

Responses to Allen Cronenberg's Paper:

Engaging Changes and Transitions: St. Matthew's, 1945-1990

**A Spring Heritage Offering by Allen Cronenberg
for the Parish Archives and History Committee, June 2020**

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Response from Elizabeth Matheson

When I left the house where I grew up, St. Matthew's was what I saw. When I walked out of church, there was home. In my mind and heart, they were one—church, family, extended family, and the green spaces between were my childhood territory. When the church bells rang, we went, no question. Mr. Masterton was rector. He was mild and dignified and led mild and dignified services. In contrast, his wife, Meta, had great style and dash. She had once danced with Lord Mountbatten! In the Crimea! The fact that she had actually ridden a camel gave her Sunday School lessons a certain vivid authenticity. Meta was alive to absurdity. She told me that, decorating the church her first Christmas here, she was gently informed that only nandina was to be put on the font. It was then she realized that “at St. Matthew's, Holy, Holy, Holy on the altar should really be Status Quo, Status Quo, Status Quo.” Needless to say, I adored her. I loved all the “old ladies” of the church and was greatly spoiled by them. Boo was every child's favorite but she was never an old lady, even when she was one. Her aunt, Henrietta Collins, sat in front of us. I liked her very much but did not greatly love her. I was around ten when she died and Mother thought hers would be a good starter funeral for me. I am glad to report everyone else lived to a great age.

The vestry were all men. My mother's take on this was that, men being naturally less churchy, best to let them think they ran things. Cousin Paul Collins, Senior Warden for Life, certainly felt he did and made Mr. Masterton's life somewhat miserable. At the start of every sermon, Cousin Paul would take out his pocket watch. Sermons never lasted beyond fifteen minutes.

Communion Sundays were once a month. At the words “Ye who do earnestly repent ye of your sins and are in love and charity with your neighbors....” unconfirmed, and, by implication unrepentant, children were excused to go to the churchyard where we walked the wall and reverently hopped over the mounds of dead parishioners.

With the arrival of Mr. Pettit and the civil rights struggle, life became more complicated and contentious at St. Matthews. The discord played out in a particularly distressing and public way for my family and I, who had spent my childhood ardently praying for something dramatic to happen, had my prayers answered.

I lived away from Hillsborough during most of the 60's and 70's, so missed much of the ensuing turmoil, though I certainly heard about it. As for outward and visible signs of change, I remember once coming home and being somewhat startled by Sunday service. "Goodness, Mother, where are the hats?" "When," she asked dryly, "were you last in church?"

I am grateful to St. Matthews for many things—for its simple beauty and for examples throughout my life of kindness and grace. But this above all: that Sunday after Sunday and when the bell rang in between, I was exposed to what was surely the most rich and beautiful liturgy in all Christendom, now lost.



Top left: Boo --"with all her wonderful Boo-ness on display"

Top right: Elizabeth Drane Webb ("demure Mama" of Elizabeth Matheson); with Boo

Left: Boo with friends (including Buck Webb, with straw hat)

Photo from Elizabeth Matheson's family archives

MEMORIES OF GROWING UP IN ST. MATTHEW'S

By Jim Parsley

I grew up going to St. Matthew's in the '40's, 50's and early 60's. "Family-size" best describes the parish I knew then. Most of those attending services were local members of long-time parish families. All the parishioners that I knew lived near Hillsborough. All the adults knew each other, many since they had been children in the parish. There were only a relatively few "newcomers." The main family names were Webb, Graham, Collins, Cheshire, Dula, Latta, Bacon, Cameron. There were other family names that were closely linked to one or more of those. Most people had regular places where they sat in the pews. A quick glance around the sanctuary told me who was there, and who wasn't. It was a big Sunday if there were sixty people at the main Sunday service.

Sunday School: Children started their church lives with Sunday School, at about age 4 or 5. It was held by the Rector in the Sanctuary every Sunday about 9:30 am. We children quickly got quiet when we came inside. Miss Liza Webb played the organ, and the Rector wore special clothing. The service started with a hymn, then a short ritual from the Prayer Book. Any child who had had a birthday that week would be asked to come forward, kneel, and receive the blessing of a special birthday prayer. I dreaded being singled out that way. The Rector would have a special story or views to tell us, and we sang another hymn. Then the children collected in small groups of reasonably close ages and went to stations in various pews around the sanctuary, where adult women conducted a short class for each group. Sunday School lasted about 45 minutes; then the kids hurried outside to play until it was time for "church."

Playing outside the church: The chief outside activity was walking on the top of the brick wall which enclosed the church property. Much of the wall had rounded bricks on the top, making it challenging to balance and walk on. Some wall-sections had overgrowing bushes. But the wall was continuous, all intact then, and there was enough time to make it quite a way before church started, or some peer pushed you off.

Main Service: Usually the liturgy was Morning Prayer. Holy Communion was regularly conducted on the first Sunday of the month. The Rector's sermon filled out the service time to about an hour in either case. Lent was a pain because the extra prayers meant extra kneeling time. My family always sat on the back row, beside my Collins family relatives. I had to be careful not to squirm or wiggle too much and disturb them. Before I was confirmed, at age 12, I learned to appreciate Communion Sundays because the service was shorter than normal (for me). Children not yet confirmed were expected to leave the service as soon as the Communion

portion started. They might just go outside and play until the service was over. Usually, my mother and some other parents would leave the church along with their kids, take them home and get an early start on Sunday dinner. Some non-parent adults also left at that time. So Communion only went to those who chose to stay for it.

Clergy back then: The first clergyperson that I recall was Mr. Masterton. The rector was always referred to as “Mister,” for some reason. He, his wife Meta, and his much-older daughter (Isabelle, I think), lived right across the street in a house called “the rectory.” He was a nice, older gentleman who was treated with great respect.

Mr. Masterton retired and moved away when I was about ten years old. The new rector was “Mr. Pettit,” short and friendly, with his wife Mrs. Pettit and two children, Lannie and Lauton Jr. Mrs. Pettit played the organ for all our services. Their children were a little younger than I was, so I only saw them at church. I was old enough to notice and remember much more about Mr. Pettit. I remember that I could never follow his sermons. He used to make pastoral visits to parishioner homes. When he came to ours, we had to sit politely in the living room and listen to the conversation, which always ended with everyone kneeling in prayer. Mr. Pettit brought about two big changes in my church-life: Confirmation and Acolyting.

Confirmation and Communion: Before Confirmation, I didn’t even know what Holy Communion was! I’d never even seen it before, let alone participated. But Mr. Pettit held a multi-month class for about a half-dozen of us, involving memorizing the answers to a “catechism” (long list) of questions, and the Bishop confirmed us all. After that, I found out what went on in the Communion part of the service, and I was then qualified to stay through it all. Since I had a much younger brother, our mother often took us home early anyway.

Acolyting: Shortly afterwards, Mr. Pettit asked four of us boys if we would become “acolytes.” I didn’t know what an acolyte was, since we’d never had such at St. Matthew’s before. But we couldn’t very well say “no,” so Hunter Dula, Harry Dula, John Dickey and I got the jobs. Soon we were being outfitted with “vestments,” long red dress-like garments and white frilly tops to go over them. Then we had a little class on what to do as an Acolyte, which was mostly to light candles, stand there, be reverent and look interested, then put out candles. Two of us were assigned to the main service each Sunday, so there was trading to be done if one wanted to be somewhere else that particular day.

During the service, we got to sit on a little bench up front and kneel behind a supportive rail. However, if there was a Communion portion to the service, one of us had to hand the priest the elements and kneel very upright on a small cushion on the floor for a very long time. That kneeling quickly became most uncomfortable, so I didn’t volunteer for that role.

Occasionally there were special services, like weddings, in which acolytes were asked to assist. Those were fun because they were unique experiences and the acolyte had a front row seat from which to watch. I particularly remember watching as Ann Roberts married Bill Teer.

The acolyte's vestments were kept in a tall cabinet in the sacristy, the little room behind the choir today where all the service paraphernalia is kept, and we had to dress in that room.

It was years later when I realized that we had no girl acolytes. Girls weren't permitted to participate in the services in that day, but I was as oblivious to that restriction--as I was to a lot of things back then.

Special People: I remember two special ladies who helped introduce us little kids to Sunday School activities. Miss Liza Webb, who was Elizabeth Matheson's mother's mother, was a sweet, kind grandmother who also played the organ for Sunday School, and who made little kids feel comfortable. She led crafty activities like coloring and putting shoestrings through holes in paper, somehow getting lessons about God and Jesus out of those.

Miss Annie Cameron was the closest thing to a nun that I ever met. She taught a class of little kids in Sunday School too. Miss Annie was one of the few parishioners who always sat and sang in the choir seats up front. She drove a special stationwagon, which she used on Sundays to go out into the country and pick up a load of children, bringing them back to Sunday School at St. Matthew's. Her car was casually referred to as the "Gospel Wagon." I was told that the Vestry had purchased it for her use, to do just that. Miss Annie was one of the few people who could step up and run the Morning Prayer service if something delayed the rector. She was one of the pillars of service at St. Matthew's, beloved by all. I'm pleased to see her name on several commemorative plates around the parish buildings. Miss Annie never married and lived by herself in a house adjacent to the public school in town. She was also my first grade teacher in that school, along with a couple of generations of other lucky kids.

Miss Mary Exum was an elderly parishioner who took particular interest in all the children, especially in me. She once gave me a special, unique, non-churchlike gift: a bundle of army soldier's equipment that had probably been left with her by a relative after World War II. A gas mask, canteen, machete, and folding shovel--all wondrous things for a boy to play with! The canteen came in especially handy for boy scout activities and for drinking water at school during the 1954 drought.

Women's Participation: Men had the official leadership jobs in those days, but women made the week-to-week life function at St. Matthew's. Every able-bodied woman had an altar guild assignment at one time or another. Elizabeth Matheson, Miss Sue Hayes, Miss Mary Exum, Lucile Dula, Mary Leigh and Isabelle Webb, Helen Hill, Elizabeth Collins, Peggy Trull, my mother Evelyn Parsley, Ellen Bacon, Kathleen Graham, Della Latta, Mary Roberts, Anne Cheshire. There

was also “The Guild,” a group of church women who met and regularly planned a few activities like “The Bazaar,” an annual craft/food sale similar to our FeST today. The rector was always a man, but the organist and the choir were always women.

Newcomers: Occasionally someone new would appear at the services St. Matthew’s. If they came back enough, answered all the probing questions, seemed somewhat important and seemed to be serious about joining, they would be unofficially accepted by the congregation. I wasn’t aware of many such people. Dr. Charles and Helen Blake, he a retired ornithologist from an Ivy League school, was one such couple. The Millenders from Mebane were another. Helen Hill came in and became a friend to many in my mother’s circle. It was rare to have someone at St. Matthew’s who was not from Hillsborough, or at least Orange County.

My Childhood Myopic Viewpoint: I had a very limited perspective. I was really aware only of the immediate events in which I participated. I didn’t have exposure to, or interest in, the big picture. As a child, I never heard of Elizabeth Gwynn Hayden, the lady for whom our Hayden Building is now named; even though she made it possible for the parish to construct that building when I was a teenager. Social Justice—I never heard that term. Vestry—what was that? Issues—I never heard of any. Catholics—who were they? I wasn’t aware of there being any in Hillsboro. The same goes for Jews. Non-Christian religions—maybe in textbooks but I’d never encountered any in my world.

Blacks lived all around us and worked for us; but it was like they lived in a parallel universe. We only interacted with most of them in very limited ways. Some of my closest neighbors were blacks, but our interactions were really superficial. The closest contact we had was with the black ladies who worked as maids, household helpers. I think that most of the white families in the parish had one of those. Segregation was just “a part of the woodwork” to me as a kid.

Other Churches in Hillsborough: My mother had grown up Presbyterian and felt very comfortable there. She raised me and my brother in the Episcopal Church only because my father wished it, and our Collins relatives were one of those pillar families. But, after my father died, my mother occasionally went to a service at the Hillsborough Presbyterian church, particularly during the month of August when the rector took vacation and St. Matthew’s became dormant.

The Hillsborough Methodist Church was a relatively comfortable place too. My family had many friends who went there. Their church building was air conditioned too! There was no way that St. Matthew’s was going to spend money to air condition our sanctuary.

Both the Methodists and Presbyterians had very active youth groups that met on Sunday evenings. It was common for kids to participate in both, to bounce back and forth to some extent. Our Episcopal church just had too few kids to make a functional youth group, so I went

where my other town-friends went. When we finally built what we called “The Sunday School Building,” I felt more up to par with the kids in the other churches.

The Hillsborough Baptists were in a different category all together. Presbyterian, Methodist and Episcopalians could mix and mingle freely, but a line seemed to be drawn between that group and the Baptists. I knew of no families or kids crossing that line. Baptists were not allowed to dance, and dancing was an important recreational activity for the Episcopal, Methodist and Presbyterian kids. Baptists openly discouraged any behavior with sexual implications by teenagers, but the other group of churches pretty much ignored it. Baptists had church services a second time on Wednesday nights, while once a week was good enough for our side. I knew and associated with lots of Baptist kids at school, but not particularly so outside school. That’s the way the local religious world was divided, as I recall it.

Uniqueness of the Episcopal Church: To me as a kid, the two things that distinguished our Episcopal Church from the other denominations were our Prayer Book liturgy and our practice of kneeling for prayers. We had many of the same hymns to sing, similar sermons to endure, similar Sunday School activities. But we used a prayer book, and its language was sophisticated, not common, obviously “superior.” My non-Episcopal friends thought that having a prayer book was strange, but I was comfortable with it and their services seemed very informal. Kneeling seemed appropriate, and we had kneeler cushions right there to use. For kids, kneeling was easy to do too. So I felt that we Episcopalians had a degree of “class” that distinguished us from those other churches.

Summer Schedule: The rector took vacation the whole month of August in the summer, went away to Nags Head. The parish effectively went dormant, no Sunday services. We did have a big, bring-a-dish, picnic, in the back (northeast) corner of the cemetery. That area was totally grass inside the walls back then and made an excellent picnic location. Lots of fried chicken, potato salad, pie and cake; a good time for adults to visit and kids to play.

Parish Staff: We had the Rector to conduct the services and visit the sick. We had the Sexton, an old black man, to keep the grounds clean. That was it for paid staff. Volunteers took care of the altar needs. As a kid, I didn’t think at all about details like keeping up with collections, paying bills, cleaning inside the church, correspondence of all sorts. I don’t think we had printed bulletins. It was a much simpler time – but that’s the viewpoint of a child.

Parish Facilities: St. Matthew’s ground-space today is the same as I remember it as a child. The church building is the same size, but there have been some interior changes. The space between the Altar and the congregation has been elevated, paved, and the choir moved across to the south side; choir used to be between the congregation and the organ. The two big windows in the west wall used to be clear glass that let in a lot of light. Stained glass windows

are there now, and the area under the balcony is much darker. The altar is not against the wall now; it used to be.

In the latter 1950's, what we now call the Hayden Building was built. That was a great leap forward, bringing St. Matthew's up to speed with the other churches in town. Suddenly we had classroom spaces and restrooms, and an office for the Rector. I was getting old enough to have more serious Sunday School classes then, for which classrooms were appropriate. Most important, we had a big open room downstairs where we kids could have our friends over for dances and other parties. I appreciated that space more than anything else. I'm sure that the Rector appreciated not having the rectory be the only place for restrooms and offices.

Time passes fast when you're away and having fun: I effectively left home and St. Matthews when I finished high school and went away to college. I departed Hillsborough as quickly as possible, eager for greener pastures elsewhere. Yes, I occasionally came home to visit, but my interactions with St. Matthew's were brief and my attention was elsewhere. We buried my mother beside my father, in St. Matthew's cemetery in 1972. There wasn't much to attract me to Hillsborough after that. I kept in touch with my local family and a few friends, and they mentioned people and things related to the parish. But I was busy with my career and my growing family. So Hillsborough and St. Matthews were not in my focus when many of the changes and events happened that Allen Cronenberg has mentioned in his excellent paper. I have been very interested to read all those details about things that I knew little or nothing about. I spent forty years away from St. Matthew's, and the last seventeen years trying to catch up with what happened while I was gone.

Jim Parsley
5/26/2020

MEMORIES OF ELIZABETH (BOO) COLLINS

By Jim Parsley

Boo Collins was my cousin, my father's first cousin. Our family connection was through Boo's mother, Mary McNeill Collins. Boo's family was the closest kin that we had in Hillsborough. Our relationship was really closer than that: her parents were very much like grandparents to me; Boo was like an aunt, and she treated me like a nephew. We enjoyed their hospitality on many occasions, especially holiday gatherings.

The Collins family lived geographically very near us, out of sight but within easy walking distance. They owned many acres of undeveloped land, a space where I was allowed to roam and hunt as much as I pleased. They had a large yard with lots of bushes and trees and a little goldfish pond, a great place for various adventures. The Southern Railroad track ran right along the edge of their yard, and lots of very noisy trains passed there every day. I recall several times when there were train wrecks on the tracks in front of their house. I got to go and see the jumble of freight cars, all over the railway.

I was born in 1943, while Boo and her good friend Peggy Trull were away from home serving with the Women's Army Corps in the South Pacific. From my earliest memories, Boo was always around. She was really good to me and my brother. I have old photos showing Boo with me and my cousin Frank, on sleds in the snow. Boo owned the biggest sled around, and she used to enjoy sledding with us kids. She gave me the first dog that I remember, "Patsy." She gave me my first camping tent so I could camp in the backyard of my house. I kept and used it for many years. When my mother died, Boo was there to provide support and to tell me about things I should know that my mother had never shared. Boo was the one who sat down with me and diagrammed our mutual family tree, helping me to make organizing-sense out of the relatives that I knew and adding many that I didn't know. Boo and I drifted apart in later years, which was my fault for being too independent but also not living in Hillsborough.

Born in 1912, Elizabeth Hyman ("Boo") Collins was the daughter of Paul Cameron Collins, from Hillsborough, and Mary McNeill Collins, from Fayetteville. Boo had a younger sister, Mary Strange. Both girls grew up in Hillsborough. Boo went to the Hillsborough public schools, moved on to St. Mary's School and Junior College in Raleigh where she graduated after "Grade 14." She became a businesswoman, an insurance agent. She ran the Citizen's Insurance Agency, on North Churton St. in Hillsborough, next door to the bank that her father managed. Boo handled the business from 1934 until 1942, when she joined the US military to do what she could for her country. Her father kept the insurance agency going for her during the war years, and Boo picked it back up when she returned in 1946.

Boo joined the WAC's in November of 1942. In September, 1943, she had an enlisted rank. Boo's assignments were in transportation, motor pools. In the WAC, she became friends with Peggy Trull, a WAC officer from Tennessee. Both Boo and Peggy were sent to the South

Pacific. Allen Cronenberg's paper gives a lot of detail about their war experiences. Boo held the rank of 1st Lieutenant when she separated from the service in February of 1946. She returned to Hillsborough and resumed her insurance agency job.

It was at that point that I came to know Boo as a person running her own business. I figured that dealing with insurance was a complicated activity requiring education and skill. I now realize that as a woman, Boo was competing with a lot of men in that business. So far as I know, she did well.

Sometime after Boo's father died and his estate was settled, she decided that she really didn't need to work at a job anymore. She could take care of her needs by managing her inherited investments. So Boo retired, at about age 49, to take care of her properties and enjoy her remaining years. She bought a riding lawnmower and used it to keep down the grass in her extensive yard. She frequently entertained friends and family in her home.

An important friend of the Collins family, and a resource to Boo for much of her life, was Margaret Faribault. She was the housekeeper, maid, cook--most reliable caretaker of important things and for important people. Margaret made every guest feel "at home" and special. Boo, like her parents, treated Margaret as an important member of the family. Though Margaret was a black lady, and Boo was her employer, the relationship between them was much more as friends, with love and concerns for each other. I know of times when Margaret had serious problems, and Boo was there to support her. I don't remember sensing any racial bias in Boo, or hearing her make any disparaging comments about black people.

Boo's family owned a beach cottage at Nags Head, one of the old-style (circa 1930) unpainted buildings facing the surf. Eventually, it became Boo's cottage. Boo loved to fish and spent a lot of time there in the fall. She invited family and friends to enjoy time at her cottage, including St. Matthew's rector during his August vacations. I can remember going there several times, a classic "beach" experience then but not much like what kids expect today.

Boo was very involved with St. Matthew's, though an unofficial leader. Women didn't get Vestry jobs in those early years, but Boo was very active with the Altar Guild and definitely had opinions on how the parish should be run. Allen Cronenberg's paper tells about her election to the Vestry in 1972. She was active on the Search Committee that brought in Brooks Graebner. For many years, Boo was the keeper of the map of the graves in St. Matthew's cemetery. People came to her when a burial need arose.

Her niece Elizabeth Goode describes Boo well, "She loved life and people." In Hillsborough, Boo was highly respected. When the town needed a place for youth baseball, Boo and Mary Strange offered some acreage of their jointly owned property, south of the railroad and across from their front yard, to be turned into baseball fields. Those ballfields are still in use today. In 1974, the Hillsborough Exchange Club recognized Boo's outstanding community service by giving her their "Book of Golden Deeds" award.

Boo had a jovial, outgoing personality. She was honest and tactful, but she was also independent. "She would call a spade a spade." Alcoholic drinks lubricated the flow of hospitality and conversation among her circle of friends, but I never knew her to be "under the influence" to any noticeable extent.

As previously mentioned, Boo had a "best friend," Peggy Trull, whom Boo had met and served with in the Women's Army Corps during World War II. They had shared some significant overseas war experiences. After the war, Peggy came back home to Tennessee, then migrated to the Durham area where she had family members living. She and Boo continued their friendship. Peggy started a social work career and settled near Hillsborough. She and Boo remained close, and Peggy started living in Boo's home after both Boo's and Peggy's parents had passed away.

My own knowledge of Boo's later life is limited because I moved away from Hillsborough after I graduated from college, in 1965. I did not maintain close contact with my Hillsborough family after 1972, had other things on my mind, was not very aware of a lot that went on back in Hillsborough in the 70's, 80's, and 90's. I recall just bits and pieces from occasional visits and correspondence.

In 1983, Boo's niece Elizabeth Goode and her husband Steve relocated back to this area from Texas. Boo and they decided that they should join Boo in the old Collins family home, called "Highlands." They also decided to build a smaller house for Boo and Peggy, nearby on the property, a duplex-style that the two ladies could share but lead their separate lives. The Goodes paid for the new house; Boo and Peggy closely supervised its construction. It was a good arrangement for everyone.

In the latter 1990's, Boo started suffering the effects of dementia. Peggy looked after her at first. Boo's niece and family took over her care and later brought in nurses. I have a letter from Peggy, dated February, 1998, in which she mentions how difficult it was to help Boo keep her life on track. It was a downward spiral from there.

Boo Collins died on March 11th of 2002, at the age of 89. She was buried in the cemetery at St. Matthew's.

In reflecting on Boo's life and to verify the information I've related here, I talked with Boo's niece, Elizabeth Williams Goode, and Boo's nephew, Frank Williams, and his wife Peggy (nee Larsh). Frank and Peggy began their married life in nearby Chapel Hill and had this to say about Boo:

Boo was delighted to have us living so close to Hillsborough and welcomed us warmly with many invitations to her home for meals and conversation. Here, Boo frequently spoke about St. Matthews, always with deep caring, concern and support. When we began regular attendance at St. Matthews in the early 1970's, Boo was full of enthusiasm and pride to have close relatives to carry on the strong family tradition

and love for St. Matthews. It meant so very much to her to have the next generation's participation and dedication and, hopefully in turn, with her great nieces and nephews to follow. Although Boo had many endearing qualities, we know that her faith in God and her love for others were very important to her and very evident to those that knew her. We are so fortunate to have benefited from her example of how to unselfishly lead a life of faithful Christian service, including hospitality and fellowship to others. She was an important member of our family, St. Matthew's, to her friends and to all who knew her. Surely, she will be remembered over time.

Jim Parsley

6/6/2020

Some relevant photographs:



Book of Golden Deeds Award

Boo Collins sledding with Jim Parsley and Frank Williams, about 1948.



A typical Christmas meal at Boo's dining room table about 1970. Boo is serving the turkey. Left side: Bill Parsley, Annie Cameron (hidden), and Evelyn Parsley. Right side: Annie Webb and Helen Hill.

MY MEMORIES OF PEGGY TRULL

By Jim Parsley

I first knew Peggy as Boo Collins' really good friend, like a member of the family but not quite. I understood that she and Boo met and became close friends during World War II, and had kept their friendship ever since. She was often at Boo's house when I visited there, but sometimes she was away for work or traveling. I understood that Peggy did social work, either for the State or some other public agency. She was a "professional," but (as a child) I didn't really know what a social worker was or what she did. It was unusual, at that time, for a woman to have a full-time job out of town. Peggy always seemed to handle that work just fine.

I was born in 1943, and my first recollection of Peggy would be from about 1948. At that time, Peggy's wartime friend, Boo, was living with her own parents in their big family home near my own, just outside Hillsborough. Peggy's own parents were aging and had moved to Orange County south of Hillsborough. Peggy looked after them until they passed away.

For background, you should understand that Elizabeth (Boo) Collins was my cousin, my father's first cousin, the closest relatives my immediate family had in the area. Thus, Peggy was a family-friend whom I would see throughout my childhood, at family gatherings and hospitality times in Hillsborough. She related well to everyone and had lots of friends, generally in the same circle as my mother and my cousin Boo.

Peggy had a sister who lived in Durham. That sister had a child who was to go to the same summer camp where I was going, about 1952. Peggy found out that we had a common interest and arranged for us boys to meet. We got acquainted and saw each other around the camp, but there were too many differences for us to become good friends.

After Boo's parents died and left Boo the family estate, Peggy spent more time at Boo's place. There were times when she had a room, even a suite, in Boo's house. Eventually, Boo passed her big historic house on to her niece and family, and built a new, smaller, house for herself and Peggy to share. The new house was like a duplex, two complete living spaces each with its own carport, but without an interior dividing wall. They lived in that house starting in about 1985.

Boo became seriously afflicted with dementia during the last years of her life, and Peggy became her part-time caregiver. Boo's niece and family took over Boo's care and brought in nursing assistance. Boo died in 2002.

After Boo was gone, Peggy moved on. She first lived in an apartment in Durham; then moved into Senior Living facility called Emerald Pond, in Durham. Her body deteriorated with age, and

she needed more personal support, so she moved to the new Carillon assisted living facility in Hillsborough. Eventually she needed more intense care and moved to the Brookshire nursing home in Hillsborough. Peggy died in 2011, nine years after her friend Boo.

Allen Cronenberg has more fully described Peggy's involvement and contributions at St. Matthew's than I could ever do. I was living elsewhere during those years when Peggy was leading the Vestry and the Search Committee that called Brooks Graebner. I remember Peggy, like Boo, being at church services and being involved in the typical "woman's activities." Because she had a full-time job that took her out of town, Peggy would not have been as active in the church as many other local women, until after she retired. Allen's paper tells me that she got really involved after that.

I don't recall ever hearing much from either Peggy or Boo about their wartime experiences. Allen's paper informed me of many more details than I ever realized had happened. I have recently been informed of another source of information. On the Web, there are three recorded oral interviews with Peggy, made in 2005 for the NC Dept of Archives' Veterans Oral History Project. In her own words, Peggy relates her life experiences, which Allen's paper more concisely summarizes. I have never known a World War II vet who seemed to want to talk about those times, which indicates to me how serious, traumatic, they might have been.

In the early 2000's, I had a few conversations with my friend Peggy that included St. Matthew's topics. She talked about how difficult it had been to get Rector Fisher to leave the parish. She was most pleased to have been involved in getting Brooks Graebner to replace him. Our church secretary at that time was Pamela McMillen who was very popular, and Peggy claimed credit for finding and attracting Pamela to St. Matthew's. Peggy was certainly a key person involved at a critical time in St. Matthew's history.

I have a letter that Peggy wrote to me in February of 1998, when I was living in Greenville, NC. I had made a contribution to St. Matthew's building fund in recognition of her and Boo's service over the years, and Rector Brooks had noted that to her. In her letter to me, Peggy said:

The Church has meant a great deal to us all these years, and I am sad that I can no longer serve. I'm still on the altar guild, in March, and the Bishop is coming – maybe I can do it one more time. I can't see whether the brass is polished or not and the Fair Linen will probably be wrinkled after I've done my best by it.

Peggy lived for another thirteen years after that. Fortunately, she left behind memoirs and fond memories that help us recognize the life that she led and the things that she did for others in her time.

Jim Parsley
5/26/2020

My Memories of Peggy Trull

by Margaret Brill

June 17, 2020

I visited Peggy Trull regularly in her last years, right up until shortly before her death. As her health declined, she had to move from an apartment in an independent living community (Emerald Pond in Durham) to an assisted living (Carillon in Hillsborough) and finally to Brookshire Nursing Home. The first move was especially hard for her because she missed her friends at Emerald Pond, and especially her bridge partners. I learned from her experience that I should plan to move to a Continuous Care Community where I would not have to move as I needed more care, so I put my name down at Carol Woods, a move I have never regretted.

Peggy was the first person I visited as a Lay Eucharistic Visitor (LEV); I learned a great deal from her that would be prove valuable to my work in pastoral care as well as in my own life as I grow older. She was an extraordinary role model for a single woman. I had lost my husband not long before, and I missed my mother, so Peggy was also a substitute mother for me. Indeed, I had volunteered to be an LEV because my mother received visits from her church in England every month, so I understood how valuable the ministry is.

Despite her worsening health, Peggy never lost her sense of humor, or her pragmatic, upbeat attitude to life. She still had the cheerful smile that you can see in the pictures of her younger self. I admired her very much because she was a strong, independent woman at a time when it was even more difficult than it is now. She never expressed any regret about not marrying, but was proud of her full life, and especially her service in World War II. I think she was equally proud of having been Senior Warden at St. Matthew's when Brooks Graebner was called to be Rector. She continued to pledge to St. Matthew's, and once said how sorry she was that the pledge wasn't bigger.

Peggy retained her good spirits right up until her death, even when she was confined to bed. I'll never forget her funeral at St. Matthew's because she was buried in the Churchyard with full military honors.

Remarks from Ed Southern

Ed Southern (former member of the Parish Archives and History Committee) noted in looking at the population figures for Hillsborough over the last 200 years that there was the **largest single jump in population (109%) from 1970 (pop. 1,444) to 1980 (pop. 3,019)**--the year he moved to Hillsborough and joined St. Matthew's.

Ed remarked that perhaps the crisis of 1985-1990 was a "crisis of modernity" (a standard social and historical phrase) with a lot of migration to and around Hillsborough and a clash of generations and the loosening of an "old family" grip on St. Matthew's--a conclusion, he said, that can certainly be debated, augmented, and analyzed.