

(sic) which I stayed five days dancing from sunrise till one o'clock next morning every day. I escorted Mrs. Brown, Miss Nelly & Miss Sally Ewell, Mrs. Craik and the amiable Miss Sally Lee over who shines here like a star of the first magnitude. She eclipses Miss Creathorn tho I would not wish you to tell her so, well when we got there we found a large assembly of young ladies and gentlemen in all amounting to fourteen couples all of whom remained there until Sunday when we could dance no longer. I thought it fit to return in the course of this month, we are to pay a visit to the same place which will be very agreeable.

I'll assure you this place will rival Philadelphia soon if it continues as it has done for some time which there is a great probability of as the Gentlemen appear to be roused from that lethargic state which they were formerly buried in, we have fallen on a method of having monthly balls at Port Tobacco which will reflect honorably on its inhabitants. The first one is to be in September.

I have just this minute received your letter for which I thank you and at the same time pleased to hear of the arrival of my small venture which I will be much obliged to you if you will take the trouble of negotiating for me. I sent 3 barrels of flour & was to pay half for freight, the return of the other half I am to receive, you say it is rum which I am in \_\_\_\_ sell well, and when sold I will be glad if you would let me know by the first post what my share amounts to & will be glad if you could purchase one of the most fashionable light coloured cloth for a coat with a very neat button, & trimmings suitable so as to make it a very dressy one & if the money will hold out, purchase a pretty silk jacket & britches patterns & four yards of good black hair ribbon & send them by the first opportunity, if you can't get the silk for the britches & jacket cheap you may send the remainder of the money or lay it out in anything you think will be of service to me here, as you please, give my love to all Mrs. Roberts family & to all the young gentlemen & ladies of my acquaintance, & I am with much esteem your affectionate friend

(signed) Jas Craik Junior

Mama & family send their compliments to you & are much obliged to you for the good information & hope you will continue it

\*J. Richard Rivoire is my authority for this statement. Apparently the name of the Manor was changed from Strawberry Hill to LaGrange some time before 1830.

## Friendship House Celebrates Charter Day

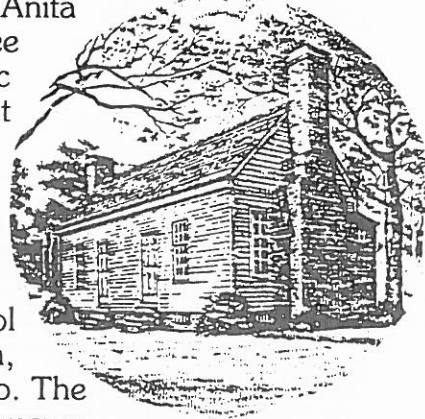
Charles County observed its founding with Charter Day, a celebration on May 13, 1989 honoring its 331st birthday. With opening ceremonies at the Port Tobacco Courthouse and historic site tours following, Friendship House unveiled for the first time, with a ribbon cutting ceremony, its Cellar Museum. Janet A. Lohr, museum chairperson, proudly opened the museum which now features our farm tool display, complete with engraved wall plaques, a children's corner with student's work displayed in tobacco baskets, the new slide-tape presentation for visitors created by Anita Wood, and a three panel photographic display on student tours at Friendship House. In addition, the cellar museum contains a tobacco barn mural created by Lackey High School student Erik Brown, authentic with tobacco. The back room of the museum contains brochures, gift items for sale and framed copies of Colonel William Dent's inventory, the Land Patent to Friendship House, and transcribed versions for better reading.

For Charter Day Celebration, Friendship House was decorated with Colonial dried flowers created and arranged by Mrs. Carol Sprague, and was enhanced by the displays and demonstrations of the Patchworkers Quilt Club. Melissa Willett, program chairperson, and society members provided lemonade and colonial cookies, while those in attendance enjoyed their afternoon at Friendship House.

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## Dues Notice:

It's now time to pay your 1990 dues. We value you as a member and encourage your support and help throughout the year. The special programs and exhibits we are planning for 1990 will not be possible without your help. Please complete the enclosed MEMBERSHIP ENVELOPE and drop it in the mail with your dues payment. We would appreciate your dues payment by March 1, 1990.



## The Building of Durham Church, ca. 1734

by Eugene A. Jenkins, Jr.

Nanjemoy was one of the four sites chosen for a parish of the Episcopal Church in Charles County under the Establishment Act.. As early as July 30, 1694, a "report of the assembly" indicates that "Nanjemie . . . has a church building"; i.e., under construction, because the same report states that Port Tobacco "has a church built", and "Pescataway has a church agreed for."<sup>(1)</sup> In this same account, the author has a picture which accompanies the material on Nanjemoy Parish, the caption of which picture says "Christ (church), built about 1732 at Grayton in Charles County."<sup>(2)</sup> It would be interesting to learn whether, how and when, the Nanjemoy Church has indeed been called "Christ Church" rather than "Durham."

We know, at least, the present church is not the first building at Nanjemoy. It is this second (present) church with which we are concerned. Indications are that construction began in 1732<sup>(3)</sup>, though no source is given for that specific date. In any event, the Additional<sup>(4)</sup> Administration Account of George Mason, states clearly that he had agreed with the Vestry during his lifetime "for building a church in Nanjemoy."<sup>(5)</sup> Hence, construction could well have begun as early as 1732. We would probably be more certain of that date had George Mason died with a Will, but, he was drowned, unexpectedly, crossing the Potomac on March 5, 1735.<sup>(6)</sup>

There are in the official records, an inventory of George Mason's Estate and two Administration Accounts filed by Ann Mason, his widow and Administratrix. The first account was filed October 11, 1736 and was passed on December 11, 1736.<sup>(7)</sup> This account is no help to us, for Durham Church is not mentioned in it, nor is there any indication in the Estate Inventory that George Mason held any property for the benefit of the Parish. Perhaps the church had not been completed at the time (1736).

It is the second Administration Account filed by Ann Mason on August 22, 1741 which is significant for our purposes.<sup>(8)</sup> It would seem

that George Mason's "agreement" with the Vestry was as a contractor and not simply as the Chairman of a building Committee, for his estate exercised the responsibility of paying the builder.

That builder of Durham was one John Hobson, who was paid 25,000 lbs. of tobacco for building the church. In this account, Ann Mason listed 17,719 lbs. of tobacco she received from the Vestry for the construction. In addition, she received varying amounts of tobacco from the following:

John Hobson 10,200 lbs., Wm. Macconchie<sup>(9)</sup> 600 lbs., Robert Brent 356 lbs., Dr. Gustavus Brown 600 lbs., Co. Dent 12,462 lbs.

It would seem that all these men were all members of Durham Church. It is especially interesting that the man who built the church also contributed to the construction cost. Though these amounts added to the 17,719 lbs. given by the Vestry greatly exceed the 25,000 lbs. price, the Accounts indicate that the tobacco was given for Durham Parish (sic) and not necessarily for construction of the building.

Subsequent to the payment of the 25,000 lbs. of tobacco, Ann Mason paid an additional 400 lbs. of tobacco for "sundry expenses in building the church."<sup>(10)</sup>

It would seem, then, that 25,400 lbs. of tobacco was the actual cost of construction of Durham Church. Since the responsibility for paying the bills devolved upon Ann Mason, Administratrix of George Mason, all of the outstanding bills would have been paid prior to the filing of this Additional and Final Account.

(1) *The First Parishes of the Province of Maryland*; Percy G. Skirven, Baltimore, 1923; p. 131.

(2) This is undoubtedly Durham Church.

(3) *The Five George Masons*; Copeland & MacMaster. University Press of Virginia, 1975; pp. 72-73.

(4) It was also the "final" account.

(5) *Charles County Administration Accounts (1740-1742)* p. 319 et. seq. Maryland Hall of Records.

(6) Op. cit. note (3). pp. 72-73.

(7) *Prerogative Accounts, 1736-1737*; Liber 15, folio 255, Maryland Hall of Records.

(8) *Charles County Accounts (1740-1742)* Vol. 18, Folio 319, Maryland Hall of Records.

(9) Possibly the village of Macconchie was named for this man?

(10) Op. cit. note (5).





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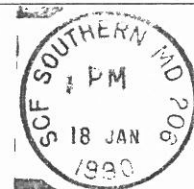
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Articles of historic interest on Southern Maryland are requested for possible publication in future issues of *The Record*. Please send your typewritten manuscripts to: Publications, *The Record*, Box 261 Port Tobacco, MD 20677

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## The RECORD

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No. 47 January 1990

Mr. Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr., President

Mr. Garth E. Bowling, Jr., Editor

## A Post-Revolution Letter From a Charles County Resident

Prepared by Charles G. LaHood, Jr.

The letter by Dr. James Craik, Junior, printed below, dated June 4, 1782, was written at Strawberry Hill\* (present-day LaGrange) to his friend, William Stone, of Philadelphia. The letter forms a part of a collection of letters and autographs donated to the Historical Society of Charles County by the Hon. J. Bruce Kremer and is filed in the Society's collection at the Southern Maryland Studies Center, Charles County Community College.

Dr. James Craik, Junior, was the son of Dr. James Craik, the long-time friend and physician of George Washington. Of particular interest in this letter is the detailing of Craik's return journey from Philadelphia to his Charles County home, and many insights into the day-to-day details of colonial life.

Strawberry Hill June 4 1782

I, forget you my friend, never while memory maintains her seat. There needs not your presence or any other memento to remind me of you. The sacred tie of Friendship is not so soon dissolved. Behind me the idea of my friend often crosses my imagination, when I am taking my lonely walk of an evening; I frequently wish for you as a companion in my solitude, & often think of the many agreeable hours we spent together in Philadelphia, the Paladium of mirth and politeness, a retrospect of which I'll assure you afford me the greatest happiness & nothing but the greatest regard & affection for some people in Charles County could prevent my sharing in that happiness which I have already had a specimen of & which I again begin to anticipate so soon as I expected, tho upon consulting the Oracle's of Wisdom & contemplating the many great and noble advantages to be derived from a residence in Philadelphia. I think I shall find no difficulty in breaking through those slender, engaging obstacles to acquire those mental qualifications which render a man conspicuous in this life. I make no doubt but you have been much astonished at my long silence considering the many faithful promises I made to write you as soon as I arrived at Strawberry Hill for which I shall at present offer



no other apology than the want of time & opportunity; on my arrival here I was accosted with all the tenderness of parental affection which afforded a degree of happiness, not to be paralleled by anything else than a similar situation, my presence was not unexpected as they had been looking out for me ten days before I arrived consequently they met with no difficulty in discovering who I was. My journey was disagreeable as it possibly could be. In the first part I was almost jolted to death in the stage & in the latter I was exposed for a whole day & almost night to the relentless fury of the Chesapeake (sic) where the boisterous winds & head tides caused the waves to roll like mountains which was very disagreeable & alarming to me not being accustomed to the stormy seas. I have been very happily entertained in the neighborhood since I saw you. First feasting at one place then another till I am almost tired to death there being a much greater proportion of belles than beaux here which obliged me to display all the gallantry I am master of to pay proper attention to them all. I have had the pleasure of being at a party at your Sister Scotts, & at a dinner at your Brother Toms, at both of which places I was agreeably entertained & am now just returned from a visit to Mr. How\_\_ in Choptank