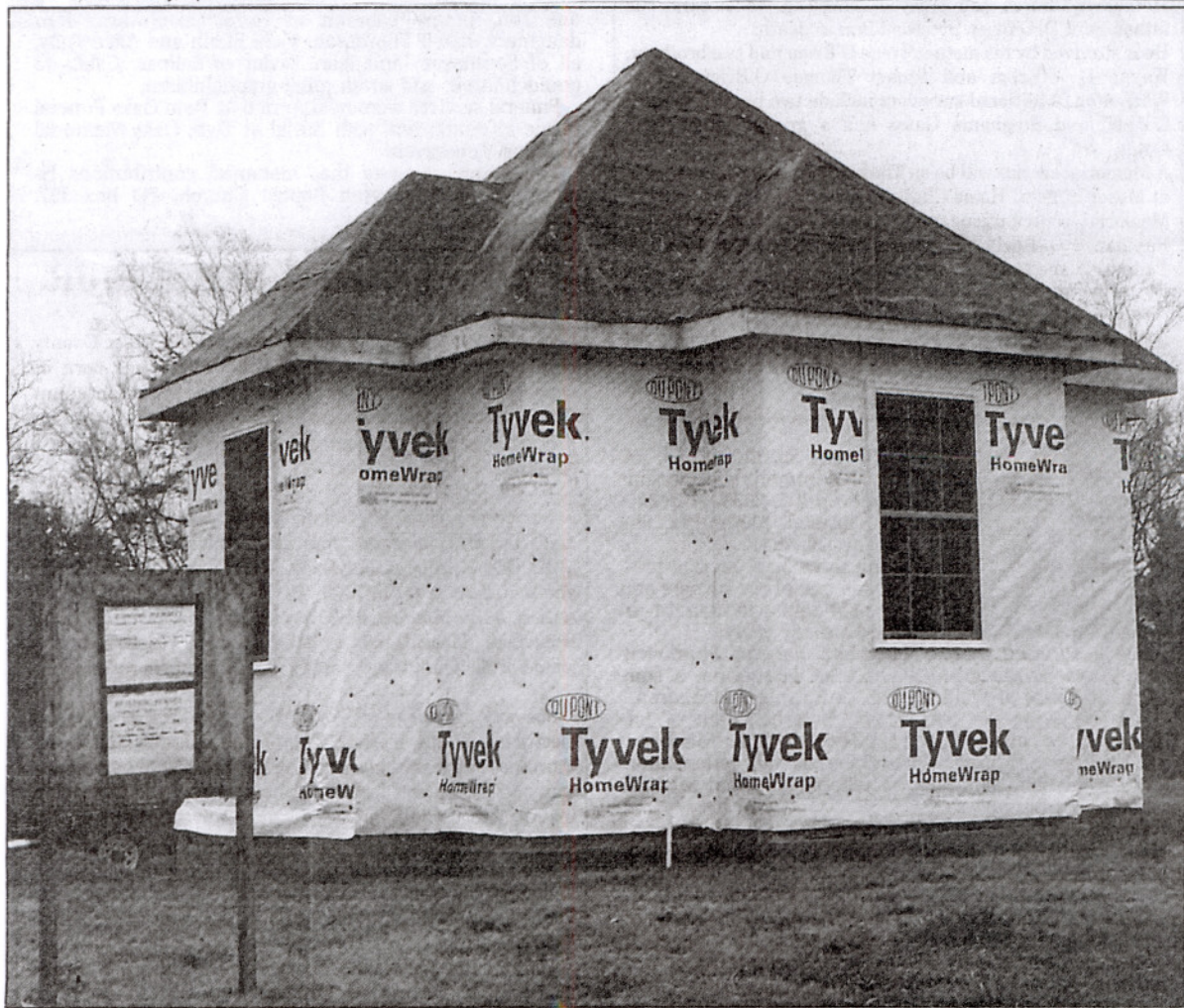


EDITORIAL & OPINION

"Where the press is free and every man able to read, all is safe." — Thomas Jefferson

A22 Wednesday, April 8, 2009

Fauquier Times-Democrat



Courtesy photo

IN THE HOMESTRETCH: The volunteers of the Elk Run Church Site Preservation are seeking additional funds and/or contribution of services and materials to finish construction of the mini-museum at the site in southern Fauquier.

Park, Mini-Museum Need Community Support

Ten years ago, we embarked on an archaeological quest to discover, and then uncover, the foundation and remains of the 1750s Anglican Church at Elk Run, the first such church in Fauquier County.

Our efforts have been richly rewarded.

Now we enter a final phase of the project, the remaining construction and dedication of the mini-museum that will capture the history of the church and surrounding area.

To review briefly, site work began in 1999 under the direction of a professional archaeologist. That work culminated in exposing the heretofore unknown stone foundation, laid down in the 1750s in the form of a Greek cross.

Numerous artifacts came to light, including Indian arrowheads, handmade nails, ceramic fragments, early coins, brick and glass. A bur-

ial ground was discovered adjacent to the church.

On completion of archaeological field work, the foundation stones were covered with top soil to preserve them. However, a small portion of the original foundation will be left open within the mini-museum for public viewing.

The mini-museum measures roughly 21 feet by 21 feet and will expose an eventual six feet by six feet portion of the old foundation. The unique shape of the mini-museum will allow visitors to walk around the foundation unit and view pictures on its walls that will show the history of the surrounding area, the church and its archaeological discovery captured in maps and photographs since 1999.

The mini-museum at this time is under roof, walls closed in, and windows installed. The Elk Run Church Site volunteers need

additional funds and/or contribution of services and materials to lay a small two-foot high portion of brick, installation of vinyl siding, an inside cement floor and cost of framing some of the history-making information for the walls.

Fauquier residents, organizations and businesses are asked to contribute to establishing, preserving and achieving this important Historic Church Park goal. Further information on our efforts over the past 10 years can be found on our Web site, www.elkrunchurch.org.

The Elk Run Church Preservation Committee is planning an official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new mini-museum at 9:30 a.m. Sept. 12, 2009, with living historians participating in the event.

This event leads off a day-long celebration of the settlement of Fauquier County as

part of the county's 250th anniversary.

Elk Run's first minister was the Rev. James Keith (circa 1742-1751), grandfather of Chief Justice John Marshall.

Your financial gift or contribution of services or material will help us reach and secure the rightful place of Elk Run Church in the history of colonial churches in Virginia.

Checks can be made payable to "Elk Run Church Site Preservation Fund" and letters of services and material contributions can be sent in care of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 8538 Greenwich Road, Catlett, 20119. All donations are tax deductible.

We send in advance our deep appreciation for your support in preserving the heritage of Elk Run Church.

Edward F. Dandar, Jr.
Nokesville