

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name HANOVER MEETING HOUSE
 other names/site number Polegreen Presbyterian Church
Polegreen Church Archaeological Site (44Hn82)

2. Location

street & number Route 643, 2000' N of jct. SR 627 not for publication
 city, town Mechanicsville, VA vicinity
 state Virginia code VA county Hanover code 85 zip code 23111

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Wayne C. Miller 7/11/91
 Signature of certifying official Date
Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources
 State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

 Signature of commenting or other official Date
 State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

 Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Section 7: Description

The Polegreen Church Archaeological Site (44Hn82) lies in a wooded tract of 3.5 acres along Rural Point Road (Route 643) in a rural section of Hanover County, Virginia. The site is covered in mature woods of mixed hardwood and pine. The maturity of the growth indicates that the trees now standing on the site have been growing on the relatively undisturbed plot of ground since Polegreen Church was destroyed during the Cold Harbor campaign (Battle of Totopotomoy and Bethesda Church) on June 1, 1864. The site lies within the area recently designated for conservation of resources related to that battle by the National Park Service (1990).

The property is traditionally known as the site of "old Pole Green Church" and is situated "on the east line of State Route 643 north of the intersection with Route 627, Hanover County, Virginia," and is identified as parcel 3-25 on the Hanover County tax map. Clear title to the property was affirmed to "The Samuel Davies Church Trustees" by a title search stemming from a court case of November 12, 1922. The proceedings of this case and title search were recorded on October 22, 1929 in Deed Book 90, p.292, accompanied by a plat in Plat Book 9, Plat No. 2. In 1985, the deed was transferred to constituents of the Hanover Presbytery; namely, a 3/10 interest to Trustees of Beulah Presbyterian Church and a 7/10 interest to Trustees of Salem Presbyterian Church. Presently, the property is owned by the Historic Polegreen Church Foundation, a non-profit corporation of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The location of the property is indicated on Figure 1.

The site was originally registered by Mr. J. R. Saunders of Hanover County in the 1970s. Archaeological testing of the site was begun in 1989 by Virginia Commonwealth University's Archaeological Research Center, under the direction of L. Daniel Mouer. This work was undertaken in the interest of determining the location of major features on the site. Systematic shovel testing was used to determine concentrations of artifacts or signs of human soil disturbance. As a result of this testing, remnants of a shallow, partially robbed, brick foundation for the church were discovered and partially exposed. None of the original builder's trench - which is minimal - was disturbed by this excavation, although Civil War-era

 See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION

ARCHAEOLOGY, Historic-Non-Aboriginal

ARCHITECTURE

MILITARY

Period of Significance

1743-1864

Significant Dates

1743

1755

1864

Cultural Affiliation

Southern dissidents

Scots-Irish

African-American Slaves

Significant Person

Davies, Rev. Samuel

Architect/Builder

Morris, Samuel

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Statement of Significance

The Polegreen Church Archaeological Site is considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criterion A for its central association with the 18th century Hanover dissident movement. The Polegreen reading house of the 1740s and the church of the 1750s were the home base from which Samuel Morris and Samuel Davies carried the widespread social and spiritual movement of the Great Awakening throughout much of the South. The site is also significant because of its place in the crucial Cold Harbor Campaign, evidence for which is plentiful and well preserved on the site.

In addition, the site is considered potentially eligible under Criterion B. Polegreen was the Reverend Samuel Davies's first church. It is here that Davies stirred the popular disaffection that led him into a central role in the Parson's Cause and related social, literary, and legal confrontations between New Side Presbyterians and the establishment of Tidewater Virginia. It is at Polegreen Church that Davies' sermons had a profound effect on the political disposition and oratory of Patrick Henry.

Finally, the Polegreen Church Site is potentially eligible under Criterion D. The site has already yielded information about the architecture, landscape, and history of this early dissident church, as well as alterations made to the church throughout its lifespan. The well-preserved cemetery undoubtedly contains burials from the early period of use, and its remains may prove to contain valuable information on the human population and mortuary customs of this early rural, multi-racial congregation. All archaeological indications suggest that the site certainly is likely to continue to yield important information in the future.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Virginia Commonwealth University

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 3.5

UTM References

A

1	8	2	9	4	3	6	0	4	1	6	8	7	7	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title L. Daniel Mauer, Ph. D. date 4/15/91
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

foundation robbing has obliterated any remains of the builder's trench in some places. The 1989 testing program also served to delimit the approximate boundaries of the churchyard cemetery, and to identify two additional areas of the site where early structures had possibly stood. Civil War related features on the site were also identified and mapped.

Additional excavations were undertaken in November 1990, under the direction of L. Daniel Mouer and Douglas C. McLearen. The work was sponsored by gifts from the Historic Polegreen Church Foundation, Incorporated. The purposes of the additional investigation was to determine more fully the nature and extent of remains at the site, and to provide information suitable for determining the site's eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the excavations have provided valuable information useful for interpreting the history of the site and the architecture of buildings and landscapes constructed there in the mid-18th century. Analysis of data and artifacts from the excavations is currently underway, and a complete report on the excavations at Polegreen Church will be completed in 1991 (Mouer and McLearen, in preparation). The archaeological project was not designed to exhaust the archaeological potential of the site, but rather to use minimally destructive partial excavation methods in order to determine the significance of the site as an archaeological resource, and to provide basic architectural, chronological and landscape information. This will be used for the purpose of interpreting for the public the historical and social significance of the Hanover Revolt, the Hanover Presbytery, Samuel Morris, the Reverend Samuel Davies, and the Polegreen Church.

Archaeological work has identified at least two, and possibly three, early structures. The earliest building on the property (archaeological identification: "Structure 2") includes features thought to represent a timber frame or log building constructed in the mid-18th century. This building is probably the original (ca. 1743) "reading house" constructed by Samuel Morris, founder of the Hanover dissident movement which later became organized as the Hanover Presbytery. Interpretation of the architectural and landscape features is currently in progress, and the following descriptions are based only on preliminary observations. All that appears to remain of the structure is a large disturbance (Feature 11 on Figure 2; Plate 1), a second large disturbance labelled "Feature 1," and several small, shallow features nearby. Feature 11 is interpreted as the salvaged remains of a massive brick end chimney and hearth which stood at the eastern end of the building. This complex feature is characterized

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

by a large U-shaped robber's trench surrounding an area of considerable ashy content. Within this feature, a small test trench uncovered an intact portion of a burned timber sill or hewn log (Plate 2). Feature 1 is a large, amorphous, shallow pit to the west. This pit shows signs of burning also and is tentatively interpreted as a firepit used to salvage nails following the abandonment of the reading house sometime near the turn of the 19th century. One burned board with nails was found in situ within this feature. The smaller features shown in this area on Figure 2 are possible footings for wooden or brick piers.

In summary, the earliest structure - the "reading house" - is represented by only a few archaeological features, which makes interpretation of original architecture difficult. It seems likely that the building was constructed of horizontal log walls or, more likely, of timber frame construction with sills resting on shallow piers, approximately 20 feet by 40 feet in dimension, with a massive brick end chimney on its eastern gable end. The large number of wrought nails discovered in this area indicate the likelihood that the structure was probably covered with weatherboards. A substantial amount of windowpane glass was also recovered, suggesting the presence of sash windows. Artifacts surrounding the structure and incorporated within its features suggest a mid-18th century construction date, consistent with historic records concerning the earliest "reading house" at Polegreen, and destruction near the turn of the 19th century. By all indications, the building burned, and remnants were salvaged for use elsewhere.

The second structure is that which contains remains of a partially "robbed" brick foundation partially shown on Plate 3 (archaeological identification: "Structure 1", labelled as "Church" on Figure 2). This structure has been identified as the Polegreen Presbyterian Church (although the term church was not legally used historically until following Disestablishment). Artifactual dating indicates a construction date within the early third quarter of the 18th century, and destruction in the 3rd quarter of the 19th century. This building, which was apparently similar in form to another of Davies' churches - Providence Presbyterian Church (Virginia Landmarks Register 54-61) in Louisa County - undoubtedly represents the remains of the church constructed by the Hanover dissidents for the Reverend Samuel Davies. The building was constructed between 1747 and 1755. Evidence of cataclysmic destruction (explosion and burning) in the third quarter of the 19th century are consistent with historic accounts of the church's bombardment during the Battle of Cold Harbor. The size and shape of the structure, as well as the evidence for entrances, suggest an architecture that was very similar to that at Providence Church, which was probably modelled after Polegreen.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

The church was approximately 40' x 26' feet, oriented east-west, not counting a probable porch or addition along the northern side. This compares with the approximate 50' x 26' dimensions of Providence Church in Louisa. Some have surmised that Providence may have been extended at its western gable to its 50' length in later Colonial times (Rawlings 1963: 178), and there is some evidence that an addition may have been added to the western gable end of Polegreen as well. Further excavation is needed in this area to clarify the situation. The 26' width is a common measurement for structures of the 2nd quarter of the 18th century, and may represent the maximum width possible for two-story gable-roofed buildings constructed with technology and designs commonly available at that time (Noël Hume 1969). Even though the footing for the building is very lightly built (partly 1-1/2 bricks thick, partly 2-bricks thick, and very shallow, the church probably had one or more galleries, similar to those at Providence.

There is evidence for a gable end entrance in the western end of the church, and there appears to be another entrance in the northern side, near the center. This entrance is marked by a distinctive brickwork footing incorporated into the shallow, lightly constructed, dry-laid foundation. Just east of this entrance were disturbances identified as robbed piers, indicating the presence of a porch at this side entrance. This porch may have run the entire length of the church, and almost certainly represents a 19th century addition, replacing an earlier grade-level stoop. Plate 4 shows the pier holes and, at the lower left of the picture, the remnant of the original stoop constructed within the brick footing. A very large amount of window glass has been recovered from the area surrounding this structure, suggesting that there were a number of large sash windows. This interpretation differs from the simple and sparse fenestration of Providence Church, and may indicate 19th-century upgrading of the Polegreen building. Some shutter pintles and hooks have been recovered as well. That the church building was repaired or remodelled periodically is indicated by large numbers of wrought nails, wrought-head cut nails, and early machine-headed cut nails. Lack of any roofing material and an abundance of probable roofing nails suggests that the structure was covered with shingles of wood.

Archaeological remains of a third structure may yet be revealed in the vicinity of a small cluster of domestic artifacts found on the ground near the northeastern corner of the property, just beyond the limits of the cemetery. These include hand-painted pearlware, wine-bottle glass and Colono-Indian ceramics. This debris may represent the domestic deposits of a small sexton's or graveyard keeper's house, or similar structure. The small number of materials found here suggest a date range in the period ca. 1785 - 1820.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Besides the structures described above, the site includes a number of Civil War lunettes (rifle trenches) and a long traverse, covered way or rifle trench, the latter probably reconstructed from an original Colonial boundary ditch defining the Polegreen churchyard. Civil War-related artifacts from the site were moderately common and include muzzle-loading musket bullets (used and not used), percussion caps, a musket sling swivel, exploded artillery or mortar shell fragments, etc.

There are remains of the church cemetery as well, although most of the headstones once present have been vandalized (Plate 5). There may be indications of a wall or fence line around the cemetery, although excavations to date have not been adequate to determine this for certain. A number of large, very mature hardwood trees, and archaeological features indicating the presence of earlier trees, provide some additional means of reconstructing the landscape at Polegreen.

Artifacts recovered from around the "reading house" and the Polegreen Church structures are useful not only for dating, but, due to the low level of post-depositional disturbance - will prove very helpful in interpreting the architecture and histories of the buildings. Door, window and shutter hardware; window glass; framing, lathing, roofing and flooring nails are abundant. Domestic debris, while understandably scarce, occurs in sufficient quantities to provide valuable information for dating the structures and for interpreting quasi-domestic and social uses of the buildings and their setting. Of particular interest is a quantity of Colonial Indian Ware pottery recovered in two locations (near the possible Sexton's or gravekeeper's house, mentioned above, and in several locations near the church foundation). Faunal remains, including bones apparently gnawed by dogs, are present in modest quantities, and are well preserved. Other domestic artifacts of interest include numerous fragments of Rhenish stoneware mugs and jugs, creamware and pearlware plates, locally made and imported tobacco pipes, a portion of a Rockingham ware spittoon, and a large variety of beverage and medicine bottles.

In summary, the Polegreen Church Site contains undisturbed archaeological remains of the Colonial and 19th century Polegreen Church buildings and landscape. In addition, there are well-preserved remains of Civil War earthworks and evidence of Civil War occupation. These appear to date to the Battle of Totopotomoy and Bethesda Church, of the Cold Harbor Campaign, which resulted in the destruction of the church. The archaeological remains have provided, and will continue in the future to provide considerable information useful for interpreting the history of the site, particularly in the crucial period of the formation of Samuel Morris' dissident meeting and the founding of the Hanover Presbytery by Davies.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Historical Background

Architecture

Only a very small number of frame churches of the Colonial era remains standing (Rawlings 1963). Even though archaeological work to date has been minimal, it is already evident that the Polegreen Church site has considerable potential for permitting the interpretation of an important example of an 18th-century dissident meetinghouse, and its modification over more than a century of use. Parallels between Providence and Polegreen Churches, both constructed for the Reverend Samuel Davies in the middle of the 18th century, are striking, and suggest a common concept. The site also contains somewhat more fragmentary remains of a slightly earlier "reading house," probably constructed by Samuel Morris, who founded the Hanover dissident movement. The dimensions and materials of this building suggest that it may have been constructed after the model of a typical domestic structure of the period. If this interpretation is correct, the formalization of "church"-style architecture corresponded with the arrival of Samuel Davies and the incorporation of the Hanover group into the formal structure of the Presbyterian Church and, particularly, the New Castle (Delaware) Presbytery.

Completion of analysis of the architecture from archaeological evidence at the site, combined with comparative studies of standing structures, such as Providence Church, St. John's Church, and Slash Church, and other archaeological sites, such as the Curles Church Site in Henrico County, should permit some insights into the ways in which dissidents utilized architecture to symbolize their divergence from the established church. Preliminary evidence suggests that, on the basis of fundamental form and size, early dissident churches did not differ significantly from smaller, more rural, established church counterparts. On the other hand, a greater number of formal and more elaborate examples, and use of masonry, is noted for many churches of the establishment (eg. Fork Church in Hanover, Abingdon Church in Gloucester, Hickory Neck in James City, or Mattaponi Church in King and Queen).

Religion

Virginia, unlike many of the early English settlements of New England and the Middle Colonies, was not founded by religious dissidents. The established church in Virginia, as in England, was directly insinuated in the dominant social and political

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

order of Virginia throughout the later 17th and early 18th centuries. Robert Beverly wrote, in 1705, "There are few dissenters...they have not more than five conventicles amongst them, namely three small meetings of Quakers and two of Presbyterians". History records that these early dissenters were often severely persecuted and systematically excepted from access to positions of political, social or economic privilege. All pre-1740 ecclesiastical structures remaining in Virginia are examples of Anglican churches.

About 1740, the Great Awakening spread to America's shores, brought largely, but not exclusively, by Northern British borderland denizens - those living on the boundaries between England, Scotland and Ireland and often referred to, though often inaccurately, as "Scots-Irish" (Fischer 1989: 621-632). Prior to the arrival of the Great Awakening, Virginians had developed a vernacular culture largely influenced by Southern and Western English "cavalier" leadership, from the mid-17th century on, and in which a concept of "hegemonic liberty" (ibid: 411) was characteristic. This "hegemonic liberty" developed from certain 17th-century British gentry roots, but was grounded particularly in the institution of race slavery that grew elaborately in the first quarter of the 18th century (Morgan 1975). The Northern British borderlanders established footholds in the few nascent towns, where they took up artisan and merchant trades in direct competition with the stores and slaves of the great planters, and they took up residence as farmers - mostly without the use of slaves - in the backcountry of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina.

In Virginia, friction between the new dissidents and the establishment naturally sparked conflicts in those areas in which the two dwelt in close proximity; most notably, at the fall line - literally the boundary between the Old Dominion and the burgeoning backcountry. The first major threat to the plantation establishment made its appearance in the early 1740s in Hanover County, thus beginning what Rhys Issac has called "the transformation of Virginia."

From 1740 onward diverse movements, all with growing popular support, challenged traditional assumptions about the nature of religion and its role in sustaining ordered community. In the 1760s and 1770s a "patriot" movement gathered support for the redefinition of customary relationships between the colony and its parent society and culture. In the ensuing turmoil the official consensus that governed social values was shattered, and conceptions of lawful authority were revolutionized. (Issac 1982:137-38).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

The attack on the established order was direct, though couched in spiritual terms. Itinerant preachers such as Gilbert Tennant "attacked the established clergy as unregenerate and encouraged people to forsake their ministers" and, perhaps less directly, the established social order (Nash 1982: 220).

Through [the Great Awakening], ordinary people haltingly enunciated a distinctive popular ideology that challenged inherited cultural norms. To some extent, as many historians have noted, the Awakening represented a groundswell of individualism, a kind of protodemocratic spirit that anticipated the Revolution. (ibid.: 222)

According to Isaac,

The first signs of the coming disturbance in traditionally Anglican parts of Virginia appeared in Hanover County in about 1743 when numbers of ordinary people led by Samuel Morris, a "Bricklayer," began reading religious tracts and absenting themselves from church...The pious gatherings soon reached such a size that a meetinghouse was built to accommodate them...Morris was invited to travel and conduct meetings "at a considerable Distance." The movement took a new direction in the middle of 1743 when emissaries from Hanover persuaded the Reverend William Robinson, a New Side Presbyterian missionary among the Scotch-Irish in southwest Virginia, to come and preach. (Isaac 1982:149)

The Hanover revolt brought reactions from the Anglican clerics. The rector of St. Paul's Parish in Hanover, Mr. Patrick Henry, Sr., sought redress from the colonial government. Court cases ensued, as did acts of the Burgesses to restrain the activities of New Lights and other itinerant preachers. The Virginia Gazette carried letters and articles indicating the fear and disgust of the established planters and clergy over the new evangelical preachers and, in 1748, Samuel Davies, then minister at Polegreen, complained about the newspapers' satires against the New Lights (ibid. 151).

The importance of the Great Awakening as it concerned relationships between whites and blacks has been made often. Nash, for instance, sees the appearance of the "New Lights" and other dissenters, as threatening the order of the planter establishment directly through the recruitment of blacks. Baptized blacks could not so easily be considered sub-human, and literate blacks, taught to read and write in some of the dissident meetings, could not be so easily compartmentalized as categorical slaves.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

The Great Awakening in the 1740's ushered in a new era of activity among those eager to Christianize slaves and a new era of receptivity among slaves to the precepts of Christianity... Samuel Davies, a leading Presbyterian, boasted that he had 100 slaves in his congregation in Hanover County in 1750 and a few years later claimed that some 300 blacks received instruction from him. (ibid: 188).

Davies wrote to a friend in England of their assemblies at his home:

Sundry of them lodged all night in my kitchen, and sometimes when I waked about two or three o'clock in the morning, a torrent of sacred harmony poured into my chamber, and carried my mind away into heaven. In this seraphic exercise, some of them spend almost the whole night. I wish, sir, you and their other benefactors could hear any of these sacred concerts. I am persuaded it would surprise and please you more than an Oratorio...

While the early Presbyterians to enter the Great Valley of Virginia were generally apart of the Synod of Philadelphia,

[o]ther congregations in Hanover County, Virginia looked north in the cultural link that brought them assistance and leadership from the New Castle and New Brunswick Presbyteries that became a part of the Synod of New York. Many of the Hanover County Presbyterians turned to the emotional and evangelical appeal of the Great Awakening, a religious movement of international significance with its emphasis on personal piety and evangelism... The Hanover Presbyterians were fortunate in obtaining the services of the Reverend Samuel Davies whose influence also extended to new settlements in other colonies. (Robinson 1979:230).

According to Bluford:

By 1755, Davies had persuaded five more Presbyterian ministers to join him in the work of the ministry east of the Blue Ridge. He successfully petitioned the Synod of New York to establish a new Presbytery, the first south of the Potomac. It was founded in December 1755, at the Polegreen site, and appropriately named Hanover Presbytery... Hanover Presbytery became the founding body of Presbyterianism in the South and into the far Southwest (n.d.: 2).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Davies became a focus of Anglican retribution against the Hanover Revolt. The cause of establishment soon reached for support from London, but the Lords of Trade upheld the Acts of Toleration. They did, however, suggest to the Virginia Governor and Council that they "admonish Mr. Davies to make proper use of that indulgence which our laws so wisely grant." Nonetheless, the Council refused to renew Davies license to preach, and attorney general Peyton Randolph "prepared a statement that revealed a determination to retain restrictions" against Davies and other New Lights (see Isaac 1982: 151-152 and his note 15, for original sources and critical readings).

The New Siders' began to attack the prerogatives of the established Anglican clergy and this, in turn, brought a number of the leading planters, such as Randolph, Richard Bland and Landon Carter, into a heated defense of the established church. The odium between the popular new religious groups and the established church and planter oligarchy came to be focused on a series of lawsuits in Hanover known to history as The Parson's Cause. While the Parson's Cause led to no resolution of the conflict, it did provide a younger Patrick Henry with his first public exposure as exponent of a popular cause, and as a trial lawyer with extraordinary oratorical and rhetorical talents. Many, including Henry himself, credited his subsequent success to learning the oratory style of the New Side preachers and, particularly, Samuel Davies (Isaac 1982: 266-269; Bluford, n.d.: 3). While the senior Patrick Henry had taken up the establishment cause, the younger Henry had grown up attending Davies' services at Polegreen Church.

Davies' indefatigable fight for religious freedom had long-lasting effects. According to Pilcher:

Thus it was that a generally relaxed attitude toward the dissenters had come to prevail in the colony during the latter part of Samuel Davies' residence in Hanover...This relative freedom, fostered so effectively by Davies, was to continue even through the Revolution and the chaotic days immediately following independence. Once the new state legislature was established, it was besieged with petitions and memorials signed by dissenters of all denominations, opposing the continuance of a government-sponsored church. The Hanover Presbytery persisted in its leadership of this opposition throughout the period...[and] was instrumental in winning the eventual passage of the act establishing religious freedom in Virginia, an act that served

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6

the framers of the Constitution in guaranteeing freedom of worship. [Historian Bruce Foote] maintained "It is owing to the exertion made by Davies, and the public discussions on the subject, in which a man of his powers engaged, that sentiments, so just and liberal respecting religious liberty, have pervaded the population of Virginia."

On Thursday, November 11, 1790, the Reverend William Hill of Winchester, Virginia, made the following entry in his journal:

I preached at Hanover Meeting House [Polegreen]. There was but a mere handful of people out, & little or no feeling among us. O what a change has taken place in old Hanover, since Davies' day! This is the very meeting house he used to make reverberate with the awful truths of God's word, which were quick & powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, becoming a discernor of the thoughts & interests of the hearts of his crowded assemblies. I am now visiting the very cradle of Presbyterianism in Virginia and the Southern States. here once stood the reading house of Samuel Morris, & this is the spot, which has echoed with the commanding tones of a Robinson, the Tennants, a Roan, & the Blairs. This is the very house where Davies delivered his thrilling & powerful sermons, which bore all before them...What a diminutive [sic] creature did I feel this day, when entering the church, & walking up the aisle, & casting my eyes up to the pulpit, where I was about to enter, I saw S.D. in large capitals, drawn on the wall, immediately back of the pulpit where Davies used to stand...

Samuel Davies left through his published writings a large corpus of sermons, poetry, philosophical writings and a major body of hymns. Davies is considered to be the first American-born hymn writer, and he is credited with writing approximately 100 songs of worship. Davies's many written works continue to be republished and studied. In 1753, Davies travelled to England on behalf of the Synod of New York to assist in efforts to raise funds for the newly formed College of New Jersey (later, Princeton University). While in England and Scotland he gained some fame as a speaker and orator, and, a century later, his sermons were still widely read by the British. Nassau Hall, Princeton's first building, was constructed with monies raised by Davies. In 1759, Davies left his ministry at Hanover to become president of the College of New Jersey and, within 18 months, at the age of 38, he was dead (Bluford n.d.: 3).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

The site is presently marked by a black marble monument with a bronze plaque, erected by the women of East Hanover Presbytery in 1929. The inscription on the plaque reads:

Site of Pole Green
Presbyterian Church
Founded in 1748 by
Rev. Samuel Davies
Presbytery of New
Castle, Synod of
New York, Seven Years
Before the Organization
of Hanover Presbytery
1755

Military History

The church was destroyed during the Battle of Totopotomoy and Bethesda Church, on June 1, 1864. One newspaper account, published in 1929 in association with the erection of the monument that marks the site, states that the church was burned by Confederate troops because it was being used by Federal sharpshooters. Fortunately, there is an extant first-hand account of the destruction of Polegreen Church by William S. White (1883) of the Richmond Howitzers Battalion, First Artillery Division, Second Corps, Army of Northern Virginia.

Describing the events of June 1st, White (1883:260-261) wrote:

A sudden volley of musketry from our skirmishers warned us that the time for amusement had passed and the moment for *work* had arrived - on, on the blue line comes, like a wave from the heaving ocean it sweeps with resistless force. But there is a barrier to stem that swelling tide, a rugged rock to roll back that seething stream, a [Gen. D. H.]*Hill* to climb, a [Gen. Wm.]*Heth* to pass, and forth from the Confederate lines dart a stream of fire from the brazen-mouthed Napoleans, all charged with murderous grape.

And as the sound of men's voices rose above the din and confusion of ensanguined strife a stream of fire rises from the roof of that old time-honored house of worship, the church of my ancestors, the church of Samuel Davies - Pole Green, perhaps the oldest Presbyterian Church in Virginia - set on fire by a shot from my own gun.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

My thoughts, even mid the din and confusion of battle, flew backward to childhood's bright and sunny days - aye, to days of merry boyhood, and I remembered that in Pole Green my own father received his Christian name; that there my ancestors had worshipped the true God, and that for many, many years it had been connected with the dearest annals of the Presbyterian Church - now it was passing away in the red glare of war.

As those flames flickered and glared and cast their lurid lights full into the faces of those Southrons [*sic*] struggling for all most dear to men, a new, a stronger spirit of endurance seemed given them, and ere the mouldering embers were shedding their dying halo, the enemy were driven back, and victory, once more, was ours.

The church was a prominent landmark which stood on a high crest over the valley of Totopotomoy Creek, and it appears on seven plates in the Official Atlas of the Civil War (Davis 1983 [1891]). The site lies within the area recently designated for conservation of resources related to Battle of Totopotomoy and Bethesda Church by the National Park Service (1990).

The greatest detail of the maneuvers and positions around the Church appear in Plate LV (5) of the Atlas (reproduced here as Figure 3), which shows Union positions encompassing the church, and facing the strong Confederate line south of Totopotomoy Creek, a line which eventually caused the Union Forces to move towards and capture the crossroads at Cold Harbor. Figure 2 indicates the locations of earthworks still extant on the site, and these appear to be rifle pits and trenches, some of which have berms facing north and east, while the Union lines were facing principally south and west. It is possible, then, that the majority of earthworks remaining on the site are Confederate defenses that were overrun during the May 29 - June 1 battle activities.

Archaeological evidence reveals these activities in the form of artifacts as well, including numerous Minié balls (shot and pristine), musket barrel bands and sling swivels, and spent percussion caps. Of special interest are the numerous fragments of exploded artillery and mortar shells. It is clear from the pattern of artifacts around the church, that the building exploded violently, with the walls collapsing outward. An extremely hot fire ensued which generated sufficient heat to melt much of the window glass, as well as sash weights and other objects. This seems to suggest that the church was destroyed by incendiary mortar fire from the Confederate line.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Artifacts and features related to the Cold Harbor campaign and the destruction of Polegreen Church will prove useful in determining specific events of the battle, and serve as well-preserved monuments to the bloody events of Cold Harbor which led, eventually, to Grant's withdrawal and the Siege of Petersburg.

Historical Archaeology

While the principal archaeological significance of the site is in the data it contains useful for the study and commemoration of the Hanover dissident movement, the architectural and landscape history of Polegreen Church, and the Cold Harbor campaign, the site contains a considerable potential to contribute to knowledge of a particularly archaeological nature. There is, for instance, a growing interest and literature within historical archaeology concerning the use of the landscape. Landscape archaeological studies have been applied to sites as different as the gardens of Monticello, the streetscapes and municipal planning of Annapolis, and the structure of industrial landscapes in New England cotton milling complexes. The semiotic or symbolic nature of architecture and landscape suggest that churches, in particular, would demand distinctive treatment from secular spaces and structures.

The fact that the earliest structure at Polegreen appears to have been constructed to dimensions, and using an architectural style, normally associated with domestic occupations of the mid-18th century may suggest, for example, that the dissidents were initially reluctant to offer a strong symbolic challenge to the established church. This reluctance had apparently passed following the arrival of Davies and the initiation of his outright altercation with the establishment, as is reflected in the clearly ecclesiastical nature of the second structure. While insufficient archaeological excavation has been undertaken to date to explore similar patterns in the evolution of the landscape of the church site, it seems likely that such an endeavor pursued with comparisons to contemporary established church sites, as well as those to other dissident churches, would prove profitable.

There are also valuable insights to be gained concerning the function and use of the church buildings and grounds from studies of artifacts recovered there, as well as potentially important demographic, physiological, and cultural data in the extensive burying ground. The finds list for the relatively limited excavations conducted to date is quite large. Owing to the areas of concentration of the archaeological study,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

the majority of materials recovered are architectural (nails, window glass, door hinges, etc.). Nonetheless, a surprising quantity of domestic and personal use items has also been recovered. These materials provide data for studies of social activities, class, and status of those drawn to the dissident church in comparison with archaeological collections from established church site excavations.

One particularly interesting class of artifacts represented at Polegreen is a series of ceramic vessels of Colono-Indian Ware (Noël Hume 1962). While very little of this material has been recovered so far, its presence may be associated with slaves - as suggested by Noël Hume. Some feel that the Colono-Indian Ware ceramics may have actually been produced by African Americans, as suggested by Deetz (1988), following on work in South Carolina by Ferguson (1978) and others. Nonetheless, the evidence seems clear that this pottery was most likely produced by Native Americans (Hodges 1990, Mouer 1991, Mouer, *et al* in press), and that the Indian presence in Colonial Virginia is represented in this locally made ware.

Locally-made tobacco pipe fragments have also been recovered from the site. While locally-made copies of imported pipes are common in 17th-century contexts, they have been only infrequently reported from later sites. One fragment from Polegreen has evidence of incised decoration. Tobacco pipes were apparently produced by the Pamunkey Indians in their settlements until at least the late 19th century (Speck 1928), and these artifacts may indicate something of the extent of the Indian trade at this rather late period. Pamunkey-made artifacts at Polegreen should not be surprising as the church stood on Totopotomoy Creek just a short distance from the largest concentration of Indians in eastern Virginia.

The artifacts include beverage bottles, food-serving dishes, spittoons, chamber pots, food remains (bone, oyster shell, burned nut hulls, etc.) and other materials associated with domestic activities. These materials suggest something of the social activities that took place within the church and its grounds. Many of the ceramics are of items often associated with slaves and low-status white servants or tenants. Perhaps this debris suggests that some persons may have actually lived in the church from time to time. At the very least, the presence of these artifacts warrants further research into documentary and comparative archaeological sources.

The well-preserved cemetery undoubtedly contains burials from the early period of use, and its remains may prove to contain valuable information on the human population and mortuary customs of this early rural, multi-racial congregation. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

cemetery may also have been used to bury some of the thousands who died in the Cold Harbor Campaign, as were nearly all consecrated grounds near a battlefield. While there are no plans to excavate the burials at the site, clearing of the tops of grave shafts indicates that burials are intact, and have not been disturbed by erosion, subsequent construction or vandalism.

Most of the grave markers - which were probably few to begin with - have been removed or destroyed, however. Nonetheless, coffin furniture and other grave offerings provide potentially important insights into beliefs, values, and mortuary customs. A number of African American burials, from Philadelphia, Virginia, and even Mississippi have been accompanied by tobacco pipes, and sometimes by goods which suggest beliefs or rituals unique to this community. Many 18th- or 19th-century burials contain remains of clothing, name plates, coffin furniture, and other material evidence useful in reconstructing social, economic and cultural patterns.

Physical evidence of nutrition, health, pathology and demography are encapsulated in ancient cemeteries perhaps more completely than in historical documentary sources. Modern techniques and findings of molecular biology have been recently applied to historic burials, suggesting possibilities for the study of family and community characteristics once thought to be beyond archaeology. The multi-racial character, location, and dissenter status of the early congregation suggests that the community of worshipers represented in the Polegreen burying ground was culturally distinctive. Exploration of physiological and pathological correlates of that distinctiveness could prove invaluable.

Summary

There is at least one remaining standing structure associated with Samuel Davies's tenure in Virginia: the previously mentioned Providence Presbyterian Church in Louisa County, possibly constructed for Davies during the same period (1747-55) in which the Polegreen Church structure is thought to have been erected. While Providence Church, which is currently listed in the National Register, may provide a more tangible example of an early dissident church, the Polegreen site represents the effective beginning of the dissident movement in the South, the founding of the Hanover Presbytery, and Davies' home church. Likewise, the well-preserved archaeological remains, which have remained undisturbed since the 1860s, provide insights into the earlier "Reading House" period of Morris' dissident movement, and preserve landscape, land use, physical anthropological, and mortuary information which has not been modified and disrupted by modern occupation, the arrival of automobiles, electric and water lines, etc.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 3

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

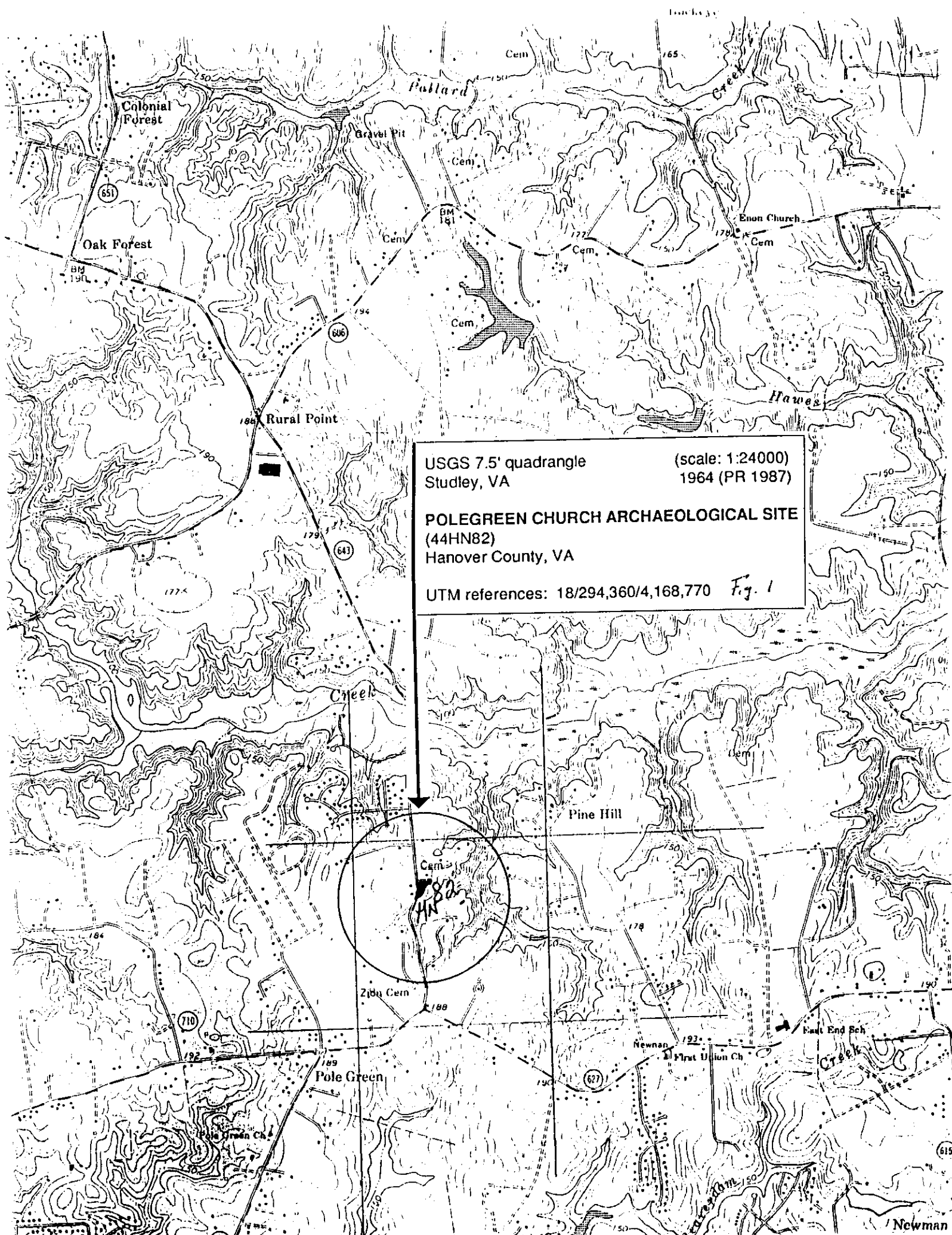
Section 10, Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary line of the property is indicated on Figure 1, being a portion of the U.S.G.S. 7.5' Studley Quadrangle map. The property is legally defined as parcel 3-25 on the Hanover County, Virginia tax map, and is further delimited by Plat No. 2 in the Hanover County Plat Book 9.

Boundary justification

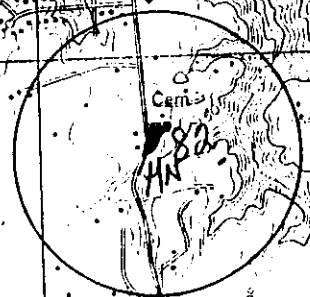
The parcel is defined by the historic boundaries of the Polegreen Church (Hanover Meeting House) property. Archaeological testing over the relatively level portions of the tract indicated the presence of 18th and early 19th century structures, features, and trash deposits throughout the entire extent of the property.



USGS 7.5' quadrangle
 Studley, VA
 (scale: 1:24000)
 1964 (PR 1987)

POLEGREEN CHURCH ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE
 (44HN82)
 Hanover County, VA

UTM references: 18/294,360/4,168,770 *Fig. 1*



Colonial Forest

Oak Forest

Rural Point

Pollard

Pine Hill

Creek

Pole Green

Newnan

Pole Green Ch.

First Union Ch.

East End Sch.

Creek

Newman

651

606

643

710

627

615

BM 196

BM 181

Zion Cern

Newnan

643

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50

50

1000 30

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