

LOS ANGELES FAMILY HISTORY CENTER

THE  
VESTRY BOOK  
AND  
REGISTER  
OF  
ST. PETER'S PARISH

NEW KENT AND JAMES CITY COUNTIES, VIRGINIA

1684-1786

TRANSCRIBED AND EDITED

BY

C. G. CHAMBERLAYNE

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THE LIBRARY BOARD

RICHMOND:

DIVISION OF PURCHASE AND PRINTING

1937

## Prefatory Note

As the parishes of the Established Church in colonial Virginia were also political subdivisions, their records are both official and important. For this reason, it is the policy of the Library Board of Virginia to publish original parish books, this volume being the fifth of a series begun in 1931. This work and three of those previously published relate to a contiguous area of early Virginia whose local archives have been lost. The decision to include these records of St. Peter's Parish, New Kent County, in the series was made after careful consideration of the fact that they had been published before, in 1904 and 1905, by the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Virginia, and after consultation with the officers of that society, who have given their generous and interested cooperation in the undertaking. The Board of the society endorsed the project for the reasons set forth in the following letter from the president:

RICHMOND, VA., September 15, 1937.

MR. WILMER L. HALL, *State Librarian,*  
*Virginia State Library,*  
*Richmond, Va.*

MY DEAR MR. HALL:

At a meeting held on December 27, 1935, the Board of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Virginia voted to endorse the State Library's project of editing and issuing in one volume the Vestry Book and Register of St. Peter's Parish in New Kent County (originally published separately by this society in 1904 and 1905) and through its Corresponding Secretary, Miss Lucy C. Roller, informed Dr. Chamberlayne, the editor of the proposed work, of its action.

Now, as President of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Virginia, I am writing to you to let you know some of the reasons that actuated us in endorsing the project, reasons which make us feel that a new edition of the St. Peter's Parish records is not only desirable but highly necessary. Those reasons are the following: The introductions to the volumes published in 1904 and 1905 are very brief, and the proposed introduction will provide an adequate historical account of the parish; the introductions contain errors of fact, which should be corrected, in the light of information now available; the volumes show many omissions when compared with the original manuscripts, one instance, in the case of *The Vestry Book*, being the omission of six whole pages of the manuscript, which contain several indentures, the wording of the various oaths taken by the parish officials, and the autograph signatures of the officials who had taken the oaths; neither volume contains any critical notes; in each volume (*The Vestry Book* especially) the index is very inadequate—so much so that it can be of little or no help to the historical or genealogical student using the book; much additional historical material concerning New Kent County in general, and St. Peter's Parish in particular, has come to light within the last five or six years and, we understand, is to be incorporated in the new edition of the St. Peter's Parish records; and newly discovered documents illustrative of the history of Blisland Parish are to be included in the St. Peter's volume, the result being that *The Vestry Book of Blisland (Blissland) Parish*, published by the State Library in 1935 and the shortly to be published St. Peter's Parish volume will together contain a transcript of all the documents connected with the history of these two contiguous parishes known to be in existence

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given twice, and (6) copies of three indentures (of 1738, 1739, and 1740 respectively), the last one being of peculiar interest in view of the light it throws upon interracial relations in Virginia at the time.

MS. Volume No. 2 is a quarto  $14\frac{3}{4}$  by  $9\frac{1}{4}$  inches in size and contains 49 leaves, in whole or in part, of heavy unruled laid paper, the watermarks being two in number: the Roman numeral IV ( $5/8$  inch by 1 inch) and a fleur-de-lis ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches). Originally the volume must have contained at least five more leaves than at present. Of these, two have been neatly cut out of the book, presumably with a knife, only a narrow margin being left, and three have been torn out roughly. Whether or not one or two leaves are missing from the front of the volume, it is impossible to say with certainty. With the exception of pages 10, 22, 44, 45, 80, 86, and 108 (which contain some extraneous matter), the book has been used exclusively as a Parish Register of births, baptisms, and deaths from the year 1733 down to about the end of the century. From page 1 through page 37 (1733-1740) the entries appear to be in the handwriting of the Rev. David Mossom, Minister of the parish, each page having been attested by Mr. Mossom. Beginning with page 39 a new method of making the entries was followed, the handwriting, which changes again after 1767, is different, there are few entries for the period 1740 to 1756, and after about 1767 the entries are again comparatively few and scattering. As can readily be seen from a glance at the printed reproduction, the record is by no means complete for the period ostensibly covered.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF ST. PETER'S PARISH AND TERRITORIAL CHANGES, 1678-1725

Some time during the year 1678 the Vestry of Blisland Parish, having first obtained the consent of the whole parish thereto, made a division of the parish, the lower part retain-

ing the name Blisland, the new parish being called St. Peter's.<sup>3</sup> The next year, on April 29th, the General Court, answering a petition of the Parish of Blisland, confirmed the division already made and thereby finally established St. Peter's Parish.<sup>4</sup> At the time of its establishment St. Peter's Parish was bounded on the north-east by the ridge between the Pamunkey and the Mattaponi rivers, on the south-east by John's (or Jack's) Creek (north of the Pamunkey) and by a line beginning at Capt. Bassett's Landing Creek (south of the Pamunkey), and on the south-west by the ridge between the Pamunkey and Chickahominy rivers. There was no boundary established on the north-west side, the parish extending in that direction, theoretically speaking, indefinitely, while practically speaking it extended only as far as to the farthest point of settlement. Later, when in 1704 St. Peter's Parish was itself divided, the upper (or north-western) portion being established as St. Paul's Parish, the dividing line between the two parishes (Matadequin Creek), which in 1720 became also the dividing line between New Kent and the newly created County of Hanover, became St. Peter's north-west boundary line.

But before St. Peter's Parish had, in 1704, limited itself to the north-west, as above noted, it had already suffered a considerable loss of territory and inhabitants. In 1691, by the Act establishing King and Queen County, the General Assembly cut off from it all that part of its territory lying north-east of the Pamunkey and annexed it to St. John's Parish (established in 1680 or later), thus making St. John's Parish include the whole of Pamunkey Neck; i. e., the present King William County and the other counties lying between the Mattaponi and the north fork (North Anna River) of the Pamunkey.

This transfer of territory from St. Peter's Parish to the Parish of St. John's is interesting as illustrating an early

<sup>3</sup> Page 14.

<sup>4</sup> *The Vestry Book of Blisland (Blissland) Parish, New Kent and James City Counties, Virginia, 1721-1786*, pp. XXXIII and XXXIV.

developing and steadily increasing tendency in the Colony of Virginia, or, to be more specific, in that part of Tidewater Virginia lying between the James (including the Appomattox) and the Rappahannock, to make navigable streams, rather than the ridges between such streams, the boundary lines between county and county, and between parish and parish. This tendency finally resulted everywhere, within the limits mentioned above, in an almost complete change in the north-east and south-west boundary lines of both counties and parishes; for whereas at first in almost every instance county was separated from county and parish from parish by a ridge between two rivers, eventually, by the addition or subtraction of territory as the case might be, rivers and not ridges formed the boundary lines. To put it another way; at first in every case the counties and parishes lay each on both sides of a river (which served as a high road) and sloped up and out on each side to a ridge between it and the next county or parish, but later the counties and parishes are found lying each between two rivers, each county or parish sloping up and in on both sides to a ridge, along which ran in most cases a road roughly paralleling the two rivers.<sup>5</sup>

Making up for the losses of territory and inhabitants suffered in 1691, when that part of St. Peter's Parish north-east of the Pamunkey was annexed to St. John's Parish, and in 1704, when St. Paul's Parish was established to the north-west, the General Assembly in 1723 ordered that on and after March 1, 1725, all that part of the parish of Wilmington lying on the (north) east side of Chickahominy River and above (i. e. north-west of) Blisland Parish as added to by the same Act be added to St. Peter's Parish. From 1725 onward then St. Peter's Parish extended from the Pamunkey on the north-east to the Chickahominy on the south-west, and from Blisland Parish on the south-east to St. Paul's Parish (Hanover County) on the north-west. By this addition of territory the number of

<sup>5</sup> Appendix D., pp. 696-700.

## Introduction

The two manuscript volumes hereinafter reproduced in print embody the earliest consecutive records of St. Peter's Parish, New Kent and James City Counties, Virginia, known to be in existence. The first, and older, of the two volumes was known to Bishop Meade and was used by him in the preparation of his *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia*.<sup>1</sup> The second, and later, volume the Bishop does not mention in his book, and it is most probable that he was unaware of its existence. Both volumes are the property of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia. For many years they were kept in the library of the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Virginia, near Alexandria; they are now in the custody of the Virginia State Library, in Richmond, and are preserved in the Archives Division of the library. These two old manuscripts were published in two volumes (the register part in 1904; the vestry book part in 1905) by the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Virginia. Both volumes have long been out of print. The present volume, containing much original matter not to be found in the two earlier volumes, is provided with an exhaustive index and with some notes, which together should make the records more easily and more profitably used by historical and genealogical students.

The earlier of the two manuscript volumes (hereafter referred to as MS. Volume No. 1) is a quarto,  $13\frac{1}{8}$  x  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches in size, and contains 198 leaves, in whole or in part, of heavy unrulled laid paper, the watermarks being two in number: the initials PB ( $\frac{7}{8}$  inch by  $9/16$  inch); and a fleur-de-lis on a shield, surmounted by a crown, the whole over the monogram CH above the monogram WR (6 inches by 5 inches). Originally the volume contained at least twenty to thirty more leaves than

<sup>1</sup> Meade, *Old Churches*, Vol. I, p. 383.

at present. Of this number some twenty or more leaves have been torn out, apparently at random; generally speaking only one leaf at a time is missing, but occasionally two consecutive leaves are wanting, and in one case the gap was made by tearing out three leaves. In addition to the missing leaves above referred to, at least one leaf is missing from the back of the volume, and two, or perhaps three, are wanting at the front. Furthermore, of the leaves that remain (or, rather, that have been counted as remaining) many have been torn or otherwise mutilated to the point where less than half (in some cases less than a fourth) of the sheet is left.

Like the manuscript *Vestry Book and Register of Bristol Parish* (transcribed and published in 1898) this MS. Volume No. 1 served two purposes: what may be called the front part (pages 1 to 247) contains the minutes of the vestry meetings between 1684 (possibly 1683) and 1758; the back part (pages 1 to 143) contains a record, apparently very incomplete, of births, marriages, baptisms, and deaths in the parish between 1685 and 1730 or 1731,<sup>2</sup> when a new book (MS. Volume No. 2) was begun, the old book containing in addition occasional entries down to the end of the century, and in one case to 1810; while the middle portion (pages 144 to 149, inclusive, counting from the back) contains (1) the wording of the Test Oath, followed by the autograph signatures of some thirty-eight parish officials who had taken the oath, (2) the wording of the Oath of Conformity, followed by some seventeen autograph signatures, (3) the wording of the Oath of a Vestryman, (4) the wording of the Oath of a Church Warden, (5) the wording of three other oaths (of Allegiance to King George, of Abjuration of the Pope, and of Renunciation of the Pretender), each

<sup>2</sup> Actually there are a few entries dating back years before the establishment of the parish, in 1678 (or 9), but in every such instance the entry was made some distance down the page and below the first entry under the particular letter (A, B, C, etc.) heading the page, a fact which proves that the entry in question was made at a subsequent date.

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weny bo': Mar<sup>th</sup>: 27 1685 Danell bo': Ap<sup>th</sup>:  
16. 1686.

Hanah. bo': July 8 1686 Pegg bo': Apr<sup>th</sup>: y<sup>o</sup>  
24. 1687

Lyon bo: May 25. 1687. Pom bo': July. 12.  
1687

Dick bō: y<sup>o</sup>: Des<sup>th</sup>: 15 1688 Sam: bo<sup>o</sup>: Aug<sup>th</sup>:  
5 1689

Bety bō: Oc<sup>th</sup>: y<sup>o</sup> 21. 1689.

at y<sup>o</sup> Qu<sup>t</sup> as ffolloweth

Doll bo: feb: 7. 1683 Matt. bo: June 21. 1685

Pretty bo: oc<sup>th</sup>: 8 1685 Margreat bo<sup>o</sup>: Apr<sup>th</sup>:  
29 1687:

Jeny bo<sup>o</sup>: Deseñ 1<sup>st</sup>: 1688 Franck bo: Jan. 6  
1688/9

\* William son to William Pullam nat: y<sup>o</sup>: 3 Au-  
gust bap<sup>t</sup>: y<sup>o</sup>: 3 of sep<sup>t</sup> 1690

Thō son to Thomas Pontin bap<sup>t</sup>: y<sup>o</sup> 21<sup>st</sup>: of June 1691  
one negroe belonging to M<sup>th</sup>: Susan: Poindexter  
borne y<sup>o</sup>: 1<sup>st</sup>: day of feb<sup>r</sup>: 1693/4

Susana Poindexter buried the 15 July 1698

Anne Daug<sup>&</sup> of Hump<sup>&</sup> Parish and mary his  
wife bap<sup>t</sup>: 4: Sep<sup>t</sup> 1698

Anne Daut<sup>&</sup> of will<sup>&</sup> Perkins by Eliz his wife  
bapt: 12 march 1698/9

Ellenor Daut<sup>&</sup> of Rob<sup>t</sup> Pasley by Ellenor his  
wife bap<sup>t</sup>: 26 march 1699

Roland Son of John Peeke by Jane bapiz the 25  
June 1699

Eliz Daut<sup>&</sup> of Gabrill Pickring baptiz the 13  
Dec<sup>&</sup> 1696

will<sup>&</sup> Son of Edw<sup>&</sup> Penick bapiz the 25 Aug<sup>t</sup>. 1694

John Son of Eliz Pedley baptiz the 30 June 169[ ]

\* James Son of will<sup>&</sup> Pullum bap<sup>t</sup> the 2 may 169[ ]

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\* Sarah Daut<sup>¶</sup> of David Pattison bapiz the 24  
march 1699/700

\* Benj Son of w<sup>m</sup> Pullum bap<sup>z</sup> the 31 march 1700

Susanna daut<sup>¶</sup> of Thō Poindexter born the 6  
ffeb<sup>¶</sup> 1696/7

Eliz Daut<sup>¶</sup> of m<sup>¶</sup> Thomas Poindexter born the  
14 Januery 1699/700

will<sup>¶</sup> Son of Thō Ponton bapiz the 12 may 1700

Jane Daut<sup>¶</sup> of Hump<sup>¶</sup> Parish born the 20 Dec<sup>¶</sup>  
1699 bap<sup>z</sup> 21 July 170[ ]

Joseph Son of John Peace bo baptiz the 13 oco<sup>¶</sup> 1700[?]

ffrances Daut<sup>¶</sup> of Jn<sup>o</sup> Park Ju<sup>¶</sup> baptiz the 16  
ffeb<sup>¶</sup> 1700/1

Hen<sup>¶</sup> Son of Humphery Parrish bapiz the 27  
april 1701

James Son of James Pyrant baptiz the 27 april 1701

Anne Dauter of w<sup>m</sup> Perkins bapiz the 4 may 1701[?]

william Son of Peter Plantine baptiz the 12  
octob<sup>¶</sup> 1701

\* Anne Daut<sup>¶</sup> of David Pattison baptiz the 2 no-  
vemb<sup>¶</sup> 1701

Elizabeth: and mary Dauters of nicō Purde  
bapiz: 15 mart 1701/2

Sarah Daut<sup>¶</sup> of Tho Poindexter borne y<sup>¶</sup> 12 may 1702[?]

\* Anne Daut<sup>¶</sup> of w<sup>m</sup> Pullam baptiz y<sup>¶</sup> 22 nov<sup>¶</sup> 1702[?]

Susannah daut<sup>¶</sup> of Jn<sup>o</sup> Peace baptiz the 31 Jan<sup>¶</sup> 170[ ]  
[28]

W<sup>m</sup> Son of James Pirant baptiz y<sup>¶</sup> 28 March 1703

Judeth daut<sup>¶</sup> of Jeremiyah Paite baptiz 4 July 1703

John Son of Charles Person baptiz Sept<sup>¶</sup> 19 1703

ffrances & Kate Negroes belonging to M<sup>r</sup> Geo  
Poindexter bap feb<sup>¶</sup> 4<sup>th</sup>: 1704/5

ffrancis Son of James Perry bapt y<sup>¶</sup> 13 Jan'y 1705

\* David Son of David Pattison born y<sup>¶</sup> 14 8br 1703

*This book is more than 800 pages.*

*It is very valuable for history + genealogy.*