Religious services were conducted on the Grounds from the first years of the University. The east wing of the Rotunda basement originally served as a chapel, and other rooms are reported to have been used from time to time. For more than 70 years the activities were coordinated by a chaplain, selected by the principal denominations in turn and supported by contributions from students, faculty, alumni, and friends.

Increasing numbers of worshipers and the inappropriateness of the various settings led the Faculty in 1835 to propose a fund-raising campaign to make possible the construction of a separate building for the purpose of worship, and the Board of Visitors concurred. The plans were somewhat grandiose—to provide seating for 800 persons, at a cost of $30,000—and this may account for the quiet demise of the venture. In 1860 the project was revived, in a considerably more modest version, with seating for 200 and a price-tag of only $6,000. The Board again approved the endeavor, and the Faculty commissioned the Superintendents of Buildings and Grounds to solicit funds in the community and in the Shenandoah Valley. He succeeded in raising $5,000, but the imminence of hostilities persuaded the Faculty to postpone the breaking of ground.

Unfortunately the value of the fund dropped by 90% during the succeeding half-decade. Other needs preempted the attention of the Faculty, and it was not until 1872 that solicitations were renewed, once more with the encouragement of the Board. Progress was slow, and the original estimate was judged to be far too low. Again in 1881 the Board commended the project to prospective donors. Added impetus was provided by the formation in 1883 of a Ladies Chapel Aid Society. By 1884 a total of $15,000 was in hand, which was deemed to be sufficient to guarantee success of the enterprise, and construction began. The cornerstone was laid in March 1885. In the course of the next months it became apparent that the
the cost would exceed the estimate, and for several years the work slowed virtually to a standstill, and the prospects for completion were dim. A final surge by the Ladies Society, the University YMCA, and other supporters produced the requisite funds, and the present Chapel was finally dedicated in June 1889, and formally presented to the Board of Visitors one year later.

The final reckoning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The building</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organ room</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organ</td>
<td>1,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial windows and tablets</td>
<td>2,650</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the availability of the new Chapel, attendance at regular services increased markedly, and the ministrations of the chaplain and local clergy were supplemented by distinguished visitors to the pulpit. But during the second decade of the 20th century the popularity of the non-denominational services declined, perhaps because access to the various local churches had become relatively convenient. There was no longer a chaplain in residence, and the YMCA (the oldest of campus Y's in the U.S.) had accepted responsibility for scheduling services in the Chapel. In the early 1940's Sunday evening and Tuesday evening services were still being conducted on a fairly regular basis, but by the end of World War II even these efforts were met with insufficient response to justify their continuation.

During the '50's and '60's the principle of separation of Church and State was in the ascendant, at least at the University. When in 1967 a group of local clergy petitioned for permission to schedule nondenominational services in the Chapel once more, they were rebuffed in no uncertain terms by the University administration and the Board, in spite of a favorable recommendation by the Chapel Committee. It was apparent that the religious use of the Chapel—built for worship services by funds contributed with the encouragement of previous Boards—was to be
restricted to an occasional funeral and to weddings, the only source of the Committee's operating funds. Litigation during the '70's led to a reversal of this position, and the Chapel as well as other space around the Grounds became available for use by religious groups affiliated with the University.

There have been a number of major improvements in the physical aspect of the Chapel. In 1953 an Aeolian-Skinner organ was given by Mrs. Robert O. Price in memory of her husband, class of 1888. The baroque-type instrument was installed at a cost of $15,000. Four years later the dedication of a 25-note electronic carillon, Flemish-tuned, was made possible by a gift of $9,777.77 by the Seven Society. Additional stained-glass windows have been given in memory of Mr. John Morris (1956) and of Mary Lou Sprengel Roseberry (Mrs. Edwin S.) (1979). In 1977 an airconditioning system was installed, greatly extending the months during which the building can be used in comfort. The cost of this improvement is being amortized, beginning in 1978, from income derived from rental of the Chapel for weddings.

During the last years of the 1970's the Chapel has been open daily, for informal devotions by individuals and groups. A typical year's calendar of scheduled events includes about 130 weddings, 5 funerals or memorial services, 25 initiations, 5 worship services, and 5 concerts. The organ is also available for practice, under certain conditions. As the Chapel approaches its centenary celebration, it is to be hoped that those originally responsible for its existence would be gratified by the varied contributions it has made to the life of the University.

FWF, after WBJ, January 1980
University Chapel’s stained glass receives ritual purification

By SHERIE WILHELM
Cavalier Daily Associate Editor

Walking along the Rotunda side of the University Chapel, students may notice that a few stained glass windows are missing. Don’t worry. They’re in good hands.

Stained glass has a life expectancy of about 100 years, and because the Chapel started functioning in 1889, the windows need some repairs. For that reason, they have been removed and transported to the repair studio, Asst. University Architect Ashley Robbins said.

Unless absolutely necessary, Facilities Management will not replace the glass itself. “Lead is the problem,” Robbins said. “Time and gravity take their toll upon the lead,” causing it to bend, she said.

“The windows are folding,” University Architect and Curator Murray Howard said. Weather and time push the lead out of its original shape, creating “holes between the glass and lead,” Howard said. “The lead holds each piece, and when it bends, the glass moves and can drop out. But normally windows collapse before that happens.”

Lead is used because it bends easily around the various pieces of glass, Howard said. Lead is soft, making it a cushion for the glass in the design.

The 13-foot windows consist of four sections of glass, removed individually. Disassembly starts at the top and proceeds down the length of the windows, Beyer Stained Glass owner Joe Beyer said. Beyer Stained Glass received the job to restore the windows.

Boards are taken up on a scaffold and are used as “stretchers” to carry the windows. Then workers hand the boards down the scaffold, load them onto a truck and carry them to the studio.

The Beyer company makes rubbings of the windows before they disassemble the pieces. That guarantees the positions of each piece will remain the same in case one is broken or misplaced, Howard said.

The Chapel windows’ artist formed several pieces of the glass with a technique called “plating,” which involves using two layers of glass. The layering “produces a color and depth that would not be possible with one layer of glass,” Beyer said.

Stained glass is part of our history. American buildings have never been destroyed in wars and if we can avoid things early enough and preserve them, we can leave a great legacy for future generations.” — Joe Beyer

The deeper colors are used to shade and model figures. The colors create a greater sense of space, and they make the scenes more realistic, he said.

Minerals, not painting, color the glass when it is made, Beyer said. Artists have painted some of the pieces with details, he said.

The University planned scheduled the work in phases, with most of the work scheduled for the winter to minimize interference with the many weddings held in the Chapel during the more temperate months, Robbins said.

The Tiffany window, a 5-foot memorial to a girl who died, was constructed so well it only needed cleaning and not actual repair work, Beyer said.

“That side of the Chapel will be beautiful in the morning,” Howard said. The jewel-cut pieces of the Tiffany “reflect light like a prism” and will make the Chapel much brighter, he said.

The time involved in restoring the windows depends on many variables that designers must consider before making the replacement pieces. The pieces have differing textures, and the colors have varying levels of intensity. So it is difficult to create a piece that can maintain the window’s original appearance.

Earlier repairs actually have damaged the glass. Some of the repairs and replacements were done poorly, Beyer said. By correcting the pieces that have wrong color and texture, Beyer and his company are trying to restore the windows to their original appearance.

The State Maintenance Reserve of the Virginia General Assembly is funding the project. The reserve funds building preservation, Howard said. Without the state funding, the Chapel would have to continue decaying, he said.

Stained glass “is a durable, long-lasting art form... We are preserving someone else’s work,” Beyer said. “It’s part of our history.”

American buildings “haven’t been destroyed in wars, and if we can catch things early enough and preserve them, we can leave a great legacy for future generations,” he said.
Chapel's Stained Glass Windows to be Restored

Hear ye! Hear ye! Prospective brides and grooms, who consider the University chapel the ideal setting for a memorable wedding, take note: the chapel will be more appealing than ever two years hence, following restoration of its stained glass windows and completion of other improvements.

The years have taken their toll on the windows that lend aesthetic and spiritual grace to the 105-year-old building. Gravity and the expansion and contraction caused by temperature fluctuations have caused severe bulges to develop. Cracks, encrusted dirt, and prior "unsympathetic repairs" have dimmed the beauty of the windows, according to J. Murray Howard, University architect for historic buildings and Ashley Robbins, a U.Va. architect who will be monitoring the project.

Negotiations are almost completed with a stained glass restoration firm, which will dismantle the windows and transport them to a studio for cleaning and repairs, said Mr. Howard. He expects the project to begin this spring.

The second stage will most likely involve the east and west apse windows, followed by the four side windows near the back of the chapel, concluding with the south wall windows, said Ms. Robbins.

"Painted plywood will cover the windows and we have money in the budget to buy some kind of drapery to hang over the north wall especially, so it won't look quite so bad for the brides," she said.

The hardest part of the project will be dismantling the windows and transporting them to the studio, said Mr. Howard. The actual restoration work is simple by comparison, though quite labor-intensive.

"Bulges, caused by gravity, will be eliminated just by taking the windows out and laying them on a flat surface. To remove the dirt they will submerge the windows in water. Where there are layers of glass, they will have to carefully lift each piece," Ms. Robbins said.

According to Mr. Howard, the

CHAPEL WINDOWS,

stained glass fits into a lead channel called a "came," but is also cemented into that channel with a lead-like paste. The water bath softens the two types of lead enabling the restorer to ease the came apart and replace damaged glass.

Cracks are repaired by either of two methods. One is the epoxy method, whereby pieces are glued together creating an "almost invisible" repair, said Mr. Howard. The second method involves placing a thin piece of copper foil between the cracks and soldering, explained Ms. Robbins.

The exterior appearance of the windows will dramatically improve once their wood trim is repainted and their protective glazing is removed. "Lexan" glazing, installed some 15 years ago, entirely conceals the windows under the bell tower.

It is uncertain whether new glazing will be installed. "We're getting mixed advice from experts about how good protective glazing really is," Mr. Howard said. "Some experts are beginning to think that much of it is not only unnecessary, but also damaging. Plastic glazing traps moisture and debris. It's also thought that if you simply let the rain hit the window it will help keep them clean.

Part of the assessment process will be to determine which windows need the protective glazing and which will do better without it. There are a lot of things in the 20th century that after the whole century is run through, we've worked our way back to square one and it was right at the beginning," said Mr. Howard.

The restoration firm will also appraise, describe and document the windows by means of photographs and physical rubbings of each window. "A 1906 Tiffany window located in the east apse, depicting young Eugenie Moore Faulkner, is considered the most valuable. The other apse windows are good examples of Victorian stained glass window designs," Ms. Robbins said. She also noted a window crafted by German artist Duncan Smith that is located on the west wall towards the rear of the chapel.

"Nothing of any magnitude was done to the chapel prior to the roof restoration two years ago," said Mr. Howard. Since then several improvements have been completed, including replastering a water-damaged vestibule, repairing wainscoting and giving the interior of the chapel a fresh coat of paint. Funds are also available to purchase new carpeting. The six-member chapel committee, chaired by Associate Professor of Music Ernest C. Mead, will select the color, said Mr. Howard, who favors burgundy or wine-colored carpet.

Ordinary chapel maintenance and repairs are state funded; chapel rental fees bring in some additional revenues. "The Chapel Committee is considering the possibility of an addition to the chapel to provide a bathroom/dressing room," said Mr. Mead. "Such construction would be very expensive, so we are exploring the possibility of this project being incorporated into the capital fund drive."

"The story of the chapel these days has a lot of hope about it," said Mr. Howard. "Five years ago, it was in such bad shape. The state only started giving maintenance monies in a major way in the early 1980s. Up until then everything had been overlooked: even our most precious buildings had been let go. The University and the state ought to be applauded for dealing with a real backlog of problems they weren't responsible for."