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Spire and Tower: The History, Architecture and Art of Two Norfolk, Virginia Churches

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SPIRE AND TOWER: THE HISTORY,
ARCHITECTURE AND ART OF TWO
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA CHURCHES

by

Judith L. Smith
B.A. June 1983, Old Dominion University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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November, 1989

Approved ~~by~~

~~Betsy Fahman~~ (Director)

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ABSTRACT

SPIRE AND TOWER: THE HISTORY,
ARCHITECTURE AND ART OF TWO
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA CHURCHES

Judith L. Smith
Old Dominion University, 1989
Director: Dr. Betsy Fahlman

While St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church and Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church are dissimilar in origin, religious practices, and architectural style, when taken together, their periods of construction in their respective revival styles span and define an important era in Norfolk, Virginia's urban history.

Original research in the sparse records of several Catholic parishes identifies the previously unknown name of the architect of St. Mary's Church. The study also offers additional information on that church's stained glass windows.

The author presents the heretofore scattered history of Epworth Church in chronological order. The study develops new information concerning one of the church's architects as well as the apparently unacknowledged reuse of Epworth's floor plan in another Tidewater Virginia church. The identity of the studio responsible for one of the previously unattributed stained glass windows is documented.

There is also a discussion of the reaction of the two church congregations to the social, economic and demographic problems visited upon downtown Norfolk since the 1960's.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest gratitude is to my husband, E. T., who spent time away from his own studies in order to type and format the volume of information contained in this thesis.

Dr. Betsy Fahlman, chair of my thesis committee and Dr. Douglas Greene, Director of the Institute of Humanities at Old Dominion University, showed more patience and continued interest in my thesis preparation than any student has the right to expect. This was greatly appreciated, and I am hopeful that this thesis justifies their efforts on my behalf.

Without the assistance of Dr. E. J. Pope, Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church historian, access to the Church Board Minutes and church memorabilia would not have been possible. Dr. Pope spent many days with me sorting through information and making suggestions on further sources of information. This not only made my understanding of Epworth's history more complete but also opened avenues to the discovery of new information about the church.

My special thanks go to Dr. Virginia Raguin, Director for the Census of Stained Glass Windows in America, 1840-1940, for her suggestions of possible research materials for a better understanding of the art of stained glass, and to Gary Baker, Assistant Curator of Glass for the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia, for his expertise in determining authentic Tiffany glass.

The staff in the inter-library loan department at Old

Dominion University was very accommodating and helpful in searching out the locations of obscure publications that were needed for my research. I thank them for their assistance.

A student is truly blessed when resources such as the materials in the Sargent Room at Kirn Memorial Library in Norfolk, Virginia are available for study. I discovered many leads to all sorts of information on Epworth and St. Mary's in the files, microfilms, and maps that are part of this center's special holdings.

I would be remiss if I did not thank another member of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church and fellow student. Gladys Blair, who, besides sending me updated articles on Epworth and St. Mary's when they appeared in the Norfolk newspapers, even became a photographer of a specific area in Epworth when I could not return to take the picture myself.

I am also indebted to Paul Gaudeau, architect for the remodeling of Immaculate Conception Church in Towson, Maryland, for spending the better part of a Saturday afternoon showing me the design modifications he had orchestrated in that church.

To Father T. J. Quinlan, former priest at St. Mary's, my gratitude for allowing me access to his correspondence with those who were restoring St. Mary's and for sharing his stored knowledge on the history and parishioners of the St. Mary's of the past.

It is my hope that these special people and the congregations of Epworth and St. Mary's will feel that this thesis provides information of value to them and to the history of the city of Norfolk, Virginia.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the middle of the nineteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century a religious fervor swept the United States. Coupled with this energy was a dramatic increase in the building of ecclesiastical structures. Some architects continued to build churches in the Classical style, but many others followed the lead of Richard Upjohn (1802-1878), James Renwick (1818-1895), and Thomas U. Walter (1804-1887) in adopting the Gothic, as interpreted by the English revivalist Augustus W. Pugin (1812-1852). By the 1870's, another style, the Romanesque, emerged to become a formidable rival of the Gothic for churches. Romanesque Revival in American architecture was synonymous with the name of an American architect, Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886). These two styles dominated American ecclesiastical building until the early twentieth century.

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, one of Norfolk, Virginia's earliest examples of Gothic Revival architecture, was dedicated in 1858 by the Right Reverend John McGill, Bishop of Richmond. It was not until the late 1880's that the style of Richardsonian Romanesque was employed by architects in Norfolk buildings. Several notable structures were erected, and one of the best ecclesiastical examples, Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church, was dedicated in

1898. Together these two churches present a chronological span of Norfolk's architectural styles from the 1850's to 1900.

Discussion of the architectural style of any structure involves built-in questions such as: what influences are apparent in the architect's drawing of the building; was this a new approach for the architect; and was the result successful in expressing the desires of the clients? While questions such as these usually refer to the exterior appearance of a structure, interiors, as interpreted by Pugin and Richardson, were an integral part of the whole design. Research was undertaken and skilled artisans were engaged to complete the continuity of design between exterior and interior. Did the architects of St. Mary's and Epworth Methodist churches follow the Pugin and Richardsonian examples of interiors in the furnishing of these sanctuaries or was this left to the discretion of the individual congregations?

General maintenance of buildings is always a problem and, coupled with advancing age, it becomes a much more serious and costly matter. Though the churches studied herein have different catechisms, their members have similar problems in preserving their buildings, in saving their history and in justifying their continued existence.

The following chapters will discuss the histories of the St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception and Epworth churches and how their varied circumstances may have influenced the selection of their particular architectural styles. The interior furnishings of each church will be considered in relation with the architectural style employed. The final chapter will address some parallel problems now facing these congregations.

CHAPTER 2
HISTORY OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH

Fleeing revolution-torn France in 1791, Father Jean Dubois, several French priests, and a few Catholic families arrived in Norfolk, Virginia. Had Father Dubois arrived twenty years earlier, he and his fellow travellers would not have been welcome in that state; but the American Revolution had intrinsically broadened ideas of religious tolerance in the United States. Freedom of religion was now guaranteed by both federal law and by the Commonwealth of Virginia Constitution. While this did not automatically connote widespread acceptance of Catholicism, it did legally stress tolerance. By 1793, more Catholic families had arrived in Norfolk, this time they were refugees fleeing from the slave insurrection in Santo Domingo.¹ Father Dubois' arrival marks the beginning of a small, but significant, presence on the part of the Catholic Church, not only in Norfolk but also in the Commonwealth of Virginia.² His congregation became known as the Roman Catholic Society

¹Saint Mary's Centennial Program, 1858-1958 (Privately printed, 1958), 13; Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Norfolk: Historic Southern Port, 2nd ed. Martin W. Schlegel, ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1931), 137; and George Tucker Norfolk Highlights, 1584-1881, (Portsmouth, VA: Printcraft Press, Inc., 1972), 77.

²Father Joseph Magri, The Catholic Church in the City and Diocese of Richmond, (Richmond, VA: Whittet and Shepperson, 1906), 37. "On November 16, 1687 in Norfolk County, Virginia, Father Raymond, at Norfolk, Virginia, was arrested for saying Mass and marrying a couple." There are no other records after that time naming any successors to

of Norfolk Borough.

Records between 1791 and 1799 relating to the establishment of an early Catholic church are nonexistent. However, a church had been constructed in downtown Norfolk by late 1802 (map 1). This church may have been the one erected by Father James Michael Bush after his arrival in Norfolk in about 1799. In his three-volume work, The History of Lower Tidewater, Rogers Dey Whichard mentions that a corner lot on Chappell Street was purchased by exiles and that a wooden chapel was built on the property.³ An Irish priest, Reverend Michael Lacy, came to minister to the Norfolk parishioners in 1803. He reported back to the Baltimore diocese that the parish had a membership of less than forty families, a debt on the church of \$600.00, a fence around the church and the graveyard that was already falling into decay. In addition to this there was no residence for a clergyman, and the adults seemed to be indifferent to their Christian duties. Father Lacy stated that his efforts would therefore be directed toward the teaching of the children. Father Lacy remained in Norfolk until his death in 1815.⁴

In 1820 at the request of Norfolk's Catholics, Pope Pius VII created the Diocese of Richmond, which would be under the direction of the archdiocese in Baltimore, Maryland, and appointed Reverend Patrick

Father Raymond in Virginia until Father Dubois.

³Rogers Dey Whichard, The History of Lower Tidewater (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1959), 1: 446-447.

⁴Father Joseph Magri, The Catholic Church in the City and Diocese of Richmond, 43.

Map 1. Copy of the Map of Norfolk, VA by George Nicholson, Sr. of Norfolk County, VA, October 2, 1802. This map shows a "Roman Church" facing Chappell Street bounded by: Holt Street on the north, 2 Street on the west, and March Street on the south. From the collections of the Sargent Room, Kirn Memorial Library, Norfolk, VA.

Kelly of Waterford, Ireland as the first bishop.⁵ The new bishop decided to settle in Norfolk, since he believed the established church there would be able to support him and serve as his cathedral until the Richmond congregation was large enough to take on this responsibility. Father Walsh, Bishop Kelly's assistant, found that discontent and fiscal mismanagement had put the congregation in such a precarious financial state that he was forced to organize a school whose business would support him instead of organizing the new diocese.⁶ The discordance in the church was complicated by the disagreements between the new Irish bishopric and the French archdiocese in Baltimore. The dissension finally caused Bishop Kelly to petition officials in Rome to relieve him of his post in Virginia. His request was granted in January 1822. By a special decree of the Sacred Congregation in Rome, Bishop Kelly was transferred from Richmond to the Diocese of Waterford, Lismore, in Ireland. The Virginia See was returned to the administration of Archbishop Marechal in Baltimore. On February 22, 1822 a Bull appointed

⁵Saint Mary's Centennial Program, 1858-1959, 14; and Reverend Peter Guilday, The Catholic Church in Virginia, 1815-1822, United States Catholic Historical Society Monograph Series VIII (New York: The United States Catholic Historical Society, 1924), 154. Richmond was selected as Catholic See for Virginia because it was the capitol of the state. However, there were but few Catholics in this city, and these were so poor that they could scarcely support one priest. Norfolk was the second largest city but it had a much larger Catholic population (a mixture of French and Irish immigrants) and was able to support two priests.

⁶Guilday, 154-156. The difficulties in the church seem to have developed when one faction of the church wanted to make the Roman Catholic Church more republican by electing their pastors and having the trustees of the church appointed by the church membership. These same trustees would have control of the monies of the church. The other faction left total control in the hands of the church.

Archbishop Marechal as the Administrator of Virginia. In June 1822, Dr. Patrick Kelly and Father James Walsh left Norfolk for Ireland.⁷

The See in Richmond remained vacant until March 21, 1841, when Father Richard Whelan was consecrated as the second Bishop of Richmond. During the intervening years, between 1822 and 1831, a series of priests held posts in Norfolk. About 1831 a Father F. von Horsigh built a new small brick church on the site of the old wooden structure.⁸ No records survive indicating the appearance of this church. It is known only that it faced Holt Street and the old wooden church was oriented with its door opening onto "Chappell" Street.⁹

Father A. L. Hetzelberger, Father von Horsigh's successor, arrived in 1833. Since the Catholic congregation had grown, it was necessary to build a larger church. A classical Greek design was chosen this time and erected on the same general site as the two previous churches (map 2).¹⁰ The new church (figure 1) was:

96 feet long and 50 feet wide, and of the Grecian Doric order of architecture, with a mitered recess for the altar, a colonnade

⁷Ibid., 153, 156; Father Joseph Magri, The Catholic Church in the City and Diocese of Richmond, 45. "Catholic Church Records" in Guide to Church Records (Richmond, VA: Archives and Records Division of the Virginia State Library, 1981), 65-66.

⁸No records survive with information on what happened to the wooden church, but if Father Lacy found the church building beginning to decay in 1803, there is reason to assume that the next 27 years would probably have seen more decay.

⁹The spelling of this street name changed by the time the map of 1842 was drawn from Chappell Street to Chapel Street.

¹⁰"Dedication of the New Catholic Church," Norfolk (VA) Beacon, July 12, 1842.

Map 2. Copy of the Map of Norfolk, VA by Robin and Kelly, 1851. This map shows that the location of the 1842 Catholic Church (St. Patrick's) was constructed on what appears to be the same site as the 1802 "Roman Church." From the collections of the Sargent Room, Kirn Memorial Library, Norfolk, VA.

Figure 1. St. Patrick's Catholic Church. It is seen here as the parish hall which it became after the fire of 1856 and its subsequent rebuilding which was completed in 1858. From Saint Mary's Parish Centennial Book, 1858-1958.



and vestibule in front, with three ascents, or esplanades, formed by granite steps. The church and its adornments are the work entirely of Norfolk mechanics: William Callis, architect and carpenter; William Denby, bricklayer; Robert Dalrymple, stone cutter; John W. Hall, plasterer; Frs. Emerick, tinner; B. W. Gatch, painter; J. J. Camp, blacksmith; Lewis Salusbury, cabinet maker; August A. Lapelouse, upholsterer.¹¹

On July 10, 1842, the Right Reverend Richard B. Whelan, second Bishop of Richmond, dedicated the new church to St. Patrick. Two years prior to the building of St. Patrick's, prominent architect Thomas U. Walter (1804-87) was in Norfolk supervising the construction of his design for the Norfolk Academy (1840). Based on the Temple of Theseus in Athens, his design for the academy and the one for the new St. Patrick's were strikingly similar. No documentation intimates that Walter loaned his design plans of the Academy to William Callis (no dates available), architect for St. Patrick's or that Walter was consulted during the building of St. Patrick's. It is possible, since Walter was so well known, that Callis liked what he saw in the Academy structure and copied it. He could also have chosen a very similar style from architectural pattern books that would have been available to him. It would be extremely difficult to investigate this hypothesis further, since the plans for St. Patrick's have disappeared and the structure was leveled in 1977.¹²

¹¹Ibid.

¹²William Callis was also the architect for the Cumberland Street Church built in 1848 for the Methodists. Though smaller than either Norfolk Academy or St. Patrick's, it was very similar in design--following the Grecian Classical lines with Doric columns and ascending esplanades.

According to the American Architect (June 15, 1878) as reprinted in Harvard College Library and David R. Godine, H. H. Richardson and His Office: A Centennial of His Move to Boston, 1874 (Boston, MA: Harvard

Father Matthew O'Keefe, on loan from the archdiocese in Baltimore, arrived in 1852 to take over the duties as parish priest from Father Hetzelberger. In 1855 Father O'Keefe, with the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent DePaul, worked tirelessly with the sick and the dying in the Yellow Fever epidemic. After more than four months, the epidemic finally subsided, but the new Catholic cemetery which Father O'Keefe had recently purchased for the parish had a population that was almost as large as the congregation of St. Patrick's.¹³

Father O'Keefe's selfless service during the epidemic was not forgotten by his Protestant neighbors when another calamity struck the parish. On December 8, 1858, a spectacular fire gutted the interior of St. Patrick's Church, and though only three walls remained standing, some furniture was saved. Insurance coverage on the church was \$10,000 with another \$1,500 for the organ; however, the underwriters estimated the loss to be \$120,000. Official documents on the fire list the cause to be unknown, but there was speculation that it might have been arson.¹⁴

Black retainers of Catholic parishioners worshipped at St.

College Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, 1974), 14:

"In common usage the architect retained his originals [architectural plans], but would rarely refuse to provide tracings where records were necessary for the location of structural supports, mechanical equipment, and drainage lines. Once the building was erected, the architect expected his drawings to be returned, so that they could not be used without recognizing his rights to the original concept."

¹³St. Mary's Centennial Program, 1858-1958, 15.

¹⁴Ibid., 16.

Patrick's. Father O'Keefe had been approached to have segregated services; but he refused¹⁵. As a result, parishioners had been harassed by small gangs, thus obliging Father O'Keefe to request and receive police surveillance during church services. The situation seemed to be abating when the fire occurred. No evidence could be found to prove that either segregationists or members of the "Know-Nothing" political party were responsible for the fire, but rumors persisted.¹⁶

Faced with rebuilding his church, yet having but limited funds available, Father O'Keefe purportedly:

turned to his compatriots in New York. There he began a preaching tour collecting money for a new church. During this same period Norfolk Catholics started a popular subscription enlisting the aid of parishioners and Protestants.¹⁷

Within the next two years, old St. Patrick's was rebuilt to serve as a

¹⁵The definition of segregated in this context meant that Father O'Keefe would not hold a special service for Blacks only. They would worship at the same service as the rest of the Catholic members, however the retainers sat in a special section of the church during the worship service. It should not be construed as being an integrated service.

¹⁶Father Gabriel T. Maioriello, "Immigration of Catholics Causes Anti-Catholicism," Catholic Virginian, March 7, 1952. The rumors that circulated regarding the cause of the fire were not without foundation for the "Know-Nothing" political party was responsible for Catholic church, convent and seminary fires in New England and the Midwest. Five states in the Northeast had just voted members of this party into gubernatorial and other state-level positions. According to this article, anti-Catholicism was one of the tenets of this party. The party was active in Virginia and had selected a strong candidate by the name of Flournoy to run for governor against the Democratic candidate, Wise. Also see James Henry Bailey, A History of the Diocese of Richmond: The Formative Years (Richmond, VA: Diocese of Richmond, 1956), 121-122.

¹⁷Bailey, 122-123 and Father Gabriel T. Maioriello, "New York Catholics Helped Build St. Mary's Norfolk," Catholic Virginian, March 14, 1952.

parish hall, and a new church was erected adjacent to it, but now the orientation of the structure was toward Chapel Street. By a Papal Edict of December 8, 1854, the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception became Catholic dogma. When Norfolk's new Catholic church was dedicated on October 3, 1858 by the Right Reverend John McGill, third Bishop of Richmond, it became one of the first churches to be called St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception. The architect for St. Mary's will be discussed in the next chapter.

The new church cost \$65,000, which put the congregation deeply in debt, so for the next sixteen years Father O'Keefe was absorbed with reducing this huge deficit. He generously chose not to draw a salary during this period, turning it back into the building fund and "frequently made 'begging trips' to northern cities to solicit funds for his church."¹⁸

In 1887 Father O'Keefe was recalled by the Archdiocese of Baltimore and reassigned to Towson, Maryland, a small town just north of Baltimore. He was succeeded in Norfolk by Father John J. Doherty, who like O'Keefe and the late Right Reverend Patrick Kelly, first Bishop of Richmond, had been born in Waterford, Ireland. Under Father Doherty's administration, the last vestige of debt was cleared from parish accounts. On December 9, 1900, St. Mary's was consecrated by the Right Reverend Augustine Van DeVyver, sixth Bishop of Richmond. Father Doherty died in 1918, but his tenure at St. Mary's was distinguished by growth and expansion of the church. Under his guidance, a rectory was

¹⁸St. Mary's Centennial Program, 1858-1958, 16; Tucker, 78.

built in 1894 next door to the church and two mission parishes were established: Sacred Heart Chapel in 1894 and St. Francis de Sales in 1905.¹⁹

Monsignor James T. O'Farrell replaced Father Doherty; then poor health forced Monsignor O'Farrell to resign from the post in 1924. When Father Edward A. Brosnan arrived, he found that his main charge was to ready the church for her diamond jubilee. This necessitated major restoration of the church costing \$60,000; but fund raising was successful, new Gothic style electrical fixtures were installed, pews were painted, a new marble floor was laid in the sanctuary, and the exterior was restuccoed.²⁰

In 1958, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception celebrated its one-hundredth birthday. Since then, many things have happened to the church complex and to the parishioners. In 1961, the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority demolished St. Joseph's Catholic Church, which had been located in the 500 block of East Freemason Street. By direction of the Bishop of Richmond, the congregation of St. Joseph's became the new congregation of St. Mary's Church and the members of St. Mary's were reassigned to other parishes.

¹⁹St. Francis de Sales became Blessed Sacrament in 1921 and Sacred Heart Chapel became a church in 1925.

²⁰St. Mary's Centennial Program, 1858-1958, 18. During this renovation, it is probable that the exterior of the Gothic Revival rectory was stuccoed. A postcard dated 1910 shows a brick rectory, but later photographs show it with the same type of exterior as the church. Though no documentation exists, the installation of the electrical fixtures may have marked the beginning of electric lighting in the church.

One hundred and seventy years earlier in what is now St. Mary's parish, a parish was begun by those seeking religious freedom to worship how and where they wanted. The current parishioners could practice Catholicism, but now their freedom to choose where to do so was threatened.

The prospective shift had an upsetting effect on St. Mary's long-time white parishioners. Their argument was not with the fact that St. Joseph's congregation, which is Negro, would be moving to the church, but that they (the present St. Mary's congregation) would have to sever their ties with a church rich in tradition.²¹

St. Mary's eventually became a predominantly black Catholic church, drawing its congregation from the poorer areas of downtown Norfolk.²² The middle income families had been reassigned to the suburban Catholic church nearest to their home.

The parish hall, or "Victory Hall" as it was named during World War I, was torn down in 1977 to make way for a larger parish elementary school. In 1978, St. Mary's became a Virginia Historic Landmark, and it was placed on the National Register of Historical Places in 1979. The rectory was gutted by fire in 1980 and subsequently torn down.

Since the centennial celebration, small repairs had been made on the church, but it became very apparent in 1983 when a big leak and several smaller leaks were discovered in the roof that major restoration

²¹Sandusky Curtis, "Tradition-Rich St. Mary's Taken Over by St. Joseph's," Norfolk (VA) Ledger-Dispatch, May 2, 1961. "St. Joseph's Moving to St. Mary's," Portsmouth (VA) Journal and Guide, May 20, 1961. This was not an integration problem, since black parishioners at St. Mary's could be traced back to as early as 1842.

²²In 1971, St. Mary's membership was 80% black; in 1976, it was 93% black.

on the church structure was necessary if the church was to remain standing and safe for worship services. The interior painted surfaces were faded and crumbling, the roof leaked badly, much of the lead in the stained glass windows needed to be repaired or replaced. An August 1983 article in the Ledger Star reported that St. Mary's faced \$200,000 worth of repairs.²³ It soon became obvious that this was just a beginning: a 1984 estimate brought the cost of thorough repairs to over one million dollars. A list of priorities for repairs was researched and established. Estimates were then solicited and a projected work schedule was drawn up with the roof repair being the most urgent, and then the restoration of the frames and the lead that hold the stained glass in place. The removal of two confessional additions was also high on the list. Their deletion would return the floor plan to its original configuration and would restore the stained glass windows that were originally at this location. Before any of this work could begin, a new engineering study of the structure had to be done, because the original blueprints were lost, and no one knew who the architect for St. Mary's had been. Father Thomas Quinlan, under the Bishop's direction, ordered new plans from the architectural firm of Washington Associates of Norfolk, Virginia.

²³Lisa Ellis, "St. Mary's Faces \$200,000 Repairs," Norfolk (VA) Ledger-Star, August 24, 1983.

CHAPTER 3

ARCHITECTURE OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH

According to a traditional story, that noted authority on Gothic architecture, Ralph Adams Cram, visited the Norfolk, Virginia area in the early 1900's. He was reported to have studied the architecture of St. Mary's closely and declared that the church was the finest antebellum Gothic church he had seen in the South.¹ The importance of this statement becomes more apparent after reading his essays "On the Contemporary Architecture of the Catholic Church," and The Gothic Quest in which he chastises ecclesiastical architecture (particularly that of the Catholic church) as being at a:

lower ebb in America than anywhere else in the world. Her architecture and her art are represented by the most inartistic and unpardonable structures that rise as insults to God and hindrances to spiritual progress.²

His caustic statements do not spare architects of whom he noted that few were Roman Catholic, but this "shouldn't bar the Church from availing herself of using the talents of the 'unbeliever'."³ He must have been

¹Saint Mary's Centennial Program, 1858-1958 and George H. Tucker, Norfolk Highlights, 1584-1881, 78.

²Ralph Adams Cram, in "On the Contemporary Architecture of the Catholic Church," Catholic World 58 (1894): 645; and in The Gothic Quest (New York: The Baker and Taylor Co., 1907), 257.

³Cram, "On the Contemporary Architecture of the Catholic Church," 654.

surprised to see that St. Mary's was not an "ugly red brick church."⁴ He would also have been amazed if he had known the identity of the architect.

The original architectural drawings for St. Mary's have never been found, and no one in Norfolk apparently recorded the designer's name; the identity of the architect of St. Mary's has long been a mystery. There has been speculation over the years that:

the architect was the same as the one who built St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, but that Father O'Keefe changed the plans somewhat to resemble his old parish church of St. John's in Waterford, Ireland, Father O'Keefe's home town.⁵

Father O'Keefe did go to New York to ask for the assistance of his Irish compatriots to help him rebuild his church in Norfolk. His speaking tour there must have been successful because when the funds raised from it were added to the subscriptions being supported by the Norfolk parishioners the total came to \$12,000, enough to allow construction to begin on the new church. However, the plans for the church were not those of his old parish church in Ireland. A letter from South Eastern Regional Tourism Organisation Ltd. in Waterford, Ireland states that at the time (before 1852) Father O'Keefe lived in Ireland the "church of St. John's" was a little thatched chapel or Mass House. No trace of the chapel remains. There was also a ruined priory of St. John opposite the site of the old chapel and remains still do exist of this. However,

⁴Francis W. Kervick, Patrick Charles Keely, Architect, A Record of His Life and Work (South Bend, IN: Privately published, 1953), 1.

⁵Maioriello, "New York Catholics Helped Build St. Mary's, Norfolk," 3 and Bailey, 123.

this was a priory in medieval times and ceased with the dissolution of the monasteries in the mid-1500's. There is a present church of St. John's, but it was built or was in the process of being built at the time Father O'Keefe was on his way to America in 1852.⁶ At the 75th Anniversary celebration of St. Mary's, Father E. A. Brosnan, then the pastor, said that there was no available data as to the identity of the contractors who erected St. Mary's but he was of the opinion that they were from New York.⁷

There is no documentation that connects the architect or the style of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York with St. Mary's. There are, however, specific statements in newspaper interviews that name the architect for St. Mary's. When Father O'Keefe left St. Mary's in 1886, he was reassigned to a parish in Towson, Maryland. When he arrived, he found his new parish also in need of a new church building. The cornerstone for this Towson church was laid on December 8, 1897. Father O'Keefe was interviewed for an article announcing this ceremony which appeared in the Maryland Journal on December 11, 1897.

The Church when completed will be an exact counterpart of the church erected by Father O'Keefe in Norfolk, Va, before he came to Towson. It will be Gothic in design, 73 by 153 feet in size, and is being built of Texas (Baltimore County) marble trimmed in brownstone. The architects are Messrs. Keeley [sic] and Houghton of Brooklyn, N.Y. who also furnished the plans for the church in Norfolk. The work was under the direction of Isaac

⁶Patrick Mackey, South Eastern Regional Tourism Organisation Ltd., Merchant's Quay, Waterford, Ireland to Judith L. Smith, August 20, 1985.

⁷Harry P. Moore, "Norfolk Mother Church Observes 75th Anniversary," Norfolk (VA) Landmark, December 3, 1933.

Laren and Father O'Keefe.⁸

How, or if, Father O'Keefe actually met Catholic architect Patrick Charles Keely is not known. An educated guess would be that during one of O'Keefe's "begging" trips to New York for funds for his projected new church, he would have been in contact with many of his Irish friends and clergy. The name and reputation of Keely must have been discussed. Keely, a native of Kilkenny, Ireland, had built the "first Gothic church in the diocese of New York which was completed in May of 1848."⁹ By 1856, Keely had designed the plans for more than twenty Catholic structures which included cathedrals, parish churches, and institutional buildings for religious orders that can be documented. However, other sources indicate that by 1859 Keely had built 100 churches.¹⁰ Of importance is that Keely had become very successful in a short time, and Irish priests "did not forget their fellow countryman who was generally the only celebrated Irish architect within their knowledge."¹¹ Keely

⁸"Corner Stone of the Church of the Immaculate Conception Laid," Maryland Journal (December 11, 1897), 3; "Church of the Immaculate," Maryland Journal (September 24, 1904), 3; and "A Portion of the Old Baltimore Custom House in Towson," Maryland Journal (April 13, 1901), 3. There is no record of Houghton's first name.

⁹Williamsburgh (NY) Gazette (March 11, 1848) as quoted in Reverend Walter Albert Daly, "Patrick Charles Keely: Architect and Church Builder," (M. A. essay, Catholic University of America, 1934), 5.

¹⁰John R. G. Hassard, Life of the Most Reverend John Hughes, First Archbishop of New York (1866), 397, as quoted in Richard J. Purcell, "P. C. Keely: Builder of Churches in the United States." Records of the American Catholic Historical Society 54 (1943), 211 and Kervick, 34.

¹¹Purcell, 212.

was also building churches in the height of the Know-Nothing persecutions. Since the cause of the fire at St. Patrick's in Norfolk was suspect, Keely's ear would have been sympathetic to pleas for assistance from the Norfolk priest.

Exactly when and how O'Keefe received either formal plans or tracings of a specific floor plan for the Norfolk church from Keely is not known, but O'Keefe credits Keely as being the architect first for St. Mary's in Norfolk and then for the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Towson, Maryland. It is doubtful that he would have specifically mentioned the full name of Messrs. Keely and Houghton if their plans had not been involved in the actual construction.

Father O'Keefe either carried the architectural plans for St. Mary's with him when he moved from Norfolk to Towson or he requested that they be sent to him when he realized that the parish in Towson also needed a new church building. Since an active architect such as Keely found effective control of undertakings geographically scattered to be very difficult, it would have been beneficial for him to instruct either the priest or a local contractor on the correct use of Keely plans. This was probably the situation in Norfolk as it was stated to be in Towson with a Mr. Larsen and Father O'Keefe being designated as the local directors of the construction project.¹² In 1857-58, while St.

¹²"Corner Stone of the Church of the Immaculate Conception Laid," Maryland Journal, 3 and Maioriello, "New York Catholics Helped Build St. Mary's, Norfolk." The latter article also mentions that Irish laborers at the local (Norfolk) gas works supplied some of the labor in building St. Mary's in lieu of a monetary contribution. As to who was the local contractor in building St. Mary's, no name has been discovered. It could have been William Callis again, who was still around and had worked with the congregation before.

Mary's was under construction, Patrick C. Keely had eight ecclesiastical structures in various stages of completion which included, inter alia, buildings in Somerset, Ohio; Roxbury, Massachusetts; Memphis, Tennessee; Detroit, Michigan; Rochester, New York; and Boston, Massachusetts. He had proven that he could carry out numerous projects simultaneously, even if he could not personally supervise each job. His partner was his son-in-law whose last name was Houghton. Two of Keely's sons, Charles and James, were also associated with, but not partners in, their father's architectural firm; however, there is no documentation of a visit by any of these gentlemen to the Norfolk area.

Since neither the original plans for St. Mary's in Norfolk nor those for Immaculate Conception in Towson have ever been found, a comparison can only be done by using current floor plans drawn up when each building was to undergo modification and repairs (figures 2, 3 and 4).¹³ There are specific differences in actual size: St. Mary's is 67 feet wide and 143 feet long while Immaculate Conception is six feet wider and ten feet longer. Immaculate Conception was designed to have side confessionals and St. Mary's side confessionals were added some time after 1933. The exterior appearance differences are most pronounced in the three front entrances for Immaculate Conception and a 200-foot bell tower at the northwest corner housing the staircase to the choir loft

¹³In figure 2, the drawing shows a large platform or stage in front of the high altar railing in St. Mary's. This was an addition in the late 1960's to conform to Vatican II's directorate on the new celebration of the Mass. Figure 3 shows the Vatican II before and after views of Immaculate Conception. Prior to that date, pews went down on either side of the center aisle to the first column cluster and the confronting pews were not there as seen in figure 4.

Figure 2. Interior design of St.Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church in Norfolk, VA, 1984. Drawing from Washington Associates, Architects, 142 West York Street, Norfolk, VA.

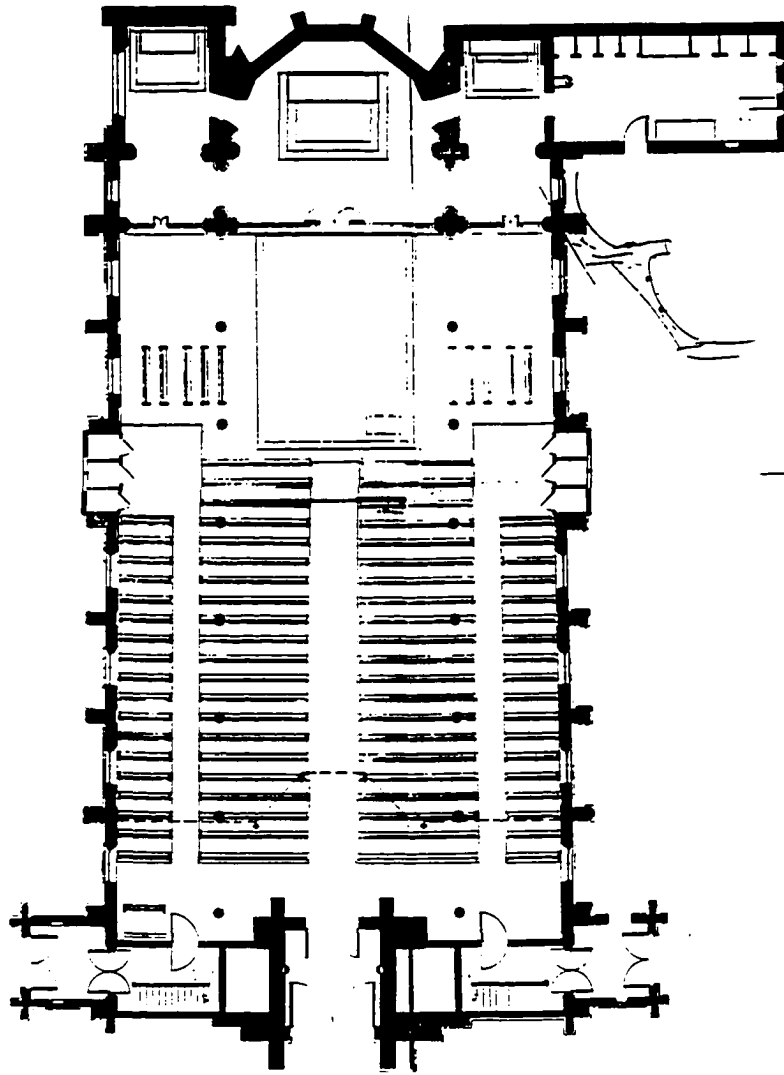
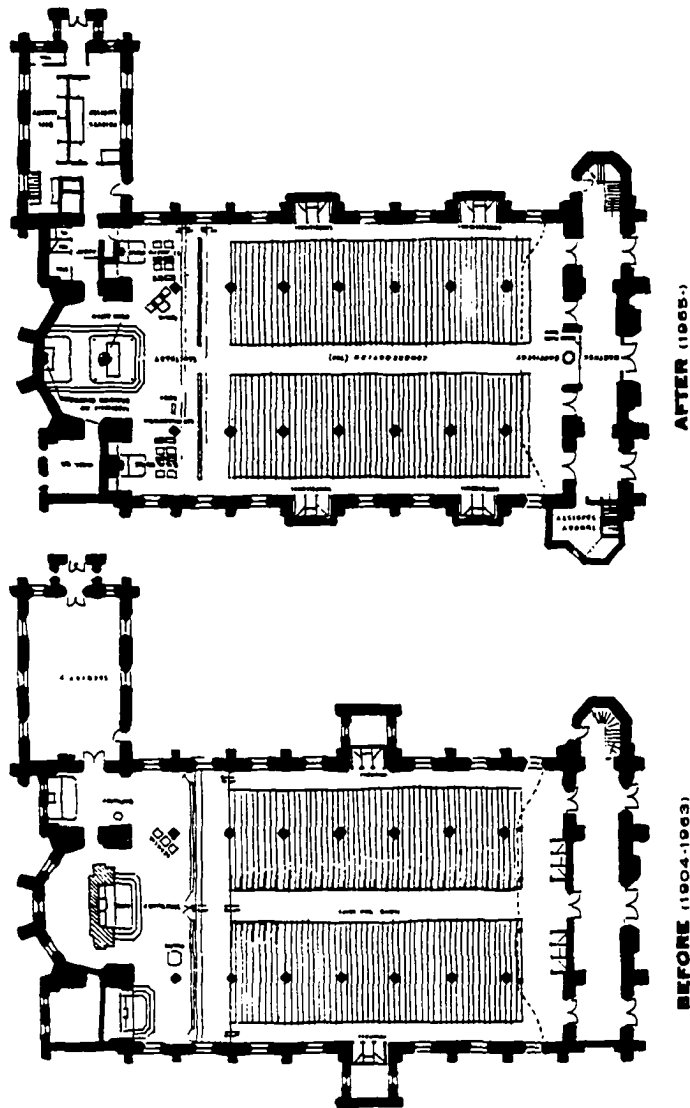


Figure 3. Interior Floor plans of Church of the Immaculate Conception,
Towson, MD, 1964. Gaudreau Architects, Baltimore, MD.



ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY CLEMENT D. EDWARDS, JR.

AFTER (1965-)

BEFORE (1904-1963)

Figure 4. Interior of St.Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church as it appeared in a photograph in the Norfolk (VA) Landmark, December 3, 1933.



MAGNIFICENT INTERIOR OF ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

while St. Mary's has a single front entrance and two side entrances that open to the interior stair cases to the choir loft and a handsome clock bell tower that reaches a height of 240 feet above the ground (figures 5 and 6). The builders of Immaculate Conception used Baltimore County marble trimmed in brownstone. Norfolk has few stone quarries, and importing stone would have been more expensive; however, bricks were produced in the area. This, then, was the "native" material for the Norfolk church with stuccoing over the brick, similar to St. Mary's neighbor, Freemason Street Baptist Church, which was built in the Gothic style in 1848 by Thomas U. Walter.¹⁴ When compared, the apsidal areas of both St. Mary's and Immaculate Conception are very similar, even to the sacristy, with the Immaculate sacristy being one yard longer at 40 feet. Each church has nine clerestory windows on each side, five apse windows and buttresses. Father O'Keefe wanted the roofs of his churches to receive decoration: in Norfolk, geometrically patterned rosettes are evenly spaced on its pitched sides; in Towson, the Greek letters IHS are emblazoned on either side of the roof pitch. Interior details appear to be different, but both churches have 9 bays, 14 stone columns, 2

¹⁴It is my belief that white stucco covering over the brick was the original exterior of St. Mary's because of a comment made by an old parishioner at the 75th Anniversary, who was also present at the Golden Anniversary. He mentioned how the restoration of the stucco "closely resembled the St. Mary's of the early days." John E. Milan, ed., From the Golden to the Diamond: A History of St. Mary's Parish from December 1908 to December 1933 with a Few Parochial Personalities (Norfolk, VA: Privately published, n.d.) I also feel that it would have been white stucco, not the current color of beige. Custom colors for paint were expensive in the 19th century also. An added expense such as this would not have been one Father O'Keefe would specifically have sought considering the fact that he took no salary for his services at St. Mary's from 1857 until he left in 1887. He designated his salary to reduce the debt of the new church building.

Figure 5. Exterior design of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception
Roman Catholic Church in Norfolk, VA, 1984. Drawing from Washington
Associates, Architects, 142 West York Street, Norfolk, VA.

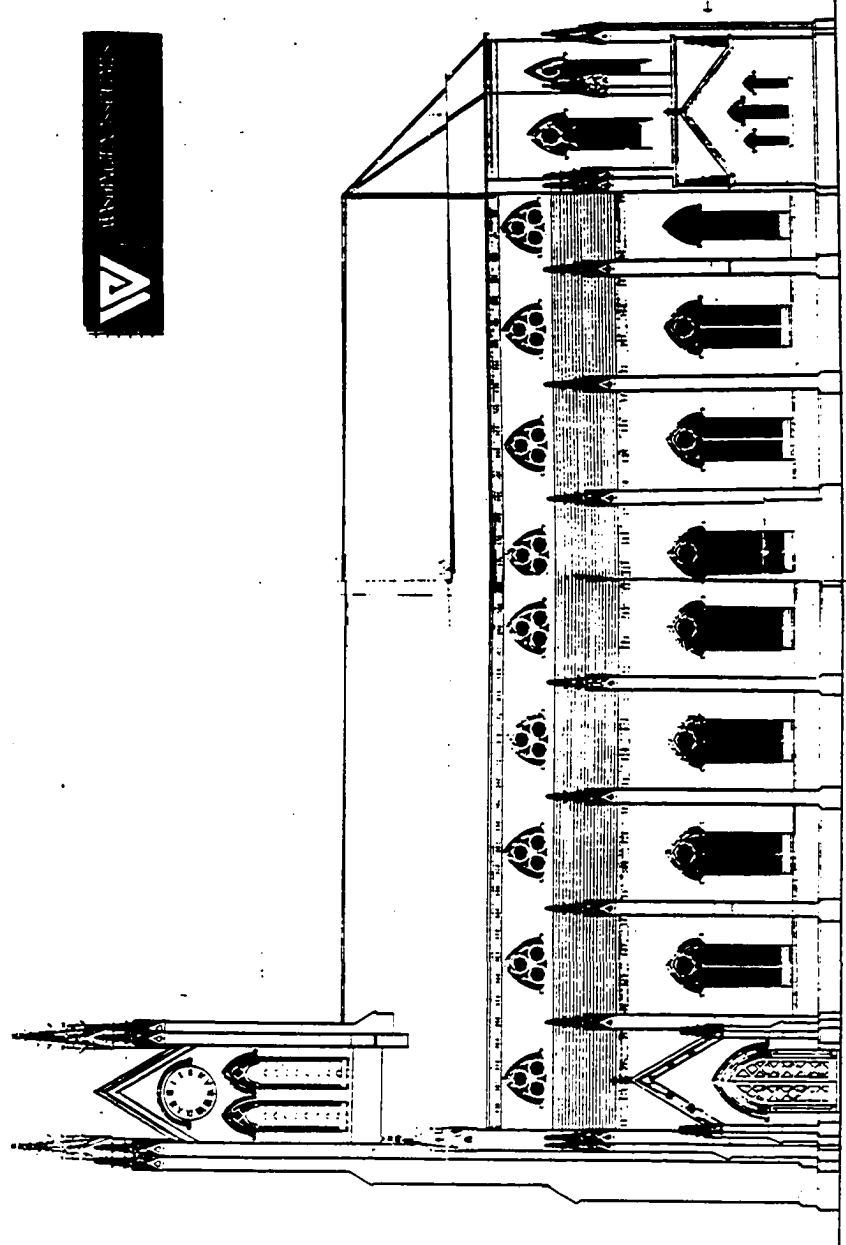
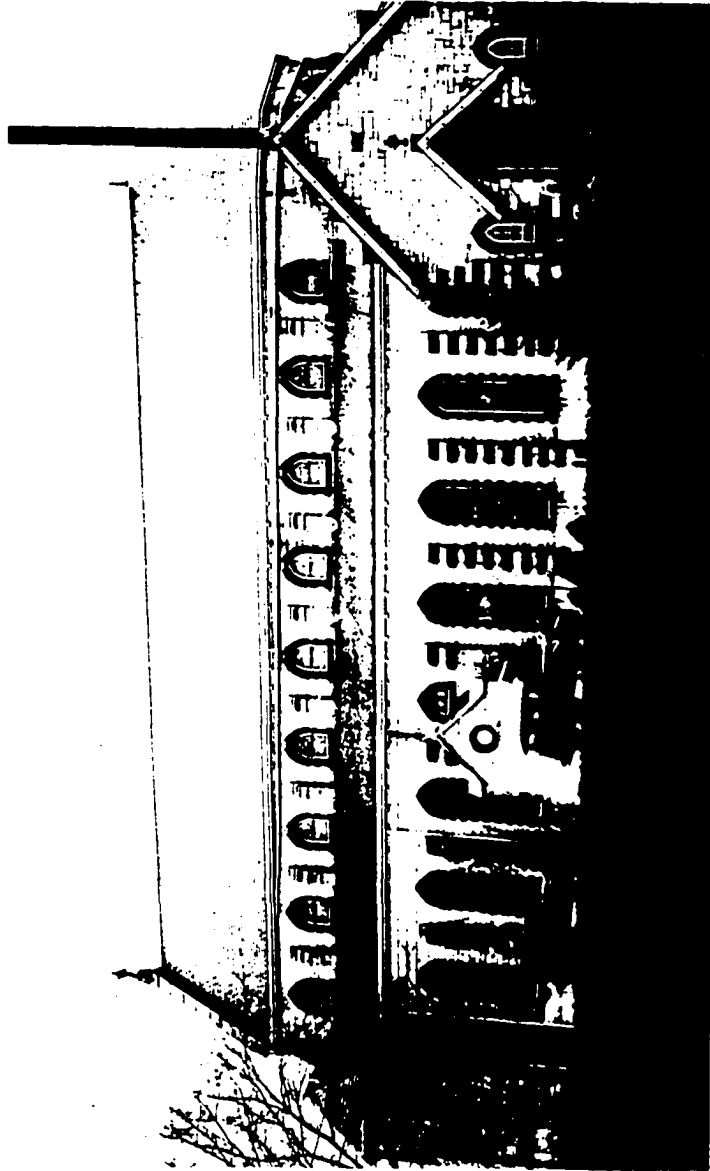


Figure 6. Exterior of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Towson,
MD, December 1904. From The Church of the Immaculate Conception:
Centennial Book, 1883-1983.



recessed side chapels, and the main altars were of central interest before Vatican II. It is difficult to know how to compare the designs for the individual choir lofts since no picture of Immaculate Conception's original loft was available. Originally, both apses had stained glass windows; today, only St. Mary's windows remain.

Patrick C. Keely's designs had architectural elements that were common to many of his churches. These were simple floor plans, recessed side chapels so that the high altar received centralized attention, three aisles, stone interior columns, groined vaults, spandrels, and carving on the ribs of the vaults which in some cases ended with ornate bosses. The use of local stone and stone quarries did vary Immaculate Conception's exterior appearance. Keely also liked to use towers for bells, clocks, or aesthetic balance and buttresses for decoration. While St. Mary's and Immaculate Conception have differences in appearances, the basic, simple floor plans of each are the same. Only speculation can be made as to why there was a change in the front entrances. There evidently was a plan for a spire for Immaculate Conception, because Cardinal Gibbons expressed the hope at the dedication ceremony of September 8, 1904 that "Father O'Keefe would live to see the grounds beautified and a tower lifting its head above the roof."¹⁵ Eventually, in 1963, a small tower was placed at the crossing.

Influences on Keely and his life's work began in Ireland under the tutelage of his father who was also an architect. During the period of his education, he could have been exposed to A. W. Pugin's early works

¹⁵Maryland Journal, September 24, 1904, 3.

in Ireland at the College of St. Peter in Wexford in 1838-40 or the church at Gorey in Wexford in 1839-42.¹⁶ Though books were expensive, Keely could have seen and read Pugin's book Examples of Gothic Architecture: Selected from Various Ancient Edifices in England. There is no evidence that Keely worked or studied under Pugin, but because Keely was a staunch Catholic he would have known of the Oxford movement begun in 1833 and Pugin's role in it and in the revival of Gothic architecture. The Catholic church believed that Gothic architecture depicted all that was good in life and that it was the right style for churches. Not only was Gothic superior to anything built in the modern period, but Gothic society outshone industrial society in its humanity to its fellow man and in its faith. Bringing back the Gothic style would bring back Gothic ideals; therefore, its architecture must be archaeologically correct in its style and decoration and display its liturgical fitness, i.e., the high altar as a focal point.¹⁷

After Keely came to New York in 1842, he was given the opportunity to express his ideals and ideas in church architecture. His first major commission was in 1847 for a church in Williamsburgh, New York, Saints Peter and Paul. It was the first Gothic church in the Diocese of New York.¹⁸ From this beginning until failing health in 1894 prevented him

¹⁶Kervick, 5.

¹⁷Spiro Kostof, A History of Architecture Settings and Rituals, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), Part III, "The Search for Self," Chapter 23, 589 and Agnes Addison, Romanticism and the Gothic Revival (New York: Gordian Press, Inc., 1967), 147.

¹⁸Daly, 5.

from being so active, Keely was purported to have designed or built almost six hundred churches. The American Architect as cited in Kervick reported that Keely was reputed to have had as many as fifty plans for churches in his office at one time.¹⁹ Keely's deeply religious character, conservatism and uncompromising honesty in the business world made him a sought-after church designer. His plans were often in the hands of less-experienced or less-talented construction supervisors with diverse budgets, which brought on variations to Keely's original designs.

The liturgy in the Catholic Church demanded certain things of its architecture, such as the "mystical separation" of the high altar from the rest of the church, side chapels for special prayers, spires pointing to heaven, stained glass windows as teaching aids or reminders of virtues to be sought by parishioners. The architect for a Catholic church was limited in freedom of expression. Final approval for designs was in the hands of the church hierarchy, not the individual congregations. Keely's designs met the requirements of the church; therefore, Father O'Keefe was fortunate in being able to avoid delays in construction due to bureaucratic disapproval of one or another specific element of design. O'Keefe's only hindrances would be the adaptability of the plans to fit the site and following Keely's directions to achieve the

¹⁹Kervick, 22. The total number of churches that Keely is supposed to have planned varies between 500 and 600 depending on which author is read: Daly, Kervick, Dorsey or Purcell. However, Robert T. Murphy in "Patrick Charles Keely" in Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architecture, ed. Adolf K. Placzek, (London: Collier MacMillan Publishers, 1982), 2: 556, found explicit documentation for 150 Keely churches. This total will change as more research is done. This thesis adds two more to the list.

style dictated by the plans. When the structure was completed, following Keely's dictates, it would be appropriate for a Catholic congregation.

In 1887, Father O'Keefe returned to his home diocese of Baltimore. He left behind a beautiful new Gothic church, whose interior was almost complete, and a new cemetery. Because of the sacrifices of Father O'Keefe and his grateful congregation, the building debt would be retired by 1900, and St. Mary's would become one of the very few consecrated churches in the diocese.

CHAPTER 4
ART OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH

The exterior of St. Mary's suggests a Gothic interior; though in practice this was not always the case in all Gothic style churches. Many times the denomination housed in the church dictated how the interior would look, as in the case of Freemason Street Baptist Church in Norfolk. The exterior style of Freemason is very similar to St. Mary's, but the Baptists preferred a rather austere interior, unadorned and in this case--devoid of color, as in the windows. St. Mary's followed the dictates of the Catholic church, as interpreted by Keely and Pugin, that the interior of a Gothic Revival church should be archaeologically correct, which was to help insure the return of the lost aura of the church. This included everything from the high altar, to the mouldings, to the windows.

It is not known what instructions were given to Father O'Keefe as to how the interior of St. Mary's was to be decorated, but it is probably safe to assume that he visited churches in Brooklyn and in New York City, churches designed by Keely, and perhaps even Renwick's St. Patrick's Cathedral. He would have been made aware that the interior of the new church should conform to the liturgy of the Church.

The main altar was essential to any Catholic church. It was here that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the central point of Catholic

worship, was offered. St. Mary's main altar is highly polished, white, Italian Carrara marble inlaid with Brazilian onyx. To the top of the central spire, the height of the altar is 19 feet. It is 13 feet long with a carved figure of a lamb resting on a closed book in the centered medallion. This depiction of the lamb comes from the Book of the Apocalypse of the Lamb (Christ) that was slain, seated upon the Book of Life. It is the symbol of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (figure 7).¹

When St. Mary's was dedicated in 1858, Bishop McGill consecrated the altar. During the ceremony:

a small sealed metal box containing relics of at least two saints was enclosed within the altar. The relics in St. Mary's altar are of the holy martyrs, Pope St. Clement, the third successor to St. Peter and St. Clara. There is also a relic of the Blessed Virgin Mary.²

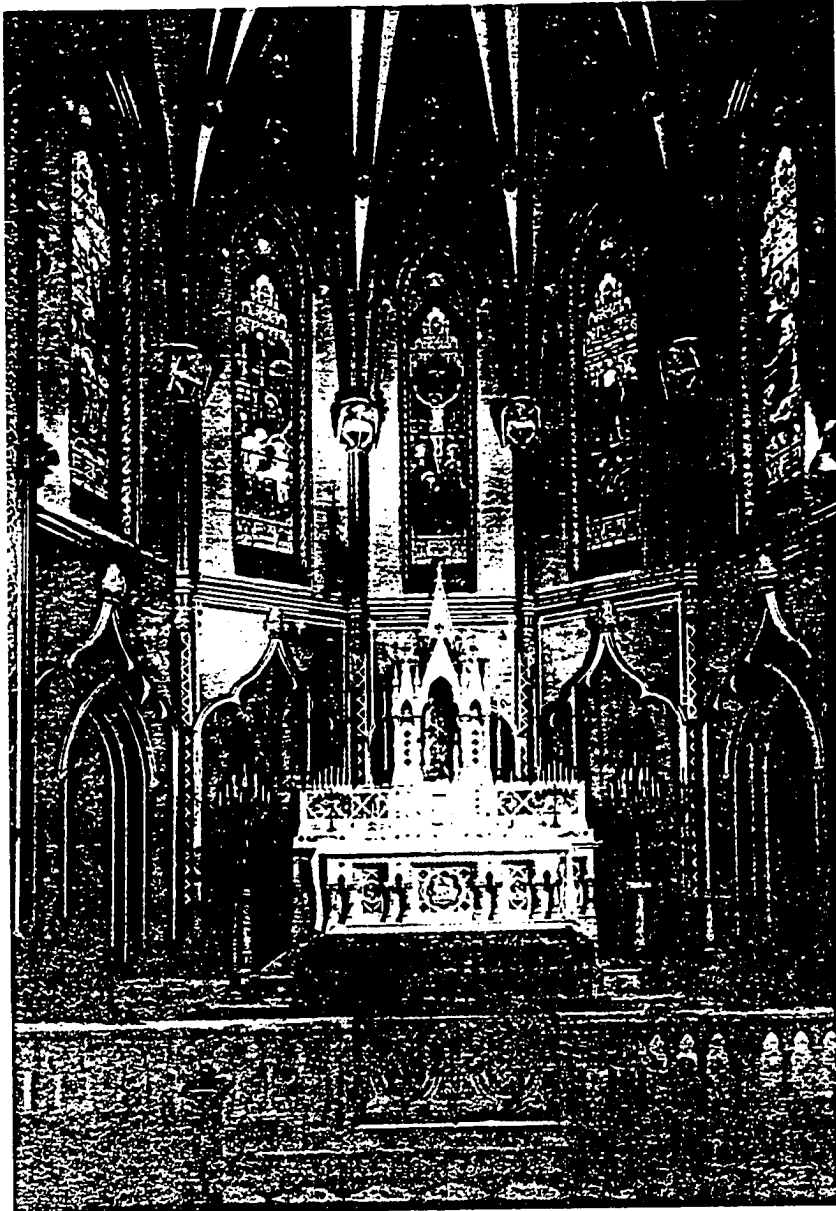
Pugin, and then Keely, made the high or main altar the central focus of the interior of the Gothic church. Before Vatican II, St. Mary's altar was one of the first things to be noticed upon entering the nave of the church. It is now more difficult to see this altar, because a large platform or stage has been placed in what was once the choir and an informal altar has been set up on this platform in compliance with Vatican II.

It is also difficult to see the beautiful mouldings done in gold gilt paint that outline two doorways and three wall panels in the apse. A vertical geometric design painted directly on the wall surface in green, gold, and red denotes the joining of each of the five apsidal

¹St. Mary's Centennial Program, 1858-1958, 25.

²Ibid.

Figure 7. Main Altar, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, Norfolk, VA. From The St. Mary's Centennial Program, 1858-1958.



MAIN ALTAR

walls (figure 8).³ The colors of these designs complement the colors of the stained glass windows in the apse, which are highlights in the church.

The St. Mary's Centennial Program states that the "first outstanding accomplishment of Monsignor O'Farrell's administration was the installing of the magnificent Munich stained glass windows over the sanctuary and in the walls of St. Mary's" (figures 9, 10, and 11).⁴ Monsignor O'Farrell arrived at St. Mary's in September 1918. Doubt is cast on an installation date of 1918 for the windows because World War I was not over until November of that year. The windows would have had to arrive in the United States prior to this country's entry into the World War in 1917. Further investigation and correspondence with the Franz Mayer Company of Munich, Germany, makers of these windows, and their United States representative, Nicholas Wagner of Brooklyn, New York, revealed that all the early files of Mayer and Company in Munich had been destroyed during bombing raids in World War II.⁵ However, Nicholas Wagner had early order books for the company's transactions in the United States which listed the person placing the order, where the order was to be sent, and what the order included. Copies of the pages from the order book show that Monsignor O'Farrell placed an order on

³This does not appear to be a true fresco. In areas where there the paint is peeling the design is not united with the wall, but rather is surface only.

⁴Ibid., 17.

⁵Franz Mayer and Company to Judith L. Smith, August 10, 1985, and Nicholas Wagner to Judith L. Smith, August 20, 1985.

Figure 8. Molding and wall juncture. Apse of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, Norfolk, VA. Photograph by Judith L. Smith.



Figure 9. St. Matthew and St. Mark, Julia and John Clark memorial windows designed by Franz Mayer and Company, Munich, West Germany. St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, 1983. Photograph by Judith L. Smith.



Figure 10. Sacred Heart and Immaculate Conception, Prince family memorial windows designed by Franz Mayer and Company, Munich, West Germany. St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, 1983. Photograph by Judith L. Smith.

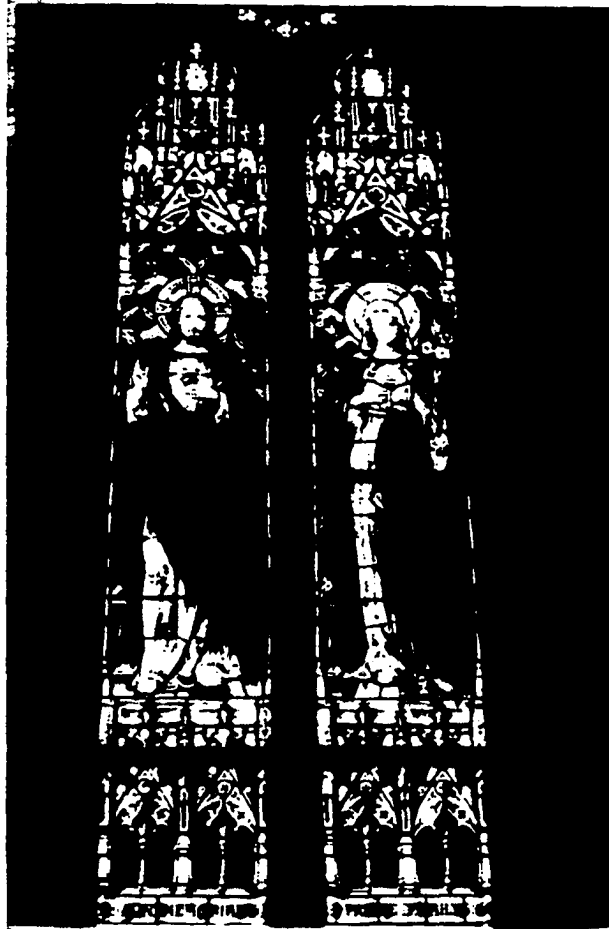


Figure 11. Kneeling Angels, Diggs family memorial windows designed by Franz Mayer and Company. St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, 1983. Photograph by Judith L. Smith.



October 8, 1923 for two one-light windows and 14 two-light windows for St. Mary's Church, Norfolk, Virginia. These windows were for the side aisles. The order for the apsidal windows was placed on March 30, 1925 by Monsignor O'Farrell's successor, Father E. A. Brosnan (figure 12).⁶

Nicholas Wagner's letter also answered two important questions as to who would have installed the windows, and in what physical shape were the windows in when they arrived in Norfolk; i.e., were they individual pieces of stained glass to be installed in lead and then placed in a window frame? He states:

all windows ever made by Mayer (for any place in the world) were always completely finished, ready for installation. There was an office here in New York, and it had a staff of three or four experienced glaziers who were sent out to set the windows and I would, therefore, assume that the installation was done by them.⁷

He further says that the cost of the windows was not entered in the order book, so there is no way, since the loss of the Munich records in World War II, to investigate this matter.

Three photographs of windows in St. Mary's are included to present a more enlightening picture of the Mayer style. The two-light kneeling angels window had its dedication panels reinstalled recently. They had been removed when the confessionals were added after 1933. The gilt moulding and the need for restoration is also apparent in this photograph. Two other examples are also included, since the background is dark, the richness of the color is more apparent and the need for wall

⁶Ibid.

⁷Nicholas Wagner to Judith L. Smith, August 20, 1985.

Figure 12. Reproduced copy of two orders in 1923 and 1925 for stained glass windows from St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church. Taken from the preserved order book of Franz Mayer and Company, Munich, West Germany. The order book is the property of Nicholas Wagner, Mayer Company representative, Brooklyn, NY.

2. *Thunbergia*

Thunbergia *Thunbergia*

5. *Thunbergia* *Thunbergia* *Thunbergia*

Thunbergia

2. *Thunbergia* *Thunbergia* *Thunbergia*

2. *Thunbergia* *Thunbergia* *Thunbergia*

1. *Thunbergia* *Thunbergia* *Thunbergia*

1. *Thunbergia* *Thunbergia* *Thunbergia*

2. *Thunbergia*

Thunbergia *Thunbergia*

2. *Thunbergia* *Thunbergia* *Thunbergia*

repainting does not detract from the beauty of the windows (figures 9, 10, and 11).⁸

The Mayer windows in St. Mary's follow the fifteenth and sixteenth century stained glass tradition of using intense blues and brilliant reds under the canopies as opposed to the French tradition of a pastel tint in the glass under the canopy. Germany had led the way in the development of dimensionality and spatial perspective in medieval glass, but revival stained glass did, in some cases, suffer from being rather flat and sterile in comparison with medieval glass with its flaws. Medieval glass enlivened designs by offering opportunities for the artist to practice his craft in making the best of imperfections.

One tradition that had its revival in nineteenth century stained glass, which also continued into the twentieth century, was the return to the system of making leads to bind together the separate pieces of glass. This binding performed the function of being the main outline of each window's subject as opposed to the rather flat eighteenth century pictorial style windows.⁹

The Mayer windows are a combination of both painting and outlining and are antique glass.

By the early 1870's, the Munich firm of Mayer and Company was doing enough business in England to justify opening an office in London. Soon after this, Mayer was exporting more glass to England than the favored Belgian artist Capronnier.¹⁰ Evidently, a similar situation must have occurred in the United States, since Mayer and Company opened

⁸The use of a magnifying glass adds dimensionality to the figures in the windows that is not readily apparent with the naked eye.

⁹Martin Harrison, Victorian Stained Glass (London: Barrie and Jenkins, Ltd., 1980), 15.

¹⁰Ibid., 25.

offices in Brooklyn, New York and in Chicago, Illinois.¹¹

Pugin felt that stained glass was so important that he persuaded John Hardman, a Birmingham, England metal worker, to open a workshop for the manufacture of stained glass. They attempted to adhere to the medieval ideals in this art form, which were to emulate the idea of the light passing through the stained glass as a parallel of the divine word entering into the soul of man and passing out again in good works. They also returned to the medieval techniques of using outline leading on the figures, employing bright, intense reds and blues, painting on faces and hands to show details, and painting also on the folds of draped fabric to give depth and dimensionality.¹²

Keely appreciated the techniques, the spirit, and the beauty of stained glass in completing the interior of his churches. Many descriptions of his churches make a special point to describe the windows therein.¹³ There is no record as to what St. Mary's had before the installation of the Mayer windows and there is no information indicating that either Monsignor O'Farrell or Father Brosnan received specific

¹¹Erne R. Frueh and Florence Frueh, Chicago Stained Glass (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1983), 110. The earliest Chicago stained glass window dates from 1902 and is in St. Michael's Redemption Church, a German congregation. Mayer's office continued in Chicago until 1939. Mayer still has a representative in New York, Nicholas Wagner of Brooklyn, New York.

¹²Stephen Adams, Decorative Stained Glass (London: Academy Editions, 1980), 38.

¹³Purcell, 216, 219; Kervick, 16; Daly, 11, 13, 17, and Edward G. Lilly, ed. and Clifford Legerton, compiler, Historical Churches of Charleston (Charleston, SC: Legerton and Co., 1966), 67, 73.

instructions on the purchase of the stained glass windows. Keely designed St. Patrick's in 1887 and the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in 1890; both churches are in Charleston, South Carolina. The description of each church specifically mentions that the stained glass windows were the work of Franz Mayer and Company. Unfortunately, there is no catalogue of Keely churches that lists who made the stained glass windows for these churches, so no association can be concretely established between Keely and Franz Mayer and Company. It is difficult to speculate as to the reason for the purchase of Mayer windows instead of those by an American designer of ecclesiastical windows, but more than likely it was because Mayer and Company was popular, available in religious supply houses after 1890, and Mayer made an attempt, however painterly, to emulate the style of the Middle Ages.

Though music in the early medieval church came primarily from the voices of the clergy singing various parts of the mass or the liturgy of the prayer cycles, later medieval clergy were assisted by musical instruments.¹⁴ After the Reformation, Protestant churches allowed the congregation to join the clergy in singing part of the religious services. Until Vatican II the communicants' participation in Catholic church services was very limited, and music was used to set the tone of the service or to highlight special moments of the mass. By the

¹⁴Emanuel Winternitz, Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art: Studies in Musical Iconology (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), 148n. Reference is made to a Hans Memling triptych (1480) decorating the organ of the church of the Benedictines in Nejera. There are more examples of musical instruments in medieval and earlier painting, but reference to organs, in situ, in churches in the Middle Ages, where they would have been used for services is rarer.

seventeenth century, entire masses were sung with musical accompaniment. It is, therefore, fitting that St. Mary's has a musical instrument to add to the beautiful mystery of the mass.

Richard M. Ferris and his half-brother, Levi U. Stuart, built the organ for St. Mary's in their New York City workshop and installed it in Norfolk in July 1858. It was the last organ built by Ferris, who died in December of that same year at the age of 41. Before Ferris worked with Stuart, he worked with Henry Erben. This partnership installed organs in Christ Episcopal Church, Norfolk, 1828; St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Norfolk, 1832; St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Portsmouth, 1837; and St. John's Church, Fort Monroe, 1840. By 1840, there were 21 Erben organs installed in southeastern Virginia and, after 1837, they were maintained by Ferris. Perhaps it was Ferris's reputation that persuaded Father O'Keefe to select this new firm to build the organ for St. Mary's, but there is no information to document this supposition (figure 13).¹⁵

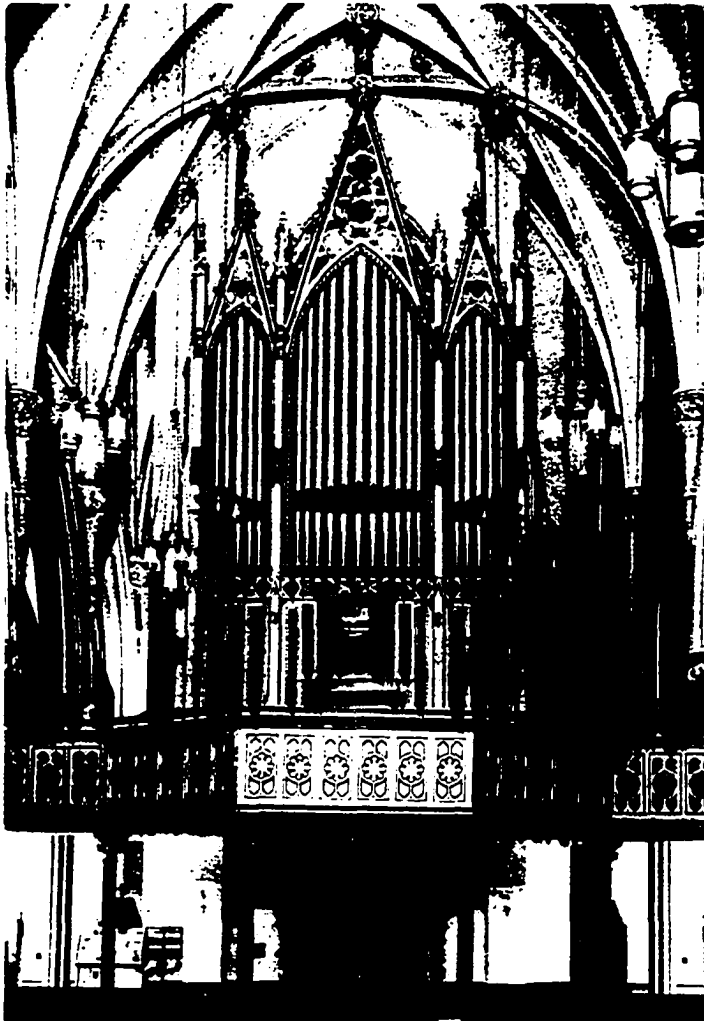
The organ was built using a mechanical system that had been handed down from organ builder to apprentice since before the time of Christ, with each generation slightly improving it. The mechanical system is often called a tracker action, because the five mechanical linkages for each key are long, thin strips of wood, called trackers, which carry the motion between key and valve. Ferris and Stuart built the mechanism entirely of wood, as had generations of organ builders before them.

¹⁵William T. Van Pelt, "St. Mary's Church, the Organ," pamphlet, (Norfolk, VA: Privately printed, 1958). Mr. Van Pelt is the public relations officer for the Organ Historical Society, Inc.

Figure 13. Tracker organ built by Richard Ferris and Levi Stuart.
Built for and installed in St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman
Catholic Church, Norfolk, VA, 1858.

St. Mary's Church

232 Chapel Street, Norfolk, Virginia



THE ORGAN

Built in 1858 by Richard M. Ferris & Levi U. Stuart, New York City

This, according to experts, accounts for the longevity of the organ at St. Mary's.¹⁶ There are 1750 pipes in this organ that range in height from 16 feet to just a few inches and many are original. While most of the pipes are metal, some are of wood. They are made in different shapes so that they might have varying tonality. This organ and the Church of St. Mary's received special recognition from the Organ Historical Society for having and maintaining an instrument of exceptional historical merit.¹⁷

The interior of St. Mary's fulfills the obligations to look like a Gothic-inspired church. Graceful cluster columns support acanthus leaf capitals. From these columns spring the 14 Gothic arches that separate the side aisles from the nave. There are 20 trefoil stained glass windows, 18 in clerestory and one on either side of the west entrance, above the small wheel windows. These windows are all alike and are not Mayer windows. No information has been found on the manufacturer of the clerestory windows or of the rose window above the west entrance. The western rose window is lost behind the large tracker organ in the choir loft, but it is not a very remarkable window.

The vault of the apse is quite beautiful. Liernes form a star shape that is enhanced by Christian symbol bosses. Tiercerons join the liernes to create a more complex stellar pattern. All of these ribs and bosses are painted in gold gilt. The gilded transverse rib in the apse

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid. A plaque of merit was placed on the organ on November 17, 1979.

arches to a point 62 feet above the marble floor. It is complimented by six identical transverse ribs equally spaced down the nave (figure 14).

There are two chapels, one on either side of the main altar, one to the Virgin and one to St. Joseph. Because the sacristy is on the immediate right of the St. Joseph chapel, there is no figure stained glass window. Instead, there are three narrow lancet windows in the sacristy that are opaque glass with red glass borders. The Lady chapel is undergoing changes that will alter the original design of the church. The original chapel will become a covered passageway from the school to the church. The new Lady chapel will be in the addition to the left side of the apse (figure 15). There is a stained glass window for the Lady chapel, but it has been stored in the vault of Waters Craftsmen in Front Royal, Virginia ever since the preservation work began on the church. An interview with Father Thomas Quinlan before he left St. Mary's for a new parish produced little information on the window except that it is a tribute window, and it is not a Mayer window. Father Quinlan could not remember if the figure was the representation of the Virgin but he thought it might be since it was originally in Her chapel.¹⁸

On the side walls are the traditional stations of the cross. These oil-on-copper paintings were originally in dark oak frames, but during the refurbishing for the Diamond Jubilee they were cleaned and then recessed directly into the walls. They have darkened considerably since 1933 and are very difficult to see. The paintings are signed

¹⁸Father Thomas Quinlan of St. Mary's Catholic Church, Norfolk, VA, interview by author, April 23, 1985.

Figure 14. Apsidal vault in St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, Norfolk, VA, 1983. Photograph by Judith L. Smith.



Figure 15. New Lady Chapel under construction. Addition to St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, Norfolk, VA, 1983. Photograph by Judith L. Smith.



L. Chevot of Paris, but nothing further is known about the artist.¹⁹

Original to the structure are the wooden pews which are mounted on a raised platform. Even older than the pews and the church is the lovely, large eleven feet high by five feet wide wooden crucifix. It was rescued from the fire at St. Patrick's and then reinstalled in a dark corner in the church. Except for the arms, it was carved from a single piece of Bavarian pine by one of the artists from an area noted for extraordinary wood carving, Oberammergau. It was restored recently, and, except for the marks from the fire, the original beauty is now quite evident.

Pugin liked and used towers and crocket trimmed spires. Keely followed this tradition as the plans for St. Mary's must have directed, because crocketed spires, above the buttresses, articulate the exterior of the side aisles. Smaller corresponding spires are also above the side entrances to the narthex (figure 16). Rising 300 feet above the west entrance is a Norfolk landmark, the steeple of St. Mary's. It is the oldest steeple in Norfolk and the only one with a clock.²⁰

In the early days of Norfolk it was supported by public funds for it was the means by which the community regulated its daily activities. It tolled out the hours and three times a day announced the Angelus commemorating the great mystery of the Incarnation.²¹

¹⁹Reference books by Benezit and Thieme Becker contain no information on this artist; neither these nor other reference books have been enlightening as to who this artist might be. Results were also negative when variations on the spelling of the artist's name were researched.

²⁰Freemason St. Baptist Church's original steeple blew down in a storm, which thus made the steeple of St. Mary's the oldest.

²¹St. Mary's Centennial Program, 1858-1958, 21.

Figure 16. South side entrance to St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception
Roman Catholic Church, Norfolk, VA, 1983. Photograph by Judith L.
Smith.



Once, the old clock stopped, and people descended on the church to discover the problem. Men could not get to work on time and the cooking schedule for meals was disorganized.²² Originally, someone had to climb the clock tower every four days to wind the clock works, but it was electrified sometime between 1957 and 1980.²³

The main altar, the stained glass, the beautiful mouldings and ribs in the vault, the pews, the crucifix, the organ, and the steeple are all very important elements that contribute to the whole design of this Gothic Revival church. Keely attempted to follow the tenets of Pugin and the Catholic church when he drew out the floor plans for his churches. Even if he could not personally direct construction, it seems as though he must have given instructions for the completion of the details so that the new church would truly have all the components befitting this style of architecture. St. Mary's Church can be seen as a success for Keely and Father O'Keefe and a most worthy example of Gothic Revival architecture in Norfolk.

²²Clare Marcus, "St. Mary's Clock Has Marked Norfolk Hours for Near Century," Norfolk (VA) Ledger Dispatch, January 20, 1957.

²³In Clare Marcus's article, she mentions that a janitor had to climb the bell tower every four days to wind the clock. In a personal letter dated February 1, 1980 from a Mr. Watson Cobb of Virginia Beach, VA to Father Quinlan, Mr. Cobb talks about repairing the electric motor for the clock.

CHAPTER 5

HISTORY OF EPWORTH METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

When Francis Asbury, who would become first Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, arrived in Norfolk in 1775, he found 73 Methodists worshipping in an old, abandoned play house. Asbury attempted to raise money for a new church, but the members were poor and lacked the initiative to undertake such a project. Eighteen years passed before a permanent church home was built on Fenchurch Street in Norfolk.¹ This first church was constructed of wood on six-foot pilings, a design to protect the building from flooding during storms. Its location was described as being "on property adjoining the old Academy grounds."²

In 1802, a lot was purchased on Cumberland Street from Arthur Moore, and a larger brick church was built for the growing congregation (map 1).³ By 1832, the congregation had again outgrown its facility, so the 1802 church was torn down and a second church was erected on the same site. A fire on March 2, 1848 destroyed the second church, but

¹Reverend N. F. Hunt, A Century of Service, 1850-1950: The History of Epworth Methodist Church (Norfolk, VA: Privately printed, 1950), 9.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

"with money collected on insurance, amounting to \$14,000, a third church was constructed on this property" (figure 17). While the construction for this third church on Cumberland Street was progressing, members from this congregation were planning to build yet another church at the corner of Granby and Freemason Streets.⁴

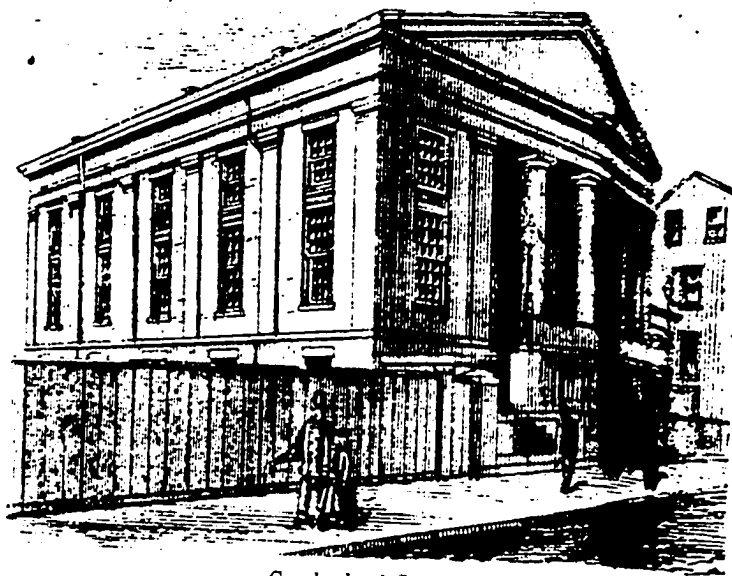
As early as 1848, Dr. William Smith, pastor of the Cumberland Street Church, expressed to the congregation the idea that they should think about building another Methodist church on a larger site, which would accommodate the rapidly growing congregation and allow more room for a Sunday School. The current membership at Cumberland Street was more than 1000, which was about 500 more than Dr. Smith felt he could serve effectively.⁵

A lot on the northeast corner of Freemason Street and Granby Street was purchased by the membership of Cumberland Street Methodist Church. By the fall of 1850, the Ionic-classical structure, designed by J. J. Husband (no dates available), had been completed. On December 8,

⁴Ibid., 10.

⁵Ibid. Additional information was found in the Scrapbook of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church, 2 vols. "1772-1919" and "1919-1966." For the most part, this information has no source listed. A handwritten note contained the following information: "William Callis was the architect and contractor for the third Cumberland Street Church, and John Ridley was the brick mason." This was probably the same William Callis who was responsible for the architecture of St. Patrick's Catholic Church built in 1842. There are some visual similarities between St. Patrick's and Cumberland Street Church (figures 1 and 17). However, it is impossible to compare the two structures, because both the architectural plans and the buildings themselves have been lost in redevelopment. Later reference is made in the scrapbook to William Callis as a charter member and trustee of the newly-formed Granby Street Methodist Church.

Figure 17. Cumberland Street Church in Norfolk, VA, 1848. From "A Century of Service, 1850-1950," by Reverend N. F. Hunt.



Cumberland Street Church

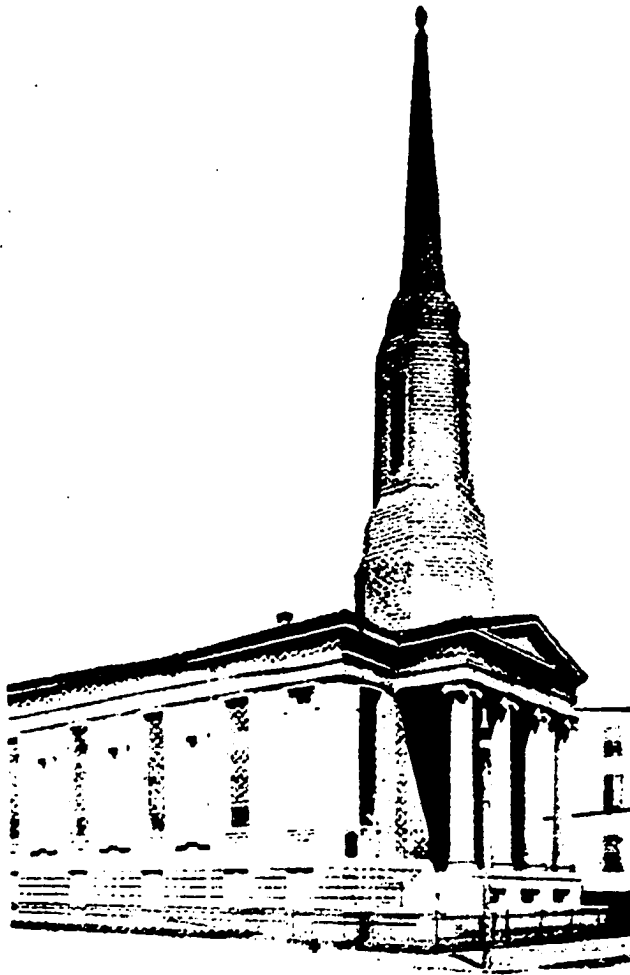
1850, the church was dedicated by the new pastor, Dr. John E. Edwards (figure 18). One hundred and sixteen members from Cumberland Street Church became charter members of the Granby Street Church. Among the dedicated charter members of Granby Street Church were some of the most prominent business and professional men in Norfolk. Henceforth, the Cumberland Street church was referred to as the "mother-church" of Methodism in Norfolk, and in late years its name was changed to First Methodist Church.⁶ In part because of this, "Granby Street Church was one of the very few churches, of that period, for whom struggle was obviated by the choice conditions under which it was organized."⁷

The congregation of the new church continued to grow in membership and wealth. In 1884, the church raised \$10,000 for education and for missionary work: \$2,500 went to Randolph-Macon College and the remainder

⁶Hunt, 12; Scrapbook; and W. S. Forrest, Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Norfolk and Vicinity (Philadelphia, PA: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1853), 267-70. All of these sources mention an interesting sidelight: the main floor pews in the Granby Street church had horse-hair-covered seats. They were box-like in shape and they had doors to close them off from the aisles. These pews were rented. Only in the gallery were the pews free to all worshippers. Forrest elaborated on this point to include his own opinion that the pew-seat system was contrary to the economy practiced by the Methodists. Forrest felt that all seats should be free or, at least, there should be a free section for visitors, properly marked.

⁷Hunt, *Ibid.* The conditions to which Reverend Hunt refers, though he does not enumerate them, probably denote the choice location of the new church. This area along Freemason, Bute, York, and Granby Streets was growing and some, according to Reverend Hunt, of the "best homes in town" were built on these streets (map 3). Reverend Hunt could have also been referring to the quality of the membership which included the following people: William Callis, architect; J. H. and Nathaniel Nash, prominent Norfolk businessmen; William Taylor; Captain John L. Roper, whose lumber and shipbuilding business later became Norfolk Shipbuilding Dry Dock Company; and B. T. Bockover, merchant and large stockholder in the Bank of Commerce.

Figure 18. Granby Street Church in Norfolk, VA, 1850, designed by J. J. Husband. Granby Street Church eventually was used as St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church. In 1961, it was torn down and its congregation shifted to St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church. From "A Century of Service, 1850-1950," by Reverend N. F. Hunt.



Granby Street M. E. Church, South, Norfolk, Va.

assisted in the establishment of three chapels which later became Colonial Avenue Methodist Church, Lekies Methodist Church, and McKendree Methodist Church.

By the late 1880's, the Granby Street congregation realized that their own building had problems. Additional space was needed for the Sunday School and in the auditorium. The steep sanctuary steps had become an architectural barrier for the older members. This situation, as well as a desire to be closer to more residential areas, were the main reasons cited by the congregation for constructing a new church building.⁸ Since there was no way to alter or build on to the Granby Street Church, a general meeting for all members was held on October 15, 1890 to discuss the possibility of building a new church. At that meeting, it appeared to be the consensus that "the defective architecture of our present building becomes more and more apparent when it is compared with the more modern structures of today."⁹ A building fund was established at this meeting with an initial donation of \$5,000 from the estate of J. B. Lekies. A building committee was also appointed at this meeting.¹⁰

⁸Ibid., 15.

⁹Official Board Minutes of the Granby Street Church, October 15, 1890 general meeting. These minutes were in the ledger retained by Epworth Methodist Church after the congregation moved from the Granby Street to Epworth Church in 1895.

¹⁰Mr. Lekies, charter member and trustee of Granby Street Church, had been a supporter of a new building. He died just before the 1890 general meeting, but evidently he had made provision in his will for the building fund.

On March 22, 1891, building committee members and their wives signed a deed for two adjoining pieces of property at the northeastern intersection of Freemason Street and Boush Street.¹¹ The first piece of property was purchased from W. Charles Hardy, R. Lee Hardy and his wife, Emily for \$8,300; the second piece of property was purchased from Martha D. Rogers and her family for \$10,000.¹² The location and combined size of this property fulfilled the requirements outlined by the congregation. The new church would stand on the edge of a developing residential area which housed some of the more prominent families in Norfolk, such as Captain J. L. Roper, J. D. Hunter, W. D. Taylor, Dr. W. B. Selden, and Mrs. Tazewell (map 3).

After almost a year of inactivity, the Stewards attempted at the January 1892 official board meeting to revitalize the building fund by subscribing substantial amounts themselves.¹³ During this meeting, the stewards also set aside Sunday, February 16, 1892 as subscription Sunday for the entire congregation. Reverend Tudor, former pastor of Granby

¹¹These building committee members were: Captain John L. Roper; his wife, Lydia; B. T. Bockover; his wife, Elizabeth; S. F. Pearce; his wife, Mary; L. Clay Kilby; his wife, Susan and four other unnamed members.

¹²Deed of Trust, Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church 96 (March 22, 1891): 209. City of Norfolk, VA. Clerk's office. See Map 3 for exact location. The Gatewood property adjacent to the two Methodist parcels of land was purchased by Epworth Methodist Church in 1915.

¹³The Official Board Minutes of January 1892 do not give specific monetary figures and only state that the subscriptions were sizeable. It should be noted that the Methodist church has two main boards: the Board of Trustees and the Board of Stewards. The Board of Trustees is composed of appointed lay persons and the minister who oversee the trusts of the church and the allocation of funds on recommendations from the Board of Stewards. The Board of Stewards are elected lay persons and the minister who oversee the general business of the church upon recommendations from the congregation. Unless otherwise noted, the Board cited herein refers to the Board of Stewards.

Map 3. Copy of the Map of Norfolk, VA, 1876 that was the property of Mr. and Mrs. William Ely, 714 Colley Avenue, Norfolk, VA. This map not only shows the location of the new Catholic church, St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, but also the shape of the building. It also shows the location of the Granby Street Methodist Episcopal Church on the corner of Granby Street and Freemason Street, its Church School on Granby Street, as well as Cumberland Street Methodist Episcopal Church. This map is now part of the collections of the Sargent Room, Kirn Memorial Library, Norfolk, VA.



Street Methodist Church, was invited to give the keynote address at this fund-raising service. In his speech, he asked for \$2,000 per minute and after approximately twenty minutes, \$40,000 had been pledged. One prominent member was not at the service, but he pledged \$2,000 the following day, bringing the total to \$42,000.¹⁴

The pastor of the church at that time was Dr. Evans, but he left shortly after the fund-raising in the regular rotation of ministers. His successor, Dr. A. Coke Smith, was then appointed by the Methodist bishop to help guide the Granby Street Church through the construction years of the new Methodist church on Freemason and Boush Streets.

During the spring of 1892, the building committee invited architectural firms to submit plans for the proposed new church building. William F. Poindexter (1840's-1908), a Washington architect, was employed to aid the committee in their selection of the most favorable design for the new church from the plans submitted by eight firms.¹⁵

¹⁴William B. Roper and Edward Deming, A Layman's History of the Granby Street Methodist Church (Norfolk, VA: Mimeographed booklet, 1984), no numbered pages; "\$2,000 a Minute, A Handsome Collection at Granby Street Methodist Episcopal Church," Norfolk (VA) Landmark, February 16, 1892.

¹⁵Roper and Deming. This writer remembered that the eight firms were located in Norfolk, Richmond, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. The names of these firms were not in any of the available information on the church. Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), (Los Angeles, CA: Hennessey and Ingalls Inc., 1970), 477. William Poindexter, originally from Richmond, had established by 1878 an architectural office in Washington, D. C. He was responsible for the designs of the State Library in Richmond, Hall of History at American University, several Marine Hospitals, specifically in Newport, Rhode Island and San Francisco (there are no dates for these structures). William B. O'Neal, in Architectural Drawing in Virginia, 1819-1969 (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 1969), does not mention Poindexter. No ecclesiastical buildings were mentioned in his accolades. There is no documented information on why he was in Norfolk, what his connection might have been with Granby Street Church or why he was employed to evaluate church plans.

The building committee and Poindexter accepted the plans of Norfolk architects John Ruthven Carpenter (1867-1932) and John Kevan Peebles (1866-1934), (figure 19).¹⁶ Carpenter and Peebles, who formed a partnership in late 1890 or in 1891, produced plans in the Romanesque Revival made popular in the northeast by ecclesiastical designs of noted Boston architect, H. H. Richardson (1838-1886). Richardson's Trinity Church (1872-77) in Boston brought the style to prominence (figure 20).

The board minutes do not describe what the criteria were for judging the eight submissions, the identity of the seven other firms, nor do they indicate why the plans of Carpenter and Peebles were selected over the seven other proposals submitted. It is possible to speculate on why the board and Poindexter may have accepted the Carpenter and Peebles design. Judging from the decisions previously made by the members of the board, cautious planning and a sense of direction would be adequate characterization of any venture undertaken by this corporate body. Though they expressed the desire for a more modern structure in keeping with the times, they would not have approved a design that did not exemplify permanency. Perhaps, it was the solidness of the Romanesque Revival style of architecture, which falls directly in line with the steadfast fundamental Methodist doctrine of the late 1800's. The heaviness of Richardsonian Romanesque also may have appealed to Methodist ideals. Gothic Revival, though increasingly less

¹⁶The birth year for Peebles is different from that given in Withey's book Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Withey's dates for Peebles have been used as a source for several books and documents, but they are incorrect. According to notes made by Bernard Mann Peebles, son of J. K. Peebles, the birth date should read January 25, 1866. This new information came from Ann Bradbury Peebles' genealogical writing, Peebles: Ante 1600-1962 (Privately Published), 1962. The annotations made by Peebles' son are in the Alderman Library Archives Room, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA. Additional notes made by Peebles' son state that J. K. Peebles wrote a thesis in 1890 as part of the requirements for receiving his doctorate in science.

Figure 19. Prominent Norfolk businessmen. Note, in particular, the last two photographs at the bottom of the page, architects J. E. R. Carpenter and J. K. Peebles, 1895. From Norfolk, VA: A Great Maritime Port and Railroad Center. In the collection of the Sargent Room, Kirn Memorial Library, Norfolk, VA.



Figure 20. Trinity Church in Boston (1872-77), before alterations. The architect was H. H. Richardson (1838-86). In the distance is Richardson's Brattle Square Church (1870). From Art in America by Richard McLanathan.



111 HENRY HOBSON RICHARDSON
(1838-86) *Trinity Church, Boston,*
1872-7, before alterations. In the
distance on the right is Richardson's
Brattle Square Church, 1870

popular, might have been considered to be "very high Methodist" (close to Episcopal) which this congregation would have found undesirable. Classicism in church design was still being done, but it was generally considered passe'. This congregation had already been housed in other classical style structures, and perhaps they wanted to express their independence in their own way. For whatever undisclosed reasons, it was the Carpenter and Peebles' working drawings that were pushed to completion, and the bid from the local contractor, C. R. Parlette, that was accepted.¹⁷

At the July 1892 board meeting, Captain John L. Roper proposed to purchase the Granby Street Church building for \$15,000. His payments on the sum were to be remitted to the church treasury as the money was needed in the construction of the new church. He also agreed to allow the congregation to continue to use the Granby Street church, rent free, until December 31, 1894 or until the new church was completed.¹⁸

Since subscriptions to pay for the new church were being made on a four-year plan, work on the new structure could not begin until at least one-third of the cost, approximately \$42,000, was collected. This delayed the ground-breaking until November 22, 1893. By April 24, 1894, construction had progressed enough to allow the cornerstone to be put in place. A special Masonic ceremony marked the occasion. Local newspapers reported not only the details but also listed the artifacts to be placed inside the cornerstone.¹⁹

¹⁷Roper. C. R. Parlette had been involved in the building of other churches in Norfolk, but this writer did not disclose which ones.

¹⁸Official Board Minutes, July 1892.

¹⁹Of interest is that the cornerstone is not located on any corner but rather on the eastern side of the church about half way up the wall. Some of the artifacts listed by the Norfolk Herald (April 24, 1894) were: a Bible, Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, minutes of the last Virginia Conference, a hymn book, a list of the

The cornerstone-laying was not the only event for the congregation on April 24, 1894. That evening, all members were invited to meet together at the Granby Street Church to select a name for the new church. Because there were more than 20 suggestions, it took three ballots to eliminate all others but Epworth, which was the name of John Wesley's home in England.

With construction on the exterior progressing, attention could now be directed toward some interior furnishings. In June 1894, a contract was signed with Hook and Hastings of Boston, Massachusetts to build a new organ which would be 50 feet long, 12 feet deep and 30 feet high.²⁰ By early spring of 1895, the new pew seats were purchased. These were special because they would be free; the rental pew system had no place in the new church. On October 22, 1895, the Board of Granby Street Church received a letter from Mrs. Emma J. Lekies which allocated monies for the building committee to purchase memorial chimes for the belfry of the new church.²¹

The new church was dedicated on January 19, 1896 and when The Public Ledger reported on the event, the church was described as being:

massive, symmetrical, and charming. The auditorium with its elegance, richness of frescoing, fittings, furnishings and windows, is probably not excelled anywhere in the South; a creation of Norfolk genius that must thrill the architects--Messrs. Carpenter and Peebles--as they look upon it, and that must be a source of intense satisfaction to all who have

officers and members of the Granby Street Methodist Episcopal Church, a written history of the Cumberland Street Methodist Episcopal Church, and a copy of Dr. A. Coke Smith's address on this occasion.

²⁰Roper and Deming.

²¹The chimes were to be dedicated to the memory of John B. Lekies who had been a steward in Granby Street Church. The installation of the chimes necessitated alterations to the building's structure. Later these chimes would prove to be a hazard during electrical storms and a maintenance burden.

assisted in bringing to such a magnificent consummation what is truly a work of art.²²

During what The Public Ledger termed as a "strikingly beautiful sermon" by Dr. A. Coke Smith, the pastor requested that the "congregation subscribe \$25,000 toward paying the debt on the church. There were responses amounting to \$14,500."²³ Another service was held that evening allowing the congregation to appreciate the "electric illumination of the exquisite auditorium".²⁴ One week after the dedication of the church, the building committee gave its final report to the Board of Stewards for the new church. The grand total for the church's construction was \$121,824.00 (figure 21).²⁵

Board minutes dated March 23, 1896 reported that during a storm, the large rose window on the Freemason Street side had fallen in.

Mr. Peebles of the firm of Carpenter and Peebles, with diagrams and figures, demonstrated the fall of the window was due to want of proper dowelling and that with proper precautions, the window could be replaced without danger.²⁶

C. R. Parlette, the former superintendent of construction, contacted the stone mason to be ready to replace and restore all the glass damaged by the accident. The Board decided that the Carpenter and

²²Dedication of Epworth Norfolk (VA) Public Ledger, January 20, 1896), 1.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Official Board Minutes, January 27, 1896.

²⁶Ibid., March 23, 1896.

Figure 21. A copy of the expenses incurred in the building of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA. This report lists the names of the companies and workmen who completed the original work on Epworth. From the January 27, 1896 Church Board minutes.

'Stewards': G. S. Bruce, W. H. Thompson, H. Bishop
 B. Y. Bodden, W. J. Vasey, H. H. Hume, D. F. Mearns
 L. L. Kelly, J. L. Raper, Geo. R. McCusker, Robert H.
 a. S. H. Jones.
 Trustees: J. D. Gale, H. J. Denby Jr. R. O. Nottingham
 and B. D. Thomas.
 Secy. of Church Conference, Wm. H. Grayson.
 The exercises were opened with prayer by the Pastor.
 This being a called meeting, the reading of
 minutes of previous meetings was omitted.
 Then L. Raper, Chairman of the Board of
 Missions, Committee submitted the following
 financial report:

Real Estate	18500.00
Interest paid to date	3992.10
Income Yr.	1755.22
Income before deduction Yr.	1671.00
Expenses of Church	1200.00
Paid Watchman	120.00
Insurance Yr.	586.50
Rev. R. H. Bennett	387.00
Don Yr.	2235.03
Plaster Yr.	2677.84
Carpenters Yr.	10722.68
Co. R. Parlette Superintendent	3000.00
Trace & Find. Br. ch. work	7103.50
Union Mining Roofing Co.	3344.00
Balmain Bros - Stone Center	30811.57
J. E. Wright Painters	839.50
Globe Furniture Co. (Seating)	2147.00
Sperry & Beck - Carriages	750.00
Shaw & W. Stent - Decorating	3478.00
Carpenter & Peckoles - Archt.	2500.00
Smith & H. H. Smith - Organ	7479.50
Bearley, Motor Co. Engines	496.42
Peck & H. H. Smith - H. H. Smith	3850.00
Peck & H. H. Smith - H. H. Smith	1020.00
Peck & H. H. Smith - H. H. Smith	707.00
Peck & H. H. Smith - H. H. Smith	1564.00
Peck & H. H. Smith - H. H. Smith	4194.00
Peck & H. H. Smith - H. H. Smith	5672.00

Total \$121,834.00

Peebles should supervise this work. The stone mason was to strengthen the companion rose window as well as any other window that might be considered questionable.

In January 1901, the Board decided to replace the original windows in the sanctuary with stained glass memorial windows. John H. Core was one of the first to apply for permission to erect a window in honor of his deceased wife. On December 8, 1902, a letter from Core informed the Board of a bequest of \$5,000 in his will to defray the cost of this window as well as any other appointments for the church that the Board deemed necessary.

An important moment for the church came on December 4, 1912 when the mortgage bonds on the church were ceremonially burned, signifying the cancellation of the building debt. Within two years, Epworth found that expansion of its facilities was necessary. The Gatewood property next door to the church on Boush Street was purchased for \$30,000. It became a community house for social work in and around the church. The area next to the Gatewood house was designated as a playground for the children of Boush Street School directly across the street, since the school had no open area for outdoor activities. This project became part of the community services of the church. On October 4, 1915, Epworth, under the direction of the Social Service of the church, opened one of the few public kindergartens in the city. Four days later, the new \$55,000 Sunday School addition, built behind the community house and at a right angle to the church proper, opened.

Architect Russell E. Mitchell (no dates available), was again retained in 1917 to design an addition to increase the height of the

church's Romanesque tower.²⁷ This became necessary because the sounds of the chimes reverberated off nearby buildings thus distorting the music and minimizing the distance at which it could be heard. The Board also felt that a taller tower would be in better proportion with the massive gables of the church. Money for this addition was provided for in Mrs. Emma J. Lekies' will, as well as the money for the Lekies memorial window. Twenty feet of stonework were added to the tower, making the completed height 125 feet above the sidewalk.

By 1921, Epworth needed some restoration. This time, Peebles and Finley F. Ferguson (1875-1936) were the architects in charge.²⁸ While repair work was done on the roof and chimney, Peebles and Ferguson's plans for lowering the organ and choir loft were implemented. Upon completion of this project, the auditorium was redecorated and refurnished. In this year, too, one of the most prominent members of the

²⁷Roper and Deming. Mitchell was also the designer for the new Sunday School addition. I was unable to find any further information on Mitchell, including his dates. No reasons were stated in the Board Minutes as to why Peebles was not retained for this alteration of his building. The partnership of Carpenter and Peebles was dissolved around 1895. Carpenter practiced alone for the next five years. According to "James Edwin Ruthven Carpenter" in The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, permanent series (Clifton, NJ: James T. White Co., 1935), 29: 271-272, Carpenter went to Paris for a year and a half after he left Norfolk. When he returned to the United States, he opened offices in New York, where he continued to work until his death in 1932.

²⁸Ferguson, a graduate of both Hampden-Sydney College and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was a Norfolk architect who formed a partnership with John Kevan Peebles in 1917. Together they specialized in academic and ecclesiastical buildings which included Ghent Methodist Episcopal Church (1922), Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall in Williamsburg, VA, and The State Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, VA. After Peebles' death in 1934, Ferguson's son, Finlay Forbes Ferguson, Jr. became his partner.

church died, John L. Roper. A Union officer in the Civil War, he had chosen the South as his new home where he was very successful in the lumber and shipbuilding industries. He was a steward on the Church Board for 40 years and chairman for 25 of those years.

On November 4, 1930, repairs were made on a small crack in the church's foundation on the west wall, which had been discovered by Peebles. The tower, organ and chimes were damaged in a violent storm in September 1933. Evidently, the organ was so thoroughly drenched, that it needed extensive drying out and restoration before it could be used again. It was, therefore, decided to dismantle and to store the organ until funds for the repairs were available. This was finally possible in the early spring of 1935, a year of redecorating and relighting in the church proper, along with the dedication of two memorial windows on the north wall.²⁹

In 1936, the Community House was no longer structurally sound, and it would need extensive remodeling if it was to continue in service. Estimates for the work were submitted by Norfolk architect, A. O. Ferebee and an architect from Duke University, a Mr. Haines.³⁰ The issue was whether to revamp the old building or to erect a new structure. It was finally decided to make changes in the annex building, which was attached to the church, to accommodate all the Sunday School classes and the activities formerly held in the Community House.

²⁹All the stained glass windows will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

³⁰Official Board Minutes, July 1936. No further information has been found on either architect.

Enough repairs were made to satisfy the city building inspectors until the alterations had been completed in the annex building. Razing of the Community House took place in early July of 1937.

Epworth did not have a chapel, but through the generosity of Louise Davis, in memory of her father, long-time board member Leroy W. Davis, one was designed for one of the larger rooms on the ground floor of Epworth. Five stained glass pattern windows were put in this room to give it more atmosphere, along with new pews, chancel rail, and an upholstered kneeling railing. Consecration of the chapel took place on July 9, 1937.³¹

For almost two years Epworth did not have to face any major maintenance problems, but on August 16, 1939 lightning struck the north side of the church tower in a storm. It struck three feet from the roof top damaging tiles on the roof, but the chimes were not harmed. While no structural damage occurred, some of the stone trim was loosened and pieces of it fell to the street below. This was the second storm that had caused tower problems.³² An untitled article in the Norfolk (VA) Ledger Dispatch of November 30, 1940 stated that galvanized cables had been put on the chimes in the hopes that these cables would act as grounding agents. The article also described the tiled pinnacle that was placed over the bell tower which restored the tower to its original appearance. The pinnacle had been removed when the chimes were in-

³¹Scrapbook, 1936 and Official Board Minutes, June 1937.

³²Scrapbook 1939. The first damaging storm was in September of 1933.

stalled and the tower was raised 20 feet. Four triangular stones had replaced the pinnacle; now, the pinnacle was back. Engineers felt that the cables would prevent future lightning strikes, but on September 9, 1941 a bolt struck the tower a third time. Four large blocks of stone fell onto the lawn and sidewalk.³³ It would be 40 years before this problem was finally rectified.

World War II brought special prayer services, and interdenominational meetings in Epworth's auditorium to help the many servicemen and women then stationed in Norfolk. A revaluation of the church property was done also in 1941.³⁴

By the late 1940's Epworth found that the younger membership was beginning to outgrow the nursery and Sunday School rooms. The pastor, Dr. Carroll, and the Board received a recommendation for the appointment of A. Hansel Fink of Philadelphia as consultant and potential architect for a new Sunday School building. Fink inspected Epworth, then he drew up a proposed plan for not only the Sunday School, but also for a new chapel. Fink's plans were then presented and explained to the Board by local architect Louis A. Oliver, who was also a member of the Board. These plans were accepted on November 7, 1951.³⁵

Ground was finally broken for the new Sunday School and Education building on March 8, 1953. The local architects, A. Vernon Moore and

³³Scrapbook 1940-41, loose news clippings.

³⁴Official Board Minutes, February 1942. The adjusted approximate value was given as \$333,450.

³⁵Ibid., November 7, 1951.

Louis A. Oliver, with James A. Carney as the contractor executed Fink's plans. The opening date for the new structure was projected for February 10, 1954. While construction on the new building progressed, the subject of the chimes and bells in the bell tower arose again. Repair and alteration work on the tower had been done in 1917, 1933, 1939 and again in 1941. Now decisions had to be made on whether to repair the chimes to make them safe in their housing, to repair the walls of the bell tower, and then, perhaps, to electrify the bells so that they would be easier to use, or to remove them. There was another problem; it was extremely difficult to reach the small console which controlled levers that allowed the chimes to be played. The player had to not only be sure the tower windows were open so the tones could be heard, but also had to climb a ten-foot ladder to reach the console. This became more difficult as both the chimes and the player aged.

Since the new structure was projected to cost approximately \$270,000, the Board decided to remove the chimes and bells from the plans as an expense that could not be borne. The Lekies chimes were a memorial donation to Epworth, but the Board of Trustees decided that another appropriate memorial would be found and the monies received from the sale of the bells would purchase this tribute which would be placed in the new chapel. The I. T. Verdun Company of Cincinnati bought the 11 bells for \$2790. E. T. Gresham removed them and Verdun shipped them back to Cincinnati on October 6, 1953.³⁶

³⁶Official Board Minutes, June 10, 1953 and November 1953. The chapel was never built, and there was no more information in the Board minutes describing what the final tribute was to Mr. Lekies.

The church was thought to be structurally sound until a report was made at the January 4, 1960 Board meeting that the west wall was cracking and bulging out. When the original blueprints were sought to ascertain the cause of the problem, they could not be found. The consulting engineers, Fraioli, Blum, and Yesselman, removed two stones from the west wall, so the problem could be studied more easily, then Louis A. Oliver presented their findings and recommendations to the Board. The west wall had buckled out as much as four-and-seven-eighths-inches from the base. There were 14 cracks in the wall ranging in size from one-quarter to two inches wide. There were ten major cracks in the south wall, which faced Freemason Street, ranging from one-quarter to one inch wide. Four major solutions to the problems were set forth and accepted by the Board: (1) tie the north and south outside walls to existing steel roof truss systems; (2) provide anchorage of the roof joist; (3) introduce a horizontal truss below the balcony; and (4) put in an anchorage between the balcony floor framing and the walls.³⁷

Restoration began in the late summer of 1963. There were small mistakes made during the complete renovation and repair, such as using the wrong stain on interior pews and a mix-up of the glass quadrants in the stained glass windows, but the major construction work went smoothly and all work was completed by late summer 1964. The treasurer's report showed the final cost to be \$181,690.93--a debt that would not be retired for ten years.³⁸

³⁷Official Board Minutes, July 24, 1963.

³⁸Ibid., Treasurer's report, September 12, 1964.

In September 1978, Fraioli, Blum, and Yesselman were again engaged to assess the cause of a roof collapse on the Annex building. Their report to the Board read, in part: wood rot of beams was caused by water; horizontal and vertical cracks in portions of midspan timbers reduced their load carrying capacity; timber supports were missing between purlin and parapets; large wood knots in beams reduced the strength; and mortar in the parapet wall was powdery. With the list of problems, solutions were offered and approved: exterminating Powder Post Beetles; adding new rafters between the old to add more support; removing all old tar and gravel, adding new insulation, installing a new four-ply to build up the roof, and painting it with aluminum roof paint. All work was completed by June 1979 at a cost of \$7132.00³⁹

From 1975 through 1979, Epworth saw a decline in membership, and the church was confronted with the same problems that other inner-city churches all over the United States were facing: increased maintenance requirements versus the higher costs of building materials; heightened security needs for people and property; and a lack of interest within the community for the preservation of historic architecture. Epworth was nominated in October 1981 for inclusion on the National Registry of Historical Buildings. This was doubly important to the church for it would help assure the continued existence of the church building, and it might also make the approval of a tax-free loan for renovation and restoration much easier to get.⁴⁰ Epworth applied for and received a

³⁹Ibid., September 20, 1978.

⁴⁰Ibid., October 4, 1981.

capital improvement loan at ten percent interest in December 1981.⁴¹

Improvements and renovations were made to the kitchen, fellowship hall, and heating plant, and repairs were made on the stained glass windows. After lightning again struck the bell tower, the fourth such incident, a lightning rod system was finally installed. A wheelchair ramp was also erected at the courtyard entrance to the church.

The church was rebuilding and becoming revitalized. Attendance was up with young families and older members returning to Epworth. Increased subscriptions by the members had enabled the Board to approve the reroofing of the church.⁴² Encouraged by the new life in Epworth, the Board of Trustees recommended to the Board of Stewards that the exterior of the church be restored, which included waterproofing, cleaning and repairing all the stained glass windows in the main church building. The cost of this restoration would be borne, in part, from the large Annie Hall trust.⁴³ When the church finally files the application to become a historical landmark, it will be looking at the future by celebrating its past, a celebration that will show off the beautiful church building.

⁴¹Ibid., December 21, 1981.

⁴²Ibid., July 27, 1983.

⁴³Ibid., March 5, 1984.

CHAPTER 6

ARCHITECTURE OF EPWORTH METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Protestant churches, Methodist churches in particular, make their own decisions through each church's board, which is composed of lay persons and the minister. Major decisions, principally on doctrine, are made in conjunction with the Bishopric, which, for Epworth, is in Richmond, Virginia. Architecture in the Methodist Church cannot be viewed as having to conform to specific tenets of church doctrine, but rather with the wishes of the congregation and their representatives--in this case the church boards. Therefore, two years after the decision was made to build another church, the Granby Street Church held a competition for working plans for a new church. Their Board, as the congregation's representative, the plans from the Norfolk firm of Carpenter and Peebles.

The partnership of Carpenter and Peebles began in 1890, approximately two years after Carpenter had left the Boston firm of McKim, Mead and White. Stanford White of this firm was a follower of H. H. Richardson and brought this influence into his own work. Carpenter would have been exposed to this, but, more importantly, he could have visited Trinity Church in Boston, a monument to Richardson's talents. Not far from Trinity was another example of Richardson's skill, Brattle Square Church (1870) (figure 20). This atmosphere may have brought Carpenter

to the decision of designing a Romanesque church patterned after H. H. Richardson.

Carpenter and Peebles' exterior design was for a truncated cruciform church. Since the original plans for the church have disappeared, evaluation and explanation of the church's architecture is necessarily based on plans done by John K. Peebles and his later partner, Finlay F. Ferguson, for alteration work done on the church in 1921 and on the physical survey done by surveyor R. Stuart Baldwin in 1954 (figures 22 and 23).¹

To describe the architecture of a building as being Richardsonian Romanesque, certain elements of design should exist in the structure. Some of these are rusticated stone work, cushion capitals on Ionic columns, porches with heavy semicircular or depressed arches, alternating solid and pierced spaces, towers, turrets, crenelation in walls, the use of a variety of stone for the natural color contrasts, and tile roofs. Architects following Richardson's prime consideration in drawing the plans for a structure probably would also have known the writings of John Ruskin, in particular his "Lamp of Power" which requires that the outline of a building be simple and continuous. Richardson incorporated Ruskin's principles in his designs. He thought "in wholes, not in parts and thus left the details of making his designs

¹Renderings of the following: First Floor Plan, Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church, Carpenter and Peebles, Architects, August 1921; Second Floor Plan, Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church, Carpenter and Peebles, Architects, August 1921; and Physical Survey, Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church, R. Stuart Baldwin, 22 March 1954.

Figure 22. A copy of the first and second story plans for alterations on Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church, August 21, 1921. John Kevan Peebles and Finlay F. Ferguson, Architects.

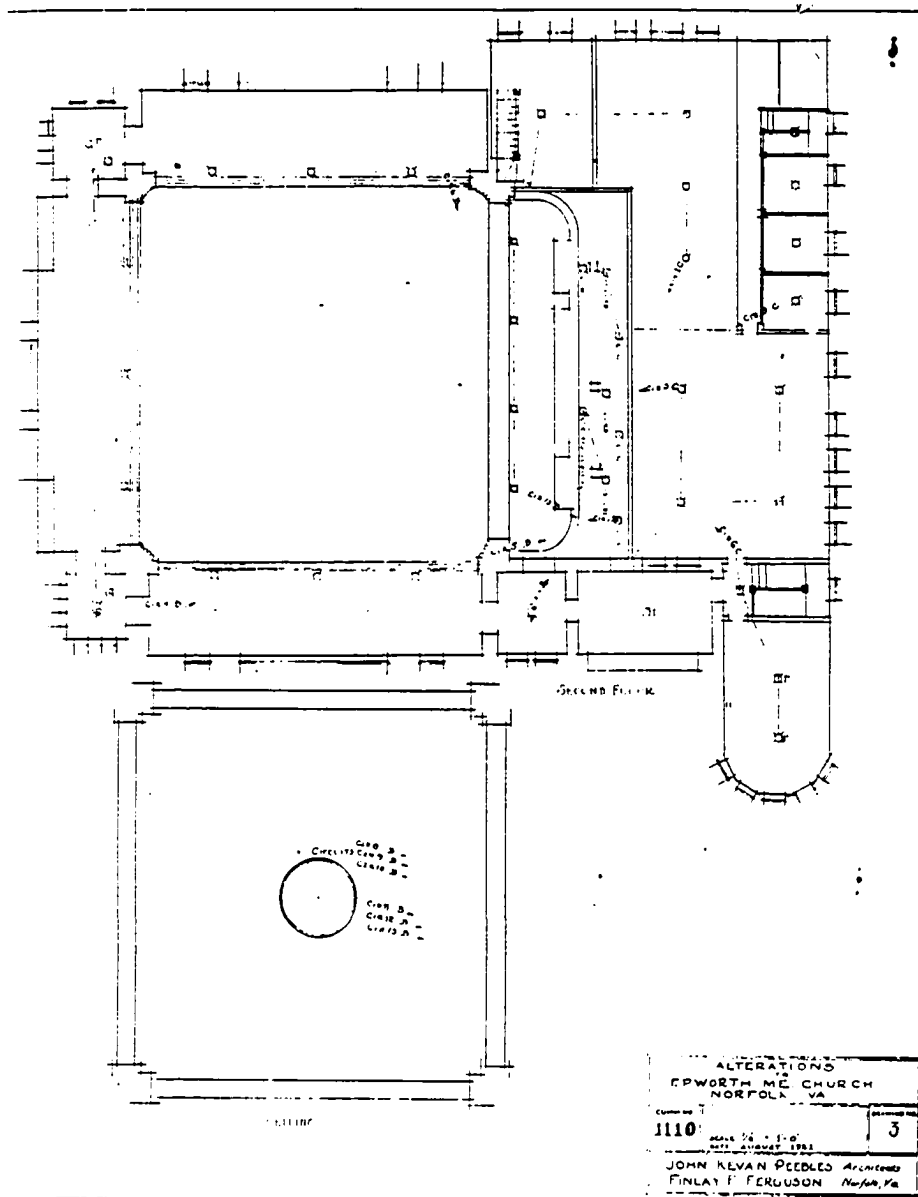
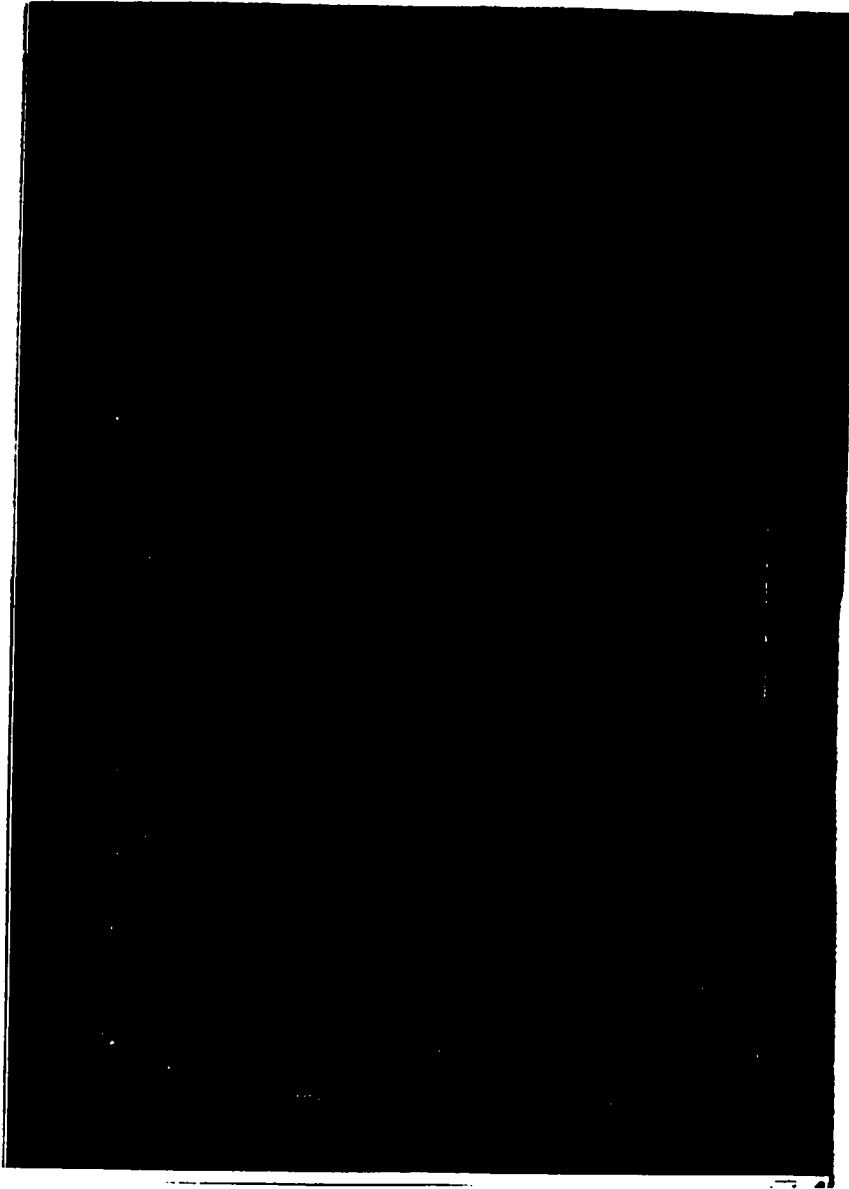


Figure 23. A copy of the Physical Survey of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church, March 22, 1954 by R. Stuart Baldwin, Licensed Surveyor.



work to others;² in examples such as Trinity Church, all the components coalesce and leave an impression of strength and permanency upon the observer.

Carpenter and Peebles were successful in designing a building that illustrated an understanding of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture (figures 24 and 25). Rusticated gray granite blocks from nearby Mount Airy, North Carolina were selected for the exterior of the church. Buff-colored sandstone was chosen to accent the arched windows, doorways, and banding that divided and yet united the structure in four unequal planes.³

The lowest plane includes the arched doorways and ground floor stained glass windows, a dedication tablet, a covered exterior arcade and the parlor housed in a five-sided bay swell.⁴ The next plane is narrow and has six pairs of lancet windows as openings in the stone work, two pairs in the bell tower and the other four pairs in the shorter towers (figure 26). Two pairs of larger lancet stained glass windows flank the rose windows which are divided between this level and the next or upper plane. Three large stained glass windows on the west

²Harvard College Library and David R. Godine, 24.

³A fifth plane marked by the sandstone banding appears after additional stone work was done to raise the height of the bell tower in 1917.

⁴The minister's study is located on the second floor of this bay swell as well as the church offices denoted by the windows above the arcade. However, the offices are really placed between the ground and second planes due to the interior maze of stairways to levels not noted on exterior planes.

Figure 24. A copy of a drawing of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church by architects Carpenter and Peebles as it appeared in the Richmond Christian Advocate, April 11, 1895. Reproduction by Heliotype Projection of Boston, MA.

SPURTH • METHODIST • EPISCOPAL •
CHURCH • FOLLY • NORFOLK •
CARPENTERS • BUILDERS •
ARCHTS • NORFOLK • VIRGINIA •

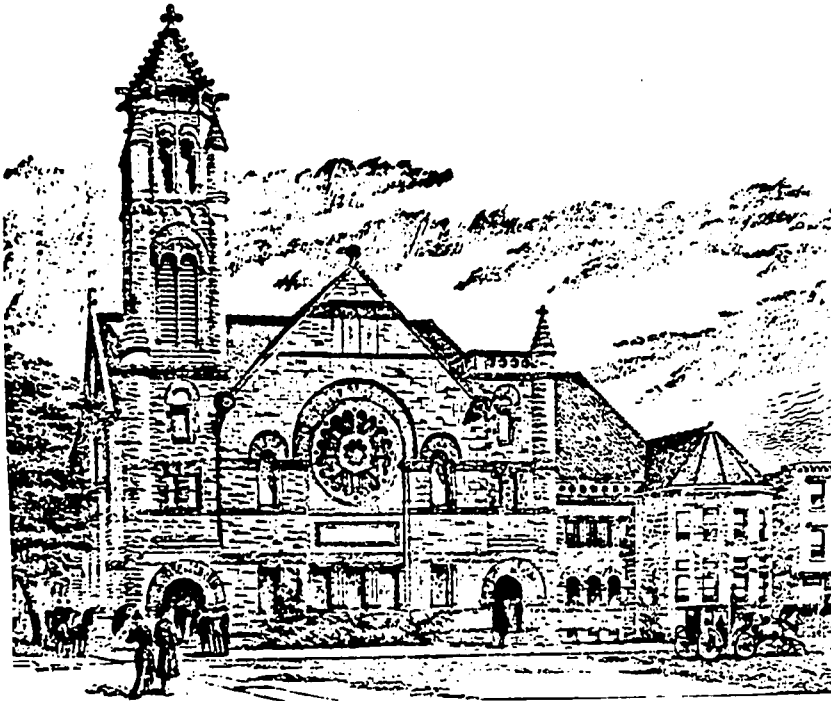
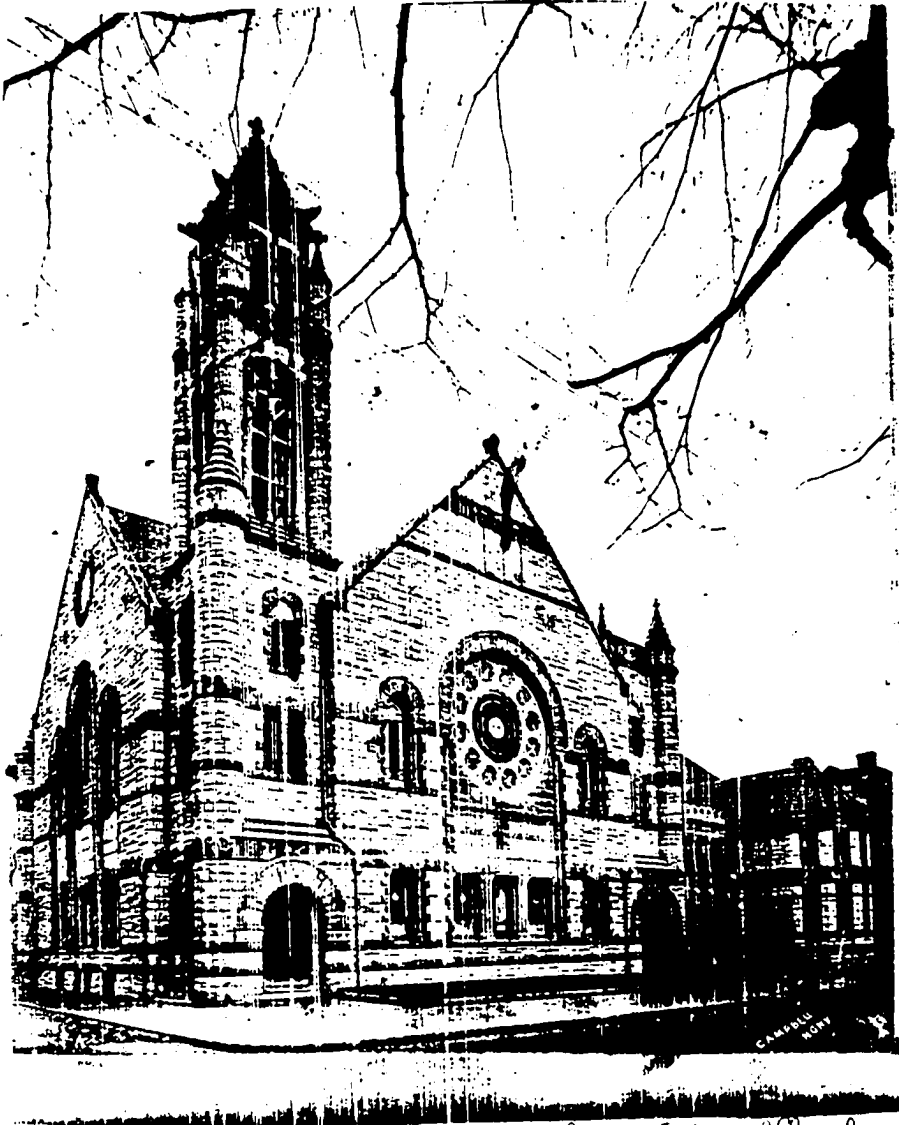
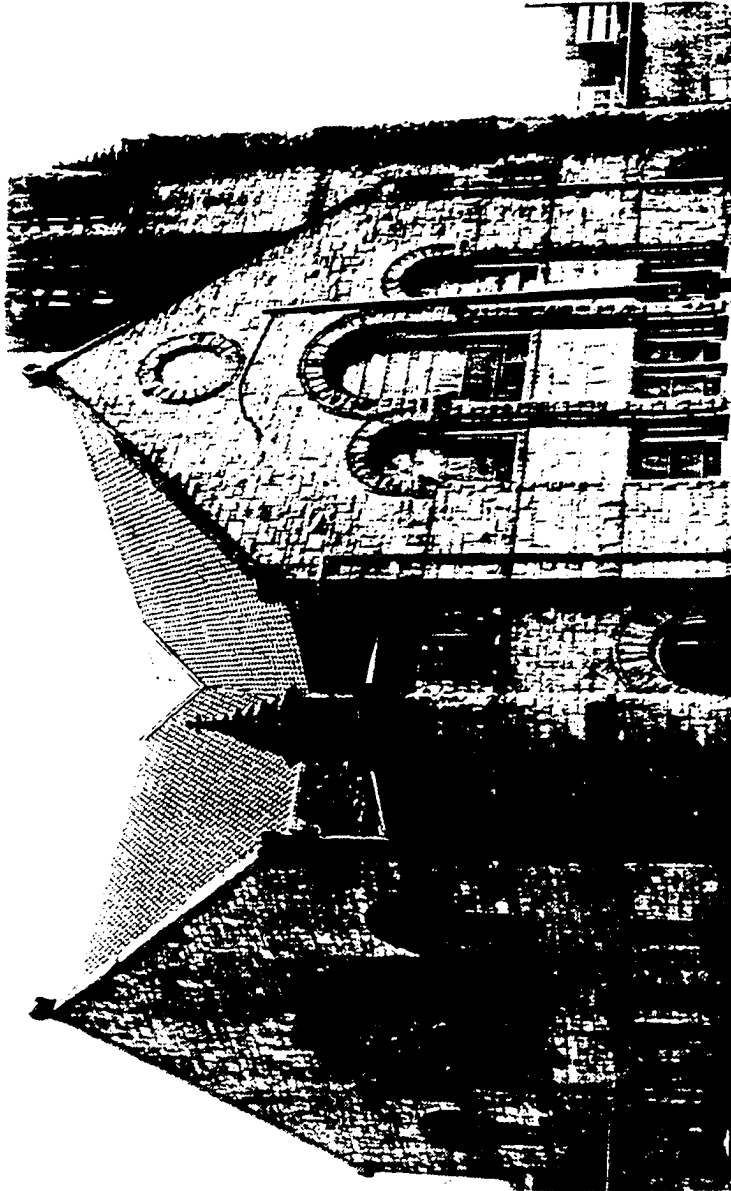


Figure 25. Copy of a photograph of the exterior of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA, 1896. Original photograph by Campbell of Norfolk.



Exterior Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church
1896

Figure 26. The west and north exterior of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA, April 1982. Photograph by Judith L. Smith.



facade are also on the divided planes. The last plane includes the sandstone arches over all the windows on this level as well as a frame around a recessed circle on the west face. Other decorative features on this plane include a low wall around the top of the shorter south side tower which is pierced in a quatrefoil pattern, and three blind, elongated trefoil shapes that are recessions near the peak of the south facade.

The bell tower is pierced, above the 1917 addition, by two separate levels of arched openings, one is large and the other is small (figure 27). The four slender cone-roofed turrets of the original bell tower were retained when the addition to the tower was built. Double gargoyles at the corners of the tiled tower roof guard the cross at the towers pinnacle. A tall engaged turret spans the space between the street and the bell opening anchoring the bell tower to the earth. At one time, this turret was balanced by the engaged turret on the shorter tower on the south side of the church (figure 24). When the height of the bell tower was increased, the builder also made the turret taller. There does not seem to be a problem with balance or proportion. Perhaps, it is the mass of the stone or the distance between the two turrets, but the sum and substance of the trim and the banding give the feeling of a unified whole (figures 25 and 27).⁵

Some of the most beautiful features of the exterior of the church are the architects' attention to details around the doorways and

⁵Compare the current view of the southside of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church, and its bell tower (figure 27), with the 1895 photograph of the same view (figure 25).

Figure 27. The south exterior of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA, April 1982. Photograph by Judith L. Smith.



stained glass windows. The portals are trimmed most handsomely with buff-colored sandstone arches, which are terminated by intricately carved sandstone friezes. The patterns of the friezes begin with egg-and-dart molding, then a complex design of basket weaving and scrolled vines are intertwined, while a growling, snub-nosed gargoyle breaks the design at the corners. The door jambs are engaged columns whose capitals are the continuation of this basket weave-vine pattern (figures 28 and 29).⁶ Four pairs of short columns support the three sandstone arches of the arcade (figure 30). The architects have used this medieval idea to bind the church structure with the lesser rooms of the complex, much like H. H. Richardson did with the multi-building complex of Trinity Church in Boston. Richardson also used this same type of arcade to disguise exterior stairwells on Trinity Parish House. A subtle twist of design on the four outside capitals which match each other causes them to differ slightly from the four matching inside capitals. Ornate metal screens which enclose the arches display a Moorish style open work reminiscent of the open metal work in the interior of the Hagia Sophia. At the top of the screen is a metal fan-shaped sunburst with rays ending in the arch itself.

Because the south side is the designated front of the church, it received more detailed stone work. Small engaged columns frame all stained glass windows in the central facade. For the single windows, single columns with viney capitals were used. For the triple windows

⁶This design is very similar to a brown ink drawing of a study for a capital for the Allegheny County Court House by Richardson, reproduced in Harvard College Library and David R. Godine, 139-141.

Figure 28. Exterior south side doorway of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA, April 1982. This exemplifies the detail work done around all doorways and stained glass windows. Photograph by Judith L. Smith.

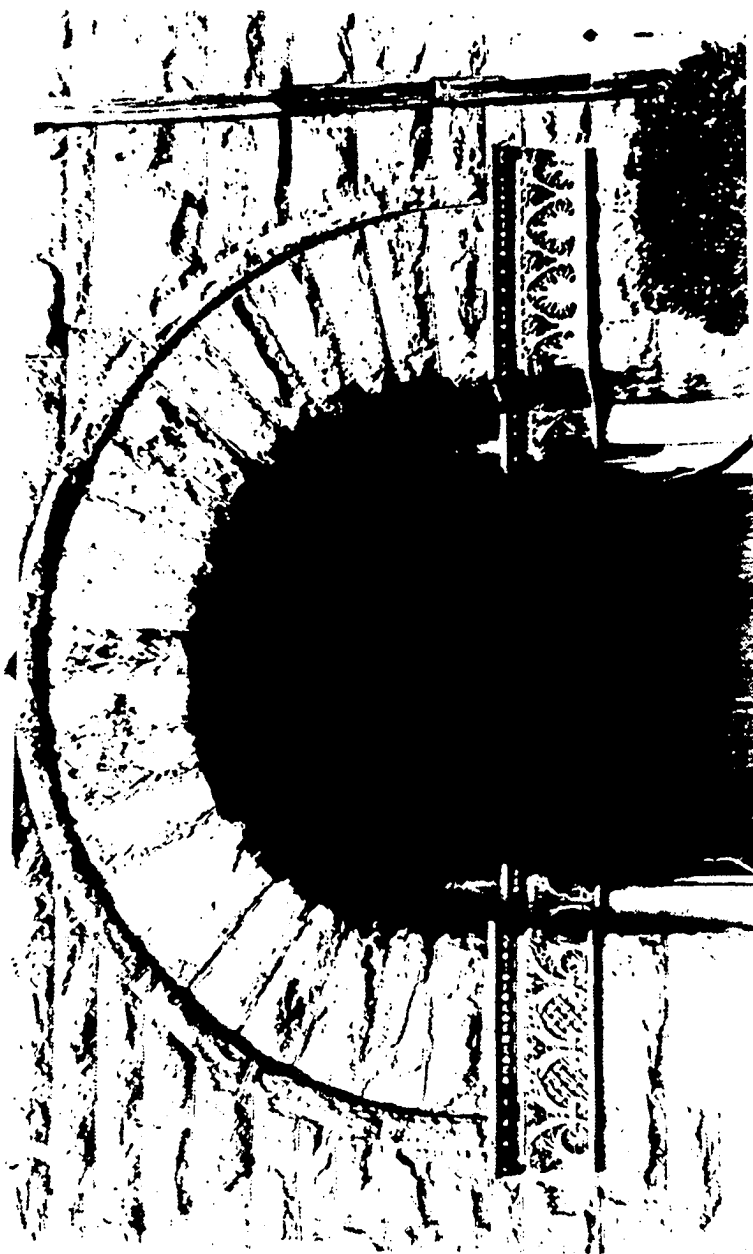


Figure 29. Exterior close-up of the sandstone frieze which is found at all doorways of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA, April 1982. Photograph by Judith L. Smith.



Figure 30. Exterior arcade on the south side of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA, April 1982. Note the delicate capitals and the grill work. Photograph by Judith L. Smith.



below the dedication tablet, single engaged columns are on either end, but triple engaged columns frame the center window. This is a device that Richardson also used. The outside single columns are juxtaposed to single tall, slender columns that extend upwards, meeting the sandstone arch of the rose window and the frieze that ties this central arch to the two smaller arches of the flanking windows. The windows on the west facade also have column/capital frames, but only single columns are used this time. Once more, the tall, slender column meets the sandstone arches around the larger stained glass windows. There is a short frieze of vines that also becomes the capital for the taller column. The north and east facades do not have the column framing of windows or friezes.

In the fall of 1894 the roofing material was changed from slate to tile. Tile is much more appropriate for a Romanesque style church, even though replacement can be extremely difficult and expensive. Glass panels are at the crest of the crossing, but they do not distract from the harmony of the patterned roof. These panels are the source of light for the ocular window which is in the dome of the interior ceiling.

The rhythm is consistent in the overall treatment of the exterior. The architects repeated their chosen geometric shapes, but with a slight change on each exposed wall. For example, they use the rounded column as part of the window framing. Columns are used extensively on the south facade, with diminished use on the west wall windows, while none are used on the north wall and there are no windows at all on the east wall. Yet there is a continuity of design. The varied heights of towers, turrets, and roof lines could have left an impression of unsettled confusion, but the solidity of the granite and the downward

thrust of the sandstone arches secure the church to its foundation. In keeping with Ruskin's tenets, there is an honesty in the materials used; and like Richardson, Carpenter and Peebles were able to balance the various ideas and hold the entire structure together.

Two additional buildings were later added to the Epworth complex. One was a two-story brick educational building, erected in 1915, which would house many of the Sunday School classrooms (figure 31).⁷ This building is plain; however, the roof line, with its brick basket weave frieze and crenelated cornice, helps relieve the flatness of the facade. Brick masons attempted to alleviate the starkness by laying bricks in a pattern at the top of each window which adds interest to the regular brick courses. Two downspout drains from the flat roof frame the entrance with engaged square columns, but, in spite of this treatment, the overall appearance is not aesthetically successful (figure 32). In June 1937, the Gatewood House, which faced out onto Boush Street, was torn down because it could no longer safely house those Sunday School classes that were not in the Educational building. This part of the lot remained vacant until 1951 when church architect, A. Hansel Fink of Philadelphia, was asked to submit plans for a second structure which was to be attached to the 1915 building forming a "U" shape with a courtyard between the new building and the main body of the church. Plans for a chapel were also to be included (figure 33).⁸ The

⁷Floor plans for the ground and second floor of the new education building for Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church, 1915. The plans were drawn by the firm of Mitchell and Wilcox. No other information was available on these architects.

⁸Drawings for the second educational building for Epworth Methodist

Figure 31. Copy of the plans by Mitchell and Wilcox, Architects, for the ground and second floor classrooms in the new Education building at Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA, 1915.

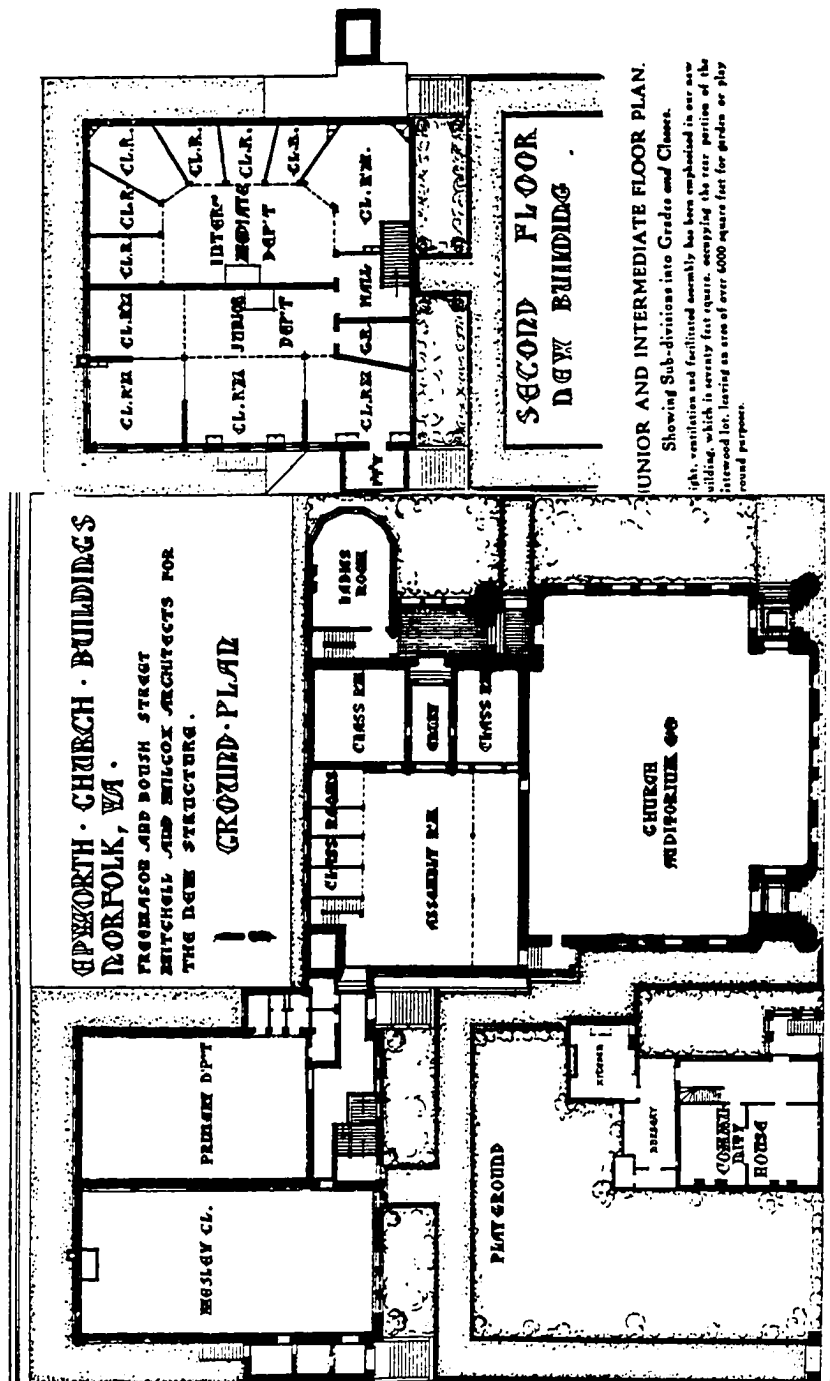


Figure 32. Copy of a photograph of the exterior of the Education building of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA, after 1915 and before the razing in June 1937 of the Gatewood house seen in the foreground. Unidentified photograph found in a box of Epworth Scrapbook memorabilia.

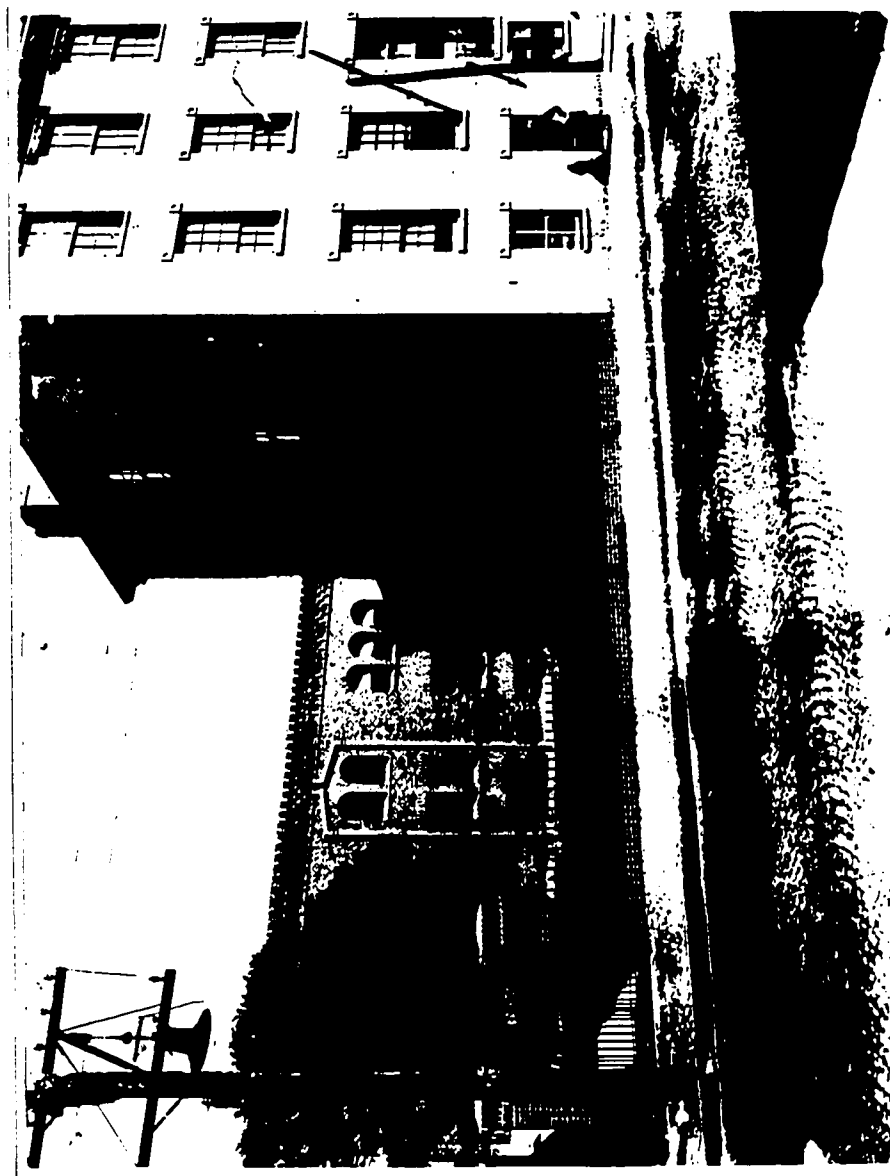
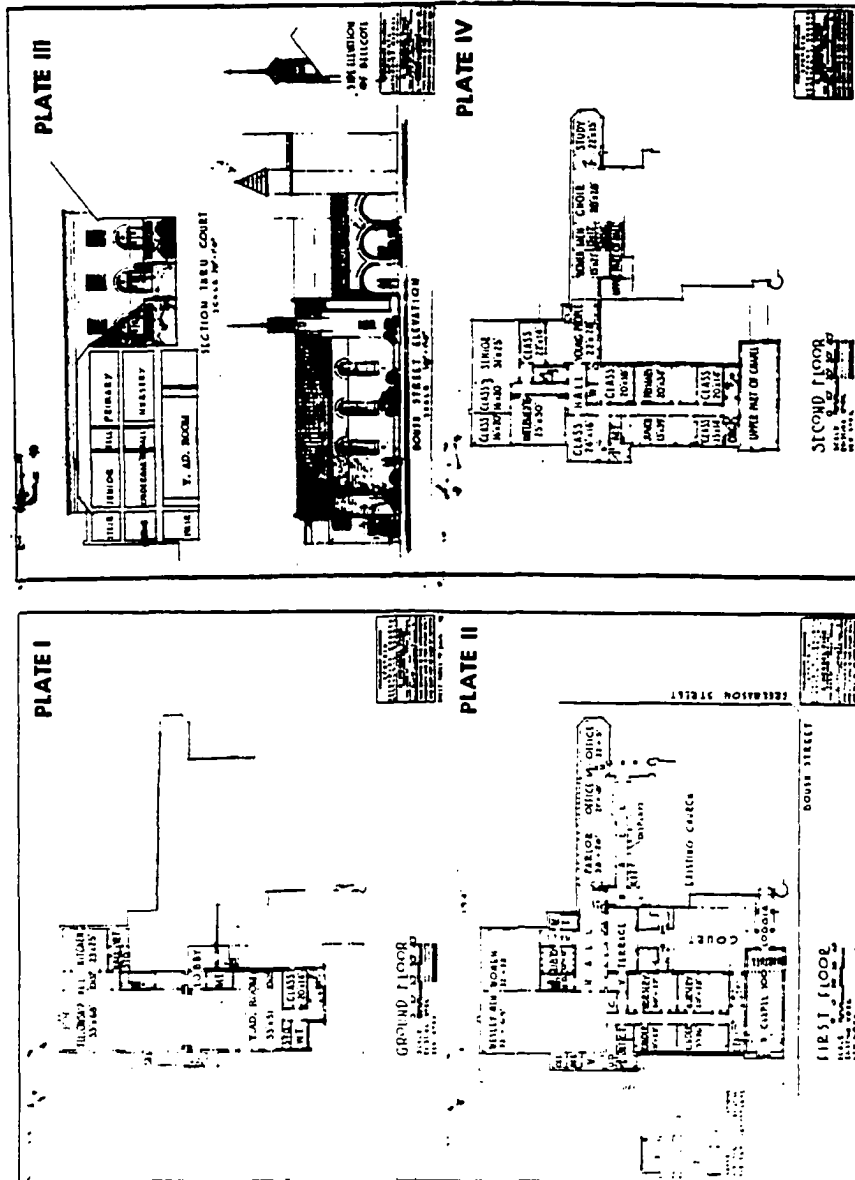


Figure 33. Copy of the drawings of the floor plans for the second educational building of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA, November 7, 1951. The plans were drawn by A. Hansel Fink, Architect, Philadelphia, PA.



chapel was never built, but the second educational building was. It now occupies all the space that was allotted for it and for the chapel in the drawings.

It is fortunate that these two buildings do not detract from the beauty of the church itself. They were necessary, if growth and the purposes of the church were to continue. Neither of these additional structures is unattractive; in fact, they are utilitarian buildings with some style, which never challenge the architectural excellence of this Romanesque revival church. The church stands firmly on its own merit.

There is no doubt that architects Carpenter and Peebles fulfilled the criteria for their design for the exterior of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church to be called Richardsonian Romanesque. The church has mass from any angle, and a richly textured surface, which has been accomplished by the use of natural materials. Romanesque arches are to be found over doorways, windows and an arcade. There are turrets, towers, and horizontal banding which bind and hold it all together successfully. It appears that Carpenter and Peebles used similar exterior plans for a Methodist church in Portsmouth which was dedicated on November 2, 1902 by Bishop John C. Cranberry (figure 34). This structure is still an active church now called the Garden of Prayer

Episcopal Church done by A. Hansel Fink of Philadelphia, 7 November 1951. These plans also include the chapel that was never built, the educational building comes to the edge of the sidewalk on Boush Street instead. These are the plans that were presented to the Board for approval. Louis Oliver, local architect and Board member, explained these plans to the Board since he would be in charge of the actual construction of the new addition. Fink was also responsible for Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D. C. and Dauphin Methodist Church in Mobile, Alabama. Their construction dates were unavailable.

Figure 34. Copy of a reproduction of the architect's drawing for South Street Baptist Church in Portsmouth, VA and the new Granby Street Methodist Church in Norfolk, VA, 1901. From Pictures in Maritime Dixie: Norfolk, VA Port and City, The Chamber of Commerce Book found in the collection of the Sargent Room in the Kirn Memorial Library, Norfolk, VA. Special note: labels for both of these churches are incorrect.



New Granby Street Methodist Church, Norfolk.
Carpenter & Peebles, Architects, Norfolk.



South Street Baptist Church, Portsmouth.
Carpenter & Peebles, Architects, Norfolk.

Temple Church of God in Christ⁹. There is another essential component that must be addressed if the whole church is to be designated Richardsonian Romanesque, and that is the architects' treatment of the interior. Chapter 7 will discuss this feature.

⁹The church has had several names. On the architectural drawing it was labeled South Street Baptist Church. Maybe the Baptists never built this church, because the only structure that fits this drawing was Central Methodist Church on the corner of South Street and Washington Street. There was no record in Portsmouth of a South Street Baptist Church that could have been built during the partnership of Carpenter and Peebles. There are many elements on the exterior of the church that are similar to Epworth, including the sandstone frieze and the rusticated stone. The overall effect is that of a diminutive Epworth. The interior has a domed ceiling, and the pews are installed in an arc with no center aisle. There is no other known documentation that attributes this design for this church to Carpenter and Peebles other than this drawing from Pictures in Maritime Dixie: Norfolk, VA, Port and City by A. M., The Chamber of Commerce Book (Norfolk, VA: George W. Engelhardt, 1901). Also see Lucile V. Gailey, "Central Overcomes Buffets", Norfolk (VA) Ledger Star, November 16, 1963.

CHAPTER 7

ART OF EPWORTH METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Interior decoration was important to H. H. Richardson who felt that "a rich effect of color in the interior was an essential element in the design."¹ He gathered great talents around him to design the stained glass and to decorate the walls of his ecclesiastical, domestic, and commercial buildings. At Trinity Church in Boston, John LaFarge (1835-1910) was in charge of the decorative program. His talents can be found in the murals depicting the prophets, the woman of Samaria, and Nicodemus as well as in the picture windows which were examples of his discovery of opaline glass. Like Richardson's exterior, the windows are a study and commentary on an all-important period of American art.² English Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones' (1833-1898) contribution was a small window portraying the collection of treasure for the building of Solomon's temple.³ Norfolk's Carpenter and Peebles, agreeing with the Richardson ideal, decided that the interior of Epworth

¹Douglass Shand Tucci, Built in Boston, City and Suburb, 1800-1950 (Boston: MA: New York Graphic Society, 1978), 47.

²Irene Sargent, "Trinity Church, Boston, as a Monument of American Art," Craftsman 3 (March 1903), 336.

³Ibid., 337.

Methodist Episcopal Church was to be that of a `color` church. Thus this partnership also directed the furnishing of the interior.

Epworth's main auditorium is a 65 foot by 130 foot rectangle which, with the galleries, will seat 1000 people. A good description of the original interior was provided by the Public Ledger when the church was dedicated:

Springing from corners of the galleries and resting on beautifully carved Corinthian pillars are four grand arches, each having a span of fifty feet. Fifty-four feet above the sanctuary is a dome. The center of this dome is stained glass, lighted during the day through a large sky-light above, and at night by a great ring of incandescent lights.

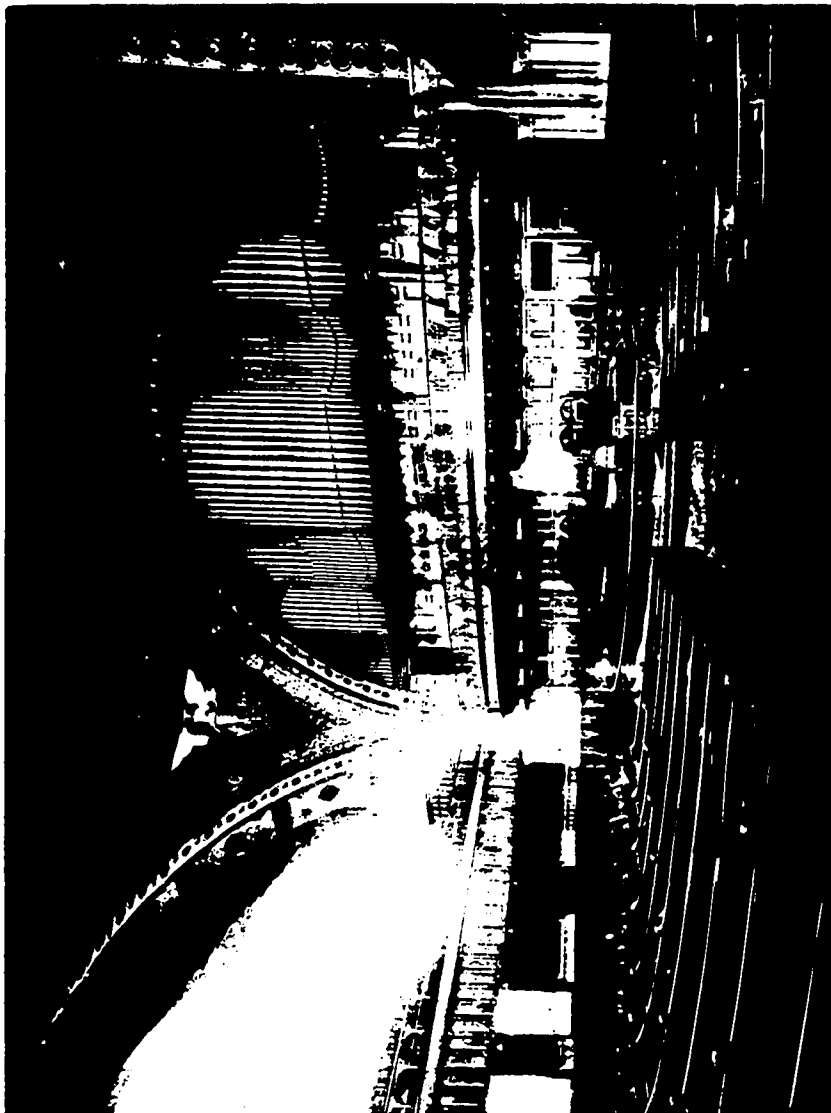
The four commodious galleries are of equal size and rest on stone pilasters, being carried by heavy trusses concealed in the front paneling, so that there is not a pillar or other support to mar the perfect symmetry of the interior. In the front and on an elevation with the other galleries are the choir and magnificent organ, the latter completely filling the arch and extending the entire length of the gallery.⁴

The architectural principal for this design of placing a dome on a square bay can be traced to the third century A.D. One of the most famous structures to use this principal is the Hagia Sophia which was constructed between 533-537 A. D. in what was then Constantinople. However, unlike the Hagia Sophia, the exterior of Epworth does not indicate that this design was selected for the interior of the church, and the interior is not square.

Continuing with the Byzantine influence, the architects of Epworth chose to have geometric patterns frescoed on all the arches, the arched ceilings over three of the galleries, and on the curved walls of the dome (figure 35). There was no description of the colors used in this

⁴Norfolk (VA) Public Ledger, January 20, 1896, 1.

Figure 35. Copy of a photograph of the interior of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA about 1896. Unidentified photograph found in a box of Epworth Scrapbook memorabilia.



INTERIOR OF EPWORTH M. E. CHURCH—Norfolk.

frescoing in the news clippings, board minutes, or the scrapbook, and the copy of the photograph used was in black and white. This information would have been lost if, in 1985, a small patch on the ceiling of the north gallery had not peeled, uncovering one of the frescoed circles with the Maltese cross in the center and a small section of what had been the rectangular border enclosing this and four other circles. The colors appeared to be a soft gold background with terra cotta for the cross and the small circle enclosing the cross. The frescoing was painted as if it was a mosaic with individual tesserae. The border seems to be either black or very dark brown and it is solid, not mosaic (figure 36). It is remarkable that this original work has withstood overpainting at least four times, but it is a credit to the artist's use of the proper method of fresco which does become part of the wall and not just a surface application like regular paint.

Though the quality of the copied photograph is poor, the frescoed tree of life pattern is discernible in one band around the dome. An ecclesiastical pattern on the interior of the four arches appears to be a familiar one of the quatrefoil, representing the four gospels. Another band over each of the arches and around the dome is the Maltese cross inside the circle (figure 36).

The personifications of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Love have been frescoed on the pendentives by New York muralist Edward J. N. Stent.⁵

⁵Faith, Hope and Charity are the only three theological virtues that are mentioned in I Corinthians 13:13. Charity has been used as being synonymous with Love. The artist of these frescoes, Edward J. N. Stent, may have taken artistic license by separating "Charity" and "Love" so that there are four figures for the four spandrels. Because the attributes are confusing and overlapping, as in the case of the palm

Figure 36. Revealed fresco on the ceiling of the north gallery of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA, June 1985 before repainting took place. Photograph by Gladys Blair.



These figures remain vibrantly colorful 93 years after the completion of the work. Close examination does not reveal either repainting or touch-up work nor do the Board Minutes indicate any repair on these frescoes (figure 37).

The lower half of the first floor walls and the wall area below the gallery railings are polished oak paneling. Complementing the paneling are oak pews with carved Maltese cross end panels. The pews are arranged in a semi-circle rather than the traditional ritual space, making Epworth's sanctuary, like Richardson's design for the interior of Trinity Church, an auditorium. It is an open space under a great lantern. The concentric semi-circles of pews cause the usual apse, transepts and nave to become vestigial.⁶

In the front of the sanctuary, and on an elevation with the other galleries, were the choir and the Hook and Hastings organ, which was reported to be the largest organ in the South. It filled the entire east gallery from side to side. When the architects, Peebles and Ferguson, made plans for the renovation of the church in 1921, they

frond which could be conceived as either Hope or Charity, it is difficult to say positively which is which.

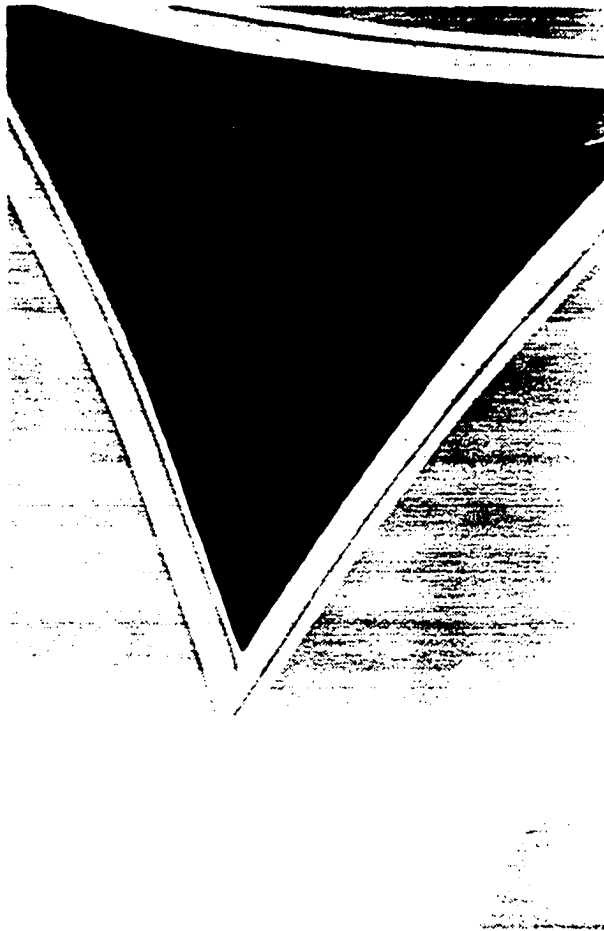
Research has not uncovered any additional information on Stent. He was working at the same time as one of the more famous muralists, Edwin Howland Blashfield (1848-1936). Blashfield's work influenced many muralists. John La Farge was very well known for his murals and could also have been an influence. Without other examples of Stent's work and more knowledge about him, nothing further can be suggested.

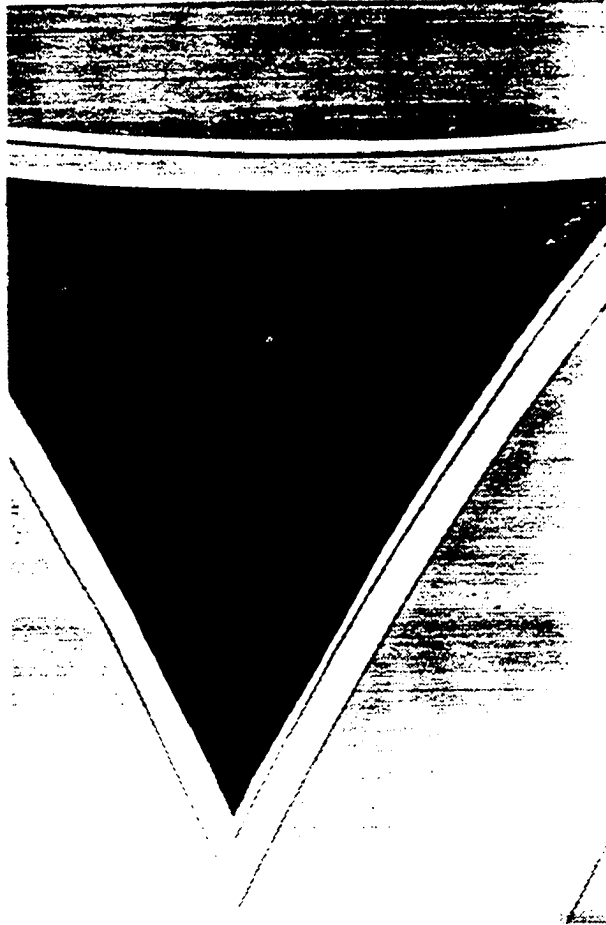
⁶Walter C. Kidney, Architecture of Choice: Eclecticism in America, 1880-1930 (New York: George Braziller, 1974), 13. Kidney gives one of the few discussions of the interior appointments of Trinity Church. The comparison is my own.

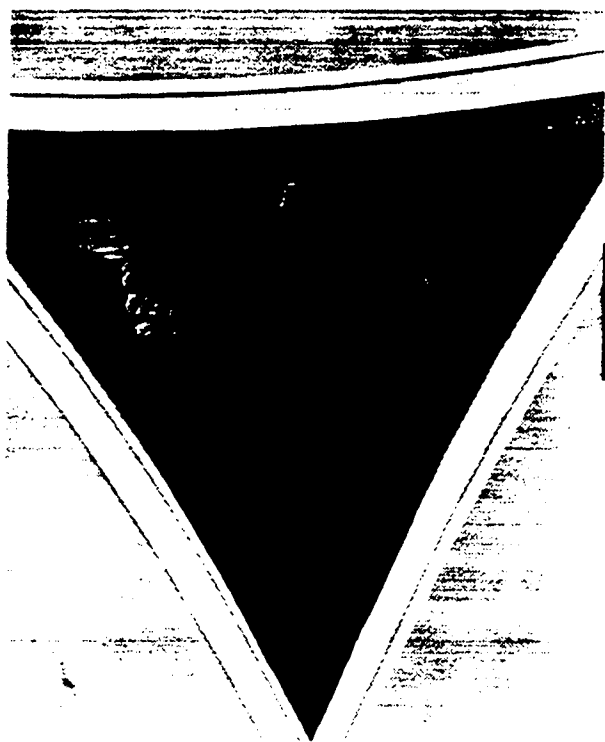
Figure 37A, B, C and D. Theological virtues of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Love personified frescoes on the pendentives in the auditorium of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA by the New York muralist Edward J. N. Stent, 1896. Photographs by Judith L. Smith.

- 37A. Faith
- 37B. Hope
- 37C. Charity
- 37D. Love









lowered the choir loft which made it necessary to rebuild the organ to fit this new space. The Hall Organ Company, instead of Hook and Hastings, was hired to rebuild and reinstall the organ, under the direction and following the designs of Peebles and Calrow.⁷ Repair on the organ was necessary after a fire of unknown origin damaged it in 1937.

General repair and maintenance was again required in 1943. When Theodore Lewis, a prominent organ builder from Washington, D. C., worked on the organ in 1949, he said that approximately \$6,000 worth of repairs should be contemplated within the next five years to sustain its capabilities. He further stated that to purchase a comparable replacement would cost between 30,000 and 40,000 dollars.⁸ Negotiations with the Aeolian-Skinner Organ Company for a new organ began in 1957 and culminated in the installation of the new organ which was first played for services on December 20, 1959.⁹ Members and friends purchased memorials which permitted the organ to be debt-free by June 4, 1962. This organ

⁷Hunt, 21. There is nothing to explain why Hall did the rebuilding instead of Hook and Hastings. There was a bill for \$20,640 from the Hall Organ company dated May 6, 1922. "Great Organ of the Church to be Dedicated," Norfolk (VA) Ledger Dispatch, March 18, 1922, 14. This is the first and only mention of partner Charles J. Calrow (1877-1938) who was a life-long resident of Norfolk, Virginia. Calrow was apprenticed as a draftsman to J. E. R. Carpenter until 1905 when he became a partner in the firm of Ferguson, Calrow and Taylor. Peebles joined this firm in 1917. The information on Calrow is from The Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased).

⁸Official Board Minutes, March 6, 1949.

⁹Ibid., April 19, 1957 and November 2, 1959. There is no record of the new organ's cost.

is still the church's major musical instrument.

General interior design, or significant elements incorporated in the design, often make a lasting impression on the viewer. While the spaciousness of the church's interior is comfortable and the personified frescoes on the pendentives are pleasing to see, it is the stained glass windows memorializing past members of Epworth that can be considered the interior architectural treasures of the church. There are a total of 23 windows divided between the north, south, and west walls, plus the opaline glass ocular in the apex of the interior dome. Nineteen of these windows are not the original windows installed in the church (figure 25). Only the rose windows on the north and south walls, the two plain opaline windows in the vestibule and the Frances Taylor Memorial window on the south wall are originals. An old photograph in an Epworth scrapbook dating to 1939 shows a close-up of the original windows on the north side of the building. They were basically done in solid opaline glass with a Christian symbol, in most cases a cross, in the center. It is quite possible that, as memorial windows were installed in the church, these original windows were removed and placed elsewhere in the church building. The chapel in the basement, now the Crusader Room, has four opaline windows which face out onto a narrow alleyway. Because of cost, the original windows in this room would not have been opaline glass. It is reasonable and practical to suggest that these windows might have come from the auditorium and were placed in the chapel for atmosphere and appearance as well as to segregate this room from adjacent classrooms. Today, on the main floor of the auditorium, 12 figural windows of a Tiffany style commemorate prominent members or

their families. Each window displays a single, larger-than-life figure in flowing robes. A few have attributes which should make it easier to identify them, such as the carrying of a fish. This usually is St. Peter, who was a fisherman by trade before his calling to become a disciple. However, this figure in an Epworth window is a character from The Apocrypha, the Guardian Angel Raphael. This is an appropriate figure since the window memorializes Epworth pastor Dr. W. J. Young's two small daughters who died two days apart from diphtheria.¹⁰ All figures in the windows have halos and most have wings which, in some cases, fill the colored glass archway of the window so tightly that very little open space is given to the figure. One of the few figures that seems to have atmosphere around it is located on the north wall and is dedicated to S. R. White. Though the archway and memorial tablet are companioned with its neighbor, which is dedicated to Richard Dodson, the subject of the White window is unique in that it appears to be a warrior saint. However, this warrior saint carries in one hand a shield with the Star of David emblazoned on the front and in the other hand what appears to be a scourge. The incongruity of the halo and wings coupled with the Star of David shield make it difficult to identify this figure

¹⁰This information on the Young window came from a news clipping in the Epworth Scrapbook. No date or newspaper name was attached to the clipping, but the tense of the verbs in the article made the information a current event, therefore the date had to be between 1895 and 1899 during Dr. Young's tenure at Epworth. Keeping in mind that the church dedication was not until January 19, 1896, it is probable that the window was put in by or just after this date and not after 1899. This made the Young window one of the earliest figural windows in the church. It is on the north wall and not visible in the photographic reproduction of the church's exterior in 1896 (figure 24).

with certainty.¹¹ The companion window's figure also has attributes in a combination--a bunch of lilies in one hand and an orb in the other, that do not lend themselves to identification of the figure.

The windows on the north wall seem to be from a different company than those on the west and south walls which appear to come from the same studio.¹² The north wall figures are not readily identifiable. Blue sky-like glass is used around the heads of the figures, adding atmosphere to the window. There is more painting in of details; for example, the helmet, face, and crown are painted in on the warrior with shield. The surface glass seems smoother to the touch with fewer irregularities in the glass. Blunt, three-pointed arches were used to frame the figures rather than the round arches found in the other windows. It is unfortunate that there is no record of the name of the studios that produced these windows. All of these main floor windows are fascinating and add much to the atmosphere of the auditorium; however, it is the windows in the gallery of the auditorium that are the jewels of Epworth.

¹¹A warrior figure with the Star of David on a shield usually describes King David from the Old Testament. A warrior saint, halo and wings, with armor are attributes of St. George, a personage from the Middle Ages. The drapery around the figure is similar to that found on figures from the first century. There also is a crown on the figure's head, which would lend support to the supposition that it is King David.

The attributes in all of the main floor windows make the identification of the figures more than a bit difficult. These figures are of lesser known biblical persons.

¹²There is an exception to this statement: the two outer windows in the quartet of figures on the west wall, ground floor, appear to be from a third firm.

Rose windows are centered and balance the north and south walls. Colored opaline glass fills the 12 border circles of the windows with more opaline glass making a multi-petaled flower in the center of each window. No date was found for the installation of stained glass in the rose windows, but Reverend Samuel T. Senter, Epworth's pastor from 1914 to 1919, commented that "while there were several lovely art glass windows in Epworth, he hoped that the rose windows would also be filled with colored glass in the near future." (figure 38)¹³

Flanking the rose windows are four memorial windows dedicated to members of the Carl Moore Jordan family, two on the north wall and two on the south wall. Easter Sunday, 1931 was the dedication date for the south wall Jordan windows. The subjects are David and Jonathan, appropriately dedicated to Jordan's brother, Wallace Pell Jordan, and Christ Knocking at the Door for his father and mother, Reverend William and Alice Moore Jordan. On Easter Sunday 1935, the north wall Jordan windows were dedicated to the paternal and maternal grandparents of Mr. Jordan. Moses the Law Giver and Isaac and Rebekah were the Old Testament subjects selected by Jordan and approved by the Board of Stewards for this wall (figure 39).

The George W. Haskin Studio of Rochester, New York made the Jordan

¹³Reverend Senter's comments were in the Epworth scrapbook. Much of the information in the scrapbook is without sources or dates. Perhaps Reverend Senter meant that he hoped for a pictorial rose window, because new information documents the purchase of two colored glass rose windows, installation material, and a request for help--presumably help in the installation process. The order was placed with the J. & R. Lamb Studio on Carmine Street in New York, NY on April 18, 1897, and the windows were delivered on May 9 of that same year.

Figure 38. Copy of the order for two rose windows from the ledger of J. & R. Lamb Studio, Philmont, NY (formerly on Carmine Street, New York, NY). This copy was supplied by Susan Swantek of the Lamb Studio.

[illegible]

Figure 39. Issac and Rebekah, and Moses the Law Giver, Jordan memorial windows on the gallery north wall of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA, Easter Sunday 1935. Designed by the George Waldo Haskins Studios, 35 James Street, Rochester, NY. Photograph by Judith L. Smith.



windows in antique glass. Each of the windows designed by German-born Erwin Merzweiler and Haskins is lovely, but Moses the Law Giver draws the viewer's attention. Following a very old medieval tradition, the rays coming from Moses' head appear to look almost like horns. This precedent was expressed by the sculptor Claus Sluter, 1350-1406, in his Moses Well at Chartreuse de Champmol, Dijon, France and by Michelangelo, 1475-1564, in his marble statue of Moses at San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome.

Haskin Studio had placed stained glass windows in nearly 2,000 churches in the United States, two in Canada and one in Korea at the time of Haskin's death in August, 1953.¹⁴ His most famous work was 16 windows completed in 1928 for Aimie Semple McPherson's Angelus Temple in Los Angeles. McPherson personally contacted Haskins and commissioned him to undertake this project after she saw his work on a visit to Rochester.¹⁵ The Temple windows cost \$15,000, which may be a guide to the expense of the Jordan windows.

On the west wall of the gallery are three magnificent opalescent stained glass windows (figure 40). The actual installation dates of

¹⁴"George W. Haskins Dies. Church Window Creator."
Rochester (NY) Democrat and Chronicle, August 1, 1953.

¹⁵Mary E. Samples, representative for Angelus Temple in Los Angeles, CA to Smith, June 4, 1986. Information on the commissioning of the windows and photographs of the windows was drawn from the archives of the church. The Jordan Windows, when compared with the photographs of the Temple windows, appear to be a bit narrower, but they have as many horizontal panels. The Jordan windows are also made with the darker jewel tones of stained glass as opposed to the more pastel colors of the Temple windows which exemplified the diverse talents of the artists. Haskin Studio was demolished some time after Haskins' death.

Figure 40. Christ Visiting the Home of Mary and Martha, B. T. Bockover memorial window, about 1907. Ascension, Lekies memorial window after April 1917. Faith, Hope and Charity, Core memorial window, after December 1910. Located on the gallery west wall of Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, VA. Faith, Hope and Charity is the documented work of the J. & R. Lamb Studio, Carmine Street, New York, NY. Photographed by Judith L. Smith.

- 40A. Christ Visiting the Home of Mary and Martha
- 40B. Ascension
- 40C. Faith, Hope and Charity







these windows are unknown, but research in the Board Minutes leads to an educated guess of 1907 for the Bockover window; after December 1910 for the Core window; and, after April 1917 for the Lekies window.¹⁶ Tradition at the church attributed these windows to Tiffany Studios in New York, but since they were not signed, the expertise of Norfolk's Chrysler Museum assistant glass curator Gary Baker was enlisted to identify them. Baker closely examined the windows and determined that while the quality of the work was excellent, they were not, in his opinion, "Tiffany" windows.

Further investigation brought forth the name of the Gorham Company which for more than a century had an ecclesiastical division that made stained glass windows.¹⁷ These windows were available through the Gorham showroom at Fifth Avenue and 36th Street in New York. While

¹⁶Official Board Minutes, November 5, 1906 note that Board of Trustees is to purchase a window to the memory of B. T. Bockover. The location and design of the window would also be decided on by the Board of Trustees. The Board Minutes of October 3, 1910 discuss the Core bequest of \$5,000. Wooden announcement boards were purchased from this bequest, but they would not have cost \$5,000. On December 5, 1910, members of the Board conferred with the lawyers who represented the Core estate to try to devise a way of easing the funds from the estate for use by the church at that time. There is no other mention of the funds being used for anything else in the church; thus it is surmised that the remaining funds purchased the large memorial window. The Board Minutes of February 5, 1917 report that the LeKies fund for the memorial window and for raising the chimes would be available in about April of that year. No other mention is made of the installation or dedication, but the October 10, 1917 minutes report that work was being done on the tower to raise it to accommodate better the LeKies chimes. It can probably be assumed that the money for the window was released at approximately the same time.

¹⁷Roper and Deming.

Epworth Board Minutes of January 7, 1918 note the installation of bronze memorial tablets purchased from Gorham¹⁸ and perhaps other memorial tablets were purchased from Gorham's foundry as well, Gorham has no record of orders from Epworth for stained glass windows.¹⁹

In each of the windows, the placement of the opaline glass is done very well. The only painting in each of the windows was done on the faces, hair, hands, feet, and in the case of Christ Visiting Mary and Martha on a small white bowl on the table and on a bowl in the arm of Martha which has a painted lip. In this same window, the perspective achieved in the placement of the floor tiles and the scenery behind the head of Christ is excellent. Attention to detail on the bottle in Martha's hand demonstrates exceptional skill in placement and leading. In the Ascension window, the figure of Christ is the focus, but it is the faces of the disciples and that of the Magdalene that draw the eye. There seems to be a double layer of painted glass on these features which gives phenomenal depth. The same technique appears in the faces, hands, and feet of the female figures in the Core window (Figure 40C). Although Epworth records refer to this as the Core window, newly documented information entitles it Faith, Hope and Charity, designed by J. & R. Lamb Studio on Camine Street in New York, New York (Figure 41).

¹⁸Official Board Minutes, January 7, 1918.

¹⁹Dr. Mark Brown, curator of manuscripts, John Hay Library, Brown University to Smith, July 11, 1989. Ann Holbrook, Gorham Tectron consumer relations to Smith, June 24, 1986 also included a few duplicated pages from early Gorham window catalogues from 1914, 1920 and 1925. None of these windows were done in the style of the three Epworth windows.

Figure 41. Copy of the order for the Core window from the ledger of the J. & R. Lamb Studio, Philmont, NY (formerly on Carmine Street, New York, NY). Since no year is on this order, the previously speculated date of "after December 10, 1910" stands. This copy was supplied by Susan Swantek of the Lamb Studio.

John A. Core 13.
Norfolk
June 6
The
Memorial window
about
12'6" x 6'7"
Engraving:- Wash
Dulwich "Charity" as per design
2 Plots in base
of "Hundred" plate overhanging
base guard.

Photo of finished window to be sent to
Mr. Lane.

Edward M. E.
The Quaker
Lancaster
In memory of my wife
MARTHA ANNE CORE, nee TARRANT
Born May 2, 1829, Died June 14, 1902.
Faith, Hope and Charity, the greatest of
these is Charity. Well done, Thou good
and faithful servant, thou hast been
faithful over a few things, I will make
thee ruler over many things: enter
thou into the joy of thy Lord.
Set complete
Full size of inscription
to be sent to Mr. Lane
before printing.

Alc. 23, place 28

Colors in the stained glass are of a very high quality as is the placement of these colors in the elaborate arches of the Ascension and Faith, Hope, and Charity. Though the arches in Christ Visiting Mary and Martha are not as elaborate, the coloration and shading in the glass gives a stone-like quality to the Romanesque arches. Praise is easy to give to these three windows. With one window positively identified by Lamb Studio archives, research continues to discover the identity of the studio(s) for the remaining two windows.

The effect of glass in a church can be the first and last impression taken away by a visitor. Epworth is indeed fortunate in having some outstanding examples of both the antique glass and the opaline glass windows which express the full spectrum of the use of glass in revival architecture. Though the windows help to create a contemplative attitude, they also adhere to Richardson's principle of designing a "color" church.

Richardson's influence is found in the seating arrangements in the auditorium, the murals, and the richly colored stained glass. Like Keely following the tenets of Pugin, Carpenter and Peebles attempted to do the same with the ideas of Richardson. Their plans for the interior furnishing of Epworth were in harmony with the impressive Romanesque exterior. The "whole" structure is a successful sum of its parts, which can be designated Richardsonian Romanesque.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMATION

Norfolk, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, can probably be best described as a growing, mercantile, port city. In conjunction with growth came the construction of buildings, and the buildings developed into the cultural indicators of the growing city. These structures embodied the community's aspirations in becoming sophisticated, in touch with the world outside Norfolk, and aware of the current trends in the arts and architecture. Two different architectural firms, one from outside the area and one local, were responsible for the designs of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church and Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church. While the selected styles of architecture for these churches are dissimilar, they epitomize the values held by their respective congregations; and when their periods of construction are bracketed together (1856-1898), they span and define an important era in Norfolk's urban history.

Though the two churches being discussed evolved out of a similar need for a place of worship which was within a comfortable traveling distance for their congregations, the architectural style for each church was selected by entirely different guidelines. Historically, the dioceses or archdioceses of the Catholic Church made the decisions on the style of architecture used for a new church. In the nineteenth

century, the Catholic Church praised the ideas and ideals they felt were demonstrated in Gothic designs as interpreted by A. W. Pugin; thus, many Catholic churches built between 1840 and 1900 were in the Gothic. From the beginning, individual Protestant churches made their own decisions usually in the aegis of a board composed of elected lay persons and the minister for the congregation. Therefore, selected architectural styles cannot be viewed as conforming with the tenets of the Church, but rather with the wishes of the congregation as seen in the drawings of the chosen architect. It can be speculated that the Romanesque design of Epworth represented the impression the Board, as the spokesman for the congregation, wanted to make on the citizenry--one of stability and dignity.

In both cases, a revival style of architecture was selected, which, during that period of time, was popular in many other areas of the country. Montgomery Schuyler states that:

in architecture alone men look back upon the masterpieces of the past not as points of departure but as ultimate attainments and reproducing the forms of these as monuments.

A good example in the hands of a skillful practitioner can enlighten the public. An enlightened public admires and justifies the examples set forth by the practitioner. It has been the birthright of most Americans to be reared in a country in which admirable monuments have been familiar to him from childhood.¹

This is not to say that either of these churches was built with the idea of being a monument, but they were constructed with the hope of their

¹Montgomery Schuyler, American Architecture and Other Writings, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 1, section 1: 99 and 105.

being sources of pride for their members and for the city. Consciously or unconsciously, people are affected by the architecture around them; therefore, church structures which are built with dignity and honesty should produce desirable influences on the community.

Economic stratification differed in the two churches. Generally speaking, St. Mary's served a middle to lower income membership composed of second and third generation working class immigrants, but among the charter members of Epworth's congregation were some of the most prominent business and professional men in Norfolk. This diversification could be seen in the promptness of paying off the building debt and the installation of such things as the memorial stained glass windows.

When these churches were constructed, they were surrounded by local businesses, and the homes of their members were in nearby residential areas. Major activities in their members' lives, such as their jobs, church, home, and shopping, were close. The churches had their differences in style of edifice, practiced tenets, and economics; but they also had their similarities in being revival style architecture constructed in an era of growth in their city, in an urban location, an influence in the lives of their members, and a source of civic pride. This environment lasted through two World Wars and fifteen years of relative peace until the early 1960's when both churches faced a common serious problem, urban flight. Urban flight meant that the more affluent population moved from the neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown area to housing areas which were at a distance from the center of the city. As a result, formerly prestigious neighborhoods began to decline until some could be considered slum housing. The businesses

that surrounded the churches were vacated on the weekends, leaving behind a vacuum of inactivity. Many businesses moved away from the city proper to shopping malls which had been built closer to the newer housing areas. More churches were built in the neighborhoods which were closer to the homes of their congregation and potential new members. Areas of deteriorating dwellings and oppressed inhabitants had little interest or money to support and improve the church structures. The burden of maintenance was left to those who, for the most part, could least afford it.

By the 1970's, both churches were aware that they needed to make modifications in their attitudes and methods of reaching out to old and new members. The most radical changes had already appeared in the liturgy of the Catholic church after Vatican II, but the Protestant churches also realized that to survive in the heart of the city, staid attitudes and atmosphere would have to go. Churches have never been known for their ability to make rapid modifications in any facet of their doctrine. Their strength has come from a slow but sure approach; thus, while neither church rushed to make changes, a reformation in ideas did take place.

City planners in Norfolk also realized drastic steps were necessary, if the city was to stay alive. Redevelopment in the city proper would be necessary to entice older businesses to remain there and new ones to begin. Plans for a renovation project of older buildings and the building of new structures were being discussed for the area west of Boush Street, south to the Boush Cold Storage plant and bordered by Freemason Street on the north. These plans were welcomed by nearby

Epworth church, since the project included new homes which could mean the return of potential members for the church. Some renovation was taking place near St. Mary's. Substandard housing was being torn down, but a shopping mall was erected in its stead rather than improved housing.

Housing areas on the periphery of the city's center were rejuvenated by the building of new structures and the refurbishing of older well-built homes. Neighborhoods began to regain lost pride. Some former citizens, frustrated by long commuting problems, came back to these neighborhoods, and new families sought homes here instead of in other contiguous cities. With the return of families to the urban area came a renewed interest in urban worship centers. This affected Epworth more than it did St. Mary's.

After reaching a very low point in the late 1970's, Epworth was being revitalized. In 1982, the older minister at Epworth saw the need for a younger leader to sustain this revitalization. The Board sent a letter to Dr. M. Douglas Newman, Norfolk District Superintendent of the United Methodist Church, requesting the placement of a young minister at Epworth. Employing a younger minister, H. Randolph Arrington, brought amazing results; attendance was up with young families as well as older members coming back to Epworth. On June 11, 1982, J. Edward Gatling, chairman of the Board of Trustees, wrote a letter to District Superintendent Newman describing the events from 1980-1982 in hopes of encouraging other congregations and ministers in downtown churches who were

suffering from the flight to the suburbs.²

St. Mary's was still struggling. Because the parish membership had been split in 1961 on the basis of domicile location, many of the white members were relocated to suburban churches nearer their homes. Simultaneously, St. Mary's had had to absorb the membership of St. Joseph's Church because the building which housed this predominately black membership was being torn down and the congregation was assigned to St. Mary's. This changed the population of St. Mary's from all white to 95 percent black, and the economic base became that of low income families. It took some time before the new congregation could establish a feeling of belonging to St. Mary's and to regain the previous congregation's sense of pride.

By 1983, Epworth began to work with two nearby churches, Freemason Street Baptist Church and St. Mary's Catholic Church, to plan a strategy for participating in the revival of downtown image and activity. Planning included a joint sunrise service on Easter Sunday morning, sponsored by these three churches, with the advertising to be handled by the city Chamber of Commerce. This was the first ecumenical service involving these urban churches. Interdenominational efforts continued with joint family night programs. Memberships of these churches began to grow which contributed to renewed strength for their city. A poem, by an unknown author, appears in Lumpkin's book on The History of Freemason Street Baptist Church, 1848-1972. It is called "The Reverie of a Downtown Church,"

I am a downtown church. Some people pity me, for they think I

²Official Board Minutes, September 13, 1982.

am destined to grow weak and die. But they do not know me or they would know better. I live to serve. I exist for others. This may be the reason why I continue to keep my strength through the years.³

While much of what this poem conveys is true, it was the congregations of each of these churches that worked so hard to give their church back its pride and its place in the continuing history of Norfolk. Their revival spans the past, but it is also an important indicator for the future.

³William Latone Lumpkin, The History of the Freemason Street Baptist Church, 1848-1972 (Norfolk, VA: Phaup Printing Co., 1973), 200.

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