



Although America's oldest silver communion service is right here in New Bern at Christ Episcopal Church, there are thousands of local citizens who have never seen it.

They have no one to blame but themselves. We know from personal experience that the Rev. Charles E. Williams, who has long served as rector of this historic place of worship, is happy to display the treasured service to anyone genuinely interested.

Still in use, it was a gift from King George II of England in 1752. Especially created by royal command, each piece of the perfectly fashioned service bears the Royal Arms of Great Britain, and four Hall Marks, in a shield.

Any expert could take a quick look at these identifications, and vouch for the authenticity of the various pieces. The first tiny Hall Mark consists of the initials, M.F., and indicates that the silversmith who made the service was Mordecai Fox of England.

The next Hall Mark is the letter "R" for "Rex" or King, and this indicates that the order for the service came from George II himself. A "passant gardant" in the form of a lion is proof that the silver was of a standard required by law, and a crowned leopard's head shows that the plate was hall marked in London in the government office.

The inspector who determined for the king that sufficient silver was used in fashioning the communion service took nothing for granted. A close examination will disclose a small auger hole, where a sample of the metal was extracted for careful testing.

King George died eight years after the gift was presented to Christ Episcopal Church, having reigned as a monarch of the Hanoverian line from 1727 until 1760. Incidentally, one of the great works of English literature — Thomas Grey's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" — was written while King George was on the throne.

It was Fox, designer of the Christ Church communion service, who also created a similar set for presentation to Old South Church in Boston. He later made an alms basin that is the property of Trinity Church in New York City.

The priceless Christ Church service remains unmarred, despite its hectic early history. It has been said that Royal Governor Josiah Martin tried to take it with him, when he left New Bern with considerable speed back in 1775. He was foiled in his plans.

Having remained intact through the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the set was again endangered by a conflict when the War Between the States broke out. The Rev. A. A. Watson was rector of Christ Church at that time. He took the set post haste to Wilmington. It was later transported to Fayetteville, and placed in the care of Dr. Joseph Huske.

According to the story, it was hidden beneath a pile of rubbish in a closet there. Federal troops didn't discover it, and eventually the service was returned to Christ Church. It has been here ever since.

Not only did King George II give the local church its communion set, but presented also its Bible and its Books of Common Prayer. The lapse of time since these gifts arrived from England seems doubly impressive when measured by literary figures of the era.

For instance, Charles Dickens wasn't born until 60 years after the communion service was presented. And it wasn't until 98 years after the set was put into use that Robert Louis Stevenson saw the light of day.

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STILL WINNING RIBBONS—Mary had a little lamb in one of our favorite Mother Goose rhymes, but it wasn't 10-year-old Mary Dunn of route 1, New Bern. She prefers a heifer like Big Susie, capable of capturing purple and blue rib-

bons in the Coastal Carolina Junior Dairy Show. Last year the young lady came up with a champion and this year she did it again. It's getting to be a habit.—Photo by Billy Ben-ners.

Local Males Also Following Trend Toward Less Clothing

Most New Bern males, when they run out of something allegedly funny to say, poke fun at the female of the species for wearing less and less clothes. The accusation may be true, but look who is talking.

Like the pot that calls the kettle black, local men are wearing less than ever themselves, and are in no position to wisecrack about the fair sex in this respect.

For example, Mr. New Bernian no longer starts from scratch by donning heavy woolen underwear with the first cool days in September. He doesn't even put the long handles on when the icy blasts of

Winter arrive.

Decidedly not. He wears the same skimpy shorts that served a worthy purpose in July and August, and it's next to sure bet that he won't even add an undershirt. Gone are the days when no self-respecting gentleman would think of climbing into his best Sunday shirt without seeing to it that he had on other suitable wrappings underneath.

Wearing an undershirt today doesn't prove that you're cultured, and careful not be downright uncouth. It only labels you as a square who is living in the wrong century. In fact, you might even

end up in a museum or have a historical marker placed upon your bosom.

And, while you're smirking about the limited attire of local ladies, you might remember that you're the guy who used to wear a vest. Going out minus a vest was enough to make a fellow feel half naked.

Even when the hot days arrived, you still wore one of the things to Sunday school and church, and on all other special occasions. Now the only reason you condescend to wear a coat in church is the fact that the average place of worship has been air conditioned to coax

you into the pews.

When was the last time you wore a pair of garters to hold up your socks, like you did in the so-called good old days? And what happened to the arm bands that held up your shirt sleeves?

It's still debatable whether doing away with vests was a wise thing. Admittedly, they were mostly good for spilling soup and gravy on them, but the soup and gravy now go on your best tie and your last clean shirt. Besides, when vests went out of style, it likewise spelled the end of that grand and glorious masculine ornament—the gold watch chain.

In all probability, the departure of his watch chain started many a good man on the road to being a mouse. Next to a cheap cigar, nothing made a gent feel more important and influential.

With those shiny links missing from his midsection, he lost his sense of security, and ceased to be the true master of his house. The next thing he knew he had been reduced to the role of a domestic servant, and was doing the dishes with monotonous regularity.

Aside from this lowered station in life, doing away with the vests and undershirts, and most especially long-handled underwear, may have brought on other complications. To be specific, those pesky little varmints that the doctor calls a virus.

Back in the days when men saw fit to wear more, there weren't any viruses, and very few germs. At least, if they were around they apparently couldn't get to you in a vital spot. Come to think of it, (Continued on Back Page)



WATERY ROW TO HOE—Pushing onward through waist-deep water, a farmer in South Viet Nam follows his two water buffaloes and plow through a rice field. Heavy rains have flooded a wide area of the country.