

An Anthropological Analysis of Christ Church Shrewsbury from 1733 to the Revolution

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Introduction. Founded in 1702 by an Anglican missionary priest from London, Christ Church of Shrewsbury has a long and bountiful history, one that stretched from before the Revolutionary War to present day. The clergymen of Christ Church kept detailed records of the sacramental events of their parishioners beginning in 1733, the date that the first parish church with the rectorship of John Forbes. At the onset of the Revolutionary War, the Reverend Samuel Cooke returned to his native home of England and the records from 1775 to 1810 were interrupted due to the absence of a priest. As we found the Colonial Period to provide a natural juncture for analysis, this project focused on the years from 1733 to 1775. However, any future work with the parish registry after 1775 is highly encouraged to provide a complete view and analysis of the register.

For this project, we aimed to gain a better understanding of the lives and connections of the parishioners of Christ Church and the broader community. We planned on achieving this by creating a searchable spreadsheet of all the names from our resources, analyzing the data, and then creating profiles about the parishioners that would provide a glance into their lives. This was mainly accomplished through the use of the parish register and John Stillwell's book. The parish register was a recording of the marriages, baptisms, deaths, and etc. that occurred in the church. We focused specifically on the marriages and baptisms, due to the unexpectedly high number of baptisms and the fact that there was already an existing graveyard spreadsheet. As the register is an old document, we used digital images of the register that were taken at an earlier date. There are various versions of the register that we used and also that we will mention in the paper. The original parish register dating to 1733 was believed to be lost until very recently. Another version is the Finch register, which was created by Reverend Harry Finch as he wanted to preserve the information in the original register, but realized it was quickly degrading. The Finch register was the version that was used to create a microfilm copy. And then the microfilm itself was used to create .jpeg images. Our other main

BAPTISMS.		
DATE.	NAME.	PARENTS.
1757 May 17	Janus	Richard Bates by his wife
" "	Jane	Patrick Robertson " " "
" 23	John	Abraham Buckalov " " "
" "	Isabella	John Buckalov " " "
" "	John	John & Hannah Bula
" "	Henry	Joseph Pine Junr by his wife
" "	Mary	Paul Miller " " "
Septemb 4	Catharine	Christopher W. Abalam Hyfong
November 6	Sarah	John Throckmorton by his wife
" 27	Catharine	L. M. Elizabeth Skiffeld
December 25	Sarah	Leiah Walsted by his wife
1758 April 16	Sosiah	Janus Russell " " "
May 14	Mary	Silas Cook " " "
Septemb 25	Elizabeth	
" "	Francis	adult Cranbury
" "	Margaret	do "
" "	Valeria	
1759 February 21	Samuel	John Powell by his wife
" "	John son of	
" 28	Samuel	Joseph & Mary Throckmorton
April 17	Margaret daughter	
June 10	John son of	
July 8	William	John Russell by his wife
" "	Sarah	Stephen Hyfong " " "
" "	Catharine	John Cook " " "
" 17	Mary a negro belonging to	S. Leonard Esq. Private
August 5	Elizabeth	John Mc Coffey " " "
" 26	Annanna	Mrs Henry Leonard " " " Private
" "	Sarah	Elizabeth Lane
September 30	Thomas	Abraham Hayes " " "
" "	Jacob	do do
" "	Mary	
" "	Mitilla	Sosiah & Anna Walsted
" "	Joseph	Samuel & Elizabeth Woolley by his wife

An example page of the CD images we worked with. These pages were copies of the Finch register.

source was John Stillwell's *Historical and Genealogical Miscellany: Data Relating to the Settlement and Settlers of New York and New Jersey*. A genealogist himself, Stillwell compiled the information from the register into a book that was more easily readable than the register. By carefully comparing both the Stillwell book and the register, we were able to create a more accurate spreadsheet and gain insightful information.

Although we will go into much more detail of the analysis, it is necessary to briefly describe what we did with the data. For the paper, we decided to split the information into three categories: statistics, names, and family connections. Statistics will focus on the number of events, people, etc. For names, we looked at the rate of different surnames and how often they appeared in the register. In the final category, we selected and traced the recorded actions of three families from the parish register, looking particularly at any interconnections through marriage there may be between them.

Spreadsheet Creation. The first step of the project was to actually create the spreadsheet. Originally, we had thought that this step would not take an exceedingly lengthy amount of time, perhaps a month at the most. In reality, completing the spreadsheet took around three months. The main reason for such a large gap between what we planned and the reality was that there were many more baptisms than we had originally expected. In total, there were 1,304 baptisms from 1733 to 1775. The spreadsheet for the marriages was comprised of 206 entries, thus bringing the grand total of entries to 1,510. The creation of the spreadsheet was an absolutely crucial step in our analysis of the information. Without a searchable spreadsheet, we would have been searching through the Stillwell book and the Finch register manually, with a greater chance of missing or leaving out information.

Relying on the Finch register and the Stillwell book for our information, we ran into a curious problem. There were a number of discrepancies between the sources. For example, some of the names Stillwell listed in the baptisms did not appear in the CDs of the Finch register. This occurred too often for it simply to be a mistake on Stillwell's part. As we progressed, we came to suspect that Stillwell was looking at other sources besides the Finch register, perhaps the original register that was presumed to be in a bank vault or lost. This struck us as particularly interesting, especially as the majority of the people Stillwell listed but did not appear in the register were living outside the Shrewsbury area. Perhaps the clergymen, as missionary priests, travelled outside their church to towns that were farther away to perform baptisms and recorded the information in another book. Or perhaps there was another addendum of some kind. One exclusion of a name seems to suggest that the errors may lie in the Finch register itself. Mary Cooke, the daughter of the Reverend Samuel Cooke, was not listed in the Finch register, although Stillwell noted her name and baptism. This seems to suggest that either Finch, in creating a copy of the register, missed some entries for the baptisms or that Stillwell was referring to another copy (or the original) of the register. The actual reason as to why there are so many discrepancies is still unsolved as of now, although the recent rediscovery of the original parish register should help with this, we proceeded with the analysis accepting the Stillwell information.

As we continued going through Stillwell's book and the register, we kept a detailed record of any inconsistencies between the two, any questions that arose, and any interesting bits of information that we came across. The "Parish Register Baptism and Marriages Notes," as we referred to them, totaled thirty pages. By keeping track of all the names who were listed in the Stillwell book, but did not appear in the register, we determined that there were about 455 names

of the 1,304 baptisms that are not in the register. After locating the original register (previously believed lost), it would be interesting to see how many of those 455 names appear in the original register compared to the Finch register.

As to the interesting bits we found in the register, one included a man named Samuel Carman. Samuel was baptized November 6, 1748. No other information was provided in his entry, besides the word “clanicus.” After searching for the definition of the term, we found that clanicus can refer to “one who is baptized while ill or infirm.” Although we do not know how old Samuel was or when he died, it sheds an interesting bit of light on him and his life. Another interesting entry we saw was that of John, a negro servant of Thomas Clayton. According to Stillwell, John was under sentence of death and had died “very repentant.” One has to wonder what crime earned John a death sentence, and though we will probably never know, our research has helped to reveal some aspects of life in the community during the 1700s that is truly interesting.

Some discrepancies that we also kept track of, aside from the people not listed in the register, were actual name discrepancies, such as the spelling. An example of this can be seen with the Throckmortons, a notable family in the area with many family members. The name Throckmorton was mentioned many times, but we also found, in both the Stillwell book and the register, the name Throughmorton also made a few appearances. We found it curious that Throckmorton was misspelled as Throughmorton so frequently, perhaps some members of the family changed the spelling of their name or maybe it was simply a misspelling on the part of the reverend writing the register. A few other name discrepancies we came across included the Craddocks/Shaddocks/Sharrocks and the Halsteads, alternately spelled as Holsted or Holstead. Many of the name discrepancies occurred to the same people, as a married couple could appear

as Timothy and Mary Halstead in one entry, and then the next entry appear as Timothy and Mary Holsted. For consistency and to make searching the spreadsheet a great deal easier for others, we decided to settle on one name spelling for members clearly of the same family (i.e. Halstead, Throckmorton, Holmes, Russell, Perrine, Kearny, Rogers, Warne).

Family Connections. After completing all the statistical data, we then moved on to the Family Connections section of the paper. For this part we chose three families from the spreadsheet that had relatively large numbers of family members and were generally well documented in both the baptism and marriages spreadsheets. We then traced the family through the years. The first family we chose was the Dennis family. Jacob and Clement Dennis, husband and wife, were both baptized on November 28, 1735 along with their children Hannah, Sarah, Samuel, Jacob, Anthony, Increase, and Elizabeth. On August 13, 1738 the register lists that a Samuel Dennis was baptized. As this is the second time a Samuel Dennis was baptized, perhaps this suggests that Samuel was ill and dying. Or, Samuel may have recently died and his parents named a newborn son after their deceased child. However, we may not know this for sure as we have not come across any burial records. The same scenario occurred again on August 13, 1738 and July 27, 1740 when a Benjamin Dennis is baptized on both days. On June 30, 1742, Increase Dennis was baptized again. In Increase's case, we are fairly certain that she was ill, as the Stillwell book lists Increase Dennis in the burials for 1748. Clement gave birth to two more children, James (baptized on March 17, 1744) and Isaac (baptized February 1, 1746). In total, Clement gave birth to a minimum of ten children, not counting the two duplicate baptisms of Samuel and Benjamin.

Now looking at the children of Jacob and Clement, their son Jacob Jr. married Margaret Price on February 24, 1756. Margaret was also a member of the community; she herself

baptized in the church on January 1, 1738. Their children were Samuel (baptized February 22, 1756), Joseph (baptized October 25, 1762), Anthony (baptized May 5, 1765), Littleton (baptized April 4, 1768), Mary (baptized October 28, 1770), and Margaret (baptized May 9, 1773). In totally, they had six children as of 1775.

Another child of Jacob and Clement's we were able to trace was Benjamin, however, the name of his wife was never referred to and in the spreadsheet we simply called her Mrs. Dennis. Their children were Amelia (baptized August 26, 1764), Jacob (baptized October 1, 1766), John (baptized October 2, 1768), Thomas (baptized October 17, 1771), and Mercy (baptized November 14, 1773). In total, they had five children as of 1775.

We also found some information for Anthony Dennis, another son of Jacob and Clement. As with his brother Benjamin, the name of his wife was not provided and we referred to her as Mrs. Benjamin Dennis. On April 18, 1773, Anthony's child Clement was baptized. As of 1775, Anthony had one child.

The next family we focused on was the Holmes family. Parents Josiah and Hannah had a number of children, beginning with Esther/Hester (baptized July 15, 1739), Hannah (baptized February 22, 1741), Thomas (baptized August 14, 1743), Jacob (baptized June 1, 1745), William (12 days old, baptized October 29, 1747), Clement (baptized March 29, 1752), Josiah (baptized May 5, 1754), Samuel (baptized June 13, 1756), John Harrison (baptized September 3, 1758), Anthony (baptized October 26, 1760), and Benjamin (baptized February 12, 1764). Again, we came across a second entry for the baptism of a Thomas Holmes, the registry listing him getting baptized again on November 19, 1749. As with the Dennis family, we speculated that Thomas was ill and dying or had already died and his parents named a newborn son after their recently deceased child. In total, Josiah and Hannah had at least eleven children.

We found information for one son of Josiah and Hannah's, Jacob. Jacob married Ann Russell on November 8, 1770. On May 26, 1771, their son Abraham was baptized. As our work only led us to analyze the information up to 1775, Jacob and Ann may have had more children after 1775. We also found information for the eldest Holmes' daughter, Esther (although she is alternately referred to as Hester). Esther married Thomas Morford on April 3, 1768 and had two daughters, Sarah (baptized March 24, 1769) and Hannah (baptized May 12, 1771).

The final family we chose to follow was the West family, a very large family with numerous branches. We decided to focus on one branch of the Wests, specifically on the children of Joseph and Audrey, as adding many more names, dates, and information would have been confusing considering that Joseph and Audrey had thirteen children and many of them stayed in the same area and have records in the register. On June 14, Joseph and Audrey, along with their son Joseph were baptized on June 14, 1747. Joseph was sixteen years and 10 months old at the time. On June 21, 1747, James (15 years), John (12 years), Asher (10 years), Catherine (8 years), Deborah (7 years), Boriah (5 years), Jane (2 years), and Samuel (9 months) were all baptized. On February 4, 1750, their daughter Ann was baptized at 9 months old. Joseph and Audrey had three more sons, Stephen (6 months old) and Matthew were baptized on May 5, 1754, and Lewis was five months old when baptized on May 16, 1756. As Matthew is the only child without an age, perhaps he and Stephen were twins.

The eldest West son, Joseph, married a woman named Mary and they had a child named Joseph, who was eight months old when baptized on April 14, 1752. There is a possibility that the entry for this Joseph West did not refer to the son of Joseph and Audrey, as Webley West also had a son named Joseph who was of a similar age. There is no certain way of knowing which Joseph this actually is, as the register did not provide the names of the grandparents.

James West married a woman named Ann sometime before 1750. They had four children as of 1775. Sarah was ten months old when she was baptized on April 14, 1751, John was four months old when baptized on June 21, 1752), Catherine (baptized on August 28, 1768), and Audrey (baptized on August 28, 1768). James' brother John married Lydia Wainwright on December 3, 1755.

Deborah West and Andrew Stephens married some time during 1759. There is no more record of Deborah until 1768, when the register lists that Catherine, William, Joseph, Jane, and Mary Stevens are all baptized on August 28, 1768. Their mother was listed as the widow Deborah Stevens. We believe that there is a strong possibility that the widow Deborah Stevens is the very same Deborah West who married Andrew Stephens. Further evidence that corroborates with this is that her brothers, James and Asher, both had their children baptized on the same day.

For the next few West children, we only had marriage dates. Boriah married Sarah Parker on October 22, 1761. Ann married James Smith at some point in 1768. Samuel and Sarah Lafetara married in January 1769. Daniel West married Mary Vandyke on June 11, 1772 and had one child named Daniel, who was baptized on June 15, 1773. The final child of Joseph and Audrey we have information on is Asher, who married a woman named Ann. On August 28, 1768, his two daughters Elizabeth and Euphemia were baptized.

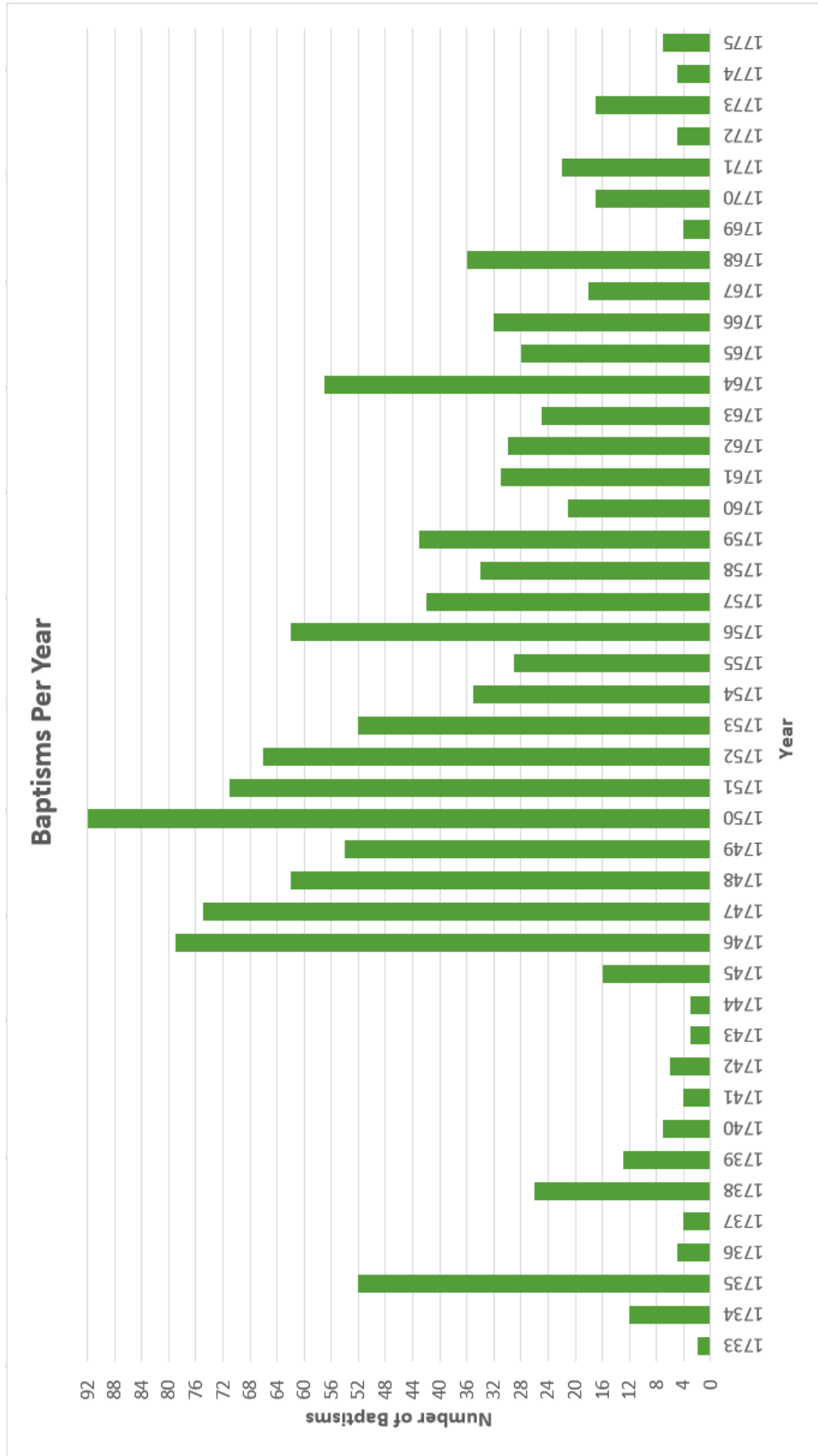
The Family Connections portion of the paper was one of the most interesting. It was with this section that we were able to set back and let it sink in that these entries represented real people who had thoughts, dreams, and daily problems. As we became better acquainted with the register, we began recognizing the names of some families who appeared often (i.e. the Dennis family). It was eerie to read about the recent births or marriages of family members and then

walk through the graveyard in the church and realize a good many of the people were reading about have been deceased for over two hundred years and are likely buried in the very graveyard we were walking through. Following the lives of these three families also showed how interconnected the community was. With families commonly having six plus children, it is no wonder that many families became related through marriage multiple times. The Family Connections of the paper clearly show that Shrewsbury was a thriving town in the 1700s, with many families choosing to settle down here with their children. Although the register did not provide an extreme wealth of information, with what little we have we can get a glimpse into the lives of the early parishioners of Christ Church and better understand their world.

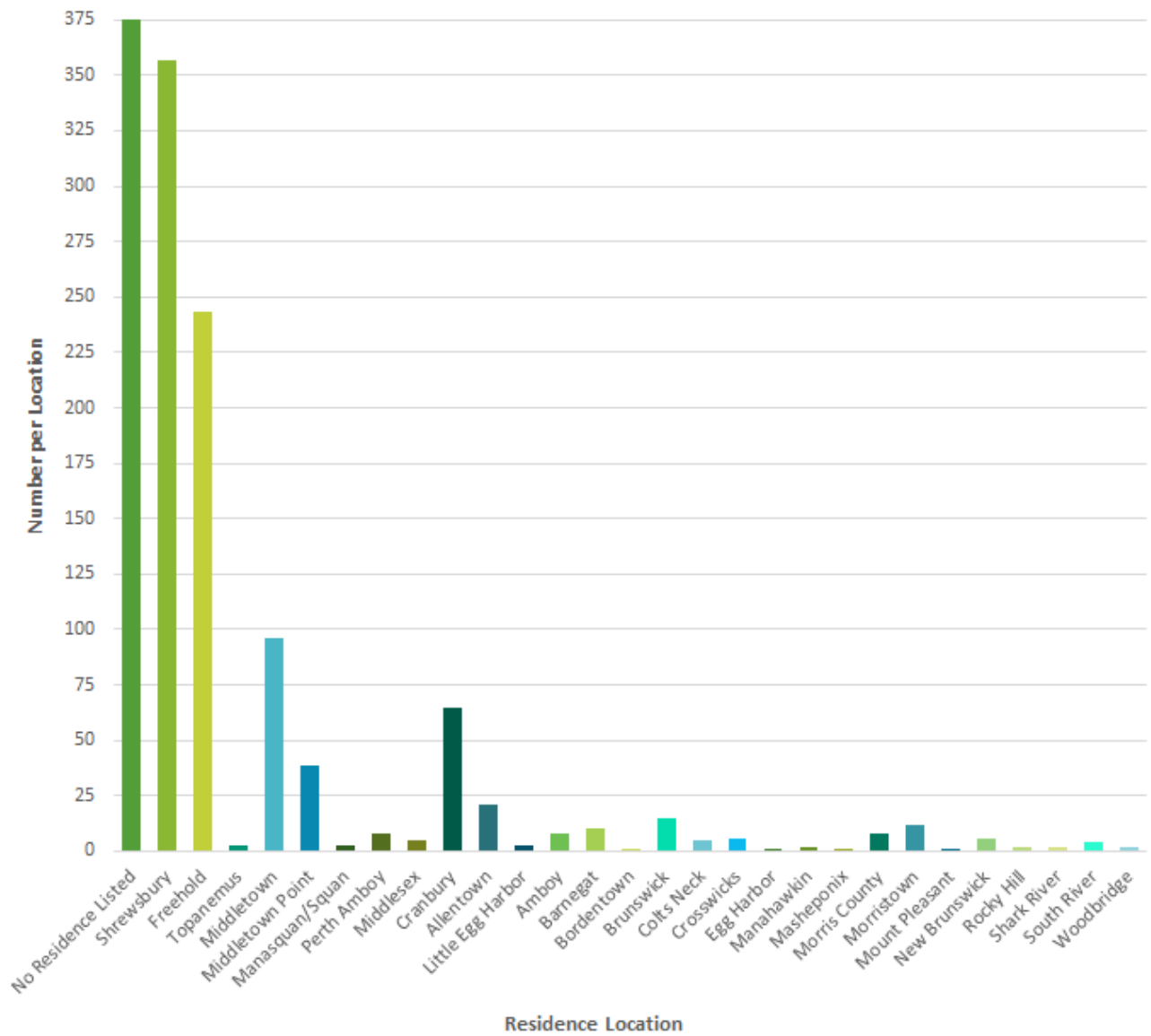
Conclusion. Just from the brief time span that was researched, we were able to garner a lot of information about Christ Church, the surrounding community, and the parishioners themselves. There is still wealth of information left to be unearthed in the parish register and the different versions of the parish register. We are hopeful that the project we worked on will be useful for others to continue researching the history of Christ Church.

Appendix A

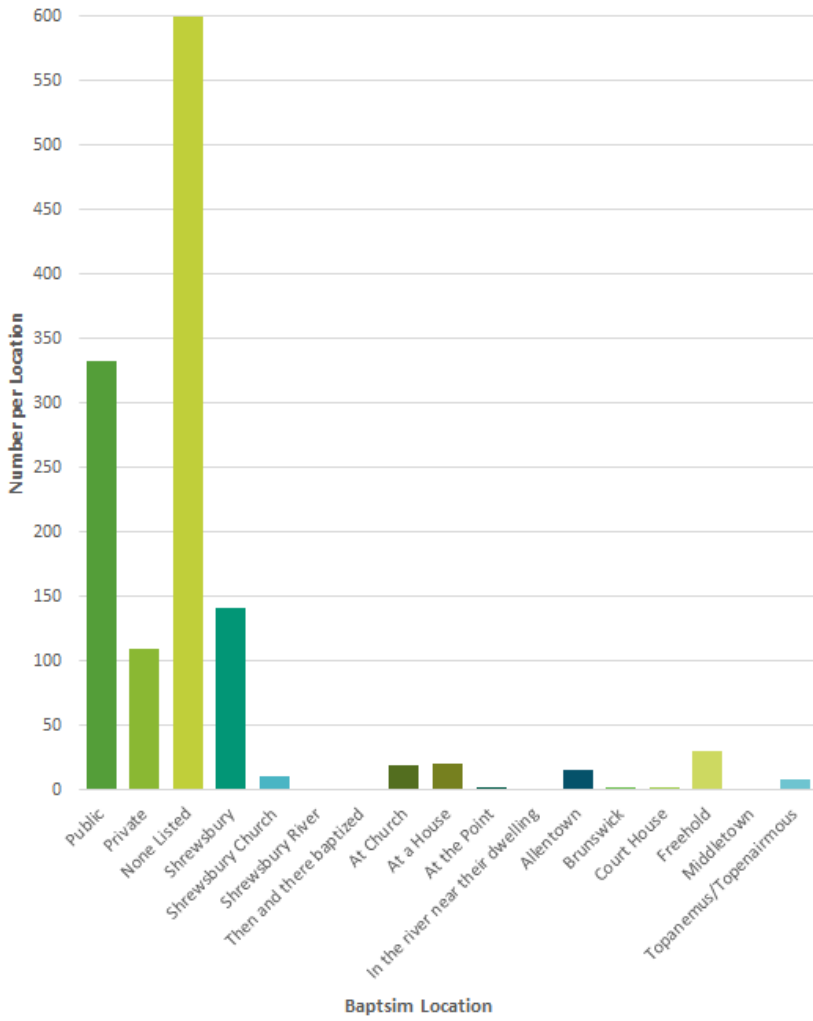
Charts of Baptisms



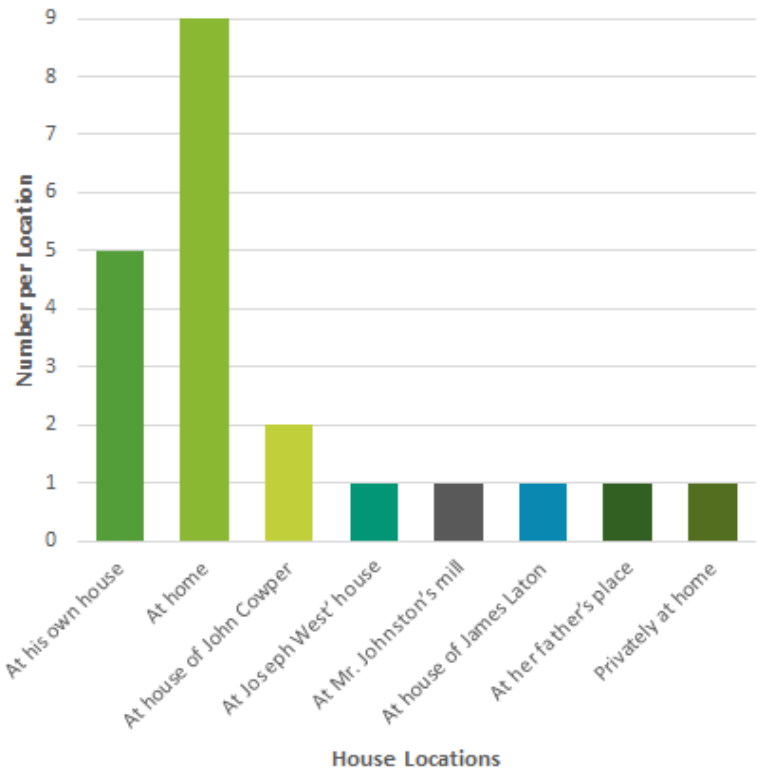
Number of Residence per Location



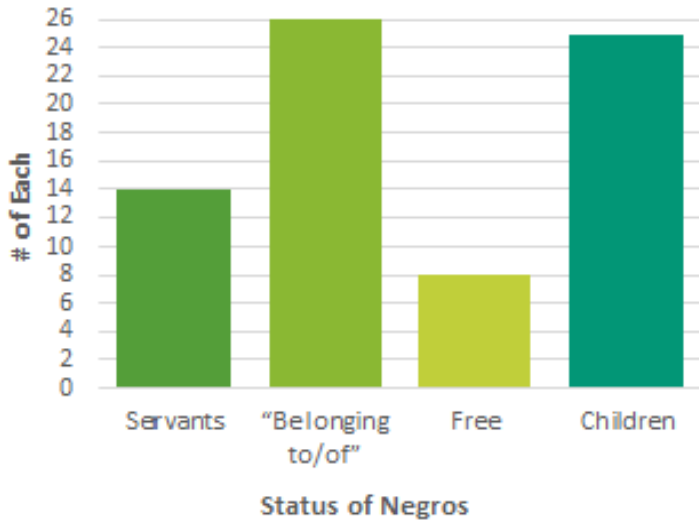
Number of People per Baptism Location



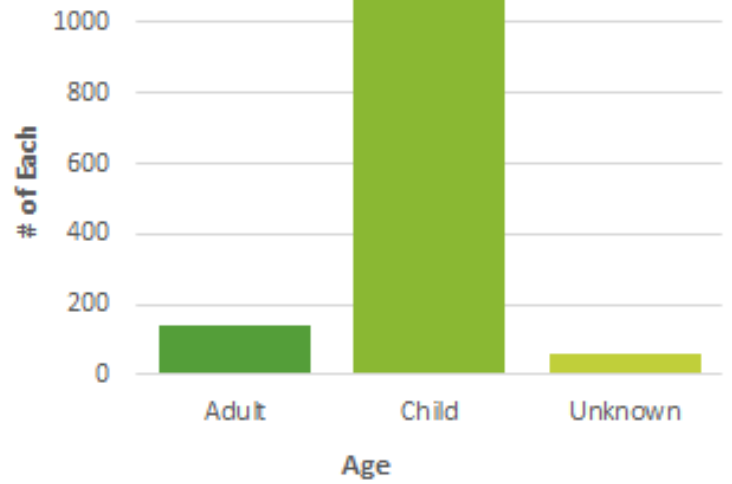
Types of House Location



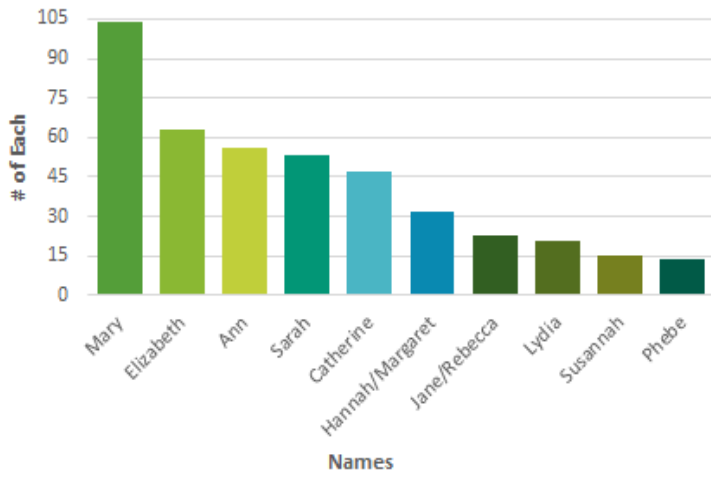
Negros Baptized



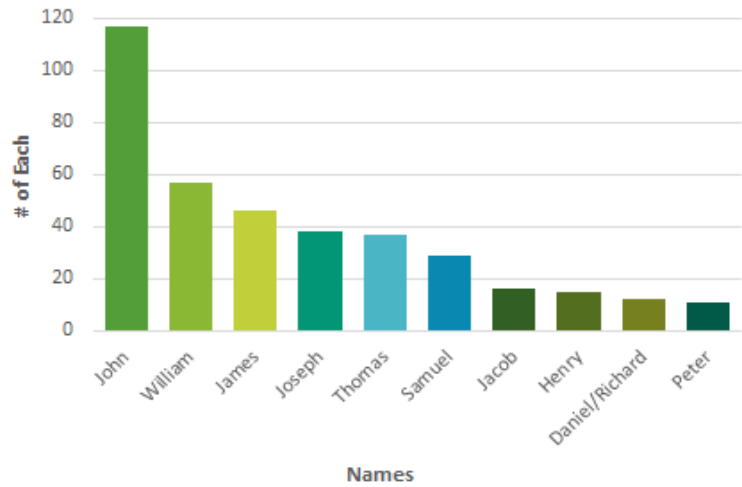
Age of Baptized



Top Ten Female Baptismal Names

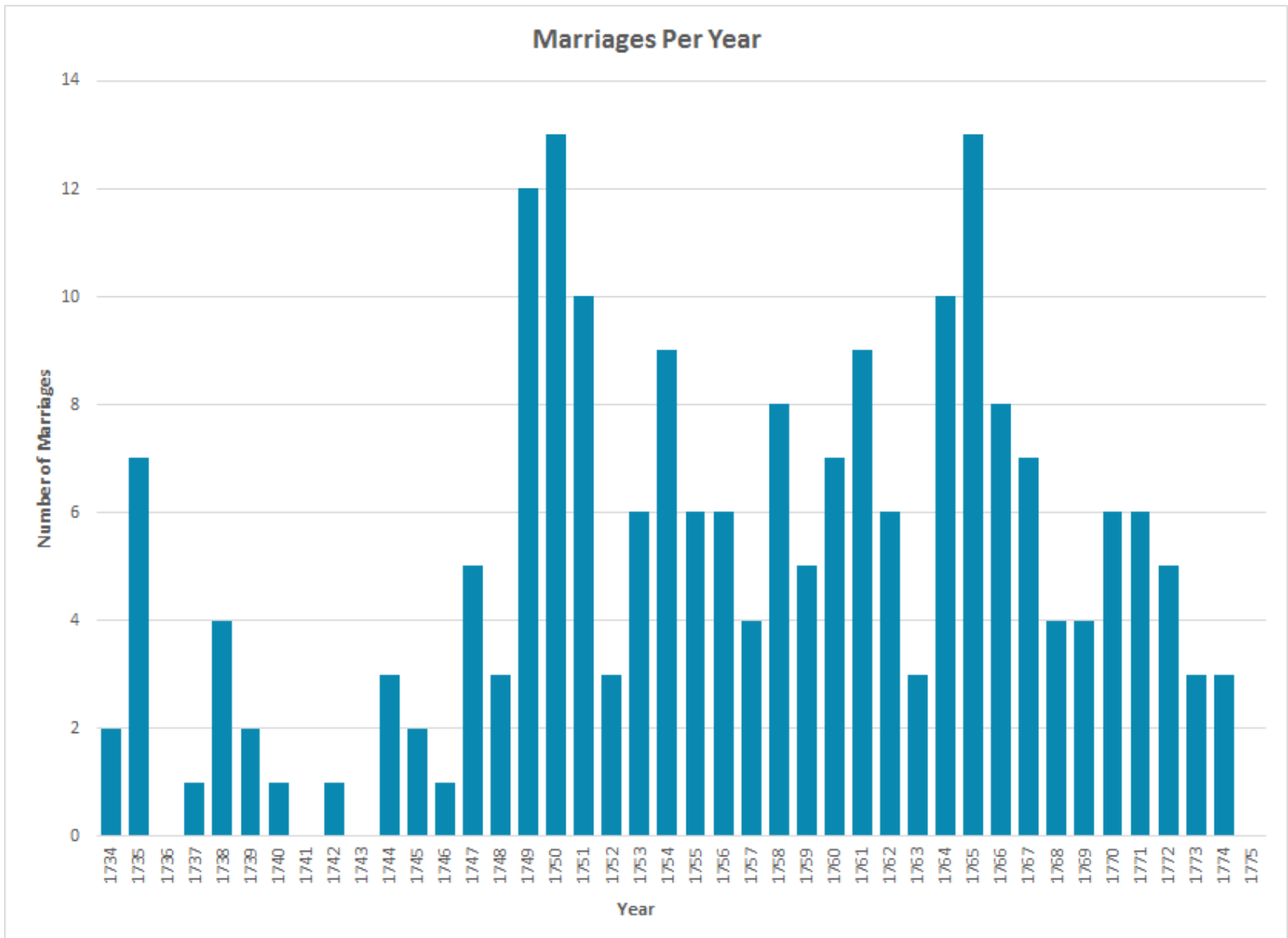


Top Ten Male Baptismal Names

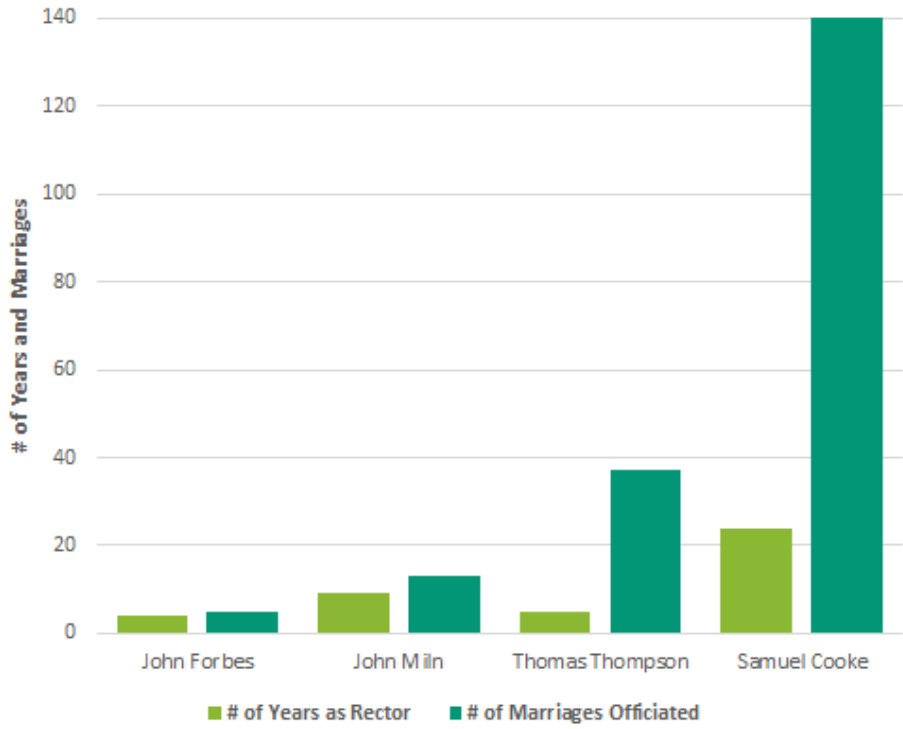


Appendix B

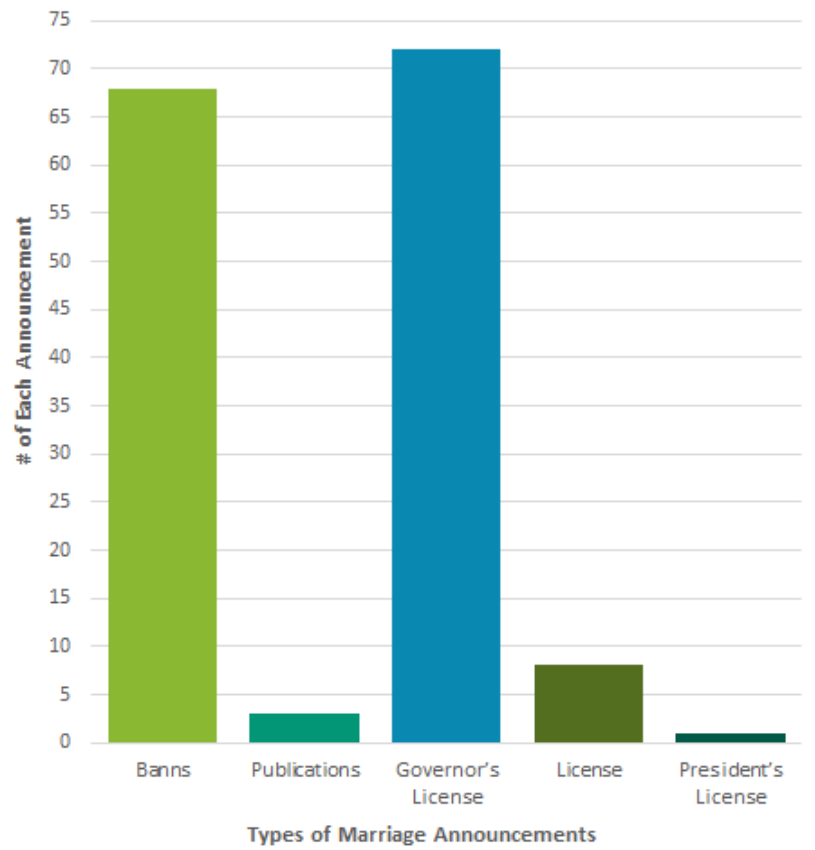
Charts of Marriages



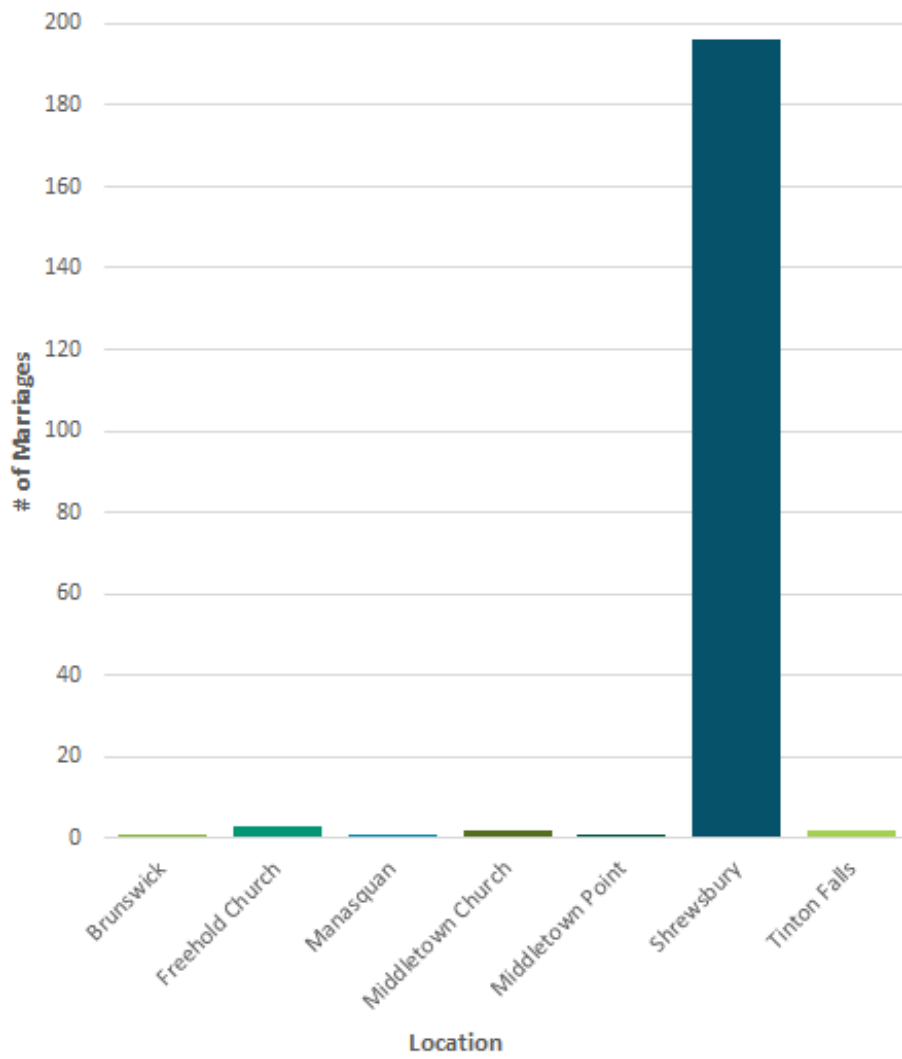
Reverend of Christ Church



Marriage Announcements



Marriages By Location



Appendix C

Tables of Baptisms

Residence of the Baptized	# per place
No Residence Listed	375
Shrewsbury	357
Freehold	243
Topanemus	3
Middletown	96
Middletown Point	39
Manasquan/Squan	3
Perth Amboy	8
Middlesex	5
Cranbury	65
Allentown	21
Little Egg Harbor	3
Amboy	8
Barneget	10
Bordentown	1
Brunswick	15
Colts Neck	5
Crosswicks	6
Egg Harbor	1
Manahawkin	2
Masheponix	1
Morris County	8
Morristown	12
Mount Pleasant	1
New Brunswick	6
Rocky Hill	2
Shark River	2
South River	4
Woodbridge	2

Baptism Location	# per Location
Public	333
Private	110
None Listed	600
Shrewsbury	141
Shrewsbury Church	11
Shrewsbury River	1
Then and there baptized	1
At Church	20
At a House	21
At the Point	3
In the river near their dwelling	1
Allentown	16
Brunswick	3
Court House	2
Freehold	31
Middletown	1
Topanemus/Topenairmous	9

Types of House Locations	# Per Location
At his own house	5
At home	9
At house of John Cowper	2
At Joseph West' house	1
At Mr. Johnston's mill	1
At house of James Laton	1
At her father's place	1
Privately at home	1

Baptism Year	# per Year
1733	2
1734	12
1735	52
1736	5
1737	4
1738	26
1739	13
1740	7
1741	4
1742	6
1743	3
1744	3
1745	16
1746	79
1747	75
1748	62
1749	54
1750	92
1751	71
1752	66
1753	52
1754	35
1755	29
1756	62
1757	42
1758	34
1759	43
1760	21
1761	31
1762	30
1763	25
1764	57
1765	28
1766	32
1767	18
1768	36
1769	4
1770	17
1771	22
1772	5
1773	17
1774	5
1775	7
Total	1,304

Age of the Baptized	Number of Each
Adult	142
Child	1103
Unknown	59

Negros	# of Each
Servants	14
“Belonging to/of”	26
Free	8
Negro Children	25
Negro total	48

Top Ten Female Names	
Mary	104
Elizabeth	63
Ann	56
Sarah	53
Catherine	47
Hannah/Margaret	32
Jane/Rebecca	23
Lydia	21
Susannah	15
Phebe	14

Top Ten Male Names	
John	117
William	57
James	46
Joseph	38
Thomas	37
Samuel	29
Jacob	16
Henry	15
Daniel/Richard	12
Peter	11

Number of Baptismal Names

Baptized Name	# of Each	Baptized Name	# of Each	Baptized Name	# of Each	Baptized Name	# of Each	Baptized Name	# of Each
Aaron	2	Chloe	1	Grace	1	Lenah	1	Rachel	9
Abigail	8	Christian	2	Hagar	2	Leonard	1	Raymond	1
Abraham	9	Christopher	2	Hannah	32	Letitia	2	Rebecca	23
Abram	1	Clemens	1	Hartness	1	Lewig	1	Redford	1
Adam	1	Clement	3	Helena	3	Lewis	9	Rhoda	2
Adonijah	1	Collin	1	Henry	15	Littleton	2	Richard	12
Agisyles	1	Content	1	Henryetta	1	Lucy	3	Rip	1
Agnes	2	Cornelius	5	Hezekias	1	Lydia	21	Robert	9
Agnus	1	Cortland	1	Holmes	1	Mareviasteot	1	Rose	1
Alexander	3	Daniel	12	Hosea	1	Margaret	32	Rosseaa	1
Alice	1	David	10	Hugh	3	Margery	1	Ruhamah	1
Allen	1	Deborah	9	Huldah	1	Maria	1	Salathiel	1
Alsee	1	Denise	1	Increase	3	Martha	8	Samuel	29
Amelia	3	Derrick	2	Isaac	10	Mary	104	Sarah	53
Amery	2	Diego	1	Isabel	1	Mathias	1	Sharper	1
Amey	2	Dinah	3	Isabella	9	Mathew	4	Stephen	7
Anastasia	1	Dorothy	2	Jacob	16	Matthias	4	Susannah	15
Andrew	7	Duncan	2	James	46	Meergaret	1	Sussex	1
Angeline	1	Eda	1	Jane	23	Mercy	1	Sylvia	1
Ann	56	Edith	1	Jasper	1	Merford	1	Syntyche	1
Anna	6	Edward	6	Jedan	1	Meriam	1	Thaddeus	1

Annaias	1	Eleanor	7	Jemiah	1	Merrin	1	Thankful	1
Annastasia	1	Elisabeth	3	Jemina	1	Michael	5	Theodosia	1
Anthony	6	Elisah	1	Jennet	1	Mirtilla	2	Thomas	37
Aphelia	2	Elisha	2	Jeremiah	1	Moses	3	Timothy	4
Aphy	1	Elizabeth	63	Jerimah	1	Nathaniel	3	Uriah	1
Armenia	1	Ellen	1	Joan	1	Neal	1	Uriel	1
Arrabella	1	Enoch	1	Joanna	1	Nicholas	1	Valeria	2
Asher	1	Esther	3	Joannah	1	Nicodemus	1	Vincent	1
Ashfield	1	Eugin	1	Job	4	Noah	1	Violet	1
Audery	4	Euphema	1	Joel	1	Obadiah	3	W	1
Barbara	1	Euphemia	4	John	117	Oliver	3	Webley Jr.	1
Bell Fame	1	Ezekial	2	Jonathan	6	Othniel	1	Willet	1
Bella	1	Francis	5	Joseph	38	Patience	6	William	57
Benjamin	8	Franscina	1	Joshua	2	Patrick	3	Zebulon	1
Benoni	1	Frederic	1	Josiah	5	Pearson	1	Zephaniah	1
Beth	1	Gabriel	2	Joyce	1	Perrine	1	Zerniah	1
Bethsheba	2	Garret	1	Judith	2	Peter	11	Zilpha	2
Boriah	1	George	9	Kenneth	1	Phebe	14	Zilphia	2
Burrough	1	Gersham	1	Kezia	2	Philip	3	Unknown	10
Catherine	47	Gertrude	2	Laurence	1	Phillis	2		
Charles	1	Giles	1	Leah	3	Primus	1		
Charlotte	1	Glencross	1	Lena	1	Priscilla	1		

Appendix D

Tables of Marriages

Marriage Year	Number of Marriages
1734	2
1735	7
1736	0
1737	1
1738	4
1739	2
1740	1
1741	0
1742	1
1743	0
1744	3
1745	2
1746	1
1747	5
1748	3
1749	12
1750	13
1751	10
1752	3
1753	6

Reverend	# of Years as Rector	# of Marriages Officiated
John Forbes	4	5
John Miln	9	13
Thomas Thompson	5	37
Samuel Cooke	24	140

Marriage Location	# of Marriages
Brunswick	1
Freehold Church	3
Manasquan	1
Middletown Church	2
Middletown Point	1
Shrewsbury	196
Tinton Falls	2
Total	206

1754	9
1755	6
1756	6
1757	4
1758	8
1759	5
1760	7
1761	9
1762	6
1763	3
1764	10
1765	13
1766	8
1767	7
1768	4
1769	4
1770	6
1771	6
1772	5
1773	3
1774	3
1775	0
Total Marriages	208

Types of Marriage Announcements	# of Announcements for Each
Banns	68
Publications	3
Governor's License	72
License	8
President's License	1
Total	152