

VLR-10/17/72 NRHP-4/11/73

133-17

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Virginia</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Suffolk</b> <b>Nansemond</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
**St. John's Church**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Chuckatuck Church**

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**North side of Rt. 125, .5 mile Southeast of intersection with Rt. 628.**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Chuckatuck Vicinity (Watkins M. Abbitt, Fourth District Congressman)**

STATE <b>Virginia</b>	CODE <b>51</b>	COUNTY: <b>Nansemond</b>	CODE <b>123</b>
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Vestry (The Reverend H. Kennickell)**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**P. O. Box 318**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Driver**

STATE:  
**Virginia**

CODE:  
**51**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Nansemond County Court House**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Suffolk**

STATE:  
**Virginia**

CODE:  
**51**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1958**  
 Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Library of Congress**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Washington**

STATE:  
**D. C.**

CODE:  
**11**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: <b>Virginia</b>	COUNTY: <b>Nansemond</b>	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
FOR NPS USE ONLY			

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. John's stands in a churchyard denizenized by gnarled cedars, sycamores and boxwood above a pond formed by Cedar Creek on the north side of Route 125, a little more than a mile east of the village of Chuckatuck. The building is not oriented east-west as are most colonial churches; instead its chancel is oriented to the northeast. The brick building measures 60'10" x 30'6" on the outside, and has 27" thick walls. Although it originally had clipped gables, the building is now covered by a steeply pitched gable roof with simple box cornice. The apex of both the present gables is filled in with a light colored brick. The walls are laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers above and below the bevelled water table, although the glazing is more regular on the west wall. Rubbed brick suggest quoins at the corners and mark all original jambs, arches and the pilasters at the west doorway. Queen closers are employed at the corners and occur irregularly at the openings of windows and doors. Marked brick include those incised "AH-17" and "EH-53" high on the southeast wall, representing Anthony and Esther Holladay who gave the land for the church, as well as those incised "AG" and "CH", also on the southeast wall. There are four large windows with rounded arches in both the northwest and southeast walls, and one smaller window in the northeast end. A small circular window high in the southwest gable has been filled in with cement. The two original windows in the chancel have been bricked up, and a window replaces the southeast doorway. The molded brick pediment which surely adorned the southwest doorway is missing, although the pilasters remain in place.

The interior of the church was replaced in 1888 with wood panelling by William Whitney. The raised and panelled chancel in the northeast is framed by a lancet arch and is flanked by two dressing rooms entered by doors in the sides of the chancel. The walls are completely panelled in diagonal tongue-and-groove panelling. The three-plane ceiling is panelled in tongue-and-groove board arranged in a herringbone pattern. The roof trusses are believed to be original. The gallery in the southwest end dates from about 1870. The colonial 18" square pink-brown sandstone flagstones remain in the nave, although the flooring underneath has been replaced.

G. H.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1755**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phil.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Nansemond County was formed in 1636 as New Norfolk County and received its present name, an Indian word meaning "fishing point or angle", in 1645. In 1642/3 the county was divided into three separate Parishes: the West Parish was known as Chuckatuck and the East Parish as Lower Parish. These two were united to form Suffolk Parish in 1725. Chuckatuck Church, originally the parish church of Chuckatuck and later was incorporated into Suffolk Parish, is the third church at this site. The first church, built Circa. 1643, stood just beyond the entrance to the present church. The second church stood to the southeast of the present church, completed in 1755. After deciding in 1751 to replace the building, the vestry advertized in the Virginia Gazette, April 24, 1752, "To be LET the Building of a new Brick Church in Suffolk Parish near the old one in Chuckatuck....". After the vestry accepted the new building, it ordered the warden "to advertize the Pulling down of the Old Church and Clearing the Yard."

Chuckatuck Church was abandoned after the Revolution and the resulting Disestablishment, but it was repaired and returned to service in 1826. In 1828, in accordance with the popular custom of renaming colonial churches after saints, the church was dedicated to St. John. It is said that Federal Troops used the church as a stable during the War Between the States. After the War the building was once more restored to use. The present interior appearance is thought to derive largely from the renovations carried out by William Whitney in 1888.

With its beautiful glazed header Flemish bond brickwork, St. John's Church is an important example of the rectilinear form of Virginia's colonial ecclesiastical architecture, and is unusual because it does not have the normal east-west orientation. St. John's is remembered as the church whose vestry challenged Gov. Francis Nicholson's claim to the authority of induction of ministers and the supply of vacancies.

G. H.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Mason, George Carrington, Colonial Churches of Tidewater Virginia.  
Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1945.

Rawlings, James Scott, Virginia's Colonial Churches. Richmond: Garrett  
and Massie, 1963.

Rose, Harold Wickliffe, The Colonial Houses of Worship in America. New  
York: Hastings House, 1963.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes Seconds
NW	36 ° 51 ' 31 "	76 ° 33 ' 44 "			
NE	36 ° 51 ' 31 "	76 ° 33 ' 36 "			
SE	36 ° 51 ' 20 "	76 ° 33 ' 36 "			
SW	36 ° 51 ' 20 "	76 ° 33 ' 44 "			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **10 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
		2FW	
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff**

ORGANIZATION: **Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission** DATE: **August, 1972**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Richmond** STATE: **Virginia** CODE: **51**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

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

National  State  Local

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**J. R. Fishburne, Director**

Title **Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

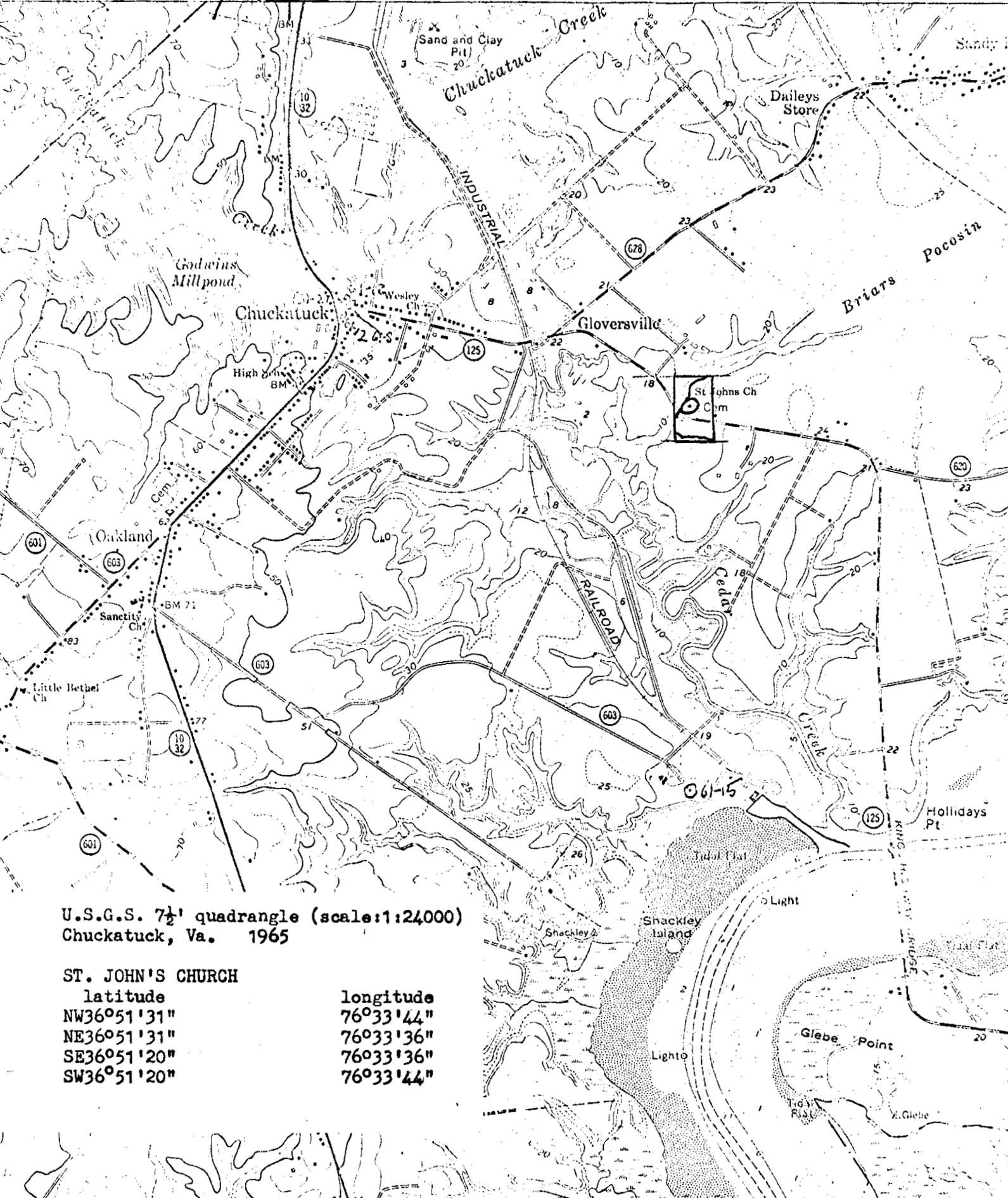
\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
 DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES  
 JAMES L. CALVER, STATE GEOLOGIST

358 36° 52' 30" / 76° 36' BENNS CHURCH 4.4 MI. 360 5657 1 NE (BENNS CHURCH) 361 362



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
 Chuckatuck, Va. 1965

**ST. JOHN'S CHURCH**

latitude	longitude
NW36°51'31"	76°33'44"
NE36°51'31"	76°33'36"
SE36°51'20"	76°33'36"
SW36°51'20"	76°33'44"