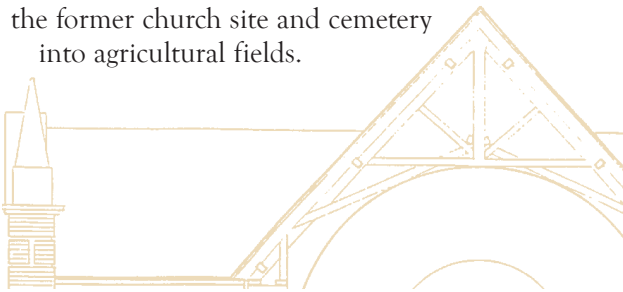


## The Birthplace of Religious Freedom

History was made in Maryland in 1634. The nearly 150 English settlers who arrived at what is now St. Mary's City aboard the *Ark* and the *Dove* established far more than simply the fourth permanent English colony in North America. They forged what would become known as the birthplace of religious freedom in America. Among the settlers were several Jesuit priests including Father Andrew White. The Jesuits acquired a parcel they named "the Chapel Land" and built a wooden chapel there. This building was the founding place of the Roman Catholic Church in English America. After an attack on St. Mary's City by forces hostile to Lord Baltimore in 1645, this chapel was burned and a long period of turmoil ensued. With the restoration of King Charles II in 1660, the Calvert family again took charge of Maryland and, in 1667, a new Roman Catholic chapel was built in the chapel field.

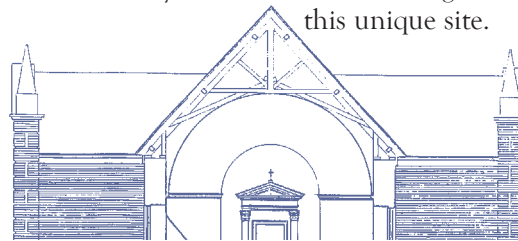
The impressive brick structure served as the focal point of the Catholic faith in Maryland until 1704, when the royal governor ordered the building locked and never again used for religious purposes. The Jesuits dismantled the building and used its bricks to construct a new manor house at the St. Ingoes mission. In 1753, the Jesuits sold the land to William Hicks, who converted the former church site and cemetery into agricultural fields.



## Rediscovering the Brick Chapel

While most above-ground traces of the buildings that had stood there were obliterated by the plow, they were never forgotten. Local lore continued to identify the field as the place where the Catholic chapel stood. In 1938, architectural historian H. Chandlee Forman tested the site and found that the chapel's floor plan was in the shape of a Latin cross. After his work, the remains of the building were reburied and its exact location again forgotten. The chapel land remained in private ownership until 1981, when it was purchased by the State of Maryland for the Historic St. Mary's City museum.

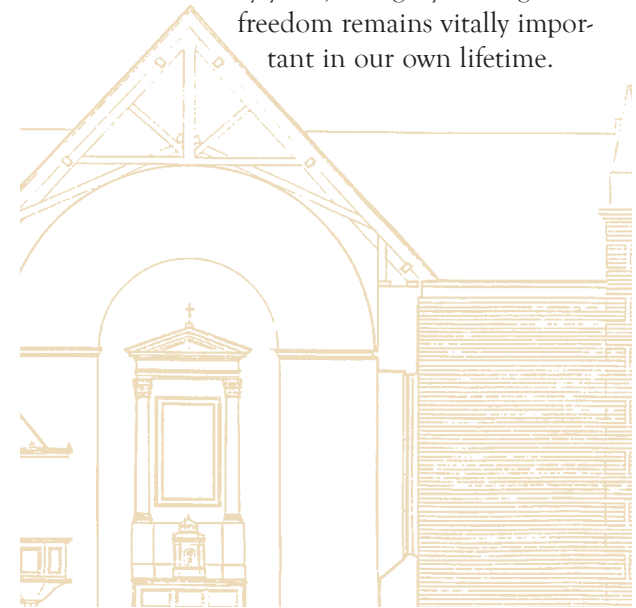
As soon as the museum acquired the property, there was intense interest in exploring the site. Local citizens, led by Fred and Beth McCoy, raised funds to allow an archaeological survey of the chapel field. Historic St. Mary's City staff succeeded in relocating the brick chapel along with several other colonial buildings. As part of the celebration of the 350th anniversary of Maryland's founding in 1984, the foundations of the 1667 chapel were partially demarcated and signs installed for visitors. A major research program was designed and excavations began in 1988. One purpose of the excavations was to retrieve essential information about the original chapel so it could be accurately recreated. This effort was aided by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1990 that allowed several years of intensive investigation at this unique site.



## Rebuilding the Brick Chapel

In 1997, the Historic St. Mary's City Foundation initiated the Chapel Campaign with a goal of raising funds to rebuild the 1667 Brick Chapel. The Chapel Campaign is led by private citizens who serve on the board of the Historic St. Mary's City Foundation, a non-profit charitable organization. In 2003 and 2004, contributions from the public were supplemented by almost \$500,000 in grant funds from *Save America's Treasures*.

The brick chapel at St. Mary's City is a powerful reminder of faith, perseverance, and enduring American values. Many early English settlers fled religious persecution. Liberty of conscience and separation of church and state were mandated in colonial Maryland, far in advance of the laws and practices in other New World colonies. Though the brick chapel was in active use for only about forty years, its legacy of religious freedom remains vitally important in our own lifetime.





## Honoring the Legacy

Reconstruction of the 1667 Brick Chapel is an essential step in telling the story of one of Maryland's greatest contributions to American values.

The chapel has been reconstructed over its original foundation, within which archaeologists discovered three extremely rare lead coffins containing members of the Calvert family. The coffins are currently on exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History's *Written in Bone* exhibit, which runs through 2010.

The reconstructed chapel at HSMC will be an interpretive exhibit for all visitors, not a consecrated place of worship. The chapel will contain two exhibits. The lead coffins will eventually be displayed through a glass floor in their original positions and a portion of the original five-foot deep foundation of the chapel will be displayed in another place. Additional interpretation of the chapel story will be found in an adjacent exhibit building.

## Join the Reconstruction Crew

Individuals, foundations, corporations, small businesses, social, religious, and civic groups from throughout Maryland and the nation are participating in The Chapel Campaign. Contributions so far will allow us to complete the building, but the reality is that additional gifts are still needed in order provide simple furnishings.

Here are some tax-deductible ways you can help:

- Write a check or donate appreciated stocks to the Historic St. Mary's City Foundation.
- Participate in the occasional special events that are held to support the project.
- Buy or give the superb limited-edition print of the *Maryland Dove* by George McWilliams; all proceeds support the Chapel reconstruction. The print is available for \$100 at The Shop at Farthing's Ordinary, 240-895-2088.
- Buy bricks – for yourself, your family, your friends! More than 100,000 bricks will be mortared into place as the Chapel walls rise again. Each brick is \$25 and they are available from the Foundation, 240-895-4991.



For more information, please contact:  
**The Chapel Campaign: HSMC Foundation**  
 P.O. Box 24  
 St. Mary's City, MD 20686  
 (Phone) 240-895-4991 (Fax) 240-895-4968  
[www.stmaryscity.org](http://www.stmaryscity.org)



Autumn 2009  
 ...a Good Brick Chappell



# Reconstruction Update

## Evidence of the Chapel

The first step in reconstructing the chapel was finding out what it looked like. Because the building was intentionally demolished and its parts reused, there was less evidence at the site than archaeologists would normally find. This made every fragment important. Archaeological evidence was acquired at the site and analyzed with painstaking thoroughness. Archaeologists discovered that the chapel had massive brick foundations three feet thick which extended into the ground a full five feet. The structure measured 54 feet long and 57 feet across the arms of the cross. The size of the foundation and comparisons with similar buildings suggest the chapel was about 25 feet tall. In a colony where most people lived in 15 by 20-foot buildings, the chapel would have been impressive!

## ABOUT THE BRICK

The brick for the exterior was made by Henry Cersely, who specializes in historic projects, using local clay and wood-firing in a special kiln. Chemical analysis by Dr. Ruth Ann Armitage, formerly with St. Mary's College, helped create the recipe for the brick. Suitable clay, or *brickearth*, was located in an artifact-free zone near the chapel site. Several tons were excavated and delivered to the brickmaker. Jimmy Price and a crew from Virginia Lime Works are the masons for the chapel.

## About the MORTAR

Artifacts found during excavations at the site proved that the mortar and plaster used was a type common in 17th-century tidewater Maryland and similar to that used by Romans centuries ago. It takes days to set and stays flexible, which is one reason Roman ruins still stand. In this region, the main ingredient, lime, was derived from oyster shells. Virginia Lime Works, has perfected the formula for the mortar. The process of obtaining lime from oyster shells involves burning, then *slaking*, or curing, the shells in a pit for at least 12 months. Curing allows the particles to break down smaller and smaller, and ultimately enhances binding properties of the mortar. Sixteen tons of mortar are needed to complete the project.

## A Word from the Historians

Few historical references to this building exist. Actions by a vandal in 1669 left behind evidence of glass windows. From burial expense lists, we know the building was paved with flooring stones. Finally, Royal Governor Francis Nicholson, who moved the capital from St. Mary's City to Annapolis, referred to the structure as "A Good Brick Chappell" in 1697. Aside from these clues, no documentary evidence of the building survives.

## MORE CLUES FROM THE PAST

- ✘ Few traces of plaster attached to wood lathe suggesting the ceiling was timber clad.
- ✘ Much of the plaster that was found appears to have been applied directly to brick, suggesting the walls were finished this way.
- ✘ Fragments of window glass found at the site had been cut at different angles. These angles tell us the shape of the chapel windows.
- ✘ Bits of mullion bricks were found. These held the windows in place. They were coated with a stucco-like material, which made them appear to be carved stone.
- ✘ Flat roof tiles found at the site tell us that the roof had to be a steep angle or it would leak. Research has determined this angle is about 48°.

## DEVELOPING A PLAN

In March 2004, historians, architects, builders, and archaeologists decided on a final plan for the exterior of the chapel. The building is a scholarly best-guess as to the appearance of the structure that stood here three centuries ago, taking into account the political, cultural, and economic realities in the colony and the backgrounds of the people who designed and built it. The façade of the chapel has a Jesuit-inspired appearance, since they were the most likely designers. The design features of this building were commonly used on Jesuit churches of the period, even those that remain in remote parts of the world. Some churches were decorated with carvings, religious statues and other elements. Given the sensitive political setting of early Maryland, however, use of such elaborate decorations on the outside of the building would have been unwise. Therefore, efforts are being made to keep the classical influence while minimizing the decorative details.

## Red Masons

The decorative carved bricks that form the entablature and niche, and frame windowsills, pilasters, the piscina, and other features are hand tooled by these master *red masons*, the traditional name for these craftsmen who sport a patina of brick dust, using centuries-old techniques. Brickforming is a process of hand cutting and rubbing bricks to conform to a template.

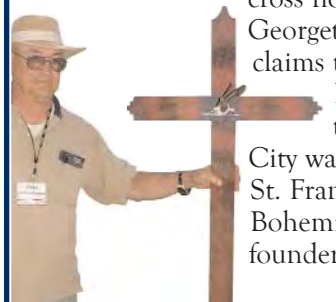


## The Mason's Magic

The facade and decorative elements of the chapel have been finished with a thick mortar, or rendering, and faux joints have been scribed and penciled. This technique lends brick the appearance of stone - the most prestigious building material. Rendering was widely used for important buildings in the 16th and 17th centuries. The exterior sides and back of the chapel have been coated with a red color wash and faux mortar joints have been penciled in, and coated with preservative. These coatings serve both decorative and protective purposes.

## A Symbol of Faith

Pete Himmelheber fabricated the cross that tops the chapel. The four foot tall cross will also serve as the terminus of a lightning rod. It is modeled after a cross now in the archives at Georgetown University. Legend claims that this cross came to Maryland in 1634. When the chapel at St. Mary's City was closed it was brought to St. Francis Xavier Mission in Old Bohemia, Maryland by its founder, Father Thomas Mansell.



## The Inside Story

During the 2008 season, the interior walls received two coats of plaster, and a floor of Metawacke sandstone from Ohio, which is very similar to the original pavers, was installed. Carpenters completed the wooden barrel ceiling of yellow pine. The ox-eye window in the façade and portions of the first leaded glass window were installed.



## Raising the Roof

The roof for the chapel went on throughout the 2007 season. A rugged truss system that also supports the barrel vault was installed. Over the summer, roofing boards, a leak-proof membrane, and battens to secure the clay tiles were applied. At the beginning of September, carpenters began to affix the clay roofing tiles. The last tile was placed in mid-November 2007.

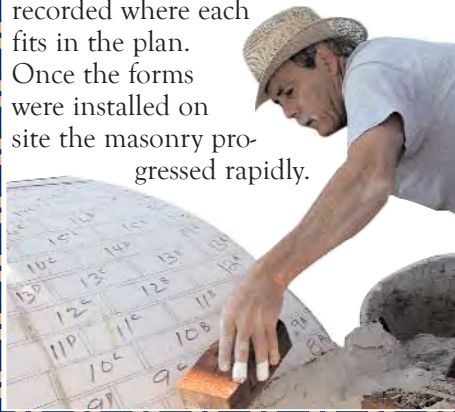


## DETAILS, DETAILS

Installation of leaded glass windows, doors, and hardware took place through Summer 2009. Upon completion of the altar floor, the Chapel will be architecturally complete. Construction of a pulpit and tabernacle, the simple furnishings that would be historically accurate, will take place as funding allows.

## Forming an Arch

Wooden forms were used as patterns and support for complicated features, such as the arches that top windows, and the door, and the niches that frame the altar and ornament the façade. Masons pre-carved bricks to fit around the forms and carefully recorded where each fits in the plan. Once the forms were installed on site the masonry progressed rapidly.



## Holes in the walls & angled windows?

Have you noticed places in the wall where a brick seems to be missing? These *putlog* holes supported ends of timbers for the scaffolding. The flared frames of the chapel windows, seen in many historical structures, channel light to the interior.



## Mystery of the Altar Stone

In 2004, the pastor of St. Cecilia's Church in St. Mary's City received a package from WMCRP Architects, the firm that designed the church over 30 years ago. An employee had noticed an envelope with "Altar Stone, St. Cecilia's Church, St. Mary's City" in the trash. Inside, he discovered a flat marble stone with small Greek crosses carved near each corner and in the center and a small niche covered with black slate that may contain the relic of a saint. Faint writing on the back of the stone and the envelope eventually led to an account of the dedication of St. Cecilia's in 1974, "... the altar stone believed to have been used in the St. Inigoes Manor House chapel and...possibly used in the [1667 brick] chapel at St. Mary's City...was presented..." Altar stones are tablets consecrated by a bishop and typically contain the relic of a saint. They are set into altars or serve as portable altars for missionaries or traveling priests. While we cannot prove that this was the actual stone used in the Chapel, one very similar to it was unquestionably in the original altar.

## Anatomy of a Window

Final coatings lend an elegant finish but hide the complex brickwork that forms window openings, tracery, and decorative elements.