

All Faith Parish, Saint Mary's County

WHEN the Parish of All Faith, in St. Mary's County, was created in 1692 the parish church at Huntersville was already built and named "All Faith." According to some writers it is thought that the name "All Faith" was originally "Old Faith."

All Faith Parish is fortunate in that its ancient records have been preserved. The first entry in these old records has to do with the establishment of the Parish and reads in part as follows: "At a court at Benedict town on the 14th day of February, in the year of our Lord 1692, and in the fifth year of our Sovereign Lord the King, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith. And by the justices thereunto authorized and appointed with the most principal freeholders thereunto called for the laying of the parishes on the south side of Patuxent River in Calvert County, being in obedience to an act of the Assembly entitled an act for ye service of Almighty God and the establishment of the Protestant Religion in the Province: Made at the city of St. Mary's the 10th of May in the year of our Lord 1692."

Like many of these old churches, the original structure was built of logs. It was located on the site of the present building and was erected possibly prior to 1675. In later years it was rebuilt and finally replaced by the present colonial brick structure about 1768.

In the early records we find letters from parishioners

who lived long distances from the church complaining that as the parish is 50 miles long and the church stands in the upper end, they who reside in the lower end have to pay their forty pounds of tobacco and have no benefit of said church.

As a result of these petitions Chapels of Ease were established, one with historic interest being built in 1703 and called "Four Mile Run Church." This chapel later became the first church of St. Andrew's Parish when a part of All Faith was taken to help form the new parish. This chapel has long since disappeared.

Another Chapel of Ease established in 1887 at Mechanicsville is still in use.

The barrel shaped ceiling, slave gallery and old hand-wrought hardware give evidence of the age of All Faith, and in the well kept graveyard which surrounds the church generations of parishioners lie buried.

Many improvements have been made both in the interior and on the exterior without detracting from its old colonial architecture and Old All Faith still stands at Huntersville a monument to the faith of the pioneers of Maryland.

The Rector of All Faith also serves Dent Memorial Chapel at Charlotte Hall, erected in 1884 as a memorial to the Rev. Hatch Dent, who was the first principal of Charlotte Hall Military Academy, organized in 1774. Dent Memorial Chapel ministers principally to the cadets and faculty of the Academy.



The Parish Church of All Faith Parish

Old Durham Church, Ironsides, Charles County

FORTY miles down the Potomac River from our National Capital is Durham Parish, which is five hundred miles in area and includes the whole southwestern section of Charles County.

Old Durham Church traces back to Governor William Stone. By long accepted usage the term "old" has grown into and become part of the name. Governor Stone cherished the name Durham in honor of his patron Lord Baltimore, who desired to unite in himself all authority of Church and State like the Bishop of Durham in England. In 1665 Governor Stone began the settlement of this Nanjemoy, or western peninsula of Charles County, and his name is commemorated in the William Stone road through the Churchyard.

He was a devout member of the Episcopal Church and we think of him as spiritual ancestor of this congregation, and the Patriarch of Old Durham. In his long since vanished home of Poynton Manor we find the first beginnings of historic Durham a generation before 1692, when the Church was built on its present site.

It may well have been at the Governor Stone Mansion that the first recorded marriage in Durham Parish—that of William Dent and Elizabeth Fowke—was solemnized in June, 1684, by Rev. John Turling. "William Dent, Esqr. 1707," with the London hallmark, is engraved on the Church's Communion Silver.

Two sons of this marriage are buried in the Churchyard beneath recumbent stones. The stones are well preserved, and perfectly legible, after two and a half centuries. One is dated 1690, the other 1695. The original deeds of the property, not legally signed till 1694, speak of William Dent as "laying off the bounds of the parish."

Durham Churchyard we believe is unique among ancient, historic Churchyards in that it was all "laid off" in straight rows.

Beneath these rugged oaks, all buried deep;
In row by row, with feet towards the dawn,
The godly founders of the parish sleep
The sleep of peace, till resurrection morn.

Perpetual care of the Churchyard was begun, by vote of the Easter Vestry, in 1929. The ground was cleared, leveled, and seeded. But most important of all was the devoted care in seeing to it that no old graves were lost.

In 1932 the General Wiliam Smallwood Chapter of the D.A.R. placed a bronze tablet at the west end of the Church to commemorate the "Three-fold Bicentennial of Generals Washington and Smallwood, and of the rebuilding of Old Durham Church in brick."

Also in 1932 the Colonial Dames of Maryland built the Churchyard wall. It is made of 200-year-old hand-

made bricks from the old Neil Hotel in Port Tobacco, and built in Flemish bond like the fine examples of ancient brickwork in the Church. This Bicentennial Wall commemorates the visit of Washington to this Church, March 17, 1771, mentioned in Washington's Diary.

The now completed Smallwood Memorial Tower was likewise a labor of love on the part of a multitude of modern temple builders. It was chiefly done with token work in the best tradition of Cathedral builders in other lands. Architect Stenhouse of Washington worked out the beautiful and unique design which combines a utilitarian chimney with a tower in perfect harmony with the centuries old Church.

The 12,000 old hand-made bricks for the tower were the gift of a saintly Hebrew. They were taken from a ruined mansion, along the river, of General Smallwood's sister. Her remains repose in an honored vault under the shadow of her old Church.

The magnificent bell, from a ruined Church in St. Mary's County, was the gift of a saintly woman in Washington. The wood in the superstructure of the tower is of redheart cedar donated from the old William Dent property along the Nanjemoy Creek.

The Tower is the first addition to the Church since a Vestry Room was constructed in 1843, and is not seen on the most widely known pictures of the Church. Part also of the 1843 restoration are the pews. They have recent-

ly been restored with natural wood finish. The Chancel is now very beautiful with new carpet, a magnificent Dossal, an American flag, and a new Church flag. Right of the Church door is a much admired oil painting of Christ healing a sick child.

In front of the Church is the ancient Sundial. "Be it resolved," say the Church's photostat records of Colonial times, "that from April to November Services be held at eleven on Sundays by the sundial in the Churchyard and, on cloudy days, a majority of watches that agree shall determine the time."

To the patriotic, the history loving and devout this old church, and all it stands for of the good and loyal and true, make their unique and tremendous appeal. This Church has received much and owes much to the whole Nanjemoy community. It ministers the word of life, and the bread of heaven in Communion, to many who exclaim deep down in their soul. "Surely the Lord is in this place. This is none other than the House of God and this is the Gate of Heaven."

Hundreds of people, even from distant States and from foreign countries, come as pilgrims every year just to visit this National Shrine, the oldest Church in Charles County.



Old Durham Church, Ironsides