

FRANCIS MAKEMIE SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING  
FENCE REDEDICATION PRESENTATION

BY: FITZHUGH LEE GODWIN, JR.  
Makemie Park, June 9, 2012

Welcome Society Members and Guests. This marks the culmination of several years work to locate and remove from it 15-year resting place in a nearby woods the historical century old fence that surrounded the Francis Makemie monument and to repair, repaint and reinstall the fence just as it appeared here in 1908. The goal is accomplished. Also, I am happy to report that the Society has completed several other of its goals in the last two years. As you entered the Park, you may have noticed our beautiful new entrance sign. The Society has a website. And, a year ago, the Internal Revenue Service approved 501 (c) tax-exempt status for the Society. A part of our commitment to obtain that tax-exempt status is to educate the public about the history of our Founder, Francis Makemie. To meet that promise, I am presenting five historical readings from The Life Story Of Reverend Francis Makemie by I. Marshall Page.

READING 1. There were few stops between the Isle of Barbados and the old County of Somerset in Maryland where resided Colonel William Stevens-the man who had written the Presbytery of Laggan (Ireland) in 1680 for them to send a minister to the people of Maryland. Colonel Stevens' home was open to all non-conformist to use as a place of worship.

The mansion of Colonel Stevens sat on 600 acres and was called Rehoboth Plantation. It was FRANCIS MAKEMIE'S first home in America. At the table of the great Plantation, FRANCIS MAKEMIE laid the foundation for the churches he would build.

**MARK FISHER WOULD YOU POINT TOWARD REHOBOTH  
PLANTATION.**

**LET US FLASH FORWARD ALMOST 200 YEARS**

In 1853 the pastor of Rehoboth about a half-mile from the church located the spot where Colonel Stevens was buried and removing the earth found a marble slab inscribed:

HERE LYETH THE BODY OF WILLIAM STEVENS, ESQ. WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE 23<sup>RD</sup> DAY OF DECEMBER, 1687, AGED 57 YEARS, HE WAS FOR 22 YEARS JUDGE OF THIS COUNTY COURT, ONE OF HIS LORDSHIP'S COUNCIL, AND ONE OF THE DEPUTY LIEUTENANTS OF THIS PROVINCE OF MARYLAND

A few hundred feet away lay the ruins of Rehoboth Plantation. Colonel Stevens had been named and chosen by Lord Baltimore. He could grant hundreds of acres of land to whomever he pleased, and his word was law in the county.

READING 2. In the early months of 1683, FRANCIS MAKEMIE started six churches. Rehoboth (the Oldest Presbyterian church in America), Buckingham in Berlin, Manokin in Princess Anne, Wicomico in Salisbury and Pitts Creek in Pocomoke. The Colony of Virginia was a Royal Province and had the Established Church of England, the Anglican Church, and dissenters were not favored. Maryland was a Proprietary Government owned by Lord Baltimore of the Calvert Family. Lord Baltimore, a Catholic, granted freedom of religion to all subjects. There was perfect religious freedom. Maryland filled up with Presbyterians and FRANCIS MAKEMIE came at the time ripe for harvest.

**Dr. Donald Rising would you make a few comments about those 6 early churches today.**

READING 3. Our Presbyterian minister, FRANCIS MAKEMIE, at age 29, was united with a rare beauty, Naomi Anderson, age 19, in the bonds of holy matrimony at an uncertain date, probably in 1687 or 1688. Naomi's parents were William and Mary Anderson. Colonel Anderson was a wealthy and prosperous businessman. FRANCIS MAKEMIE and Naomi made their first home on Machatank Creek, 30 miles by water to her parents' home. By land, one traveled South, eventually crossing the 12,000 acre estate of Edmund Scarburgh and the large estate of the famous Edmund Custis.

FRANCIS MAKEMIE was a handsome bridegroom. He had a high intellectual forehead, brown, wavy hair, blue eyes, and the manner of an Irish gentlemen. The only portrait of FRANCIS MAKEMIE burned in the house fire of Reverend Stephen Balch in Georgetown, DC, but his daughter gave scholars the description of FRANCIS MAKEMIE.

**THIS IS A 1938 DESCRIPTION OF MACHATANK PLANTATION.**

The lands on the southside of Matchatank Creek (some 400 acres) are rich land, capable of growing plenty and they do for Lawrence Killmon who owns the land now and he knows how to farm.

**RECENTLY SEVERAL SOCIETY MEMBERS VISITED MACHATANK AND MET ITS CURRENT OWNERS MR. AND MRS. THORNBERG.**

FRANCIS MAKEMIE brought William Boggs over from Ireland in 1691. William Boggs was the son of FRANCIS MAKEMIE's oldest sister. Matachatank Plantation was kept in the MAKEMIE family until June 26, 1787 when Ann Makemie Holden, daughter of FRANCIS MAKEMIE, deeded it to John, Francis and

Joseph Boggs, descendants of William Boggs. There are over 400 Boggs descendants today.

**THIS IS ONE OF THE BOGGS DESCENDANTS, JOSEPH POWERS BOGGS, A NEW SOCIETY MEMBER.**

The Boggs cemetery is nearby the spot where FRANCIS MAKEMIE'S first house once stood. See also Brice Stump's wonderful article in the DAILY TIMES of April 1, 2012.

READING 4. Colonel Anderson died in 1698 and left FRANCIS and Naomi MAKEMIE his estate Pocomoke Plantation, some 950 acres.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN YOU ARE SITTING ON POCOMOKE PLANTATION.**

In the last year of FRANCIS MAKEMIE'S life, he stayed close to his home, POCOMOKE PLANTATION. His travels on church business were reduced. The pressure of fighting battles was over. He was surrounded by all that meant so much to him. His Churches. The beauty of this place. His beloved Naomi. His beloved daughters, Ann and Elizabeth.

FRANCIS MAKEMIE played the violin and flute. In his home were objects of interest to him. In the great room were oil paintings of King William and Queen Mary, who did much for religious freedom and whose likenesses graced the Mansion until FRANCIS MAKEMIE'S death.

FRANCIS MAKEMIE came to his end in the quiet of his home. Here Dr, Charles Barrett attended him from an illness beginning in April 1708 and ending in his death between June 9 and August 4, 1708.

READING 5. In 1879, Dr. Littleton Purnell Bowen and Dr. JTB McMaster, of Pocomoke, MD, came to Jenkins Bridge to interview an old lady, Mrs. Charlotte Corbin.

**MARK FISHER, HOW OLD WAS DR. BOWEN AT HIS DEATH?**

He was 4 days short of 100 years. Let us hear the words of Dr. Bowen in 1879:

"During the summer of 1879 my friend, Dr. J.T. B. McMaster of Pocomoke City, a grandson of Madam Holden's pastor, accompanied me to the house, near Jenkins bridge, of Mrs. Charlotte Corbin, a lady then seventy years old, from whom we hoped to gain important information.

"Mrs. Corbin told us that the old family graveyard was surrounded by a brick wall, around the top of which she used to run and play when a barefoot girl; that the tombstones were already becoming badly broken and the fragments carried off for whetstones; that there was then no difference of opinion in the community of this being the place where Madam Holden and her forefathers were buried.

"Thus directed, we hastened down the 'old part' and with our hoes removed the surface earth in search of some vestige of that brick wall. Sure enough, just as Mrs. Corbin described, we struck upon the foundation just below the ground, followed its angles and found it inclosing the cattle-pen! Entering the pen and digging below the accumulations, we came upon indications of graves covered with old English bricks laid edgewise."

Later others came to try to determine the specific grave of FRANCIS MAKEMIE. Let us here their words in 1897:

“Thus Dr. Bowen found the cemetery on the Pocomoke plantation where the Andersons and Makemies lived and where Anne Makemie spent her long life, and he dug and found the brick inclosure inclosing the family graves of the Andersons and Makemies, but which grave was Francis Makemie’s resting place?

“Let Dr. J. Simonson Howk who was a young man and pastor of old Rehoboth Church, answer this question: ‘Two officers of the Rehoboth Church agreed to take me across to the old Holden property where we knew Makemie was buried, but in an unidentified grave. We hoped to find some means of identification. We started down the Pocomoke river from Rehoboth, in a small sail boat, and crossing to the Virginia side went up Holden Creek to the farm. The men were E. A. Stoops and W. Thomas Davis, both (now) dead for many years. We had a spade and pickaxe, as I recollect.

“...we found the graveyard was still used as described by Dr. Bowen. It did not seem very different from what it was in 1879. The graves were all leveled with the ground and it was hard to trace anything. It took some time to trace the brick wall, but we did accomplish it. Next we measured lines from the center of each side and marked the spot where they converged. Then we came near giving up,

for it looked like two small graves had been there side by side, but fortunately we kept on clearing away debris and removing surface soil, and the mystery was soon revealed. ...special pains had been taken with the grave ... we found that it was built in and arched over with brick. We carefully and reverently removed enough of the arch to probe and look inside.. The casket and the remains were only heaps of dust, in which we found copper coffin nails, fragments of glass and a few bones and teeth. I held a tooth in my hand that was apparently of a man of middle age.'"

**MARK FISHER, WOULD YOU POINT TO THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE GRAVE OF FRANCIS MAKEMIE?**

He cannot do that of course. But how many members and friends interested in archeology wish to help the Society find the grave? Please let us know if you wish to help at the next archeological dig.

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