

**BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM**

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION  
ALBANY, NEW YORK (518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY  
UNIQUE SITE NO. 103-05-0342  
QUAD \_\_\_\_\_  
SERIES \_\_\_\_\_  
NEG. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Oa 41  
green/red  
NR  
listed

YOUR NAME: Town of Islip Town Hall. DATE: 6/11/79

YOUR ADDRESS: 655 Main Street  
Islip, N.Y. TELEPHONE: (516)224-5450

ORGANIZATION (if any): Department of Planning and Development

\*\*\*\*\*

**IDENTIFICATION**

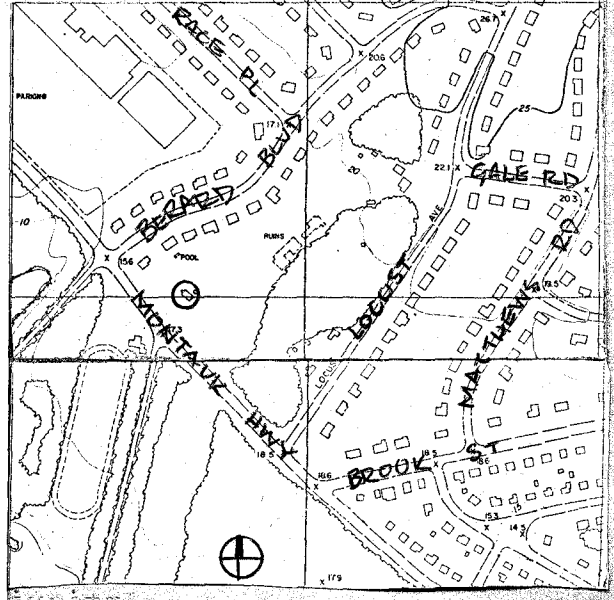
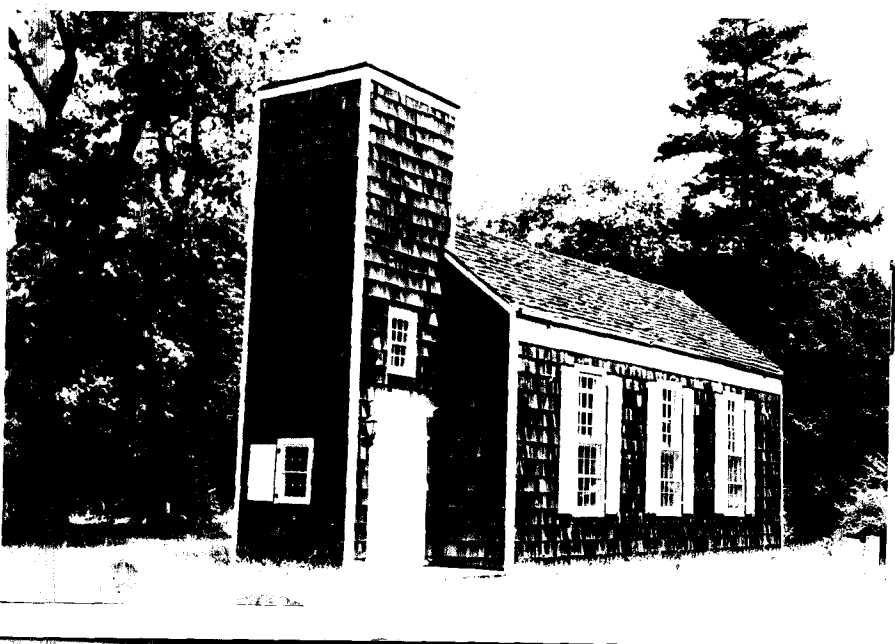
- 1. BUILDING NAME(S): Saint John's Episcopal Church
- 2. COUNTY: Suffolk TOWN/CITY: Islip VILLAGE: Oakdale
- 3. STREET LOCATION: Montauk Highway Hwy; northeast side; at Berard Blvd.
- 4. OWNERSHIP: a. public  b. private
- 5. PRESENT OWNER: Parish of St. John's ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. USE: Original: Church Present: Church
- 7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes  No  partially hidden  
Interior accessible: Explain at door

**DESCRIPTION**

- 8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard  b. stone  c. brick  d. board and batten   
e. cobblestone  f. shingles  g. stucco  other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: a. wood frame with interlocking joints   
b. wood frame with light members   
(if known) c. masonry, load bearing walls   
d. metal (explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
e. other \_\_\_\_\_

- 10. CONDITION: a. excellent  b. good  c. fair  d. deteriorated
- 11. INTEGRITY: a. original site  b. moved  if so, when? \_\_\_\_\_  
c. list major alterations and dates (if known):  
enlarged 1843  
restored 1962

12. PHOTO: neg 5, NJM-2 13. MAP: Bowe-Anderson Q-14



HP-1 view from southwest

14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known  b. zoning  c. roads   
 d. developers  e. deterioration   
 f. other: \_\_\_\_\_

15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:  
 a. barn  b. carriage house  c. garage   
 d. privy  e. shed  f. greenhouse   
 g. shop  h. gardens   
 j. landscape features: Surrounded by high hedges  
 j. other: adjacent cemetery

16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):  
 a. open land  b. woodland   
 c. scattered buildings   
 d. densely built-up  e. commercial   
 f. industrial  g. residential   
 h. other: \_\_\_\_\_

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:  
 (Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)  
**St. John's is located on the north side of Montauk Hwy.,  
 across the street from the property of LaSalle Military Academy.**

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):  
**Small 1 story shingled church that is 3 bays deep, with  
 square tower on West end (front) facade. Church has gable  
 foof, while tower has a low, shallow, hip roof.**

**SIGNIFICANCE**

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: 1765

ARCHITECT: \_\_\_\_\_

BUILDER: \_\_\_\_\_

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:  
**Saint John's Episcopal Church was built by William Nicholl III,  
 one of the first settlers in Oadale. It was originally called  
 The Charlotte Church. During the Revolution, when the British  
 seized and almost destroyed the church, the angry citizens re-  
 named it Saint John's. It is the first church in Islip, and the  
 second oldest in Suffolk County, and has been declared a town  
 Landmark.**

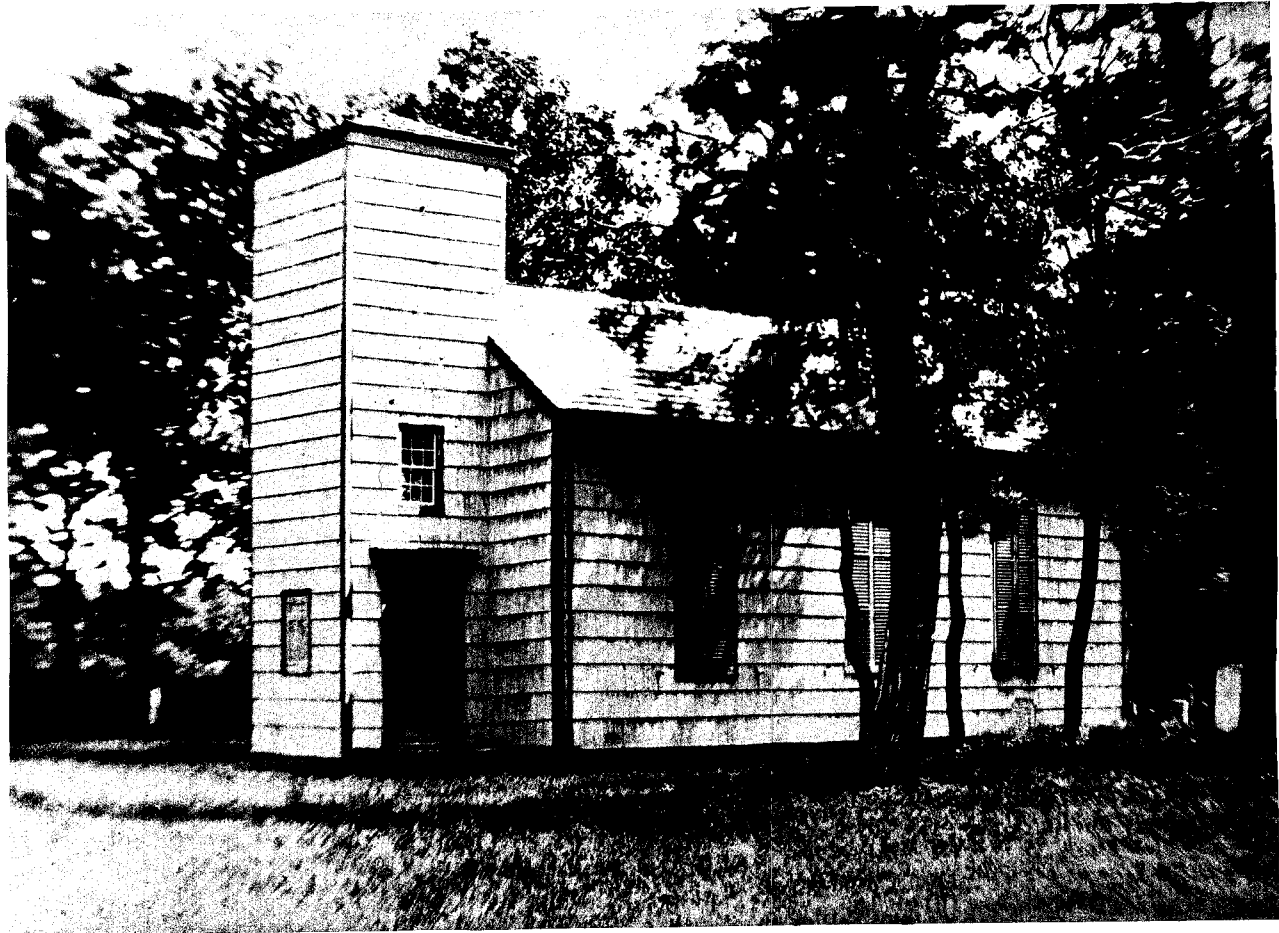
21. SOURCES:  
**Charles P. Dickerson, A History of the Sayville Community,  
 The Suffolk County News, 1975.**

**John W. Davis, Dominion in the Sea: History of the Diocese  
 of Long Island, Hempstead, 1977.**

22. THEME: **Prepared by: Society for the Preservation of Long Island  
 Antiquities  
 Setauket, New York 11733  
 Nina Monastero, Research Assistant**

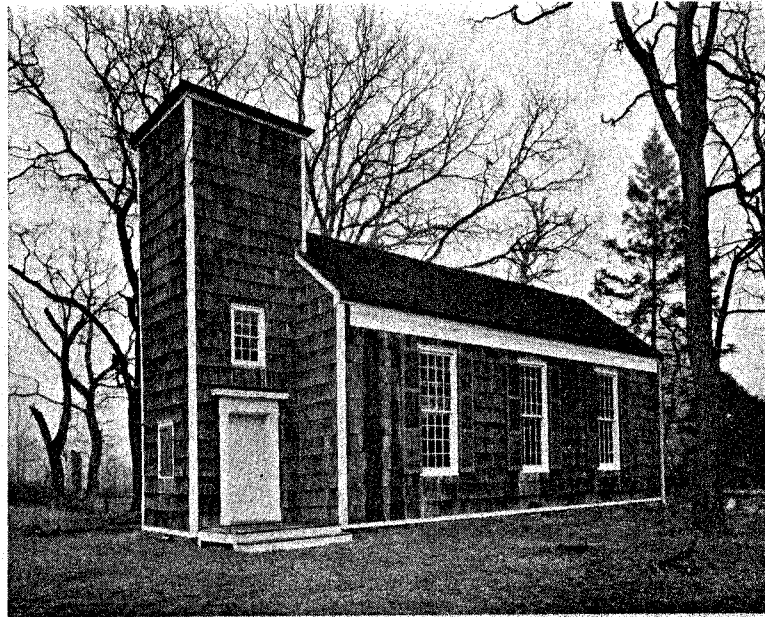
Attachment

1885 View of Oakdale Church



Copy negative by Joseph Adams from 1885 I. H. Green, Jr. photo album from Betty Prall.

Collections Mrs. Ruth Dougherty, Sayville Historical Society.



ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

At Oakdale, Long Island, Built between 1765 and 1775.  
There is an old slave gallery along the side of the interior.

Rosalie Fellows Bailey

The Nicoll Family and Islip Grange, 1940



uncle) on the records of the Town of Brookhaven: laying out a land division there May 2, 1743, appointed April 18, 1748 to run the east line of the patent across the Island, acting as a Trustee of the Town on that date and again on Dec. 18, 1753. He was also on the Brookhaven Town Assessment list of 1749. So we may judge that he did not return to Islip until 1754-55, before the birth of his son on May 20, 1756.

William and Joanna De Honeur were married June 1, 1750, according to their grandson's record. She died in New York City on Dec. 3, 1772 in her 42nd year after a painful year's illness. Her long obituary<sup>20</sup> shows the love and admiration in which she was held and gives an interesting picture of the life of that day. Through her father, Samuel D'Honeur of Huntington and Brookhaven, the Nicolls acquired Huguenot and Dutch blood and were connected with the Beekman family of New York City.<sup>21</sup> Joanna's mother was Rachel Strong, daughter of Selah Strong of Setauket; she survived the rest of the family some years, and bequeathed her estate to her Nicoll granddaughters.

William Nicoll's interest in the Episcopal Church is evinced as early as 1747 by his contribution to the building fund for a church at Huntington, Long Island. There was no church of any denomination in the vicinity of Islip, so divine service was held for many years in the Nicoll home at "Islip Grange." St. John's Episcopal Church was organized here in 1765, and erected near the center of Nicoll's patent<sup>22</sup> "principally if not entirely by the then opulent proprietor of this large estate". It was the only church here until the mid-nineteenth century.

On July 22, 1769 (the year after the death of his uncle William of Shelter Island) William Nicoll entered into a tripartite indenture followed by a suit before the Supreme Court of the Province, for the common recovery. Thereby we find that his holdings at Islip and Shelter Island amounted to at least 50,000 acres, and that he had thereon fifty farms improved with buildings, dove-houses and gardens, as also four mills and four sawmills. Most of this must have been at Islip, since the Shelter Island property was limited to Sachem's Neck.

This William Nicoll, grandson of the first, was known as *Lawyer*

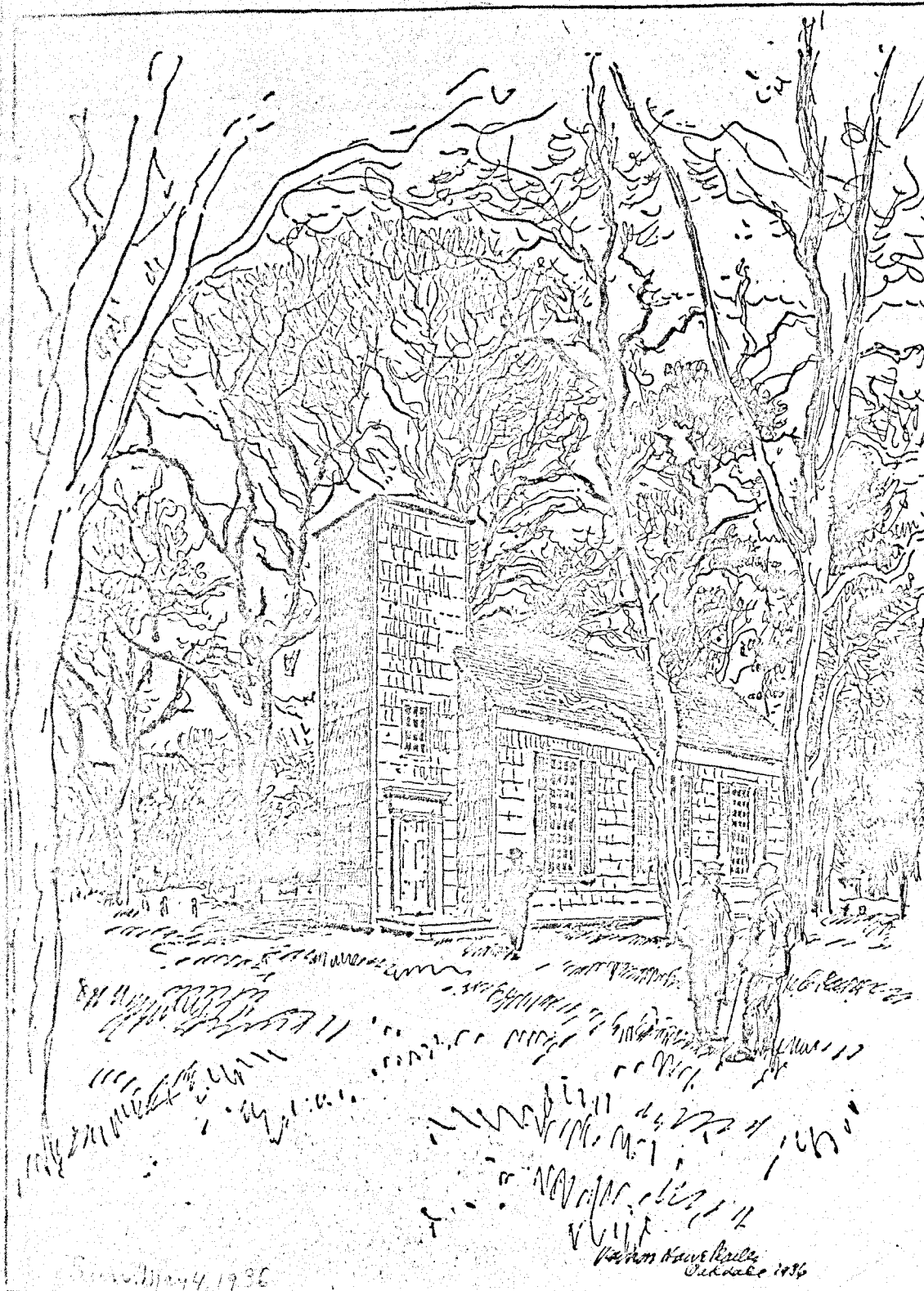
20. See Appendix III, pp. 75-76.

21. See my article on the De Honeur family in *N. Y. Genealogical Record*, v. 63, p. 169.

22. The date of erection is variously given as 1766, 1769 and ten years before the Revolution. His wife's obituary of 1772 infers there was still no church building, so Nicoll may not have erected it until 1772-75. It was enlarged in 1843 and still stands in the old village of Islip, now called Oakdale.

### The Nicoll Family and Islip Grange

Rosalie Fellows Bailey, 1940



**Oakdale, L. I.—St. John's Episcopal Church.**

St. John's Church was built in 1765, which is also the date of the organization of the parish. Except for repairs and renovation the building stands as originally erected. There is an old slave gallery along the sides and in one end of the interior of the church. About 1875 services

were discontinued and the building was not used again until 1928, when a kind of reorganization took effect and the church was reopened as a "wayside chapel." The minister now in charge is the Rev. A. W. Carrington, rector of Emmanuel Church, Great River, L. I.

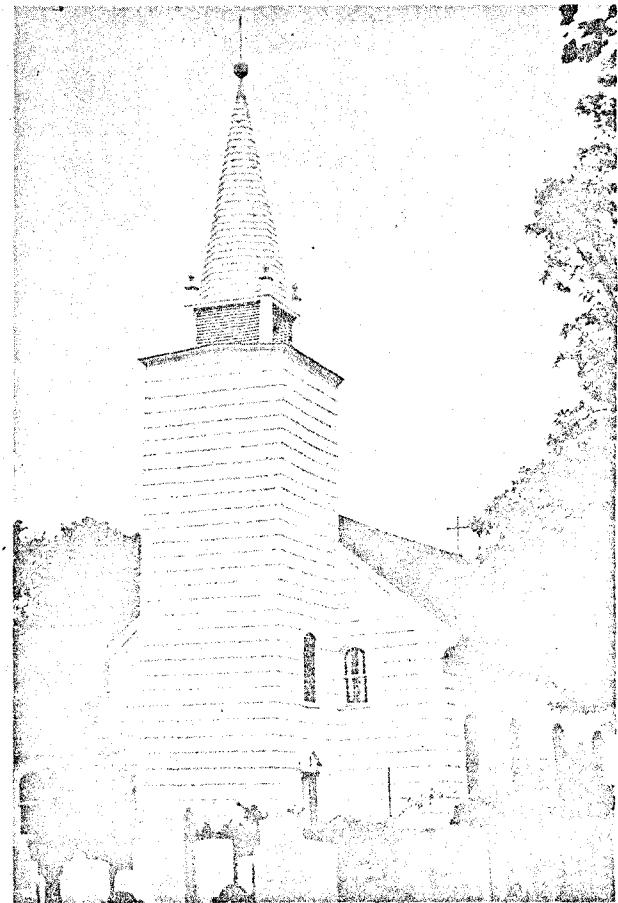
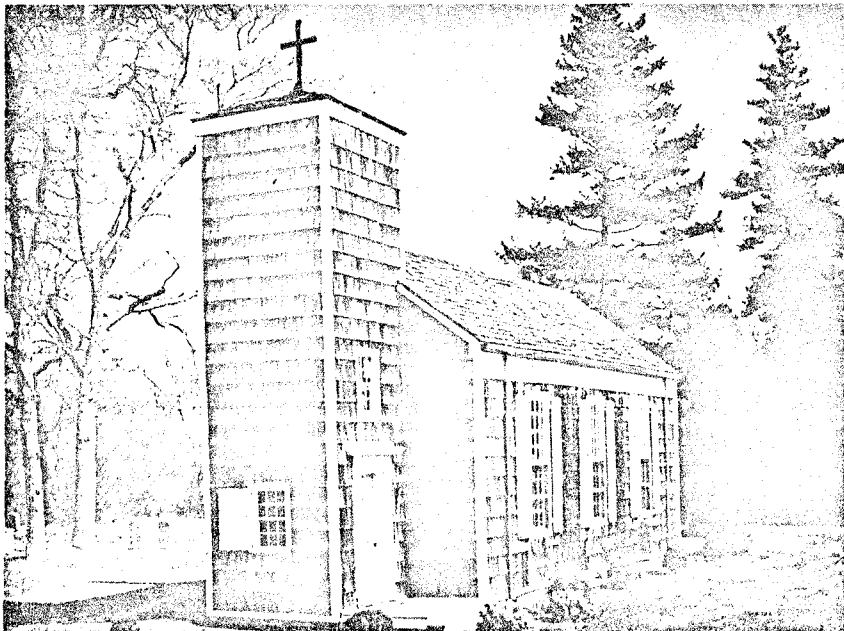
Overcoming initial opposition, the permanent establishment of the Episcopal Church on Long Island began with the arrival of the two assigned S.P.G. missionaries. The Rev. William Urquhart took up his duties at Jamaica with the responsibility of Flushing and Newtown (Elmhurst). The Rev. John Thomas was "inducted rector of Hamstead [sic] on Nassau Island in the Province of New York on the 27th day of December in the year of 1704." The Hempstead missionary wrote in his diary entry of June 27, 1705: "I have two distinct churches, fifteen miles asunder, where I preach by turns." The two churches were in the far distant places of Hempstead and Oyster Bay. Hempstead proved less trying than Jamaica. Thomas at first reported that his path was "very thorny" and "all my steps are narrowly watched." But in the succeeding years he had made his ministry among the "stiff Dissenters" so that within ten years he could cheerfully report that "All is well in my parish in general, and a happy continuance of mutual accord and affection between me and my parishioners [transpires]." The Jamaica rector experienced no such peace of mind in his work. He had to overcome tremendous opposition and never did fully gain the town's confidence or backing.

It was not until 1729 that a permanent ministry was started in Suffolk. At Setauket the Rev. Alexander Campbell held services, and under his leadership the present church building was begun. At first called Christ Church, Brookhaven, its name was changed in 1730 to Caroline Church of Brookhaven in honor of Queen Wilhelmina-Karoline, Consort of George II, who gave the silver communion ware and the altar cloths. In 1733, the S.P.G. sent the Rev. Isaac Browne, who began the long line of pastorates. It was during this time that a dispute over the church building arose between the Dissenters and the Anglicans. Once the dispute had been settled, Caroline Church prospered and grew.

A second Anglican Church in Suffolk grew out of pastoral work by a Queens County church. St. John's Church in Huntington was planted in 1745 by the missionary efforts of the S.P.G. missionaries at Hempstead. The first missionary at Hempstead to make frequent visits and great efforts to build a church and gather a congregation was the Rev. Samuel Seabury, father of the renowned Bishop Seabury. He travelled long distances to visit and to minister to the small group of interested persons. In addition to his duties at Hempstead, Seabury baptized and officiated at Huntington. In 1748, Seabury requested the S.P.G. to appoint his son, Samuel, Jr., as catechist, with a small allowance. The Society designated him to act in this capacity under the direction of his father and allowed him a salary of ten pounds a year. The elder Seabury recorded: "The Church at Huntington is also rendered very commodious and a congregation of fifty or sixty persons and sometimes more, constantly attend Divine Service there, who behave very devoutly and perform their part in Divine Worship very decently."

John W. Davis, Dominion in the Seas, The History of the Diocese of Long Island, 1977.

(right) Caroline Church, Setauket, founded 1729.  
 (below) Old St. John's Church, Oakdale, first  
permanent church built in Islip Town, restored  
1962.



In 1762, the people were able to purchase a valuable house and "Glebe" worth 200 pounds. It was not until 1767 that a resident clergyman was procured.

Only one other Anglican Church was established in Suffolk County before the coming of the American Revolution. The first permanent church to be built in the Town of Islip was St. John's Church at Oakdale, in 1769. Built on the Nicoll land at the family's expense, it was used only occasionally for church services. It was a chapel of ease, a family chapel for the Nicolls, who were staunch Anglicans.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Episcopal Church on Long Island had taken firm roots. Recognized by the inhabitants as a stable and lasting institution, the Church gained the respect of the communities and the support of its growing constituency. Three churches in the Township of Jamaica were thriving concerns. All three had received a Royal Charter from the Crown in 1761. They shared the same rector who ministered not only to Jamaica but also to Newtown and Flushing. Previously, St. George's Church at Hempstead had received its Royal Charter in 1735. It and its north shore counterpart, Christ Church, Oyster Bay, prospered and grew. In comparison, the three churches in Suffolk County seemed small. Yet each of them had deep roots and continued to weather Puritan opposition and hostility. St. John's, Huntington, Caroline Church of Brookhaven, and St. John's at Oakdale each took care of the Anglicans who had settled in small numbers and attracted many of the staunch island Protestants by the warmth of its welcome and its life.

### ENEMY CHURCH

In Lexington, on April 19, 1775, the shot was fired shortly after dawn. Before it was heard 'round the world, it echoed in the Episcopal Church, splintering its fiber and deadening its vitality. No other single event in the life of the nation had such a devastating effect upon the Church, leaving it structureless and impoverished.

Long Islanders, caught in the mesh of conflicting forces and ideologies, split into two groups: those who were intensely loyal to the King and Parliament, and those who desired patriotic self-determination. Loyalist and patriot fought with each other to preserve or to change the national identity. Some Islanders responded to the call of the patriots and formed local militia and Committees of Safety. After the disbanding of the Provincial Assembly in May 1775, matters grew more intense, and since the rebels controlled New York and Long Island, the loyalist cause suffered. Late in June 1776, however, the British ships appeared off Far Rockaway "with so many masts coming over the horizon that one observer said it looked like a forest rising from the sea." The local patriotic militia and the Continental Forces under General Washington prepared for the landing of the fleet with a scorched earth policy, burning grain and driving cattle eastward. The British landed in Brooklyn, and on August 27, 1776, they not only won the Battle of Long Island but also gained permanent control of the area. The victorious army camped at the strategic points of Flushing and Hellgate, with headquarters at Newtown.

For the duration of the war, Long Island served the British as a troop depot station, with a concentration of encampments in Kings County and the western section of Queens that dwindled off to a few scattered control stations in northeastern Queens and Suffolk. The island virtually became one camp as the number of troops was swelled by soldiers returned during the winter for rest and recreation after the summer campaigns.

The British army needed large quantities of wood, fodder and other supplies which were readily taken at prices set by the army or confiscated without any recompense being made to the owner. There was much theft by soldiers and marauders, as well as wanton destruction. The island not only fell prey to the entrenched forces but also paid a stiff toll to the whaleboatmen, who in the beginning of the war served as an effective arm of the Continental Forces, but who in time attracted a lawless element which robbed and murdered.

The western towns remained quiet and secure, profiting from British control. Jamaica had its soldier encampment, as did Flushing. A regiment of Hessians had winter quarters at Flushing. Newtown was filled with army officials. Hempstead, farther out, was the scene of constant strife between loyalists and patriots. Early in 1775, when a Tory-controlled town meeting voted to send no deputies to the Continental Congress, residents of the northern part of the township, whose sympathies lay with the patriots' cause, sent their own delegates. The split widened until September of 1775 when the north consisting of Great Neck, Manhasset, Port Washington and the Northern Neck, voted to secede and appointed its own militia officers and committees. The division remained throughout the war until 1784, when it was officially recognized. From 1776 to 1783, the Tories had the upper hand, oppressing and harassing the patriots. The British established troop watch stations on the eastern end of the island. Sag Harbor was seized, as was the Manor of St. George (Manorville). Although no major engagement was fought on Long Island, it suffered greatly from guerrilla warfare, intense hatred, and civil strife both on land and on water.

Although the Anglican Church was split in its allegiances, some Anglicans became leaders of the rebel movement. One patriot of note was Francis Lewis, active layman and church warden of St. George's Church in Flushing, who attended the Continental Congress and signed the Declaration of Independence as a delegate from New York. However, by and large the Anglicans on Long Island, both clergy and laity, were staunch loyalists. Being part of the Establishment, the clergy vehemently defended the royal cause. The Rev. Joshua Bloomer, Rector of the three parishes of Jamaica, Flushing and Newtown, refused to omit prayers for the King. The Rev. Leonard Cutting, Rector of St. George's Church, Hempstead, and Christ Church, Oyster Bay, was a violent and outspoken supporter of the government, and during the war a huge price was put on his head by the patriots.

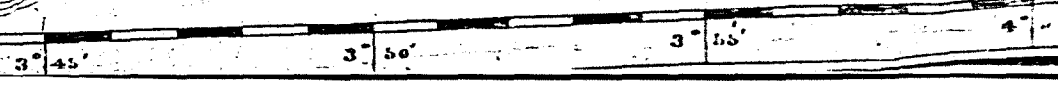




MAP OF SUFFOLK COUNTY 1829

by David H. Burr

Published by the Surveyor General pursuant to an Act of Legislature



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UNIQUE SITE NO. <u>103-05</u>	<u>0005</u>
QUAD	
SERIES	
NEG. NO.	

NYSHP  
APR 3 1975  
Rec'd NYSHP

YOUR NAME: Betty Kees DATE: 2/25/75

YOUR ADDRESS: Osadae TELEPHONE: 219-2231

ORGANIZATION (if any): W.K. Vanderbilt Hist. Soc.

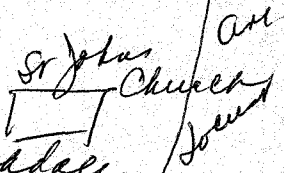
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**IDENTIFICATION**

- BUILDING NAME(S): St. John's Church
- COUNTY: Suffolk TOWN/CITY: Osip VILLAGE: Osadae
- STREET LOCATION: Mont. Hwy.
- OWNERSHIP: a. public  b. private
- PRESENT OWNER: Episc. Diocese ADDRESS: St. John's Church Osadae
- USE: Original: Church Present: Church
- ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes  No   
Interior accessible: Explain for services

**DESCRIPTION**

- BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard  b. stone  c. brick  d. board and batten   
e. cobblestone  f. shingles  g. stucco  other: \_\_\_\_\_
- STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: (if known) a. wood frame with interlocking joints   
b. wood frame with light members   
c. masonry load bearing walls   
d. metal (explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
e. other \_\_\_\_\_
- CONDITION: a. excellent  b. good  c. fair  d. deteriorated
- INTEGRITY: a. original site  b. moved  if so, when? \_\_\_\_\_  
c. list major alterations and dates (if known):  
1783. enlarged to 12 pews  
1843. Church enlarged & repaired  
1873. Chancel window installed
- PHOTO:
- MAP:

  
St. John's Church  
Mont. Hwy. Osadae  
 W \_\_\_\_\_ E  
 S \_\_\_\_\_ N

14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known  b. zoning  c. roads   
d. developers  e. deterioration   
f. other: \_\_\_\_\_

15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:  
a. barn  b. carriage house  c. garage   
d. privy  e. shed  f. greenhouse   
g. shop  h. gardens   
i. landscape features: \_\_\_\_\_  
j. other: graveyard

16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):  
a. open land  b. woodland   
c. scattered buildings   
d. densely built-up  e. commercial   
f. industrial  g. residential   
h. other: \_\_\_\_\_

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:  
(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)  
*surrounding graveyard & stones very important historically*

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):  
*Tiffany windows, plate glass, grave of Adm. Sedler & family.*

**SIGNIFICANCE**

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: 1765

ARCHITECT: \_\_\_\_\_

BUILDER: Wm. Nicoll

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:  
*1st sedler church in Suffolk Co.*

21. SOURCES: *Church pamphlets in Hist. Soc. Lib. Collection*

22. THEME:

## St. John's Church

Oakdale, N. Y.

In 1765, a small church edifice was erected by Wm. Nicoll, grandson of the patentee, near road, designed for the celebration of divine worship according to the forms of the Episcopal Church and was used occasionally for that purpose, though it long remained unblest by prelati cal hands.

It was incorporated June 17, 1806, the first church in that part of Suffolk. People came to it from a great distance and as the years passed, many members of its congregation were laid to rest in the churchyard.

It is the second oldest Episcopal Church on L.I. From 1814 the Rev. Charles Seabury, rector of Caroline Church at Setauket, acted as missionary to this congregation, and devoted a portion of his time to its service.

In 1841 the church was enlarged and the late Admiral Ludlow, who was later to fight for its very existence, was the first child to be baptized there after the improvements were made.

Under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Johnson, followed by the Rev. Henry M. David and the Rev. Mr. Douglas, the church continued until about 1871, when St. Barnabas in Sayville, now the parish house of St. Ann's, proved to be a more convenient place of worship for the majority of St. John's members.

Title of the property of the historic church, located upon the ancestral acres of the Nicolls and Ludlows has been the occasion for considerable litigation in recent years.

St. John's Church figured prominently in the courts about 1900, when the interment of Richard Vail in the churchyard was bitterly protested by Mary McLean Ludlow, then owner of the Nicoll estate. She termed it "Using her front yard for a burying ground".

This brought some interesting facts to light. The church had been reincorporated in 1872, and at that time Admiral Ludlow, son of General Wm. Ludlow and Frances Nicoll Ludlow, owners of the vestry, was away at sea. The same year General Ludlow and his wife had executed a declaration of trust which was tantamount to a deed, saying they held the church and churchyard as vested.

About 1897 Admiral Ludlow had married for the second time - - Mary McLean Ludlow - - a woman of great wealth. The Ludlow heirs had deeded the estate to her, neglecting to except the church property.

When later Mary McLean Ludlow and the Admiral had disagreee, she had put the entire property up for sale - church, churchyard and all.

So, in 1909, when it was reported to Mrs. McLean Ludlow, then in Washington, that Admiral Ludlow, as the sole surviving vestryman, had given permission for the Vail family to bury Richard wit the other members of the family in St. John's churchyard, she brought action



against the church corporation, of which he was the only representative.

The tombstones of many families not connected with the Ludlows were mute testimony that the Nicoll-Ludlow family had had no desire to interfere with the church and interments in its churchyard. Admiral Ludlow's testimony brought out the aforementioned deed of trust, and the case was won by the church corporation. The Appellate Division reversed the decision, motion for new trial was dismissed, the case was brought before the Court of Appeals, which reversed the Appellate decision and found for the church corporation.

The authorization to execute the deed was signed by Justice Maddox of the Supreme Court, following the decision of the Court of Appeals at Albany.

When ownership was finally decided Admiral Ludlow turned over the church and churchyard to the Board of Trustees of the Diocese of L.I. or made a provision in his will for the maintenance of the church and property as did his brother, Edwin Ludlow, at his death.

The Ludlow farm was later acquired from Mrs. Mary McLean Ludlow by Com. F. G. Bourne. Com. Bourne's purchase did not include the historical old church built in 1765 nor the little churchyard surrounding it where Com. Wm. Ludlow, former speaker of the N.Y. Assembly and his son, Brig. Gen. Wm. Ludlow and several other distinguished people are buried there.

Rear Admiral Nicoll Ludlow, who served in the Civil and Spanish American Wars, was the last person to be interred there. Admiral Ludlow died Dec. 9, 1915.

And so "right triumphed in the end". For now this church has been saved the fate of being thrown on the real estate market as was the rest of the estate after the death of Com. Bourne, who purchased it from Mary McLean Ludlow during the litigation and who was resident custodian of the church during his lifetime.

There was a prophetic ring to Attorney Wood's eloquent statements in arguing the final motion in the Court of Appeals: "It is repugnant to human sentiment, repugnant to justice and to law that this sacred spot should be the subject of bargain and sale as the private property of any individual, or its control subject to the individual whim of any person who cannot be held accountable to those who were christened there whose fathers worshipped there and whose dead are buried there."

3772

103-05-0005

3772

NEW YORK STATE HISTORIC TRUST  
STATEWIDE SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. Name (Common and Historic) Church of St. John, Oakdale, (Episcopal).
- Location 2. Suffolk County 3. Islip Town 4. OAKDALE Village or City
5. Address or Location <sup>N/S</sup> South Country Rd., Rt. 27A near intersection of Docust Ave., Opposite the entrance of La Salle Military Academy in Oakland section of L. I.
6. Type Colonial 7. Subject or Theme Religious Architectural
8. Date of Construction 1765 9. Architect (If Known) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Builder (If known) \_\_\_\_\_
11. Original Owner Church of St. John
12. Original Use Church
13. Present Owner Church of St. John ("ST. JOHN'S CHURCH OF ISLIP")  
Name  
Oakdale, L. I.  
Address
14. Present Use Church
15. Physical Condition Good
16. Surveys L. I. Survey, Office of Planning Coordination.
17. Future Action Federal Register  
The highway in this busy section of L. I. could easily be expanded and ~~destroy~~ the church.
18. Surveyed by Robert L. Wiggins, Cuddebackville, N. Y., Feb., 68. Date Surveyed