



Pink Chapel: Linked by Legend to a Fatal Property Dispute

There is a small chapel on the grounds of the former West Point Plantation, on the north end of Frederica Road, known as Pink Chapel. Built by the owners of West Point, the Hazzard family, the structure gained its name and color from the pinkish lichen that grows only in dense shade and colored the chapel's tabby ruins. Island legend would say, though, that both the chapel's construction and color have to do with bloodshed over a vicious property dispute.

Col. William H. Hazzard purchased West Point in 1818, while his brother Dr. Thomas F. Hazzard acquired the nearby Pike's Bluff tract in 1827. One of the plantations adjoining Dr. Hazzard's land, known as The Village, was owned by the Wyllly family.

Over several years, Dr. Hazzard and John Armstrong Wyllly had a hostile dispute over the

boundary lines of their plantations. The issue came to a head in late 1838. The December 6th issue of the *Brunswick Advocate* newspaper described in detail their final argument. Hazzard reportedly sent an inflammatory letter to the elderly, widowed mother of Wyllly. In response, while both were in Brunswick, Wyllly confronted Hazzard and struck him with his cane, before the two were pulled apart by other gentlemen. Cooler heads did not prevail, though, and Wyllly came back and spat in Hazzard's face, at which point Hazzard drew a pistol and shot Wyllly point-blank through the heart. Wyllly died instantly.

The incident certainly put the county into a flurry. Hazzard was arrested on the spot, and an investigation ensued. Other landowners on the island, including John Couper and James Gould, wrote a joint letter to the newspaper lamenting that their peers would allow themselves to display such violent passions, and that Wyllly

was lost to them at just 32 years old. Even Fanny Kemble, who coincidentally was visiting at the time, wrote in her journal of her sorrow for Wyllly's elderly mother.

The *Brunswick Advocate* noted that Hazzard was indicted for voluntary manslaughter, but later records show he was eventually acquitted. The legend of the Pink Chapel holds that the Hazzard family, now scorned by their planter class after the shooting, no longer wished to attend services at Christ Church because of the hostile environment and thus built their own small house of worship. Local historians in the 20th century, however, disagreed over this undocumented account, leaving the chapel's origin shrouded in mystery.

This month's image from the Coastal Georgia Historical Society's archives shows Pink Chapel as it appeared in 1956.