

of exile he worked almost entirely at "Wye." The sum of £279, roughly the total of his collections from Edward Lloyd, does not seem sufficiently great to accept him as the designer and builder of "Wye House." He received at that time ten shillings a day, larger than the five and a half Lloyd paid to both William Buckland and William Noke for work on his town house. This would seem to indicate that the ten shillings were for Key and his workman and that they were serving as independent journeymen. Sometimes he is paid by Lloyd's factor in Annapolis and once, in 1774, David Stewart of Baltimore was ordered to pay him ten guineas. In an undated letter Arthur Bryan, the factor, writes the extravagant young owner of expensive houses:⁴³

After much plague and trouble I have Settled with Mr. Key the Balance Coming to him has left your Mama almost clear of Cash. I have Inclosed his Ansr against you I thought the charge of repairing the Stable too high and came under no agreement about it to support such a charge he has drawn or orders on you in favr of Mr. Lucas and Mr. Garnet.

Some of this protested work was for drawing the design for a tent with a suspended cot bed.

Mr. Key was not a very good risk for the universal credit system of business. In the Davidson Account Books where he is frankly called "Carpenter," he is charged for many items ranging from Bohea tea to whip-saw files and in pencilled notes interest is added for the ten years past.⁴⁴

The most important building done by Key was undoubtedly that on St. Anne's church in Annapolis. When the Assembly granted funds in 1774 to build a new church, it was Robert Key who took down the organ and repaired the fence around Church Circle.⁴⁵ The old edifice was torn down and usable material stacked for future use. But with the arrival of the war all building plans were postponed, the congregation worshipped as best it could in the theatre, and vandals or patriots made away with most of the accumulated timber and bricks. It was 1784 before work could begin on the new building. As has been stated in the article on Joseph Horatio Anderson, a law suit developed ten years later over Key's bill to the Assembly-appointed trustees.⁴⁶ The Trustees

⁴³ Arthur Bryan to Edward Lloyd III, n. d., *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Davidson Account Books, 75, Md. Hist. Soc.

⁴⁵ St. Anne's Vestry Records quoted in *Md. Hist. Mag.*, X, 140.

⁴⁶ *Hyde vs. Key*, Chancery Court, Anne Arundel County, #2942, 1794.

made it plain that Anderson had drawn the plans and that all Key had to do was to carry them out. Each Trustee wrote answer that was filed with the Court. Samuel Chase and Will Paca both begged off as they had by this time moved out of town and had had very little to do with the building. The burden had been laid upon the shoulders of Thomas Hyde, a prominent merchant, who by 1790 was anxious to be relieved of it. His feelings were hurt by an article in the *Gazette* complaining of the slow pace of construction, and harassed by Key, he was ready to account to the General Assembly and "Cheerfully resign his trust," which he did. This left the Hon. John Ridout and Dr. Upton Scot as the remaining Trustees.⁴⁶

The Trustees find it impossible to ascertain with any Degree of precision, the exact Sum that is justly due. Some of his charges are too high without Foundation, others extremely exaggerated,—the whole Account either involved in a designed Obscurity—or fabricated at random as different circumstances have struck his Imagination.

John Ridout maintained that in 1784 "Mr. Key inspected Plans, Drawings and estimate made by a Master Architect [J. Anderson] and agreed to execute all the Carpentry of the Church on terms." As time went on, he became less diligent and as the Treasurer for payment in advance. His work was unfinished and the cashier alleged he was sometimes in liquor when he applied to him for money. More specifically, he had charged for designs which were unnecessary and for trips to the Eastern Shore. Besides employed professional men to value the work done; Josiah Clark was brought in by Key; John Jarvis and Cornelius West measured and valued for the Trustees. In 1790, the Trustees offered to settle out of Court on terms judged fair by Jarvis and West, but the years went by until 1793 when William Pinkney, a national figure, was brought in to try to settle the case. Pinkney was apparently living out of town, for he gave power of attorney to James Williams, Annapolis merchant, a trust which he "annuls" in 1806. By that time the Court was ready for a decision. The verdict was that Key should be paid £1110:4:1 with interest on the exact amount left over from subscriptions, lottery, Assent appropriations, etc., after all other bills had been paid. Key was due £5000.

Key called himself "carpenter and joiner" all through the St. Anne's case but others referred to him as "architect." M