

**ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH HISTORICAL STUDIES**

**MARBLEHEAD, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Number 2**

**September 1976**

**Architecture and Liturgy in St. Michael's Church**

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## ARCHITECTURE AND LITURGY IN ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

By ROBERT L. HOWIE, JR.

On 5 May 1968 a new liturgy was celebrated in St. Michael's Church for the first time in forty years. By 1971 the celebrant stood at a free-standing altar facing the congregation, events which taken together marked the most radical liturgical departure since 1833, when the eighteenth century church interior was transformed into its present arrangement. The appearance of a free-standing altar was an impetus to reconsider the relationships between the liturgy and liturgical architecture, relationships which ostensibly reflect the beliefs of the parish.<sup>1</sup> Those beliefs and their expression in the church's interior arrangement actually began with the building of the church in 1714.

In March of that year a subscription was undertaken "in Order to the Building and Erecting a Handsom Church in the Town of Marblehead." The list survives in the records of King's Chapel, Boston, and contains the names of forty-one subscribers pledging £ 373.10.00.<sup>2</sup> Another version of this list, with identical text and date, contains several additional subscribers to make the total £ 416.00.00.<sup>3</sup> These lists are undoubtedly the earliest which survive.<sup>4</sup> In the records of St. Michael's Church for 1716 is a third list entitled, "The Names of the Gentlemen that have been Benefactors to the Episcopal Church of England in Marblehead," which gives the names of thirty-three individuals, thirty of them sea-captains, pledging £ 170.00.00.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This study is a direct outgrowth of a lecture entitled "Architecture and Worship: Problems for a Christian Community," which I delivered to the Boston Chapter of the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross in April 1976.

<sup>2</sup>*An Entry Book for Church Meetings*, No. 1, unpagged, King's Chapel Documents, on deposit with the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

<sup>3</sup>Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, London: Letter Received, New York - New England, 1702-99, Part 3, Box 1, Letter 170, pp. 599-600. The subscription is reprinted entire in Appendix I.

<sup>4</sup>David Humphreys, in *An Historical Account of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, London, 1730, says that in the year 1707 a subscription was undertaken amounting to £ 416.00.00. His account stands alone, however, and the exact correspondence of this amount with that of the London list of 31 March 1714 suggests Humphrey's date of 1707 is probably incorrect.

<sup>5</sup>*Saint Michael's Church Records: 1716-1784*, transcribed by Myles Standish, Boston, 1943, p. 3. The Rev. John Barnard, Minister of Marblehead's First Church (Congregational), showed his tolerancy by pledging £3. But Barnard did not settle in Marblehead until after November of 1715, and the appearance of his name on this list supports the belief that the list was eclectically compiled at a later time.

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The subscriptions of March 1714 would suggest that the inchoate parish was linked to King's Chapel, New England's first Anglican church. But the connection is tenuous at best, with active support of the Marblehead church by King's Chapel members confined to very few. Only one of them, in fact, was on the committee which subsequently erected the church at Marblehead.<sup>6</sup>

George Jackson was probably the single most important personage in the formation of the Marblehead church. His name heads both the Boston and London subscription lists of March 1714, and it was at his house in Marblehead on 20 July 1714 that many benefactors met to incorporate a religious society in the ways of the Church of England. He is the chief signatory of a letter written to Sir Francis Nicholson acquainting that gentleman further with regard to the Marblehead society:<sup>7</sup>

Nov. 27, 1714.

Sir,

We the Subscribers and Benefactors of the Church of England erected in Marblehead do understand that your Excellency being bound for Great Britain which pray God protect & send you safe is the humble and hearty prayers of your dutiful children. Returning our Father & founder of the Church among us humble and hearty thanks for your generous benevolence towards erecting of said Church. Honored Sir we think it our bounden duty to acquaint you further of our proceedings which is as followeth Viz.<sup>t</sup> July 20<sup>th</sup> at a Meeting of the majority of the Benefactors at the House of M<sup>r</sup>. Geo. Jackson in order to Incorporate Viz.<sup>t</sup>. The Society made choice of Capt<sup>n</sup> John Calley Moderator & Bartholomew Jackson Clarke in carrying on this affair & proceeded further to make choice of M<sup>r</sup>. Geo. Jackson, M<sup>r</sup>. John Oulton, Capt<sup>n</sup> John

<sup>6</sup> John Oulton came from London shortly after 1705, and was intermittently resident in Boston and Marblehead. Merchant, investor and a founder of Boston's first bank, Oulton was a Vestryman and sometime Warden of King's Chapel from 1712-1723, when he subsequently moved to Marblehead. He had married a Marblehead girl, Deborah Brown, in 1711, and three of his nine children were born in Marblehead.

<sup>7</sup> Francis Nicholson (1660-1728), sometime lieutenant-governor of the Province of New England and of Virginia, a founder of William and Mary College and leader of military expeditions against the French in Canada and Nova Scotia. Nicholson served successively as governor of Maryland, Virginia, Nova Scotia and South Carolina, after which he returned to England, was knighted and promoted to lieutenant-general. A Fellow of the Royal Society and founding member of the S.P.G., he founded or assisted in establishing dozens of Anglican churches in the American Colonies. Nicholson's name heads the benefactors' list in the records of St. Michael's Church with the largest contribution, £25. It was he who named the church "St. Michael's" about 1722.

Calley, Capt<sup>n</sup> James Calley to be a standing Committee for the carrying on that affair in building a Handsome Church, M<sup>r</sup>. Geo. Slackom & M<sup>r</sup>. H<sup>y</sup> Humpries Surveyors of the Work, M<sup>r</sup>. Thomas Searle, M<sup>r</sup>. John Taalmon, M<sup>r</sup>. Tho<sup>s</sup> Candish, M<sup>r</sup>. Sam<sup>l</sup> Martyn & M<sup>r</sup>. Bartho. Jackson Collectors; further the Society obligeth themselves to pay one third part of their Subscriptions when the Timber & other Utensills being on the spot & one third part more when covered & the other third part when finish'd. Pursuant the Committee erected and raised a Church on Sept<sup>r</sup> 2<sup>d</sup> of the dimensions following Viz.<sup>t</sup>. 48 foot square, 23 foot had the Tower being 50 foot from the Ground & 17 foot square And we design the Spire 53 foot above the Tower. October 16 the Church being now inclosed & followed & the most part shingled & shut pu and we have agreed for finishing the whole having all things in place. But the weather proving extream hard has put us by at present but hope by the blessing of God to compleat & finish the whole by the last of June ensuing at the furthest & we pray your Excellency's further assistance for procuring an able Orthodox Minister for us whose conversation may be according to his doctrine without which it will be impossible for the Church of England to flourish amongst us in this Town considering the many Enemies we have against us. So with due respects we beg leave to subscribe,

Your Excellency's most dutiful and  
Obedient Children to command,

Geo. Jackson,  
Jn<sup>o</sup>. Calley,  
James Calley,

In behalf of the Society<sup>8</sup>

Although the frame of the church was enclosed and shingled by October, work on the interior was apparently delayed until more clem weather arrived to put "all things in place." It was agreed "to compleat & finish the whole" by the summer of 1715 in which time it was hoped "an able Orthodox Minister" would be settled. From this account and from preface to the subscription lists there can be no doubt that these individuals intended a strict adherence to the doctrines of the Church of England. Those doctrines would be reflected not in the stylistic architecture of

<sup>8</sup> William S. Perry, ed., *Papers Relating to the History of the Church in Massachusetts, 1675-1785*, privately printed, New York, 1873, pp. 113-114. This is the earliest surviving correspondence of any sort concerning the Marblehead church, and is here printed in

building itself, but rather in the functional arrangement of the church interior.

In the years preceding the erection of the Marblehead church, those arrangements had come to be rather rigidly delineated by both custom and law. In England, the reforms associated with William Laud were characterized by a recognition that the altar was rightly the chief liturgical space in the church.<sup>9</sup> It had not always been so.

Throughout much of the seventeenth century, altars, which were both easily accessible and portable, were used for a variety of secular functions such as a table for meetings or for conducting school. Indeed, in Elizabethan England altars were placed in the lower nave or chancel only during the communion; otherwise, they were relegated to a liturgically insignificant position in the west end of the chancel. This had been customary since the Reformation. Laud and his followers sought a return to the pre-Reformation arrangement with the altar against the east wall of the chancel, elevated and otherwise made liturgically significant.<sup>10</sup>

Progress in this direction was to be seen even in Jacobean times; after 1617 in fact, parish churches began to place their altars in a permanent position against the east wall and to fence them in with a rail. Both elevation and railings set off the altar and distinguished it as the chief liturgical space, allowing communicants to kneel in reverence at the altar. This growing recognition of the altar was given legal sanction when Laud assumed the primacy of Canterbury in 1633. But with the establishment of the Commonwealth, these reforms were swept aside and the Puritans successfully returned churches to their Reformation interiors, which included the practice of receiving communion in the pews.

The end of the interregnum did not bring with it an immediate return to Laudian principles. The Restoration service of 1662, in fact, can not be considered a particularly Laudian victory.<sup>11</sup> The Puritans succeeded in

<sup>9</sup> As Archbishop of Canterbury under Charles I, William Laud (1573-1645) led the High Church movement to suppress the predominant Calvinism in the English church of his day. He was beheaded by the Puritans in 1645, but the reforms which he advocated were increasingly adopted after the Restoration.

<sup>10</sup> The best treatment of the relationship between architecture and liturgy is G.W.O. Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship: An Inquiry Into the Arrangements for Public Worship in the Church of England from the Reformation to the Present Day*, London, 1948.

<sup>11</sup> That William Laud's reforms survived at all in the 1662 Prayer Book was due largely to John Cosin and Matthew Wren, bishops of Durham and Ely respectively, who collaborated at the Savoy Conference of 1661 to ritualize the liturgy. It was Matthew's nephew, Christopher, who was to give architectural expression to his uncle's theology after the London fire of 1666.

having the manner of consecrating the elements made more explicit by the addition of rubrics. Otherwise, the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* can be considered a conservative revision of that molded by Thomas Cranmer in 1552. It was this Prayer Book that formed the basis of belief for the Marblehead church in 1714.

With the Collect for the King moved up to a more prestigious location preceding the Collect for the day, the 1662 service was as much a political settlement as an ecumenical one. Yet it was the rubrics, written by theologians, which set forth the instructions to be followed during divine service. They directed, among other things, would-be communicants to inform the curate at least a day before communion that they intended to receive. The curate could reject this application if he felt the person had not been reconciled by absolution. The priest, in fact, was obliged to read before the day of communion a warning against unregenerate persons intending to receive the Sacraments. On the other hand, the Restoration service saw fit to include a prayer admonishing those who were negligent in making their communions. In "The Order for the Administration of the Lords Supper, or Holy Communion," the rubrics gave specific instructions about the altar:<sup>12</sup>

The Table at the Communion-time having a fair white linen cloth upon it, shall stand in the body of the Church or in the Chancel, where Morning and Evening Prayer are appointed to be said. And the Priest standing at the north side of the Table shall say the Lords Prayer, with the Collect following, the people kneeling.<sup>13</sup>

This was not specific enough, however, to preclude a variety of altar locations; indeed, it was directed that any convenient place would suffice for the altar's location. The Collects were followed by the Epistle, Gospel, Creed and Offertory. During the latter, the church-wardens were to collect the people's offerings "in a decent bafin, to be provided by the Parifh for that purpofe; and reverently bring it to the Priest, who fhall humbly present and place it on the holy Table."<sup>14</sup> At the time of communion, "the Communicants being conveniently placed for the receiving of the holy Sacrament

<sup>12</sup> In the rubrics for the Prayer of Humble Access in the 1662 service, the words "Lord's Table" replaced "God's board." Yet it is a mistake to read too much liturgical significance into these terms. Communion-table, table, altar-table and altar were used interchangeably.

<sup>13</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the use of the Church of England; Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David, Pointed as they are to be Sung or Said in Churches: And the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaini and Consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*, London, 1662, unpagged.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* Although the word "priest" occurs more frequently than "minister" in the Restoration service, both terms were used interchangeably.

[the priest] and all the people kneeling humbly upon their knees," the general confession was made.<sup>15</sup>

The elements were administered by the priest standing at the northern end of the altar and wearing a surplice. The rubrics advocated complete consumption of the elements during the service, but reservation was not specifically forbidden. These generalities of the 1662 service were well known to practitioners of the English liturgy, and they formed the basis around which practitioners arranged the interior of the Church of England at Marblehead.

Only two Anglican churches had previously been erected in Massachusetts. King's Chapel, built 1689, was rebuilt in 1711.<sup>16</sup> Queen Anne's, Newbury, was also erected in 1711.<sup>17</sup> Undoubtedly the church builders at Marblehead had seen these Anglican prototypes and took note of their interior arrangements. To the new church, dependent upon pew assessment as its only reliable source of income, the arrangement of pews so as to fit as many as possible within the available space took on an immediate importance. Pews were also a way to check the frequency of attendance at divine service of their owners:

Att a meeting of the Society of the Church of England in the Towne of Marblehead (it is voted that the Pews as they Are Recorded to every Person and their heires Shall Stand Good for ever, but in Case any Person or Persons Should Absent from the s<sup>d</sup> Church has not to be a hearer & Benefactor shall Loose his Or their Rights in the said Church) and to Descend to the Remaining Society of the said Church-- God Preserve the Church & King anno 1716. Octo<sup>r</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> <sup>18</sup>

Pews were still being built in the Marblehead church as late as 1719, which the following action of the Vestry attests to:

Att a Vestrey metteing March 2<sup>th</sup> 1718/9 Voted that M<sup>r</sup> Charles Wheedon Church Warden Shall have Credett for Thirty one Pounds five Shillings & one Peney halphpeny for Bulding of

<sup>15</sup>For the first time in post-Reformation English liturgies communicants were required to kneel during communion.

<sup>16</sup>The present King's Chapel was completed in 1754, and no interior plan of either the 1689 or 1711 church is known.

<sup>17</sup>Fallen into disuse in 1766, this church finally collapsed in 1777. No interior plan has survived.

<sup>18</sup>Standish, *Records*, p. 1.

Four Pews & for mony Paid to the Reverand M<sup>r</sup> Mills & Harriss And Allsoe that he hear Orders to Sell the four Afore said Pewes and to Returne the OverPlush of the mony Ariseing by the sale of Such Pews to the Church.<sup>19</sup>

That pews were built by the Warden himself attests to the independent nature of these Marbleheaders. That independence extended as well to preferring a minister from within their own ranks. In February of 1718, several months after the first missionary Rector sailed home to England, the Marblehead Vestry wrote to the S.P.G.: "The reason of our not Intimating to your Honors sooner of our Church's being destitute of a Minister was because that we was in expectation of a Gentlemen of this country because there are several Young Gentlemen here whose Inclination leads them to our holy Constitution."<sup>20</sup> Doubtless one of these young men was Charles Johnson, the first Reading Clerk of the parish. Johnson's lay ministry was in fact the reason for the hasty departure of William Shaw, the first missionary Rector. In March of 1718 Shaw personally delivered his grievances to the Society in London:

...one Charles Johnson, Clerk of the said Church contrary to the Canons thereof sets up (though illiterate as his Letter which I have delivered to M<sup>r</sup> Humphreys will plainly evince) for an expounder and preacher of the Gospel. My hearers generally speaking being new converts and having too many of them itching ears are too subject to be led out of the way by his seducing doctrine. This man's method did not only cause divisions and create animosities among the Members of the Church, Inhabitants of the aforesaid Town, but caused several to abstain from the Communion, and for some time refrain the Church; and also put an absolute stop to the Masters of Ships their Charity . . .<sup>21</sup>

A more able missionary was dispatched to put Mr. Johnson in his proper place, but he continued to serve as Reading Clerk until 1722, and in this capacity assisted the Rev. David Mossom by leading responsorial psalms, reading warrants for meetings of the Proprietors and generally assisting the

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8. "M<sup>r</sup> Mills" was the Rev. Samuel Myles, Rector of King's Chapel from 1689-1728. He and his assistant, the Rev. Henry Harris, officiated as interim clergy at Marblehead in 1718, between the rectorates of the Rev. William Shaw and the Rev. David Mossom.

<sup>20</sup>Perry, *Papers*, p. 130.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.* Despite Shaw's statement, the election of a Clerk to perform divine service in the absence of a priest or assist in a service with a priest was expressly provided by the 91st Canon.

Rector during services.<sup>22</sup> Johnson left the country in March of 1722, and the Wardens were obliged to find a suitable replacement. The importance of the Clerk's duties was suggested by the Rector when he wrote on 1 July following: "This Day I appointed & Chose Benj<sup>a</sup> Pix to be Clerk of my Church & notified this my Choice, agreeable to Y<sup>e</sup> 91<sup>st</sup> Canon, to the Parishioners in the time of Divine Service."<sup>23</sup>

In order to become better acquainted with missions like Marblehead, the Rt. Rev. Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, sent out queries to be answered by each New England missionary in 1723. David Mossom's reply from Marblehead provides the earliest description of the liturgy and liturgical architecture in the church:

*How oft is Divine Service performed in your Church? And what proportion of the Parishioners attend it?*

Twice every Lord's day I preach & once of the Friday preceding the first Sunday in the month & on Christmas day, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Ascension day; I preach as I do on the fast and thanksgiving days appointed by the State & read Prayers on Holy days. The generality of the Parishioners attend on the Lord's day when at home, for as it is a fishing town, the greatest part of the men go to sea, & are often out at sea upon their fishing voyages 2 or three months together.

*How oft is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered? And what is the usual number of Communicants?*

I administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday in every month, the usual number of communicants is between 30 & 40. The whole consists of more than 50.

*At what times do you Catechise the Youth of your Parish?*

I Catechise the youth every Friday & Sunday in Lent & at the same time expound to them.

<sup>22</sup> A Prayer Book was ordered to "be kept for the Clerks Use at the Alter," and Clerks were instructed to read warrants for Proprietor's meetings "immediately after Contribution is over, before Calling the last Psalm." (Standish, *Records*, pp. 120, 79). A complete list of Reading Clerks can be found in Appendix C.

<sup>23</sup> Standish, *Records*, p. 23. In 1723, Pix was given £ 10 for his services, a salary which fluctuated from year to year, generally declining. In 1730, however, Pix was given £ 20 but only "upon Condition of forfeiting Five Shillings every Time He shall not assist, on a Lord's Day or Holiday, when the Church is open." (*Records*, p. 23). In 1789 the salary was a mere £ 6, and remained so throughout the rest of the century. After 1800, the Clerk received \$20.00 per year.

*Are all things duly disposed and provided in the Church, for the decent and orderly performance of Divine Service?*

Our Church is plain but neat. We have neither Pulpit Cloth, nor communion tablecloth, only one small cup for distributing the wine at the Sacrament the people are so poor that they are not able to purchase more, the Church being still in debt near £200.<sup>24</sup>

Mossom's initial statement suggests the predominance of a pulpit ministry, though the communion service was not wanting. In fact, the celebration of the eucharist at least once a month places the Marblehead parish in this period squarely in line with those Episcopal churches which emphasized their Anglo-Catholicism with relatively frequent communion. During the eighteenth century this was characteristic of some of the Anglican churches in the northern colonies. In Virginia and other southern colonies, where the Anglican church enjoyed ecclesiastical hegemony, parochial reports indicate the more normal frequency of communion was three or four times per year. This would suggest that the high churchmanship to the north was at least partially a reaction to the established Congregationalism under which Anglicans labored for expression. We may conclude from this document that the Marblehead church did not neglect the eucharist despite a pulpit ministry and the presence of two dissenting meeting houses nearby.

With the usual number of communicants between thirty and forty, and the possession of but one small cup for the sacraments, there were obvious logistical problems the Rector had to contend with. Because the communion was administered in both kinds and the cup was used for the wine, it appears that no paten or other suitable container for the bread was provided during these early years. The only other contemporary description of the church interior was provided in July of 1744, when the itinerant diarist Dr. Alexander Hamilton recorded that the "pulpit and alter are neat enough, the first being set out with a cushion of red velvet, and the other painted and adorned with the King's arms at top. There is one large gallery facing the pulpit, opposite to which at the south entry of the church hangs a pretty large gilt candle branch."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Perry, *Papers*, pp. 149-150. Mossom probably brought his own surplice from London, which was the only ecclesiastical garment worn at that time, except for a black preaching gown. The missionary at Newbury, however, complained in his reply that "My Church is not supplied with a surplice." Mossom noted that of Marblehead's approximately 300 families, between 70 and 80 belonged to the English church.

<sup>25</sup> *Itinerarium* for 29 July 1744, in George F. Dow, ed., *Two Centuries of Travel in Essex County, Massachusetts*. Topsfield, 1921, p. 65. The "gilt candle branch" chandelier was a gift of John Elbridge, Collector of the Port of Bristol, in 1732.

The Hamilton account is chiefly significant for its indication of the positions of both pulpit and gallery in the early church. A large gallery was opposite the pulpit, and the fact that the pulpit was opposite the southern entrance indicates both that the pulpit was located on the northern side of the church and the gallery, facing it, was to the south. Hamilton's statement that there was but "one large gallery" is, however, difficult to reconcile with the church records. As early as 1718 there is mention of the sale of "7 Pews in y<sup>c</sup> New Gallery," suggesting the existence of an earlier gallery. In 1722 "Two Front pews in the West Gallery" were sold, and in February of 1724 the disposition of "1 Corner Pew between the Galleries" is recorded.<sup>26</sup> It is probable that one gallery was built along with the original church, and the need for additional revenue from pew assessments precipitated the building of a second gallery in 1718.

Pew assessment, in fact, coupled with the steady growth of the parish required a major expansion of the church in 1728, when the need for additional space could no longer be met by gallery additions or enlargement. On 5 February of that year a committee was appointed to purchase "15 Feet Northward of the Church, in Order to enlarge it." And on Easter Monday 1728 it was voted that the committee "be empowered to solicit the Captains of the Ships for Contributions towards enlarging the Church."<sup>27</sup>

Although no contemporary description of these changes exists, a "Plan of S<sup>t</sup> M[ichael's] Church by SWP 1813" executed nearly a century after the church was built provides a visual explanation not only of the 1728 addition but also of the church's original floor plan.<sup>28</sup> Two entranceways are shown in this plan, one west and one south, with the latter as the principal entrance. An aisle runs from the southern entrance to the pulpit on the north side, which is shown against the northern wall. To the east is the altar, flanked by pews on two sides and fronted by one of two side aisles running north and south. The drawing is the principal evidence for the position of the altar in the early church.

A second drawing, apparently copied from the first and entitled "Copy of a plan of St. Michael's Church. previous to the Alterations in 1832" indicates more precisely the position of the altar and the character of the

<sup>26</sup> Standish, *Records*, pp. 48, 51 and 36 respectively.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 39.

<sup>28</sup> This drawing was recently restored as part of a comprehensive preservation program at the church, and is reproduced for the first time on p. 217.

1728 addition.<sup>29</sup> Both drawings suggest that the pulpit was attached to the northern wall both in 1714 and again in 1728 when the northern wall was pushed back 15 feet. A bill of 1718 "for making of 2 Windows to y<sup>c</sup> Pulpit"<sup>30</sup> suggests more clearly the pulpit's position against the northern wall. The altar is given greater articulation in this second drawing, which shows a slightly curved railing at the front of a raised platform, with the altar itself positioned firmly against the east wall.<sup>31</sup>

The drawings indicate that the main direction of the pews is northwards towards the pulpit, though seats undoubtedly faced the altar on the east side. With the equidistant axis of pulpit and altar in the original church, however, the pulpit's dominance cannot be said to do an injustice, liturgically speaking, to the altar as it was used in this period. There is every indication, in fact, that the architecture of liturgical spaces in the interior was a faithful interpretation of the English liturgy and of Laudian prototypes which had been erected in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

Unfortunately the plans do not indicate the location of the font during this period. Though the exact location may remain a mystery, we may extrapolate from the auditory churches erected by Sir Christopher Wren in London after 1666, which continue the late medieval pattern of a west-end font. During the Commonwealth it had been directed that fonts were to be removed from this position and brought into the nave to stress the relationship between Baptism and the Word. The Restoration, and the chance to rebuild churches after the Great Fire of 1666 combined to return fonts once again to the west-end.

With faithful adherence in the arrangement of pulpit and altar to this plan, there is no reason to think otherwise in the location of the font, which was probably positioned in the west entranceway opposite from the altar. Such a location would, in light of the aisle arrangement, create a somewhat peripetetic service for the celebrant, which is suggested by David Mossom's complaint that his "constant course of preaching twice a day, without any relief, administering Baptism almost every Sunday to one or more, the Holy Eucharist Monthly, & Expounding"<sup>32</sup> has weakened his constitution.

<sup>29</sup> This drawing was recently found pasted inside the cover of an early church records book, and is reproduced on p. 218.

<sup>30</sup> Standish, *Records*, p. 47.

<sup>31</sup> A third drawing related to this "Copy of a plan" and similarly titled has recently come to the church from the Diocesan Library in Boston. It shows a slightly longer rail of greater curvature without platform.

<sup>32</sup> Perry, *Papers*, p. 255.

No contemporary reference is made to the altarpiece, but the survival to the present day of a wooden reredos gives us a clear indication of what stood immediately above the altar. There are two central panels which contain the Decalogue, and these are flanked by the Lord's Prayer to the left and the Apostle's Creed to the right, beneath which are two quotations from scripture.<sup>33</sup> The treatment is in keeping with a number of altarpieces from this period both in England and the American Colonies. Long considered as having been "brought from England ... entire in readiness to be placed in position,"<sup>34</sup> the date of the reredos has been variously given as 1714, 1717 and even sixteenth century.<sup>35</sup> It seems probable, however, that it was made with the Marblehead church in mind, and installed when the interior of the church was completed in 1715.

With the indigenous origins of the structural material already proven, it seems likely that the reredos too is of American manufacture. The existence of similar altarpieces at King's Chapel and Christ Church in Boston, and St. Peter's Church in Salem, further supports this belief.<sup>37</sup> In the case of Christ Church and St. Peter's, the altarpieces were executed by one John Gibbs in 1736 and 1738 respectively. Gibb's father, also John, was a noted painter, stainer and member of King's Chapel, known for his coats-of-arms and funeral hatchments. The elder Gibbs' close connections with King's Chapel both as a communicant and Vestryman around the time of the erection of the Marblehead church make him a likely possibility for the source of both the reredos and the King's arms which surmounted it.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup>"The Law was given by Moses" and "But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Canon 82 of 1604 ordered the Decalogue to be set upon the east end of every church, recognizing that knowledge of the Commandments, Creed and Lord's Prayer were necessary for confirmation and communion.

<sup>34</sup>Samuel Roads, Jr., "Historical Address," delivered 18 April 1888 and reprinted in *St. Michael's Church, Marblehead, Mass.*, Boston, 1888, p. 24.

<sup>35</sup>An article which appeared in the *Salem Evening News* on 14 August 1936, after a recent cleaning of the reredos, stated that experts from Boston's Museum of Fine Arts stylistically dated the altarpiece to the sixteenth century because of the "Tudor roses" which adorn the open-topped pediment.

<sup>36</sup>See Stuart P. Feld, "St. Michael's Church, Marblehead, Massachusetts, 1714," *Old-Time New England*, vol. LII, no. 4, Spring 1962, p. 102.

<sup>37</sup>Actually, in the case of King's Chapel, 4 canvas panels had been drawn in England in 1696, but were painted and installed in Boston by one G. Dyer.

<sup>38</sup>There were any number of New England artists in the early eighteenth century capable of executing an altarpiece of this type. A definitive answer must, however, await a careful examination of the internal evidence and a comparison of surviving examples both here and abroad. Notices of John Gibbs (c. 1682-1725) and his son (b. 1704) can be found in various volumes of the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, among others. The King's arms, symbolic of the relationship between church and state, were compulsory in all churches after 1660.

Taken together, these plans give us a good indication of the church's liturgical architecture during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, arrangements in complete conformity with the English liturgy. The Rev. Alexander Malcolm, writing to the S.P.G. in the summer of 1745, suggests the reason why such a faithful adherence to the English rite was to be found at St. Michael's: "The Church here is composed of families from Great Britain and the Island of Jersey Brought up Originally in the Communion of the Church."<sup>39</sup> Malcolm's predecessor, however, the Rev. George Pigot, found his parishioners wanting for their lack of frequent communion. In November of 1728 he complained of their reluctance to receive the sacraments to the Society in London:

It is strange to see, that out of so many Persons that have been hearers in this church from its first foundation, there should be so few inclined to adhere closely to the Christian Institutions. To these I have made it my business to urge them frequently, and as cogently as I could, yet I am sorry to say it, I have taken in but Twelve to Communion since my Accession. The number, however, of Persons baptized by me this year are 79, whereof Six were English, and one a Negro Adult.<sup>40</sup>

Pigot was to have better luck as the years of his rectorate went by, and he compiled the only list of communicants in the eighteenth century that survives, which includes some 75 names for the period 1728-1737. During that same period, Pigot baptized some 454 people, the highest number proportionally of any Rector of either the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries.<sup>41</sup>

Written reports of St. Michael's missionaries to the S.P.G. provide an important source of information for sacramental ministrations. The Rev. Peter Bours, for example, reported to the Society in July of 1760 that "I have baptized in my own Congregation, from June 24, 1759 to June 24, 1760, one Adult and 43 Infants, & admitted 3 to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper." A year later he could report having baptized 59 infants,

<sup>39</sup>Perry, *Papers*, p. 390.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>41</sup>Pigot and his sermon, "A Vindication of the Practice of the Antient Christian . . . in the Observation of Christmas-Day . . ." Boston, 1731, the first published defense of Christmas as a religious festival in the American Colonies, will be the subject of a study to appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*.



"had one added to the Communion, and the whole number of constant Communicants is at present 47."<sup>42</sup>

Often several months or more would elapse between missionary rectorates however, and these transitional periods were a real test of the parish's cohesion. It had been months since the death of his predecessor when the Rev. Joshua W. Weeks arrived in Marblehead in November of 1763 and wrote home to London that the Marbleheaders had "been long destitute of public worship ... Notwithstanding it has been a year and a half since they have had any regular Service in the Church, yet I have been told, and I mention it with pleasure, not one Parishioner has departed from its worship or Communion."<sup>43</sup>

A second visit to Marblehead by the enthusiast Whitefield in 1770 considerably dampened Week's felicity, when a former Reading Clerk of St. Michael's went over into Whitefield's camp.<sup>44</sup> Charging apostasy, Weeks complained

... that one Jayne, who was always a great stickler for enthusiastic teachers and vagrant exhorters, has run into all the wild freaks and extravagant irregularities of raving enthusiasm. He, because of the Clerk having some difference with him, did not partake the Sacrament and yet performed his part of the communion service, took it into his head to disturb him in the execution of his office by behaving so as to offend many of the Congregation. He says likewise that I do not preach the Gospel, that there is no preaching at Church, & the like, tho' it is well known my sentiments in divinity agree with those of Tillotson, Butler and other eminent divines of our Church; These likewise are the sentiments of my parish.<sup>45</sup>

But the approaching Revolutionary storm would give Weeks greater cause to worry than Whitefield's enthusiasm and the defection of the former Reading Clerk. Indeed, when news of the Declaration of Independence reached Marblehead a mob broke into the church and tore the royal coat-of-

arms above the reredos down and torched it.<sup>46</sup> In 1778 Weeks described the state of the Episcopal church in New England and what had happened at St. Michael's:

There were only about 50 families on whose fedelity I could rely, as they were still attached to our constitution both in Church and State. For near a year after independence was declared by the Congress they generally attended divine service in the church, where I constantly used the liturgy till the General Assembly made a Law against it, when it was judged best for me to desist. Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Gilchrist shut up his church at the same time. After this I frequently visited my flock from house to house, instructed their children, comforted them under their troubles, and endeavored to encourage them in their religion and loyalty.<sup>47</sup>

The Massachusetts General Court had indeed passed a law on 4 February 1777 forbidding the prayer for the King which was an integral part of the English liturgy.<sup>48</sup> Trinity Church in Boston simply excluded these offensive prayers in their service, and as a result remained open during the Revolution, the only Anglican church in New England to do so. Weeks, however, took the obligation to uphold his ordination vows more seriously than the Trinity Church Rector and declined to perform a bowdlerized liturgy, preferring to close the church instead. It was not, in fact, until 6 February 1780 when one Woodward Abraham, a lay reader, reopened the church by reading some prayers and preaching a sermon.

In the years following the Revolution, St. Michael's, like other Episcopal churches throughout the country, was a liturgical law unto itself, and clergy were free to make changes or substitutions in the liturgy as they saw fit. In September of 1785 clergy and laity from Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island met in Boston to discuss possible changes. Retaining the English service of 1662, they changed "O Lord save the King" to "O Lord save the Church," the prayers for the King and royal family changed to prayers for the "govenor or ruler of this State or Commonwealth," and the Catechism "to honor and obey the King" was changed "to honor and obey my civil authority."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Perry, *Papers*, pp. 456, 467. A silver flagon had come to the church in 1745, a gift of David LeGallais, and a paten in 1763.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 511.

<sup>44</sup> George Whitefield (1714-1770), leader of Calvinistic Methodists, visited Marblehead in 1741 and 1770, and upon both occasions locked horns with St. Michael's Anglican missionaries.

<sup>45</sup> Perry, *Papers*, pp. 553-554.

<sup>46</sup> The royal arms were reputedly replaced by an American eagle. See John W. Leek, "Historical Sermon," delivered 29 September 1872, printed at Peabody, Mass., 1873, pp. 14 and 23.

<sup>47</sup> Perry, *Papers*, p. 601. William McGilchrist was Rector of St. Peter's Church, Salem.

<sup>48</sup> *The Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay*, vol. 5, Boston, 1886, p. 612.

<sup>49</sup> E.C. Chorley, *The New American Prayer Book*, New York, 1929.

Shortly afterwards a convention of southern states meeting in Philadelphia adopted a *Proposed Book of Common Prayer*, but this was not well received, and the convention is chiefly remembered today for its decision to rename the church "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America." With the *Proposed Book* as a basis, however, a new Prayer Book was adopted at Philadelphia in October of 1789.<sup>50</sup> The 1789 General Convention required the new American service to be used in all Episcopal churches after 1 October 1790. There was no departure in the new book from any essential point of doctrine, discipline or worship of the English service, although "priest" was substituted by "minister" where it occurred in the rubrics,<sup>51</sup> except at the Absolution, to permit a Deacon or lay reader to conduct services.<sup>52</sup>

For the first time a provision was made for a hymn immediately after the Consecration prayer, which was to have liturgical significance for St. Michael's. The installation of a pipe organ in the year 1754 attests to the parish's early interest in liturgical music, an interest furthered with the building of a singing gallery in 1764.<sup>53</sup> But even before the adoption of the new Prayer Book in 1789, St. Michael's was enjoying its popularity as a center for liturgical music. In 1787 Bishop Samuel Seabury made a visitation to the parish and confirmed 120 people, the first confirmation in the church's history. Of this event the Rector, Thomas F. Oliver, wrote to his brother:

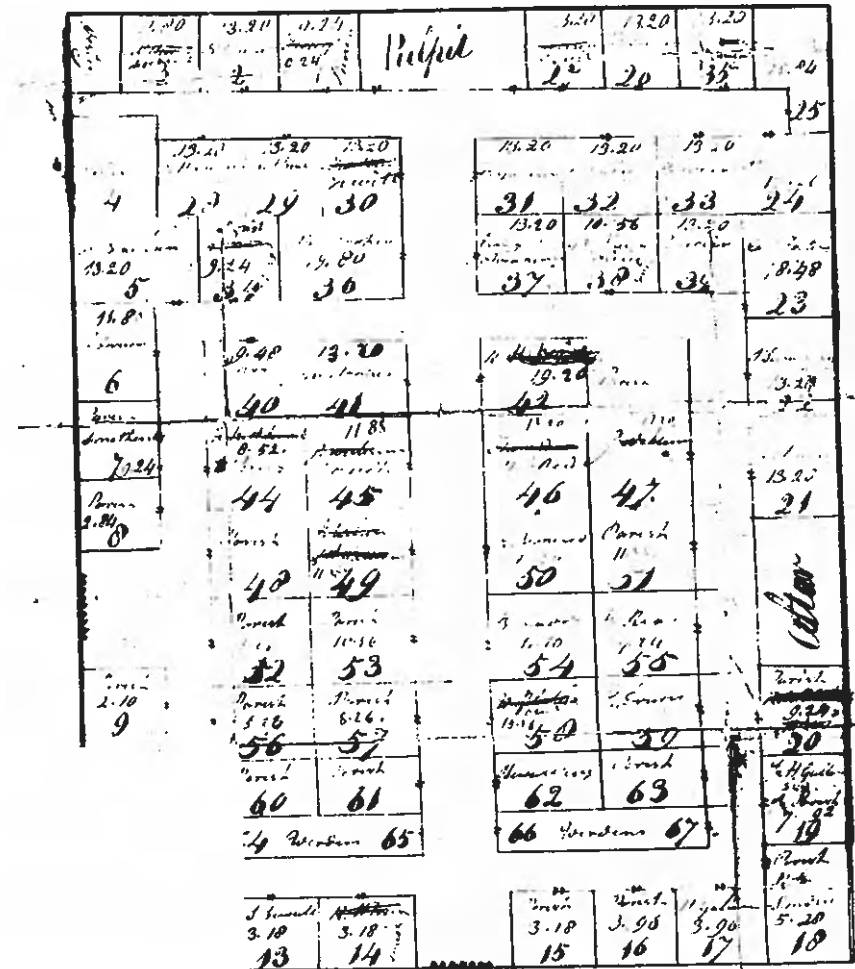
Will it give you any pleasure to learn that our quire at St. Michael's do constantly chant the Venite--the Te Deum and in the afternoon the Cantate and Nunc Dimitis to great acceptation.

<sup>50</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer, And Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America: Together with the Psalter, or Psalms of David.*

<sup>51</sup> To the rubric to stand on the north side of the altar was added "or where Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer are said," a provision dictated by the liturgical architecture of St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia, so the celebrant wouldn't have to walk to the altar, a considerable distance, right after the antecommunion.

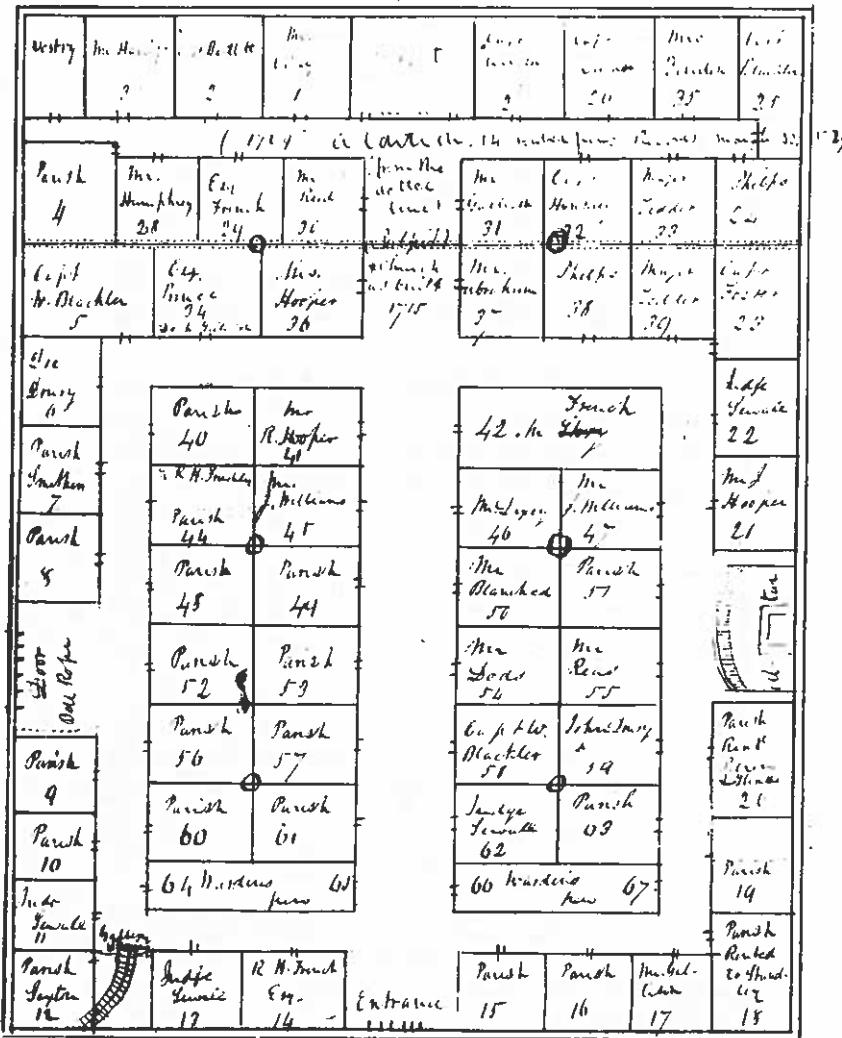
<sup>52</sup> Samuel Seabury's trip to Aberdeen for consecration as the first American bishop and the concordat he signed there to uphold the Scottish Canon placed the American service squarely in the Catholic eucharistic tradition of 1549. Edward P. Echlin, S.J., in his *The Anglican Eucharist in Ecumenical Perspective: Doctrine and Rite from Cranmer to Seabury*. New York, 1968, states unequivocally that the 1789 communion service meets Roman Catholic doctrinal requirements and is available as a form of the Mass.

<sup>53</sup> The history of organs at St. Michael's can be found in "Organs and Organists of St. Michael's Church," *St. Michael's Church Historical Studies*. Marblehead, Mass., Number 1, September 1975.



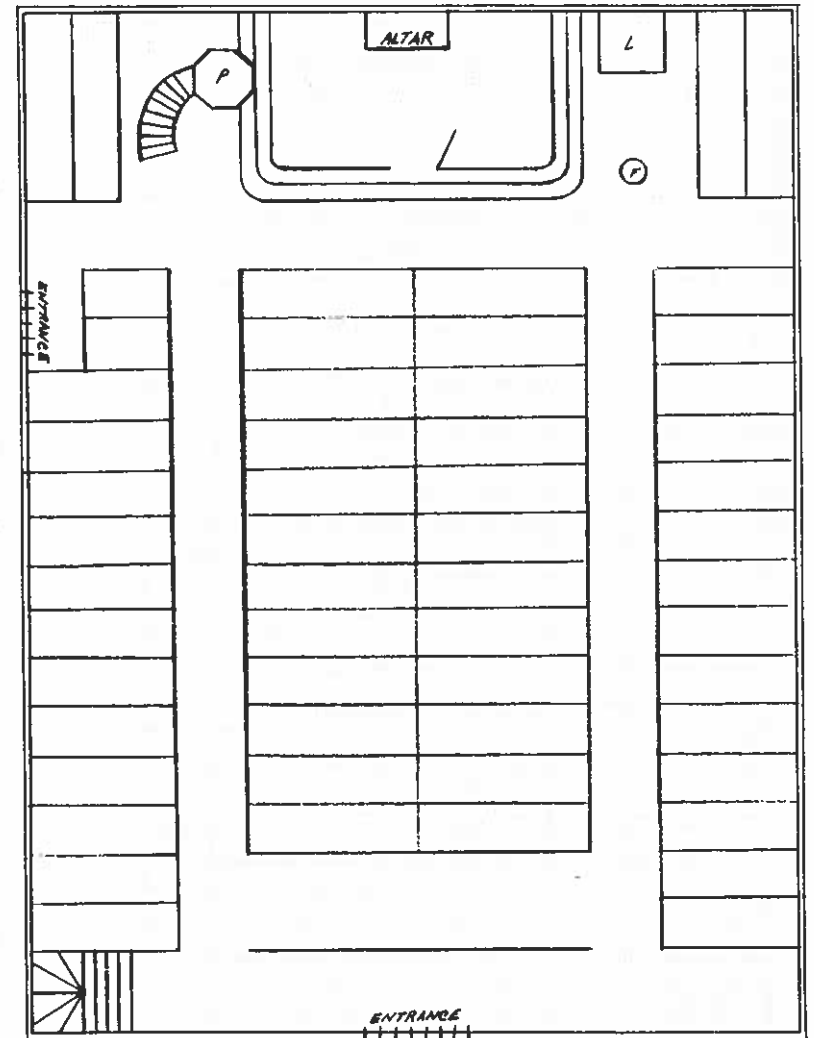
THE CHURCH INTERIOR — 1715 to 1833

ON REVERSE: "Plan of St Michael's] Church  
By SWP 1813"

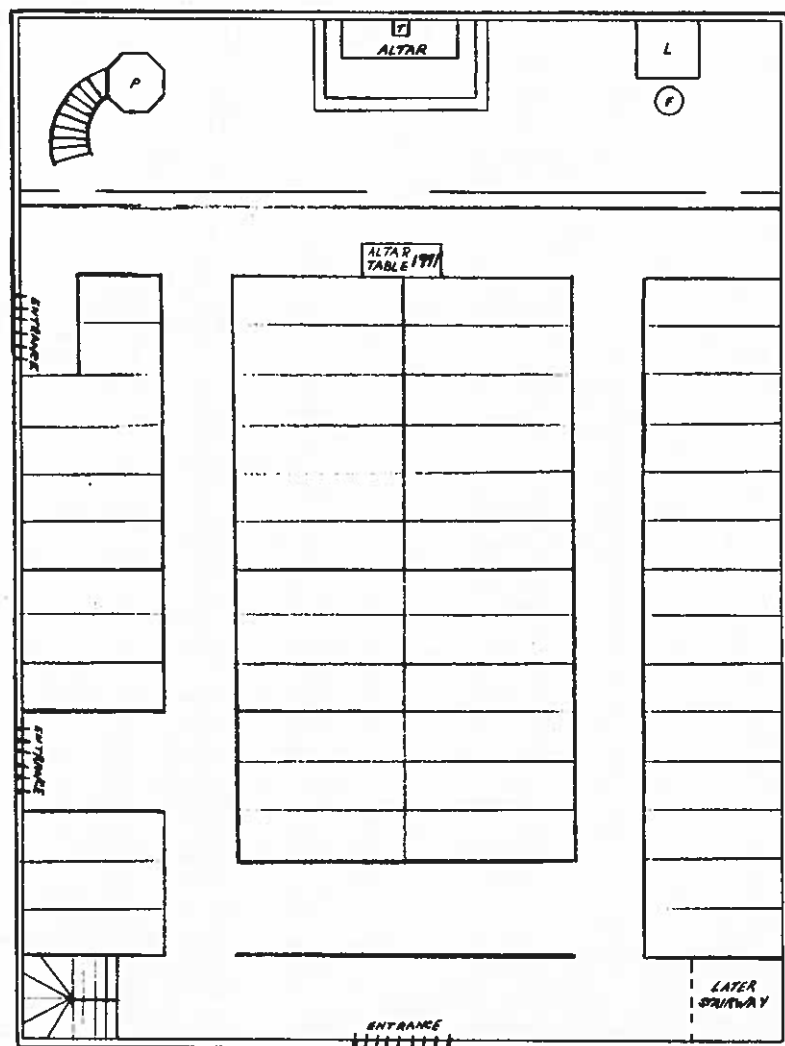


Copy of a plan of St. Michael's Church, previous to the alterations in 1832

Later Copy of 1813 Plan



THE CHURCH INTERIOR AFTER 1833



THE CHURCH INTERIOR SINCE 1937

Drawings by Robert L. Howie  
 Courtesy of St. Michael's Church Archives

This I assure you is the case and I believe mine is almost the only church on the continents in which this [is] done.<sup>54</sup>

The financial drain of Marbleheaders which accompanied the Revolution was to have an insidious effect on St. Michael's. Lack of funds eventually caused the church to close in 1819, and although it opened again in 1821, it was again forced to close for lack of support between 1827 and 1832. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century some seven different Rectors officiated at St. Michael's, a number which suggests both a reason for and a result of the parish's instability during this period. Significantly, however, John W. Smethurst, who had been elected Reading Clerk in 1795, served continuously throughout this period in that capacity. Serving some thirty years, exclusive of closings, Smethurst was undoubtedly an important and cohesive factor in the celebration of the liturgy.

The closings themselves were not without effect on the eighteenth century building, and the vicissitudes of time had taken their toll as well. Even while open for worship in 1825 one observer noted the "decayed but still venerable Church."<sup>55</sup> The degree to which the church had deteriorated and the scope of the repairs to its fabric is suggested by a document in the church records bearing date of 2 October 1833:

St. Michaels Church being in a State of Decay it was thought necessary by the unanimous vote of the Parish to have it repaired as it was no longer tenatable, accordingly in March 1833, the Carpenters proceeded to the repairs. All the boards on the flat of the roof which were not perfectly sound were replaced by new ones and the flat new shingled. Blinds put on in the tower the old windows taken away and new Gothic Windows substituted the clapboards fresh nailed and 2 coats of paint laid on the whole exterior of the church. The old floor and pews were taken away by the consent of former Proprietors, new rafters and beams laid on the ceils and a new floor laid on this, were placed sixty six new slip pews. A new Pulpit including a vestry room. The old chancel stood formerly on the North East part of the Church was now removed on the N.W. part and enclosed the Pulpit vestry &c. The Alter Piece designed and executed in

<sup>54</sup>Harold D. Hodgkinson, "A Clergyman's Comments on the Life of Young America, 1787-1791," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, vol. CII, January 1966, no. 1, p. 4. The history of music at St. Michael's will appear in a forthcoming issue of *St. Michael's Church Historical Studies*.

<sup>55</sup>Samuel F. Jarvis to Ralph F. French, 22 January 1825.

England in the year 1717 was placed directly over the Pulpit. No alteration was made to the design except laying on two coats of varnish. The Western Gallery was taken down; the walls newly firred, lathed and plastered. The old organ taken away and a new organ. placed in its stead presented by John Hooper Esq<sup>r</sup>. A partition with two doors fronting the Aisles was put up leaving a recess the width of the church eleven feet deep including the stairway to the Gallery and a room for the Sabbath School Library. On examining the frame of the church the ceils &c., it was found to be White Oak in an excellent state of preservation and supposed by the Carpenters to continue so for a century to come. Rev. George Eastman Rector, the first sermon preached on opening after the Repairs by Rev. William Potter of Quincey Mr Eastman being absent.<sup>56</sup>

The repairs were nothing short of a transmogrification, with the complete alteration of the early pulpit-altar axis to one in which the altar became centrally dominant against the northern wall and flanked by pulpit and lectern. With the installation of the latter for the reading of the Lessons, a new liturgical space was created which before had been a function of tripartite pulpits. With the lowest level for the use of the Reading Clerk in leading responses and convening notices, the middle level for the use of the celebrant in reading Lessons and the topmost level for the sermon, the triple-deck pulpit, a type common to the eighteenth century and likely the type used at St. Michael's from 1714-1833, met in one liturgical space all the non-sacramental requirements of the liturgy.

With the addition of a lectern, or reading desk, as a separate liturgical space flanking the altar on the right, the pulpit had to share what had previously been its exclusive prerogative. With this liturgical space division of 1833 came the termination of the office of Reading Clerk as well. Attempted Congregational takeover of St. Michael's and occasional use of the church for non-Episcopal services had prompted the Vestry in 1827 to decree that "in the future no person shall be engaged to preach who has no[t] taken Preast orders and no more money shall be paid for the support of any other."<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *Saint Michael's Church Records: 1799-1834*, transcribed by Myles Standish, Boston, 1943, pp. 92-93.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121. Attempted Congregational hegemony at St. Michael's will appear as a study in a forthcoming issue of the *Essex Institute Historical Collections*.

The Reading Clerk's duties were assumed by the Rector, and thus a counterpart of the first level of the tripartite pulpit was not to be found in the 1833 alterations. These alterations were prompted, as we have seen, by the need to make the church once again tenable, and although inspired by a nascent Gothicism, we must be careful not to attribute too much conscious theology on the part of the parish in establishing a preeminent altar.

A July 1833 bill of one "J. Noyes for Candlesticks \$6.00" is the earliest indication on the church records for the use of candlesticks in St. Michael's, though they may have been in use fourteen years earlier.<sup>58</sup> There is no indication, however, that the candlesticks provided by Noyes in 1833 held lighted candles; often, in fact, candlesticks were mere decorative fixtures which adorned the retable above the altar. Customarily candles were brought into the church just prior to the service, and they were taken out at the end. The feeling against unnecessary altar ornaments prevailed throughout much of the nineteenth century, and as late as 1868 Britain's Privy Council condemned the use of lighted candles during the communion. Against this background, the Noyes bill is significant for its early indication of the use of candlesticks, though we can only conjecture as to whether or not candles were lighted at this time.

In May of 1852 it was recorded "that the report of the com<sup>tee</sup> on the alteration of the pulpit be accepted & that the change recommended by them be made,"<sup>59</sup> but we are not informed just what this alteration entailed. Twelve years later, however, it was voted "that a committee of three be chosen to take into consideration the expense of cutting down the pulpit," an indication that the new pulpit of 1833 retained a height similar to those of the eighteenth century. A similar consideration to lower the pulpit was made as early as 1766, but both this attempt and that of 1864 to alter the pulpit's height were disallowed at subsequent Vestry meetings.

Some indication of the service schedule in the second half of the nineteenth century is given by the Vestry's vote in February 1870 "That the Rector be requested to change the present order of Service, and return to the old order of morning an evening prayer. viz: at 10½ <sup>o</sup> clock A.M. and 2½ <sup>o</sup> clock P.M."<sup>60</sup> Apparently lay readers were used throughout this

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94. Rev. William Morton, a Boston clergyman who occasionally supplied at St. Michael's, closed a letter in September of 1819 to Warden John Drury with: "may your candlesticks still remain." (p. 48.)

<sup>59</sup> *Record of St. Michael's Parish [1833-1904]*.

<sup>60</sup> *Record* [p. 169]. No regularly issued service schedules were printed at St. Michael's until 1948 when monthly calendars appeared, and not until 1968 were weekly order-of-service programs issued on a regular basis.

period, for in November of 1866 it was voted to "have lay reading at the Vestry on every Sabbath in the Month the first Sunday excepted, at which time a Minister shall be obtained," and some twelve years later in April of 1878 the Vestry went on record to thank one E. Norwin Child, Jr. of Worcester for his faithful lay reading in St. Michael's during the past season of Lent.<sup>61</sup>

At the 1875 Annual Meeting it was decided upon the recommendation of an 1874 study group that "hereafter no pews shall be sold: but as far as possible the sittings shall be free and the revenues arise from the offertory."<sup>62</sup> This was a decisive and important move for a church which had depended upon pew assessment income for 160 years, but it was not without precedent. In 1868 the Vestry decided to collect weekly subscriptions from worshippers, and apparently this worked out satisfactorily, for after 1875 all revenues proceeded from the weekly offertory. With pew ownership reverting back to the church permanently, the way would be open for alterations to this liturgical space without first requiring permission of individual owners.

A stereoscopic photograph of the chancel in the 1870's provides the earliest pictorial evidence of the church interior during the nineteenth century.<sup>63</sup> The picture clearly indicates the alterations of 1833 and the relationships between the four primary liturgical spaces: pulpit, altar, lectern and font. The font, which was of stone, had been obtained in 1862 and in the photograph is positioned directly in front of the lectern. Two sanctuary chairs, culminating in cross finials, flank the altar, but there is no tabernacle for the reservation of the sacraments. Both the altar and chairs were installed in 1864. A patterned fresco some twelve inches high runs around the uppermost part of the four walls, which are otherwise without decoration.

This frescoing, which is not liturgically significant, probably dated from 1833, as there are records attesting to its repair as early as 1858. The walls were again frescoed in 1888 when the church underwent a thorough redecoration. A new set of chancel furniture, including a cherry altar, two chairs and a wall-mounted credence table replaced the chestnut chancel furniture which had been in place since 1864. One of the chairs was crested with a Bishop's mitre, the other with a large cross. The stone font had been replaced by one of mahogany in 1881, but it remained in front of the lectern.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, [p. 138].

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, [p. 234, as adjourned].

<sup>63</sup> A reference print and copy negative of this stereoscope was made for the church archives from the original in the possession of the Marblehead Historical Society.

The frescoing, replacing much disfigured wall paper, was extensive and elaborate. The four evangelists were depicted in gold mosaic against a blue background in the center of the arched ceiling above the chandelier, and above the reredos was a large gilt cross and the words: "In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts." A brass cross had been in place on the altar since 1884, but this was replaced by a more elaborate one of silver in 1890. During this period also an altar service book stand and two flower vases, memorial gifts all, came to be placed permanently on the altar.

In 1919 the fresco designs of 1888 were removed and substituted by a much simpler pattern,<sup>64</sup> and in that year also the church's third set of chancel furniture since 1833 was installed. The two chairs from 1888, one of which was for the Bishop, continued to flank the altar but were removed outside the chancel railing. Flanking the altar inside the railing were two new chairs, simpler in comparison, and for the first time two brass candlesticks as permanent fixtures.

A significant change in 1919 was the installation of a table-type altar with six legs and an exposed front, an apparent attempt to recapture something of the character of what the original altar may have looked like. In addition, a large list of Rectors was framed and installed above the lectern in order to balance the height of the pulpit at the other side of the church.<sup>65</sup> That height was dramatically increased in 1919 by the addition of an hexagonal sounding board over the pulpit, which was copied from the one at King's Chapel in Boston. At the time it was believed that the King's Chapel sounding board was itself a copy of an earlier one at St. Michael's, but the evidence does not bear this out.<sup>66</sup>

Further changes were made in the spatial relationships between the pulpit, altar and lectern. With an evident concern for symmetry the pulpit

<sup>64</sup> Interior painting in 1938 throughout the church had totally covered all but two 12" sections of frescoing from 1888 and 1919 in the gallery behind an old organ case. The frescoes came to light after the case was disassembled in July of 1974, when I removed these last surviving examples only days before painters covered their last vestiges.

<sup>65</sup> The list's frame was surmounted by a gold painted wooden chalice and wafer. The entire piece was subsequently removed, and a new list, unframed, installed in the vestibule. A complete list of Rectors can be found in Appendix B.

<sup>66</sup> The King's Chapel connection was first advanced by W.H. Quiner, consulting architect at St. Michael's in 1920. The present pulpit in King's Chapel dates from 1718, but a sounding board was not added until 1837. Because St. Michael's first pulpit was removed with the 1833 alterations, it is doubtful if Quiner's statement is accurate. Moreover, the sounding board over St. Michael's first pulpit, if there was one, would have been of a different shape considering the pulpit's position against the northern wall, a type totally different from the "wineglass" pulpit at King's Chapel.

and lectern were each moved approximately three feet west and east respectively, equidistant from the altar. The practical result was to create a more effective use of space in the northern end of the church by giving greater access to both sides of the chancel railing. This spreading out of liturgical spaces was made possible by the removal of several pews in the northeast and northwest corners, an area occupied by pews since 1714.<sup>67</sup> These spatial alterations set apart for the first time the entire northern end of the church as a liturgical area distinct from the pews, which had until 1919 encroached upon this area.

The northern end was further articulated in 1937 when the small chancel railing of 1833 was replaced by a straight railing spanning the entire width of the church. With entrances at the pulpit, altar and lectern, the church was provided for the first time with an almost continuous communion railing which could accommodate upwards of thirty communicants at a time. While the previous railing encompassed only a small area around the altar, the new railing expanded the chancel area across the entire northern end of the church, including the pulpit, lectern and font. This alteration was, however, only one part of the most extensive changes in the liturgical architecture of the church since 1833.

The alterations were the idea of the Rev. Roy I. Murray, who had been Rector since 1933. Having suspended from the ceiling over the sanctuary a vigil candle, symbolic of the reserved sacrament, the changes he made in the basic arrangements of the chancel area clearly indicate in a way only liturgical architecture can Father Murray's fundamental ceremonial beliefs. The replacement of the table-type altar from 1919 with a permanent mahogany altar inlaid with stone and complete with retable and tabernacle attest to the strong catholicity which he introduced into St. Michael's. Photographic records indicate that a temporary plywood altar, in a design approximating the contemplated permanent altar, was installed for several months prior to the actual alterations in order to better judge the effect these alterations would have.

An architectural elevation drawn by W. Sanford Full in November of 1936 gives us a precise indication of these substantive changes, and itself attests to the careful planning and circumspection that went into the work. A platform seven inches high, ten feet four inches deep and forty-eight feet long was installed across the entire northern end of the church. The

<sup>67</sup> Slip pews had of course been located here only since 1833, but the original box pews had been in position here prior to that time. The pews removed in 1919 were still being sold in 1930 for \$50.00 each.

communion railing was recessed back one foot into this platform. The altar rested on a platform more than five feet deep and almost ten feet long, some nine inches above the chancel floor and supported by an intermediate platform level, three platforms in all. A careful attempt was made to relate the four altar pilasters to the two Georgian pilasters of the reredos.

The drawing indicates that six candles were introduced in the church at this time, three on each side of a large tabernacle. The introduction of a tabernacle for the reservation of the sacraments was the most liturgically significant of all the 1937 alterations. No less a personage than architect Ralph Adams Cram advised the Rector to have a large tabernacle; significantly a side elevation of the tabernacle appears on the Full elevation, and indeed, Cram's advice was heeded.<sup>68</sup> Finally, a wooden crucifix was placed at the base of the reredos' open-bed pediment.

Decoration of the walls followed in 1939, when the church celebrated its 225th anniversary. The fresco work from 1919 was painted out, and in its place above the reredos was substituted a golden semi-circle. In 1958 the entire area around the reredos in the center section of the northern wall was painted a rich blue, a color which was in turn replaced when the entire church interior was repainted white in 1971. The crucifix installed in 1939 was detached in 1958 from the reredos and positioned above it, with the addition of a gilded sunburst. New red cushions were placed in the pews, and at the communion railing and in the pulpit two red velvet cushions were installed, and the pulpit stair's carpeted.

The 1789 *Book of Common Prayer* had been minutely revised in 1892 and again in 1928 with the latter book introducing a greater service flexibility through rubrical changes whereby offices could be adapted to particular circumstances. The Revision Committee which had been formed in 1913 to prepare an updated and more flexible Prayer Book was reconstituted after 1928 as the Standing Liturgical Commission, which continues today its periodical studies on the liturgy. These two revisions of 1892 and 1928 were the only ones since 1789, and there was virtually no change in architectural requirements from the first American service.

<sup>68</sup> For this information I am indebted to Rector Emeritus David W. Norton of Salem, Massachusetts.

The only specifications for liturgical architecture in a church, in fact, are those broadly suggested by the Prayer Book rubrics, which give a great degree of flexibility.<sup>69</sup> Even the frequency of Morning Prayer and Holy Communion services are a flexible matter, dependent upon the predilections of the Rector. For this reason the rectorate of the Rev. Roy I. Murray (1933-1947), is significant in the parish's history, for it marks the end of ceremonial fluctuations in previous rectorates at St. Michael's and the beginning of a moderate high churchmanship which continues to this day.

An "Address on Worship" delivered by the Rev. David W. Norton, Jr. on Ascensiontide 1948 indicates what has been the rationale behind the worship services at St. Michael's for most of this twentieth century. Noting the fundamental place of the *Book of Common Prayer* in the worship of the church, the address went on to differentiate Morning Prayer from Holy Communion, noting as well that these services were never intended to be alternatives to each other. Ideally Morning Prayer should complement Holy Communion, and the latter should be the predominate worship service, a position implicit in the 1928 Prayer Book. The Presiding Bishop's Declaration of 1856 as to the separate use of services merely affirmed what had been the practice at St. Michael's since 1714, and the 1948 address's assumption that practical considerations make it expedient to alterate Morning Prayer and Holy Communion can be seen as only the latest statement of that position.

Holy Communion was thus celebrated on the first and third Sundays in a month, and Morning Prayer on the second and fourth Sundays. This was something of an innovation, however, for prior to this time monthly communion had been the usual order of things for the past 234 years at St. Michael's. The Rector took careful note of this, and assured communicants that there was nothing wrong with continuing to receive, if they so preferred, only once per month. And in what was to be a foreshadowing of liturgical practice in the 1970's, the Rector noted that "At least once in the year Holy Baptism shall be administered in the presence of the whole congregation."<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> A Joint Committee on Church Architecture, later known as the Joint Commission on Architecture and the Allied Arts, was formed by the national church in 1919 to recommend specific but non-binding guidelines in the liturgical architecture of churches. See the commission's *Church Buildings and Furnishings, A Survey of Requirements*, Greenwich, Conn., 1958. A corresponding effort was made by the Diocese of Massachusetts in 1958, when a Committee on Art and Architecture was gathered by the then Rector David W. Norton, Jr., who served as that committee's first chairman through 1969.

<sup>70</sup> "Address on Worship," p. 2.

This period witnessed also a return to a limited lay reading. In April of 1953 the Rector appointed two Vestrymen to read the Lessons at the principal 11 A.M. service, and a year later, Treasurer Fred Whetham was leading Morning and Evening Prayer. These renascent examples of lay reading, however, form no consistent pattern and should not be seen as official appointments. As recently as 1968, in fact, the Vestry affirmed its opposition to licensed lay readers, and lay reading, in St. Michael's.<sup>71</sup>

In September of 1967 General Convention authorized a trial liturgy for use in Episcopal churches for the next three years, the first revision so authorized since the formation of the Standing Liturgical Commission in 1928. The first reference at St. Michael's to this "revised communion service" was made at the October 1967 Vestry meeting, but no action regarding the revision was taken. Announcing his retirement for the following year, the Rector at first decided he would wait for his successor to attempt the trial liturgy. Realizing, however, that its early introduction would help pave the way for his successor, the Rev. David W. Norton decided to use the new liturgy during the following May and June. On 5 May 1968 that liturgy was tried out for the first time at St. Michael's, but, meeting with unfavorable reaction from the parish, the church returned in June to the 1928 service.

Noting that the new Rector should not be a "Low Churchman," the Vestry sought to maintain the moderate high churchmanship which had been the tradition at the church for the past thirty-five years. Installed in September of 1968, the new Rector, George A. Westerberg, lost little time in instituting liturgical reform. In January of 1969 a modified version of the 1967 and the then-proposed 1970 trial liturgies was adopted at a new 9:15 A.M. family service, and the following May and June this liturgy was tested at the church's principal 11 A.M. service. The experiment was more successful at the family hour, and thus the 9:15 became the service at which the successive trial liturgies which came along in the 1970's were tested. The confusion of this period is suggested by the Rector's Annual Report for the year 1971:

<sup>71</sup> Lay readers are licensed by the Bishop to administer the chalice, recite daily offices and conduct burial services. See Walter H. Stowe, *More Lay Readers Than Clergy! A Study of the Office of Lay Readers in the History of the Church*, Philadelphia, 1954. reprinted from *The Historiographer*, 1955, vol. II, no. 4.



I have compromised my position twice, since last June, in order to accommodate people who were dissatisfied with my two previous decisions. Instead of a sung Eucharist every Sunday at 11 o'clock, as I believe is to be preferred, we have returned to the former schedule of reading Morning Prayer on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. Instead of a sung Eucharist every Sunday at 9 o'clock, which I should also prefer, I have agreed to alternate a 'sung' and 'said' Eucharist at that hour.<sup>72</sup>

A major change in the liturgical architecture had occurred just prior to this report. The table-type altar which was in use from 1919-1937 was brought into use once again, this time as a free-standing altar outside the chancel area in the aisle directly fronting the pews. It was at this reactivated altar table that the trial liturgies were conducted facing the congregation, in a space so tight that the logistical problems of processions and acolytes were only with great difficulty overcome, chiefly by the installation of a hinged platform which elevated the altar table and at the same time could be lifted out of the way to facilitate aisle traffic. The Rector, however, saw this change as a logical and inevitable consequence of the liturgical renewal movement then gaining momentum. He envisioned making this free-standing altar a permanent addition to the church:

In order to effect renewal at St. Michael's, I have proposed to the Vestry that we 'explore,' and hopefully, 'grow,' in our faith and witness, by removing the first 4 rows of pews in the front center section of the church, in order to bring the present table altar into at least a symbolic 'midst of the people.' It will then be raised on a slight platform to make the action, there, visible to nearly all who stand around it. This will be done simply, and carefully, recognizing the historic character of our particular church building, while realizing, too, that all change is temporary, and that someday we, or another generation of worshipping Christians, may want to return the same pews to their present location. They shall therefore be appropriately marked and stored in the church for possible future use.<sup>73</sup>

The Rector left little doubt of his canonical authority to effect such change, quoting the canon and section by name. Reaction from the parish to this perceived threat was swift. The Rector was told in no uncertain

terms the divisive effect this proposal would have on the parish, and the parish's overwhelming disapproval of such an extensive alteration to the building's fabric insured that the alterations would not be carried out. Yet there were raised some valid points in his proposal that have gone without answer:

Our most immediate threat, however, is that it should become a museum: a place fixed in time and place where tourists might come and visit a building erected by an earlier generation to the greater glory and worship of God. While the virtue of establishing a table type altar in a position more prominent than its present location may be questionable to some, and hardly considered this generation's 'gift,' it should be assured that this generation cannot be accused of 'ancestor worship.'<sup>74</sup>

A brief experiment of reading Morning Prayer at 10:30 A.M. and celebrating the eucharist at 11:00 A.M., a combination tried during David Norton's time, again met with failure under the present rectorate. While it was a creditable attempt to combine the best of both service traditions, logistical problems insured its demise. Pastoral necessity demanded that Morning Prayer be retained as a viable form of worship, but the growing frequency of Holy Communion services was evident by mid 1971, when the Vestry at their July meeting expressed dissatisfaction at this trend. In November the Rector received requests at the Vestry meeting for "less formal" services, which alluded not so much to ceremonial as it did the displacement of traditional Morning Prayer. The statistics speak for themselves. In 1960 there were recorded 132 Holy Communion services and 71 Morning or Evening Prayer services. In 1970 there were 213 Holy Communion services and 65 Morning or Evening Prayer services. In 1975 that ratio was 209 to 8.

Today Holy Communion is celebrated each week at both the 8 A.M. and 10 A.M. services, the latter hour having replaced the 9:15 and 11:00 A.M. services. The decision to combine the 9:15 and 11:00 A.M. services at a 10:00 A.M. eucharist was made collectively by the parish during a series of conferences held during 1973. Since 14 December 1975 censing has been used at each eucharist, a custom which was only ten years ago reserved exclusively for festivals. In part this practice was accelerated to counter-balance the ostensible loss of *mysterium tremendum* when the free-standing altar facing the congregation was introduced. The high altar of 1937 is

<sup>72</sup> "Annual Report of the Rector of St. Michael's Church [for 1971]," delivered 31 January 1972, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

reserved today only for festivals such as Michaelmas, Christmas, Candlemas and Easter.

The ratification of the *Draft Proposed Book of Common Prayer* at the 1976 General Convention will insure for some time to come the fundamental character of the eucharist as the principal service in all episcopal churches. What had been only implicit in 1928 will now be clarified in unequivocal terms. The proliferation of rubrical "may" and "or" in the 1928 Prayer Book will only intensify with the *Draft Proposed* book, thus increasing the eucharistic variations from parish to parish. For this lack of uniformity, however, we gain the ascendancy of Holy Communion as the principal service throughout the church.

The demise of Morning Prayer has made obsolete the lectern from which it was read, and the fate of this liturgical space seems uncertain. It has already been suggested that the lectern be removed to make way for a more prominent baptistery, recalling the patristic practice of an area for this sacrament, rather than a mere piece of furniture as is the font itself.<sup>75</sup>

There is ample historical precedent for alterations to the church's liturgical architecture, alterations which began in 1833 and continued periodically up through 1937. Any permanent installation of a free-standing altar or baptistery must therefore be seen not as transmogrifications inimical to the interior fabric, but as only the latest in a series of architectural changes which reflect, in their time, the beliefs of the church. In the case of St. Michael's, the question remains how liturgical reform will ultimately affect liturgical architecture, and what the proper balance between liturgical theory, liturgical practice and historic preservation will be.

<sup>75</sup>The historical development of the baptistry and font may be found in J.G. Davies, *The Architectural Setting of Baptism*, London, 1962.

## APPENDIX A

### Subscribers<sup>1</sup>

We the Subscribers Do firmly bind and Oblige Our Selves Our heires, and Afsigns for the payment of the Several Sums Subscribed in Order to the Building and Erecting a handsome Church in the Town of Marble head and the maintaining of a Minister to Carry on the Service of God in the ways and method of the Church of Great Britain or Church of England, promifeing hereby to Espouse and maintain its Articles and Defend its Doctrine which are agreeable to the Word of God; And this We are obliged to perform as Soon as may be As Witnefs our hands this thirty first Day of March Anno Dom 1714.

George Jackson for Twenty pounds	l/ 20 -- --
John Calley for Twenty five pounds	25 -- --
James Calley for Twenty five pounds	25 -- --
Bartho Jackfon for Twenty pounds	20 -- --
Thomas Salls for Twenty pounds	20 -- --
John Yabsley for Twenty pounds	20 -- --
John Palmer for Twenty pounds	20 -- --
William Webber for Ten pounds	10 -- --
Rebecca Norman for Ten pounds	10 -- --
Thomas Candish	10 -- --
James Candish	6 -- --
George Slocome for Sixteen pounds	16 -- --
Ambrose Godain Sen <sup>r</sup> for Ten pounds	10 -- --
Peter Travely for Sixteen pounds	16 -- --
John Hine for five pounds	5 -- --
John Allin for five pounds	5 -- --
Joseph Andrews for five pounds	5 -- --
Henry Humprys for five pounds	5 -- --
John Savage for five pounds	5 -- --
John Rounday for five pounds	5 -- --
James Wegger for five pounds	5 -- --
John Chapman for Ten pounds	10 -- --
Jcaob Phillips for fifteen pounds	15 -- --
John Walker for five pounds	5 -- --

<sup>1</sup>Undoubtedly the most important and comprehensive subscription for the Marblehead church, this list is reproduced through the courtesy of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London, and is here printed for the first time.

Cornelius Barker for five pounds	5 -- --
John Lecraw for five pounds	5 -- --
John Byrde for fifty Shillings	2 -- 10
Robert Martin for five pounds	5 -- --
John Porter for five pounds	5 -- --
Henry Maine for forty Shillings	2 -- --
John Chapell Sen <sup>f</sup> for five pounds	5 -- --
Nicholas Andrews for Ten pounds	10 -- --
John Wiggen for five pounds	5 -- --
Thomas Colle for three pounds	3 -- --
Jonathan Bodain for five pounds	5 -- --
John Rupell for five pounds	5 -- --
John Calley Jun <sup>f</sup> for Ten pounds	10 -- --
George Girdler for five pounds	5 -- --
Benjamin Calley for Ten pounds	10 -- --
Anthony Pafsom for three pounds	3 -- --
Thomas Morris One pound	1 -- --
Richard Glafs for five pounds	5 -- --
John Truker Sen <sup>f</sup> for forty Shillings	2 -- --
Joseph Dolbier for five pounds	5 -- --
His Excellency Genl Nicholson	25 -- --
	£416

## APPENDIX B

## Rectors of St. Michael's Church

William Shaw	1715-1718
David Mossom	1718-1727
George Pigot	1728-1737
Alexander Malcolm	1740-1749
Peter Bours	1753-1762
Joshua W. Weeks	1763-1778
Woodward Abraham <sup>1</sup>	1780-1786
Thomas F. Oliver	1786-1791
William Harris <sup>2</sup>	1791-1802
James Bowers	1802-1811
John P.K. Henshaw <sup>3</sup>	1813-1814
Joseph Andrews	1816
Benjamin B. Smith <sup>4</sup>	1818-1819
Lot Jones	1823
Thomas S.W. Mott	1825-1827
Joseph H. Price	1831-1832
George V.C. Eastman	1832-1833
William H. Lewis	1833-1840
John P. Robinson	1840-1842
Moses P. Stickney	1842-1847
Nicholas P. Tillinghast	1847
Edward Ballard	1848-1851
John B. Richmond	1851-1859
Edwin B. Chase	1860-1866
William R. Woodbridge	1867-1871
John W. Leek	1872-1875
Julius H. Ward	1875-1878
John L. Egbert	1878-1886
Henry L. Foote	1895-1906
Welles M. Partridge	1906-1913
Lyman Rollins	1915-1921
Robert B. Parker	1922-1925
Albert R. Parker	1926-1933
Roy I. Murray	1933-1947
David W. Norton, Jr.	1947-1968
George A. Westerberg	1968 to date

<sup>1</sup> Abraham, a lay reader, was not ordained. He served as Town Clerk from 1792 to 1796 and 1798-1803, and as Marblehead's first Postmaster in 1797.

<sup>2</sup> Harris was President of Columbia University from 1811-1852.

<sup>3</sup> Henshaw was Bishop of Rhode Island from 1843-1852.

<sup>4</sup> Smith was Bishop of Kentucky from 1832-1868 and Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church from 1868-1884.

## APPENDIX C

List of Reading Clerks<sup>1</sup>

Charles Johnson.....	1718-1722
Benjamin Pix.....	1722-1727
William Adams.....	1727-1728
Benjamin Pix.....	1728-1756
Elisha Getchel.....	1756-1762
Peter Jayne.....	1762-1765
Thomas Porter.....	1765-1776; 1787-1789
Stephen Sewall.....	1789-1792
William Boden.....	1793-1795
John W. Smethurst.....	1795-1833

## ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH HISTORICAL STUDIES

Founded in 1975, this series relating to the parish's history seeks to disseminate knowledge of and interest in the three centuries which St. Michael's has seen. Contributions will be gratefully accepted to perpetuate this series and to ensure the preservation of St. Michael's Church Archives.

Also in this series:

"Organs and Organists of St. Michael's Church," Number 1  
September 1975.

<sup>1</sup>Reading Clerks, also called Parson's and Parish Clerks, should be properly distinguished from Recording Clerks, also called Proprietors' Clerks. Reading Clerks performed liturgical functions during church services. Recording Clerks kept the records of the Proprietors, later known as the Vestry.