

VLR-9/16/82 NRHP-1/2/86

ORIS NO. 2024-0018
EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only
received _____
date entered _____

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Lower Church, Southwark Parish
and/or common The Old Brick Church (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Route 10 not for publication
city, town Bacon's Castle vicinity of ~~Congregational District~~
state Virginia code 51 county Surry code 181

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>Ruin</u>

4. Owner of Property

name Bacon's Castle Memorial Association, c/o P.G. West, Jr.
street & number RFD
city, town Surry N/A vicinity of _____ state Virginia 23883

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Surry County Courthouse
street & number N/A
city, town Surry state Virginia 23883

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
title Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1982 federal state county local
depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street
city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition
 excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one
 unaltered
 altered

Check one
 original site
 moved

date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Set in the middle of a tree-shrouded old burying ground across the fields from Bacon's Castle, the roofless walls of Lower Church, Southwark Parish, present a wonderfully romantic ruin. The walls, now stabilized with steel, measure 74' x 34' on the outside and are of brick laid in Flemish bond. In its original form, the building was a typical, rectilinear, colonial Anglican Church probably looking very much like Merchant's Hope Church in nearby Prince George County with round-arch windows, a single entrance on the west end, and a side entrance on the south wall. The church burned in 1868 and has been maintained as a ruin ever since. About half of the arches are intact so the former architectural character of the building is discernible.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The exterior dimensions of the ruins of Lower Church, Southwark, measure 34' on the end walls and 74' on the sides. Each of the walls is 2½ bricks thick. English bond is employed below the water table with Flemish bond above standard mid-18th century manner. The Flemish bond converts to English bond on the inside face of the walls. The walls are fairly even colored but have scattered glazed headers. The bricks are laid in shell mortar with rodded joints. Most of the mortar joints seem to be in very good condition. The original entrance to the church was through a round-arch doorway on the west end. Each of the side walls has five bays with all the openings being round-arch windows except for the easternmost bay on the south wall which is a round-arch doorway. All of the windows have beveled brick sills or throating. Two windows are in the eastern end. It is presumed that the church had an ordinary gable roof but both gables have long since fallen in. It is also likely that the interior arrangement was the standard one for rectilinear churches having a west gallery, a pulpit in the middle of the north side, and the usual central and cross aisles.

Fewer than seven windows still have a complete brick arch. A few of the arches still preserve small sections of the gauged brick facing. Rubbed bricks are employed at the jambs of each opening, and at the corners of the buildings, queen closers are also employed. Ventilation slits pierce the foundation. The ruins were stabilized with steel reinforcing beams about six years ago; however, the tops of the walls were not capped so deterioration is still occurring. At present much of the wall surface is covered over with heavy vines and many trees are growing up from the piles of brick rubble within the walls.

Despite the deterioration, the walls and their setting present a memorable picture. James Scott Rawlings in his excellently documented architectural guide, Virginia's Colonial Churches, captured the mood of the scene when he wrote:

The ruins now form the majestic center of a cemetery that abounds in tombstones (some of which, notably several near the north wall of the church, are no longer legible) as well as in a considerable variety of trees, shrubs, and vines. Inside the ruins are two cedar trees, a redbud tree, periwinkle, and ivy of several kinds and effects. It is paradoxical that a place of such beauty should have developed from a series of tragedies.¹

¹James Scott Rawlings, Virginia's Colonial Churches. (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1963), p. 198.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1754 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The ruins of Lower Church, Southwark, belong to Virginia's important group of colonial Anglican churches, an outstanding collection of some fifty 17th- and 18th-century church buildings architecturally symbolizing the established religion of the Virginia colony. Before it was gutted by fire in 1868, the building followed the typical format of the rectilinear church, having a single doorway on the west end and five bays on either side, including a side entrance. The surviving walls, with their beautiful Flemish-bond brickwork, stand today as an exceedingly romantic ruin, one of the state's few consciously preserved ruins of a colonial building. The ruins are also the oldest surviving remnant of Surry County's very old Southwark Parish, established in 1647. As many as nine other colonial church buildings in the parish have all vanished.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the colonial church in Surry County is a complex one beginning with the first church erected on Hogg Island in 1628. This structure was a wood-frame building constructed as a "chapel of ease" for the citizens of James City County who lived on the south side of the James River. It is believed that Surry County, formed from James City ca. 1651, was so named for the county across the Thames River from London. The first parish for the area now encompassed by Surry County was known as "Lawnes Creek" and was established in 1639/40. Southwark Parish was established in 1647 and named undoubtedly for the English parish of that name located on the "other side" of the Thames from London.

As the population grew and shifted in the area, parish boundaries and churches were changed to accommodate new conditions, and a second Lawnes Creek Church was erected. It was at this second church that leading citizens of Surry County met in December 1673 to organize a protest against the county levy which they felt was unjust and imposed without their consent, a sign of colonial resistance foreshadowing the outbreak of Bacon's Rebellion three years later. The third Lawnes Creek Parish Church was built in 1695 on a site near Bacon's Castle. The Surry records state: "Captain Henry Toole complained that Philip Shelly refused to take for pay for penells...for a church said Shelly was building..."¹ Thomas Dew assigned to the church wardens at Lawnes Creek Parish about 3/4 of an acre of "land for the building of a church thereon...neare the maine road...bounded northeasterly on the land of Arthur Allen..."² (Bacon's Castle). It is possible that archaeological research could uncover the foundations of this 1695 church; however an archaeological probe for this purpose by VHLC staff archaeologists in May, 1982 had to be halted because of more recent burials in the vicinity.

The parish geographically was very long and difficult to administer according to a 1724 report to the Bishop of London from the minister, John Worden. By 1739, the 1695 church building had become the parish church of Southwark Parish and was known as the

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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LOWER CHURCH, SOUTHWARK, SURRY COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 8

Page 1

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

"Lower Church." Lawnes Creek Parish passed out of existence being absorbed into Southwark Parish and a new parish known as Albemarle. Shortly before the boundaries of Southwark Parish and Surry County became the same in 1758, the Second Southwark Parish Church, or Lower Church, was constructed. An advertisement in the Virginia Gazette dated April 18, 1751 substantiates this construction date: "The Vestry of Southwark Parish in the county of Surry having come to a resolution to build a large Brick Church in the lower part of the said Parish, where the old Church now stands."³ Bishop Meade, writing in the mid-19th century, assigns a date of 1754 for its completion which would be consistent with the Gazette notice.

In 1764 Elizabeth Bray, who was married successively to Arthur Allen of Bacon's Castle, Arthur Smith, and a Mr. Stith, made a generous bequest to the church. Her will stipulated fifty pounds current money for an altarpiece for the Lower Church in Surry. She states: "I would have Moses and Aaron drawn at full length holding up between them the Ten Commandments and if money enough I would have the Lord's prayer in a small frame to hang on the right hand over the great pew."⁴ John Allen also left funds for new Communion plates.

Following the Revolution, and the resulting antagonism against the Anglican Church, Lower Church was abandoned for a long period. The church building was used on occasion by other denominations, and Bishop Meade notes it was not until the late 1820s that there were any real efforts to rejuvenate the parish. Services began on a mission basis in 1847, and the services of a resident minister, John C. McCabe, were obtained in 1850. However, other local denominations opposed the use of the Lower Church by the Episcopalians, and the congregation constructed a new frame church building on an adjacent lot.

The old church was burned in 1868, supposedly by local freedmen who had been using the ancient graveyard as a burial ground and wanted to discourage the white churchmen from reclaiming the cemetery. Only the brick walls survived. In recent years the walls have been stabilized and the cemetery carefully maintained by the Bacon's Castle Memorial Association.

MTP

¹James D. Kornwolf, Guide to the Buildings of Surry and the American Revolution. (Surry County Bicentennial Committee, 1957), pp. 14-15.

²Surry County Deeds. 1694-1709, V, p. 66.

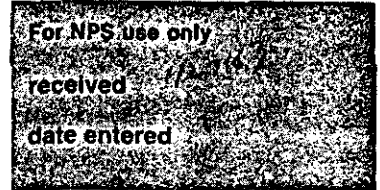
³Virginia Gazette. April 18, 1751.

⁴"Will of Mrs. Elizabeth Stith," (1764), William and Mary College Quarterly: Historical Magazine, Vol. V, 1897, p. 115.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

LOWER CHURCH, SOUTHWARK, SURRY COUNTY, VA



Continuation sheet #2

Item number 9

Page 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (continued)

- Mason, George C. Colonial Churches of Tidewater Virginia. Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1945.
- Meade, Bishop William. Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia. 2 vols. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1966. (Reprint of 1857 edition.)
- Rawling, James Scott. Virginia's Colonial Churches. Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1963.
- Rowell, Ethel R. Lawnes Creek Church, Hogg Island. Privately printed, no date.
- Surry County Deeds, 1694-1709, V, p. 66.
- Virginia Gazette, April 18, 1851.
- "Will of Mrs. Elizabeth Stith." (1764). William and Mary College Quarterly: Historical Magazine, Vol. V, 1897, p. 115.

9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #2)

- Boddie, John H. Colonial Surry. Baltimore: Geneological Publishing Co., 1966.
 Cocke, Charles Francis. Parish Lines, Diocese of Southern Virginia. Richmond: The Virginia State Library, 1964.
 Kornwolf, James D. Guide to the Buildings of Surry and the American Revolution. Surry County Bicentennial Committee, 1957.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.93 acres

Quadrangle name Bacon's Castle, VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification Boundary Justification: The boundaries have been drawn to include the church ruins and the adjoining cemetery. Verbal Boundary Description: Beginning at a point on the S side of VA 10 approximately 1650' WNW of intersection of VA 10 and VA 617; thence extending approximately 450' W; thence extending approximately 350' N to a point on S side of VA 10; thence extending approximately 600' ESE along S side of VA 10 to point of origin.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date September 1982

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
 title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date January 20, 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

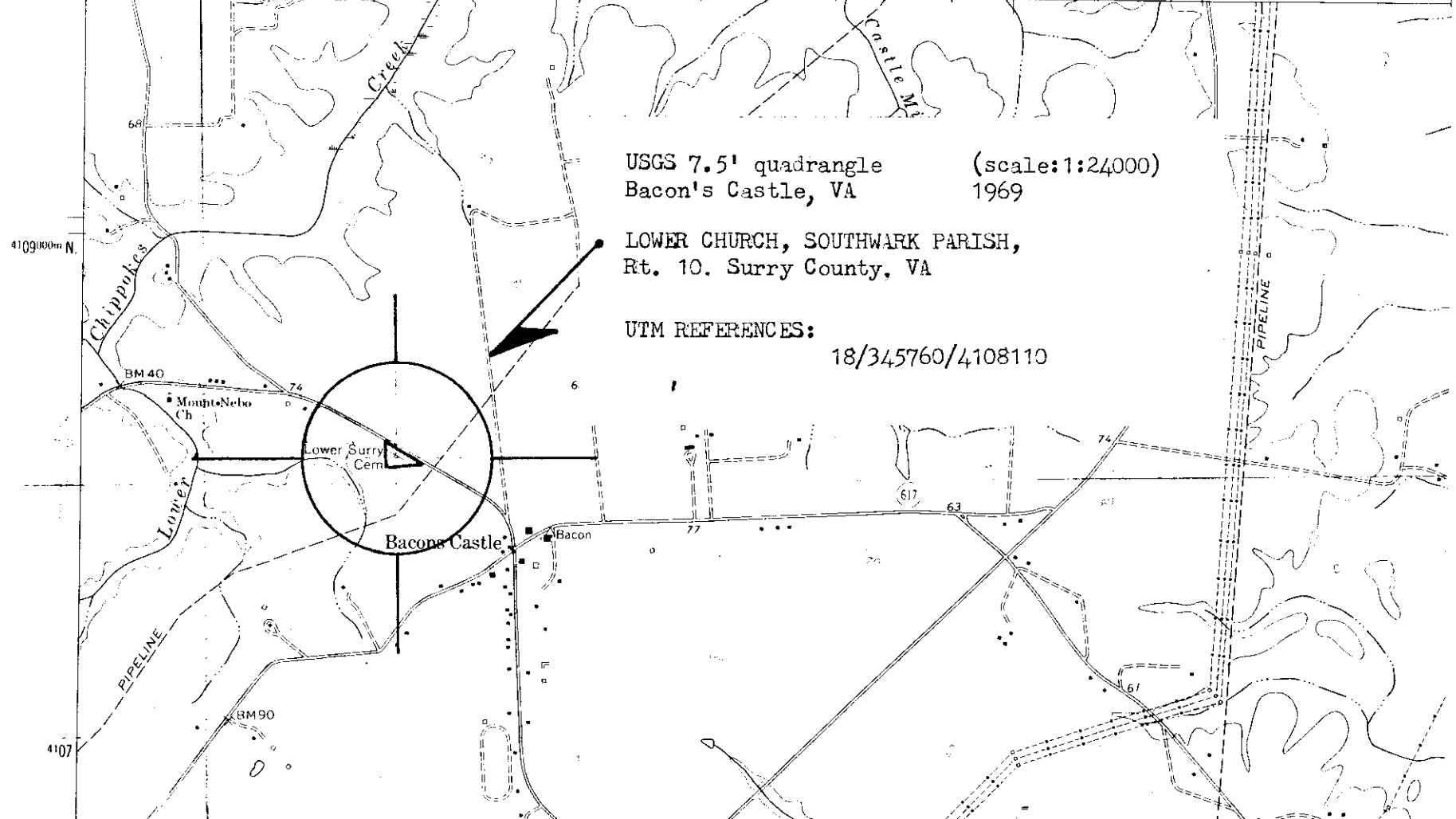
6/2/91

5658 (NE)
(SURRY)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES
JAMES L. CALVEY

76°45' 37°07'30" 346000m E. 347 348 42'30" 349 56 (HO)



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24,000)
Bacon's Castle, VA 1969

LOWER CHURCH, SOUTHWARK PARISH,
Rt. 10. Surry County, VA

UTM REFERENCES:
18/345760/4108110

