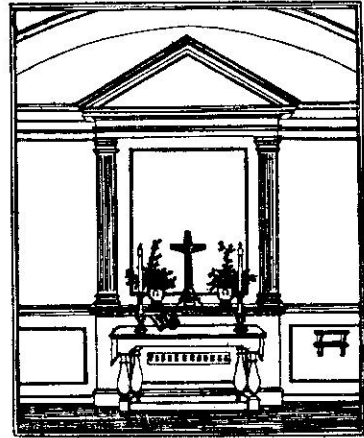


ORIGIN AND EARLY YEARS

1936 - 1948



Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill

Alexandria, Virginia

Recollections of JOHN O. WALKER



With Advice and Consent of
Ben Boogher, Al Miller and Charlie Tompkins

Robert L. ...

Printed and distributed by the Memorial Fund of Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, Alexandria, Va., February, 1966, at the direction of the Vestry.

Prologue — 1936

The stream of life had passed by Seminary Hill or "The Holy Hill" hard by Alexandria, Virginia, leaving it as a gentle, peaceful eddy with contented people.

The center of the eddy, an area landmark, was the "Chinese Revenge", the tower on Aspinwall Hall, which, lifting its white face to the sky, was older, if not higher, than the Washington Cathedral. At this time, the tower was in a bad state of repair, serving as a comfortable cote for itinerant pigeons, whose squabs augmented the pocket money of enterprising boys in the neighborhood.

The view from the top, aided by a pair of binoculars, was well worth the climb. From Fort Washington, across the Potomac, on the left, sweeping past Mount Vernon, through Fairfax County, through Falls Church, one saw, practically nothing except woods and forgotten farm land. Closer at hand, was an uninterrupted view to the top of Shooter's Hill, crowned by the Masonic Memorial. There was no Chinquapin Village — no Parkfairfax — no Fairlington — no Shirley Duke Shopping Center. The Holy Hill was truly a peaceful eddy surrounded by bucolic beauty.

The chief features of the "Hill" were the Protestant Episcopal Seminary in Virginia and the Episcopal High School, usually referred to, by properly brought up people in Virginia, as "The Seminary" and "The High School".

The Seminary had an interesting and delightful faculty, enjoyed to the fullest by those fortunate enough to know them: Dean Wallace Rollins, dreaming of the time when he would retire to the beauties of Sweet Briar College; Dr. Alexander C. Zabriskie, who was becoming more and more ecumenical each passing day; Dr. Stanley Brown-Serman, who brought a touch of England to the Hill, thinking of quiet contemplation under the trees (How he would dislike the place now, cluttered with student wives and children!); Dr. Charles Lowry, profound but not yet contaminated by the master-race philosophy; Dr. Thomas Kinloch Nelson, unable to make up his mind as to whether he was a professor of the seminary or a volunteer chaplain at the high school (He did both, and our parish house is named after him.); Dr. Albert Mollegen, whose voice was beginning to be heard, nationwide, from the "Wilderness"; Dr. Sturgis Ball, the only preacher the high school boys always approved. Dr. Clifford Stanley, who liked to stir the indolent, had gone to Missouri but would return.

"The High School" and "Flick" Hoxton, the headmaster were synonymous. He headed a group of great teachers — Mr. Daniels, Mr. Shackelford, Mr. Reade, Mr. Williams, Mr. Whittle, Mr. Tompkins,

Mr. Calloway, Mr. Carter and Mr. Latham. The boys were well taught academically, but most of all they were taught to be decent people, with good manners and how to spell E-P-I-S-C-O-P-A-L.

Sunday was indeed a day of rest. There were approximately 70 seminarians. Many had assignments on Sunday in Virginia, Maryland, the District and sundry missions, while others went away for the weekend. This was the day of unmarried students, and they were busily hunting in many fields. Those who remained on the campus went to the 7:30 service and then back to bed. While many of the faculty were away filling pulpits, there was always one available for the 11 o'clock service, and usually two on the first Sunday in the month.

Just before eleven on Sunday, the hill came back to life. The boys from the high school, having finished their perusal of the comics and the sport pages, streamed over to the chapel and with their masters took assigned places. A sprinkling of faculty wives and their well-scrubbed children added to the number of Sunday worshippers. Those not of either institution (and this included some stray cats and dogs), who lived within the eddy or had some relationship to the hill in bygone days, furnished the rest of the congregation. The boys' choir sounded off, the age-old service brought comfort to all, and the sermon by one of the faculty was invariably good, if not always understood. Then came the recessional, a period of friendly visit, and so to home. The campus was again deserted.

With the coming of summer the faculty members remaining in residence held Sunday morning services for modest congregations.

Of course there were big days — senior sermons, Holy Week, occasional outstanding visiting preachers, confirmations, home-coming, the Woodberry game, graduations. The one outstanding event was the "Seminary Fair" owned and operated by the Women's Auxiliary. Every man, woman and child within the eddy and those kin and friends outside, who could be persuaded, took part. It was labor — but a labor of love and friendship. This big day drew crowds, rich and poor, high and low, young and old. The day ended with everyone exhausted but with that happy exhaustion that accompanies success.

Financially, each successive fair was a triumph which surpassed the earnings of previous years. It is quite conceivable that some benighted heathen can trace his conversion to the proceeds from a turtle race staged on Seminary Hill during an annual fair. And racing was a highly respectable sport for missionaries from the seminary crowning the Holy Hill. In fact, if legend is true, the first missionary graduate of the seminary was noted, not for his fluency in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, but for the skill he displayed in driving a pair of fleet and handsome horses.

Genesis — 1939 - 40

In the beginning there was much conversation. If we were beginning today there would probably be "dialogues". Whether conversations or dialogues, there was much talk in 1939 and 1940. Who originally started it all is hidden in the mist of the distant past. In any event, the first important conversations are, rightly or wrongly, attributed to Dr. Zabriskie, and we can be sure he would be only too happy to be labeled the guilty party.



DR. ZABRISKIE

Charlie Tompkins from the high school faculty and Johnny Walker were among the first who talked with Zab. The fireplace at the "Studio" where Walker lived, soon became the center of the disturbance. In quick succession others became involved: Walter Karig, Cooper Dawson, Sr., Charlie Hooff, Sr., Walter Brookings, Dick Williams, Al Miller, Ben Boogher. And one must never forget the Ladies (they were "Ladies" before they became "Women of the Church"). Among this number were Nancy Bell and Helen Macondray. For them and many others, including both the godly and the rough element, the burning questions were: Do we need a parish? If so, why?

If a parish were to be established and if the seminary chapel were to be used for its worship, wisdom dictated that "Flick" Hoxton of the high school and Bishop Goodwin should be consulted. Traditionally, the high school had priority in the use of the chapel. Bishop Goodwin was slated to become head of the diocese and president of the seminary board of trustees on the retirement of Bishop Tucker.

The headmaster and the bishop were quick to give their blessing and followed it with generous and continuing support in the subsequent birthing of our parish.

There were, however, at least two people who contemplated the establishment of a parish with some reservation and misgivings: Nancy Bell and Dr. Brown-Serman. The first was worried deeply

at the possibility of no longer having an opportunity to enjoy the brilliant Sunday sermons which were given in rotation by members of the seminary faculty. The second felt that teachers and students should be able to dream under the seminary trees, undisturbed by the chatter of women and the galloping feet of playing children. In his wildest dreams Dr. Brown-Serman could never had imagined the seminary as it is today. Neither could anyone else at that time.

The reasons for establishing a parish were wide, varied and important, grounded in the history of the Episcopal Church in the community.

There had been many chapels, mostly owned by the seminary, in the general area. Among these—

St. Johns in the Duke Street - Quaker Lane area;

The Church of the Holy Spirit at the corner of Seminary Road and Howard's Lane on land now part of the hospital site (Deconsecrated and converted into a studio, it served for many of the pre-parish meetings);

One on Route 7 towards Baileys Crossroads, now owned by the Roman Catholics;

And St. Cyprian, named for the only negro saint, originally on the seminary grounds but moved across Braddock Road between Fort Ward and the present Minnie Howard School.

These chapels, as well as others, served as practice places for seminarians, and some eminent divines today have nostalgic memories of the place where they preached their first sermon.

In these and other chapels children had been baptized, later confirmed, with the exception of colored members, in the seminary chapel, then promptly forgotten. To these can be added many boys from the high school, confirmed and their home churches not advised—forgotten.

Even the Sunday offering might remain on the altar for days—forgotten.

People were married, buried — and forgotten. People were sick, suffering or in trouble, needing a priest.

How could it be explained to them that the cassock of a seminary professor covered a different kind of priest? The seminary and the church were being discredited. Where, O where, have their children gone?

Thus, we were blessed with a great missionary seminary, but if something was not done to weld our children as strong members of our church, the "Light which shines the farthest from home" would fail to shine brightly at home. This was not a seminary job. It was a parish job.

Some of us saw a small cloud on the horizon. One or two saw a second still smaller cloud. Two hurricanes were in the making. Soon the hill would be surrounded by people and more people — and automobiles. At that time there were only two or three student-owned cars, and, if memory is correct, one of these was a four-way ownership and spent most of the time being repaired.

A parish should be prepared and ready to meet the coming needs of the community. More and more children were to come. Sunday schools would have to be developed and later enlarged. The day had passed when home Christian education could be counted on as fully adequate. Teenage and college prospects needed and deserved strong Christian leadership and some place to meet and play. Only a parish could properly meet this need.

With expansion rampant, the church must move forward, or it would die. The seminary was not able and rightfully felt that it should not be expected to shoulder this responsibility, but it fully recognized the benefits which could be derived from an organized parish.

Some dreamed a dream. A strong, humanly oriented parish, a proud missionary-minded seminary, a distinguished Episcopally oriented school, the three integrated in faith, hope and devotion could become a bright jewel in the crown of the church in Virginia.

Throngs of people would soon be clamoring at our gates. Would the seminary, the high school, the proposed parish be capable of providing the leadership, imagination and vision so vitally necessary in making such a dream a reality?

Could the parish become a model parish, in its administration, in its giving, in the warmth of its welcome to new people, in its development of a model church school, in its organization of a meaningful Christian program, in providing dynamic programs by the women of the church, and as a worthwhile field for training seminary students?

Could the students of the Episcopal High School in their new and closer relationship with the parish, have a vestry training program added to their sacred study course, which would fit them to be vestrymen someday?

The seminary was sending out about thirty graduates each year, some to mission fields but most of them to parishes. Our parish due to its location and the composition of its membership was destined to send out about one-third of its membership each year to all corners of this country and to many strange and distant places in the world. In effect, entire families of parishioners might become lay missionaries, speaking with knowledge and conviction when, in distant places, a priest made his annual plea for seminary support. They could constitute a group with first-hand knowledge of a seminary's worth, needs and workings. There might even be a short course for training lay readers, with the approval of the bishop, to provide a home-missionary group ready to serve where they were and when needed.

These were a few of the thoughts and dreams of the founders of our parish. For them, the horizons of the parish they envisioned could stretch to the uttermost parts of the world and enrich the daily lives of the community it served. But it was fully recognized that dreams and hopes demanded work and Christian faith, if they were ever to be translated into tangible and worthwhile realities.



Exodus - Getting Going — 1941

Some Sunday, when driving up to church, look at the tower of Aspinwall, gleaming white in the sunshine, then let your mind go back to the early days of the parish and imagine what it was like at that time. First, the tower was not gleaming, but dirty white — or perhaps you might describe it as an off-color grey. Second, you couldn't drive up to the seminary chapel. The road was too rough and bumpy, grass- and weed-grown. On one side was the disposal field for the seminary sewage. (At that time, the city sewer system had not come so far.) A wire barrier extended across what might be called the entrance. To your right, as you faced Aspinwall, the long low building, a heritage from World War I which now houses the seminary book store, was then serving as the seminary refectory.

On the evening of May 2, 1941, in the refectory, a dinner was spread. There were no vacant seats. The spirit was like that of a bunch of children waiting for permission to open their Christmas packages. The package was to be the report of a self-appointed "ad hoc" committee. This report was supposed to be "top secret", but from the buzzing conversation it was evident that security had failed.

There were many recommendations. The first and most important was that we organize as a parish. This was approved loudly and unanimously.

In connection with this, it might be of interest to some to know that parishes, in Virginia, were originally both church and political units. Truro was perhaps the senior church in what was known as Fairfax Parish, so all churches in what was originally Fairfax Parish are technically congregations within a parish. However, usage had decreed otherwise, and as far as we are concerned we were convinced of our right to claim to be a parish.

It was recommended that the congregation be called "Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill". Some few thought this name was a bit Romanish or at least "high church". But the fact that we were to worship in "Immanuel Chapel" on the "Holy Hill" gave it a "low church" heritage and made it historically fitting. So the name was approved.

It was recommended that the vestry, eight in number, be organized to serve on a rotating basis, with members to be ineligible for immediate re-election. This was approved.

It was recommended, that, in view of the fact that the dean of the seminary was the legal rector of the parish, the seminary should have a veto on all practices and policies of the congregation that might be in conflict with, or objectionable to, the philosophy of the

seminary. It was also proposed that no member of the faculty or employee of the seminary be eligible for election to the vestry. This was approved.

It was recommended that not more than two persons from the high school staff or faculty be eligible for the vestry at any one time. It was hoped and expected that the headmaster of the high school would always be an honorary member of the vestry with the right to speak, advise and counsel, at all times, but without a vote. This was approved.

The prime reason for the two preceding resolutions was to try to establish and to maintain, from the beginning, a broad base of representation.

It was suggested that the geographical limits of the parish be flexible to include wherever our parishioners might reside, from Chevy Chase to Manassas. This was approved.

These matters settled, the meeting proceeded to the election of a vestry. It was immediately evident that the choice would be narrowly limited. This was due to the rules on eligibility plus the restrictions which had been adopted. Canon law required that a candidate for vestryman be a baptised, confirmed male member of the Protestant Episcopal Church or of a church with which the Episcopal Church was in communion and that he be at least twenty-one years of age. The ranks of the eligibles were further diminished by the fact that some men, for personal reasons, felt no inclination for service on the vestry.

No formal slate of candidates for the vestry was presented and a free-for-all contest resulted in the selection of Ben Boogher, Charlie Hooff, Sr., Walter Karig, Ray Pugh, Charlie Tompkins, J. L. Keddy, John Walker and Al Miller. For some unknown reason it was thought that there should be eight vestrymen, but then it seemed that nine was a more proper number, and Dick Williams was added to the vestry.

One member of the newly elected vestry, Walter Karig, had to have his credentials authenticated. Walter, as an infant, had been baptized and confirmed in the "Old Polish Catholic Church" with which the Episcopal Church was in communion. The impossibility of securing information from Poland in 1941 was recognized, so Bishop Tucker accepted Walter's word and wrote his approval on two sides of a page from a small notebook. Outside of spelling Walter's name incorrectly and having him in the wrong town in Poland, the approval was ecclesiastically correct.

History having been made, the meeting adjourned. Nothing we had done would count for anything, until the diocese approved, the

seminary board approved, the high school approved, and the other congregations in the area gave their consent. This fact worried us not at all. As far as we were concerned, the "Red Sea" had been crossed, and we were prepared to meet the adventures in the wilderness.

The first meeting of the vestry was held on May 28, 1941, and was fully covered by the following, interesting, unusual but quite unofficial minutes prepared by the secretary, Walter Karig:

SPECIAL TO THE VIRGINIA CHURCHMAN
FROM A STAFF CORRESPONDENT

HOWARDSVILLE, May 29, 1941.—The powerful Zabriskie machine flattened all opposition last night when the Vestry Pro Tempore of the Seminary Chapel was organized. In place of the smoke-filled room a breeze-swept porch of the Deanery served as the council chamber, but otherwise the shades of Boise Penrose and Mark Hanna would have felt at home, up to the time coca-cola was served anyhow.

The proceedings were literally and figuratively carried on in the dark. The tip-off came early when Walter Karig pre-empted the job of Secretary with the assertion he was the only one present who could write. Dr. Zabriskie then heartened the boys with a report on the net "take" at Sunday collections in 1940 achieved without putting the squeeze on the customers. Various means of stimulating attendance and putting the bee on newcomers were discussed, with Brother Al Miller suggesting a modernized version of pew rent and parking meters on the chapel drive. It was finally decided to leave the matter in the hands of a Ways and Means Committee. Inasmuch as no committees could be named without the election of a presiding officer, that formality was swiftly performed by the Cabal. Brother Boogher nominated Brother Walker for senior warden and was seconded by Brother Tompkins, whereupon the secretary

declared the election unanimous. Walker then nominated Boogher for junior warden with Tompkins seconding, while Karig pretended to battle a wasp to distract the attention of others. Boogher was declared unanimously elected. Brother Hooff, one of the most effective plate swingers in the diocese, was declared unanimously elected treasurer before Brother Keddy could offer the nomination.

Dr. Zabriskie thereupon announced the next job to be the selection of an assistant, or working, pastor and said that if anybody would second the selection of Rev. Bob Gibson he would declare the nomination closed. Tompkins, ward leader of the EHS precinct, promptly did his part and Gibson was declared "it", and immediately summoned to the City Hall — or the deanery piazza rather. There the boys proceeded to tell him of the great honor he had been accorded, and persuaded him with small difficulty to accept the honor in lieu of salary, although Hooff suggested the vestry would entertain the idea of giving Gibson a 10% commission on all Sunday collections in excess of \$500.

The vestry will meet again on June 18, to discuss ways and means of obtaining an endowment to maintain a suite at the Cavalier Hotel, Virginia Beach, for the use of the members.

These minutes indicate the cozy, informal, friendly attitude which was to permeate this congregation, with the hope that, once started, it would always exist.

It was decided that a canvass would be made, by the vestry, of the neighborhood to invite residents to attend our services. The preaching rotation by the members of the seminary faculty would continue.

Bob Gibson, serving as associate rector, appointed a small though very active visiting committee, composed of one person —Mrs. John O. ("DD") Walker.

Mr. Moreland, the seminary student assigned to the chapel for the summer, was most helpful as a church school teacher. A contract was made with the A. B. & W. bus line for Sunday bus service. Highways and byways were searched for potential church school pupils.

With the end of summer, even though approval of our congregation had not been received, there was no good reason why we should not look and act more and more like a parish.

The vestry gave serious thought to the conduct of an every-member canvass (not too difficult a task with ninety per cent of the parishioners normally present for Sunday services). Other questions demanding serious attention involved the establishment of a budget, means of resolving the seating problem, appointment of a church school superintendent, and securing of teachers for the 81 children enrolled.

After much soul-searching and the examination of every possible source of income, it appeared we could collect \$2,500.00. Wishing to be in style, we adopted a budget of \$2,967.00. The first canvass found us \$300.00 short, but since reports indicated that this difference would be picked up, the original budget was approved. Then came the first complaint: Dr. Kevin expressed the view that the associate rector's salary and the allowance provided for missions were too low, in fact ridiculous. However, the vestry thought \$1,675.00 out of \$2,967.00 was not too bad for an infant still in swaddling clothes, so Dr. Kevin's letter was merely acknowledged and filed. Feeling generous, the vestry agreed to buy a dozen caps for the choir.

On the second day after Pearl Harbor, at the suggestion of Charlie Tompkins, the possibility of a parish house was approved for investigation. Charlie was so keen about the crying need for some place for the growing generation that, if he had the money, he would probably have built the house as a gift to the parish.

The Jordan Crossed — 1942-44

The new year, 1942, found us in good shape — at least financially. Our income was soaring in excess of \$3,000.00. However, a minor fiscal crisis occurred, when it was discovered that our accounting differed somewhat from what the diocesan records indicated. The question was: Whose books were out of balance? And probably ours were, because Charlie Hooff kept his financial records on match books which conceivably could have gotten mixed. Dr. Samuel Chilton (now Bishop Chilton) evidently didn't understand the intricacies of the match book system.

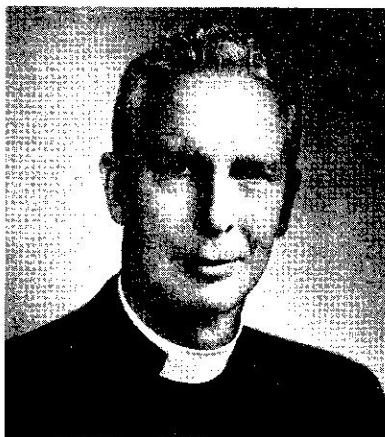
At this point, we had the organ tuned, doubtless the suggestion of Al Miller. (A majority of the vestry could have sung as well to bag pipes.) We looked into the cost of operating the chapel, so that we could assume a proper proportion. We lost our first vestryman, Dr. Keddy, who had decided, after looking us over, that it would be wise to redouble the good work he was doing at the Lorton Reformatory. Cooper Dawson, Sr. was elected to fill the vacancy.

Our Christmas offering that year went for negro work. Zab asked the vestry what their attitude would be to asking John Peters, a long-time colored resident and a confirmed member of the chapel, to join our parish for Holy Communion. The vestry felt that John Peters had a perfect right to come to communion and unanimously approved Zab's asking.

Pleased with ourselves, we requested our minister, Mr. Gibson, to confer with the Reverend Dr. Brydon, the guardian of protocol, to discover the steps we would have to take to become a legal parish. It was at this time we learned that all the Episcopal churches in the area were congregations in the Parish of Fairfax. They all appeared to be doing well as congregations so there was no reason why the papers should not be signed to enable us to do legally what we had been doing illegally for a year.

We were now advised by the diocese that we had passed our "Canonicals" and were both legal and, they hoped, regular.

The only objection, a small one, had come from Emmanuel Church on Russell Road, which did not like our using the name "Immanuel".



THE RT. REV ROBERT F. GIBSON

Another inquiry about our finances was received from Dr. Chilton, and we asked Charlie Hooff, who was greatly embarrassed. It happened that the night before, he had attended the boxing tournament at the university, and had been very successful financially. He pulled a bulging roll from his right pocket and an equally large roll from his left pocket. One of these, he said, belonged to him and the other to the church, but for the life of him he couldn't remember which was which. Ben Boogher, the junior warden, with an eye out for an honest dollar, said the solution was an easy one. He suggested that Charlie count both rolls and designate the one with the more dollars as belonging to the church. In this manner, a troublesome dilemma was resolved.

Charlie was finding the job of treasurer increasingly onerous, and so Bob Gibson dug up a seminarian who had been some kind of an accountant to work as assistant treasurer for \$5.00 a month. Charlie was so relieved that he increased his contribution by that amount. But the new arrangement meant that the vestry lost the distinction of having the only active treasurer in the diocese who always had more money in the pot than they thought they had.

The first official drawing for terms on the vestry resulted in Miller, Dawson and Williams, three years; Walker, Tompkins and Hooff, two years; and Boogher, Pugh and Karig, one year. Walker was elected senior warden; Boogher, junior warden; Hooff, treasurer; and Karig, secretary.

By September the finances appeared so healthy, the associate rector's stipend was raised to \$1,800.00. At this time the use of senior monitors of the high school, as junior vestry, was started and continued until the end of the school year, more or less of a success. The consensus of opinion was that attending every vestry meeting with the subjects discussed would bore the young lads to death, so it was agreed that two meetings a year should be held jointly, at the beginning and end of each school year. Other joint meetings might be held to deal with specific subjects in which members of the junior vestry would have a real interest. The success of this program was contingent, in a large measure, on the imagination of the rector and the senior vestry.

Figuratively, the foundation stone of the parish house was laid when the women's auxiliary sent a check for \$50.00 to start a building fund. A budget of \$5,131.50 was approved for 1943, and the Every Member Canvass exceeded its goal by raising \$5,380.

1943 opened with a bang! Cooper Dawson's motion that \$20,000 optimum be spent on a parish house was adopted. Where would it be built? On one side or the other of the road leading from Aspinwall to Quaker Lane.

The seminary board of trustees was not opposed to the location. If we had had any money that is where our parish house would probably be today, but we had to have a plot on which to borrow money, and to do so a title was necessary. The seminary, quite rightly, would not alienate a plot of land in the middle of their front yard. The present location at what was then the south edge of seminary property, bordering a combination of woods and bog, was provided instead. Stan Sweeley offered to provide preliminary sketches. An additional \$500.00 was added to the building fund.

Bob Gibson suggested that a tactful approach be made to the women's auxiliary with the proposal they become a more "orthodox auxiliary", whatever that was. However, after much discussion it was determined that our women were doing a top job on their own. This determination by the vestry was a combination of pride and fear. Plans for a community oyster supper were abandoned with regret, due to a shortage of oysters and an overabundance of measles.

As usual, seating was a problem, this time in the galleries. There were two in the transepts, one occupied during services by high school gallants, the other by simpering teenage girls. No trouble filling the latter. They doubtless missed most of the sermon but made a beautiful picture.

The rapid growth of the community was apparent. Parkfairfax and Fairlington were mushrooming at this time. (At Nancy Bell's insistence we were able to persuade the Federal Housing Administration not to call Fairlington "Seminary Hill".) This raised the question as to how the so many more "church-going" Episcopalians were to be cared for.

The diocese had planned a church to be located conveniently between the two developments, but the war made this project impossible. Consequently, it was apparent that Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill would have to assume an added load.

Enlargement of the seminary chapel had been discussed with the board of trustees of the seminary and with the high school. Enlargement was considered to be preferable to disbanding the congregation and recreating it in a church building of its own or having the high school build its own chapel. The second alternative would remove the boys from attendance at Immanuel and thus end an historic association dear to the community. It was reported at that time that Mr. Hoxton would recommend to his board that they make a substantial contribution to the cost of enlargement, estimated at that time to be \$30,000.00.

It was the unanimous opinion of the vestry that any enlargement of the chapel should not be carried out by the seminary even if its trustees were willing and able to do so. At the time the vestry felt

that the congregation should understand that they would be making an investment of money in property in which they would have no ownership.

Both the seminary and the parish had the same aim in view: making use of all physical facilities to further the church's program. Therefore, it was felt that the seminary board might consider guaranteeing the parish debt, and the congregation might assume full responsibility for its liquidation. Together, the two would be advancing the existing relationship, economic and religious.

The time was approaching when the delightful part-time ministerial services of Bob Gibson would have to end. The parish was faced with the need to obtain a new associate rector to serve under the dean of the seminary. There was also the problem of providing suitable housing. Steps were, therefore, taken to locate a place we could afford.

A new organist was needed. Colonel W. T. Galliford, a vestryman at that time, thought he might be able to locate a musical female marine.

The question of seating, always with us, was relieved for the moment by a rearrangement of seats and improvement of the back gallery. Temporarily, at least, the suggestion for holding two services, one at 9:30 and the other at 11, was held in abeyance.

The exigencies of war were postponing most construction work, other than war needs. The following priorities were established for our program: (1) finding a rectory; (2) erecting a parish house; and (3) increasing seating space in the chapel.

In 1944, the board of trustees of the seminary felt that, in view of the slow but plainly perceptible sentiment toward the erection of a parish house, the time had come to replace the informal understanding between the parish and the seminary with agreement. The agreement was approved by both the seminary trustees and the vestry, and read as follows:

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TRUSTEES
OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY IN VIRGINIA
AND
IMMANUEL CHURCH-ON-THE-HILL**

1. The Trustees agree to permit the congregation to use the Seminary Chapel as its place of worship, provided its services do not interfere with the seminary program, unless or until the congregation erects its own church.
2. The Dean, as rector of the parish, subject to the control of

the Bishop of Virginia, shall have the final decision over the use of the Chapel and all buildings located on Seminary property, and shall determine the forms of worship, ceremonial and music to be used in the Chapel; he shall have authority over all other ministers who officiate on the Seminary grounds. He shall have the right to attend and vote at all vestry meetings.

3. As long as the congregation uses the Seminary Chapel as its place of worship, its vestry shall elect its associate-rector from a list of men submitted by the Dean, subject to the provisions laid down in Canon 44 of the General Church; the Trustees assume no responsibility for his support, except such salary as they may give him for his services on the Seminary faculty if he be a member thereof. The associate-rector shall have all the prerogatives which the national and diocesan canons vest in a rector or Parish Minister including that of presiding over vestry meetings, except those reserved above to the Dean of the Seminary, and except further that his spiritual jurisdiction shall not include the Seminary.

4. The congregation shall contribute annually to the Seminary a sum of money fixed by the Bishop of Virginia in consultation with the vestry and Dean, in return for the use of the Seminary Chapel, classrooms, heat, and light.

5. The Trustees agree to permit the congregation to build on Seminary property a Parish House and the necessary means of access thereto subject to the following conditions:

- (a) The site and external design shall be approved by the Board of Trustees.
- (b) The title to the Parish House and the land on which it is erected shall be vested in the Trustees.
- (c) Responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the Parish House shall be the congregation's; and if it is not properly maintained the Board may require its removal.
- (d) The Parish House may connect into the electric power lines and water supply of the Seminary (provided the Virginia Public Service Company and the Alexandria Water Company agree) and shall reimburse the Seminary for the electricity and water used. It may also connect into the Seminary heating plant provided that it will not interfere with the efficiency of the plant for heating the Seminary.
- (e) The Parish House may not be removed or enlarged or altered externally without the consent of the Executive

Committee of the Board of Trustees; but the Board may not require the vestry to remove or alter it, provided it is properly kept up, except by mutual agreement.

- (f) The Parish House may be used for the purposes usual for Parish Houses; and shall not be used for extraordinary purposes without the consent of the Dean.
- (g) The Seminary may use the Parish House at such times and in such ways as do not interfere with the needs of the congregation in the judgment of the Minister and vestry. and will reimburse the congregation for any damage done or any extraordinary expenses incurred by reason of its using it.

6. This agreement shall be operative for ten years unless sooner changed by mutual consent.

The vestry was in hearty agreement with a suggestion that the women's auxiliary have representation on the building committee, and, as a result, Mrs. Ernst Wiecking and Mrs. Ruth Kevin were designated by the auxiliary. A tentative layout of the proposed parish house was agreed upon and presented to the board of trustees of the seminary for their consideration.

Colonel Galliford resigned from the vestry. The Marine Corps felt he could be better used in what they considered a more active field in the Pacific. Incidentally, he had failed to produce the lady marine for the organ. Bob Gibson recruited an organist at the high school.

This chapter might be ended here and a new one started with the search for a new associate-rector. The rumor of Bob Gibson's separation was becoming more than a whisper, and Zab appointed a committee to consider what action should be taken. Bob's departure hit us in June 1944.

A recommendation was made to the parish meeting, and adopted, that the annual meeting of the congregation should be on the 2nd Sunday of February of each year. In order to save the vestry the labor and expense of campaigning, their terms were extended to conform to the new date.

After looking at several ministers acceptable to the bishop, the dean and the finance committee, a call was extended to the Reverend Wm. E. (Ned) Thomsen, Jr., of Prince Frederick, Maryland. Mr. Thomsen was trained as a certified public accountant and graduated from the seminary. So it was expected that he would audit both the

finances and the souls of the congregation. We were happy when he accepted and happier when he arrived in September with his charming wife and two children.

The estimated cost of the parish house, plans for which had been prepared by Mr. Sweeley to be shown at the annual meeting, was \$7,000. While money was still lacking, it was decided that the building would be named in memory of the Reverend Thomas Kinlock Nelson.

While Charlie Tompkins would never let us forget the parish house, a place for our new associate rector was more pressing. For a while we thought we had the Charlie Crawford place, later acquired by Colonel Crom, but the deal fell through. Things looked bad, until Ben Boogher's bus-riding secretary overheard, on a bus, a conversation indicating a quick-sale possibility. With a check provided by Charlie Tompkins to bind the bargain, we bought 310 Virginia Avenue. After much argument and expressions of honest misgivings, a note for \$4,000.00 covered by a 2nd trust was endorsed by the vestry, and we were in the real estate business. Mr. Thomsen was assured of a place to live. We gave him a bucket of paint and a paint brush, and the seminary gave him two students to assist him, who were accordingly invited to attend vestry meetings. We didn't realize it, but the happy free-wheeling days of running the parish were over. No longer could dogs and cats stroll in and out as services were going on. Ned Thomsen didn't like singing long amens at the end of the benediction, so they were discontinued.

Mrs. Atherton Macondray offered the parish two acres near the present site of St. Stephen's School as a site for a future rectory. For reasons that seemed good at that time — no sewer or water available — this generous offer was declined.

St. Clements had by now been established across from Fairlington, and the vestry instructed its delegates to the meeting of the diocesan council to support St. Clements' application to become a separate congregation. There were six congregations in Alexandria at this time, and our vestry adopted a resolution to cooperate. Why six congregations of the same church in the same area should have to resolve to cooperate will always remain a mystery to this writer.



The End of the Beginning — 1945-48

In May 1945, the plans for the parish house had been developed to a point which made it necessary to make a definite decision on where it should be located. Cost estimates had now risen to \$30,000, of which sum the diocese was to give us \$5,000 at a later date. We were full of enthusiasm when Ned Thomsen dropped a bomb. He proposed that Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill consolidate with St. Clements' Chapel, at their site. The high school would continue worshipping at the seminary chapel.

That proposal was like waving a red flag before a bull. The idea was so preposterous to most members of the congregation that they thought it must have been in jest. Some felt that Mr. Thomsen had a right to make the proposal, if he thought that way, but that he was at heart a defeatist. Others suspected he was influenced by Dr. Brown-Serman, who had never been keen about our parish but was enthusiastic about St. Clements, because of Darby Betts, the rector there, to whom he was devoted.

When the congregation realized that it was a serious proposal, the reaction of most of them was that they would continue coming to Seminary Chapel, that in case they were barred, which hardly seemed probable, that they would go to some other Episcopal church but not to St. Clements. The result was a unanimous decision by the vestry, supported by all available former vestrymen, that the proposal be rejected and that the parish, as now constituted, continue.

In January, 1946, a site for the parish house was officially requested of the seminary board of trustees. A reply could not be expected before a meeting of the trustees in June. Financially, we were doing quite well and were beginning to attract some attention locally and throughout the diocese. Al Miller, who was handling the Reconstruction and Advance Program for the parish, collected over \$6,000 which was greatly in excess of the quota assigned us. The membership continued to grow, so that the number of vestrymen was increased to twelve.

In the summer of 1946 Ned Thomsen accepted a call to Cambridge, Md., and resigned the post of associate rector. He later became an assistant to an outstanding rector in a large North Carolina parish. It may have been a relief to him to go to a more orderly-minded and orthodox parish. It gives many of us much pleasure to see Ned and Jane at home-coming functions at the seminary.

Getting a new rector is always a difficult undertaking. Whether a call is a favor to us or a favor to him is never quite clear. Fortunately, the moment of decision was now postponed. Bob Gibson expected to go to Mexico, but his trip was delayed, and he agreed to come back to us with the understanding that he would have to leave within five months, when his entry papers into Mexico were approved. It was agreed that everyone would be pleased to renew the practice of having seminary professors preach from time to time. Arrangements for them to do so were left to Dr. Zabriskie and Mr. Gibson.

Someone had the queer idea that vestrymen should have some understanding of the constitution and canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, so nine copies were requested of the Reverend Mr. Chilton.

The Committee on the parish house site — Tompkins, Walter Brookings, Sweeley and Mrs. Tanis Page, head of the Women's Auxiliary — met with the seminary trustees and Dr. Zabriskie to pick a permanent location. The present site was offered and accepted after due deliberation. Near the close of the year steps were taken, at the suggestion of Frank Williams, to organize a unit of the Brotherhood of St. Andrews.

A committee headed by John Lange, which had been engaged in checking the needs of the area, insofar as this parish was concerned, recommended: that the parish not be restricted geographically but expand in every direction; that the parish continue its expansion efforts regardless of the seating capacity of the chapel; and that a parish house was a necessity. The vestry went on record as being in accord with these recommendations.

Right after the first of the year 1947, Charlie Tompkins reported on his plans for a campaign to raise funds for the parish house.

A letter, at this time, was read which had been sent to every vestry in the diocese. This letter stressed the importance of improving race relations.

The national council had been forced to call off plans for Bob Gibson to go to Mexico with his family but still wished him to make a trip alone and serve as a liaison officer between the council and Mexico. Leave of absence was granted Mr. Gibson by the vestry, and it was the vestry's desire that his family should continue to occupy the rectory as long as he was away. The Reverend Ken Heim, a member of the seminary faculty (later a missionary to Japan), agreed to serve as parish priest while Bob was away.

Thinking the matter was settled we breathed easily, but our optimism was premature. Just around the corner were further complications as the result of the growing demand for Mr. Gibson's services. We had hoped to have him become permanent rector, but no such luck. He told us it would not be possible for him to accept our call for a position as permanent rector because the University of the South (Sewanee) needed him as dean of the School of Theology. We gave him an affectionate farewell not knowing that Providence was still on our side and that in a little while he would be with us again.

Bob Gibson was on his way, and Ken Heim would soon be packing his kimona for other heathen fields, so we had to get busy. On the recommendation of Dr. Zabriskie, it was decided to extend a call to Steve Davenport, who was rector of the church at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Steve came up, looked us over and declined the call. It is believed he felt the "atom" was not as complicated as a congregation on the "Holy Hill".

Dr. Zabriskie then suggested that George Shriver, Leslie Wilder and Larry Williams be considered. Mr. Williams had just finished at the seminary, and it was necessary to request the bishop to delay making arrangements for his assignment while we had him under consideration.

George Shriver and Leslie Wilder proved to be not available, so the bishop was requested to approve Mr. J. L. B. (Larry) Williams as rector for our congregation, and Mr. Williams was advised of this request. The bishop approved, and Mr. Williams accepted and agreed to take charge late in the summer.

Larry was to prove to be a very different type of rector from those who preceded him. He was filled with energy, was a top-hole salesman blessed with a vivid imagination, and he proved to be just the type we needed at that time. Later, the vestry gave him a leave of absence to brush up on his canonicals, to satisfy the Reverend Dr. Ribble, the authority in the field. Larry could not function as a priest until he had been approved. He was ordained on October 9, 1948.

Preparation for a parish house was progressing slowly. Some impatient members suggested the name be changed from "Nelson House" to "Turtle Pen", and the cost of construction was now estimated at \$50,000.00. The debt on the rectory was refinanced into one loan of \$8,000.00 at 4%. The deed for the parish house land was received. Spiritually, we were not doing too badly, and materially we were in splendid shape. Bob Latham's project to secure proper signs pointing to our chapel and the site of the new parish house had failed to

materialize, and Bob was good-naturedly harassed by members of the vestry and others who felt that Immanuel's position on the Hill needed to be accurately marked and advertised.

The missionary society of the students of the high school voted to contribute their entire plate offering to the congregation. This collection was an inherent right vested in the high school missionary society, and the action was not regarded as binding precedent for future society actions.

Plans and specifications for the parish house were at last complete and all agreed that the time was appropriate to obtain a contract for its erection. As might be expected, bids varied widely but all were too high in terms of what the vestry and building committee felt we could realistically afford. After a few practical adjustments, our dream was finally on the way to fulfillment.

Dr. Zabriskie suggested that thirty minutes before each vestry meeting be devoted to the study of church history and that all interested parishioners be invited to attend. Between 35 and 49 turned up, and the program was considered quite a success.

The gift of \$5,000.00 offered by the diocese was announced as approved and its early receipt promised. However, this action was opposed by some organization we had never heard of, called the "Northern Virginia Strategy Committee". Larry Williams and Charlie Tompkins were summoned to appear before this committee, but nothing developed of any consequence. The diocesan finance committee approved our borrowing \$35,000.00 for a parish house.

The high school choir has always added much to the pleasure of our services, and it was felt that an annual award should be made by the congregation to the boy making the greatest contribution to the choir. This would indicate our deep appreciation for what they were doing, and the boys liked the idea.

The finance committee had approved a loan of \$35,000, but we went ahead and borrowed \$60,000 at 4% from the seminary to be repaid \$5,000 a year for the first two years and \$2,000 each year thereafter.

David Lloyd who had given much time and thought to the operation of a church school, submitted an excellent paper on the school, its importance and needs. The vestry was in complete accord with his proposals and as a first step towards the suggested goal, decided the church school should continue, with no let-up, throughout the summer.

Also in 1948, the diocese took the step of eliminating the word "color" from the constitution and canons of the Diocese of Virginia.

The growth of the congregation continued, and it was decided that a 9:30 A.M. service would be added to the Sunday schedule when the parish house was completed.

A budget of \$14,632 was approved for 1949, with the vestry's "Mister Republican", Stan Shaw, to keep his eye on it.

The year 1948 drew to a close with the parish house equipment on hand, Bob Latham's signs completed, some sod laid, a lot of grass seed in stock, and termites in the rectory.

The Book of Common Prayer was 400 years old. We, at seven, were on our way.



Vestrymen during the first seven-year period in alphabetical order:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Boogher, Benton T. | Latham, Robt. E. |
| Brookings, Walter DuB.* | Miller, Al |
| Calloway, P. H. | Pugh, J. Ray |
| Crom, W. H.* | Plummer, C. C. |
| Dawson, Cooper, Sr.* | Richardson, Leslie E. |
| Dawson, Cooper, Jr. | Romberg, A. K. |
| Galliford, W. T.* | Sweeley, R. S. |
| Gunnell, Bruce | Shaw, Stanley |
| Hooff, Charlie R. | Tompkins, C. V. |
| Hobson, R. A.* | Taylor, A. R. |
| Hawks, Karl* | Voorhis, Jerry |
| Hoxton, Archie, Jr. | Williams, R. P.* |
| Karig, Walter* | Walker, John O. |
| Keddy, J. L. | Willis, John |

*Deceased

Junior vestrymen from the high school during the same period:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Dodson, R. W. | Wilcox, Thos. H., Jr. |
| Carr, David W. | Minor, John T. |
| Saterman, Chester B. | Broyles, E. N., Jr. |
| Craighill, D. H., Jr. | Hodge, W. G. |
| King, E. D., Jr. | Thompson, R. C., Jr. |

The Memorial Fund of Immanuel-Church-on-the-Hill was established in January, 1962, to receive gifts and bequests and to invest them, for the purpose of accumulating a capital fund to help carry on and enlarge the work of the congregation in the years to come. The fund is a charitable trust for tax purposes. A small contribution to it will help defray the cost of publishing this pamphlet. A larger gift or bequest will help to insure the future of your church.

