes with the information that he would "divide my time between New York and Eastchester until the meeting of Congress".

In 1829, George Washington Adams, son of John Quincy Adams, while on a visit here went swimming in Long Island Sound. He was drowned and his body was washed up into Eastchester Creek. A warden of St. Paul's discovered the body and notified the family. He was placed in one of the vaults until the family came to remove him. In grateful appreciation his mother presented a silver chalice to the church which had been close to her in a time of great personal bereavement. The chalice is used today.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt always manifested a warm interest in the church of his ancestors. In June, 1932, he worshipped at St. Paul's and then addressed a gathering of over 10,000 assembled on the Village Green for the occasion of the first Descendant's Day. As noted, his mother headed the committee which made the church restoration possible.

X: A Rich Repository of Historic Documents and Records

St. Paul's is a veritable museum of early colonial relics and documents. In the belfrey stands the church bell which was presented

to the congregation in 1758 by its rector, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Standard, at the conclusion of thirty-one years of his service to the parish. Its historic significance is further enhanced by the fact that it was cast in the same foundry and by the same craftsmen as the Liberty Bell. This "twin sister" of the Liberty Bell was "borrowed" by the Treasury Department during World War II to promote the War Bond drives. On every Independence Day the bell is rung thirteen times as a salute to the original states. It is the same bell which was buried in the swamp. In the gallery just below the bell stands the organ presented to St. Paul's in 1833 by Rem Rapelaje. With the exception of the addition of an electric motor, no change has been made in it. It has been in continual use and as such is considered to be the second oldest organ in the United States to be used regularly since its installation. In one of the pews to the left of the altar is a massive looking chair with a heavy seat, thick legs, and a delicately carved back. In its carving one discovers the numeral 1639. This is the Bishop's Chair, the oldest Bishop's chair in the United States.

Most interesting is St. Paul's collection of communal silver consisting of a flaggon, four chalices, and a paten. There is a widespread belief that one of the pieces was given to St. Paul's by Queen Anne herself. There does not seem to be the slightest evidence to bear this out. As noted, one of the chalices was presented by Mrs. John Quincy Adams. Another was the gift of Frederick and Augustus Van Courtlandt, possessors of one of the most illustrious names in the colony.

Of the utmost historic importance are the documents, portraits, parish records, books, and rectors' account books which St. Paul's still possesses. It is to be regretted that this wealth of historic information has not been made available to historians. The church, lacking facilities, has been obliged to store the material in the vault of a down-town bank. Since the early history of the church and the colony was one and the same, no acceptable history of the community can possibly be written until these records are made available.

XI: Resting Place to All Americans Through the Ages

A tour through the churchyard of St. Paul's is always a rewarding and inspiring educational experience. One leaves feeling a little closer to those who purchased our liberties with great suffering and even with their life's blood. If any soil is ever sanctified by blood spilled in righteous causes, then the graveyard at St. Paul's is blessed indeed. For here lie in eternal rest those who gave their lives in every war fought by our colonies or by our nation. Should



ever a divine sentinel sound "assembly" in St. Paul's churchyard or on the adjacent Village Green, the heroes responding would wear the uniforms of the frontiersmen who fought the Indians and the French, those who won our freedom from the British and Hessians, those who made our independence doubly sure in 1812, those who fought to preserve the Union, those who took arms against Spanish tyranny and injustice, and those who resisted German aggression in 1917 and 1941 and Communist brutality in Korea. Here too rest those who struggled to gain for us the basic freedoms without which life for Americans would be a meaningless and intolerable existence. Encompassed within the five acres of this graveyard lie those whose lives spanned the entire life of our country from the time when some of them had to hack their way through the wilderness to those who had hurtled through space at speeds greater than sound.

The gravestones themselves are a study. The earliest date is 1704. Burials have continued from that time to the present. The stones thus represent the style and custom of every religious denomination in every period of time from the start of our colony. Some are truly beautiful masterpieces of the stonecutter's art and must have cost fortunes to make. Many are picturesque and bear inscriptions that are quaint. Some are odd, like those in the extreme east side of the cemetery, particularly that of an Oriental buried there. It is doubtful whether there is in all the nation another cemetery which offers an equal variety of gravestones.

XII : Federal Declaration as a National Historic Site

Federal recognition came on July 5, 1943. On that date the Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes published the following order: "By virtue of and pursuant to the authority contained in the Act of August 21, 1935, (49 Stat. 666) I do hereby designate -- Saint Paul's Church, Eastchester, (as) a National Historic Site". He further ordered: "Warning is expressly given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, deface, or remove any feature of this historic site".

The secretary gave these reasons for the selection: "Saint Paul's is recognized as having national significance because of its close and intimate connection with the events leading to the establishment of the Bill of Rights and its place in American architectural history and the American Revolution".

In 1955 a bronze plaque proclaiming the building and environs as a National Historic Site was placed on the west side of the church by officials of the Interior Department. St. Paul's is one of the

very few places thus signaled out by the National Government. It is a richly deserved honor.

XIII: The Present and the Future

There is a wide-spread misbelief that the Federal Government in designating St. Paul's as a National Historic Site also assumed the financial responsibility of restoring, preserving, and maintaining the area. The basic legislation, "Historic Sites Act" (49 Stat. 666), gives the Secretary of the Interior power "to acquire in the name of the United States by gift, purchase, or otherwise any property, personal or real, or any interest therein". He is prohibited, however, from acquiring title to a religious or educational institution "without the consent of the owner". Nor can he "expend funds for the acquisition of title to any property unless or until Congress has appropriated money which is available for that purpose". Congress has never been asked to appropriate money for the acquisition of St. Paul's.

On July 5, 1943, the "Corporation of Saint Paul's Church, Eastchester" entered into an agreement with the Federal Government in which it pledged itself "to preserve, protect, maintain and restore, as far as lies within its power, Saint Paul's Church, the churchyard, Village Green and the Parish House". Curiously, it also consented "not to make any alterations or repairs until the plans therefor have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Secretary of the Interior". At that time, 1943, St. Paul's was a congregation of some four hundred communicants under an energetic rector. It confidently believed that it could somehow manage to escape submergence by the wave of industrialization then mounting at its periphery. The only expenditure by the Government then or since that agreement has been for a bronze plaque placed on a wall of the church proclaiming the area a National Historic Site.

World War II and the subsequent building boom in suburban areas hastened the industrialization of the region. Over Eastchester Creek -- the water artery which once nourished a rural community -- now flows a flotilla of barges, tugs, and scows bearing sand, cement, gravel, lumber, bricks, and oil. A forest of huge, circular tanks, "Oil City" it is called, has been erected immediately south of the cemetery to store the ocean of oil necessary for the heating comfort of the hundreds of thousands living in the hinterland. (The tank sides facing the cemetery were thoughtfully painted green "not to spoil the view"). Over the old Boston Post Road where once rumbled stage-coaches and the Commissary Wagons of the War of 1812 now stream a constant procession of gigantic trucks, trailers, tankers, and monstrous barrelshaped contraptions used in mixing cement. The well-ordered farms and stately houses of a rural country-side have been

supplanted by factories, filling stations, laundries, parking lots, the modern version of drinking-and-eating establishments called "grills", a Salvation Army building for the retail of second-hand goods and the rehabilitation of worn-out men, and numerous "distributing centers" for several commodities besides oil. As industrialization continues apace, more and more parishioners have been compelled to move to more habitable localities. The congregation has steadily dwindled. Today it consists of less than forty persons, and most of these must commute several miles to attend services which are now held only on Sunday mornings.

In spite of these difficulties, opportunities are somehow provided for hundreds of visitors each year. Most of these attend on special occasions such as Independence Day, Memorial Day, and annual meetings of historic societies. The unsolicited letters and comments from grateful visitors are suggestive of what a full-scale exploitation of the Shrine may accomplish in the way of inspiration and as a catalyst to fuse diverse races and creeds into an oneness of spirit:

"I left a better American after being on the grounds."

"My visit made history alive and real. I feel much closer to our American heroes."

"I gave my talk today in class. The kids told me that I talked as if I knew those people. After coming to St. Paul's, I do feel that they are friends of mine."

"I never thought much about our liberties. I took them for granted, like the air and sunshine. Now I know what a terrible price someone had to pay for them."

"I paid a visit to your Village Green where I heard there 'dawned the light of civil liberty'. I am a colored person just up from a section of our country where voting for us is 'unwise'. I am going back there soon and I intend to fight for the civil liberties which were gained for all Americans here."

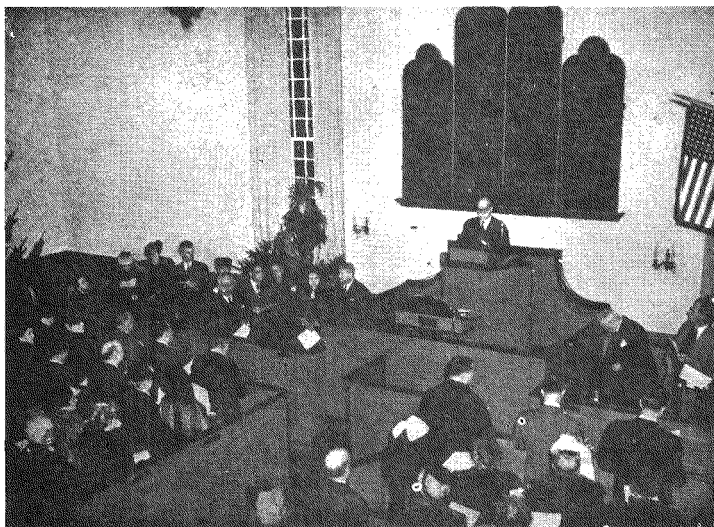
"I never thought that I would want to write a poem. But I got the urge there in your cemetery. I'll be darned if I know why. P.S. I did write one. It's called "Rest, Ye Honored Dead". It's terrible but I like it."

"Walking into the church seemed like stepping out of the 20th Century and right smack into colonial times. It was quite a sensation."

"I have just come from Europe, a refugee. I come often to the Village Green and St. Paul's. I like to walk around there. It helps me. It reminds me that I am no longer a ----- but an American. I try to think and act like they would. Thank you."

Where hundreds now repair to this fountainhead of inspiration for renewal of faith or courage, or "to get closer in feeling with American heroes", proper facilities and services would attract tens and hundreds of thousands.





Note the clerk's pew, reading desk, high pulpit, antique glass windows, and wall tablets. (p.18)



The tall pews in St. Paul's face the pulpit rather than the altar. (p.18)

Interior Restored as it was in 1787.



Communal silver given by
Mrs. John Quincy Adams and
the Van Courtlandt family.
(p.20)



Oldest Bishop's Chair in the United States 1639. (p.20)



"Twin Sister" of the Liberty Bell. (p.20)

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