

Uncovering the History of St. James's Involvement in Slavery and Racism

Preamble: This project is an effort to begin reckoning with racism in the history of our church. It arose from the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Formation Team and is a result of research conducted by a committee of volunteers, none of whom are historians. We are dedicated to telling our parish's racial history, both positive and negative, to determine the involvement or investment of St. James's and its leaders in the institution of slavery and systemic racism from the beginning of the Church in 1830 to the present. We also want to tell the story of St. James's role in the founding of St. Philip's, one of Richmond's first African American Episcopal Churches. In uncovering the history and telling more of our story, our goal is to educate and edify ourselves about the reality of our racial history, and to begin the healing and reconciliation process that will hopefully culminate in our desire as individuals and as a church to take proactive racial justice action. It is a work in progress, and we welcome others to join this effort, as researchers, writers, editors, teachers, etc. Following the call of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, we are seeking to become beloved community.

A book was written in 1986, *Not Hearers Only*, to celebrate the 150th birthday of St. James's that told the history of St. James's from 1838 to 1985. Its scope did not include consideration of the church's racial history. While this book did not include footnotes or contain many sources of information, it was factual and was written and edited by three historians, two of whom were members of the parish as was the editor. The book contains a number of historic photographs and a compilation of all vestry members and their dates of service. Part I contains much information from this book.

Two other local Episcopal churches have undergone, or are undergoing, their own racial history projects: St. Paul's and St. Philip's. St. Paul's project was led by historians and began in 2015. When the research was completed, a book was published in 2020 entitled *Blind Spots: Race and Identity in a Southern Church* and will be republished soon as *Faith, Race, and the Lost Cause: Confessions of a Southern Church*. St. Philip's is working on its history and hopes to have it completed in time to celebrate its 160th anniversary. While we have taken excerpts from *Not Hearers Only*, much of the information contained in this report was derived from Diocesan records, the St. Paul's book, and research from St. Philip's as well as many other books, articles, and U.S. census data. There were no vestry records that could be found for this period.

Part I - Slavery: 1830 – 1865

Summary

Church is and has always been a powerful force in the African American community, even more so during slavery. African Americans sought to assert their self-determination in religion. The work of the Episcopal Church prior to Emancipation was "patronizing and of a charitable sort" with much practical good but no serious effort to extend church to African Americans. According to Dr. Ed Bond, the Episcopal Church by and large ignored the issue of slavery completely.

The treatment of free or enslaved African Americans by the Episcopal Church during this time mirrored that of society whether in the north or south: African Americans were only welcomed on whites' terms. The treatment of African Americans was that of benign neglect or paternalism at best. Worship for African Americans in white churches almost always meant being segregated to the gallery. That said, the Episcopal Church was the first hierarchical religion in the U.S. to ordain an African American, Absalom Jones, in 1804 in Philadelphia.

In the south, Christian churches developed a biblical justification for slavery. In the framework of "proslavery Christianity," some white masters mentored enslaved African American people in the ways of "proper Christian practice." In this practice, African Americans were viewed as "unintelligent brutes" in need of paternalistic care: the role of whites was to teach African Americans the Bible and to baptize and marry them within the structure of slavery, because they believed African Americans would not have the wherewithal to teach themselves.ⁱ

By the 1800s, Richmond was a major center of trading enslaved people. According to the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, "After an 1808 act of Congress abolished the international slave trade, a domestic trade flourished. Richmond became the largest slave-trading center in the Upper South, and the slave trade was Virginia's largest industry. It accounted for the sale of as many as two million people from Richmond to the Deep South, where the cotton industry provided a market for enslaved labor."¹

While the cornerstone for St. James's Episcopal Church was not laid until April of 1838, the seeds for the creation of the parish germinated in 1831 from a group of people who were unhappy with attending Monumental Church.

St. James's relationship with slavery and racism is a microcosm of the complexity of whites' views of slavery and African Americans during this time, whether pro-slavery or anti-slavery. **We found evidence demonstrating that St. James's participated in institutional racism.** Many leaders and members embraced the pro-slavery Christian philosophy and treatment of free and enslaved African Americans prevalent in the United States. Bishop Meade, rectors, vestry members and other leaders in the diocese and parish enslaved people, and many favored seceding from the Union rather than give up slavery.

Lead by Dr. Empie, who was an educator who held anti-slavery views at least prior to coming to St. James's, St. James's held Sunday School for African Americans from the beginning with the school having 120 freed and enslaved students when it first opened in 1845 and 300 in 1858.² However, census records show that Dr. Empie himself owned slaves until he died. Under his tenure, during worship, African Americans were segregated from whites and were required to use the gallery, which did not have pews until 1859.

¹ The Virginia Museum of History and Culture

² Not Hearers Only: A History of St. James's Episcopal Church, Richmond, Virginia 1835-1985, Minor T. Weisiger, Donald R. Traser and E. Randolph Trice; copyright 1986 by St. James's Episcopal Church
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Though “Richmond was a bastion of Unionist sentiment,”³ **St. James’s leadership took the Confederate side before and during the Civil War.** Dr. Peterkin took somewhat of a leadership role in the secessionist movement as confirmed by one of his sermons that caught the ire of unionists. Several notable funerals were held at St. James’s, including that of Captain O. Jennings Wise and J.E.B. Stuart. Dr. Peterkin also sent supplies to the Confederate troops, such as food and Bibles.⁴

On a positive note, Sally Tompkins, a St. James’s parishioner, opened a highly successful hospital for Confederate soldiers and treated over 1,300 patients. Another famous parishioner, Judith McGuire, wrote *Diary of a Southern Refugee*, during the Civil War. In this book she shared the paternalistic attitudes towards African American and the views whites held about the inferiority of African American.

Another way whites sought to resolve the issues of slavery and integration in the 1800s was resettlement. St. James’s was involved with the American Colonization Society (ACS) program to resettle freed slaves in Africa, modeled after the resettlement effort in Africa by the British after it abolished the slave trade in 1772. St. James’s donated funds for the ACS, and one of its parishioners, Jane Cary Harrison Scott, “went out from St. James’s Church to tell the Africans of Jesus and his love.”⁵

St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, the first African American Episcopal church in Richmond, was built in 1861 largely with the financial help of St. James, St. Paul’s, and Monumental Church.⁶ African American attendance at all white churches had been declining for several decades prior to the Civil War due to the churches’ stance on slavery, segregation in the churches, and unwillingness of whites to provide African Americans what they wanted most, which was Christian fellowship.⁷ Dr. Peterkin worked very closely with the Diocese to determine what to do about the low African American attendance at white Episcopal churches. **The Diocese concluded that separate African American churches needed to be established, and it created specific rules for how they would be led and the composition of the Vestry.**⁸ Once St. Philip’s was established, St. James’s remained more involved than the two other churches: in accordance with the Episcopal Church’s nation-wide practice at the time, it provided the white pulpit personnel and some Sunday School teachers and provided oversight of St. Philip’s until 1879.⁹ St. James’s leadership was also present for St. Philip’s first Vestry meeting in 1869.¹⁰

³ Not Hearers Only, page 24

⁴ Not Hearers Only, page 26

⁵ Ken Anderson, member of St. Philip’s Church, who is writing their history.

⁶ ibid

⁷ ibid

⁸ ibid

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ ibid

A. History of the White and African American Episcopal Church

According to R.A. Bennett, historians of the African American Church agree that the Episcopal Church has not offered an easy welcome for African Americans.¹¹ “Several reasons have been suggested for this, such as the identification of the Episcopal Church with urban society and the upper class, quite distinct from the African American agrarian proletariat, or the intellectual sophistication required of its Prayer Book ritual as being unattractive to, and allowing no opportunity for, the emotional and unrestrained religious expression somehow associated with African American religion.”¹² There was also a perception that African Americans who were Episcopalians were somehow less religious and were seeking to distance themselves from their own African American community. “The African American Episcopalian response is that operating within the Episcopal Church requires the deepest religious and racial-ethnic commitment in a Church that doesn’t wholly recognize them, and that the Church is a powerful force in the African American community. Given the centrality of the Church for African American Christians...the story of African Americans is one of struggle to express itself in the face of opposition and oppression, rather than, as is often expressed, an upward climb from cultural privation with the aid or sufferance of a benign society.”¹³ Treatment of African Americans in the Episcopal Church was a microcosm of this larger struggle.

A majority of African American Christians were Anglican in the early Colonial Period, when the established Church of England was interested in evangelizing to and converting African Americans. “Established by Royal Charter in 1701, it was The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) who introduced the forebears of the African American Church to the Christian Gospel via the Anglican -- later to be called Episcopal -- Church.”¹⁴ The SPG’s purpose was to reach both African Americans and indigenous Americans. However, slave owners were threatened by the link they saw between “freedom in Jesus” and political freedom and “the great body of the Church was wholly indifferent to the work of Negro evangelization.”¹⁵ We may still be paying the price for separating the spiritual from physical liberation required to allow missionaries to do their work in the Colonies.

Two movements in late 18th and early 19th century affected the development of the African American Church: increased concern for personal freedom and the dramatic effect of the “Great Revival” on American religious life. Free and enslaved African Americans sought to establish themselves as African within the newly reorganized Anglican Church following the post American Revolution.¹⁶ Revival was associated with the emotional unrestrained religious practice and helped the African American church grow at a time when the white Episcopal

¹¹ Bennett, R.A. (1974). African American Episcopalians: A history from the colonial period to the present, Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Vol.43, No.3, pp. 231-245.

¹² Bennett, pp. 231-232

¹³ Bennett, p. 233

¹⁴ Bennett, p. 233

¹⁵ Bennett, p. 233

¹⁶ Bennett, p. 235

Church was weak due to its historic ties to the Church of England, which was viewed with suspicion following the War of Independence.

By resolution at General Convention, white bishops oversaw African American parishes. All the southern parishes, including African American parishes, had white priests during this time. Though African Americans learned to read and write through the Church rituals, and were baptized, confirmed, and married in the Church, they were not incorporated into the fellowship of the white Episcopal parishioners. African Americans sat or stood in slave galleries and had services at different hours or in different buildings from whites.¹⁷

In the North, African American parishioners suffered benign neglect. According to Dr. Robert Prichard, many African American people believed deeply in the promises of the American Revolution.¹⁸ For those who had gained their freedom, they sought to assert their self-determination in religion. “African American Methodists in Philadelphia and New York walked out of congregations in which they were given second-class treatment.”¹⁹ Absalom Jones left the Philadelphia Methodist Church, joined the Episcopal Church, and in 1784, founded the first African American Episcopal parish in the U.S., St. Thomas’s African Church. Jones was the first African American to be ordained by a hierarchical denomination in 1804, but it took years for his ordination to take place.²⁰

Another African American, Peter Williams, Jr., was ordained to the priesthood in 1826. He founded and led St. Philip’s in New York City in 1818. This church became a center for African American Episcopalians. Williams was also one of the founders of the first African American newspaper, *Freedman’s Journal*, in 1827. In the years before the Civil War, 14 other African American men followed Jones and Williams and became Episcopal priests to serve in free African American parishes mostly in Northern cities.²¹

Religions in the South developed a Biblical justification for slavery. “In the South, white clergy generally ministered to African Americans as appendages of the white families for whom they worked.”²² According to Chris Graham in *Blind Spots: Race and Identity in a Southern Church* (St. Paul’s), “In the framework of proslavery Christianity, white masters mentored enslaved African American people in the ways of proper Christian practice.” Virginia Episcopal Bishop Mead wrote passionately about evangelism for enslaved people. “Slavery, then, not freedom, was the key to the religious elevation of African American people, in the opinion of white Christians, because without the formal structure of oversight, white people would not be compelled to mentor African American people, and African American people could not find faith on their

¹⁷ Bennett, pp. 236-238

¹⁸ Prichard, Robert W., *A History of the Episcopal Church*, published 1999, [page 111](#).

¹⁹ Prichard, p. 111

²⁰ Prichard, p. 112

²¹ Prichard, p. 112

²² Prichard, p. 112

own.”²³ It was a paternalistic view of African American people as inferior whether enslaved or free.

According to the Episcopal Church’s website, when South Carolina seceded from the Union in 1860, it was followed by ten more southern states, and in 1861, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America was established in every way the same as before except for its name change and its loyalty to the Confederacy.²⁴ However, unlike other denominations at this time, the Episcopal Church declined to officially recognize any separation. According to Dawley, throughout the war, churchmen on both sides maintained their old friendships and bonds of Christian union with each other.²⁵ Seven months after the fall of Richmond in 1865, the Confederate group quietly disbanded following General Convention, which had been held a scant month before.

According to Bennett, “the most significant aspect of Episcopal Church policy during the Civil War and Reconstruction Period was its failure to take any definitive action. The southern African American Episcopalians had no recourse but to acquiesce to the southern bishops or leave the church, which the vast majority did.” It is estimated that 90% of African American Episcopalians left to become African Methodist Episcopalians or Colored [-now Christian-] Methodist Episcopalians.²⁶

Ken Anderson, who is writing the history of St. Philips, agrees: “The numbers for African American membership in the Episcopal Church before and immediately after the Civil War were dismal...I believe in the hundred range. This stemmed from the Episcopal Church's lack of a stance on slavery and abolition, and their membership's support for the cause of the Confederacy and slavery generally.”²⁷

B. The Diocese of Virginia

Records show that as early as mid-17th century, merely thirty years after the first enslaved people arrived at the English colony of Jamestown, slave-holding had become so normalized in the Diocese of Virginia that even resident Church of England clergy owned people.²⁸ By the 19th century, many if not most bishops, priests, and vestry members in the south owned slaves and were pro-slavery. Information obtained from a Virginia Theological Seminary webinar and confirmed by Dr. Edward Bond indicated that there were 112 Episcopal clergy in Virginia in 1860. Of that number, of the 103 records that could be found in the 1860 census, 84 clergy owned slaves.²⁹ Though high church clergy in the north may have been anti-slavery, the

²³ Graham, Christopher A., *Blind Spots: Race and Identity in a Southern Church*, 1999, p. 19.

²⁴ episcopalchurch.org/who-we-are/history-episcopal-church/american-church/

²⁵ Dawley, Powel Mills, *Our Christian Heritage*, Morehouse-Gorham, 1959, p. 207

²⁶ Bennett, p. 239

²⁷ Anderson, Ken. Email dated February 2, 2021

²⁸ McGuire, Mary Richie, conversation dated August 2019.

²⁹ Dr. Edward Bond presentation to St. James’s April 21, 2021

institution of slavery did not fall within the scope of their primary concern of organizing the nascent Episcopal Church around bishops, in “an almost militant support of episcopacy.”³⁰

In *Blind Spots*, Graham says that African Americans attended Baptist and Methodist churches but avoided Episcopal churches. Less than a handful of African Americans attended St. Paul’s in the 1850’s. “Failure to reach slaves reflected poorly on the spiritual health of white Episcopalians.”³¹ The Episcopal Diocese of Virginia considered the problem at their Council in 1860. They had conducted a survey of Episcopal churches to find some answers, but only one of five churches responded. In the end, they concluded that African Americans needed and received Christian fellowship from Baptist and Methodist churches, but not from Episcopal churches because of the way they had constructed religious race relations. As Graham puts it, “The social distance created by paternalism and inequality had created impassable gulfs in Christian fellowship.”³² Instead of changing their system of separation and inequality to allow for fellowship, they determined the African Americans needed their own church but with white oversight and pastorship.

This paternalistic view of African Americans and segregationist view is corroborated by this 1859 statement in the Diocesan Report by the then Bishop Johns.³³

“On my recent visit to Richmond I was greatly gratified to find that an enterprise, which I had proposed during my residence in that city, but which had been relinquished on my removal to Williamsburg, was about to be renewed, and that by persons whose agency authorizes the hope that it will now prove successful. I allude to the provision of a separate and appropriate place of worship for the people of color, where under such arrangement as the law allows, they may receive those peculiar advantages which our own mode of worship affords for this class of our population. Such a church in Richmond, properly constituted and faithfully served, could not but be a signal blessing, not only to its own members, but to the other similar congregations in that city and throughout the State, by improving the system of religious instruction among them, and elevating the standard of morals. I shall be truly thankful to see a model church there in successful operation, and the example duly followed throughout the Diocese.”³⁴

The Diocese then put their words into law by changing the Canon as evidenced on p. 33 of the Diocesan Report: “Rev. R.H. Wilmer asked that Canon X be so amended, as to make provision for the appointment of [white] Vestrymen in the colored congregations connected with this Church.”³⁵ And further on p. 36 of the Diocesan Report:

³⁰ Bond, Ed. Email communication March 29, 2021.

³¹ Graham, p. 31

³² Graham, p. 34

³³ Journal of the 64th Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, May 1859, pp. 31-32

³⁴ Ibid, p. 32

³⁵ Ibid, p. 33

“Resolved, that this Convention take into consideration the propriety of establishing missionary duty for the benefit of slaves throughout Virginia. Resolved further, that the Rector and Vestry of each Parish throughout this Diocese be requested to take up collections for the purpose of raising funds sufficient to provide suitable places of public worship for the slaves within their respective precincts, and that police regulations be established on such occasions, so as to secure good order and propriety.... Committee on Colored Church in existence.”

The Diocese also added an amendment to section 2 of Canon X providing the specific policies on how vestries in newly created African American churches were to be established:³⁶

“The same committee reported the following amendment to Canon X, to be added as section 2: And whereas the preceding Canon does not provide for the election of Vestries for Colored Congregations: therefore, in the case of the establishment of a church for the use of colored people in towns or cities, the Vestry of such church or congregation shall be elected in the following manner, viz.: Where there is only one white congregation in the place, the Vestry of said congregation may discharge the functions of a Vestry for the colored congregation, or if they think best, may elect for them a Vestry from their own body or congregation. Where there are two or more white congregations in the town, then the Vestries of said congregations shall elect from their respective congregations, an equal number of Vestrymen, who shall jointly constitute the required Vestry. When the contemplated church is established within the limits of a country Parish, then the Vestry of said Parish shall be the Vestry for the colored congregation. In all other respects, not excepted in this Canon, the provisions of the IXth Canon, as to the number, qualification, duties, &c. Of Vestrymen, and as to the time of their election shall obtain in full force.”³⁷

Rev. Peterkin of St. James’s was one of the signers of the proposed amendment and was a member of the “Committee on the Religious Instruction of the Colored Population”.

According to the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, “The years between 1840 and 1865 were troubled ones for the Episcopal Church in Virginia.”³⁸ It was caught between religion and politics with one side saying that the church should be concerned with individual morality and sin and the other side saying that it should be concerned about societal sin, which included poverty and slavery. “This self-imposed form of pseudo-monasticism in which the church acted in the world but withdrew from certain aspects of it meant that for Episcopalians, politics meant only church politics.” “While the nation debated the nature of the Union, Episcopalians debated the meaning of the English Reformation.”³⁹

³⁶ Ibid, p. 37

³⁷ Ibid, p. 37

³⁸ Magazine of History and Biography published quarterly by The Virginia Historical Society, Vol. 115, No 2. Edward L. Bond and Joan R. Gundersen, 2007, p. 243.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 244

C. St. James's Beginnings:

According to *Not Hearers Only: A History of St. James's Episcopal Church, Richmond Virginia 1835-1965*, St. John's was the first Episcopal Church in Richmond erected at its current site in 1741. St. James's arose from the second Episcopal Church, Monumental, located on Broad at 14th Street and built in 1812-1814 as a memorial to the 73 victims of the Richmond Theatre fire that occurred on Christmas Day in 1811. (The third Episcopal Church was Christ Church built in 1827 by dissatisfied members of St. John's.) In 1831, a letter was sent to then Bishop of Virginia, Richard Channing Moore, from residents of Shockoe Hill who were complaining about the deferred maintenance issues at Monumental and who were wanting to start another Church. The letter stated that there were many Episcopalians near Monumental "who are either altogether prevented from attending its services, or as much inconvenienced in so doing, by the want of comfortable Pews".⁴⁰ Many of the signatories were founding members of St. James's.

Four years later, in 1835, land was purchased at Marshall and Fifth Streets for \$1,540 contributed by 26 individuals for the construction of a Church. Fundraising ensued during the next two years as well as recruitment of a rector. A contract for \$2,500 to construct a Sunday School and lecture rooms was signed in 1837 and the Reverend Dr. Adam Empie, President of the College of William and Mary, was hired as the first rector. On September 10th, the first vestry was formed and the parish was named St. James's. The first building was completed in November 1837, and after additional fundraising and a building contract was signed, the cornerstone for the new church was laid on April 2, 1838. Construction was completed in early 1839, and the church buildings were consecrated on June 23, 1839.

Did leaders of St. James's own enslaved people?

According to *Not Hearers Only*, "Many St. James's parishioners held slaves as did each of its first three rectors." However, this book contained no sources.

St. James's had three rectors between 1837 and 1892, with Dr. Adam Empie and Dr. Joshua Peterkin serving the longest; the second rector, Rev. George Cummins, only served for a year and a half.⁴¹

The first rector, Dr. Adam Empie, was born in New York in 1785, was educated at Union College and ordained in the Episcopal Church in 1809. He began his ministry as assistant rector at St. George parish in Long Island. In 1811, he moved to Wilmington, NC to become the rector of St. James Church, but he left there in 1814 to become the Chaplain at West Point. He also married 15 year old, Ann Eliza Wright, in 1814 prior to leaving for West Point. The Empies returned to St. James Church in Wilmington in 1816 and were there until 1827. During his tenure in Wilmington, St. James Church experienced enormous growth, and Dr. Empie created a

⁴⁰ Not Hearers Only, p. 5

⁴¹ Not Hearers Only, p. 95

parochial library and helped other parishes. In 1827, the Empies moved to Williamsburg, Virginia where Dr. Empie became the rector of the Bruton Parish and taught several classes at William and Mary before he became its President.⁴²

Dr. Empie came to St. James in 1837 when the Church was just beginning. It is assumed that the name of the new Church in Richmond was to honor Dr. Empie's service at St. James in Wilmington. According to Dr. Christopher Graham, the U.S. Censuses show that Dr. Adam Empie owned one man and three women in 1840, one person in 1850, and after his retirement, five people in Wilmington just before his death in 1860. However, according to the Encyclopedia of Virginia's history of slavery at the College of William and Mary, "Adam Empie, who served as president from 1827 to 1836, opposed slavery. He upset some Virginians by ministering to African Americans and officiating their weddings at Bruton Parish Church, a dispute that contributed to his resignation in 1836. Slavery did not end at the College of William and Mary during his tenure, however, and he benefited from the services of enslaved people, including those he hired himself."⁴³ At St. James's, Dr. Empie lead the parish to hold Sunday School for African Americans. The Sunday School enrolled 120 freed and enslaved students when it first opened in 1845 and grew to 300 students in 1858. However, African American were required to worship in the gallery, which did not have pews until 1859. Dr. Empie served as rector of St. James until ill health caused him to resign in 1853.

Dr. George B. Cummins was chosen to replace Dr. Empie. He had been rector of Christ Church in Norfolk. He was born in 1822 and was ordained in the Episcopal Church in 1845. He was well-known for his preaching and extra chairs had to be added when he spoke as throngs crowded to hear him speak.⁴⁴ There was also a fire in the church during his tenure and substantial repairs had to be made. Dr. Cummins also preached at the funeral of Mrs. Jane Scott, a prominent parishioner, who had gone to Africa as part of the ACS. During that same time, St. James contributed funds to the ACS. Dr. Cummins left St. James at the end of 1854 when he was called to become rector of Trinity Church in Washington, DC. Dr. Graham was unable to locate census information on Dr. George B. Cummins, and, therefore, there is no proof that he was a slaveholder.

Dr. Joshua Peterkin followed Dr. Cummins as rector of St. James. According to *Not Hearers Only*, Dr. Peterkin was born in Baltimore, MD in 1814 to parents who died when he was two years old. He started out as a businessman but eventually graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary in 1837 and ordained in 1839. After serving at several parishes in Maryland and Trinity Church in Princeton, NJ, in 1855, Dr. Peterkin became St. James's third and one of the longest serving rectors. He immersed himself in Diocesan affairs and activities at St. James. During his tenure, pews were added to the gallery in 1859 and the Sunday School flourished with over 300 pupils. Dr. Peterkin also gave a fiery secessionist sermon in 1861 that was

⁴² [Adam Empie - Wikipedia](#)

⁴³ <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/slavery-at-the-college-of-william-and-mary/>

⁴⁴ *No Hearers Only*, p. 20

blasted by Unionists.⁴⁵ According to the census, Dr. Graham found that Dr. Peterkin owned one person in 1860.

Information from the 1840, 1850 and 1860 censuses, where records could be found, revealed five of the eight first Vestry members owned a total of 45 people in 1840 and 19 in 1850. By 1860 only one of the five owned five people. These same census records show that 19 subsequent Vestry members who served through the end of the Civil War owned a total of 92 slaves in 1840, 101 in 1850 and 64 in 1860. The Vestry members with the most enslaved people were Adolph Dill, C. Edmond Fontaine, and Charles J. Meriwether.⁴⁶

How did St. James's treat free African American and enslaved people?

In *Not Hearers Only*, "The gallery of the church seems to have been set aside for the exclusive use of African Americans from 1842 forward," but pews were not provided until 1859.⁴⁷ It also says that most of them were "servants of parishioners", but we don't know if they were paid free African Americans or enslaved.

In 1845, Dr. Empie reported that 'A Sunday School for children and adults, bond and free has just been opened by the Rector on the last Lord's Day with 120 pupils.' In 1850, fifty pupils were instructed by one male and eight female teachers who were 'much encouraged' by the improvement of the students. According to the Diocesan Journal, in 1858, there were more African Americans than whites attending Sunday School with 300 African Americans attending with 14 teachers. At this time in history, it was against the law to teach slaves how to read. It is unclear whether the Sunday School for African Americans at St. James's was oral or if African Americans were taught how to read the bible.⁴⁸

There were also African Americans baptized and married during the time. In 1843, the Diocesan Journal reported "1 colored baptized" and in 1844, "2 colored baptized and 1 colored couple married". In 1845, there were two more African Americans baptized, and in 1847, five African Americans were baptized with 133 African Americans attending; in 1853, five African Americans were baptized; and in 1858, there were two African American couples married. In 1859, 301 African Americans were baptized, and 109 African American couples were married.⁴⁹

The Church's Involvement in Colonization:

As one solution to the question of slavery and integration, the American Colonization Society was founded in 1816, and was modeled after British efforts to resettle freed slaves in Africa

⁴⁵ *No Hearers Only*, pp. 21-24.

⁴⁶ Graham, email October 1, 2020

⁴⁷ *Not Hearers Only*, pp. 18, 22.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 18

⁴⁹ Diocesan Journal Reports for 1843, 1844, 1845, 1847, 1853, 1858, 1859

following the abolishment of the slave trade by England in 1772. The British colony was on the Sierra Leone peninsula in West Africa. The settlement did not thrive, and within two years most of the original 370 settlers had died of disease or warfare.

In 1819, the Society pressured the President and Congress for support. In 1819, Congress appropriated \$100,000. The first freed U.S. slaves and free Africans departed on the journey to Africa in 1820. At this time, about 2,000,000 Africans lived in America of which 200,000 were not enslaved. The first American ship sailed south of Sierra Leone to the northern coast of Liberia; however, the first attempt at settlement did not go well. Many died within three weeks from yellow fever. Over the next 20 years more ships were sent, and the colony grew despite resistance from the native Africans. Initially white agents governed the colony, but in 1842, Joseph Jenkins Roberts, free born in Virginia, became the first African American governor. In 1847, its legislature declared Liberia an independent state and elected Roberts its first President. In 1862, it was granted official U. S. diplomatic recognition, and became the first independent republic in African history.'

This success still did not answer the question of what to do about slavery. The ACS continued to evolve in its ideas of a solution to slavery. Free African Americans, slave owners, and abolitionists promoted different ideas. Even "Abraham Lincoln believed as late as 1862 and said that voluntary colonization should go hand-in-hand with emancipation; because he thought African Americans and white people couldn't live equally in the same country."

In *Not Hearers Only*, it is stated that a "lovely young Christian woman left home and friends and went out from St. James's Church to tell the Africans of Jesus and his love."⁵⁰ Jane Cary Harrison Scott is believed to have been involved in the establishing of a mission in Monrovia, Liberia. According to "Find a Grave" website Mrs. Scott she married the Rev. Hugh Roy Scott of Amherst County, Virginia.⁵¹ They were missionaries at the Protestant Episcopal Mission at Cape Palmas, West Africa. Four months and twelve days after her arrival at Cavalla, she died of fever after an illness of eleven days. In the same year \$480 was raised by St. James's the congregation for the African colonization of freed slaves.⁵² We do not know if this was a special offering or a memorial gift made in her memory by friends or designated by the vestry. According to the Annual Convention Diocesan Journal, from 1856 to 1860 another \$461 was raised for the same purpose.⁵³ Details of her burial apparently do not exist, but she probably was buried in the churchyard of St. Mary's Church that had been built for the colony with contributions collected principally from the Diocese of Maryland. It is believed that the second Rector, George Cummins, a renowned preacher, gave the funeral sermon for Jane Cary Harrison Scott in 1853.

⁵⁰ Not Hearers Only, p. 20

⁵¹ Findagrave.com/memorial/110148226/jane-cary-scott

⁵² Not Hearers Only, p, 20

⁵³ Diocesan Journal Report for 1860

What was the Episcopal Church's and St. James's involvement in abolition or in the Civil War?

Not Hearer's Only:

Richmond "remained a bastion of unionist sentiment. Predictably, the debate leading up to the withdrawal of Virginia from the Union was intense, and at one point involved the rector of St. James's. The source of the discord was a sermon preached by Dr. Peterkin in January 1861. Widely reported to be secessionist in tone, he was called upon to disavow it by prominent Unionist lawyer, John Minor Botts. He refused, replying that 'separation in some mode or other would be better.... for the promotion of real happiness for the people' and asserted that he was willing to shake hands with his northern brothers and part in peace."⁵⁴

Not Hearers Only:

Several notable funerals were held at St. James s during the Civil War including Captain O. Jennings Wise, brother of Rev. Wise killed in 1862 at Roanoke Island and J.E.B Stuart in 1864. "Dr. Peterkin sat with him in his last hours and joined him in the emotional singing of 'Rock of Ages'." This event was memorialized in the window in the new Church given to St. James's by United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1951.⁵⁵

Not Hearers Only:

A parishioner, Sally Louisa Tompkins, opened a hospital in the private home of Judge John Robertson to treat confederate soldiers. She was the only woman to be commissioned in the confederate army—Captain Sally. Only 73 of the more than 1,300 soldiers that were treated at the hospital died, the lowest death rate of any hospitals, Union or Confederate. She remained active at St. James's as a Sunday School teacher and died in 1916. A window was dedicated in her honor in 1981.⁵⁶

Mrs. Judith McGuire, who was a regular parishioner during the Civil War, wrote *Diary of a Southern Refugee*.⁵⁷ Excerpts from her Diary demonstrate attitudes towards African American shared by many.

"Under a mysterious Providence, millions of the coloured race have been saved from the foulest paganism; millions mentally and morally elevated far above those of their native land, and multitudes saved in Christ forever. Is it God's purpose to break up this system? Who can believe that it was His will to do it by war and bloodshed? Or that by turning this

⁵⁴ Not Hearers Only, p. 24.

⁵⁵ Not Hearers Only, p. 25.

⁵⁶ Not Hearers Only, pp. 25-26.

⁵⁷ *Diary of a Southern Refugee During the War*, Judith White Brockenbrough McGuire, 1867

people loose without preparation, a rapid demoralization, idleness, poverty, and vice should doom so many of them to misery, or send them so rapidly to the grave? In this transition state, must the earth remain uncultivated, and its fruits so lessened as to reduce all to comparative poverty, and threaten such numbers with actual starvation? Must a war of races come? Must a spirit of bitter hatred burn on between the sections of our unhappy country? Why not one of peace and forgiveness instead? Why not the healing balm of love? Why not the spirit of Christ, pervading all hearts, and binding up all wounds? ...”⁵⁸

Another excerpt from McGuire:

“We miss the respectful and respectable servants, born in the family and brought up with an affection for the household which seemed part of their nature, and which so largely contributed to the happiness of both master and servant. Even the nurse of our precious J, the sole child of the house, whose heart seemed bound up in her happiness, has gone. It is touching to hear the sweet child’s account of the shock she experienced when she found that her “mammy”, deceived and misled by the minions that followed Grant’s army, had left her; and to see how her affection still clings to her, showing itself in the ardent hope that her ‘mammy’ has found a comfortable home.”⁵⁹

Not Hearers Only:

Dr. Peterkin sent supplies to troops all over the state: bibles, food, medicine, etc.⁶⁰

D. St. James’s involvement in the creation of St. Philips:

From *Not Hearers Only*, St. Philip’s was “built on North Fourth Street, only a few blocks distant from St. James’s. An 1863 *Southern Churchman* article credits our congregation with beginning the Sunday School of this new parish and supplying almost all of its teachers.”⁶¹

Ken Anderson, a historian and parishioner of St. Philips, who is preparing a detailed history of the church in preparation for their 160th anniversary, provided the following information via email.⁶²

The Diocese beginning in 1859, at the insistence of Bishop John Johns, called for the organization of a separate "colored" parish. St. James’s members supported the effort.

⁵⁸ McGuire, Preface, p. 4

⁵⁹ McGuire, p. 359.

⁶⁰ *Not Hearers Only*, p. 26

⁶¹ *Not Hearers Only*, p. 22

⁶² Ken Anderson email February 2, 2021

While *Not Hearers Only* indicates that all Episcopal Churches in the area contributed \$10,000 each for the construction of St. Philips, the 1859-1861 Diocesan Council Reports indicate that "St. Paul's, St. James's, and Monumental provided the majority of the financial support of the parish's first building on Fourth Street. But St. James's almost exclusively (with the exception of a few diocesan officials) provided "pulpit personnel" in our early years including Revs. Dashiell, Pike Powers, J.B. Winchester, and George Dame. Between 1867 and 1869, the parish barely existed, but St. James's members were present at our first recorded vestry meeting in May of 1869. Also present at that first Vestry meeting was the Rev. J. S. Atwell, the first African American ordained in the Episcopal Church in Virginia and the rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church that organized in 1868 on Perry Street. It appears that before 1879, St. James's assistant ministers would visit St. Philip's and preach afternoon/evening services on a weekly or monthly basis depending on the year. After 1879, St. James's role in our administration decreased almost completely.

Mr. Anderson provided this information about the St. Philip's windows:⁶³

"Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart, a St. James's member I believe, is credited with donating the windows of our second location at Foushee (now St. James) and Leigh Streets in Jackson Ward. While Mrs. Stuart did contribute to the building of the church at Foushee and Leigh, St. Philip's inherited the building (formerly St. Mark's Chapel) from St. Mark's Church c. 1869. Therefore, Mrs. Stuart likely donated funds and objects to the building but with the St. Mark's congregation and not St. Philip's as the intended recipient."

Mr. Anderson on the St. Philip's Sunday School:⁶⁴

"The Sunday School, originally housed by St. James, was flourishing by the end of the Civil War with hundreds of pupils. By 1865, most of the remaining African American students were transferred from St. James's to St. Philip's Sunday School which quickly developed into an independent parish school, known as St. Philip's Parish School, and staffed by both African American and white teachers. The school, first led by Isaac T. Cooley (beginning around 1869) and later by rectors of St. Philip's, lasted until the early 20th century. It was common for pupils in our early years to attend other churches but attend our school. In the late 1860s and early 1870s, our school had a student body of 100+ while the church was struggling to fill pews."

More information from Ken Anderson:

There was an adage in an old history of Richmond by John Cutchins that stated, "If you find a colored man who isn't a Baptist, ask him what is wrong with him." Despite the racist tone of the statement, it is relatively accurate as African American folks rushed into

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Ibid

Baptist and Methodist congregations immediately following the Civil War. The reasoning was twofold – first, Baptist and Methodist cells called for abolition early on, and second, their services required less reading than an Episcopal service. Given that it was illegal for a slave to read, it was difficult for the new Freedmen to participate in the liturgy. As a result, our parish and African American Episcopal churches nationally attracted early professional and free African American congregants who were able to read. In the 1890s and 1900s, as racial uplift really takes off, there are significant increases in African American membership in the Church.
