

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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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

St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Churchyard  
AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

BROAD

West Church Street at Churton Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Edenton

VICINITY OF

First

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

North Carolina

37

Chowan

041

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Vestry of St. Paul's Episcopal Church

STREET & NUMBER

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Edenton

VICINITY OF

North Carolina

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Chowan County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Edenton

North Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1934, 1935, 1937, 1939

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Washington

D. C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. Paul's Church, Edenton, stands amid its well-kept churchyard, surrounded by early gravestones shaded by large magnolias, crepe myrtles, and other trees. Called by Thomas T. Waterman "an ideal in rural church design," the brick church with its steeple-topped tower is, together with the Cupola House and the Chowan County Courthouse, among the three major eighteenth century monuments in a town filled with significant buildings from its more than two-hundred-year history.

The church is of brick, laid in Flemish bond except for the apse at the east end which is laid in all-header bond. The gable-roof nave is five bays wide. Each side elevation has a centrally placed entrance that is very handsomely treated: the flat-paneled double door is framed by rusticated brick quoins and topped by a three-part keystone, also in brick. The large windows in the remaining bays are segmental-arched, containing sixteen-over-sixteen sash. The elevations are defined by a brick water table and a molded cornice adorned with undercut modillions.

The main (west) gable end is dominated by a slightly engaged square tower. Its three stages, the third rising higher than the main block, are defined by rather wide belt courses. The front face has arched openings at each level: a fanlit double door at the first, with a handsomely worked round arch; a segmental arch at the second, containing trabeated nine-over-nine sash (similar openings with six-over-six sash occur at this level in the gable end of the main block); and at the third level a segmental-arched opening filled with louvers, which recurs in the rear face of the tower. Each of the side faces of the tower has at the first level a round-arched opening containing nine-over-six sash with tracery; at the second a segmental-arched opening with segmental-arched sash, and the third a louvered segmental-arched opening. The first and third level openings are centered; the second-level one is placed slightly more frontward. The tower is topped by a modillion cornice. From the tower rises a simple, graceful spire, octagonal in section atop a wooden base. An old photograph shows wooden urns at the corners of the top of the tower, and as noted by Waterman "the design of the square tower in relation to the octagonal spire is interesting and well-managed."

The rear gable end of the church is windowless, and from it projects the semi-circular apse with semi-conical roof. The water table carries from the main block; the apse, as noted above, is laid in all-header bond. The segmental-arched chancel window is framed with gauged brick. The modillion cornice of the main block also recurs on the apse. Waterman notes that this apse is quite rare: "No apse is known even on seventeenth-century churches in Virginia, and the only reference to one there is in a drawing in the Fulham Palace archives." (It should be noted that the 1767 Chowan County Courthouse also has an apse.)

Within, the interior reflects several eras of building: the shape of course is that of the original construction. The floor of the entire building--following restoration--is covered with square brick tiles and there are gravestones laid in the floor. The floor under the pews is wooden.

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The interior of the main block consists of a central barrel-vaulted nave with tall aisle columns supporting side galleries. (These, following a 1949 fire, reproduce the 1806-1809 work of architect William Nichols.) There are four columns on either side, two on either side of the side entrances. These are rather attenuated unfluted Doric columns and rise uninterrupted from among the pews. The galleries are enclosed by flat-paneled solid balustrades above a heavy molded entablature adorned with a dentil course. The columns carry a simple entablature at ceiling level, with a course of dentils near the top. The pews and wooden floors beneath them, plus other furniture, are all nineteenth century; they were not burned. There are four blocks of enclosed pews, with each block divided into ten pews; they are enclosed by walls with a double run of horizontal flat panels. The raised chancel reflects the semi-circular shape of the apse. It is finished with a dark-stained wainscot and features an arcaded altar rail. Altar furniture is from several eras. The chancel window has stained glass depicting the Last Supper and the Resurrection. At the rear north corner, a simple stair leads to the gallery level. The interior of the tower is quite simply finished, with plastered walls.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1736 to present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Paul's Church, Edenton, described by Thomas T. Waterman as "an ideal in village churches, unrivaled in this country except perhaps by Christ Church, New Castle, Delaware," is the second oldest church building in North Carolina, and the only colonial church still in regular parish use. Related in form to colonial Virginia churches, the gable-roof Flemish bond brick building is distinguished by its handsomely treated entrances, the simple square tower and the semi-circular apse in all-header bond. Following a 1949 fire, the interior has been restored to its nineteenth century appearance. Begun in 1736 and completed thirty years later, the church was connected with some of eighteenth century North Carolina's most important figures, including rector Clement Hall, warden Samuel Johnston, vestryman Joseph Hewes, and member James Iredell, Jr. The church is--architecturally and historically--among the chief landmarks in Edenton.

St. Paul's Parish, organized under the first Vestry Act in 1701, has the oldest charter in the state and the second oldest church building. For almost seventy-five years the parish was under the care of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Since the Anglican church was established in the colony when Edenton was incorporated in 1722, it was church responsibility to provide burial for the citizens of the town; the present churchyard served as the town cemetery for more than a century. The churchyard thus antedates the beginning of the church building by about fifteen years.

The history of the construction of the brick church building--following one or two frame buildings--is a long one, spanning thirty years. The Williamsburg Virginia Gazette for October 15, 1736, printed an entry from Edenton, dated October 4, reporting that "a large, handsome Brick Church, with a Steeple, is shortly to be built here, many of the Bricks being already burnt." Work had in fact already begun: vestry minutes record that the lots had been cleared by May 10, 1736, and by September 22, £200 had been paid for bricks and £18:7:6 for 215 bushels of shells for mortar. By December 5, 1737, £1,240:17:4 had been spent, including £561 for the bricklayer. The "Gabbd work" on the chancel window alone cost £20. By the summer of 1740, however, work had come to a halt because funds were exhausted and several members of the building committee had died. The Assembly, meeting in Edenton on August 21, levied a tax of two shillings per poll for the next two years, to be added to funds pledged by interested persons. In addition, it was ordered that vestry meetings be held only at the church as soon as it should be fit for use for Sunday services.

During this period of construction, the Reverend Clement Hall became rector of the church, on February 25, 1744; it was during his tenure that the parish was given its name. A missionary of great importance to the early history of the Anglican church in

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North Carolina, Hall rode some fourteen thousand miles and baptized some six thousand persons during the first eight years of his ministry. During these years he was also writing a devotional book for his people--A Collection of Many Christian Experiences, Sentences, and several Places of Scripture Improved; this was the first non-legal book to be printed in North Carolina.

On June 19, 1746, Hall reported to the S. P. G. that the church roof (evidently the framing timbers only) had been "raised" but that work had been stopped by disagreements among the commissioners. On August 23 he wrote that "some of the Commissioners say that the roof will shortly be covered." By July 8, 1748, the church was at last "covered"--a fact that makes all the more mystifying Hall's statement on May 1, 1751, in a letter to the S. P. G. that "the Bricks are now making to enclose the Church," and on October 20, 1755, that "the Workmen are at last enclosing the Church." By June 5, 1753, Hall was expecting the church to be fit for use by September 29. This hope, too, was disappointed; Hall was never to use the church for Sunday services. But it is believed that when he died, in January, 1759, he was buried under the sanctuary, in one of the nine graves found under the church two centuries later. After Hall's death, the Reverend Daniel Earl became rector (1759-1778).

By April 10, 1760, the church was finally ready, and the vestry met there that day, in obedience to the Assembly order of 1740. The appearance of the exterior--with the exception of the spire--was much as it is now, and something is known of the original appearance of the interior. The floors were paved with square brick tiles. The cove ceiling was supported by columns. A small stair led to the back gallery, and later descriptions by an architect indicate that the side galleries also existed at an early date. A door from the back gallery led into the upper room of the tower, or "steeple," as the minutes persist in calling it. There was, however, evidently no spire at this time, as indicated by a drawing by John Hawks (architect for Tryon Palace) now in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. Dated November 22, 1769, the drawing shows a cupola proposed as a completion of the tower. The windows of the church must have been closed with solid shutters as late as April 27, 1767, when one of the vestrymen was directed to order from Philadelphia "a Quantity of Glass to glaize the Church." Not until August 28, 1773, were final arrangements made for the completion of the interior woodwork, by a workman who died before he could do it. One of the vestrymen then took charge and on August 24, 1774, was ordered paid, after a vestry committee had inspected the work and found it satisfactory.

During the eighteenth century, when Edenton was the home of some of North Carolina's chief political leaders, the Anglican church counted many of these men among its members. Two governors who were members of the congregation were Samuel Johnston and James Iredell, Jr.; Johnston, a brilliant leader during the Revolutionary era and a governor of the state, served as warden for many years. Joseph Hewes, one of the state's three signers of the Declaration of Independence, was a vestryman for a short time before the Revolution. Also members were Thomas and Penelope Barker--she is traditionally credited as being a

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leader of the Edenton "Tea Party."

On June 19, 1776, the vestry, while professing their loyalty to the king, nevertheless took their stand squarely behind the Provincial Congress in its defiance of unjust treatment by Parliament. As for the Anglican church throughout the former colonies, the Revolution had a disastrous effect upon the parish. The church was "officially disestablished in the state by the Constitution of 1776. . . . Sporadic efforts after the Revolution to organize a Protestant Episcopal Church in North Carolina failed to materialize until 1817, when the Reverend John Stark Ravenscroft became the first Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina." During this era, the Reverend Charles Pettigrew, who lived across the Sound, served as minister (1778-1807) of the parish. (In 1794 he was elected first Bishop of North Carolina, but was never consecrated.) In the 1790s the building fell into bad condition, though its use for occasional services, funerals, and Masonic ceremonies is revealed in newspaper notices and Masonic records. Nevertheless Bishop Levi S. Ives later (1839) described it as having been "reduced . . . to bare walls," by the early years of the nineteenth century.

Papers for the years 1806-1809 trace the renovations that occurred during this era. In the summer of 1805, a committee examined the building and started a drive for funds. In December they employed William Nichols, a young English architect then living in New Bern. (Nichols was later to become state architect: he remodeled the old capitol in Raleigh, and designed a number of North Carolina buildings including buildings at the University of North Carolina, Eagle Lodge in Hillsborough, and probably Hayes near Edenton; he later went to Alabama and Mississippi, where he was state architect and designer of major buildings there.) Nichols was hired by the St. Paul's committee to make a professional survey and plans for restoration. His specifications were accepted after prolonged discussions and a contract with him signed in August, 1806.

Nichols did not alter the exterior of the church, but he argued steadily and at last successfully for the addition of the spire over the tower. He accentuated it with four urns seen at the corners of the tower in old photographs. The interior, on the other hand, had to be almost rebuilt: new girders, new joists, and a new wooden floor; new columns on brick piers; new collar beams to strengthen the roof; the chancel floor raised; the galleries reconstructed, with raised bridging for the back pews and the aisles; the chancel wainscotted and railed in with square balusters; a new stair to the galleries (also with square balusters); a new pulpit, reading desk and pews; new door frames, doors, and window sashes; and a cornice and frieze along the edge of the cove ceiling.

In May, 1828, the chancel was changed again, the pulpit and reading desk being moved farther back from the congregation and the chancel railing being moved far forward enough to enclose it. In 1836, 1837, and 1838, there was prolonged consideration of altering all pews to single pews, a plan carried out in 1838.

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In 1848, Frank Willis, an Englishman working in New York as the official architect of the New York Ecclesiological Society, designed as a memorial the oak reredos, altar rail, and chancel furniture (altar, sanctuary chair, bishop's chair, litany desk, and chancel stall). Although he was an enthusiastic proponent of the Gothic Revival, Willis used the semicircles of the apse and cove ceiling as the most important motif of his design. The work was completed before the end of 1850, according to the Reverend Charles Maison, rector's assistant at the time. Since the chancel window was given by the family who gave the oak woodwork, it is believed to have been installed at the same time. Later installations recorded in the vestry minutes include the memorial tablets along the walls (post-Civil War) and the marble dove above the altar (about 1885). In 1894 the font was removed from the chapel and two pews from the south side of it, to extend the platform. In 1903 the building was roofed with slate, laid over the old shingles. For the next fifty years only minor repairs were done.

In 1947 an examination of the church revealed termite damage, loose plaster, and shingles in bad condition under the slate. During 1948 the church was stripped, after detailed architectural studies and drawings had been made. Everything removable was stored, including flooring. Archaeological investigation located all nine graves beneath the church and enough colonial floor tiles to be reproduced. Then on June 1, 1949, the church caught fire, and the galleries, roof, and spire were burned. A column in the local newspaper reported that people wept in the streets as they saw the church burn. It was again reduced to the bare walls. But because the walls were not harmed by the fire, and because of the previous removal of much material and the detailed studies already made, the church could be rebuilt. The roof, spire, galleries, were carefully reproduced; the wooden floors beneath the pews, the pews themselves, the other furniture, and various memorials and plaques had all been safely stored. Today the church, still in regular use, looks essentially as it did before the fire, its long and lively history reflected in its blend of pre-Revolutionary brick walls and tower, original and reproduced Federal era interior work by William Nichols, and later nineteenth century chancel furnishings.

It stands amid a churchyard of even greater age. The oldest marked grave is that of Mrs. Margaret Davison (died 1753), but many earlier graves have uninscribed markers. Also there are the graves of many governors and other prominent early citizens of the area--including a number who were moved there when family burial grounds were threatened by erosion from the Albemarle Sound or rivers, or by obliteration by new construction. These include the graves of Stephen Cabarrus, Governor Charles Eden and his wife Penelope, Governor Thomas Pollock and his daughter-in-law Sarah, and Henderson Walker. John Henley, who was chief justice of the colony before the Revolution, is buried under the church. By 1851 the churchyard had become so crowded that the vestry begged the town council to provide a cemetery outside the city limits. But it was nearly forty years before the churchyard became a burial place only for the families of those who were already buried there. The churchyard is no longer open for burials, except for local members of the congregation who have their entire family buried there and have no descendants. In recent years some gravestones have been moved, but the quiet character of the churchyard

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still provides an idyllic spot in the midst of Edenton.

Already included on the National Register by its location within the Edenton Historic District, the church is being nominated individually because of its outstanding significance as one of only three surviving colonial churches in North Carolina and as a structure of architectural importance in itself and as it relates to other colonial churches in Virginia and elsewhere among the thirteen colonies.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

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 Powell, William S., Introduction to Clement Hall's A Collection of Many Christian Experiences. . . . Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1961.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2 L&L: 36° 03' 42" 76° 36' 34"  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME/TITLE Research by Elizabeth Van Moore, Edenton  
 Architectural description by Catherine W. Cockshutt, Survey Supervisor  
 ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Division of Archives and History 20 February 1975  
 STREET & NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
109 East Jones Street 829-7862  
 CITY OR TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Raleigh North Carolina

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *[Signature]*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 20 February 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

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St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Edenton, vestry minutes, 1701 to present.  
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St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Churchyard  
 Edenton  
 North Carolina

USGS, Edenton Quadrangle  
 Scale: 1:62500  
 Date: 1940

Latitude			Longitude		
degrees	minutes	seconds	degrees	minutes	seconds
36	03	42	76	36	34



