1. NAME
COMMON:
St. Philip's Church Ruins
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER:
Off SR 1533 at Brunswick Town State Historic Site
CITY OR TOWN:
Orton (Seventh Congressional District)
STATE:
North Carolina
CODE:
37
COUNTY:
Brunswick
CODE:
019

3. CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY
(Check One)
[] District
[] Site
[] Object
[] Building
[] Structure

OWNERSHIP
[] Public
[] Private
[] Both

PUBLIC ACQUISITION:
[] In Process
[] Being Considered

STATUS
[] Occupied
[] Unoccupied
[] Preservation work in progress

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
[] Yes
[] Restricted
[] Unrestricted
[] No

PRESENT USE
(Check One or More as Appropriate)
[] Agricultural
[] Government
[] Park
[] Transportation
[] Commercial
[] Industrial
[] Private Residence
[] Other (Specify)
[] Educational
[] Military
[] Religious
[] Comments
[] Religious
[] Scientific

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
OWNER'S NAME:
State Department of Archives and History
STREET AND NUMBER:
109 East Jones Street
CITY OR TOWN:
Raleigh
STATE:
North Carolina
CODE:
37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Brunswick County Courthouse
STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Southport
STATE:
North Carolina
CODE:
37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey
DATE OF SURVEY:
1918
[] Federal
[] State
[] County
[] Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress
STREET AND NUMBER:
East Capitol and Independence Avenue, S. E.
CITY OR TOWN:
Washington
STATE:
Washington
CODE:
D.C.
The ruins of St. Philip's Church consist of four relatively intact brick walls of a rectangular building measuring 54 by 78 feet. The massive walls, 22 feet, 6 inches in height and 3 feet thick at grade, are of English bond below the water table and of Flemish bond above it. The water table is 2 feet, 6 inches high. The interior walls are laid entirely in English bond.

The most striking feature of the church is the large Palladian window opening which was once over the altar and still dominates the east wall of the building. The semicircular-arched central opening measures 15 feet, 4 inches by 6 feet, 5 inches and reaches almost to the top of the wall. The flanking trabeated section are 11 feet, 1 inch by 3 feet, 10 inches.

The west wall is pierced only by a large semicircular-arched central entrance, the top of which is formed by a double row of headers. At 19 feet, 8 inches, it extends nearly the full height of the wall.

The north and south sides of the building are identical. Each has a symmetrical arrangement consisting of a smaller semicircular-arched entrance (15 feet, 10 inches in height), flanked by pairs of arched windows (13 feet, 9 1/2 inches in height). All openings are surmounted by arches of rubbed, gauged brick.
The town of Brunswick, located on the Cape Fear River fourteen miles from its mouth, was laid out by Maurice Moore about 1722. When Brunswick County was formed in 1764, Brunswick became the county seat, but by 1779 the government offices at Brunswick had been moved to the plantation of John Bell near Lockwood's-Polly Bridge. It is thought that the first church erected in Brunswick was little more than a wooden shed which measured 26 by 16 feet. The next church, St. Philip's, was erected there under an act of the "General Assembly XXV George III Chapter XIII," dated September 27, 1751. Richard Price is thought to have been the brickmason, and Thomas Dick was the chief carpenter. Much of the money used to build the new church came from the sale of slaves taken from a Spanish privateer's vessel sunk by the intrepid residents of Brunswick. On April 17, 1760, the Reverend John McDowell, who was the minister of St. James at Wilmington and St. Philip's at the time, wrote to the Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in London that the brickwork of St. Philip's was finished and the greater part of the roof completed. But a few months later, progress was halted by an event described by the Reverend McDowell: "The roof of the new church at Brunswick is all fallen down... it was struck with lightning, last July, and afterwards a prodigious and immoderate quantity of rain falling on it, made it all tumble down; and there it lies just as it fell." But the members of the parish were determined to complete their church. In November, 1760, the General Assembly approved a lottery to provide money to finish the churches in Wilmington and Brunswick. The lottery was held at the courthouse in Wilmington on April 25, 1761, with prizes amounting to £3,000.

The church was dedicated on Whit-Tuesday, (May 24), 1768, by the Reverend Mr. Barnett, who was assisted by the Reverend Mr. Wills. At the outbreak of the Revolution, the residents of Brunswick retired to more protected locations. Most of the buildings in Brunswick, including St. Philip's, were burned by the British during the war, and the site gradually became overgrown. The church, which was never rebuilt, now consists only of four uncovered walls.

St. Philip's was "His Majesty's Chapel in the Colony," where royal governors Dobbs and Tryon had their own specially raised pews installed. In the churchyard are buried many of Brunswick's citizens among whom are Royal Governor Arthur Dobbs (1754-1765), and Alfred Moore, justice of the United States Supreme Court (1799-1805). This early church, described in 1761 as "the largest and most pretentious in the Province," included in its congregation two royal governors, a president of the council, several members of the council, and other influential men of the colony. St. Philip's was cited by Thomas Tileston Waterman for its "unusually large and fine" Palladian
8. **Significance**

Its ruins stand as a reminder of a town, long since destroyed, which played a vital role in the early history of North Carolina.


### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
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**APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:** 8 Acres

**LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
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**FORM PREPARED BY**

**NAME AND TITLE:** Survey and Planning Unit, John B. Wells, III, Supervisor

**ORGANIZATION:** State Department of Archives and History

**DATE:** April 22, 1971

**STREET AND NUMBER:** 109 East Jones Street

**CITY OR TOWN:** Raleigh

**STATE:** North Carolina

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

**DATE:**

**ATTEST:**

Keeper of The National Register

**DATE:**
9. Bibliography


St. Philip's Church Ruins
Off SR 1533
Orton, North Carolina

North Carolina State Highway Map
Scale: 1"/1 mile
July 1, 1967

Latitude
Longitude

34° 02' 32"
77° 56' 55"