

## Introductions Prior to the Service

**Scene setting:** The Virginia House of Burgesses established Norborne Parish of the Church of England and Berkeley County Virginia in 1771. Berkeley County and Norborne Parish shared their namesake, Norborne Berkeley, Lord Botetourt, the former Governor of Virginia, who died in 1770. The Bishop of London, responsible for appointing clergy for the colonies, sent the Rev. Daniel Sturgis to Virginia, and he arrived in late 1771 with the position of Rector of Norborne Parish.

Norborne Parish was carved out of Frederick Parish, and it consisted of what is now Berkeley, Morgan, and Jefferson Counties in West Virginia. The Pendleton family was instrumental in getting this approved by the Burgesses. Previously, there was one rector of Frederick Parish responsible for churches located from the headwaters of the Rappahannock (now Shenandoah County VA) all the way to the Potomac River, and this was far too great an area to be served by one clergyman. The new Norborne Parish would have its own rector to serve a smaller area. At the time, there were churches or chapels in Hedgesville, Bunker Hill, Mecklenburg (Shepherdstown), and St George's Chapel (Near Charles Town).

Similarly, Frederick County, with its seat of government in Winchester, was unable to adequately serve its constituents that were spread out over the same area as Frederick Parish. Some would need to ride over 50 miles on horseback to transact business with the county government. The Burgesses, therefore, responded by making three counties out of Frederick County – Berkeley County, Frederick County, and Dunmore County in the southernmost part of the former Frederick County. Dunmore County was named for Lord Dunmore, another former Virginia governor, who would later be despised by Virginia residents who changed the name to Shenandoah County.

The stage is now set for the arrival of leadership for the newly independent Norborne Parish and Berkeley County. The Bishop of London, Richard Terrick, appointed the Rev. Daniel Sturgis Rector of Norborne Parish in 1771, and he arrived in the parish late in that year. The new parish purchased 139 acres in what

is now Jefferson County for the parish glebe (land to house the new rector's residence and farmland to support him and his family). The new parish also elected its own vestry of prominent church members to oversee the business of the parish.

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1772, Berkeley County had its first meeting of the county court. Shortly before this meeting, voters of the new county elected Col Adam Stephen (Virginia Militia) as county sheriff, and several prominent citizens as members of the county court. Of major significance, Adam Stephen was also a member of the Norborne Parish vestry. Stephen had an agenda for the new county that was largely self-serving – he was a major land owner around what is now Martinsburg, so getting the seat of county government on or near his land would be profitable for him.

This all leads up to our commemorative service of Morning Prayer, going back to June 1772. Historical evidence shows that there was no church building in what is now Martinsburg, but there were Church of England members in the area. These church members would have had local lay-led services, as did members at Hedgesville, Bunker Hill, or Shepherdstown, but now with a new parish and rector, as well as the new county, there were new possibilities to have their own church. Our speakers before the service will discuss this in more detail. First, Norborne Parish Senior Warden, Col Samuel Washington, will talk of the status of the parish:

**Samuel Washington:** I thank all of you for coming out on this beautiful Sunday morning to talk about a church building for this community of believers. Mr. Sturgis and I had a pleasant ride from the east county where we live, and we thank Mr. Stephen for his hospitality. We are indeed blessed to now have our own rector to lead our various communities of faith in each of the localities. Special thanks go to the Pendletons for their building Hedges Chapel, the Morgans for the chapel in Bunker Hill, the Swearingens for the Mecklenburg church, and for the families currently building St. George's chapel in the east county. Now, it is my great pleasure to introduce the Vestry of Norborne Parish: I am Samuel Washington, the Senior Warden, and the Junior Warden is William Henshaw. Your local member is Sheriff Adam Stephen. The remaining members are Thomas Rutherford, John Neville, Robert Worthington, George Cunningham, Magnus Tate, William Baldwin, James Keith, Hugh Stephenson, and Morgan Morgan II.

It is my great hope and prayer that those of you assembled here today will further God's Kingdom and plan by building the next church in our parish. Now I yield to Sheriff Stephen, who has such a plan and is eager to explain it.

**Adam Stephen:** Thank you Col Washington and the Rev. Mr. Sturgis for coming to celebrate divine worship with us today. It is our fondest hope and prayer that in the not-too-distant future we will have a church building for our community and you will be with us often to lead our worship. I am planning a new town on the Tuscarora Creek where the valley turnpike crosses over it. The central location of this new town will make it an ideal location for the seat of county government, which has not yet been chosen. As your sheriff, I will direct my fullest efforts toward getting our county seat placed in this town. In my plan for the town, there will be a central square and a lot for a courthouse. There will be numerous lots available for housing and businesses. Finally, I will personally donate a lot for the construction of a building to serve this congregation of the Church of England. Now, it is my great joy to have the Rev. Mr. Sturgis with us to officiate at our service, and I yield to him for any remarks prior to the service today.

**Rev. Daniel Sturgis:** I appreciate your most kind introductions and am eager to lead you in this service of Morning Prayer. Most of you well know that I am new to Virginia, having arrived only several months ago. Life and ministry here is vastly different from that with which I am familiar in England: Old, established churches in old, established towns and villages. Here on the frontier of Virginia everything is new and changing constantly. In England, I had a local bishop to support me, now I have only vague guidance from an appointed Church of England commissary in Williamsburg which is several days' ride from here. While the college of William and Mary has a divinity school, graduates must go to England to be ordained by a bishop there. Congregationalists from Harvard and Presbyterians from Princeton divinity schools have no such a barrier to their ordinations. Our churches' ministry for Virginia and the rest of the colonies seems to be an afterthought, and it is my hope and prayer that our King and Church will send us the bishops and clergy necessary for the advance of God's Kingdom in the colonies. Now let us begin the order of Morning Prayer.