

Part II – Reconstruction and the Lost Cause Theory: 1865 – 1900

Community Context:

In 1865, the population of Richmond was 110,000. It had more than doubled since the beginning of the Civil War in 1861. There were soldiers, prisoners, the war wounded, visitors and individuals with business and political endeavors underway. Food was in short supply. On Sunday, April 2, 1865, the Confederate lines were breached by the Union forces in Petersburg. An aide found President Jefferson Davis in church that morning and briefed him on the situation. A fire was lit to destroy the munitions stored in the city and much of the city south of the Capitol burned.

By Monday morning the mayor had invited the Union troops stationed outside the city to enter and help restore order and extinguish the fire. The American flag had been returned to the Capitol by the young Capitol page who had taken it down as the war began and hidden it. Mayor Joseph Mayo formally surrendered the city to Union General Godfrey Weitzel. On the morning of April 4, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln arrived at Rockett's Landing. He was greeted by about 75 African Americans who were working on the dock. President Lincoln and his son Tad walked up Main Street to the White House of the Confederacy and sat in the chair of President Jefferson Davis. He then returned to Washington D. C. for the celebration of the surrender at Appomattox.

With slavery now over, the next 50 years were very socially fluid. Reconstruction and adjustment to the new reality followed. Edward A. Pollard, wartime editor of the Richmond Examiner, was quoted as saying, "though the war had ended slavery and restored the union, it did not decide negro equality; it did not decide negro suffrage."¹ Life was made as difficult as possible for the newly freed Negro. The Virginia General Assembly passed a law in 1866 so severe that unemployment essentially was made a crime.

The first Reconstruction Act was passed by Congress in March of 1867. Blacks were now allowed to vote. The city stayed racially segregated and everything was done politically to keep it that way. For political reasons, President Johnson was very lenient with the southern states seeking readmission to the Union. During the first part of Reconstruction, Virginia was one of five military districts in the south. They were not allowed to rejoin the Union until they had passed a new constitution. The second era of Reconstruction began in 1867. Virginia had not reconstructed itself adequately to participate in the 1868 presidential election.

The Funder/Readjuster controversy was about paying back bondholders for money lent before the war vs. paying for public education. Schools continued to be overcrowded and underfunded. Those who could afford it sent their children to private schools. Annexation, gerrymandering, and redistricting began as early as 1871. Democrats gained control and by 1890, Virginia no longer had black representation in Congress.

The Lost Cause movement gained momentum in the 1890's, and the monuments began to go up on Monument Avenue. The population of the city began to spread out with class and racial segregation ensuing. By 1896 there were no longer any Black members of city council and there would be none until after WW II.

“For its part, Virginia was never really reconstructed, rebuilt from the ground up. The same men ran Virginia after the war as before; the same heroes were worshipped; and the same goals led government. As with the rest of the South, however, later generations took the 14th and 15th Amendments created in Reconstruction and resumed the work that Reconstruction in Virginia never had a chance to do.” 2

Sources

- (1) Richmond's Unhealed History, Benjamin Campbell, p. 131.
- (2) “Reconstructing Virginia”, The Richmond Daily Dispatch, 1866-1871.
- Blind Spots, Race and Identity in a Southern Church, Christopher Alan Graham
- Not Hearers Only, Weisiger, Traser and Trice.

Community Context, The Lost Cause

Edward A. Pollard, writer and essayist who was the Editor of the Editorial page of the *Richmond Examiner* during some of the Civil War and after, wrote the *Lost Cause* in 1866. According to Encyclopedia.com, Edward A. Pollard | Encyclopedia.com, the book described the South's bid to leave the Union as a heroic effort that was undertaken to preserve Southern honor and virtue. The Encyclopedia Virginia contains an excerpt about the “The Lost Cause” that is worth including.

The Lost Cause is an interpretation of the American Civil War (1861–1865) that seeks to present the war, from the perspective of Confederates, in the best possible terms. Developed by white Southerners, many of them former Confederate generals, in a postwar climate of economic, racial, and social uncertainty, the Lost Cause created and romanticized the “Old South” and the Confederate war effort, often distorting history in the process. For this reason, many historians have labeled the Lost Cause a myth or a legend. It is certainly an important example of public memory, one in which nostalgia for the Confederate past is accompanied by a collective forgetting of the horrors of slavery. Providing a sense of relief to white Southerners who feared being dishonored by defeat, the Lost Cause was largely accepted in the years following the war by white Americans who found it to be a useful tool in reconciling North and South. The Lost Cause has lost much of its academic support but continues to be an important part of how the Civil War is commemorated in the South and remembered in American popular culture.

Important Dates and Events Following the Civil War

1865 Ku Klux Klan established

1866 VA Vagrancy Act – resulted in mass incarceration and convict labor

President Johnson's pardon of former confederates

Federal Civil Rights Act of 1866 – gave citizenship and equal rights to all born in the U. S. except Native Americans

1867 Federal Reconstruction Act – reconstruct state constitutions and ratify 14th Amendment

1867 *24 of the 105 Delegates to the VA House are freedmen*

1869 VA ratifies new constitution

1870 U. S. Military withdraws from VA

1877 Reconstruction ends nationally

1896 Plessy v. Ferguson – Supreme Court Decision – Jim Crow is approved

Amendments to the U. S. Constitution

1865 13th Amendment – ends slavery

168 14th Amendment – Citizenship, due process, and equal protection under the law

1870 15th Amendment – Guarantees voting rights to Freedmen

The U.S. Episcopal Church:

The southern general council and northern general convention reunified immediately following the Civil War and established itself as a national church. Several black congregations in the north and south were formed under one of three black Episcopal Churches. These included the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME, founded in Philadelphia in 1787), the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ, founded in New York in 1796/officially recognized in 1821), and the Colored (now Christian) Methodist Episcopal Church, which was formed by southern blacks in 1870. (Prichard, p.145, websites)

The Conference of Church Workers Among the Colored People was formed in 1883 in response to a proposal made by a group of white bishops and clergy, which if adopted by the General Convention, would have separated black Episcopalians into non-geographical racial diocese. The failed 'Sewanee Canon' as it was known, was the second attempt by southern Episcopal leaders to segregate the diocese and church congregations. Thereafter, individual southern dioceses took steps to limit black participation in diocesan conventions. (Prichard, p.179)

As the nation moved west, the Church expanded its membership and reputation through missionary work, seminaries, and the construction of major cathedrals such as Chicago's Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, Minnesota's Cathedral of Our Merciful Savior, Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, and Grace Cathedral San Francisco. Washington National Cathedral, officially Cathedral Church of St. Peter and Paul, in Washington, D.C. was chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1893. Cathedrals were designed to project the Episcopal Church as capable of meeting the needs of the nation's citizens and to help thwart the growing influence of the Catholic Church with which some new immigrant populations identified. (Prichard, p.193; Encyclopedia Britannica)

U. S Church Challenges:

The Church was beset by race, class, and regional differences, changing societal ills, growing pains, and divisions of orthodoxy, yet it managed to remain unified where other Protestant denominations experienced splits. Special schools/missions to the blind, Native Americans, Asians, the rural poor, and Blacks were prevalent. Pritchard mentions that as these schools grew, they were organized as separate congregations, which “routinely created congregations composed of a single economic or racial group” (p.180) The Church also actively responded to social and economic problems related to slum housing and unfair labor practices in urban areas. Increased eastern and western missionary work resulted in 29 new missionary districts and dioceses in the U.S. between 1880-1910. (Prichard, p.178, 174)

The African Methodist Episcopal Church’s website notes that “the most significant denominational development occurred during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Oftentimes, with the permission of Union army officials, AME clergy moved into the states of the collapsing Confederacy to pull newly freed slaves into their denomination.” Northern black churches focused their southern black mission work on helping prepare newly freed blacks to live independently. Pritchard indicates that their efforts to educate blacks gave rise to independent black institutions of higher education such as Spellman and Morehouse in Atlanta. Urban, northern blacks and southern blacks held vastly different worship styles, which created conflict although both managed to survive. Northern congregations tended toward “proper decorum and attention to reading the Bible” while southern black congregations were more emotive.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, “the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church originated from a movement begun in 1866 with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to organize the Black members into an independent church. At the founding convention in 1870, two bishops from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, consecrated two Black elders as the first bishops of the new church.”

The Episcopal Freedman’s Commission (1865-1878) was established to increase black church membership after their dramatic move away from the Episcopal Church during the War and Reconstruction. Within a few years, it had founded 65 schools with 5500 black students but as donations declined, the Commission turned its mission to congregational development. In 1877 the Commission reported 37 congregations, 15 black clergy, and 14 candidates for ordination in the south. The Freedman’s Commission was dissolved in 1878 when Congress ended Reconstruction. In the south, the Church formed Episcopal Colleges and a seminary from which

to draw clergy to serve in black parishes and grouped them into 'Archdeaconries for Colored Work.' (Prichard, p.146).

U. S. Church Operating Form and Function

Growth in membership, services, reputation, and diverse interest groups demanded the advent of systems, new programs, and a national governance model for the Episcopal Church. The Church established a national headquarters in NYC in 1894, grouped dioceses into provinces, adopted standard parish accounting practices, and created the National Council to act for churches between conventions. The Church established the Boys and Girls Club, the Women's Auxiliary, the United Thank Offering, and Every Member Canvas. (Prichard, pp.174-178)

The Episcopal Church also worked in partnership with other denominations to address social ills through agencies such as the American Negro Academy (forerunner of the NAACP) and the Society of Christian Socialists. Prichard notes another, the American Economic Association (1885) was formed "to challenge conservative economic theory according to which union demand for salary increases were an immoral attempt to alter just compensation levels set by natural law" (Prichard, p.179).

Additionally, America had become a world power through which the Church expanded its national and international presence by foreign missionary work and the provision of chaplains to the military. (p.196-197) The number of Episcopal communicants in foreign mission districts increased from 408 to 28,136 during the late 1800's and after the Civil War. (Prichard, p. 173)

U. S. Church, Church Congress Movement

A group of Church leaders, seeking to hold together a coalition of agencies and special ministries with a new vision for the church and to avoid a schism between radical and moderate evangelicals over Episcopal Church form and polity, started the Church Congress movement. It provided a forum for the discussion of important issues; diverse points of view were represented, and no vote or official action was taken. Meetings were open to the public of all denominations and covered extensively by the press. Leaders sought to instill a broad tolerance for diversity of thought including a willingness to entertain intellectual challenges presented by scholars such as Darwin, Freud, and Lyell. The Church Congress's vision was "the broad church," one that would encompass a wider audience and pursue steps to make it liberal and free. (Prichard, p.184-185)

Out of the Church Congress forums, "in 1886 the House of Bishops adopted the quadrilateral, an outline of four basic elements that the Episcopal Church would expect in any national church it helped create: the Holy Scriptures, the Nicene Creed, the Sacraments of Baptism and

Eucharist, and the historic episcopate adopted to local circumstances” (Prichard, p.190). Butler states that “the resulting changes were so powerful that they effectively destroyed old-style Evangelicalism within the Episcopal Church. The new generation of leaders, initially Evangelicals, slowly abandoned old party loyalty in favor of the Broad Church whose new emphasis on critical theology and social ministry seemed to better address the problems of post- Civil War America” (p.214).

Sources

Butler, D.H. (1995). *Standing Against the Whirlwind: Evangelical Episcopalians in Nineteenth Century America*. Oxford University Press, New York.

Prichard, R. (1999 rev). *A History of the Episcopal Church*. Morehouse Publishing. New York.

<https://www.ame-church.com/our-church/our-history/>

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Episcopal Church in Virginia:

Following the end of the Civil War, the Episcopal Diocese was struggling with the issues of how the Diocese would be geographically carved up, and whether it would condone “high” church practices.¹ The larger church outside the Diocese was responding to emancipation of enslaved people, and “Sunday school classes for freedmen . . . was part of the larger response of the Episcopal Church to emancipation.”²

At the 1865 Diocesan Convention right after the war, Bishop John Johns gave a report on the situation.

“It is proper that I should remind you of the fact, by the action of the Federal Government, several millions of slaves have been suddenly set free, are left amongst us a potent power for good or evil, in connection of the destinies of this country and further, that the character of their influence must be determined by their own character, which, under God, depends on their moral and religious education, for which a large measure of responsibility must rest upon us. ... An indispensable basis, their reliance on the purity of our purpose must be gained, and over the prejudices which their former relations may have generated, and which some would be glad to strengthen and perpetuate... if we of the South, who best understand these people, and ought to direct and control this work, neglect it, other mischievous hands will take it up to our great annoyance, and the serious perversion and ruin of many whom they assume to enlighten.”

¹ The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 115, No. 2, 2007, p. 278-282.

² Ibid, p. 283

As we saw before the war, Black people were not allowed to serve as clergy, leading to “mass migration from the Episcopal church.”³ Numbers “were embarrassingly small”⁴ of Black people who were members in Episcopal churches. The national Episcopal church established a “freedman’s commission to provide education and other services to the newly emancipated. One of the commission’s successful schools . . . was in Petersburg and the white women who taught there worked with the Rev. Churchill J. Gibson and black members of Grace Episcopal Church to found a black congregation, St. Stephen’s Church, Petersburg, in 1867. St. Stephen’s . . . quickly became the diocesan anchor for black Episcopalians. By 1878 it was joined by a revitalized St. Philip’s Church in Richmond.”⁵

Sunday Schools for the poor were popular because they taught literacy skills along with Bible lessons.⁶ These schools attracted African Americans who had left for other denominations.⁷ The schools gave students materials and let them keep things they had made, and this added to the attraction, and also fit with the church’s paternalistic views of African Americans.⁸ This paternalism was evident in the church’s refusal to admit St. Stephen’s Petersburg as a voting, full-fledged parish within the Diocese, and in keeping St. Stephen’s as a mission church.⁹

The marginalization of African Americans, and efforts to segregate African Americans was continued by churches in the Diocese in the 1880s. Black priests opposed these efforts.¹⁰ The Diocesan Council took steps to limit participation in the council by Black priests.¹¹ A “Colored Missionary Jurisdiction” was created by the Diocese that “consigned black churches to a separate office in the Diocese.”¹² Speaking against the establishment of the Colored Missionary Jurisdiction was Black Deacon George Freeman Bragg. “Bragg’s protest represented a call to an equitable faith and earthly brotherhood that white Episcopalians chose not to hear.”¹³

In 1884, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Virginia, Alfred Randolph, asserted his beliefs about the value of Christian education for Black people. Randolph believed that educating Blacks in the church “allowed for the growth of black social capacity toward a purely theoretical inclusivity that no slaveholder could have maintained.”¹⁴ And yet, “White Episcopalians refused to recognize that their hostility and their inability to imagine a larger social context of racial equality drove black people from their church, and further separated black Episcopalians and their congregations from the mainstream structure of the denomination.”¹⁵

³ Ibid, p. 283

⁴ Ibid, p. 283

⁵ Ibid, p. 284

⁶ Ibid, p. 284

⁷ Ibid, p. 284

⁸ Ibid, p. 285

⁹ Ibid, p. 286

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 287

¹¹ Ibid, p. 288

¹² Blind Spots, Race and Identity in a Southern Church, Christopher Alan Graham, p. 66

¹³ Ibid, p. 67

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 64

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 65

At the 1889 Diocesan Council, segregation was officially canonized. In his address to the Council, the Assistant Bishop expressed gratitude for involvement of “colored clergy” but also offered a rationale for limiting their involvement in the Council through his portrayal of most Blacks as having only a childlike ability to contribute to the workings of the church.¹⁶ Rev. George F. Bragg, a Black priest, spoke in protest, saying that the amendment to the canon “will put an end to the growth of the work of the Church among our people.”¹⁷

This excerpt from the address by Bishop Randolph rationalized their views and reveals how white clergy felt about African Americans abilities 24 years after the end of the Civil War.

This system of (church) government is based upon the assumption of the possession by this voter of certain elements of moral character, of knowledge of personal self-control and dignity, which in some degree, belong to the white race in all communities. ...Is it justice to doctrine, discipline and worship of that great Church which we have inherited to trust its purity, its stability, and its mighty mission under God to a people who have had no such training, no such discipline of ages of self-control and of moral and intellectual progress? The question, with reference to the negro as legislator in the Episcopal Church is not a question of race, a question of color, but it is a question of faculty, of ability. It is a question of capacity of character. Of course, there are marked exceptions here and there, which we thankfully recognize as signs of promise for the future....

The change, effectively limiting future involvement of Black clergy and laity, read: “Sec. 3. The Council shall also be composed of the Colored Ministers having a seat and a voice in the Council on the 17th of May 1889, and of two Clerical and two Lay delegates from the Colored Missionary Jurisdiction of the Diocese, as the same is now or may hereafter be constituted by Canon.”¹⁸

In 1892 the Diocese divided, and the Diocese of Southern Virginia, which was more accepting of Black ministers and members and had greater numbers of both compared with the Diocese of Virginia, was formed.¹⁹ By the end of the 19th Century, the Diocese of Virginia had renewed its mission work. This was enhanced by the formation of the Women’s Auxiliary²⁰ and by the formation of a divinity school to train Black ministers in Petersburg.²¹ Included in this was the work of Rebecca Peterkin, daughter of St. James’s rector Joshua Peterkin, to found Sheltering Arms Hospital in 1889.²²

St. James’s:

¹⁶ Journal of the 94th Annual Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, pp. 42-46

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 75

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 73

¹⁹The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 115, No. 2, 2007 p. 289

²⁰ Ibid, p. 296

²¹ Ibid, p. 298

²² Ibid, p. 295

According to *Not Hearers Only*, Dr. Joshua Peterkin continued to serve as the rector of St. James's during most of this period and served until his death in 1892. He was followed for the next four years by Dr. John K. Mason who served with Dr. Peterkin as Associate Rector and took over as rector upon Peterkin's death. He stayed briefly and left in 1896 due to his dissatisfaction with the Vestry's decision not to move to another location. The church was still at the corner of Fifth and Marshall. Dr. Mason was replaced in 1896 by Dr. William Meade Clarke, from the same church in Fredericksburg that Dr. Mason left. (p, 37-39)

St. James's equipped its Sunday School to act as a parish school in 1866, which was discontinued in 1870 due to lack of funds. In the 1870's during Peterkin's tenure, St. James's was very mission driven. It helped start Moore Memorial which became Grace and Holy Trinity Church (p. 30). St. James's purchased a site on Laurel St. This and other things caused money woes, but things improved, and money was raised to repair and redecorate the sanctuary in 1878. In 1883, "a street mission and weekday prayer service were operated at Monroe and Broad Streets, led by Miss Maria Allen and the Reverend Preston Nash. A mission and sewing class for Blacks was operated at the nearby market by Miss Anne Goodall, and also one at the City Alms Home." (p. 31, 34)

Frederick W. Hanewinckel of St. James's, and other St. James'sers, started the Protestant Episcopal Church Home in 1875 for the benefit of indigent Episcopal Women. Records of the Home are held at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture (VMHC). Mrs. Peterkin, Dr. Peterkin's wife, served as the second President of the Board of Managers in 1894. The Home served 157 elderly Episcopal women in its 100-year history and moved three times. It merged in 1975 with the Westminster-Canterbury Home. While not researched, it is assumed that this home was only for white Episcopalian women. (<https://virginiahistory.org/research/research-resources/finding-aids/protestant-episcopal-church-home-ladies-richmond-va>) In 1889, Peterkin's daughter, Rebekah helped to start Sheltering Arms. Also, that year, St. James's helped to start a mission in Brazil (P.35).

Also, in 1877, Mrs. John Lightfoot helped found the Retreat for the Sick (now Retreat Hospital), the first hospital to help paying and non-paying patients (p. 34). An article from the Times Dispatch in 1962 indicated that "The hospital is Richmond's oldest, founded in 1877 by Annabella Ravenscroft Jenkins to serve people of any race as an alternative to the general almshouse." (https://richmond.com/retreat-for-the-sick-hospital-1962/article_6eddfb32-df55-5805-b05c-be95feb826a5.html)

In 1894, St. James's Miss Mary Tinsley Greenhow founded the Virginia Home for Incurable. She was an invalid since the age of 20 and believed "that those who could not be cured also deserved relief". (p. 40) It cannot be confirmed if this institution included or excluded African Americans.

Unfortunately, the Vestry minutes that were available for the time period 1870-1900 were not helpful in terms of information about the clergy or Church leaders' behavior, practices or

policies towards freed African Americans, or major events during and after Reconstruction. Apparently, St. James's and its leaders were focused on the survival of their Church and its members. However, while not related to African Americans, the Treasurer's report that was included in the Minutes dated April 3, 1877, showed that \$25 of the \$467.97 collected on Good Friday & Easter was earmarked for the Society for the Conversion of the Jews.

While there was no mention in the Vestry minutes, St. James's clergy either participated in the committees that were created to decide how to deal with African American churches and/or they voted for the resolutions or changes to church law that were the result of the committee's work. In the 1866 Diocesan Convention Report mentioned in the next section, the Diocese created a "standing executive committee on colored congregations". St. James's assistant rector, Rev. T. G. Dashiell served on this committee. (p. 40-41)

As indicated in the preceding section on the Virginia Episcopal Diocese, the Diocese canonized segregation at their 1889 Convention. Although it appears that neither clergy nor lay leaders of St. James were on the Committee that was appointed at the previous Convention to create the new law, when the vote was taken on this change to the canon, Rev. Peterkin voted for the change.

St. Philips:

As indicated in Part I, St. James's, St. Paul's, and Monumental provided funding to start St. Philips in 1861, and St. James's provided the clergy. The 1865 Diocesan Convention Report stated, "The Reverend T. G. Dashnell, after having been usefully employed as assistant minister of the Church for more than five years, has resigned that position, in order to take charge of St. Philip's Church (colored)." P. 69.

In the 1866 Diocesan Convention Report, there was a petition from St. Philips and a "colored" Church in Halifax to be admitted to the Council, which was tabled. Instead, the Diocese resolved that "the Council is willing to take under its care regularly organized congregations of colored people". (p. 36)

According to Ken Anderson from his presentation to St. James's in May 2021, St. Philip's was in disarray from 1865-1867. While the Church struggled, the Sunday School, assisted by the Freedmen's Bureau, flourished with over 200 pupils and an integrated staff. In 1869, Rev. J.S. Atwell, who was the first Black priest ordained in the Diocese of Virginia, served as the first Black priest at St. Philip's. During that time, St. James's Church, especially Dr. Peterkin, were involved in everyday affairs at St. Philip's.

Following Rev. Atwell's departure in 1870, the Church was again served by St. James's assistant priests: Reverends Winchester, Dame, and Powers. In 1879, St. Philip's called its first Black rector, Rev. Thomas White Cain. After that happened, St. James's took less of an active role in St. Philip's. Ken Anderson stated in his presentation that "in 1889, the Diocesan Council voted to canonize segregation within the Diocese." Finally, in 1896, a new Church was constructed at

St. James and Leigh Streets. St. James's donated new light fixtures and benches for the sanctuary.

From Ken Anderson email 2/2/21, "Throughout the 1860s and through the 1889 Diocesan Convention when the Diocese officially segregated itself, it was clear that white Episcopalians desired a Black presence (in the spirit of mission and paternalism) but did not desire to give Black clergy or laypeople any agency at the administrative level. Following 1879 (the calling of our first Black rector), the diocese did release some control on our day-to-day operations, but we went as a parish without representation at convention for many years."