

Rectory of St. Paul's
Alexandria
Fairfax County
Virginia

VA-708
HABS No. VA-~~708~~

HABS
VA
7-ALEX,
61-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District of Virginia

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Washington Office

HISTORY OF SAINT PAUL'S RECTORY, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA (D.C. UNTIL 1846)

by
Margery Arden Hall. April 1932.

1846
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The first mention of Saint Paul's Rectory is found in a deed of Trust dated 1853 which refers to a document dated 16th November 1831 which says: "St. Paul's Church Congregation are desirous of erecting a dwelling house for the accomodation of their Rector, and to effect that object the sum of \$2500. is required". "The vestry of said Church propose raising that sum by stock in shares of one hundred dollars --- and bearing interest of six per cent per annum payable quarterly from July 1 1832 ---- to secure the interest the rents arrising from said dwelling (to be paid by the occupant) are to be conveyed to a Trustee" etc.

Fifteen people bought shares of this stock, the largest sum invested by any one person being \$800, (eight shares) bought by the Rev. William Jackson, then Rector of St. Paul's. Mr Jackson resigned in 1832 and sold his stock to Mr. William C. Gardiner, already a stookholder and a vestryman.

Ferdinand P. Marstellar and others conveyed property by deed dated March 10th 1832 in trust for the use, benefit and advantage of St. Paul's Church to Trustees (see page 65 Vestry Register). This property is described in the deed of Trust conveyed in 1853 to William Fowle and Cassius Lee and included the property where the present Parish Hall, Lecture Room, or Chapel was later erected, as well as the Rectory property.

In 1832, Mr. Jackson reported "the sum of \$800. spent on the Church and a Parsonage soon to be completed". In 1833, the Rev. James T. Johnston became the Rector and he is probably the first occupant of the Rectory. At this time only the front half of the present house was built. Parson and Mrs Johnston lived here until he resigned in 1859 and in June of that year Dr. George Hatley Norton became the Rector. Then came the War and Dr. Norton with his family left Alexandria and remove to Lexington, Va. During the occupancy of St. Paul's Church as a Federal Hospital the Rectory was used as a Federal Commissary. On May 15, 1865, "to secure the return of the Church, Chapel, and Rectory to the Congregation, and to superintend all necessary repairs" Mr. J. Wallace Hooff and Mr John A. Dixon were appointed by the Vestry.

The house was of red brick with stone sills and outside wooden shutters. The hall on the first floor was reached by a flight of outside steps with an arched doorway. The hall was on the west, opening into two large square rooms to the east through doors with triple crosses (double crossed in the upper half of the panelling). In the basement (only two and a half feet below the street level) was the diningroom and kitchen. The second floor contained two large and one small bedroom and the attio had three bedrooms and a small hall. The house had two large chimneys and a shingled roof. At the front door was a carriage block and a hitching ring in the syoamore tree and beyond the brick pavement the street was paved with cobble stones which had been laid by the Hessian soldiers during the Revolution. At one time there was a wooden baloony porch extending the length of the east wall which was approached through the north room on the first floor. This porch had no steps to the ground. There was a well in the basement floor, probably used for grainage.

In 1871, the Rectory was described to the Vestry as being utterly unfit for the comfort and neccessities of Dr. Norton and "dampness and decay rendered it unhealthy" ---- so extensive repairs were made and the "back wing" was added at a oost of \$2900, designed by Mr B. F. Price. At this time an unknown gentleman benefactor gave \$500, "to finish improvements and repairs" and in the Spring of 1872 it was expended "in putting up a neat and substantial enclosure, in altering and modernizing the front entrance, and in painting, grading, paving, etc". A year later it was found necessary to add a railing to the front steps. These steps were renewed in 1884.

In 1879, forty-six years after the first stock was issued, Mrs Rebecca Holmes Daingerfield gave \$1,000. to pay off the remaining stock, thus paying off the debt on the Rectory property, says the Vestry Register.

After the death of Dr Norton in September 1893, \$500. was again spent for repairs. The old wooden cellar floor was removed from the old part of the house and replaced with brick. In 1909 the windows on the west side of the house in the front halls (first and second floors) were closed up; and about 1915 electric lights were installed.

The Rev. Peter Parker Phillips D.D. and his family lived here during his ministry at St. Paul's 1894-1920. A "modern" fireplace was installed in the living room for him which was altered in 1921 and replaced with a reproduction of an old mantel in 1938.

In 1921, the sum of \$3000. was spent in a new heating plant, thoroughly renovating the interior, painting the woodwork on the exterior and building two substantial porches on the rear which were designed by Mr. Emmett C. Dunn. A year later a slate roof was added to replace the shingles on the older portion of the house. The Rev. Percy Foster Hall and his family lived here from September 1921 to August 1937.

The original dining room and kitchen were in the basement. During Dr. Norton's time the kitchen was moved to the northeast cellar room and the dining room was above it. Dr Phillips had the kitchen moved upstairs to the present location (north east) and used the north west room for the dining room. Dr Norton and Mr Hall used the northwest room for a study as does the present Rector. Parson Johnston and Dr Phillips used the present dining room as a study.

Before the Rev. E. A. deBordenave came to St. Paul's, Mr Waterman, at the request of the committee in charge of repairs, restored the front door and steps to what is supposed to be the original appearance of the front entrance, removing the vestibule and delapidated wooden steps. As there was no picture in existence of the front of the original house, the restoration was based upon the architecture of the period and the old arch that was found beneath the newer facade.

Many eminent devines have been entertained here, notably; the Rev. L. B. Minor (missionary to Liberia), Bishop Payne (1st Bishop of Liberia), Bishop Penick (3rd Bishop of Liberia), the Rev. Dr. Sparrow of the Virginia Theological Seminary, Bishops Meade, Johns, Whittle, Randolph, Gibson, and Goodwin of Virginia; the Rt. Rev Arthur Jett (of S.W. Virginia), Bishop Brown (missionary to Brazil and Bishop of Virginia), the Rt. Rev. Lucien Lee Kinsolving (1st Bishop of Brazil), the Rev Dr. Morris (missionary to Brazil), the Rev J. K. Morris (missionary to Japan), Bishop Naide of Osaka Japan, Bishop Tseen of Honan, China, and two presiding Bishops of the Episcopal Church in America, the Rt. Rev. John G. Murray and the Rt. Rev. Henry St. George Tucker of Virginia and formerly of Japan.

It is possible that Nellie Custis and her husband Major Lawrence Lewis were entertained here also, but this is not certainly known.