St James's Church in the Jim Crow Era (1896 -1960)

Anne S. Hayes - May 31, 2022

The Rev. William Meade Clark 1896 -1914

William Meade Clark, son of the Rev. John Thomas Clark and Mary Wilson Marr, was born in 1855 at "Banister Lodge" tobacco plantation in Halifax County. His father entered the ministry primarily to instruct the enslaved persons who worked on his plantation but also took charge of Roanoke Parish. From an early age, Clark shared his father's interest in the ministry. While a student at the University of Virginia, he taught at Keswick Farm where Ella Rives, a white communicant at Grace Episcopal Church in Albemarle County, had helped establish a "colored" Sunday school. In 1875, while attempting to board a moving train car in Keswick to return to Charlottesville after teaching, Clark fell under the cars and had to have his foot amputated.[1]

Clark went on to graduate from Virginia Theological Seminary and was ordained a deacon in the Diocese of Virginia in 1882. That same year, the Diocese ordained its first two Black clergy – the Revs. James Solomon Russell and Thomas White Cain -- both graduates of the recently formed St. Stephen's Normal and Theological School for Black clergy in Petersburg, Virginia, later known as Bishop Payne Divinity School. Once ordained, Clark quickly gained recognition for his preaching. Following a sermon at the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina General Convention in 1889, a Raleigh newspaper remarked that Clark was "one of the best preachers in North Carolina" whose "preaching is heard gladly because it is pure gospel." In 1894, Clark declined a call to Monumental Church, in part, "to show the world that there was at least one preacher who was able to resist the temptation to live in Richmond." However, two years later he accepted a call to become Rector of St. James's.[2]

Clark arrived in Richmond just a few months after the United States Supreme Court issued its *Plessy v Ferguson* 163 U.S. 537 (1896) opinion which established the "separate but equal" doctrine declaring that racial segregation is constitutional as long as facilities are equal in quality. Southern states, including Virginia, soon adopted laws and constitutions severely restricting the ability of Black people to vote and segregating schools, public spaces, and housing. When Virginia held its 1901-1902 Constitutional Convention, Robert Eden Scott, a southwest Virginia lawyer who would later become a vestryman at St James's, expressed his approval of new measures which disenfranchised Black voters by imposing a poll tax, property requirement, and literacy test, deeming the proposed draft constitution a "a good one." In 1869 twenty-one Black delegates and six Black senators had been elected to the General Assembly. Following adoption of the new Constitution, the number of eligible voters in the Jackson Ward

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[1] Secrist, M., *Families of Halifax County, Virginia* (Lulu Press, Inc., 2012), 56-61; Goodwin, William A.R., *History of the Theological Seminary in Virginia and its Historical Background* (New York: E.D. Gorham, 1924), Vol. II, 186; Woods, Kathie, "Grace's Outreach to the African-American Population in the 19th and 20th Centuries," Grace Church, https://www.gracekeswick.org/graces-outreach-to-the-african-american-population-in-the-19th-and-20th-centuries-by-kathie-woods.html, accessed 18 May 2022; "Horrible Accident," *The Abingdon Virginian*, 15 Oct 1875, 2.

[2] "Episcopal Eighty-Seventh Annual Session," *Weekly Virginian* (Norfolk), 25 May 1882, 1; "The Episcopal Convention," *Weekly State Chronicle* (Raleigh, NC), 24 May 1889, 1; "Too Well Pleased to Leave," *The Daily Star* (Fredericksburg, Va.), 22 May 1894, 1; "Called to Richmond," *The Daily Star* (Fredericksburg, Va.), 11 Jul 1896, 3.

precinct, which had been established in 1871 to contain Black voting power, dropped from 2,983 to 33 by 1903. No Black legislators would be elected to the General Assembly again until 1968.[3]

Following the *Plessy* decision, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation which permitted and then later mandated segregated streetcars. Although designed to discriminate against Black riders, this Jim Crow law impacted other customers including St. James's vestryman James Roy Gordon, who in July 1907 made headlines after vowing to appeal a fine he received for violating the law. As Gordon explained in the newspaper, he was convicted of a misdemeanor and fined $10 after refusing to move from the Black section where he had sat to smoke because the designated smoking section was occupied. The *Times Dispatch* republished a Lynchburg editorial calling Gordon's decision to challenge the court's ruling "unfortunate" and "imprudent." Noting that Black and white passengers had ridden public transportation together for 100 years without issue, John Mitchell Jr., editor of Richmond's Black newspaper the *Richmond Planet,* commended Gordon's "test" of the Jim Crow law which was a "nuisance" to both Black and white passengers. Mitchell deemed the provision "as unnatural as it was unnecessary" and characterized arguments to the contrary as appeals to "unreasoning racial prejudice." Although available records are unclear as to whether Gordon succeeded in appealing the fine, the Richmond Passenger and Power Company quickly prepared new rules relegating smokers to the outside rear platform of the streetcars.[4]

In 1911, the all-white Richmond City Council adopted another segregation law mandating that "no colored person shall be permitted to reside on a block where the majority of the residents are white and vice-versa." The following January, a special committee appointed by the City Council to consider better housing for Black residents impacted by the ordinance held a public hearing. Black leaders urged the City Council to allow residents of overcrowded areas to occupy surrounding neighborhoods. They also requested action to reduce the number of saloons in Black residential areas. Civic activist Mary-Cooke Munford, whose nephew Walter Russell Bowie had recently become rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, also testified regarding the overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in Black neighborhoods which the city had neglected. One City Council member admitted that "improvements had gone where they would do the most good politically" and that Black residents, who had been "ousted from politics," stood little chance of receiving appropriations for their neighborhoods. Later that year, civic leaders including St. James's vestry member James Caskie organized the "Society for the Betterment of Housing and Living Conditions in Richmond." Caskie, appointed treasurer of the Society, was a lawyer and former City councilman. Although not directly involved in the Society, the Rev. Clark spoke at a St. Paul's Men's Association meeting in October 1912 organized to discuss "[b]etter housing conditions . . . improvement to sanitary matters, [and] attacks on moral ills." Munford and the Rev. Bowie served on the Society alongside Caskie and together enlisted Gustavus Adolphus Weber to conduct a study of housing and living conditions in Richmond. Weber's final report

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[3] "The New Rector Arrives," *Richmond Dispatch*, 19 Sept 1896, 3; "Sentiment for Proclamation," *Richmond Dispatch*, 27 Apr 1902, 2; Breitzer, Susan, "Constitutional Convention, Virginia (1901–1902)," 23 Mar 2021, *Encyclopedia Virginia.* https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/constitutional-convention-virginia-1901-1902/, accessed 18 May 2022; "Registration Now Complete Here," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 30 Sept 1903, 10.

[4] "The Jim Crow Law" *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 2 Jul 1907, 6; "Mr. Gordon and the Street Cars," *Richmond Planet*, 6 Jul 1907, 4; "Law of the Road as to Street Cars," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 26 Jul 1907, 10.

included photos and detailed descriptions of poor housing conditions. Noting the connection between unsanitary and congested living situations and Richmond's above-average sickness and mortality rates, the report recommended easing overcrowding with unused land, installing water in every house, eliminating trash, installing underground sewer, cleaning streets, and providing more housing for working-class people. The Society Board recommended changes to existing sanitation ordinances and supported Weber's efforts to coordinate a two-week neighborhood "clean-up" campaign. However, overcrowding, negligent landlords, and a lack of affordable housing remained issues.[5]

In addition to his role as rector of St. James's Church, Clark served on the Board of Trustees of Bishop Payne Divinity School and as editor of the *Southern Churchman*. Although he decried the "misuse of the pulpit" to speak on current events, Clark did express his opinions in that publication, including on race relations. In 1900, shortly after Clark was appointed editor, the *Southern Churchman* criticized a recent medical association lecture by University of Virginia racial eugenics professor Dr. Paul Brandon Barringer entitled "The American Negro: His Past and Future." Barringer believed Black people were genetically inferior to white people. He argued that they had advanced due to the "discipline of slavery" but younger Black people were now "reverting through hereditary forces to savagery." To remedy this perceived "negro problem," Barringer advocated disenfranchisement of Black men and "education of trade or industrial type" by "well-chosen white teachers, who will teach [them] to respect, to obey and to work." The *Southern Churchman* objected to Barringer's characterization of every young Black man as "a liar, a thief, a robber, a gambler, perhaps a murderer or a highwayman" and denounced the professor for "narrow and bitter race prejudice that can only lead to harm." The following year, when the 1901-1902 Constitutional Convention debated a proposal to base appropriations for Black public schools solely on revenue collected from Black taxpayers, the *Southern Churchman* called it a "vicious…unjust, unkind, reactionary, and disastrous piece of legislation" that "contravenes directly in every way, every precept of the Christian religion." Clark's views aligned with those of Baptist ministers Meredith Ashby Jones and Robert Healey Pitt. According to historian Samuel C. Shepherd Jr., Jones believed white Christians should support public education of African Americans as part of their duty "to assist blacks in improving their minds and morals," and Pitt viewed the appropriations proposal as a "policy of degradation" which would "stifle hopes and ambitions." Clark's experience as a Trustee of Bishop Payne Divinity School may have influenced his belief in the value of educating Black people."[6]

While Clark condemned openly hateful expressions of racism, he believed that racial divisions were insurmountable and that segregation was inevitable in both civil and ecclesiastical realms.

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[5] "Mayor to Pass on Measure To-Day," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 19 Apr 1911, 10; "Colored People Plead for Homes," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 26 Jan 1912, 10. In 1903, City Council abolished the Jackson Ward district to eliminate the possibility of electing a Black councilman. "Plan Blots Jackson Ward from the Map," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 29 Sept 1902, 1. "Housing Problem Under Scrutiny," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 21 Feb 1913, 16; "Men of Church Meet," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 30 Oct 1912, 10; "Public Aroused by Clean-up Call," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 12 Apr 1913, 14; Weber, Gustavus A., *Report on Housing and Living Conditions in the Neglected Sections of Richmond, Virginia* (Richmond, Va: Whittet & Shepperson, 1913). In *Buchanan v. Warley* (1917), the Supreme Court of the United States unanimously upheld the right of whites and Blacks to sell residential property to one another, making Richmond's 1911 segregation ordinance unenforceable.

[6] Shepherd Jr., Samuel C., *Avenues of Faith: Shaping the Urban Religious Culture of Richmond, Virginia 1900-1929* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2001), 218, 220.

The status of Black people in the Episcopal Church had long been a matter of debate. In 1883, Black Episcopalian members of the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People (CCWACP) defeated a proposal by white Southern bishops to create separate Black missionary districts governed by white bishops. Instead, the CCWACP proposed establishing special missionary districts with Black bishops to escape the paternalism of white clergy and achieve some autonomy. When the 1907 General Convention convened in Richmond, a committee assigned to study the status of Black clergy within the church presented its report. The majority favored a "suffragan bishop plan" which would create an assistant position to the diocesan bishop, providing opportunity for leadership but no vote in the House of Bishops or right of succession. The majority disapproved of the CCWACP's proposal, fearing this step toward ecclesiastical segregation would eventually result in schism and loss of control over Black Episcopalians."[7]

Speaking for the minority on the committee, Clark supported the CCWACP's plan to create separate racial missionary districts. As delegates prepared to convene in Richmond, Clark laid out his position in the *Southern Churchman* and *Times Dispatch*. He characterized the current situation as "absolutely abnormal and utterly unreasonable," with Black Episcopal churchmen in the South having no standing in the council which governs them or voice in the making of laws. Going a step further, Clark asserted that "dreams of equality" were "vanishing" and present divisions were "and ought to be, fixed and unalterable." The solution, in Clark's opinion, was simply to "recognize facts." He considered it better to leave the Black man "out of the church than to bring him in at the expense of his racial self-respect" and asserted the Black Episcopalian "must be given his own teachers and his own leaders" who understand his "aspirations and ideals." Shortly before his 1914 death, Clark published a statement entitled "The Only Right Thing," in which he reiterated his support for the missionary district plan, asserting it would provide the Black man "a square deal in the Church, whether he got it anywhere else in the world or not," giving him "an open door of hope," and making him understand that the Church "recognized no social, or political, or racial difference whatsoever, and that in the Church every human being stood on the same footing as every other human being." In Clark's view, racial inequality was permanent; therefore, the answer to resolving racial division was not the pursuit of political and social justice but rather the embrace of promised equality before God. In the decades to come, religious leaders including Billy Graham and Jerry Falwell would carry forward this concept, preaching about "colorblind" Christianity as a means of eliminating racism as well as the need for legislation to address racial inequality.[8]

The Rev. George Freeland Peter 1915-1928

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[7] Shattuck, Gardiner H., *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 2000) 13, 16, 21; "Long Day's Debate," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 16 Oct 1907, 2; *Journal of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America* (1907), Appx IX, 520.

[8] "Work for Negro to be Discussed," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 20 Sept 1907, 10; "Long Day's Debate," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 16 Oct 1907, 2; "Rev. W.M. Clark Dies at His Home," *Times Dispatch* (Richmond, Va.), 30 Apr 1914, 1; Bragg, George F., *History of the Afro-American Group of the Episcopal Church* (Baltimore, Md: Church Advocate Press, 1922), Appx 7, 319; Miller, Stephen P., *Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South* (Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 12; Butler, Anthea, *White Evangelical Racism: The Politics of Morality in America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

When Clark's successor, the Rev. George Freeland Peter, delivered his first sermon at St. James's in June 1915, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* noted he preached "a clear and convincing sermon, based solely upon the Gospel, indicating plainly that it was his purpose during his ministry to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Peter's preaching style aligned with the growing Fundamentalist movement which favored strict interpretation of the Bible and rejected efforts to meld Christian thought and scientific theory. Newspaper articles announcing Peter's arrival noted his "distinguished" ancestry which included ties to Martha Washington. His great grandfather Robert had amassed a fortune using enslaved labor to farm tobacco in Maryland. When tobacco farming in the East declined in the 1800s, the Peter family sold some of their land and enslaved laborers in rural Maryland. They invested proceeds in Georgetown real estate including "Tudor Place," the family estate which Peter's parents eventually inherited and where the future clergyman was born in 1875. After graduating from the General Theological Seminary in New York City, Peter served as assistant rector of two Washington, D.C. churches and also studied at Oxford University in England. In 1914, he briefly served as rector of St. Matthew's Church in Wheeling, W.Va., before being called to St. James's.[9]

Available research reveals little about the Rev. Peter's views on race relations. In 1920, when Silas Henry Shackelford, the Black sexton who had worked at St. James's for more than 20 years died, Peter attended his funeral at St. Philip's Episcopal Church where Shackelford had been a member. According to the *Richmond Planet*, after St. Philip's Black rector the Rev. Junius Linwood Taylor conducted the regular service, Peter delivered remarks on "Faithfulness" and "beautifully portray[ed] the reward for those who are faithful." Peter likely focused his remarks on the role in which he knew Shackelford -- as a "faithful" sexton at St. James's Church. However, the *Richmond Planet* obituary makes no mention of Shackelford's occupation or connection to St. James's, focusing rather on details of the "[s]olemn and impressive" service which featured the deceased's favorite hymns, a "profusion" of flowers from friends and loved ones, and many pall-bearers including members of King David Masonic Lodge.[10]

Just a year later, Shackelford's son and namesake Silas Henry Shackelford Jr. was featured in *History of the American Negro and His Institutions*, a multi-volume work which Arthur Bunyan Caldwell began writing during World War I to counter contemporary reporting of Black people characterized by "shallowness and levity" and exaggerated "crimes and foibles" by highlighting examples of "heroic struggle" and "noble achievement." Caldwell's biographical sketch describes Shackelford as a "successful druggist" who attended pharmacy school in Raleigh, North Carolina, and relates how the young Shackelford had worked with his father, an "efficient sexton," while attending school and aspiring "to professional life." By 1918, Shackelford and a partner owned two drug stores in Jackson Ward and Church Hill under the firm name Bowles & Shackelford. The biographical sketch concludes with the pharmacist's assessment of Black people's greatest need: "Co-operation as it relates to the Negro and a square deal from the dominant race." Shackelford had reason for concern about race relations. Beginning in 1916, in what became known as "the Great Migration," millions of Black people moved to the North and Midwest in an effort to escape racial violence and Jim Crow laws in the South and to seek better

[9] "Rev. G. Freeland Peter Preaches at St. James," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 7 Jun 1915, 2; "St. James New Rector Takes Charge To-Day," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 6 Jun 1915, 5; "The Peter Family," Tudor Place, https://tudorplace.org/museum/history/the-peter-family/, accessed 18 May 2022.
[10] "Mr. Silas H. Shackleford is Laid to Rest," *Richmond Planet*, 5 Jun 1920, 2.

educational and job opportunities. However, racial tensions and violence grew -- exacerbated by competition for jobs and housing -- prompting NAACP, church, and community leaders to organize a silent march of approximately 10,0000 people through New York City in July 1917 to denounce racial violence and discrimination.[11]

Still, Virginia continued to enact divisive laws including those aimed at upholding "racial integrity." In 1922, acclaimed pianist John Powell and Methodist preacher Earnest Sevier Cox founded the Anglo-Saxon Club with the goal of preserving "white ascendancy." Powell's father had served on the vestry of St. James's for many years and his sister, music teacher Elizabeth Brockenbrough, was a member of the church. The young Powell maintained ties to St. James's, frequently performing concerts to benefit the church's ministries. In a July 22, 1923 article entitled "Is White America to Become a Negroid Nation?," Powell urged action on the Anglo-Saxon Club's proposed anti-miscegenation legislation, expressing alarm over the prevalence of lighter-skinned "colored" people and collegial interactions between members of mixed-race boards of welfare organizations and training schools. Powell asserted that unless the law was enacted, within 30 years "racial and caste distinctions will have become so weakened, the dissemination of Negroid blood so widespread, that effective political action will be impossible." In March 1924, the Racial Integrity Act, which imposed stricter racial classifications in an effort to prevent interracial marriages, was signed into law.[12]

Two months later, the death of seamstress Belle Mason provided newspapers an opportunity to comment on the Racial Integrity Act's passage. An obituary in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* entitled "Respected Negress Dies" noted that Mason, the "only colored communicant" at St. James's for the last 40 years, was "highly respected" and "widely known among the older generation of Richmond." A tribute in the *RTD* commended Mason for her long tenure at St. James's, quietly sitting in the balcony, waiting to kneel at "the very end of the rail" after white parishioners had preceded her. The newspaper declared that Mason represented "a simple, unquestioning piety . . which leveled all differences and all distinctions" and suggested that "when our brothers in the North speak of our intolerance" they think of Mason's "faithful" presence in the gallery of St. James's. A few days later, John Mitchell Jr republished the *RTD* tribute in the *Richmond Planet,* with a "few ideas of [his] own on the subject." Drawing attention to the prevailing practice of segregated seating in white Episcopal churches, Mitchell wrily commented, "It is gratifying information to know that she sat in the gallery on her own motion

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[11] Caldwell, Arthur B., *History of the American Negro and His Institutions* (Atlanta, Ga.: A.B. Caldwell Publishing Co., 1921), Vol. 5, 312-313. Crew, Spencer, "Great Migration, The," 14 Dec 2020, *Encyclopedia Virginia*, https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/great-migration-the/, accessed 18 May 2022; Morand, Michael, "1917 NAACP Silent Protest Parade, Fifth Avenue, New York City," 26 Jul 2020, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, https://beinecke.library.yale.edu/1917NAACPSilentProtestParade, accessed 18 May 2022; "Ends Richmond Segregation," *The Washington Post*, 13 Dec 1917, 13.

[12] Wolfe, Brendan, "Racial Integrity Laws (1924-1930)" 25 Feb 2021, *Encyclopedia Virginia.* https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/racial-integrity-laws-1924-1930/, accessed 21 May 2022; "Prof. Powell Dies Suddenly," *The Daily Times*, 23 Jul 1899, 1; "Mrs. Brockenbrough Is Dead; Well Known Music Teacher,"*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 8 Dec 1938, 1; "John Powell Will Be Heard Here May 18 in Piano Recital," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 6 May 1923, 45; "Is White America to Become a Negroid Nation?" *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 22 Jul 1923, 52. In the 1960s, the funerals of both Powell and his wife took place at St. James's. "Rites Are Today for Mrs. Powell," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 2 Mar 1960, 9; "Powell Funeral Set Here Monday" *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 17 Aug 1963, 4.

and not on account of any rule" at the church. Noting that Mason's obituary in the *RTD* had "dubbed" her "An Aged Negress," Mitchell asserted the fair-skinned Mason would have been horrified by such notoriety, declaring she "was neither a 'Negro' woman in the true sense of the word nor a 'negress.'" Critiquing the paper's description of Mason as well as the Racial Integrity Act's rigid racial classifications, Mitchell suggested adding a sentence to the *RTD* obituary: "Her complexion was so fair that she was taken to be a white person." In a May 31, 1924 letter to the editor of the *Richmond Planet*, Black Episcopal clergyman the Rev. George Freeman Bragg Jr. provided additional commentary. Recalling an occasion when white parishioners at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Petersburg took communion alongside Black parishioners "from the hands of a colored Priest whom they had once known as a 'newsboy,'" Bragg suggested those white churchgoers exhibited "more humble" conduct than Mason. Bragg also commended two past rectors of St. James's -- the Rev. Peterkin, who had served as rector of St. James First African Church in Baltimore where Bragg now presided, and the Rev. Clark for advocating "a square deal" policy towards Black men in the Episcopal church by supporting Black-led missionary districts.[13]

Throughout 1924, Powell and other Anglo-Saxon Club leaders sought to organize chapters across Virginia. Members of the Lexington Post included future St. James's rector the Rev. Churchill Jones Gibson, then serving as rector of Lee Memorial Chapel. Several St. James's parishioners attended a December 1924 Anglo-Saxon Club meeting at which plans were discussed to appeal a Rockbridge County Circuit Court ruling that allowed Robert Painter and Atha Sorrells to obtain a marriage license despite concerns about the bride's racial composition. Anglo-Saxon Club leaders also turned their attention to new legislation focused on segregation in public spaces after Grace Copeland, a childhood friend of Powell, objected to being seated next to Black patrons when she arrived late for a concert at Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. In January 1926, Delegate George Alvin Massenburg introduced a bill requiring the separation of white and "colored" persons in public gathering spaces. Several members of St. James's declared their support for the legislation in a petition published in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. Despite opposition from members of the Richmond Ministerial Union and Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC) who feared the measure would worsen race relations, the General Assembly passed the Public Assemblage Act which became law in March 1926.[14]

After the Richmond Urban League (RUL) was formed in 1924, St. James's vestry member and local real estate developer Oliver Herbert Funsten partnered with that biracial organization in an effort to improve living conditions for Black residents. At the 1925 annual meeting of the Richmond Real Estate Exchange, Funsten encouraged "all real estate men, builders, owners and manufacturers" to participate in the effort which he believed would "redound to the interest of the whole community." Noting that homes where Black domestics worked were "immaculate," while these servants came from "the filth and slime of the colored sections," Funstein declared

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[13] "Respected Negress Dies," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 26 May 1924, 3; "In the Gallery at St. James," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 27 May 1924, 6; "'In the Gallery at St. James,'" *Richmond Planet*, 31 May 1924, 4; "Rev. George Bragg, Jr's Historical Recital," *Richmond Planet*, 7 Jun 1924, 4.

[14] "Anglo-Saxon Club Work is Expanding," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 10 Nov 1924, 11; "Anglo-Saxon Club May Take Appeal in Sorrells Case," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 10 Dec 1924, 1; "The Leading White Citizens Make Protest," 20 Feb 1926, 1;"Noted Citizens Sign for Racial Integrity Bill," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 4 Mar 1926, 13.

real estate developers had 'neglected the colored population of the city to the extent that it was a reflection on the exchange." Asserting conditions in Jackson Ward, Sidney, and Fulton were worse than 20 years ago, Funsten proclaimed, "It would be a God send were a conflagration to wipe out these sections as they are now." Executive Director of the RUL Clifford Louise Winfree suggested that if developers built homes on the outskirts of the city within reasonable distance to street car lines they would sell quickly. The Exchange appointed a committee to work with the RUL and other organizations to improve housing; however, apart from neighborhood cleanups, little progress was made in addressing Richmond's lack of quality, affordable housing for Black residents.[15]

In the summer of 1928, the Rev. Peter left St. James's Church to become Canon-Chancellor of the Washington National Cathedral. At the height of the Depression, he erected a large estate in Maryland on 47 acres inherited from his great grandfather Robert who had built his fortune during the 1700s using enslaved labor to farm tobacco. In 1949, Peter sold the property to the nearby National Institute of Health for just over $500,000 -- the equivalent of more than $6 million in 2022.[16]

The Rev. Churchill Jones Gibson 1928-1957

In October 1928, the Rev. Churchill Jones Gibson began his duties as rector of St. James's, the same church where his father the Rt. Rev. Robert Atkinson Gibson had served as assistant rector fifty years prior. After graduating from the University of Virginia and Virginia Theological Seminary, Gibson spent ten years in Lexington, Va., serving as student chaplain at Virginia Military Institute (VMI) and Washington and Lee University (W&L), as well as rector of W&L's University Chapel (formerly Lee Chapel). A newspaper article announcing his arrival at St. James's noted the Rev. Gibson's popularity in Lexington due to his "youthful outlook and great vigor." Bishop Robert Carter Jett of Southwestern Virginia said Gibson would be greatly missed by friends young and old because "[h]is life was so normal and so refreshing, his mind so vigorous and practical, [and] his sympathies so broad and understanding."[17]

Not long after his arrival, the Rev. Gibson joined the biracial Board of the Richmond Urban League which continued efforts to address the City's affordable housing shortage. In 1932, the

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[15] "Seeks Better Homes for Colored People," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 22 Jan 1925, 3; "New Real Estate Law Under Fire," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 23 Jan 1925, 1; "Improve Conditions Among Negroes Here," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 11 Feb 1925, 18; "Working for Good of All!" *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 15 Feb 1925, 22; "Negroes to Have Parent-Teachers Units in Schools," *The Richmond News Leader*, 17 Sept 1928 (mentions RUL neighborhood clean up clubs).

[16] "Dr. Freeland Peter Now in Washington," *The Richmond News Leader*, 8 Aug 1928, 7; "History of the Lawton Chiles International House (Stone House)," Fogarty International Center at the National Institute of Health, https://www.fic.nih.gov/About/Pages/stonehouse-history.aspx, accessed 18 May 2022; Pugh, Dorothy, "The National Institutes of Health: A Bethesda Landmark Celebrates Its Centennial," in *The Montgomery County Story*, Vol. 30, no. 1 (Feb. 1987), 256.

[17] "To Begin Duties as Rector Here," *The Richmond News Leader,* 6 Oct 1928, 18. The Board of Trustees officially changed the name of Lee Chapel to University Chapel on June 4, 2021. "The Future of Washington and Lee University," 4 Jun 2021, Washington & Lee University Board of Trustees, https://www.wlu.edu/the-w-l-story/leadership/board-of-trustees/messages-from-the-board-2/the-future-of-washington-and-lee-university/, accessed 23 May 2022.

RUL Board endorsed an ultimately unsuccessful proposal to build housing for Black residents on property formerly occupied by Hartshorn Memorial College. Following passage of the Housing Act of 1937, which provided subsidies to local public housing agents to improve living conditions for low-income families, the RUL Board approved a resolution in support of the Richmond Redevelopment Housing Authority (RRHA) which, in 1941, designated Gilpin Court as its first federally subsidized public housing project. [18]

Five years later, the city of Richmond adopted Harlan Bartholomew's master plan for "urban renewal" which recommended "clearance" of blighted property and construction of highways for white commuters living in the suburbs, many of whom had achieved homeownership with help from the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage insurance program. The FHA utilized discriminatory underwriting policies which the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) had used to administer New Deal legislation, including designating areas where Black residents lived as too risky to insure -- a practice known as "redlining." The Housing Act of 1949, part of President Harry S. Truman's Fair Deal program to address housing shortages, provided federal funding for "slum clearance" programs and public housing constructed primarily in neighborhoods receiving low grades from the HOLC, thereby concentrating poverty in inner cities. In 1952, attorney and St. James's vestryman Richard Florance was elected to Richmond City Council. At the time, the RRHA was studying Jackson Ward "as the top priority area" for a Black neighborhood "slum clearance project." After two failed referendums to construct a commuter highway, Richmond was also trying to figure out how to authorize the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike. Florance served on the toll road committee which, in 1953, helped craft legislation to push through the project without voter approval by creating a separate toll road authority. Following much secrecy, in August 1955, the turnpike route was announced, cutting through the center of Jackson Ward and isolating Gilpin Court residents from commercial districts along Broad Street. The new highway destroyed an estimated 400 homes, apartments and businesses, impacting nearly 1000 families. By the end of the 1950s, slum clearance and urban renewal projects had destroyed 4,700 Richmond housing units in primarily Black neighborhoods.[19]

In the 1940s, residents of Westwood near the intersection of Willow Lawn Drive and Patterson Avenue remarkably saved their homes from a similar fate. A group of formerly enslaved people had established Westwood shortly after the Civil War ended. In 1942, Richmond annexed the neighborhood and introduced a proposal to convert Westwood into a public park despite the lack of such a facility on the city's master plan. Ernest Dudley Turner Jr., who had served on St. James's vestry, was a city councilman at the time. Residents and Black civic leaders mobilized and fought back. Thomas Calhoun Walker, a lawyer and president of the Negro Organization Society, urged councilmen to treat Westwood residents fairly, noting "While your men were fighting to preserve slavery our folks stayed at home and looked after your womenfolks and

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[18] "Impetus Given Better Housing for Poor," *The Richmond News Leader,* 28 Sept 1932, 10; "Wards Survey Reveals Data About Slums," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 28 May 1939, 14.

[19] "Four Incumbents Elected to Council as Five New In Richmond Politics Win," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 11 Jun 1952, 1; "City Group Study Plans to Rebuild Slum Areas," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 23 Sept 1952, 1; "Legislator Group Likes Toll Road Idea," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 13 Aug 1953, 2; "Route is Fixed For Intercity Highway," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 2 Aug 1955, 1; Kollatz Jr., Harry and Eshleman, Tina, "Wrecking Crew," *Richmond Magazine*, 19 Mar 2017.

raised crops." Imploring council members to leave the residents alone, Walker continued, "They went out there in the woods--where you wouldn't go--and built their homes." Some white neighbors also spoke out against the city's plan to displace the Westwood residents, as did Richmond newspapers. Calling the park plan "specious," the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* urged City Council to abandon the "brutal" proposal designed to displace "hard-working, respectable" Black residents who had lived in the area long before the white neighbors who were now objecting. Turner, as a member of the Common Council, voted against several of the proposals and the park measure was ultimately defeated.[20]

Having resolved the park issue, City Council turned its attention to the matter of installing utilities for Westwood which had relied on wells and outhouses for years. Turner participated in a survey of the neighborhood, after which the City Health Department condemned Westwood's wells and urged extension of water and sewer to the community. The Common Council approved the improvements, but the Board of Alderman refused. Appalled by the situation, the *Richmond News Leader* published a front page article with photos of residents hauling buckets to the one water hydrant installed to provide clean water to the neighborhood. Calling the situation "scandalously intolerable," the *RNL* declared "basic humanity and common justice are at stake." The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* also urged City Council to provide utilities to the taxpaying residents of Westwood, asserting that to do otherwise "would be taken, rightly, as evidence that Richmond believes in one standard of justice for whites and another" for Black people. In September 1947, the city finally installed water and sewer services in the neighborhood.[21]

The Westwood victory was unusual. Without political representation, Black citizens had little ability to influence governmental policies and practices through civic engagement. In 1948, Black lawyer and civil rights activist Oliver White Hill briefly won a seat on the Richmond City Council but was defeated two years later. In 1954, Hill asked the City Council to adopt a resolution calling on the General Assembly to repeal laws requiring segregation in public places and transportation, noting the economic losses incurred by the city as a result of Black residents refusing to use segregated services. Councilman and St. James's parishioner Richard Florance urged fellow representatives to hold a public hearing to consider Hill's request. Mayor Edward E. Haddock disagreed, opting to "poll the boys" and schedule an informal session at which council members declined to ask the General Assembly to repeal Jim Crow laws. Virginia's 1902 Constitution had ensured that white men unaccountable to a large group of citizens controlled state and local government. In the 1950s, while serving as president of the Richmond First Club, St. James's vestryman Ernest Ballard Baker pondered how to increase voter

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[20] "Council Group Defers Action on Westhampton Playground," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 31 Jan 1945, 7; "Committee Fails to Act on Park Plan," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 28 Mar 1945, 5; "Westhampton Park Decision is Deferred by Committee; Alternative Sites Proposed," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 26 Apr 1945, 12; "Westhampton Park Paper Voted Down," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 5 Jun 1945, 4; "A Forgotten Civil Rights Battlefield: Richmond's Westwood Neighborhood," 31 Oct 2018, *The Shockoe Examiner*, https://theshockoeexaminer.blogspot.com/search?q=Westwood, accessed 18 May 2022.

[21] "Utilities Now to be Asked for Westwood," *The Richmond News Leader*, 5 Jun 1945, 10; "Survey Planned Today," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 10 Jul 1945, 5; "Alderman Refuse to Consider Westwood Sanitation Project," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 11 Jul 1945, 7; "Unfair and Inexcusable," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 11 Feb 1946, 8; "The City's Duty to Westwood," *The Richmond News Leader*, 18 Feb 1947, 12; "Water, Water Aplenty But Little for Drinking in Westwood Village," *The Richmond News Leader*, 19 Feb 1947, 3; "Westwood-Touchstone for Richmond," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 6 Apr 1947, 58.

engagement. The First Club conducted a study to determine why Richmond and Virginia "consistently have a lower voting turnout than almost any similar area in the country." A 1955 report prepared by the organization concluded the poll tax was the biggest factor contributing to low voter turnout. That measure would not be repealed until 1964, when the United States Supreme Court issued a ruling declaring such measures unconstitutional.[22]

In the 1950s, St. James's parishioner Ann Burroughs Haskell served on the Board of Child Care Centers Inc., a non-profit created to provide care for children ages 5 through 11. During World War II, Richmond had received federal funding under the Lanham Act for free extended day centers operated by Richmond Public Schools to help women working to support the war effort. Realizing many women with children needed to work to support their families, Richmond decided to continue this service at schools throughout the city, with three facilities for white children and one for Black children. However, unlike during the war, the city concluded the day care centers should be self-supporting, with participating families paying weekly or daily fees. In 1955, Haskell reported that while the white day care centers were thriving, the center for Black children at Baker School might close due to low participation. She noted that of the 15 children then enrolled at the Baker School facility, only 5 lived in the surrounding neighborhood of Jackson Ward, while others were scattered in various parts of the city including Church Hill, the West End, and North Side. Recognizing the childcare center filled "a definite and urgent need" Haskell pledged to do "everything possible" to keep it open and explored cost-cutting measures including the elimination of lunch. However, the Baker School center eventually closed due to low enrollment. Income disparities, slum clearance projects, and transportation challenges likely contributed to low attendance at the Baker School center and its eventual closure.[23]

Black lawyers and civil rights activists including Richmond's Oliver W. Hill increasingly turned to the court system to seek relief from unjust Jim Crow laws while white community leaders sought to forestall legal challenges with pleas for interracial cooperation. In September 1935**, t**he Rev. Gibson participated in a four-hour meeting of the Virginia Commission on Interracial Cooperation (VCIC) after the University of Virginia denied Black student Alice Jackson admission to graduate school. One attendee pointed out Virginia had no schools where Black students could study law, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, or post-graduate work. Following the meeting, Black members of the VCIC supported a lawsuit challenging UVA's decision to deny Jackson admission while white members worked behind the scenes to pass legislation funding

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[22] "Council Urged to Seek Action on Segregation," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 9 Feb 1954, 1; "Richmond Council Splits on Segregation-Repeal Debate in Open Meeting," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 10 Feb 1954, 2; "Segregation Held Matter for Assembly," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 18 Feb 1954, 1; "3 Factors Blamed in State For Low Voter Turnout," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 19 Jun 1955, 35.

[23] "Group Finds Child Care Centers Still Needed," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 12 Jul 1951, 4; "Child Care Group Reorganizes to Take Over Center Operation," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 1 Apr 1952, 6; "Baker School Child-Center Will Continue," *The Richmond News Leader,* 12 Jan 1953, 16; "Low Patronage May Force Child Care Center to Close," *The Richmond News Leader*, 1 Dec 1954, 21; "Baker School Child Center Rates Studied," *The Richmond News Leader*, 7 Jan 1955, 9; "Child Care Center to Close," *The Richmond News Leader*, 25 Sept 1962, 17. "Facts on Negro Income Here Compiled by League," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 11 Jul 1955, 5 (RUL study revealed that in 1950, the median income of Black families was less than half of white families). For a detailed study of economic conditions for Black Richmond residents in the 1950s, see Taylor, Michael Eric, "The African-American Community of Richmond, Virginia: 1950-1956, Master's Thesis (1994), 30-50, University of Richmond Master's Theses, https://scholarship.richmond.edu/masters-theses/, accessed 22 May 2022.

grants for out-of-state graduate school programs. In 1936, the General Assembly passed the Educational Equality Act which offered tuition grants to black students to leave the state to pursue graduate study elsewhere. In *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938), the United States Supreme Court held that states which provide school to white students must also provide in-state education to Black students.[24]

At a 1937 meeting, the VCIC considered whether to replace its "quiet educational methods" with a more "vigorous program." The Rev. Gibson, who co-chaired the VCIC's committee on work among churches, expressed reservations about this proposed change in strategy. In February 1941, on the eve of Virginia's interracial goodwill Sunday which Gibson helped coordinate, he advised clergy to encourage their congregations to support "a more realistic approach to the race problem." Gibson elaborated:

> No matter how many pressing problems come and go . . . we of the South have one which is always with us and which, in addition to being a problem, is an opportunity to set the pace for our country in inter-racial relations. It is only in the atmosphere of the Christian religion that the relationships between the white and Negro races can reach any just and permanent solution.

Gibson approved of the VCIC's slow approach of improving race relations through interracial cooperation, but others desired more tangible and effective ways to address racial inequities. The April 1941 VCIC annual conference included a session on the successful efforts of NAACP attorneys Oliver W. Hill and future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall to equalize Black teachers' pay in Norfolk. In *Alston v. School Board of City of Norfolk* (1940), the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled the city's pay scale was discriminatory and unconstitutional. A year after the *Alston* decision, Black teachers presented a petition to the Richmond School Board also seeking equal pay. St. James's vestryman Braxton Valentine was among a delegation of community leaders, including the director of the VCIC, which "urge[d] the board to find a solution to the problem, thereby preventing possible court action." For Black citizens disillusioned with interracial cooperation efforts, the legal system was proving a more effective way to challenge the status quo.[25]

The Rev. Gibson and Braxton Valentine did offer valuable assistance to institutions providing segregated educational opportunities for Black people. They joined other church leaders in raising funds to support budgetary and capital needs for Virginia Union University (VUU), which traced its roots to a seminary for freedmen founded soon after the Civil War. In an address

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[24] "Graduate Study For Negroes Is Discussed Here,"*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 24 Sept 1935, 22; Smith, J. Douglas, "'The Ordeal of Virginius Dabney': A Southern Liberal, the Southern Regional Council, and the Limits of Managed Race Relations" 8-9, att https://studylib.net/doc/7860117/-the-ordeal-of-virginius-dabney---a-southern-liberal, accessed 22 May 2022.

[25] "Racial Group May Add Life to Campaign," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 28 Mar 1937, 7; "Churches Plan Interracial Program," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 8 Feb 1941, 6; "Defense Offers Opportunities for Negroes, Dr. Alexander Tells Racial Group Here," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 19 Apr 1941, 4 (Norfolk teacher pay equalization discussed). With its influence waning, the VCIC merged with the Virginia Council of Churches in 1945 to become the Council's Department of Interracial Cooperation. "History," Virginia Council of Churches, https://vacouncilofchurches.org/about-vcc/history/, accessed 23 May 2022.

urging support for a VUU fundraising campaign, Gibson "stressed the necessity for citizens to appreciate their great opportunity for service to the Southern and local Negro." The two men later participated in annual campaigns for the United Negro College Fund founded by John D. Rockefeller Jr in 1944. Gibson and Valentine also helped organize the Craig House Art Center, a Works Progress Administration project which offered classes and exhibits for Black artists from 1938 until 1941.[26]

White religious and civic leaders also fundraised for the constructions of St. Philip Hospital and School of Nursing which opened in 1920 to serve Black patients. In 1959, St. James's parishioner Mary West Bryson honored Marguerite G. Nicholson as Richmond's outstanding volunteer Red Cross nurse. Nicholson, the recently appointed Director of St. Philip School of Nursing, had been a Red Cross nurse for 25 years. Bryson, who served on the Board of the Instructive Visiting Nurse Association (IVNA) for more than 20 years, knew firsthand the crucial role Nicholson and other Black nurses served in the community. In 1947, the IVNA employed 8 white nurses and 8 Black nurses who provided critical access to health care through home visits and clinics, often at no cost to patients. Data indicated the greatest demand for care was among maternity cases, particularly in the Black population which constituted more than half the calls in 1946. Gay Lloyd Gibson, wife of the Rev. Gibson, also supported the IVNA. In 1944, St. James's Church hosted a capping ceremony for white nurses to celebrate the first anniversary of the Student Nurse Cadet Corps during WWII. Black nurses received their caps from St. Philip's staff in a separate ceremony at First African Baptist Church. In 1957, the IVNA held an integrated capping ceremony – the same year the Medical College of Virginia (MCV) School of Nursing admitted its first Black nursing student, Charlotte Wynn Pollard. However, Pollard was not allowed to sleep in the MCV dormitory with white students. St. Philip School graduated its final class of Black nurses in 1962. The following year, the newspaper reported a shortage of nurses, citing low pay as a factor. The closure of St. Philip may have also contributed to the decline. In years to come, the MCV/VCU School of Nursing would graduate fewer Black nurses than St. Philip's which, despite many challenges including substandard equipment, had provided a uniquely supportive learning environment for Black women during the Jim Crow era.[27]

Early intervention for Black school children experiencing difficulties was another need St. James's parishioner Katharine Tyndall "Kitty" Dennis addressed through her involvement with the Educational Treatment Center. Dr. Hertha Pataky Riese and her Jewish husband Walther, both psychiatrists, came to Richmond in 1940 to escape persecution in Europe. After working with the Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, Dr. Riese started the Center three years later with the aid of a small group of Black and white citizens. Dennis, who had a degree in psychiatric nursing, was among the Center's early financial backers and served as its President

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[26] "Virginia Union University Fund Drive Opens at Dinner June 19," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 13 Jun 1933, 2; "Virginia Union Library Drive Will Be Directed By Leigh," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 24 May 1938, 2 (Gibson and Valentine sponsors); "Valentine Named To Head Drive for College Fund," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 30 Apr 1948, 3; "C.B. Valentine To Head Negro College Fund," *The Richmond News Leader*, 9 Apr 1953, 16; "Negro Art Center," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 18 Jun 1939, 59.

[27] "Nursing Director Honored," *The Richmond News Leader*, 12 Mar 1959, 34; "The Visiting Nurse - Messenger of Good Health," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 9 Feb 1947, 55; "Anniversary Event Slated by Student Nurse Cadet Corps," *The Richmond News Leader*, 29 Jun 1944, 5; "Nurse's Aides Are Capped," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 4 Jul 1957, 14; "Nursing Service Staff Shortage Cut Visits," *The Richmond News Leader*, 31 Jan 1963, 17; Farmer, Robin, "Lessons from St. Philip," *Richmond Magazine*, 20 Jan 2013.

for several years. Rather than committing children who experienced behavioral or academic difficulties to industrial schools or other institutions, the Center provided mental health treatment and educational support in a day care setting with an "atmosphere of kindness, attention and respect for the child." The Center also offered parents counseling and other support services. Although most of the children treated at the Center were Black, Dr. Riese did not attribute their difficulties to their skin color but rather "generations of social, psychological, and cultural deprivation; neglect, incredible poverty; and repeated and constant frustration and victimization."[28]

In 1946, civil rights leaders met with President Truman to share their concerns about violence against Black people including WWII soldiers returning to the United States after defending freedoms overseas. The leaders urged the President to provide greater protections for Black citizens. After examining obstacles Black people faced in exercising their rights and achieving equal opportunities, the President's Committee on Civil Rights released a report, "To Secure These Rights," recommending an antilynching law, abolition of the poll tax, a Fair Employment Practices Committee, desegregation of the military, and fair housing, education, healthcare and employment laws. Southern delegates who opposed the civil rights platform quickly formed the States' Rights Democratic Party. During the Democratic National Convention in July 1948, the "Dixiecrats" displayed Confederate battle flags in protest and many of the southern delegates walked out when the civil rights agenda passed. After the convention, display of the Confederate flag increased throughout the South as well as in other parts of the country.[29]

For many years, St. James's had honored Confederate soldiers with ties to the church including J. E. B. Stuart and VMI cadets who fought in the battle of New Market. And, like many other white ministers in the former Capital of the Confederacy, the Rev. Gibson participated in annual commemorative services celebrating Confederate leaders Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. In 1949, St. James's vestryman Dr. Hatley Norton Mason was installed as commander-in-chief of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) Richmond Chapter and the Rev. Gibson became chaplain. Dr. Mason's son and namesake Hatley Norton Mason Jr. was also active in the SCV, serving as adjutant-in-chief at the national level. In June 1950, the UDC and SCV encouraged Richmonders to display the "stars and bars" rather than the American flag on the first Flag Day following President Truman's signing of Public Law 203 designating June 14th as this patriotic occasion. The *Times-Dispatch* noted the controversy those organizations had generated over which flag to display. In a letter to the editor, Roanoke nurse Jessie M. Boyd asserted the Confederate flag had no place on this patriotic day because it represented states that had seceded and individuals who had renounced their citizenship. When asked about the Flag Day controversy, a Tampa flag manufacturer confirmed a sharp surge in requests for the Confederate flag after Dixiecrats opposed President Truman's 1948 civil rights platform. The younger Mason

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[28] "Therapy Center Set for State Aid," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 13 Jul 1948, 4; "Children's Therapy Center Sets Donation Goal at $5,000," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 16 Feb 1949 (Dennis and the Rev. Ashton Hamilton of St. Philip's collecting donations); "Dr. Reise to Get Americanism Award," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 24 May 1952, 5; "Mrs. Dennis, 1960 Pioneer," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 21 Jul 1960, 23; Hofstein, Saul, Book Review of "Heal the Hurt Child," *Child Welfare*, Dec 1964, 508; "Clinic Plans 4th Move Next Month," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 17 Jul 1966, B1; "Psychiatrist Aids Underdeveloped Children," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 3 Sept 1967, B1.

[29] Sitkoff, Harvard, "Harry Truman and the Election of 1948: The Coming of Age of Civil Rights in American Politics," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 37, no. 4 (Nov. 1971), 597-616; Appelbaum, Yoni, "Why Is the Flag Still There?" *The Atlantic*, 21 Jun 2015.

was slightly more circumspect when asked his view on the Confederate flag's popularity, attributing the uptick to concerns about "federal government overreach."[30]

In Oct 1951, the UDC donated a stained-glass window honoring J.E.B Stuart to St. James's. One of the young girls unveiling the window was Susan Stuart Gibson, granddaughter of the Rev. Gibson. St. James's continued to maintain ties to the SCV and UDC. In 1957, shortly after his resignation, the Rev. Gibson presided over the dedication of the UDC's new headquarters next to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.[31]

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States issued its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kans.*, ruling that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. At its Annual Council later that month, the Diocese of Virginia adopted a resolution recognizing that "the problems created" by the Court's decision provided an opportunity for "intelligent, deliberate, Christian leadership by all members of the Diocese." The resolution further called upon members of the Diocese "to do all within their power to provide such leadership, so that the decrees of the court may be carried out with malice toward none and good will to all." The Rev. Gibson supported an unsuccessful motion to delete this final paragraph. White lawyer Edmund Douglas Campbell of St. Mary's Church in Arlington, Va., who would later represent plaintiffs opposing Virginia's policy of massive resistance to school integration, argued that striking the paragraph would "water down entirely" the resolution and asserted "a Christian body such as [the] Convention should not be so cowardly." At the 1954 annual Council, the Diocese also called upon Bishop Frederick D. Goodwin to appoint a special interracial commission to advise various church departments. After reviewing the interracial commission's report and engaging in considerable debate, the Diocesan Council adopted a resolution in May 1955, to "eliminate barriers preventing the free fellowship in the Church's life of people of different races." Shortly thereafter, the Supreme Court in *Brown* II, ordered schools to integrate "with all deliberate speed." Upon his return from the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Honolulu that Fall, a refreshed Gibson wearing an Hawaiian shirt and lei provided a *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reporter with an upbeat account of the convention highlighting mission work and daily swims. Church leaders, under pressure from Black clergy and lay delegates, had canceled original plans to hold the Convention in Houston after local authorities would not ensure integrated facilities for attendees. Gibson told the *RTD* reporter the visit to Hawaii had given him a different perspective on segregation, noting that "the island people automatically fall into their own ethnic groups" despite there being no segregation laws in Honolulu.[32]

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[30] "Stuart's Birthday Marked," *The Richmond News Leader*, 7 Feb 1940, 3; "Jefferson Davis' Birthday Will Be Observed Here Today," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 3 Jun 1943, 4; "Dr. Mason Installed As SCV Commander," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 22 Jan 1949, 4; "3 from City Given SCV Staff Posts," *The Richmond News Leader,* 30 Aug 1951, 26; "Pleas Pose Loyalty Question," *The Richmond News Leader*, 13 Jun 1950, 6. The Masons also helped plan an event honoring General James W. Moore, the Chief of the United Confederate Veterans, to coincide with other Flag Day celebrations. "Which Flag Is Problem for Richmond," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 14 Jun 1950, 4; Boyd, Jessie M., "'Foreign' (Confederate) Flag Not Proper for Flag Day," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 20 Jun 1950, 12; "Tampa Flagmaker Calm About Changes in Flag," *The Tampa Times*, 13 Jun 1950, 3; "Dixie's Unflagging Banner," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 19 Aug 1951, 83.

[31] "Memorial to General Will Be Unveiled," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 13 Oct 1951, 2; "Dedication Ceremonies Set by UDC," *The Richmond News Leader*, 1 Nov 1957, 32.

[32] *Journal of The 159th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (1954), 84; "Church Asks Interracial Commission," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 21 May 1954, 4; "A Tribute to Edmund

Addressing the *Brown* decision was a top priority when Virginia's General Assembly convened in January 1956. While delivering the opening prayer, the Rev. Gibson struck a serious tone, asking God to "save the representatives of our people from fear, hate and prejudice," and expressing hope that deliberations "advance the honor and welfare of all Thy people." In a January 17, 1956 letter to the Rt. Rev. Goodwin, St. Paul's Episcopal Church vestryman Turner Arrington expressed his displeasure that "Churchill" and other local Episcopalian clergy had either "asked their congregations to pray for guidance in a political matter or else themselves offered such a prayer in their presence." The following month, U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd called for a strategy of "Massive Resistance" in opposition to integration of the state's public schools. Proponents of this plan secured a limited constitutional convention on the issue of state financing of private schools through tuition vouchers. Meanwhile, Gov. Thomas B. Stanley announced a package of Massive Resistance legislation, the "Stanley Plan" that included giving the governor power to close any schools facing federal desegregation order. After four Black churches and two homes were bombed in Montgomery, Alabama, the biracial Richmond Area Ministers' Association published a "Statement of Conviction on Race" on January 29, 1957, criticizing Gov. Stanley and the General Assembly for Massive Resistance. Gibson, who had announced his retirement from St. James's effective that Spring, "voiced agreement in part," but did not come out in support of the statement. A tribute to Gibson in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* that April noted how "beloved" he was by the St. James's congregation while also making "countless friends here among all religious groups and among both races."[33]

The Rev. Richard Royall Baker III 1957-1960

In June 1957, the Rev. Richard Royall Baker III arrived at St. James's. Similar to his predecessor, the 37-year-old minister had graduated from the University of Virginia and Virginia Theological Seminary. Baker had also been involved with campus ministry, serving as an Episcopal chaplain at the University of Florida for three years before his call to Richmond. Shortly after the Supreme Court's *Brown II* decision, Baker, on behalf of the college's Episcopal Canterbury House, joined three other religious organizations in petitioning the Florida Board of Control to end racial segregation at the University of Florida. The July 1955 petition, prepared by a Quaker professor, stated: "Admission of students now banned because of race will show the nation and the world that Florida answered the Supreme Court's call for local leadership by a prompt and reasonable start toward full compliance without lawsuits." Noting the taxpayer expense of maintaining duplicate segregated educational systems, the petition declared, "We believe integration on the southern campus has lost its strangeness and found its feet." The petition made headlines in Florida and prompted backlash with demands to fire a Methodist

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Douglas Campbell," 53 *Washington and Lee Law Review* 1211 (1996). After Governor Lindsay Almond ordered the closure of Norfolk public schools in September 1958, Campbell successfully challenged the school closure law in *James v. Almond*, 170 F. Supp. 331 (E.D. Va. 1959). Campbell's son, Benjamin, would later found Richmond Hill spiritual retreat center in Church Hill. "Episcopal Resolution Urges End to Church Segregation," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 27 May 1955, 4; "Young Richmonder Sparked Missionary Spirit at Meeting," *The Richmond News Leader*, 20 Sept 1955, 25; "Episcopal Convention to Honolulu," *The Honolulu Advertiser*, 18 Jun 1954, 1.

[33] "Interposition Bill Offered In Surprise House Move," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 12 Jan 1956, 1; correspondence between Turner Arrington and the Rt. Rev. Frederick D. Goodwin, Jan 1956, in St. Paul's Episcopal Church archives (Richmond, Va.); "152 in Survey Favor RMA's Stand on Race," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 4 Feb. 1957, 1; "He Won't Be Allowed to Retire," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 21 Apr 1957, 56.

signatory. One editorial entitled "Rocking the Boat" characterized the petitioners as "misguided zealots."[34]

It is unclear whether St. James's Church knew of the Rev. Baker's pro-integration stance at the time he was called to Richmond. There were certainly members of the congregation who would have opposed the young rector's views, including vestryman Dr. Mason who continued his involvement with the SCV throughout the 1950s. In November 1957, Judge Walter Burgwyn Jones of Alabama spoke at the SCV's annual convention in Richmond. Two months earlier, President Dwight D. Eisenhower had sent federal troops to Little Rock Central High School after angry white protestors threatened the safety of Black students trying to attend classes. At the SCV event, Judge Jones recounted how he had fined the NAACP $100,000 for refusing to turn over lists of members and financial supporters and had issued an injunction barring the organization from Alabama during the Montgomery bus boycott. Judge Jones told Dr. Mason and other attendees at the SCV meeting that after Little Rock, integration was "dead as a doornail in Alabama" and "anyone who advocates integration doesn't stand a chance." Dr. Mason also joined the Virginia Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, whose 1957 application declared the group stood for "racial pride and states' rights." The Defenders supported defunding integrated schools and had successfully advocated for the 1956 amendment to Virginia's constitution to permit private school tuition vouchers. In 1958, Dr. Mason and several other Defenders were appointed to a 19-member group whose task was to help localities "threatened by integration" establish private schools."[35]

Leaders of Richmond Public Schools were also factoring the *Brown* decision into their plans. In 1958, the Richmond Planning Commission, which included St. James's vestrymen Edwin Parker Conquest and Tazewell Morton Carrington III, approved a capital budget authorizing two new junior-senior high schools – one on the North Side and the other on the South Side. The following Spring, City Council directed the School Board to proceed with construction, a decision which the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* deemed "tantamount to a pledge to continue public education in Richmond despite the apparent inevitability of racial integration." School Board Chairman Lewis Franklin Powell Jr. explained that construction of the two new schools would enable the city to house Richmond's rapidly growing Black student population at the existing Bainbridge and Chandler Junior High Schools, helping to "ameliorate the integration problem." St. James's vestryman Richard Henry Catlett Jr. attended and spoke in favor of the construction plan, expressing his view that the Fan district where he lived would be "adversely affected if the new schools were not built." The School Superintendent added that the sites of the two new schools had been selected with a view toward annexation of white population areas in surrounding localities.[36]

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[34] "Florida University Chaplain Accepts Call to St. James's," *The Richmond News Leader*, 23 Jan 1957, 25; "Four U. of F. Religious Groups Ask Integration," *The Tampa Tribune*, 23 Jul 1955, 1; "Rocking the Boat," *New-Press* (Fort Myers, Fl), 25 Jul 1955, 4.

[35] "Judge Adamant on Integration," *The Richmond News Leader*, 12 Nov 1957, 19. In two unanimous opinions, the United States Supreme Court reversed Judge Jones's rulings, concluding that the First Amendment protected the free association rights of the NAACP. "Application Form," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 7 Oct 1957, 30; "Group Set Up to Help Plan Private, Segregated Schools," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 4 May 1958, 1.

[36] "Plans Unit Approves New Budget," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 25 Feb 1958, 1; "Building of 2 Schools Authorized by Council," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 7 May 1959, 1.

The downtown Collegiate School and its Henrico counterpart, the Collegiate Country Day School, also adopted a new building plan in 1958 to accommodate growing demand from white families. The downtown campus would merge with the River Road campus in Henrico County, allowing the private school to enroll nearly 1,000 students, making it the largest private day school in Virginia. Lawyer and St. James's vestryman Andrew Jackson Brent, who served on the private school's board, helped prepare governing documents for the merger. In a 1959 *Richmond Times-Dispatch* article entitled "Car Pools Have Richmond Moms in Hot Water," his wife Virginia McGuire discussed the challenges "suburbanites" face transporting children to and from school. The busy mother of three children suggested "anybody building should be sure and put the house near a bus stop," adding "I think about moving near one all the time."[37]

Brent was well-regarded as a civic leader in the Richmond community and participated in numerous endeavors including Episcopal church activities. In the Spring of 1957, the Diocese of Virginia adopted a resolution calling on the department of missions "to give serious consideration to the support of our expanding ministry to [Black worshippers] in all parts of the diocese, particularly by the use of qualified clergy regardless of race." Brent and fellow St. James's vestryman Emil Otto Nolting Williams accepted appointments to the Diocese's "Richmond Strategy Committee for Negro Work." In 1959, the Committee designated St. Peter's Mission in Church Hill as a pilot program for which the Diocese would provide a full-time minister and other financial support. Brent also served on a special advisory committee to work with St. Peter's vestry. In 1961, the Rev. Odell Greenleaf Harris accepted a call to lead the Church Hill mission. Harris was a proven leader within the Episcopal church, having served as warden of the Bishop Payne Divinity School and Archdeacon of the Colored Convocation in the Diocese of Southern Virginia before moving to Georgia in 1951 to serve as Director-Chaplain of Fort Valley College and Archdeacon for Negro Work in the Diocese of Atlanta. At the 1958 General Convention, Harris joined other Black delegates in urging rectors and laymen to affirm the House of Bishops' statement calling for an end to racial segregation, expressing his view that it was improper to compromise "on the teachings of the Lord." Although the resolution failed, Harris's belief in "one holy catholic and apostlic Church" compelled him to continue advocating for the equality of Black and female Episcopalians as he helped grow St. Peter's Episcopal Church.[38]

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[37] "Two Schools To Join At River Road Site," *The Richmond News Leader*, 29 Nov 1958, 1; "Car Pools Have Richmond Moms In Hot Water," *The Richmond News Leader*, 5 Mar 1959, 33; "Patrons of Collegiates to Meet," *The Richmond News Leader*, 26 Oct 1959, 7. Virginia was the daughter of John Peyton McGuire, who helped establish McGuire's University School in Richmond.

[38] *Journal of The 164th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia* (1959), 54, 244; "Union Teacher, Doctor On Episcopal Committee," *New Journal and Guide*, 7 Feb 1959, 3; Graebner, The Rev. Brooks, "An appreciation for the life and ministry of the Ven. Odell Greenleaf Harris," 2 Apr 2022, Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, https://www.episdionc.org/uploads/images/a-tribute-to-the-ven-odell-greenleaf-harris-program-booklet-history-day-2022_386.pdf. After a 1966 resolution allowing female vestry members received less than two-thirds approval from clergy and lay delegates, Harris told the press the Diocese was "far behind the times" and needed to "do something about making women full-fledged members." "Plan to Allow Vestrywomen Given Approval," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 29 Jan 1966, 5.

In the summer of 1957, the Diocese of Virginia quietly began integrating youth camps at Roslyn and Shrine Mont retreat centers -- a decision which alarmed many in the Diocese. In an effort to reach consensus, Bishop Goodwin appointed a Racial Study Commission in January 1959, with the Rev. Baker serving as Secretary-Treasurer. Goodwin optimistically described the Commission as an opportunity to explore the "many areas of agreement" for the purpose of racial reconciliation. At a two-day gathering in September 1959, Baker reflected on "a frustrating discussion" the previous night during a meeting of the Commission's Resolutions subcommittee which he chaired. In an effort to unite the group, Baker suggested that "since most people agree that integration is coming," perhaps the Church could "now render signal Christian service in arranging integrated youth conferences to plan for the future." He noted the small number of Black children in the Diocese made separate youth conferences impractical. After more debate and a lunch break, the committee took up discussion on the "heart of the matter" before the committee -- "what is the best way to help the people in the State of Virginia live with a situation that is inevitable." One member noted that "action relieves pressure," using integration of schools in Charlottesville as an example which had "lowered the build-up of emotional steam." Objecting to this suggestion, two members urged the group to focus on "areas of agreement rather than disagreement" and asserted "the full citizenship that [Black people] desired was not within the province of the Church." Other committee members disagreed, "pointing out that unless the Church does something to ease the tension government undoubtedly will use the force of law." Asserting that the Church of England had helped abolish slavery and accomplished "bloodless reform," another committee member proclaimed the current situation was bringing about "cataclysmic changes" and warned "the Communists will come in and enforce upon us a Godless society" unless "we can reconcile ourselves to each other." With that remark, the meeting came to a close.[39]

A week later, it appeared as though the Rev. Baker's earlier conviction on the issue of integration during his college chaplain days might be faltering. In a September 27, 1959 *Richmond Times-Dispatch* interview for an article about scientific research and juvenile delinquency, Baker questioned the ability of people to influence the behavior of others, telling the newspaper, "if some guy in this research told people in the South they weren't being fair to Negroes, how many people's minds do you think he'd change?" Baker continued, "No one of us is good enough to tell the rest of us how to live, not even the ministers. We're only human like everyone else." After a year of discussions, the Racial Study Commission issued a report in January 1960 recommending both segregated and integrated events given the "wide disagreement" on the matter. Echoing Baker's remarks in the *RTD* article a few months earlier, the report concluded, "No one can require a person to change his views, especially if they have been reached in a conscientiously Christian manner." [40]

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[39] "Episcopalians Name Racial Study Group," *The Richmond News Leader*, 26 Mar 1959, 4; "Minutes of Sub-Committee III Racial Study Commission," Sept 1959, in Mary Tyler Freeman Cheek McClenahan papers at Virginia Museum of History and Culture (Richmond, Va.).

[40] "Behavior Problems Tied to Research, Age-Old Patterns," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 27 Sept 1959, 69; Racial Study Commission of the Diocese of Virginia, "The Race Problem and The Church," 27 Jan 1960, 31.