IDENTITY THROUGH STYLE: THE TRANSATLANTIC DISSEMINATION OF ANGLICAN AND EPISCOPALIAN NEO-GOTHIC CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT

In the nineteenth century the Episcopalians used Gothic Revival architecture for dogmatic purposes to define their status among Protestant denominations and secure their place in the United States of America. The discussion of neo-Gothic churches in America usually begins after the arrival of the English theological Oxford Movement in the 1830s. I claim the political changes that occurred with the American Revolution along with early nineteenth century American tensions between low and high church Episcopalians fostered a distinct American Episcopalian neo-Gothic church development. Through exchanges of ideas between English and American clergy and architects, American Episcopal High Church architecture developed and spread throughout the United States. By examining specific churches, including those by Frank Wills and Richard Upjohn, in context of Anglican and Episcopalian doctrine, its liturgical practices, and publications by architects and English and American ecclesiological societies, I show how and why neo-Gothic churches became solidified as a signifier of and reinforced the Episcopal faith.