

VLR-2/20/96 NRHP-12/27/90

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions for additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Trinity Church

other names/site number DUR 42-38

2. Location

street & number RT 738 & 658

city, town Beaverdam

state Virginia

code VA

county Hanover

coda 085

zip code 23015

N/A not for publication

X vicinity

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- X private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property

- X building(s)
district
sire
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official: Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Date

1 Nov 1990

State or Federal agency and bureau

in my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religious Structure: church

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religious Structure: church

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic: Early Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Slate

other Tin Roof

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

#### Description

Trinity Church is an early nineteenth century structure located in the rural countryside of Hanover County. This masonry building is located on the old Ridge Road (Route 738) going west just past the section of the county known as Coatesville. Since its construction in 1830, this plain yet finely-detailed church has been altered but twice, most recently to return it to its original form which reveals many of the unique features installed by William and Milton Green in the year 1830.

#### Architectural Analysis

The facade of Trinity Church is Flemish-bond brick and contains the double door entrance. The entrance is covered by a small pedimented porch supported on turned wood columns. Above this roof is a bull's-eye window. Flanking the doors are two of the ten windows in the main church. All windows have simple plank shutters for protection. The remaining walls of the church are laid in American bond. Each side wall has three windows located in it. The sacristy is centered on the rear wall of the church between two windows. It has a window in its north wall and a door on its south elevation, a brick cornice, and a hipped roof clad in tin. The sacristy was added to the church sometime during the second half of the nineteenth century. The double-pitched roof covering on the main block of the building is slate, which was installed during restoration of the exterior. The roof overhang is a simple soffit and fascia with ogee moulding trim. The front and rear gables return and the front gable is supported by brackets.

The ten windows in the main block of the church are casements, two panes wide and eight panes in height. They contain much of their original glass and are hung on handmade hinges. Also of interest is the oval bull's-eye window which accents the otherwise unadorned gable on the front of the building.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Architecture

Period of Significance  
1830

Significant Dates

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person  
The Reverend John Cooke

Architect/Builder  
Milton & William Green

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Trinity Episcopal Church is located on the old Ridge Road in western Hanover County and was built in 1830 to replace Hollowing Creek Chapel, which is believed to have been destroyed by fire. Trinity church is part of St. Martin's Parish and is specially significant for the unusual concentric circular plan of its chancel, which has a curved rostrum, a curved Holy Table, and a curved ring of benches around the communion rail. It was only the fourth Episcopal church built after the Revolution in Virginia. One of the most interesting features of any Virginia gallery is a well-wrought sign in Trinity Church that reads (in gold letters on both sides of the sign) FIRST THREE PEWS ON THIS SIDE, FOR SERVANTS. This substantial brick building was constructed by two local builders, William B. Green and Milton Green.

Historical Background

Trinity Church is in a very rural setting, surrounded by relatively large farms and is located in the northwest portion of Hanover County. It was built to replace Hollowing Creek Chapel, which had served the area since 1759 and is believed to have been destroyed by fire. Trinity Church has always been a part of St. Martin's Parish, which was formed in 1726 from St. Paul's Parish. The area around Trinity Church developed from an early and successful tobacco business that was made possible by deep water in the nearby Pamunkey River and the convenient terminal port at Hanover town. The old connecting Indian path was widened by carts and was called "the Cart Road." Later the creeks were bridged to carry the rolling tobacco hogsheads and the road became "the Rolling Road." Trinity Church is located on the side of the old Rolling Road.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

- Chamberlayne, C. G., ed. The Vestry Book of St. Paul's Parish, Hanover County, 1706-1786. Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1940.
- Davis, Vernon Perdue. Virginia's Ante-Bellum Churches: An Introduction with Particular Attention to their Furnishings. Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1978.
- Hanover County, VA. Deed Book 228 p.83.
- Hanover County, VA. Plat Book 8 p. 165.
- Interview with Carolyn Weekley, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. August 1986.
- Joy, Charles A., ed. " 'On People and Places': A Memoir by Berkeley Minor," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography. (1983).
- Page, Rosewell. Hanover County: Its History and Legends. N.P., 1926.
- Page, Rosewell. "Letter to Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission." MS, 1981.

See continuation sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Specify repository:**  
 VA DEPT of Historic Resources  
 221 Governor ST, Richmond VA 23219

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 2.42 acres

**UTM References**

A 18 267550 4197900  
 Zone Easting Northing

C         

B           
 Zone Easting Northing

D         

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Trinity Church is located at the intersection of RT 738 & RT 658 in Hanover Co., VA. The property lies on the southwest corner of the intersection and is fully described by the attached plat drawn by The Reverend T. S. Russell, C. E., and recorded in plat book #8, p.165, plat #1, Hanover Co., VA.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

Justification is based on the attached plat drawn by The Reverend T. S. Russell, C. E.. This plat is located in the records of Hanover Co., VA in plat book #8, p.165, plat #1.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Thomas W Pemberton IV  
 organization N/A date 1-23-90  
 street & number RT 1 Box 318 telephone 804-550-2355  
 city or town Doswell state Virginia zip code 23047

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National Park Service

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### Architectural Analysis (continued)

The entrance to the nave is thru a pair of five-panel heart-pine doors. There is no handle on these doors since the use of the large brass & iron key is all that is needed to swing the doors open.

The nave of the church, although plain, possesses several distinctive features. A focal point on the interior is a sign hanging from the base of the balcony which reads (in gold letters on both sides of the sign) "FIRST THREE PEWS ON THIS SIDE, FOR SERVANTS". Just to the right of the sign are the small winding steps to the balcony, which contains a few pews and may have been a standing-only gallery for the church. The balcony, supported on four columns, affords an impressive view of the nearly circular altar rail and altar, the pulpit, and the ring of benches to the sides. Behind the pulpit is a concave recess with a matching curved door located in the center. This door leads to the sacristy of the church.

The seating in the nave is composed of twenty pews. These pews are arranged in two groups of ten which flank the center aisle. The pews are simple, constructed from solid heart-pine boards with solid backs and seats. The top of each pew is capped with a rounded moulding. Under each seat is a solid front panel.

The altar rail is also made of solid heart-pine supported by square balusters. The ring of benches surrounding the altar rail are made of heart-pine with solid seats and a vertical slat back accentuating the importance of being instructed during Communion.

The first alteration to the interior of the church was the removal of the pulpit from inside the altar rail and the removal of the ring of benches, being done around 1910. The furnishings were reconstructed and returned to their original positions around 1920.

The interior walls of the building are plaster on brick and the flat ceiling is plaster on lath. The flooring in the nave and in the balcony is heart-pine. To the left of the pulpit, facing the altar, is the pump organ.

The churchyard, filled with 42 large old oak trees, contains the church cemetery. The cemetery is on the northwest side of the church and is without any physical separation from the rest of the grounds. The cemetery contains 143 graves with 101 markers. The oldest marker in the cemetery is dated 1892 although the unmarked graves may be older. Families who attended Trinity still use the cemetery for burials.

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## Architectural Analysis

Another addition was constructed behind the sacristy in about 1981. This small frame structure, which can be entered only from the east elevation, provides restroom facilities for the congregation.

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### Historical Background (continued)

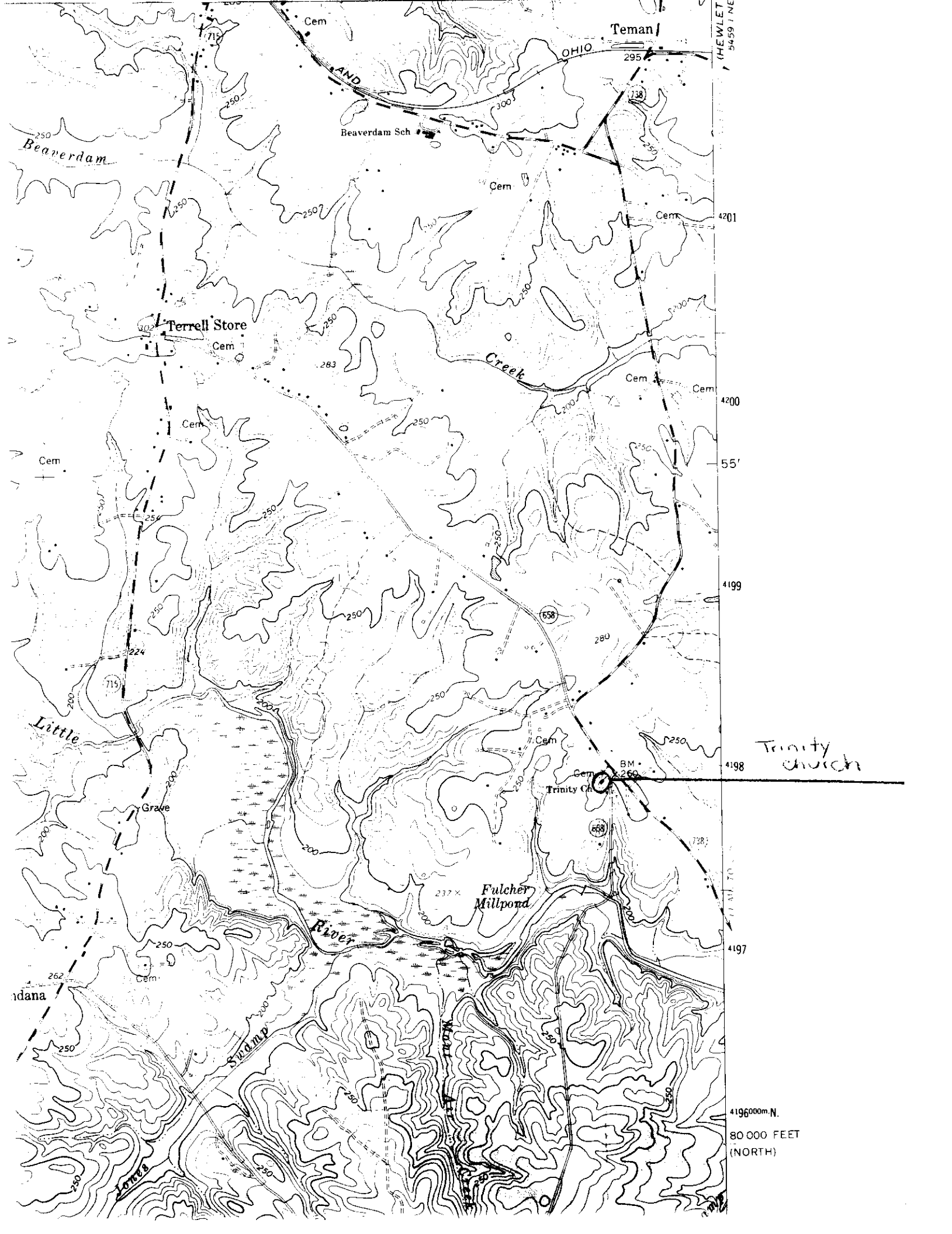
Before Hanover County was formed from New Kent County the area was a part of St. Paul's Parish and on 2 October 1721 the St. Paul's vestry authorized the building of "two chapples" in the growing west. One was to be called Fork Chapel and the other Allen's Creek Chapel in what is now St. Martin's Parish. Hollowing Creek Chapel was added in 1759 to serve the needs of the parishioners.

In 1825 the Reverend John Cooke, age twenty-three and just graduated from the Virginia Theological Seminary, became the sixth rector of St. Martin's Parish. The Reverend Cooke was aware that there was a substantial number of Episcopalians living in the northwest corner of the parish who were too far away to attend an episcopal church, after the destruction of nearby Hollowing Creek Church. In his effort to raise the necessary money to build a new church he found a young widow named Elizabeth Berkeley was very helpful; indeed, according to Cooke family tradition she supplied most of the money. It was not long before the widow Berkeley and the Reverend Cooke were married. In the 1850 census Cooke was the second wealthiest person in the county and owned eighty-four slaves.

The cornerstone of Trinity Church was laid on 8 October 1830 by the Right Reverend Richard Channing Moore, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia. There was present a host of prominent persons including the Reverend Leonidas Polk, assistant minister at Monumental Church in Richmond, who later became a bishop of Louisiana and a general in the Confederate Army. During the first fifty years after the disestablishment of the American Church only seven Episcopal churches were built in Virginia; Trinity Church was one of them.

Twenty-five years ago the Trinity Church congregation was merged with that of Fork Church and Trinity Church closed. However, the building and grounds are well maintained and an annual service is held year on Trinity Sunday.

Trinity Church has retained its distinctive architectural features, the unusual circular plan of the chancel with its curved rostrum; original curved Holy Table; curved communion rail and ring benches; and even its striking overhead sign at the entrance that once told the servants where to sit.



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(NORTH)