

St. John's Church (Branched) Friendly Vicinity
St. George's County, Md.
Permit

HABS-MD-99

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MD
17-BROCK
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Photographs
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. MD

Historic American Buildings Survey
HABS Headquarters, for:
John H. Scarff, District Officer
1012 Keyser Building, Baltimore, Md.

ST JOHN'S CHURCH, BROAD CREEK
~~St~~ George's County, Maryland
PRINCE

Owner: Episcopal Church

Date of Erection: 1763 (for authority, see page 2)

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Unknown

Present Condition: Good, but considerably altered.

Number of Stories: One

Materials of Construction: Brick

Other Existing Records: ~~Unknown~~ See Skirver, P.G., The First
Parishes of the Province of Maryland, 135, 136. Also
Wilstach, P., Potomac Landings, 58, 242.

Additional Data: (See following pages)

Parish ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
St. George's County, Maryland

Excerpt From:-

"St. John's Church, Broad Creek, Md.",
Some Old Historic Landmarks, pp. 33-35.

Author:- William Snowden

"More than two hundred years ago an Episcopal church was organized here (Broad Creek) by the first dwellers. The parish was at first known as Piscataway, afterwards King George's and the Church of St. John's. The first house of worship was of logs and built in 1694, rebuilt with bricks in 1722, and enlarged to its present dimensions in 1763, John Addison, William Hatton, William Hutchinson, William Tannahill, John Emmet, and John Smallwell were of its first vestry, and Rev. George Tubman its first rector. This church ante-dates all other Episcopal churches of the Potomac region of Maryland. The leading spirit in the organization of this church was Col. John Addison, a member of the Governor's council and an uncle of the celebrated Joseph Addison.

"The burial place of the old kirk is densely peopled with the dead of departed congregations. Over most of the graves is a wilderness of tangled vines. Many of the stones are levelled and sunken nearly out of sight, with inscriptions worn and hard to decipher. Hundreds of graves have no stones at all, presumably of the earlier burials. A broad marble slab lies over the remains of Enoch Lyells killed in a duel, August 7, 1805, with the following inscription:

'Go, our dear son, obey the call of heaven;
Thy sins were few--we trust they are forgiven.
Yet, oh, what pen can paint the parents' woe?
God only can punish the hand that gave the blow.'

"The quarrel of the duelist had its origin in offensive remarks made at a ball in the village of Piscataway, and the duel took place at Johnson's Spring, on the Virginia shore. The young man who was killed and who had made the remarks was averse to the encounter, but was goaded on to his death by his father and mother. His antagonist was named Bowie, who afterwards fled to the new settlement of the southwest. To him belongs the unenviable reputation of originating the bowie knife.

DATA NOT COMPILED AND NOT GUARANTEED
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"The hip-roofed house over two hundred years old still remains on the shore of Broad Creek where the wounded man was carried by his frienda to die. It stands lonely and ghostlike, scarred and blackened by the mutations of time, a grim memorial not only of the duel, but of the more prosperous days of the locality when square rigged vessela even, sailed from the new lonely and desolate place with cargoes of tobacco and other valuable freight of a fertile and productive region.

"Long after the event of the duel the old house was to all the negro population an object of averaion; and even to the present time stories handed down through the generations, are told of strange lights which were seen flitting and hovering over the locality, on dark and dismal nights. These lights if seen as averred, may not have been due entirely to the distorted imagination of the ignorant negroes, but as well the the phosphorescent exhalationa from the decaying matter of the surrounding marshes."

Revised 1936, H.C.F.

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ADDENDUM TO:
BROAD CREEK CHURCH
(St. John's Church)
9801 Old Oxon Hill Road
Friendly vicinity
Prince George's County
Maryland

HABS MD-49
HABS MD, 17-BROCK, 1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001