

VLR- 7/31/80 NRHP- 10/31/80

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED 10/31/80

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Martin's Brandon Church (Preferred)

AND/OR COMMON

Brandon Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

State routes 10 and 1201

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Burrowsville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fourth (Robert W. Daniel)

STATE

Virginia

ZIP CODE

51

COUNTY

Prince George

CODE

149

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Brandon Church C/o Rev. Brian Hobdon, Rector

STREET & NUMBER

Route 1, Box 75

CITY, TOWN

Disputanta

STATE

Virginia

Zip Code

23842

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Prince George County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Prince George

STATE

Virginia

Zip Code

23875

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

TITLE

(1) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE

1959

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

## 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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

Martin's Brandon Church is located at the junction of routes 10 and 1201 in Burrowsville, Prince George County, in what is essentially a rural setting. The edifice was constructed in 1855-56 near the site of an earlier 18th-century frame structure.

The structure sits on a brick foundation, and the walls are constructed of brick covered with scored stucco painted pink. The present finish dates to a refurbishing of 1962. The main (east) entrance is contained within a gable-roof porch. The entrance consists of round-head batten double doors, original to the structure. The porch is approached by brick steps flanked by iron rails. Both the steps and the rails are recent additions. A secondary entrance is found on the south elevation in the bell tower. The entrance also has round-head batten doors. In addition to the entrance, the tower has round-arch, stained-glass windows and louvred lancets in the belfry. The tower is covered by a flared pyramidal roof with a cross finial. Fenestration consists of both round-arch, multi-paned sash and casement windows as well as stained-glass windows. A small, round stained-glass window, that was removed from the earlier church and dates to 1845, is found on the north wall. That and the other stained-glass windows are later replacements. The east and west elevations have clasping buttresses which are also covered with scored stucco. A small brick chimney with a corbeled cap is at the northeast corner. The rear (north) wall was pierced for a hyphen that connects the church with the 1952-53 parish hall.

The church interior was refurbished in 1961 when the present carpeting and lights were installed. The sanctuary has undergone a number of alterations, the altar and reredos dating to 1963. The exposed roof truss and gallery are original features. The gallery with its finely carved rail contains slave benches as well as pews which are believed to be original. The altar reading desk dates to 1891 and the baptismal font to 1881. The church silver dates as early as 1655 and is still owned by the congregation.

The church cemeteries are located to the east and west of the church. The graves date to the 19th and 20th centuries. Of particular interest is the Smith family lot which retains its original cast-iron fence.

RCC

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property consists of three acres and includes the church, cemeteries, and a small portion of the churchyard in the front (south) of the church within the limits of route 1201. The church is situated between two cemeteries that date to the late 19th and 20th centuries.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES                      1855-56                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Attributed to Niernsee and Neilson, Architects

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Martin's Brandon Church, the fourth church of one of the oldest parishes in Virginia, exemplifies ecclesiastical architectural taste at the time of the revival of the Episcopal Church in Virginia. Attributed to the Baltimore architectural firm of Niernsee and Neilson, the present Tuscan-style church was consecrated in 1857 and stands across the road from the site of an earlier 18th-century frame church. A chalice and paten left to the congregation by a parishioner in 1656 are believed to be the oldest Communion silver in this country in continuous possession of the original parish.

The land on which the present church is situated was first patented in 1618 by Captain John Martin and called "Martin's Brandon." When the land was repatented in 1643 by John Sadler and Richard Quincey, the patent mentioned a glebe, indicating the presence of an established congregation. A court order established the parish in 1655, by which time the second house of worship erected on the original parish plantation was already in bad repair. The following year John Westrope bequeathed to the church its prized silver Communion chalice and paten as well as a sum of money and tobacco for the repair of the church. In 1703, when Prince George County was formed from Charles City County, Martin's Brandon Parish was enlarged by the inclusion of Westover and Weyanoke parishes south of the James River. The parish grew considerably, and a new frame church was erected in 1723. The last colonial church building of Brandon parish is believed to be the place where Colonel William Byrd met his men on his way to run the dividing line between Virginia and North Carolina in 1728.

In Virginia, as elsewhere in America, the political revolution against the English government in 1776 also became an ecclesiastical revolution against the English church. Fully disestablished by 1784, the Church lost the most valuable source of income for its clergy in 1802 when the General Assembly vested the glebe farmlands and other colonial property of the Church in the state at large. The seizure of church property, which followed a long petition campaign by Baptists and Presbyterians in favor of confiscation and redistribution, resulted in the collapse of the parish system throughout the Diocese of Virginia. Martin's Brandon Church was no exception, and the church remained abandoned for many years.

By 1829 the Virginia Episcopal Church was well on its way to revival, due largely to the efforts of William Meade, Episcopal historian and reformer. Meade revived the church according to a deliberate plan which included the securing of an evangelical bishop for Virginia, the establishment of the Theological Seminary at Alexandria, and a conciliatory approach to other religious denominations. Through Meade's influence both before and after he became bishop in 1840, the church gradually returned to a position of prestige with renewed membership among the old families. It is not known exactly when the Brandon Church reopened. Vestry records indicate a building campaign in 1852-53, and services

# MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Cocke, C.F. Parish Lines of the Diocese of Southern Virginia. Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1964.
- Holmes, David Lynn, Jr. William Meade and the Church of Virginia, 1776-1829. Princeton, 1971.
- Lutz, Francis Earle. Prince George-Hopewell Story. Richmond, 1957.
- Mason, George Carrington. Colonial Churches of Tidewater Virginia. Richmond, 1945.
- Meade, Bishop William. Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia. Vol. 1. Philadelphia, 1857.
- Robbins, Gus, Jr. "Martins Brandon Parish." The Spur Magazine, Fredericksburg, Va., January 1964.
- Southern Churchman, Alexandria, Va., 1852-56.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Savage, Virginia

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 315860 4120520

B         

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Beginning at a point on N side of route 1201; about 200' W of intersection with route 10 and at W line of western cemetery; thence extending about 175' N along said cemetery line; thence extending about 200' E along N cemetery line; thence

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

July 1980

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

## STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE X

LOCAL   

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE JUL 31 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Martin's Brandon Church, Prince George Co., Va.

CONTINUATION SHEET #1 ITEM NUMBER 6, 8 PAGE 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1968, 1975 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

8. SIGNIFICANCE

at the church are noted in the Southern Churchman throughout the 1850s. Bishop John Johns formally consecrated the present church building on November 8, 1857.<sup>1</sup>

While the church's interior has undergone numerous modifications, the exterior remains in a good state of preservation. The attribution to Baltimore architects Niernsee and Neilson is based on a stylistic comparison of the church to documented examples of that firm's ecclesiastical works. A comparison with Spesutia Church, St. George's Parish, Harford County, Maryland, shows distinct similarities. Approximately the same size and proportions, both Tuscan-style churches feature the same gabled entry, clasping buttresses, rounded windows, and engaged bell tower. A Baltimore edifice, St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church, has a steeple similar to that found on Brandon Church. The firm's reputation was known to Virginia congregations through the Southern Churchman, which listed Niernsee and Neilson as the architects of Grace Church in Baltimore in its December 20, 1852, issue. J. Crawford Neilson's obituary mentions his designs for "many public and private buildings at Staunton, Va."<sup>2</sup>, and his biographical notice in Men of Mark in Maryland (1882) calls attention to many prominent examples of his work in the Commonwealth, including the Richmond Tobacco Exchange and Robert E. Lee's Mausoleum.<sup>3</sup>

MTP/VDS/RCC

<sup>1</sup>Southern Churchman, Vol. XXII, #47.

<sup>2</sup>The Sun (Baltimore), December 20, 1900, p. 7, c. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Men of Mark in Maryland, "City of Baltimore--J. Crawford Neilson," 1882, p. 334.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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Martin's Brandon Church, Prince George Co., Va.

CONTINUATION SHEET #2 ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA - Verbal Boundary Description

extending about 100' E to NE corner of eastern cemetery; thence extending about 200' NE along NW cemetery line; thence extending about 250' SE along NE cemetery line to N side of route 1201; thence extending about 500' WSW along said side, then about 200' WNW along said side to point of origin.

Lower dew

Hundred

USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
Savage, Va. 1966(PR1974)

MARTIN'S BRANDON CHURCH, Prince George Co., Va.

UTM References:

18/315860/4120520

WARDS

Johnsons Landing

4123

4122

4121

4120

12'30"

4119

1:24,000  
SCALE  
1:24,000

BM 69

618

BM 68

BM 55

Brandon Ch  
Burrowsville  
57  
75

Cem

Salem Ch

Creek

WARDS

614

611

500

72

59