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St. Mark's Chapel: Migratory and Enduring

Wade H. Hadley, Jr.*

John H. Haughton (1810-1876) built a small family chapel on his plantation near the town of Gulf in Chatham County, North Carolina, over 147 years ago, a chapel that now rests, restored and well maintained, at Mordecai Square in Raleigh, North Carolina. It remained at its original location for 106 years, then made a sojourn of 26 years in Siler City, North Carolina, and has been at its present location since 1979.

John H. Haughton came to Chatham County from Edenton, North Carolina. By 1836 he had been appointed postmaster at The Gulph (present-day Gulf) and held that position until 1848. The 1850 census records the value of his real estate at \$15,000 and his occupation as lawyer. He had a water-powered mill on Deep River near Gulf before 1848. He was Representative to the North Carolina General Assembly from Chatham County 1844-1846 and Senator for two terms, 1850-1852 and 1854-1856.

The information recorded below has to do mainly with the material history of this church building. It covers seven periods during which it was alternately active and inactive as an Episcopal Church by the name of St. Mark's.

1847 to 1891

The original location of St. Mark's Chapel was on the outskirts of the town of Gulf on the north side of Deep River in Chatham County, North Carolina. This chapel was built of wood. Its dimensions are approximately 30 feet long and 20 feet wide. It

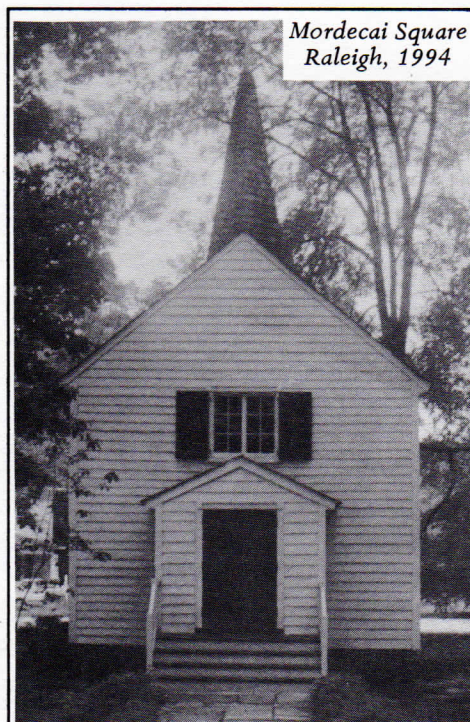
**Wade H. Hadley, Jr., past president of the Chatham County Historical Association and co-author of Chatham County 1771-1971, lives in Siler City, where he continues to explore the by-ways of local history.*

could seat about 55 people. There is an 8- x 19-foot balcony reached by a curving staircase. The balcony seated slaves before the Civil War.

This chapel became St. Mark's Episcopal Church, having been consecrated in August of 1847 by the Rt. Rev. Levi Silliman Ives, second Bishop of North Carolina. Soon it was serving a substantial congregation from the surrounding vicinity. During 1870, St. Mark's had seventeen communicants. The congregation then dwindled as old families died or moved away. By around 1891 only two members were left. Unable to support a rector or to hold services, the church became inactive and remained so for 18 years.

1891 to 1909

During this inactive period, the church building became badly dilapidated. All of the windows were broken out and the plastering torn from the walls.



St. Mark's Chapel, now in Raleigh, N.C.

1909 to 1934

The church was rejuvenated and the first service held on the first Sunday in February of 1909. Services were then held regularly on the first Sunday of each month. The rector at that time was the Rev. W. L. Mellichamp. On 21 October 1909, the Ladies Auxiliary of St. Mark's Church at Gulf gave an oyster supper to help raise funds for putting St. Mark's Church and the old academy in proper repair and condition for service and use. The invitation was issued in the *Siler City Grit* by the following committee:

Mrs. H. A. Russell	Miss Decie Chambers
Mrs. George D. Frasier	Miss Dora Palmer
Mrs. F. D. Jones	

By November of 1909, the Bishop had recently visited the church and confirmed eight persons. The number of communicants then was eleven. New windows had been put in the church, the interior was plastered, and a cheap organ and some other church furniture had been purchased. A wish to paint the church and repair the cemetery fence was expressed. It was pointed out that there was once a nice iron fence in front and a rock wall at the rear of the cemetery.

The *Siler City Grit* of 15 March 1911 carried the following notice: "The regular appointments at St. Mark's Episcopal Church at Gulf are 2nd Sunday at 4:00 p.m. and the 4th Sunday at 11:00 a.m. The public are cordially invited to attend these services."

Again the congregation slowly declined and the

services became intermittent. Annual Homecoming services at St. Mark's were initiated in 1924 by the Rev. R. G. Shannonhouse of St. Bartholomew's of Pittsboro. The last service was reported in 1934, probably for the burial of Eugene H. Frasier.

1934 to 1953

St. Mark's Church is indicated to have been inactive during this period, the property being held in the name of the Episcopal diocese.

1953 to 1969

Around 1951 a small group of Episcopalians in Siler City, North Carolina, organized the Church of the Holy Cross. Their first meeting place was in the office of a local yarn mill. Later, negotiations to buy the long-inactive St. Mark's Chapel at Gulf were initiated.

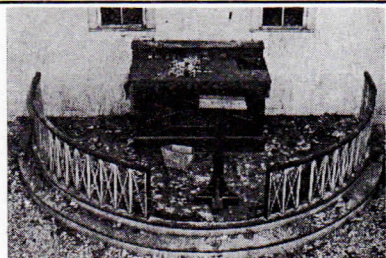
The trustees of the diocese agreed to the removal of the building to Siler City. In preparation for this, the little church was deconsecrated during a formal service within it on 6 February 1953.

During the inactive period of this church at Gulf prior to its removal to Siler City, some articles had been removed from it, including the Bible, the lectern, and one of the oil lamps. The location of these three items was known. The original cross used by the congregation at St. Mark's was found stored under the altar. No trace was found of the communion plate.

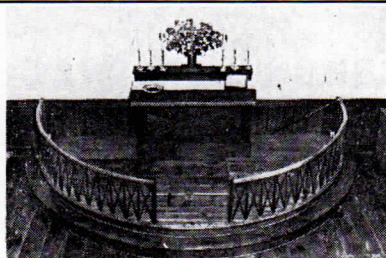
Inspection just prior to its removal from Gulf revealed that on a whole the wooden church building was in a sound condition, with a fairly new roof.

Many of the windows were broken and the plaster had fallen from portions of the ceiling. The building contained nine pews, an old pump organ that still worked, and an old wood-burning stove.

The building is made almost entirely of heart pine. For the move to Siler City, it was taken apart and each board and sill numbered. Once there, they were fitted back into place. The hand-hewn sills were placed upon a foundation of antique brick taken from an old building. All of the pine floors, wainscoting, and furnishings within the building were sanded by hand and finished with a clear varnish. The altar and communion rail from the old church were retained. The job of dismantling the church building and of erecting it in Siler City was supervised by Ralph Blair. The location of this church at Siler City was on the east side of North Dogwood Avenue between West 5th and 6th Streets.

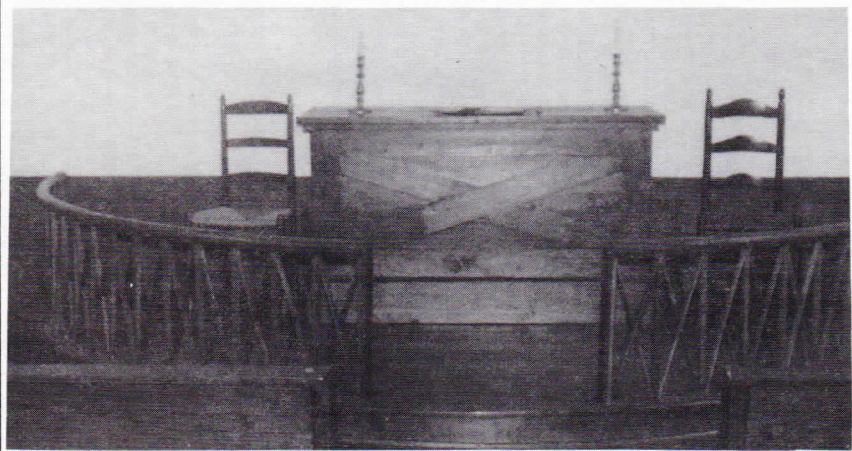


Gulf, early 1953



Raleigh, 1994

Siler City, late 1953



The church was reconsecrated and formal dedication services were held on 26 November 1953, conducted by the Rt. Rev. Edwin A. Penick, Bishop of North Carolina.

The Siler City congregation changed its name from the Church of the Holy Cross to St. Mark's Church.

At that time, November of 1953, this congregation had less than 20 members. Mason P. Thomas was senior warden and A. R. Tucker, Jr., was junior warden. Mrs. A. R. Tucker, Jr., was secretary. The Rev. James Carpenter of Pittsboro was rector.

After about fifteen years, the congregation at St. Mark's Church at Siler City had declined and regularly scheduled services ceased. This local church was disbanded on 1 December 1969.

1970 to 1978

During this period, the church building remained unoccupied at its Siler City location. In 1978 it was offered to the Raleigh Historic Properties Commission, and this offer was accepted.

1979 to the Present

In 1979 the decommissioned church was transported intact to Raleigh by truck, after its steeple had been removed. Its new home is in Mordecai Historic Park at One Mimosa Street in Raleigh, North Carolina. After restoration work, the building was dedicated as a new addition to the Square on 12 December 1980. Although decommissioned, it is available as a wedding chapel and retains the name St. Mark's. It has served as the place for weddings, lectures, and musical programs.

A lectern dating from the earlier years is now in the chapel.



SOURCES

The Chatham News, Siler City, N.C., 19 February 1953, p. 1; 3 December 1953, p. 1, 8.

Wade H. Hadley, Doris G. Horton, and Nell C. Stroud, *Chatham County, 1771-1971*. (Durham, N.C.: Moore Publishing Co., 1971)

Chris Hughes, Park Director, Mordecai Square, Raleigh, N.C. Mr. Hughes provided information concerning St. Mark's Chapel at its present location and helped me in obtaining photographs of it.

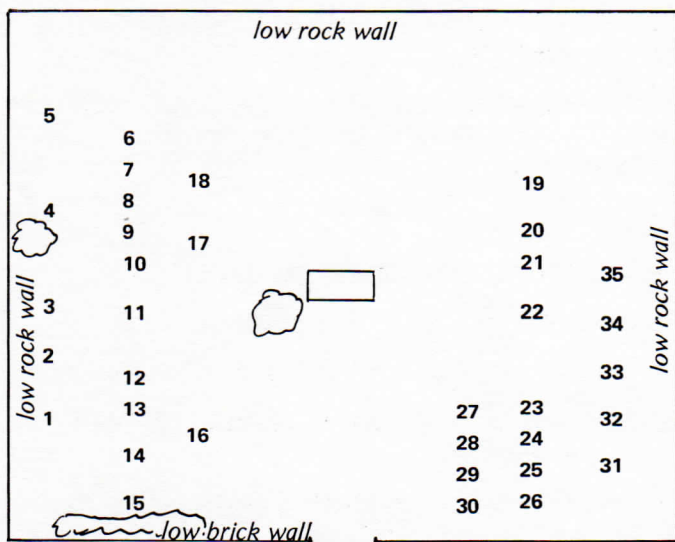
Dennis Patterson, "Circuit Ride of 1847 Chapel in Raleigh," *News and Record*, Greensboro, N.C., 25 January 1988.

The Siler City Grit, Siler City, N.C., 20 October 1909, p. 3; 3 November 1909, p. 3; 15 March 1911, p. 3.

Martha Hope Smith, *St. Bartholomew's Parish, Pittsboro, North Carolina, 1833-1983* (Pittsboro: Pyb Printing, 1983), p. 25-26.

Inventory of Gravestones and Burials, St. Mark's Cemetery

1. Joseph C. Hooker, b. 10 May 1831, d. 30 June 1867.
2. Mary Jane, wife of Joseph C. Hooker, b. 14 Mar 1834, d. 21 June 1866.
3. James Harriss, son of Joseph C. & Mary Jane Hooker, b. 21 Mar 1856, d. 29 Sep 1856.
4. Kate Carman Newby, daughter of Dr. George C. & Margaret Newby
5. Zillah Frasier, b. 10 Apr 1788, d. 6 Apr 1850.
6. James M., son of W. M. & E. C. Heron, b. 8 Dec 1855, d. 6 Aug 6 1865.
7. Florence J., daughter of George D. & Pattie Ann Frasier, b. 21 Aug 1887, d. 3 July 1889.
8. G[eorge] McNeal, son of G.D. & P.A. Frasier, d. 12 Jul 1880, aged 1 year, 3 months, 4 days
9. Joliette Irene, only child of J[ohn] W. & E[velyn] W. McIntyre, d. 18 Sep 1879, aged 4 years & 9 months
10. Evelyn W., wife of John W. McIntyre, d. 1 Nov 1893, aged 44 years.
11. Lemuel Colburn, son of Wm. & Sarah C. Murdoch, b. at Graniteville, S.C., 26 Nov 1846, d. of Typhoid fever at Gulf, 22 Sep 1863.
12. Lt. John W. Harris, second son of Brooks & Elizza Harris, d. 1 Sep 1865, aged 27 years 8 months and 10 days.
13. Lt. D. C. Harris, eldest son of Brooks & Elizza Harris, d. 15 Oct 1862, aged 27 years 4 months and 19 days.
14. Brooks Harriss, son of West & Elizabeth Harriss, who died 21 Feb 1869, aged 65 years.
15. Eliza, wife of Brooks Harris, who died 24 Feb 1872, aged 71 years.
16. Permelia C., wife of John M. McIver, b. 14 Feb 1842, d. 4 Oct 1875. [on back] Here are also interred her three unnamed babes. [on side] The daughter of Brooks and Eliza Harris.
17. George David Jr., son of G.D. & Leta Frasier. b. 14 Mar 1906, d. 18 Aug 1906.
18. Lizzie Pearl, daughter of G.D. & P.A. Frasier, b. 18 Nov 1881, d. 7 May 1896.
19. Eugene H. Frasier, b. 28 Aug 1904, d. 11 Dec 1934.



Rough sketch of grave locations in St. Mark's Cemetery, Gulf, N.C. Numbers correspond to numbering in the accompanying article.

20. Leta Goldston, [2nd] wife of George David Frasier, b. 19 Feb 1883, d. 13 Nov 1953.
21. [Masonic symbol], George D. Frasier, b. 18 Aug 1850, d. 16 May 1919.
22. Pattie Ann, [1st] wife of Geo. D. Frasier, b. 9 Aug 1852, d. 26 Apr 1901.
23. Kate Meta, daughter of L.J. and M.A. Haughton, d. 23 May 1868, aged 20 months.
24. Martha Ann, [2nd] wife of L.J. Haughton, b. 15 Sep 1832, d. 16 Jan 1882.
25. Richard Olmsted Frasier, b. 8 Aug 1853, d. 18 Jun 1924.
26. Walter Raleigh, son of R.G. & J.W. Frasier, b. 17 Sep 1859, d. 1 May 1893.
27. Emily Joyner, daughter of R.G. & J.W. Frasier, b. 29 Mar 1845, d. 6 Apr 1892.
28. Alice L., daughter of R.G. & J.W. Frasier, b. 2 Mar 1856, d. 17 Jan 1892.
29. [Masonic symbol] Richard G. Frasier, b. 5 Nov 1816, d. 16 Feb 1888.
30. Jane Watson, wife of R.G. Frasier, b. 22 Aug 1825, d. 11 Mar 1909.
31. Mrs. Mary R. Haughton, wife of John Haughton, b. 11 Dec 1791, d. 15 Jan 1865. [Mary Ryan Hooker]
32. John Haughton, b. 20 July 1775, d. 26 Nov 1849.
33. Lt. John L. Haughton, son of L.J. & Ann J. Haughton, b. 16 Apr 1841, d. 17 Sep 1862.
34. Jane McBryde, daughter of L.J. & A.J. Haughton, b. 4 Oct 1844, d. 22 Mar 1856. d / March 22, 1856.
35. Mrs. Ann J. Haughton, b. 5 March 1822, d. 21 Aug 1849. [Ann J. Hayes; first wife of L.J. Haughton]

UNMARKED GRAVES, KNOWN [from St. Bartholomew's Parish Register]

1. [p. 62] Dec 15 1869 Isabel, born Dec 3rd 1868, parents Robert & Maria Antoinette Paton; [p. 207] Isabel Paton daughter of Robert & Maria Antoinette Paton of Egypt, Chatham Co - born Dec 3rd 1868 - died of Marasmus Aug 1st 1870, aged one year 6 mos & twenty-seven days - Buried in the Churchyard at the Gulf.
2. [p. 217] Robert Paton age 57 years Buried in St Mark's Churchyard Gulf [buried 2 July 1883]
3. [p. 222] George Clinton Newby M.D. Aged 66 years & 6 mos Died June 16, 1889. Buried in S. Marks Ch.yard Gulf [buried 17 Jun 1889]
4. [p. 224] Mrs. Maria Antoinette Paton widow Robert Paton. Aged 60 yrs. Buried at St. Marks Ch yd. at Gulf, N.C. [buried 4 Dec 1892]

POSSIBLY BURIED IN UNMARKED GRAVES AT ST. MARK'S [recorded from St. Bartholomew's Register]

1. [p. 204] Marion son of Brig.Gen [space] Walker of S.C. born [space] died Sept 19th 1864 of Catarrh fever buried at the Gulf [buried 20 Sep 1864]
2. [p. 205] Walter son of Robert & Maria Antoinette Paton born [space] died [space] buried at the Gulf. [buried 20 Jan. 1865]
3. (p. 205) Harriet daughter of Robert & Maria Antoinette Paton, born Dec. 30th 1864 died very suddenly, cause unknown. Jany 17th, 1864. Buried at the Gulf. [2 and 3 probably twins, but no hard evidence]
4. (p. 206) Mrs. Julia McRae wife of Donald McRae born in Mass. died July 28th 1867 in consequence of / aged 32 years - Buried at the Gulf.

NOTES

Sketch and inventory were completed by Jane Pyle in September 1994, making minor corrections in an inventory published by Kathy Brooks Jones in *Buffalo Creek Chronicles*, Vol. 1, 1984. The page references to St. Bartholomew's parish register were compiled by Martha Hope Smith. Verbatim tombstone records are available from Will Heiser, the coordinator of the Association's cemetery survey.

The *Chatham Historical Journal* is an occasional publication of the Chatham County Historical Association. Its purpose is to disseminate items of historical interest about Chatham County. To be considered for publication, articles or photographs should be previously unpublished, of reasonable length, and include detailed sources of information.

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