

V - MOVING FORWARD AND LOOKING BACKWARDS

After 33 years in office, Bishop Adams, who had been ordained before the Civil War, died in 1920. After the Great War the United States was entering a time of economic and technological expansion. Use of telephones, automobiles, and motion pictures were becoming more common and commercial radio broadcasts began in the 1920's. One Eastern Shore priest who built his own radio wrote of the promise of having "the best speakers, the greatest music, and the events of the day" brought into the Rectory. The Episcopal Church had been growing in urban areas, but "Town and Country Work" received new attention as the rural population of the US dropped below 50%. Women had just won the right to vote, and in Maryland, the Vestry Act was amended to permit women to serve on Vestries if a parish received permission from Diocesan Convention. The Modern Churchman's Union was formed to uphold the "right to interpret faith through scholarship" among other goals and by 1929 a popular course at the Peninsula Summer School was "The Religious Aspects of Psychiatry." Times were changing

Bishop Adams was both the oldest and most senior bishop of the Episcopal Church when he died in office at age 87. There was no retirement system for either bishops or clergy, thus "disabled and superannuated clergy" were a frequent concern, and the creation of a Church Pension Fund was not the least of the "church business methods" put into place in this period. The next bishop of Easton would be able to retire. When Bishop Davenport retired in 1938 he reported a 25% increase in the communicant strength of the diocese over the eighteen years of his episcopacy, and over \$350,000 had been spent in the diocese on church building projects.

Paralleling developments taking place in the national church with the creation of an elected "Presiding Bishop" and National Council, Bishop Davenport created the Executive Council of the diocese with functioning departments of Missions, Social Service, Finance, Publicity, and Religious Education. His enthusiasm for Christian Education helped create a Summer School for Town and Country Ministry, a training conference for Sunday School Teachers, and Camp Davenport, "for the purpose of bringing together under Church leadership and influence, the young people from various parts of the Diocese, in healthful out-of-door recreation, and wholesome companionship, that individualism and parochialism might give place to a corporate diocesan spirit." This last enterprise survives as Camp Wright in the diocese of Easton.

These were good years for the Episcopal Church almost everywhere, with 1934 being the high water mark for Sunday School enrollments. Despite the Great Depression, church life was supported by strong town life on the Eastern Shore. The extensive railroad system provided a way to get agricultural goods to market, and automobiles could take farm folk to church or town, but few people traveled frequently beyond the Eastern Shore. There were many local papers, baseball teams, movie theaters, and other entertainments. Even many smaller towns had Episcopal Churches.

In 1924, William McClelland became the diocesan missionary for all the Episcopal Churches in Dorchester outside of Cambridge and Cornersville. As Rector of Old Trinity, he and Nellie Calvert Carroll began the Old Trinity Church Association in 1927. In 1928, he introduced the then “new” Prayer Book of which Old Trinity still owns a draft edition. When elected bishop, he retained his role as Rector of Old Trinity.



A 1939 gathering at Old Trinity. Bishop McClelland is center left, wearing a “scarf.”

Bishop McClelland was consecrated the fourth Bishop of Easton on June 2, 1939 in Christ Church, Easton. He rallied a diminished supply of clergy to give leadership during the Second World War and attempted to keep in touch with the over 600 Episcopalians from the diocese who were serving in the Armed Forces. He died in 1949, and by his request,

was buried in the churchyard of Old Trinity (Photo right). Twenty years before his death he had written, "In communities of the size in which our churches are located, especially where the population is static, 'good times' and more so 'bad times' are ever dangling before our eyes and have a distressing influence on the work of the church." He left his successor 62 parishes and missions, but these numbers could not be sustained in the post-war years. The local canning industries collapsed due to irrigation in the West, better roads "shrank" the distance between towns, and the building of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge changed forever the isolation of the Eastern Shore.



The 1950's seemed like good times for the Episcopal Church. Hundreds of returning GI's entered seminary and others began families that filled growing Sunday Church Schools. President Dwight Eisenhower rallied religious participation as a response to the threat of Communism. American and Episcopal churchgoing reached a high point in 1957.

The nation was also looking nostalgically to the past to rediscover its values in changing times. John D. Rockefeller had created a national colonial revival shrine of the town of Williamsburg, the colonial capital next to that first settlement at Jamestown. In that same spirit, Colonel Garbisch and his wife began to restore Old Trinity Church in 1953.



Chrysler Building



Walter P. Chrysler

"Born in Kansas in 1875, Walter P. Chrysler began as a nickel-an-hour apprentice machinist in the Union Pacific shops, learning to make and use the tools he needed as he went. He bought his first car in 1908, which he immediately took apart to find out how it worked. In 1924 he established his own firm and called it Chrysler Corporation. In 1928 he started building the Chrysler Building in New York City and was named Time Magazine's Man of the Year". Walter P. also bought "Pokety," a hunting estate on Maryland's Eastern Shore next to (and perhaps once part of) Castle Haven, established in 1659 and lived in by both Bishop Kemp and Governor Carroll. After Walter Chrysler died in 1940, his daughter, Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, inherited Pokety. It was she and her husband who restored Old Trinity in memory of her parents.