

## **St. Thomas Episcopal Church** <sup>[1]</sup>

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St. Thomas Episcopal Church at Bath, ca. 1923.  
North Carolina Collection, University of North

by Wilson Angley, 2006Carolina at Chapel Hill Library.

St. Thomas Episcopal Church <sup>[2]</sup> in Bath, North Carolina's oldest existing church, was begun in 1734 under John Garzia <sup>[3]</sup>, the first permanent minister to serve St. Thomas Parish. As early as 1701, however, the parish had received a library of more than 1,000 books and pamphlets as part of the overseas mission work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts <sup>[4]</sup>. The church seems to have been used for services from 1735 onward but apparently required extensive repairs in the 1750s, during the long and fruitful rectorship of the Reverend Alexander Stewart.

The simple but dignified church features brick walls two feet thick, laid in Flemish bond. Its floor plan is basically rectangular, several feet out of square. It appears to have been erected by mistake some 50 feet north of its intended location, and in the middle of what was supposed to be a public street.

Severely damaged by a storm in about 1840, St. Thomas was not completely repaired until after the Civil War <sup>[5]</sup>. Extensive renovations followed in the 1880s. Subsequent efforts to restore St. Thomas began in the 1920s, but it was not until after the Great Depression <sup>[6]</sup> that this was finally accomplished through the efforts and dedication of the Reverend A. C. D. Noe <sup>[7]</sup>. Noe served as full-time rector of the church from 1936 until 1953 and maintained an active interest in its welfare until his death in 1978. A treasured and familiar landmark in North Carolina's oldest town, St. Thomas Episcopal Church continues today as an active house of worship.

#### **References:**

Wilson Angley, "A History of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Bath, North Carolina," Research Branch, North Carolina Division of Archives and History (1981).

Joseph Blount Cheshire, *Sketches of Church History in North Carolina* (1892).

Herbert R. Paschal, *A History of Colonial Bath* (1955).

#### **Additional Resources:**

NC Historic Sites: <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/bath/st-thomas.htm> <sup>[8]</sup>

St. Thomas Episcopal Church: <http://www.stthomasparishnc.org/history/history.html> <sup>[7]</sup>

#### **Subjects:**

Places <sup>[9]</sup>

Religion <sup>[10]</sup>

#### **Authors:**

Angley, Wilson <sup>[11]</sup>

#### **Origin - location:**

Beaufort County <sup>[12]</sup>

#### **From:**

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press. <sup>[13]</sup>

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**Source URL:**<https://ncpedia.org/st-thomas-episcopal-church>

#### **Links**

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/st-thomas-episcopal-church> [2] <http://www.stthomasparishnc.org/pages/history> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/garzia-john> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/society-propagation-gospel-foreign-> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/history/cw-1900/civil-war> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/history/20th-Century/great-depression> [7] <http://www.stthomasparishnc.org/history/history.html> [8] <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/bath/st-thomas.htm> [9] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/places> [10] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/religion> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/angle-wilson> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-22> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia->