

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Church of the Immaculate Conception & the Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 145 South King Street N/A not for publication

city or town Halifax N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Halifax code 083 zip code 27839

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Arthur J. Crow SHPD 4/29/97
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other. (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
2		structures
	3	objects
4	3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**

-0-

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood

Stucco

roof Asphalt

other Cast iron

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture
- Social History
- Other: funerary art

Period of Significance

- 1859- 1947
- 1889

Significant Dates

- 1859
- 1889

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Durang, Edwin Forrest--architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Division of Archives and History

Name of Property

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.74 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>267380</u> Easting	<u>4023020</u> Northing
2			

3			
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Davyd Foard Hood

organization _____ date 27 January 1997

street & number Isinglass, 6907 Old Shelby Road telephone 704/462-4331

city or town Vale state NC zip code 28168

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name The Most Reverend F. Joseph Gossman

Bishop of the Diocese of Raleigh

street & number The Catholic Center telephone 919/821-9702

715 Nazareth Street

city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27606-2187

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. Description

The Setting

The Gothic Revival-style Church of the Immaculate Conception and the Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery occupy an irregular hexagonal-shaped grass-covered lot at 145 S. King Street in Halifax, a small town with a rich colonial history that is also the seat of Halifax County. The church and cemetery are on the east side of S. King Street, about three blocks south of the early-twentieth century Halifax County Court House and the Historic Halifax State Historic Site. The Church of the Immaculate Conception faces west on S. King Street which is lined with nineteenth and early twentieth century houses and churches. The church stands virtually opposite the Halifax United Methodist Church, a brick building erected in 1948 on the west side of S. King Street; St. Mark's Episcopal Church, also a Gothic Revival-style nineteenth-century frame church, stands about a half-block to the south, at the southwest corner of Church and S. King Streets. The church was built in the late winter and spring of 1889 on a small trapezoid-shaped lot deeded by the trustee of the Michael Ferrall estate to Leo Haid, Vicar-Apostolic of North Carolina; there was some minor adjustment to the boundaries of that one-eighth acre lot in 1925 (Halifax County Deeds 370, 276). Through Nannie Marie Gary's bequest of her adjoining (Ferrall family) home, lot, and the Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery to the Diocese of Raleigh in 1969, the church holding here was more than quintupled to its present shape and size of about three-quarters of an acre. The Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery is located at the east edge of the Ferrall house lot which carries along Granville Street. In the early 1970s, the Ferrall family house, said to have been the colonial-era Eagle Tavern, was moved northward to the north corner of King and St. David Streets and restored as a museum building in the Historic Halifax State Historic Site. The former site of the house was grassed over and merged with the surrounding lawn which carries to the church and the cemetery. The lawn is partially shaded with mostly volunteer native trees including holly, wild cherry, and pecan. A laurel tree of considerable age stands at the north edge of the cemetery and partially shades the vault and ledger stones.

The Church of the Immaculate Conception

In the account of the dedication of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, published in THE ROANOKE NEWS, the writer noted that "Though small it is very pretty," and that description holds true, 108 years later, for a building whose picturesque appearance has made it a landmark in the small town. The church survives to the present in a virtually original state and with a remarkable degree of preservation. Earlier in this century the spaces between the brick piers on which the church was built were infilled with brick masonry and the (original wood?) shingle roof covered with asphalt shingles. The wood

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steps leading from the front entrance to the sidewalk and a smaller flight at the north side door of the sacristy were added in the early 1990s when the church was repainted and other general repairs to its fabric made. The church faces west/northwest; however, for the ease of description the front elevation will be described as the west elevation, etc.

The diminutive Church of the Immaculate Conception is basically a rectangular gable-front building, twenty feet wide and thirty-seven feet deep, whose elevations are enlivened with a pair of asymmetrical towers, asymetrically placed at the front corners of the church, a projecting enclosed entrance porch, lancet-arch window openings, and an apse which is partially extended on the north side to carry flush with the sanctuary wall. The church rests on a continuous foundation of brick piers and brick infill. The elevations are covered with weatherboards framed with simple corner boards. The eaves of the asphalt shingle roof are nearly flush with the walls; on the side elevations a frieze board is overlaid with a pattern board of continuous lancet-arch shapes which replicate, in reduced scale, the lancet arches of the window openings.

The front elevation of the church is enframed by projecting towers of uneven height and slightly asymmetrical placement which feature single windows on the first stage and smaller paired windows in their second stage. The two-stage north tower is covered with a tall hipped roof: a brick flue stack, concealed within the tower, rises through the apex of the roof and functions as a finial. An open belfry, resting on a shallow pent, forms the third stage of the taller south tower which is also covered with a tall hipped roof finished with a cross at its apex. The belfry has chamfered square-in-plan wood posts with chamfered lintels across the openings; the ceiling of the belfry is sheathed with reeded flush boards. The window openings on the towers and throughout the church have single-board lancet-arch surrounds with thick, projecting sills. The projecting gable-front enclosed porch has paired, molded two-panel doors in a segmental-arch opening below a two-part transom with reeded flush boards applied on a forty-five degree angle. The front eaves of the porch are enriched with a step-cut rake board. A rose window occupies the upper part of the church's front elevation, above the porch, which is further defined by plain wide rake boards that recur on the church's rear elevation.

The church's four-bay side elevations are identical and feature a quartet of biforate window openings fitted with stained/colored glass; the side elevations of the towers have single window openings on the first stage and paired openings on the second level. An apse, twelve feet wide and ten feet deep, projects on the rear elevation; its south elevation is blind, and a single six-over-six window is centered on its east elevation. A shed extension on the north side of the apse has a four-panel door opening onto a small landing with steps to the lawn; it contains a passage which leads into

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the sanctuary and a second door which opens into the sacristy at the east end of the church.

The center-aisle plan interior of the church is a handsome sanctuary distinguished by dark mellowed pine, white plaster walls, pastel-colored diamond-pane glass windows, and an unusual tunnel-vault ceiling. The paired front doors open directly into the sanctuary which is encircled by a vertical board wainscot rising directly from the pine flooring to the sill level of the windows where it terminates with a molded chair rail. The seven faces of the tunnel-vault ceiling are sheathed with reeded flush boards, applied in differing, complimenting patterns, and finished with battens. The entrance door, recessed in a shallow space that appears as an enclosed porch on the exterior, is flanked by doors, in diagonal faces in the front, west corners of the sanctuary, which open into the bases of the two towers. Cast plaster plaques marking the fourteen stations of the cross are arrayed on the side elevations of the sanctuary. Ten pews are fitted directly against the wainscot on the outside walls of the church, and their aisle ends are shaped with a curvilinear profile; the kneelers are wood and movable. Six pews are symmetrically placed on the south side of the aisle while four are positioned on the north side of the aisle. The difference provides accommodation for the church organ, manufactured in 1902 by the Shipman Organ Company of High Point, North Carolina, in the northwest corner of the sanctuary.

The east elevation of the sanctuary is highly developed and centered by the chancel and altar which is elevated, partially recessed, and enframed by a tall lancet arch. On the (left) north a lancet-arch opening, hung with blue velour drapery, gives onto the passage to the sacristy. On the south a lancet-arch niche holds a polychrome statue of St. Joseph. The chancel, raised one step above the church floor, is marked by wood piers with a round railing hung with blue velour drapery. The wood altar with stepped levels rising to a tabernacle containing a brass cross and surmounted by a wood cross has symmetrical recessed panel faces ornamented with church symbols. It bears a small plaque identifying it as a gift of the "Catholic Church Extension Society of U. S. A." Above the altar a lighted niche contains a polychrome statue of the madonna, the patron saint of the church; wood plant stands flank the altar which is also lighted with three wall-hung globe lamps, probably installed in the 1930s and contemporary with the two hanging lamps in the sanctuary.

As noted there is a small passage opening off the north side of the chancel which connects with the exterior side door and the sacristy, behind (east of) the chancel. The four-panel door opening from the passage into the sacristy has a small rectangular opening in an upper panel fitted with wood lattice whereby, when closed, a priest, in the sacristy, could hear confession by communicants in the passage. The sacristy is a simple room with a painted

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wood floor and painted plaster walls and ceiling. A storage wardrobe is built across the south wall for vestments, altar hangings, and other worship furnishings: it is cedar lined.

The Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery

The Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery is a small rectangular enclosure, measuring thirty-two feet on its east and west sides and twenty-four feet on its north and south sides, which contains the Michael Ferrall Family Vault. The enclosure is comprised of a cast-iron fence mounted on a continuous granite perimeter base. The fence is simple in design with principal vertical stiles supporting ornamental leaf-shaped finials which form a continuous cresting around the top of the fence. The stiles and cresting ramp up and inward to the granite gateway centered on the east side of the cemetery. It has the form of an aedicule with square-in-plan granite piers supporting a lintel on which a pediment is flanked by simple block-form acroteria. A cross is carved into the face of the pediment. The gateway is fitted with a cast-iron gate. The Michael Ferrall Family Vault is rectangular in shape, seven-and-a-half feet wide on its east and west sides and about ten feet deep on its north and south sides. It is a brick structure covered with stucco. The half-round top of the vault has stepped parapet ends on the east and west. The east parapet is the front of the vault and has a trio of crosses. Here, a white marble tablet is placed in the center of its east face and above the granite enframed entrance to the vault which has been sealed with brick and stucco. The marble tablet has two recessed field panels. The lower lunette-shaped panel bears an inscription reading "M. Ferrall's Family Vault A. D. 1859." The upper panel features a cross flanked by stylized willow trees. It was carved and signed by "Grier & Co., Raleigh." Three granite ledger stones are positioned on the south side of the vault in the southern part of the enclosure; they were probably placed here in 1969. One marks the grave of Nannie Marie Gary (1887-1969) by whose will she directed the erection of the other two; a second ledger stone marked the grave of her brother Frederick Sterling Marshall Gary, Jr. (1886-1908) and the third marks the grave of her mother, Mary Ursula Tormey Gary (1864-1898), and four infants born between 1890 and 1898.

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The Church of the Immaculate Conception and the Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery are handsome and unusually well-preserved resources that demonstrate the remarkably close relationship of family and church in nineteenth century North Carolina; the church and cemetery, located on sites which were earlier the side and rear yards, respectively, of Michael Ferrall's house on Halifax's main street, hold statewide significance in the areas of architecture, social history, and funerary art and satisfy Criteria A and C and Criteria Considerations A and D. The period of significance, 1859-1947, begins with the erection of the family vault and fence in 1859 and continues to 1947, the last year in which the property meets the fifty-year criterion for listing. The church was closed twenty-two years later in 1969, upon the death of Miss Nannie Gary, the last member of the Ferrall family associated with the church.

Michael Ferrall (1811-1862), an Irish Catholic immigrant who came to Halifax in the 1820s and established himself as a merchant, was the progenitor of a small family whose members were associated with the fortunes and development of the Roman Catholic church in Halifax County from the 1820s until the death of Ferrall's great-granddaughter, Nannie Marie Gary (1887-1969) in 1969. Ferrall supported Catholic interests in both his community and the state, becoming a benefactor of the Church of St. John the Baptist in Raleigh in 1859. That same year, following the death of his wife Mary Elizabeth Williams Eppes (1810-1858), he erected an impressive burial vault, enclosed with a cast-iron fence that is one of the most highly developed individual examples of its type outside larger cemeteries such as Cedar Grove in New Bern and the Episcopal Cemetery in Elizabeth City. The vault is identified by a handsome white marble tablet bearing the inscription "M. Ferrall's Family Vault A. D. 1859." Mrs. Ferrall, Mr. Ferrall, their two daughters, two sons-in-law, and a granddaughter are buried in the vault, while another granddaughter, and six great-grandchildren, including Miss Gary are buried within the fenced enclosure. When Ferrall died in 1862, he placed his estate in trust for the benefit of his daughters in the hands of the Bishop of Charleston, whose purview included North Carolina until the state was set apart as a vicariate in 1868.

For some sixty years Roman Catholic services were held in the parlor of Michael Ferrall's house, from the 1820s until 1889 when the trustee of his estate sold a small lot in the south side yard of the house to the Rt. Rev. Leo Haid, Vicar-Apostolic of North Carolina. This diminutive Gothic-Revival-style frame church was built in the late winter and spring of 1889 and dedicated by Bishop Haid on 5 May 1889. When THE ROANOKE NEWS reported on the dedicatory services the following Thursday, the 9th, the newspaper noted that "The church is a frame structure of Gothic architecture, and is after plans drawn by the celebrated architect, Durang, of Philadelphia. Though small it is very pretty." The Church of the Immaculate

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Conception is the southernmost building known to have been built to designs by Edwin Forrest Durang (1825-1911) who was the most prominent, prolific, and successful architect of Catholic churches and related facilities in Philadelphia for much of the second half of the nineteenth century. The church is architecturally significant for its association with Durang, its designer, as an unusually well-preserved example in a group of important Gothic-Revival-style frame churches erected in North Carolina, and as the only known nineteenth century Gothic-Revival-style frame Catholic church to survive in the state.

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The Church of the Immaculate Conception and the Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery, occupying sites originally in the side yard and rear garden, respectively, of Michael Ferrall's house, demonstrate the extraordinarily close relationship of family and church, particularly the Roman Catholic church, in Halifax County. When Michael Ferrall came as an Irish Catholic immigrant to Halifax, the county seat of Halifax County, in the 1820s there were about 600 Catholics living in all of North Carolina; the state, together with South Carolina and Georgia, were part of the Diocese of Charleston, newly-formed in 1820. Six years after his death in 1862, North Carolina was separated from the Diocese of Charleston and became a vicariate of its own under the direction of the Rt. Rev. James Gibbons, D.D. In 1889, when the dream of a Catholic church in Halifax was realized with the consecration of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Catholics, while still a minority, were rising in both influence and number in the state. The development of a small Catholic community in Halifax County owed to the presence of Michael Ferrall and the kinsmen and fellow Catholics he encouraged to settle in its towns and villages. His parlor in Halifax was the scene of Catholic services for about half a century. The erection of this church, on the site of his former store house--a lot sold by the trustee of his estate to Leo Haid, Vicar-Apostolic of North Carolina, was supported by his two daughters, Hibernia F. Ferrall Maguire and Harriett Ann Ferrall Tormey McMahon. The preservation of the church, always a mission, owes to the long stewardship of his great-granddaughter, Nannie Marie Gary, who bequeathed her house, lot, and graveyard to the Diocese of Raleigh. Through her bequest of her residual estate a fund has been established which guarantees the maintenance and preservation of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Michael Ferrall, his daughters, and members of his family down to his great-granddaughter--some of whom worshipped in the church--are buried either in the family vault or in the grounds enclosed by a cast iron fence erected in 1859.¹

* * *

Michael Ferrall was born in 1811 in County Longford, Ireland, and by 1829 he came to Halifax, the seat of Halifax County, which had achieved fame in the eighteenth century as a center of political activity. Halifax was the center of a prosperous society which occupied houses in town or on the plantations covering the face of the county; the county seat was on the navigable course of the Roanoke River and thus became a center for trade in the region. The advantages of trade drew Michael Ferrall to Halifax where he served as an agent for the Petersburg firm of Dumas & McIlwaine. In 1830 he and his brother Thomas entered a partnership with the firm; in 1834 the Ferrall brothers bought out Dumas & McIlwaine. In 1839 Michael Ferrall bought out his brother's interest and operated alone as a commission merchant until his

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death. In 1845 he relocated briefly to Norfolk but quickly returned to Halifax.

Michael Ferrall prospered as a merchant and exercised a strong and important voice among Catholics in North Carolina. He was probably the first or surely one of the first Catholics to reside in Halifax. With prosperity and the prospect of affluence, Michael Ferrall married into a local family and encouraged his brothers and others to depart Ireland for Halifax County. On 31 October 1831 he was married to Mary Elizabeth Williams Eppes (1810-1858), the daughter of Richard Eppes. The couple were the parents of several children, including Joseph Francis Ferrall, their first-born; however, only two daughters lived to adulthood and produced children of their own. Hibernia Francenia Ferrall (1839-1905) was born in 1839 and educated at the Georgetown Convent. Harriett Anne Ferrall (1845-1908) was born in 1845 and educated at the Georgetown Convent and the Ursuline Convent at Columbia, South Carolina. Services for his family and servants were held in the parlor of his house by visiting priests; according to Miss Gary's memoir, linens, vestments, and sacred vessels were kept in a trunk in the Ferrall house.

In time he successfully encouraged his five brothers to leave Ireland. Thomas Ferrall later settled in Scotland Neck where he is said to have built a small chapel for his family. James Ferrall, another brother, was a planter in the West Indies; his widow and daughter later taught school at Scotland Neck and subsequently entered the Visitation Convent of Mount de Sales in Baltimore. Francis Ferrall became a Roman Catholic priest in the Diocese of Charleston and later located in New York. Little mention is made in Miss Gary's memoir of Charles Ferrall and Edward Ferrall who apparently worked for Michael Ferrall; Edward eventually entered a monastery. Patrick Ferrall, a kinsman of the six brothers, settled in Raleigh, married Margaret O'Rourke, the daughter of John O'Rourke, and became an influential lay leader in the Catholic community in the capital.

Miss Gary in her historical memoir mentions many of the priests who came to Halifax and held services in her great-grandfather's lifetime, up to his death in 1862; they and other Catholic clergy were personal friends. In CATHOLICITY IN THE CAROLINIAS AND GEORGIA, the first authoritative history of the Catholic Church in the territory embraced by the Diocese of Charleston, the Rev. Dr. J. J. O'Connell notes the hospitality offered by Michael Ferrall and others to Father Charles J. Groghan (1822-18__): Father Groghan was a missionary priest in North Carolina for eleven years between 1850 and 1861.

Wherever he went he was hospitably entertained. During his periodical sojourn in Newbern he was the guest of Judge Manly's family, of Judge Heath, of Edenton, of Mrs. Leroy, in Washington, in Halifax of Mr. Michael Farrel (sic), in Scotland Neck of Mr. Thomas Farrel's (sic)

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family; all worthy and devoted Catholics, the co-operators of the clergy in planting the Faith, now mostly gone to their reward, but leaving inheritors of their religion and piety (CCG, 156).

In 1859 when the former Baptist Church at the southeast corner of Union Square in Raleigh was acquired and refitted as St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Michael Farrell contributed \$100, becoming one of the four largest individual benefactors to the church project (CCG, 413; also, WAKE: CAPITAL COUNTY OF NORTH CAROLINA, 386).

Michael Farrell's interest in the Raleigh church could have been through his cousin Patrick Farrell, who contributed fifty dollars to the endeavor, through conversation with Catholic authorities, or because he was in Raleigh on family business. Mary Elizabeth Williams Eppes Ferrall had died in 1858 and was buried in the garden to the east of the house. In 1859 Michael Ferrall constructed a burial vault and apparently re-interred his wife in it. The brick structure was covered with stucco and fitted with an entrance on the east. Here, above the entrance, Ferrall set a carved white marble tablet, ornamented with a cross and two willow trees in a panel above a recessed lunette bearing the inscription "M. Ferrall's Family Vault A. D. 1859." It was carved and signed by "Grier & Co., Raleigh." At present nothing is known of the marbleworks or its principals. The following year, on 8 February 1860, Ferrall's eldest daughter Hibernia was married to Dominic James Maguire (1833-1865).

Michael Ferrall died on 24 April 1862 and was buried with his wife in the family vault. He devised bequests of \$500 each to his kinsman Patrick Ferrall and his niece Mary T. Ferrall and bequests of lesser amounts to four Catholic priests, the Rev. Thomas Quigley of Raleigh, the Rev. Thomas Murphy of Wilmington, the Rev. Thomas Mabry of Petersburg, and the Rev. Joseph H. Plunkett of Portsmouth, Virginia. His daughters were to inherit his household and kitchen furniture outright. The majority of his estate was left in trust to the Rt. Rev. Patrick N. Lynch, Bishop of Charleston, who was to apply one-half of the income to the support of each of the two daughters. Small amounts were to be set apart to keep up the family vault and to pay the salary of the Catholic priest appointed to the mission then embracing Halifax. He named as his executors Edward Conigland of Halifax and Joseph B. Batchelor of Warrenton; both were attorneys. As events proved Edward Conigland, one of the most prominent attorneys in northeastern North Carolina, served as both executor of the estate and as local agent for Bishop Lynch. (Edward Congiland (1819-1877), the son of Dr. Patrick Conigland, was, like Ferrall, an Irish-born Catholic. He came to New York in 1834 and in 1844 he relocated to Halifax to study law. His brother, Andrew Conigland (ca. 1806-1879), was already in Halifax County and residing at Enfield where he taught school. Edward Conigland lived in a Greek Revival-style house on his estate, Glen Ivy,

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to the south of Michael Ferrall's house where he was buried. In 1980 the house was moved to a new site at 228 South King Street and restored in the early 1980s; the new Halifax County Court House was built on the Glen Ivy land.) A series of ten letters written by Conigland to Bishop Lynch and dated between 1866 and 1875 survive in the Charleston Diocesan Archives; they document Conigland's scrupulous efforts to preserve his friend's estate through the difficult years of Reconstruction and general devaluation in rural North Carolina. Conigland's estimate of the value of the estate, quoted in a letter of 6 December 1870 to the bishop, was \$30,000.

During the 1860s there were other significant changes in the lives of his daughters. In 1863 Harriett Anne Ferrall was married to John Tormey (1835-1866), also an Irish-born Catholic, who served as captain in Company G of the 12th Regiment, North Carolina Troops. In 1864 a daughter, Mary Ursula Tormey, was born to Harriett Anne and John Tormey. In 1865, Dominic James Maguire, husband of Hibernia, died, having sired two children: Thomas Ferrall Maguire (1863-1942), who located in Raleigh; and Mary Elizabeth Eppes Maguire (ca. 1866-1948) who entered the Ursuline Convent in Columbia, South Carolina, where she was Mother Superior at her death. Maguire was buried in the family vault. Two years later, in 1866, John Tormey died and he, too, was buried in the family vault. Within the space of a few years, the Ferrall household was expanded from the tight circle headed by Michael Ferrall to a large household consisting of the two sisters, their husbands, and three children, and then reduced to a matriarchy of the two sisters and their children. This later situation would not last long for in 1868 Harriett Anne (Ferrall) Tormey was married to Michael McMahon (1833-1908).

During the later 1860s, the 1870s, and the 1880s, Catholic priests continued to visit Halifax, holding services either in the Ferrall sisters's home or at Edward Conigland's until his death. These priests also visited other Catholic families who lived in Halifax County on these visitations. In 1868 Pope Pius IX created North Carolina as a vicariate; the Rt. Rev. James Gibbons, D.D. (1834-1921) was named vicar-apostolic and remained the head of the North Carolina Church until 1877 when he was transferred to Baltimore. Gibbons' term as head of the Roman Catholic Church in North Carolina initiated a period of growth in its membership, in the number of priests, and in the number of churches. These advances continued through the term of the Rt. Rev. Leo Haid, D.C., O.S.B. (1849-1924) who was consecrated Vicar-Apostolic of North Carolina on 1 July 1888 and served as head of the Roman Catholic Church in North Carolina until his death.

While there had long been an interest in having a Roman Catholic church in Halifax the small number of Catholics had precluded that possibility until a confluence of events in the 1880s. In 1885 Mary Ursula Tormey (1864-1898), Michael Ferrall's granddaughter, was married to Frederick Sterling Marshall

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Gary (1859-1930). Their first-born child, a son, was born in 1886 and named Frederick Sterling Marshall Gary, Jr. (1886-1908). The next year, a daughter Nannie Marie Gary (1887-1969) was born. According to family tradition Mrs. Gary was determined that her children would grow up in a community with a Catholic church. There is a coincident family tradition that about 1886 a fire destroyed the store house of Michael Ferrall which stood immediately south of his residence on King Street and threatened the frame house then occupied by his daughters, Mrs. Maguire and Mrs. McMahon, and their families; the sisters are said to have prayed with the promise that if their house was saved from destruction they would build a church on the site. This enthusiasm for a church found support in the work of the Rev. Father Thomas Frederick Price (1860-1919), pastor of St. Paul's Church, New Bern, from 1886 until ca. 1895 when he was transferred to Sacred Heart Church, Raleigh. Halifax County was a mission of the New Bern church.

The circumstances through which Edwin Forrest Durang (1825-1911) of Philadelphia, one of the foremost nineteenth-century Catholic church architects in the United States, came to design the church at Halifax are not known at present. However, the influence of either James Cardinal Gibbons, who had earlier enjoyed the hospitality of the Ferrall sisters, or that of the Rt. Rev. Leo Haid, newly consecrated as Vicar-Apostolic of North Carolina is surely evident. The Church of the Immaculate Conception is the only building in North Carolina known to have been designed by him and is the southernmost of the many churches designed in a career which spanned some sixty-five years. Speculation exists that Durang might also have designed St. Mary's Catholic Church in Goldsboro, erected in 1889-1890; however, his authorship of the eclectic brick church remains unconfirmed. According to Miss Gary's memoir, the choir from St. Mary's Church, begun in the late spring of 1889 and dedicated in February 1890, sang at the dedication of the Church of the Immaculate Conception.

THE ROANOKE NEWS, published in Weldon, North Carolina, printed the first mention of the church in its (Thursday) 7 February 1889 issue in its local news columns.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH--For several years now the members of the Roman Catholic church at Halifax have been working to get funds with which to build a church. With the usual success of ladies in such matters they have at last realized a sufficient sum for their purpose, and on Tuesday work began on the building and will continue until it is completed sufficiently for divine worship. The church is situated on the lot on which the Ferrall store building stood.

Two weeks later, on 21 February 1889, Thomas W. Hill, trustee of the Michael Ferrall estate, conveyed a rectangular one-eighth acre lot, measuring fifty

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feet in width along Main (now King) Street and 117 feet in depth, to Leo Haid, Vicar-Apostolic of North Carolina. The price for the lot, immediately south of the Ferrall residence, was \$100 (Halifax County Deed Book 87, 453).

The construction of the church moved swiftly. On 21 March 1889, THE ROANOKE NEWS informed its readers "The Roman Catholic church is nearing completion" under the heading "Halifax Items." Work on the church proceeded through the spring of 1889 and, although not entirely finished, a dedicatory service was scheduled for Sunday, 5 May. THE ROANOKE NEWS reported the event in its following issue of 9 May 1889.

CHURCH DEDICATION--The Roman Catholic church at Halifax was dedicated on Sunday by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Haid. Owing to the high rates charged for the excursion train by the railroad authorities none was run as was formerly announced but excursion tickets were sold from Wilmington and Goldsboro for the regular trains, and a large crowd from those places and the vicinity of Halifax was present to witness the services which were solemn and impressive. The audience was estimated at about 250.

Following was the order observed:

Dedicatory services, by the Rt. Rev. Leo Haid, Bishop of North Carolina.

Music, by select choir from Goldsboro.

High Mass, celebrated by Father Price.

Dedication sermon by Bishop Haid.

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Singing of the Te Deum, by the choir.

The choir sang Bordese's Mass in F, and the music was good.

The church is a frame structure of Gothic architecture, and is after plans drawn by the celebrated architect, Durang, of Philadelphia. Though small it is very pretty. It has not been entirely completed but work on it will continue until it is.

Whatever few details remained to be completed were apparently finished soon after the dedication; the Church of the Immaculate Conception has a remarkable integrity and consistency of finish and there has been virtually no change in the building since 1889 except for brick infill between its original brick piers. For approximately two decades the Church of the Immaculate Conception

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flourished and was the scene of fairly regular services held by Father Thomas Frederick Price who had charge of the Halifax mission until he went to Raleigh where he established a Catholic orphanage at Nazareth in the southwest part of the capital. Price was succeeded by Father James Pendergrast who presided at the funeral mass for Mary Ursula Tormey Gary, Michael Ferrall's granddaughter, who died in March 1898. She apparently died from complications with the birth of a son, Francis Xavier Gary (1898): her ledger gravestone bears her name, his name, and that of three other deceased infants all of whom are buried in the family cemetery: John Tormey Gary (1890), Harriette M. Eppes Gary (1892), and Joseph Crawford Gary (1894).

Divine worship in the Church of the Immaculate Conception and the extended circle of the Ferrall family, occupying the ancestral home beside the church, marked by promise in the last decade of the nineteenth century, would be marked by further diminution through a series of deaths between 1905 and 1908 which claimed the lives of five members of the family. In 1905 Hibernia Francenia Ferrall Maguire (1839-1905), Michael Ferrall's eldest daughter and a widow for forty years, died and was buried in the family vault. Two years later, in 1907, her niece Mary Maurice McMahon (1877-1907) died and was buried in the vault. The next year, 1908, saw the death of three members of the family: Harriett Ann Ferrall (Tormey) McMahon (1845-1908); her husband Michael McMahon (1833-1908); and her grandson Frederick Sterling Marshall Gary, Jr. (1886-1908). Mrs. McMahon and her daughter are buried in the family vault; Mr. Gary's grave in the enclosure is marked by a ledger stone. The body of Mr. McMahon was buried immediately outside the fence and marked by the simplest of stones (which is not noticeable).

Within the short space of a decade, between 1898 and 1908, the extended Ferrall family in Halifax comprising three generations was reduced to a grandson-in-law, Frederick Sterling Marshall Gary, Sr. (1859-1930), a great-granddaughter Nannie Marie Gary (1887-1969), and her half-uncles, Michael Ferrall McMahon and Joseph Francis McMahon. Following the death of Mrs. McMahon in 1908, the Ferrall property was divided. Miss Nannie Gary later acquired Michael Ferrall's house and leased it until after her father's death; she and her stepmother eventually left the house built by her parents and moved back into her great-grandfather's house beside the church. Their cousins, the children of Hibernia F. Ferrall Maguire, had long since departed Halifax: Mary Eppes Maguire became a member of the Ursuline convent in Columbia, South Carolina, and lived there until her death; Thomas Ferrall Maguire married Helen Lavender and lived near Littleton, in western Halifax County. Thus the number of Catholics in Halifax was reduced to Miss Gary and perhaps one or two others; her father remained an Episcopalian.

From 1908 until 1922 occasional services were held at the Church of the Immaculate Conception; during this period Miss Nannie Gary assumed stewardship

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of the church and exercised care for the building for some sixty years until her death in 1969. In the early 1920s the Halifax mission was placed under the care of Father Arthur Raine Freeman, pastor of St. Mary's Church, Goldsboro, whose assistant, Father John P. Manley, had charge of the Halifax mission. As Miss Gary relates in her historical memoir, Catholic life in Halifax County took on a new, improved dimension with the arrival of Father Manley. Manley held services in the homes of Catholic families in Roanoke Rapids, Weldon, Crowells, Enfield, and Scotland Neck and on the first Sunday of each month he held mass at the Church of the Immaculate Conception with a service of Benediction in the evening and a second mass the following Monday. This practice generally continued until 1929. Missions and special festival services were also held at the church in Halifax since it was the most architecturally developed Catholic facility in the county.

In the 1930s Catholicity in Halifax County entered a period of growth and renewal that had been unexampled in the county during the century since Michael Ferrall came to Halifax in the 1820s. In 1930, according to Miss Gary, the Catholics in Halifax County were reassigned to the care of Father Francis J. McCourt, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church at Rocky Mount. The following year, 1931, the parish of St. John the Baptist was organized at Roanoke Rapids and a church was built and dedicated on 5 July 1932. The construction of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church effectively made it the center of Catholic life in Halifax County; this important role was further confirmed by the arrival of Father Peter McNerney as resident priest about 1933 and the construction of a rectory. Father McNerney and his successor held occasional services at the Church of the Immaculate Conception. The fiftieth anniversary of the church was honored by the Most Rev. Eugene J. McGuinness, Bishop of Raleigh, who celebrated a Pontifical High Mass on Tuesday, 2 May 1939, in the presence of many Catholic clergy. Miss Gary recalled "The Altar was beautifully decorated with golden Scotch broom, old lace and the old crystal candelabrum that have been used in the church since it was built, with single crystal candlesticks making out the proper number of candles." On Monday evening, 1 May, Miss Gary had entertained the visiting clergy; after the fiftieth anniversary services, luncheon was served at the home of Miss Gary's stepmother, Mrs. Sterling M. Gary.

For thirty years, from 1939 until her death in 1969, Miss Nannie Marie Gary oversaw the maintenance of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. In September 1943 she prepared a historical memoir, "History of The Church of the Immaculate Conception, Halifax, North Carolina," which remains the principal source of information on the history of the church. On 18 May 1965 Bishop Waters had an interview with Miss Gary which has been transcribed; while repeating much of the information found in the 1943 memoir, the transcribed interview also includes additional information on the church and the Ferrall family.

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In 1958 Monsignor William Francis O'Brien (1872-1960), pastor emeritus of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Durham, published a small volume of memoirs in which he recounted his experience as a Catholic priest in North Carolina. He had been named the first resident pastor of Durham in 1907 and he remained there until being named pastor emeritus. Halifax was one of the missions attached to the Durham parish, and in his memoirs he recalled his association with the Church of the Immaculate Conception and the Ferrall family.

Another Mission I was always glad to visit was the little Immaculate Conception Church in Halifax, the first church built by Father Price. The lady in charge of the church in Halifax in 1907, was Mrs. McMahon, a niece of James Farrell of Scotland Neck and the grandmother of Miss Nannie Gary who attended the church there and looked after the needs of the priests in their monthly visits for a number of years. She still attends the little church across the yard from her home that her grandparents attended and which she has known from childhood, save now she attends and is present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the little church, full of sweet memories of the past, and by necessity, physically present in a wheelchair. Mrs. McMahon, who was so devoted to the cares of the church and its needs, would speak of cherished memories she had, of devoted and zealous missionaries who came to Halifax in the past and of their pleasant experiences in the neighborhood. She remembered the days when Bishop Gibbons was Vicar-Apostolic of North Carolina and who became the Archbishop of Baltimore and Cardinal Priest of Holy Church. When Father Price was a young priest he used to confide in her as a mother, telling her how he had intended to see Bishop Haid and speak about the establishment of a Missionary center and the formation of a band of missionary priests for the conversion of their native state, North Carolina. Mr. James Farrell (sic), of Scotland Neck, was the brother of Miss Gary's great-grandfather, Michael Farrell (sic), whose tomb I often visited in Halifax. (THE MEMOIRS OF MONSIGNOR WILLIAM FRANCIS O'BRIEN, 55-56.)

Miss Nannie Marie Gary died on 16 January 1969; her body was buried in the family cemetery surrounding the family vault. In her will, dated 14 March 1963, she left "to the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Raleigh, North Carolina, my house, lot and grave yard in the town of Halifax, Halifax County, North Carolina. The said house and lot being where I now live and adjoins the Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception belonging to the Diocese of Raleigh, North Carolina. I leave the property with the understanding that the same be used for some charitable or diocesan work and put to use at the earliest possible date after my death, in this way preserving both properties. (Halifax County Wills 69-E-14.) Specific bequests were made to

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friends and relatives, the North Carolina Museum of History, the White Hart Lodge in Halifax, and the Historic Halifax Restoration Association: she bequeathed her great-grandfather's account books and papers to the University of North Carolina. A bequest also provided for the erection of a ledger gravestone over the grave of her father, who had served as clerk of court in Halifax County from 1894 until his death, in the Colonial Cemetery and like ledger gravestones over the graves of her mother and her brother in the family cemetery; the wording for inscriptions was also specified. Her executor (and nephew) Sterling Gary Gilliam saw to these wishes and also erected a ledger gravestone over Miss Gary's grave. The residue of her estate was bequeathed to the Bishop of Raleigh.

The Diocese of Raleigh accepted the house, lot, and graveyard as she requested; however, it was clearly not feasible to use the Ferrall house for charitable or religious purposes. Acceding to her wishes that the house be preserved, the house was conveyed to the Historic Halifax Restoration Association and moved a few blocks north into the complex of buildings maintained as the Historic Halifax State Historic Site. According to family tradition the house had been first used as the Eagle Tavern at the site of the colonial town, down by the Roanoke River: in the early 1840s it is said to have been moved by Michael Ferrall onto the lot on King Street where it stood until the early 1970s. Following its relocation northward to the corner of King and St. David Streets in the center of Halifax, it was restored, and is interpreted as a museum under the style of the "Eagle Tavern." The former site of the Ferrall family house was grassed over and the rectangular lot including the Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery at its northeastern boundary on Granville Street forms the open setting of the church. The entire property is lawn, partially shaded by volunteer trees, and well maintained.

During the years since Miss Gary's death, Mrs. Charles (Helen) Boykin, Sr., and her son Mr. Boykin, Jr., neighbors and long-time friends of Miss Gary's were unofficial stewards of the church. Over time, even with their efforts, the building showed signs of disuse. In 1972 when Father Gerald Lewis became chancellor of the Diocese of Raleigh he undertook certain stabilization and general maintenance work. The church was painted and the roof covered with asbestos shingles. The church's stained glass windows were repaired and stabilized by Stained Glass Associates of Raleigh. Electric heat was installed to provide a generally even year-around temperature. At the cemetery, weedy vines and other volunteer growth was removed, and the cast iron fence was sanded and painted. Except for the repairs to the windows, the work in 1972 and 1973 was undertaken by Richard Helbig of Raleigh with the assistance of Father Lewis, Robert Mulder of Raleigh, Mrs. Boykin, and Mr. Boykin, Jr.

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In the early 1990s, Catholics in Halifax County and members of the Ferrall family pressed the Diocese of Raleigh to undertake certain remedial efforts to preserve the building. During a two-year period, from 1993 through 1995, general repairs were made to both the exterior and interior of the church. The brick masonry foundation was repointed where necessary, two new flights of wood steps were erected at the front and side entrances to the church, a brick walk was laid to the sidewalk along King Street, and wall-mounted light fixtures which once flanked the front door were repaired and remounted. The exterior was painted and the stained glass windows fitted with protective panels. Inside, the plaster was repaired, the walls repainted, the electrical wiring upgraded, and a new heating and air conditioning system was installed. Attention was also given to the furnishings of the church which were cleaned, repaired, restored, or regilded as necessary. In other instances, so much attention lavished on a building might have given it a "new" appearance; however, these efforts at the Church of the Immaculate Conception merely returned the building to the appearance it probably had in 1939 when Miss Gary, the Bishop of Raleigh, and a host of Catholic clergy and communicants celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the church. Today the church is under the care of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Roanoke Rapids, and is used for occasional services and opened for historical tours.

ARCHITECTURAL AND FUNERARY ART CONTEXTThe Church of the Immaculate Conception

On 9 May 1889 when THE ROANOKE NEWS described Edwin Forrest Durang, the designer of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, as "the celebrated architect, Durang, of Philadelphia," the newspaper was accurately stating the facts. During most of the second half of the nineteenth century Edwin Forrest Durang (1829-1911) was the most prominent, successful, and prolific architect of Catholic churches and church-related buildings in Philadelphia. His entry in the BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF PHILADELPHIA ARCHITECTS (229-234), published in 1985 lists some 189 documented building and design projects designed by Durang between 1859 and 1908; in 1909 he took his son, Francis Ferdinand Durang (1884-1966), into his firm which was renamed E. F. Durang & Son and produced another fourteen projects before his death in 1911. Of that total group of 203 buildings and projects the vast majority (176) are in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania; nineteen are located in New Jersey, and there are a total of eight projects in the states of Illinois, Ohio, Alabama, New York, and the District of Columbia. The Church of the Immaculate Conception in Halifax does not appear on the list of buildings and projects which is compiled mainly from published sources, from Durang's few surviving drawings and papers housed in the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, the Archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and some few other references.²

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Edwin Forrest Durang, the son of Charles Durang (1791-1870) and the grandson of John Durang (1768-1822), was born on 1 April 1829 into a distinguished family of American actors and theater people; he was named for Edwin Forrest (1806-1872), the celebrated American tragedian, who was surely a family friend. Michael J. Lewis, a Durang scholar and architectural historian of Philadelphia, has suggested that his family's life in the theater and an early interest in stage design led the young Durang into architecture. In 1857 he joined the office of architect John E. Carver who was known for his ecclesiastical work in Philadelphia and at Carver's death in 1859 he continued the firm. During a career extending over half a century, he specialized in ecclesiastical design for Catholic clients, producing churches, schools, convents, hospitals, parochial residences, and other buildings required by the church for religious, educational, and charitable purposes. He also designed a small number of private residential projects including summer cottages on the Jersey shore.

Durang's ability to design skillfully in the Classical, Romanesque, and Gothic Revival styles enabled him to satisfy a broad range of clients and churches whose members included large numbers of Italian, German, Irish, or Polish immigrants who poured into Philadelphia and moved throughout the city and the state to work in factories, foundries, mines, and as clerks, domestics, and laborers. His buildings appealed on a popular level but his larger success as an architect owed to his ability to satisfy the Catholic clergy who hired him and, in turn, recommended him to their colleagues in the church. As Lewis and others have noted he held a virtual monopoly on ecclesiastical design for the Catholic Church in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania from the late 1860s until the 1890s when Henry D. Dagit's office began garnering important commissions. While many of his buildings survive, the Church of St. Charles Borromeo (1868-1876), the Church of the Gesu (1878-1888), the Church of St. Francis Xavier (1894-1895) and the Church of the Visitation remain landmarks in the religious fabric of Philadelphia.

Given the fact that Durang's only other known work south of Pennsylvania was at Trinity College in Washington, D.C., and for Sacred Heart Chapel and the Visitation Convent in Mobile, Alabama, his design of the Church of the Immaculate Conception was probably secured through the Rt. Rev. Leo Haid, Vicar-Apostolic of North Carolina, who was born, educated, and ordained in Pennsylvania. The Halifax church was, perhaps, the first church to be planned after Haid became head of the Roman Catholic church in North Carolina, and the choice of Durang was entirely logical given Haid's background. In 1993 Michael J. Lewis noted the similarities between the design of the Church of the Immaculate Conception and Durang's other work.

In particular it closely resembles wood churches built by him all over Pennsylvania in the 1870s and 1880s. The biforate wood tracery and

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lancet windows recall his other churches; the flat facade enframed between slightly asymmetrical towers is typical of his work; and the rose window and projecting porch beneath it can also be found throughout his career. There is a certain schematic flatness about the building that is a hallmark of Durang's--the sense of the building being a paper conception. I think Durang was at heart a classicist, and all of his Gothic churches have an ordered regularity about them that is rather non-Gothic in spirit.³

There has been some speculation that Durang was also the designer of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Goldsboro that was begun in 1889 and dedicated in 1890; however, there is no known documentation to prove his authorship at present. Neither of the articles in THE HEADLIGHT, published in Goldsboro, concerning the laying of the cornerstone and the dedication of the building mention an architect.⁴ The Halifax church served as a model, later in the century when a Catholic church was built in Tarboro. St. Catherine's Catholic Church, erected at St. David's and Pitt Streets, was a virtual copy of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. The building was completed in the spring of 1898 and dedicated by Bishop Haid on 30 October 1898. That building became unsound and was replaced by a new church at St. David and Phillips Streets in 1929.⁵

The Church of the Immaculate Conception survives today as an important and remarkably well-preserved example of the small parish churches designed by Edwin Forrest Durang during a long career as a prominent and prolific Catholic architect. In North Carolina it is one of a group of very few Catholic churches which survives from the nineteenth century and includes St. Paul's Church in New Bern (1841, 1896), St. Anne's Church in Edenton (1858-1868, 1898), St. Mary's Church in Goldsboro (1889-1890), St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Gaston County (1844), and the former St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Wilmington (1845-1847, 1858, 1870) which was damaged by fire in 1966 and never again used as a church. The Gothic Revival style of the Church of the Immaculate Conception places it among a small but impressive group of frame Gothic Revival-style churches of several denominations, but mostly Episcopalian, which continues to stand in small villages and rural communities in North Carolina. Within this group, the Church of the Immaculate Conception is an important and well-preserved example and the only surviving nineteenth century Gothic Revival-style frame Catholic church in North Carolina.

The Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery

The Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery, comprising a stucco-covered brick vault, a Greek Revival-style stone entranceway, and a cast-iron fence enclosing the burial ground, is an important example of funerary art in Halifax County and North Carolina as one of the few such highly developed family burial places of

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its type surviving outside public or church cemeteries in North Carolina. Burial vaults of this type, built of brick, covered with smooth stucco, and fitted with stepped parapet ends occur in the Cedar Grove Cemetery in New Bern and in the Episcopal Cemetery in Elizabeth City (where some of the finest examples have been compromised within the year by a very misguided renovation effort). As a merchant, Michael Ferrall would probably have visited in New Bern and Elizabeth City and could have seen vaults in those cities. He could also have seen the impressive group of like vaults in Elmwood Cemetery in Norfolk, Virginia. The memory of these was no doubt clear in his mind in 1859 when he determined on a style of monument to raise over the grave of his wife Mary Elizabeth Williams Eppes who had died in 1858.

Michael Ferrall could easily have ordered a handsome individual monument to mark the grave of Mrs. Ferrall from a marble yard in Norfolk, Baltimore, or New York and thereby followed the example of other merchants and planters in Halifax County in the antebellum period. As Halifax is located well inland and has a relatively low water table, neither was there a reason, as in New Bern, Elizabeth City, and Norfolk, all of which have high water tables, to erect a vault for practical hygienic reasons. Instead, as the marble tablet on the east facade of the vault indicates, with its inscription "M. Ferrall's Family Vault," Michael Ferrall had a perceptible sense of family and his family's station in their community. This concept, probably reinforced by their separateness as Catholics in a region that was largely Protestant, no doubt encouraged him to erect a monument that would also shelter members of his family in death. The inscription on the tablet, carved and signed by Grier & Co. of Raleigh confirm that intention. The placement of three granite crosses on the east parapet end of the vault are a metaphorical reference to the three crosses erected in Gethsemane for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the thieves who accompanied him in death.

Ferrall's development of the family cemetery as a burial place was enhanced by the erection of a handsome cast-iron fence that encloses a rectangular plot measuring approximately thirty-two feet in width and twenty-four feet in depth. The vault occupies the center of this plot. A trabeated granite entranceway, in the form of an aedicula with acroteria, is centered in the east side of the fence, on axis with the vault door: the opening is fitted with a cast-iron gate, and a cross is carved into the pediment. The three granite ledger stones, erected in 1969, repeat the material of the Greek Revival gate and are positioned unobtrusively on the south side of the vault.

Endnotes

1. The principal source for the history of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, the relationship of the Ferrall Family to it, and the development of Roman Catholicism in nineteenth and early-twentieth century Halifax County

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are "History of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Halifax, North Carolina," a historical memoir prepared by Miss Nannie Marie Gary in September 1943, and the transcription of a conversation between Bishop Waters of the Diocese of Raleigh and Miss Gary held in Halifax on 18 May 1965. Photocopies of both items were made available to this author by Margaret M. Hofmann who also supplied to him other information used in this nomination. Variances on some points occur between the 1943 sketch and the 1965 interview; where issues could not be resolved, the author noted one document or the other as the source of information that might be in possible dispute. These two sources and others used in the compilation of this nomination are cited in the bibliography and cited in internal notes in the text where abbreviations are used.

2. Sandra L. Tatman and Roger Moss, BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF PHILADELPHIA ARCHITECTS (Boston, 1985), pp. 229-234. Michael F. Lewis, "Edwin Forrest Durang and Catholic Church Architecture." INSPIRED, Vol. VI, No. 4/Vol. VII, No. 1, pp. 8-9, 18. These two sources provided the information on Durang used in the preparation of this nomination, together with a letter from Lewis to Margaret M. Hofmann, 25 January 1993. The list of Durang's buildings and design projects which appears in the BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF PHILADELPHIA ARCHITECTS is compiled from published sources and the surviving Durang drawings in the collection of the Athenaeum in Philadelphia. It is unclear whether Tatman and Moss attempted to confirm the construction of the many buildings listed. Durang's two projects for the Visitation Convent in Mobile, Alabama, designed in 1891 and 1892, were apparently never built; B. M. Harrod and Paul Andry of New Orleans are cited as the designers of the 1890s Chapel of the Sacred Heart at the Visitation Convent. The research and writing of Michael J. Lewis appears to be the principal work undertaken to date on Durang; however, a number of his churches have been listed in the National Register through the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office.

3. Michael J. Lewis to Margaret M. Hofmann, 25 January 1993. Lewis was then historiographer at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

4. THE HEADLIGHT (Goldsboro, North Carolina), 12 June 1889 and 12 February 1890.

5. THE DAILY SOUTHERNER (Tarboro, North Carolina), Bicentennial Edition 1976.

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Church of the Immaculate Conception and
the Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery
Halifax County, North Carolina

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the Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery
Halifax County, North Carolina

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated acreage consists of two parcels listed in Halifax County Tax Mapping System: #06-01215 and #06-01189.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the lots on which the church stands and the cemetery is located which are the site and setting of both resources and are historically associated with the church and cemetery.

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Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation
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Church of the Immaculate Conception and
the Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery
Halifax County, North Carolina

Photographs

The following information applies to all of the photographs submitted with this nomination.

1. Name of property: Church of the Immaculate Conception and the Michael Ferrall Family Cemetery
2. Location: Halifax County, North Carolina
3. Name of photographer: Davyd Foard Hood
4. Date of photographs: 24 June 1996; #E was shot on 17 February 1997.
5. Location of original negatives: North Carolina Division of Archives and History
109 East Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-2807

Description of views:

- A. Overall view, looking south
- B. Front elevation, looking south/southeast
- C. Interior view, looking southeast
- D. Interior view, looking southeast
- E. Landscape view, looking west/southwest
- F. Cemetery view, looking north
- G. Vault panel, looking west/northwest

Church of the
Immaculate
Conception + the
Michael Farrell
Family Cemetery
Zone 18
Halifax Guard

5456 1 SW
(DARLINGTON)

4072

4073

4074

4075

3 MI. TO INTERSTATE 95



