Down From the Balcony: African Americans and Episcopal Congregations in Washington County, Maryland, 1800-1864[1]

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On Christmas Day, 1849, a few months after the consecration of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in rural western Maryland, the first wedding was held in the new sanctuary. The couple married were Malinda and Jeremiah James, both slaves. The Jameses had no further recorded dealings with the church after this. Separated by Malinda's manumission in 1858, the couple reunited after the Civil War and lived together until Jeremiah's death in the 1870s. It appears they did not worship again in the Episcopal Church after emancipation; Malinda was remarried in 1881 by a minister of another denomination.[2]

The experiences of the Jameses highlight several themes that are common in the saga of African Americans and Episcopal

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[2] Boonsboro, St. Mark's Episcopal Church–Lappans, Parish Register 1849-98, 63; Washington County Court Land Records, mdlandrec.net, MSA CE 18-8, Book IN 13, 550; Annapolis, Maryland State Archives, CM1141, no. 463 (1881); 1860 Census, Washington County, MD, Hagerstown post office, p. 24, NARA (National Archives and Records Administration) microfilm M653, roll 483; 1870 Census, Washington County, MD, 16th District, Beaver Creek post office, 33, NARA microfilm 593, roll 597; 1880 Census, Washington County, MD, Election District 16, 14, NARA microfilm T9, roll 517. All Census citations are from digital images at Ancestry.com (www.ancestry.com) and are from population schedules unless otherwise noted.

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congregations in nineteenth-century Maryland: the involvement of slaves with the church from an early point in the church's history; the ambivalent quality of their relationship with the church and with their Episcopalian masters; and finally their departure from the Episcopal Church. This article will explore some of these issues, looking specifically at the Episcopal churches in Washington County, Maryland. It will focus on church attendance and worship practices, sacraments and rites (baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, marriage, and burial), and education and social relations within the church. The same themes that are writ large in the story of race in the greater Episcopal Church[3] are found on a smaller scale in parishes and families. Episcopal congregations accepted slaves and free African-Americans as subordinate members, kept African-Americans segregated, and saw their black members as suitable objects for mission work but as having no leadership capacity.

Washington County is today the third westernmost county in Maryland, located at the narrowest part of the state and bordering Pennsylvania to the north and West Virginia (formerly Virginia) to the south. It is a significant area for African-American history. In the early nineteenth century the abolitionist James W. C. Pennington grew up and escaped from slavery here, before writing the first history of African Americans.[4] In 1859 the radical abolitionist John Brown and his followers hid out in Washington County in the months before his historic raid on Harper's Ferry. In 1862 the battle of Antietam, which led to the Emancipation Proclamation, was fought here. Slavery was pervasive in western Maryland, though less so than in other parts of the state, and it had a different character here. Whereas eastern and southern

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[3] Harold T. Lewis, *Yet with a Steady Beat: The African American Struggle for Recognition in the Episcopal Church* (Valley Forge, 1996), 17-38; Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., *Episcopalians & Race: Civil War to Civil Rights* (Lexington, 2000), 7-29; Mary Klein and Kingsley Smith, "Racism in the Anglican and Episcopal Church of Maryland," presented at "400 Years of Anglican Episcopal History," Tri-History Conference, 24-27 June 2007, Williamsburg, VA, http://archive.episcopalmaryland.org/history-racism.php.

[4] James W.C. Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith, or, Events in the History of James W.C. Pennington...* (London, 1849), 2, 11-48; Pennington, *A Text Book of the Origin and History of the Colored People* (New York, 1841); Christopher L. Webber, *American to the Backbone: The Life of James W.C. Pennington...* (New York, 2011), 149-56.

Maryland were economically more like the deeper South, with tobacco farms and larger-scale slave-holding, western Maryland, including Washington County, had a wheat-based and mixed agriculture that was far less suited to slave labor. Thus slave holdings in this region were small; relations between slaves and slaveholders were often closer than elsewhere, yet slave families were under the added stress of being spread across multiple holdings.[5] Between 1790 and 1840, the black population of the county grew from 1,340 to just over 4,000, with free black numbers growing steadily; overall, the county's total African-American population remained close to 4,000 for much of the antebellum era, from 1820 until after 1850. Over the four decades before the Civil War, however, the number of persons held in slavery in the county fell by a dramatic fifty-one percent. In the 1850s and early 1860s, about half of the African Americans in the county were free.[6]

Episcopalians founded seven churches in the county before the Civil War: St. John's, Hagerstown (founded 1787; the largest and most stable congregation); St. Paul's, Sharpsburg (founded between 1815 and 1820); St. Thomas', Hancock (1835); St. Luke's, Brownsville/Pleasant Valley (1837); St. Andrew's, Clear Spring (1840); the College of St. James (1842; this combined college and grammar school in some ways functioned like a parish church); and St. Mark's, Lappans Cross Roads (1849). Numerous

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[5] For small slaveholdings, see Diane Mutti Burke, *On Slavery's Border: Missouri's Small-Slaveholding Households, 1815-1865* (Athens and London, 2010), 142-97. For strains on families, see Ibid., 198-230, and Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven and London, 1985), 23-28. For Washington County slavery, see Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, 2-11, 65-73; Kathleen A. Ernst, *Too Afraid to Cry: Maryland Civilians in the Antietam Campaign* (Mechanicsburg, PA, 1999), 9-18; Carol Appenzellar, "Slavery in Washington County, Maryland, Mid-19th Century (1845-54)," in *An Index to Hagerstown Newspapers, 1850-1854, Part One, A-K* (Hagerstown, 2012), xi-xvi; Edie Wallace, "Reclaiming the Forgotten History and Cultural Landscapes of African-Americans in Rural Washington County, Maryland," *Material Culture*, 39 (2007), no. 1: 9-32.

[6] In 1830 the Census recorded 1,082 free blacks and 2,909 slaves; in 1840 there were 1,580 free blacks and 2,546 slaves; in 1850 there were 1,828 free blacks and 2,090 slaves; in 1860 there were 1,677 free blacks and 1,435 slaves. Appenzellar, "Slavery in Washington County," xvi.

Episcopal missions also persisted at various times during the antebellum period.

INVOLVEMENT WITH SLAVERY

Each of these churches was deeply enmeshed with slavery from its beginning. Like Episcopal churches throughout Maryland and the South in general, they were founded by and to a large extent filled their membership rolls with slaveholders, the economic elite.[7] Donations for building the churches, as well as ongoing support for them, came from wealth built up in part through slaveholding. At St. John's, Hagerstown, at least five of the first seven vestrymen elected in 1787 were slaveholders, owning a total of eighty-three slaves in 1790.[8] St. Paul's was built between 1819 and 1831 in part through the donations of the Chaplines, Sharpsburg's founding family, who held fifteen slaves; the church also counted among its members the prominent slaveholder William Blackford of Ferry Hill Plantation, with eighteen slaves.[9] When St. Thomas' was built in the western part of the county, at least six of the twelve local contributors who gave $20 or more can be positively identified as slaveholders, with at least fifty-nine slaves between

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[7] Mary O. Klein, "'We shall be accountable to God': Some Inquiries into the Position of Blacks in Somerset Parish, Maryland, 1692-1865," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 87 (1992): 399-405; Klein and Smith, "Racism in the Anglican and Episcopal Church of Maryland"; J. Carleton Hayden, "After the War: The Mission and Growth of the Episcopal Church among Blacks in the South, 1865-1877," *Historical Magazine of the Episcopal Church* 42 (1973): 409-10; R. E. Hood, "From a Headstart to a Deadstart: The Historical Basis for Black Indifference toward the Episcopal Church, 1800-1860," *Historical Magazine of the Episcopal Church* 51 (1982): 272-27.

[8] In 1790, Nathaniel Rochester owned sixteen slaves, Daniel Hughes six, John Stull ten, Thomas Sprigg forty-four, and Eli Williams seven. David Churchman Trimble, *History of St. John's Church, Hagerstown, Maryland* (Hagerstown, 1981), 17-18; 1790 Census, Washington County, MD, 6, 18, 20, 22, 32, NARA microfilm M637, roll 3.

[9] David Churchman Trimble, *History of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Sharpsburg, Maryland* (privately printed, 1998), 4-6; 1820 Census, Washington County, MD, Election District 1, p. 62, NARA microfilm M33, roll 46; Maryland Register of Will Records, 1629-1999, *Inventories 1839-1842*, vol. L, 25 (online at Familysearch.org).

them.[10] In the southern part of the county, the majority of the white families who figure in the early records of St. Luke's were slaveholding ones.[11] At St. Mark's, the eight founding vestry members were all slaveholders, with fifty-eight slaves between them in 1850.[12] Three of the five other pledges of $20 or more toward building the church came from slaveholders, who held a total of twenty-seven slaves.[13]

Did slaves literally build the churches? The rare construction records that survive say nothing about labor. St. Mark's was built by Upton Morin, a young white mason who owned no slaves at the time. But male slaves in northern Maryland were often trained in a trade (such as stone masonry or carpentry) and then hired out, so Morin may well have hired slave help or even borrowed unfree labor from some of the founding members of the church, many of whom lived nearby.[14] Thus the possibility that slaves worked on the building site is a real one. Slaves were present in the minds of those who planned and built the churches. When St. Mark's was

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[10] Lavinia Gregory owned two slaves, Cromwell Orrick thirteen, Kelly Thomas four, Jacob Brosius four, George Thomas sixteen, and James Breathed nineteen; Hancock, MD, St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Parish Register 1, 7-10; 1830 Census, Washington County, MD, District 5, 166, 169, NARA microfilm M19, roll 58; 1830 Census, Morgan County, Virginia, 121, NARA microfilm M19, roll 198; 1840 Census, Washington County, MD, Hancock and Hagerstown Districts, 119, 182, NARA microfilm M704, roll 171.

[11] These included the Botelers, Claggetts, Edwardses, and Grims. Brunswick, Petersville-Brownsville Register, 7, 11, 39, 61, 70; 1840 Census, Washington County, MD, Pleasant Valley District, 231, NARA microfilm M704, roll 171.

[12] John Booth owned six slaves, John Breathed eleven, Hezekiah Clagett eleven, M. C. Clarkson one, Daniel Donnelly Sr. eight, George Kennedy fifteen, Dr. Thomas Maddox four, and Frisby Tilghman two. Boonsboro, St. Mark's Vestry Minute Book 1849-91, 13; 1850 Census, slave schedule, Washington County, MD, District 1 and Subdivision 2 and Boonsboro, NARA microfilm M432.

[13] Samuel Claggett owned seventeen slaves, Gera South five, and John A. Adams five. Boonsboro, St. Mark's Vestry Minute Book 1849-91, 3; 1850 Census, slave schedule, Washington County, MD, District 1 and Subdivision 2, NARA microfilm M432.

[14] Boonsboro, St. Mark's Vestry Minute Book 1849-91, 4-6; 1850 Census, Washington County, MD, Subdivision 2, 30B, NARA microfilm M432, roll 298; Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, 4. Morin purchased three slaves in 1858; Hagerstown, Washington County Historical Society, Document BS81. Founders who lived near the church site included Thomas Maddox, Frisby Tilghman, and John Booth.

being designed in 1848-49, the original specifications were altered to include a balcony; though it was not called a slave gallery in the instructions, local parallels and contemporary practice, as well as the numerous appearances of African Americans in the St. Mark's register, reveal the balcony's purpose as slave seating.[15]

Many of the local Episcopal clergy resembled their white parishioners in owning slaves themselves. One of the first Episcopal clergyman known to have operated in the county was a wealthy slaveholder, the Rev. Bartholomew Booth (d. 1785).[16] When the Rev. Thomas Pitt Irving became rector of St. John's in 1813, he brought two slaves, a forty-ish woman named Susan and a young teenaged boy named Tom, with him from North Carolina (almost certainly removing them from their kin and friends), and the next year Irving purchased David Davis, a blacksmith aged about twenty-four, for six hundred dollars.[17] The Rev. John Alexander Adams, who was rector of St. Paul's in the 1820s and 1830s and continued to assist in the parish for the next few decades, had one young male slave in 1840. By 1850 he owned a fifty-year old woman, a seventeen-year-old woman, and three younger children; in 1860, he owned seven male and female slaves ranging in age from five to seventy years.[18] The Rev. John Delaplane, first rector of St. Thomas', owned two slaves,

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[15] Boonsboro, St. Mark's Vestry Minute Book 1849-91, 6. For local parallels and contemporary practice, see below, "Separate Spaces and Services." Local church records virtually never mention slavery as such. Despite recent speculation that the congregation at St. Luke's may have been divided over the issue in 1843, there is no evidence for this. James H. Johnston, *From Slave Ship to Harvard: Yarrow Mamout and the History of an African American Family* (New York, 2012), 143 and 252, note 10, citing Edward T. Helfenstein, Editor, "Consecration of St. Luke's," *The Church News*, 1 November 1894 (where there is no mention of slavery). The bishop's contemporary description of the problem specifically attributes it to a difficulty with the deed of donation (*Convention Journal*, 1846), 40.

[16] Thomas J. C. Williams, *A History of Washington County, Maryland, from the Earliest Settlements to the Present Time* (Baltimore, 1916), i. 383; Frank D. Clawson, "Bartholomew Booth and Delamere," *The Cracker Barrel*, 15 no. 11 (April 1986): 22.

[17] Trimble, *History of St. John's*, 21; Washington County Court Land Records, mdlandrec.net, MSA CE 67-21, Book Z, 46-47, 617.

[18] 1840 Census, Washington County, MD, Boonsboro, 215, NARA microfilm M704, roll 171; 1850 Census, slave schedule, Washington County, MD, Subdivision 2, NARA microfilm M432; 1860 Census, slave schedule, Washington County, MD, Sharpsburg District, 13, NARA microfilm M653.

a middle-aged man and an older woman, in 1840.[19] His successor, the Rev. James A. Buck, married Delaplane's widow, who owned William and Emely (both baptized in 1846); Buck buried his slave Rebecca Kirtis in 1845.[20] Dr. John Kerfoot, rector of the College of St. James, owned Kitty Brooks and her three young children until he manumitted them in 1848, when she was forty-two years old.[21] Two years later he still owned a thirty-year-old woman and a fifteen-year-old named Eliza Robison; in 1852 he sold Robison to Elizabeth Smith for a term of fifteen years, promising that she would be free at the end of that time.[22] The Rev. R. B. Sutton, rector of St. Luke's, baptized his slave Jane's daughter Sylvia in 1860.[23] Slave-owning was not universal among the clergy, even among those who needed domestic help. The Rev. Joseph Passmore, rector of St. Mark's, employed two free "mulatto" women, Sophia Jones and Ellen Dorsey, as servants in his home in 1860.[24]

These men and the other Episcopal clergy of slavery-era Washington County left few written comments on slavery. In an 1861 letter to a friend in Baltimore, John Kerfoot of St. James's wrote of his own antipathy to the slave trade. If Maryland seceded, he mused, "I foresee only one possible bar to my conscience [in remaining in Maryland]—the reopening of the African slave trade. . . . I fully believe that such an enactment would compel me . . . to withdraw from any State or nation responsible or consenting." Yet Kerfoot went on to express, in the same letter, his distress that "infidel and lawless abolitionism" was partly to

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[19] 1840 Census, Washington County, MD, Hancock, 187, NARA microfilm M704, roll 171.

[20] Hancock, St. Thomas' Parish Register 1, 21, 136.

[21] Washington County Circuit Court (Land Records) 1858-1859, IN 13, 298-9, MSA CE 18-8 (online).

[22] Kerfoot had previously sold Robison to Smith's late husband, but stated he had never been paid. 1850 Census, slave schedule, Washington County, MD, Subdivision 2, NARA microfilm M432; Hagerstown, Washington County Historical Society, documents D25 and BS201. In Maryland at this time, the promise of future freedom was included in 88% of local sales of slaves; Max Grivno, *Gleanings of Freedom: Free and Slave Labor along the Mason-Dixon Line, 1790-1860* (Urbana, IL, 2011), 138.

[23] Brunswick, MD, Grace Episcopal Church, Register of St. Mark's Petersville and St. Luke's Brownsville, 22.

[24] 1860 Census, Washington County, MD, Williamsport District, Williamsport P.O., 401, NARA microfilm M653, roll, 483.

blame for the sectional strife rending the nation; he opposed the slave trade, but he was no abolitionist.[25] During the Civil War, the Rev. Joseph Coit, the rector of St. Mark's and a teacher at St. James', briefly expressed sympathy for persons forced (back?) into slavery, when he recorded an incident at the college in his diary during the tumultuous month of June 1863: "Near tea-time a person named Sever came from Winchester [in Virginia] in search of the slaves of his father. He carried off our cook and her two children. It was a sad sight."[26] There is no indication that Coit or anyone else tried to help the woman and her family avoid this fate. Whether they were slaveholders themselves or not, and whatever their views on slavery, priests who served in Maryland adapted to the prevailing views and practices.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Throughout the South, those prevailing views and practices with regard to slaves and worship changed over the course of the nineteenth century, as slaveholder attitudes shifted from indifference about slave religion to the active promotion of Christianity, often as a means of social control.[27] The foundation dates of Washington County's Episcopal churches, from 1787 to 1849, span this transitional period. Signs of the shift can be detected both in the church records and in the contrasting behavior of successive generations of Episcopal slaveholders in the county. Not only is there little evidence for slaves attending the Episcopal churches in Washington County in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but also there is evidence suggesting they

[25] Hall Harrison, *Life of the Right Reverend John Barrett Kerfoot*, vol. I (New York, 1886), 194.

[26] James McLachlan, ed., "The Civil War Diary of Joseph H. Coit," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 60 (1965): 254.

[27] Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," in *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870*, ed. John B. Boles (Lexington, 1988), 99-106; and Boles' introduction to the same volume, 9-10; Noel Leo Erskine, *Plantation Church: How African American Religion Was Born in Caribbean Slavery* (Oxford and New York, 2014), 68-81, 114-17.

did not. Striking testimony on this score comes from the Rev. James W. C. Pennington, a prominent nineteenth-century abolitionist who had escaped from slavery near Lappans Cross Roads in 1828. In his autobiography, he wrote that his former master Frisby Tilghman, Sr. "was an Episcopalian" and sometimes drove into Hagerstown to go to church, but neither "my master or any other master, within my acquaintance [before 1828], made any provisions for the religious instruction of his slaves. . . . I never knew him to say a word to one of us about going to church, or about our obligations to God, or a future state."[28] The records of St. John's in Hagerstown lend some support to this statement, for no African Americans appear in them from the 1787 founding until 1834-35.[29] It seems that Tilghman's fellow parishioners at St. John's either, like him, did not bring their slaves to church or brought them only as unrecorded worshipers. At St. Paul's in Sharpsburg (where the records are admittedly much patchier) there is no evidence of blacks in the church from the founding to 1831. St. Paul's member John Blackford kept some of his slaves working on Sundays in the late 1830s, and it appears from his plantation journal that none of them attended church.[30]

Intertwined factors that affected slaves' church attendance included the attitudes of masters and clergy, physical conditions such as distance, and whether enslaved people themselves were interested. As Pennington's statement implies, a slaveholder's indifference or hostility could easily keep his slaves away from church. Slaveholders could be influenced by their priest, who in turn may have been influenced by the bishop. The register of St. John's seems to demonstrate this. The register begins in 1818, yet no African Americans appear in it until the 1830s and very few until about 1842, when black baptisms became frequent

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[28] Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, 67.

[29] African Americans first appeared in the records of St. John's when the priest reported four black marriages in 1834-35 (*Convention Journal*, 1835), 40, followed by ten black confirmations in 1835-36 (*Convention Journal*, 1836), 10; the latter implies there had been baptisms by this date, but these are not recorded.

[30] *Ferry Hill Plantation Journal . . . 4 January 1838 – 15 January 1839*, ed. Fletcher M. Green et al., 2nd ed. (Shepherdstown, 1975), x, 5, and passim.

and black marriages began to occur.[31] The change probably resulted from several factors. First was the request from the diocese of Maryland, beginning in 1834, that parish statistics be reported by race.[32] Second was the arrival of a new rector, T. B. Lyman, in October 1840. Third was the consecration of the new bishop of Maryland, William Rollinson Whittingham (1840-79), who in May 1841 addressed the diocesan convention on the subject of ministry to slaves. He told his audience of clerical and lay delegates:

> Surely their blood will be upon the heads of those who suffer them to go down to the pit in brute ignorance or blind fanaticism, unwarned, untaught, unfed with the bread of life! . . . A heavy burden lies on us, my brethren, both of the clergy and of the laity, until we do more, much more, than is now done, for the servile portion of our church.[33]

Later that year, when the bishop stayed at Frisby Tilghman's home during a visit to Washington County, he noted in his journal: "At Family Prayers, addressed the assembled negroes of Col. T[ilghman] on good works, the proof and fruit of faith—about 30."[34] It seems Pennington's old master was now (thirteen years after Pennington's escape) amenable to some religious instruction of his slaves, at least to oblige a visiting bishop. Tilghman's changed behavior, the shift in practice at St. John's, and even the bishop's own interest in proselytizing to slaves were all characteristic of a broader change in thinking among slaveholders, who by the 1840s were becoming more inclined actively to promote Christianity among their slaves, in part as a means to regulate slave behavior and in particular to replace independent slave religion,

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[31] Annapolis, Maryland State Archives (MSA), SC 2634, M 855-1 (St. John's Parish Register 1816-93), 26-53, 213-18.

[32] *Convention Journal*, 1834, 55 (appendix).

[33] *Convention Journal*, 1841, 21-22. Though sometimes ambivalent about slavery, Bishop Whittingham wrote against abolition and in 1860 either owned or hired a twelve-year-old male slave; T. Felder Dorn, *Challenges on the Emmaus Road: Episcopal Bishops Confront Slavery, Civil War, and Emancipation* (Columbia, SC, 2013), 59-60; 1860 Census, slave schedule, Washington County, MD, Baltimore City Ward 20, 3, NARA microfilm M653.

[34] Baltimore, Episcopal Diocese of Maryland Archives, Bishop Whittingham's Personal Journal, 1841, 79.

which was seen as disorderly and subversive.[35] For example, whites often accused black preachers of encouraging slaves to escape or rebel; a local example occurred when two slaves, Henry and Jacob Martin, ran away in 1846 and itinerant preacher William Norris, "who had been prowling in the neighborhood, was arrested . . . under the charge of having been accessary (sic) to their escape."[36] As the bishop's language demonstrates, those white churchmen who wanted to bring African Americans into the fold still saw them as an inferior people, to be looked down on in a multitude of ways.

St. Thomas', Hancock, presents a case very similar to St. John's. For its first six years or so, the surviving records show few African Americans at the church. But this too changed after the May 1841 diocesan convention. Over the next nine months, the Rev. Savington Crampton (newly arrived at St. Thomas' in 1840) baptized eight slaves, married two black couples, and listed four blacks among the communicants of the church. Here, too, it seems likely that the bishop's exhortation had inspired this new rector, and that he in turn encouraged both his black parishioners to participate actively in the rites of the church and his white parishioners to accept them.[37]

Not all slaves who were able to attend church wanted to or did so with the pious enthusiasm their priests may have hoped for. But many did. While testimony from Washington County is lacking, Alice Marshall, a former slave from nearby Virginia, would later express her feelings this way:

> In slavery days Sundays was one day we glad to see come. Yes, we went to church. Had to walk four or five miles, but we went. We took our

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[35] Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 99-101; Boles, *Masters and Slaves*, 9-10; Paul Harvey, *Through the Storm, Through the Night: A History of African American Christianity* (Lanham, MD, 2011), 30-35, 44-51. The change in the St. John's register may also have been due to more precise record-keeping.

[36] *Hagerstown Torch Light*, 13 August 1846. Local African Methodist Episcopal preacher Thomas Henry was also suspected of inciting rebellion and of aiding escapes; Thomas W. Henry, *From Slavery to Salvation: The Autobiography of Rev. Thomas W. Henry of the A.M.E. Church*, ed. Jean Libby (Jackson, 1994), 25-26, 108-11.

[37] Hancock, St. Thomas' Register 1, 41-2, 80, 109; I thank Ms. Tracy Salvagno for this suggestion.

> shoes in our hands an' walked barefooted. When we got near de church door, den we put on our shoes. In church we sat in de gallery. De white man preached all de sermons. But we could jine in de singin'. De white folks word off de hymns and we follow 'long.[38]

Charles Wilson Bingham, a white writer who had lived in the county as a child, alluded in his memoirs to (non-Episcopal) worship that seems to have been racially mixed: "Every person on the farm, black or white, was sure to attend Sunday morning worship, which invariably opened by singing 'Safely Through Another Week.'"[39] Episcopal church attendance was easier for slaves who lived in or near Hagerstown than for those who lived in sprawling rural parishes. Hence it is no surprise to see the consistently higher numbers of blacks in the St. John's parish register, and to a lesser degree at St. Thomas', Hancock, also located in a town center.

Although free people of color made up approximately half the local black population in the last few decades before the Civil War, they were probably under-represented in Episcopal churches. In general, African Americans who could choose their churches more often opted for Baptist or Methodist congregations, where they could take on more active roles.[40] The Methodist Episcopal Church in western Maryland was well integrated in the 1830s, though blacks still struggled for fully equal treatment. In addition, there was a black church in Hagerstown from 1818 onward, and at least two by 1840.[41] While St. John's, Hagerstown, and St. Thomas', Hancock, may have attracted more free blacks than the rural Episcopal churches did, Washington County's black Episcopalians are likely to have been disproportionately the

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[38] Charles L. Perdue Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds., *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Bloomington and London, 1976), 202; Dusinberre, *Strategies for Survival*, 123-24.

[39] Charles Wilson Bingham, *A Little Boy in Maryland during the Civil War* (Cedar Rapids, IA, 1937), 15.

[40] Hood, "From a Headstart to a Deadstart," 269, 283-87, 294-95; Katherine Dvorak, "After Apocalypse, Moses," in Boles, *Masters and Slaves*, 174; Larry M. James, "Biracial Fellowship in Antebellum Baptist Churches," in Boles, *Masters and Slaves*, 54-57; Randall M. Miller, "Slaves and Southern Catholicism," in Boles, *Masters and Slaves*, 134-36.

[41] Henry, *From Slavery to Salvation*, 16-19.

slaves of white members rather than free blacks, especially in the period before 1850 (when slaves still greatly outnumbered free blacks in the county).

Episcopal priests and missionaries in western Maryland must have been aware of the competition they faced, for both black and white souls, from other denominations, often attributing the advantage to livelier worship services. Bishop Whittingham thought that slaves showed a "general preference of forms of worship in which their untutored but warm hearts find more excitement than in the sober majesty of our services, and in which too, perhaps, they get some slender spiritual nourishment better adapted to their capacities than we have yet generally taken the pains to provide for them."[42] Likewise modern historians have sometimes concluded that African Americans in particular "were not attracted to what seemed the cold ritual of the Episcopal Church."[43] At first glance, the Episcopal service offered very limited scope for active participation, especially to those who could not use or had no access to the Book of Common Prayer and hymnals; most Washington County slaves, like those elsewhere, were illiterate, and so were most free blacks.[44] But, as noted by former slave Marshall above, slaves easily could join in congregational singing, picking up the words to hymns. They could equally learn the congregational responses during liturgy. Similarly, hearing Scripture read, and hearing constant references to it in hymns, liturgy, and sermons, gave churchgoers a Biblical grounding. For those who attended Episcopal services, worship was full of sensory, intellectual, and spiritual experiences, in which black worshipers could participate much as whites did.

SEPARATE SPACES AND SERVICES

Once slaves and free African Americans entered the church building, they sat apart from whites, usually in a balcony at the

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[42] *Convention Journal*, 1841, 22.

[43] Dusinberre, *Strategies for Survival*, 123.

[44] Local literacy rates for black adults after emancipation were very low; 1870 Census, Washington County, MD, passim, NARA microfilm M593, rolls 596-97.

rear. It appears that all six of Washington County's pre-Civil War Episcopal parish churches (excluding the College of St. James) were built with galleries or added them. The evidence for these structures varies from church to church. Three churches responded to an 1844 survey from the bishop that included a question about accommodation for "servants and free colored people." St. John's, with a recently renovated church building, reported that its black attendees sat in a gallery that held "60 to 80" persons. St. Thomas' reported that it provided "part of the gallery" for the same population. St. Andrew's, which has a balcony at the rear today, responded with a laconic "none" to the question about accommodation.[45] At St. Paul's the pre-Civil War building, begun in 1819 and consecrated 1831, no longer stands, but was described as having galleries around three sides of the interior; these probably were or included a segregated area for slaves.[46] St. Luke's was built in 1839, apparently with a rear gallery that is now gone.[47] And at St. Mark's, the church plans were specifically amended in 1849 to include a balcony, ten feet deep, "with appropriate benches."[48] In all these cases, the builders were participating in a largely nineteenth-century trend; before this, in southern churches, slaves had more often sat in a designated section on the ground floor, or with their masters' families.[49]

Thus the normal, perhaps universal, experience for blacks who attended Episcopal churches in Washington County was that they sat in balconies at the rear of the church. Here they were together with other African Americans and separated from white worshipers, as described above by ex-slave Marshall. Depending on

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[45] Baltimore, Diocesan Archives, Bishop Whittingham's Questionnaire, 188, 190, 193; Trimble, *History of St. John's*, 18, 28-29 (for the 1843 renovation of the 1823 building). St. John's 1797 building also had a balcony. The current rector of St. Andrew's believes its balcony to be original (Rev. Steven L. McCarty, personal communication, 11 June 2014). St. Andrew's was badly damaged in the Civil War and repaired afterwards; Julianne Mueller, Inventory of Historic Properties Report WA-V-314 (Maryland Historical Trust, 1992), 1.

[46] *Convention Journal*, 1832, 8; Trimble, *History of St. Paul's*, 4-5.

[47] St. Luke's, Brownsville, website, www.stluke.ang-md.org/History.html; personal communication, Rev. Charles Holder, 17 November 2013.

[48] Boonsboro, St. Mark's Vestry Minute Book 1849-91, 6.

[49] Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (New Haven and London, 1997), 218; Harvey, *Through the Storm*, 50.

the specific arrangements, they might be able to see the white congregation; they could see the priest in the chancel and pulpit. They could see—but, with rare exceptions, they could not participate in—holy communion. They could hear everything that happened in the service, and they could be heard; normally the acoustics in the churches were quite good. And conversely those sitting in the balcony could not be seen very well by those below, so they were to some degree freed from supervision. (In fact, they looked over—literally "supervised"—the white congregation below.) Without a doubt, segregation of black worshipers both was intended and functioned as a means of subordination; this was recognized at the time and is clear to scholars and lay observers today.[50] But the slave gallery had another aspect too. The worshipers in the balcony formed a separate community, a congregation within and apart from the larger congregation. Social and even kinship bonds could develop at church, as individuals who rarely or never saw each other during the week spent time together at church. In western Maryland, this was especially important. The lack of large plantations and prevalence of small slaveholdings—most with fewer than six slaves—meant that church was one of the few occasions when enslaved people could meet in larger numbers. In many cases, it provided members of the same family (including spouses), who were spread across multiple farms, with a chance to be together. Thus, the slave balcony played a crucial role in fostering black community and eventually, because this was a worship space, it may even have contributed to the formation of African-American churches.[51]

Services with whites below and blacks in the balcony were not the only form of worship that Washington County African Americans were offered by local Episcopal churches, however. Throughout the slavery era, local priests and congregations also provided worship services exclusively for blacks. Thus at the Antietam Iron Works mission, which was partly under the direction of St. Paul's,

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[50] E.g., Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York, 1980), 269-70.

[51] Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 26; Boles, *Masters and Slaves*, 13; Dvorak, "After Apocalypse, Moses," 174; Mutti Burke, *On Slavery's Border*, 249.

"a coloured congregation" that included slaves was among the activities that had "regularly been attended to" in 1829-30.[52] In 1840, even before the Episcopal church building was finished at Clear Spring, the rector of St. Andrew's reported that he "usually officiates every other Sunday three times, (including an afternoon service for the colored people,) in the Methodist Episcopal Church."[53] This separate Sunday service was still (or again) being held "occasionally" in 1848.[54] Meanwhile St. John's reported in 1842 that a "weekly service is held in the Church in the fall and winter months, for the special benefit and instruction of the colored population."[55] In July 1859, a local mission priest wrote to the bishop, "At present I devote [one day a month] to the coloured people, a large number of whom are in the habit of attending our service."[56] In a period when local clergy regarded parts of Washington County as "yet a mere Missionary field,"[57] the county's black population, both slave and free, was regarded as a special population in need of targeted mission work.

When the bishop of Maryland traveled through his diocese, he sometimes preached separate public sermons for black Episcopalians. This was particularly true in the very early years of Bishop Whittingham's episcopate, and in the southern and eastern parts of the state (where the slave population was much denser).[58] In western Maryland, the bishop may not have felt that the African-American population was large enough to warrant separate public sermons on his part. He did, however, very occasionally worship with slaves in private homes locally. As seen above, he held prayers with the slaves at the Tilghman estate in 1841. During a trip to Washington County the previous November, he had

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[52] *Convention Journal*, 1830, 42. That the mission was not exclusively Episcopalian is clear from Henry, *From Slavery to Salvation*, 25-28, 80-83. An Antietam mission was founded before 1823; it later "languished" for a while and then was revived c. 1852; *Convention Journal*, 1853, 93.

[53] *Convention Journal*, 1840, 53.

[54] *Convention Journal*, 1848, 94.

[55] *Convention Journal*, 1842, 112.

[56] Baltimore, Diocesan Archives, Rev. J. H. Kehler letter to Bishop Whittingham, 15 July 1859.

[57] *Convention Journal*, 1858, 68.

[58] *Convention Journal*, 1841, 41-42.

visited a "severely ill" white woman at her home and "confirmed her, her two daughters, and her servant"; the servant was an enslaved woman named Eve who became a communicant at St. Thomas'.[59] In May 1843, the bishop and the rector of St. John's, Hagerstown, read Evening Prayer in the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in Hagerstown, apparently as an attempt at outreach to the black community.[60] In October of the same year, at a private home just to the east of Washington County, the bishop "expounded" on a text from Philippians and then "addressed the servants."[61]

In contrast to these occasions where the white preacher met with a black congregation, some Episcopal services were explicitly mixed, even when the emphasis was on African Americans. A striking example is the wedding of a free black couple at St. John's in 1850, as described in a Hagerstown newspaper: "Large Wedding. On Thursday evening last, in the Episcopal Church by the Rev. Mr. Lyman, Mr. John Wagoner, to Miss Emily Guynn, both coloured. This wedding was attended with great pomp and display. Three hundred persons of both colours, witnessed the solemn ceremony. May joy attend them."[62] One wonders, but cannot know, just who attended this event and what the seating arrangements were.

PREACHING

While other aspects of the worship service let slaves hear the full and potentially liberating message of Christianity, sermons that white clergy preached to slaves often took the opposite approach, emphasizing and endorsing their unfree condition. Although almost no evidence survives to indicate the content of Episcopal

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[59] Baltimore, Diocesan Archives, Bishop's Whittingham's Personal Journal, 1840, 5, and Whittingham's Confirmation Register, 1840; Hancock, St. Thomas', Parish Register 1, 51, 80, 84; *Convention Journal*, 1841, 18; 1840 Census, Hancock, MD, 185, NARA microfilm M704, roll 171.

[60] Baltimore, Diocesan Archives, Bishop's Whittingham's Personal Journal, 1843, 22, Tues. 16 May 1843.

[61] Ibid., 79, Sat. 28 Oct. 1843.

[62] *The Weekly Casket*, 12 Jan. 1850, online at whilbr.org.

preaching to slaves in Washington County, there is information about such sermons elsewhere in Maryland. One widely circulated sermon series was preached by the Rev. Thomas Bacon in eastern Maryland, published in 1743, and then reprinted in Virginia around 1813 and thus available as a model throughout the early nineteenth century. Bacon addressed four of his sermons to masters and two to slaves; the tone of the latter is summarized in the preface, where he advises readers that "the direct tendency of the Gospel-doctrine is, to make their negroes the better servants, in proportion as they become better christians."[63] Both of Bacon's sermons addressed to slaves took as their text Ephesians 6:8 ("Knowing, that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free"), and each ran to more than 24 printed pages. He included uplifting and egalitarian messages: for example, "Believe me, my black brethren and sisters, there was not a single drop of [Christ's] precious blood spilled, in which the poorest and meanest of you hath not as great a share, as the richest and most powerful person upon the face of the earth."[64] But he also unconditionally endorsed the slaves' status, stating for instance that "what fault you are guilty of towards your masters and mistresses are faults done against God himself, who hath set your masters and mistresses over you, in his own stead, and expects that you would do for them, just as you would do for him."[65] As the nineteenth century progressed, and particularly after Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831, white proselytizing to slaves across the South focused more on behavioral control, and preaching played an important role in this trend.[66]

It seems likely that preaching in Washington County followed the same pattern. A white Methodist minister, Jacob Gruber,

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[63] Thomas Bacon, *Sermons Addressed to Masters and Servants, and Published in the Year 1743...*, ed. William Meade (Winchester, VA: n.d.), 85; for further discussion of this work, see Klein and Smith, "Racism in the Anglican and Episcopal Church of Maryland."

[64] Bacon, *Sermons*, 94.

[65] Ibid., 104.

[66] Harvey, *Through the Storm*, 50; Perdue et al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 116, 183, 202, 322.

preached against slavery at a mixed-race camp meeting south of Hagerstown in 1818; he was arrested and tried for sedition and inciting slave rebellion, though he was acquitted.[67] James Pennington recalled having heard two sermons in his life before he escaped from slavery at Rockland in 1828, "but had heard no mention in them of Christ, or the way of life by Him."[68] Similarly, George Ross, who fled from slavery in Hagerstown to freedom in Canada around 1850, told an interviewer in 1863, "The religious feeling is used to induce the slaves to feel that they owe a duty to their masters & mistresses, more than to their great Maker above. Certain parts of the Scripture, about obeying masters and mistresses, they quote very much, but not in the right light."[69] Together such testimony suggests that over time—or in the hands of most white ministers—preaching shifted its focus, from the multiple themes developed by Bacon to the single blunt message that slaves must conform to standards of behavior. Slave recollections also demonstrate that whatever the effect of these sermons in reinforcing slave subservience, in the long term such preaching did nothing to nurture African Americans' loyalty to the white churches where they heard this message.[70]

The only direct evidence about the content of Episcopal sermons preached to black congregations in Washington County comes from the register of St. Thomas', Hancock, where the Rev. Alexander Berger made brief notes about many of the funerals he conducted. A few of these were African-American burials. On June 18, 1849, he buried "Sally (colored) servant of Mr. John Vanhorn, aged about eighty six . . . in the village grave yard. Preached to the servants on the occasion in the Church from Gen. 3:19 last clause ['for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return'] ex. tem. on the evening of the 24th inst." For the funeral of fourteen-year-old Kitty, the rector made only "some ex. tem. remarks on the occasion." On March 16 of the following

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[67] Henry, *From Slavery to Salvation*, 16, 32, 75, 78; Brand W. Eaton, "Jacob Gruber's 1818 Campmeeting Sermon," *Methodist History* 37 (1999): 242-43.

[68] Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, 43-44.

[69] *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies*, ed. John W. Blassingame (Baton Rouge and London, 1977), 407.

[70] Perdue et al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 183, 322.

year, the rector again preached extemporaneously at the funeral of twenty-two-year-old Sarah Ann Grey, this time on the longer text of John 11:23-26 (Jesus speaking with Martha after the death of Lazarus).[71] This rector used both of these texts, as well as similar ones and *ex tempore* remarks, at white funerals as well.[72] During funerals, then, black and white congregations heard the same message at St. Thomas'.

RECORD-KEEPING

Before moving more deeply into the ways in which African Americans participated in local congregations, in particular through the sacraments, it would be useful to examine how such activities were recorded. Records kept by parishes reflected white attitudes about race in numerous ways. First is the fact that whiteness was assumed, whereas people of color were labeled as such. The practice of racial distinction was encouraged, and perhaps caused, by the diocese of Maryland, which from 1834 onward asked that annual parochial reports of numbers of communicants, baptisms, and so on be broken down as "white" and "colored."[73] Thus the rector may have felt that he needed to make note of race as he kept his register. Yet there was considerable variation in actual record-keeping practice, beginning with vocabulary. The term "slave," while used by a few rectors, was less common than "servant," which was standard in most registers. (That "servant" denoted a slave is evident from such usages as "infant servant of."[74]) The word "colored" was also common, for both slaves and free blacks; the latter are sometimes noted as free. Beyond this basic terminology, though, the way registers were written is interesting in other respects. Almost universally, for example, registers named slaveholders when speaking of either "slaves" or "servants"; indeed, owners were so privileged in some registers that their names were often recorded when

[71] Hancock, St. Thomas' Register 1, 139.
[72] Ibid., 137.
[73] *Convention Journal*, 1834, 55 (appendix).
[74] Annapolis, Maryland State Archives (MSA), SC 2634, M 855-1, 31, 36.

a slave child was being baptized, even if parents' names were not.[75] Frequently African Americans appear in the register by first names only (even though they often had surnames); but, on the other hand, there are instances where a slave appears in local secular records with only a first name, whereas the church record gives him or her a surname.[76] At the other end of the spectrum is the register shared by St. Luke's, Brownsville, and St. Mark's, Petersville (in neighboring Frederick County), where a rector in the 1850s used almost no names of blacks, writing instead "a colored child," "a servant woman," and so on.[77] Certain rectors of St. Thomas', Hancock, kept separate sections of the register for black baptisms, marriages, and burials, so that African Americans were physically segregated on paper as well as in the church.[78] Consistently across all the Washington County parish registers blacks received virtually no titles of respect ("Mr.," "Mrs.," or "Miss"), unlike their white counterparts. A related practice unique to the Hancock register, though common in secular society, was the occasional use of the titles "Aunt" and "Uncle" before African-American names: "Aunt Eavy (colored woman), Unkle Allen (ditto) [sic]."[79] Unlike "Mr." and "Mrs.," these race-specific titles (when used by whites who were not related to the blacks in question), suggest difference, over-familiarity, and white ability to intrude into the black family sphere. Finally, on the rare occasions when a black individual was praised in the register, the language expressed lower status than that used for whites: Richard Waters, who died in 1867, was described as "(colored) . . . a very respectable old man," whereas a white man whose

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[75] Hancock, St. Thomas' Register 1, 20-21, 28; Brunswick, Petersville-Brownsville Register, 24.

[76] E.g., William Thompson and Ellen Thompson, identified only by first names in their master's will, but with surnames in the parish register: Hagerstown, Washington County Courthouse, Register of Wills, Book E, 148; Boonsboro, St. Mark's Register 1849-98, 68.

[77] Brunswick, Petersville-Brownsville Register, 71-73.

[78] Hancock, St. Thomas' Register 1, 17, 20-21, 51, 100-1, 109-11, 136.

[79] Ibid., 80. This register also has the only instance of "Miss" used for a "colored" woman (and possibly "Mrs." for another woman) being baptized; 28.

burial was noted on the same page of the St. Thomas' register was "a Lutheran and a very worthy citizen."[80] Thus, in multiple ways, these records emphasize the subordinate place of African Americans in the church. Even though the registers recorded events that were essentially the same for blacks and whites (baptism, marriage, confirmation, burial), the mode of record-keeping managed to mirror very clearly the inferior status of slaves and free blacks in the larger society.

BAPTISM

African Americans participated most actively in church life when they partook of the sacraments. Of these, baptism held the widest appeal—and perhaps the most profound religious meaning—for slaves across the South, as it resonated with African religious traditions.[81] As one would expect, baptismal records provide the most numerous appearances of African-Americans in Washington County's Episcopal churches. The first recorded black baptisms were in 1835-36, when St. Thomas', Hancock, reported to the diocese seven white and nine black baptisms. Over the next few years this church and St. John's, Hagerstown, between them reported a few black baptisms most years, and then a noticeable increase after 1841. The number throughout the county also rose in the 1840s. Certainly there were, by now, more Episcopal churches in the county, but other factors seem also to have been at work: Bishop Whittingham's address to the 1841 diocesan convention, urging more active mission work among slaves; the same bishop's interest in record-keeping (and hence a greater number of parishes reporting annual statistics to the diocese); the arrival of new priests in several Washington County parishes; and the substantial growth of the county's black (and especially, in the 1840s, its free black) population

[80] Hancock, St. Thomas' Register 1, 157.

[81] Harvey, *Through the Storm*, 53; Hood, "From a Headstart to a Deadstart," 283, 288-89; Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 123; Erskine, *Plantation Church*, 1, 32-33.

since 1800.[82] Clergy unaffiliated with a church also baptized. Thus, for example, a teacher at the College of St. James reported in 1860, "Since my ordination to the Diaconate, I have . . . administered the sacrament of Baptism on 1 occasion to two colored Infants."[83] From 1835 to 1840 the county's Episcopal clergy together recorded five African-American baptisms per year on average, but in the 1840s that figure tripled to fifteen per year. These numbers represented seventeen percent of all recorded Episcopal baptisms in the county in the first period and twenty-eight percent in the second.[84] Overall, the immediate impression of an increasing black presence in the local Episcopal churches seems inescapable.

It is hard to tell, from the records, who usually brought slave children to be baptized. Only the St. Mark's register regularly names sponsors for African-American baptisms; reading this source is complicated by the fact that it does not distinguish between baptisms of slaves and free blacks. But individual cases point up the role of mothers and of whites in both situations. Abraham and Elizabeth Howard were slaves belonging to two different slaveholders; Elizabeth was enslaved to the Donnellys, one of the founding families of St. Mark's. Elizabeth's daughters, three-year-old Charity and one-year-old Martha, were baptized at St. Mark's in September 1849 with Mrs. Donnelly and one of her daughters standing as sponsors, respectively.[85] A few weeks later John Henry Hawkins, one-year-old son of John and Louisa Hawkins, "colored" and probably slaves, was baptized with his mother alone as sponsor.[86] Charles and Rachel

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[82] From a black population of 1,286 slaves and 64 free persons in 1790, the numbers of both slaves and free rose each decade to 2,909 slaves and 1,082 free in 1830. In 1840 the number of slaves dropped slightly, to 2,546, but the number of free blacks rose dramatically, to 1,580, with the total black population reaching its nineteenth-century peak. Sometime in the 1840s, the African American population began to decrease very slightly, while slave numbers dropped precipitously. In 1850, there were 2,090 slaves and 1,828 free blacks. In 1860 both numbers were down, to 1,435 slaves and 1,677 free. Appenzellar, "Slavery in Washington County," xvi.

[83] *Convention Journal*, 1860, 88.

[84] *Convention Journal*, 1835-49, *passim*; and parish registers, *passim*.

[85] Hagerstown, Washington County Historical Society, Drawer 3, S85; Boonsboro, St. Mark's Parish Register 1849-98, 47.

[86] Boonsboro, St. Mark's Parish Register 1849-98, 47. The Hawkins family does not appear in the 1850 census, suggesting that they were not free.

Hinton were free blacks who lived near St. Mark's; mother Rachel and her three small children were baptized together in 1860 by a priest who worked at the College of St. James, with no sponsor named. When a fourth Hinton child was baptized in December 1863, the rector of St. Mark's officiated and Mrs. Thomas Maddox, wife of one of the (white) founding members who was a close neighbor and employer of the Hintons, was sponsor. The following month her husband, Dr. Thomas Maddox, stood as sponsor for William Solomon, "colored," son of free black laborers Charles and Marian Solomon, both of whom also worked for the Maddoxes.[87] When the rector of St. Luke's baptized his slave Jane's daughter Sylvia in 1860, Jane herself and her mistress, the rector's wife, were the sponsors.[88] The St. Luke's register also records the baptism of nine-month-old John Thomas, "servant of Captain Boteler," on 30 April 1864, and his burial the following day—clearly a case of baptism *in extremis*.[89] In none of these cases was the black father a sponsor.

Sometimes the evidence suggests that the paternalistic role of slaveholders in baptism may have been coercive. On 22 November 1842 at St. John's in Hagerstown, seventeen slaves belonging to "Colonel" John R. Dall were baptized. Three could be considered young women (Rachel, twenty-three; Violet, seventeen; Miranda, sixteen); all the rest were girls and boys aged twelve and under. Two years later, on a single day in May 1844, another seven slaves belonging to Dall were baptized, five of them children and two with no ages given.[90] These striking scenes may have been caused in part by distance and infrequent attendance: the Dall estate was located some seven miles from town. But there seems to be more to this story. Historian Randall Miller has argued that baptism of slaves was "common among both Catholics and Protestants partly because baptisms did not interrupt plantation rhythms and they allowed

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[87] Ibid., 50-51; 1860 Census, Washington County, MD, Tilmington District, 474, NARA microfilm M653, roll 483; Mount Pleasant, SC, Maddox Family Papers, Ledger 1857-63, 11, 61, 110, 114.

[88] Brunswick, Petersville-Brownsville Register, 22. This baptism took place at the rector's other church, St. Mark's, Petersville, in neighboring Frederick County.

[89] Brunswick, Petersville-Brownsville Register, 39.

[90] Annapolis, MSA, SC 2634, M 855-1, 29-30, 32-33.

masters to believe that they were fulfilling their religious obligations to the slaves."[91] This may help to explain the Dall case. Perhaps priestly suasion resulted in the mass baptisms, as this master yielded to pressure and rounded up all the young slaves he could find.

At times a slave child was baptized in a private home when the master's own child was christened, as, for example, in May 1853, when a bishop visiting Hancock "baptized at the house of Charles A. Swan . . . *Charles Alexander Swan*, infant son of Charles and Louisa Swan age 15 months. At the same time and place, *Ann*, servant child of Charles and Louisa Swan (parents, Banard[?] and Mary Read) age 1 year."[92] Whether the second baptism was a planned item on the day's agenda or a spontaneous addition is impossible to tell from the record.

Historians have speculated that part of the appeal of the Baptist church to African Americans was its practice of baptism by full immersion, which resonated with African religious traditions. Sometimes southern Episcopalians, too, allowed baptism by "dunking," especially for slaves.[93] Washington County Episcopal records say little about the means of baptism. Many black baptisms did take place in church buildings, and thus could not have been immersions. But immersion was not unknown to local Episcopalians. On 20 May 1860, the rector of St. Luke's baptized the daughter of two white parishioners "in the millrace above Brownsville, Washington Co. Md."[94] Given the extremely variable nature of register entries for the Episcopal churches in this sample, the possibility cannot be ruled out that other baptisms, including those of some slaves, took place in local creeks and ponds, and that the priests simply did not record that information.

CONFIRMATION AND COMMUNION

Whereas baptism was open to all, few black Episcopalians achieved confirmation and thus became eligible to receive

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[91] Miller, "Slaves and Southern Catholicism," 131.
[92] Hancock, St. Thomas' Parish Register 1, 29.
[93] Hood, "From a Headstart to a Deadstart," 289; Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 123.
[94] Brunswick, Petersville-Brownsville Register, 11.

communion. By 1838, St. John's in Hagerstown counted ten blacks in a total of ninety-seven communicants, but this was the largest such group in the county throughout the nineteenth century.[95] From 1841 through the Civil War, a twenty-three-year period for which confirmation records seem to be complete, only twenty-one African Americans were confirmed in Washington County, none of them after 1858.[96] Whites may well have been less eager to confirm blacks, especially slaves, than to baptize them, since confirmation admitted the believer to fuller membership and, through communion, to greater participation in worship. It is probably significant that nine of the twenty-one black confirmands can be identified as free, probably free, or free a few years later, and that several more shared the surnames of local free black families.[97] Whether or not whites actively or passively discouraged blacks, especially slaves, from seeking confirmation, it did present a higher hurdle for the confirmand, who had to learn the catechism and be publicly examined. Thus it may have been an unattainable goal for the illiterate.

Lists of communicants throughout the antebellum period naturally reflect the small numbers of blacks confirmed. Even though, according to historian Blake Touchstone, Episcopalians were of all nineteenth-century Southern denominations "the ones most accustomed to offering bread and wine to large numbers of blacks,"[98] few African Americans received communion in

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[95] *Convention Journal*, 1838, 46; these ten black parishioners appear to have been confirmed in 1835-36.

[96] *Convention Journal*, 1841-65, *passim*; Annapolis, MSA, SC 2634, M 855-1, 121-32; Hancock, St. Thomas' Register 1, p. 52; Baltimore, Maryland Diocesan Archives, Bishop Whittingham's Register of Confirmations, *passim*.

[97] Although roughly half the black population of Washington County blacks was free, the majority of blacks found in Episcopal parish registers overall appear to be enslaved. The free confirmands were Samuel Cole, Emily Gwynne, Esther Handy, Polly Hatton, John and Hannah Jackson, Patience Snowden, and Eliza Williams at St. John's; and Margaret Amelia Williams at St. Paul's. Jerry M. Hynson, *Free African-Americans of Maryland, 1832* (Westminster, MD, 2007), 142; 1840 Census, Washington County, MD, Hagerstown District, pp. 89, 93, 106, 108, NARA microfilm M704, roll 171; 1850 Census, Frederick County, MD, District 8, 434B, NARA microfilm M432, roll 293; 1860 Census, Washington County, MD, Boonsboro District, 698, NARA microfilm M653, roll 483; *The Weekly Casket*, 12 January 1850, online at whilbr.org.

[98] Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 123-24.

Washington County's Episcopal churches. But eligible blacks did exercise their right to receive communion. On a few special occasions the number of whites and blacks partaking of the sacrament was recorded by the bishop, providing a snapshot, as it were, of the racial makeup of the congregation on that day. Thus at St. Paul's, Sharpsburg, on 15 July 1840, the bishop gave communion to fourteen white women, five white men, one black man, and one black woman.[99] On 5 November of the same year, Thanksgiving Day, he celebrated communion at St. John's in Hagerstown, noting that there were four black communicants.[100] On 8 March 1846, again at Hagerstown, the bishop administered communion to "about 120 people, including . . . 6 blacks (1 male)." On 4 August of that year he was at St. Thomas' in Hancock, giving communion to a congregation he described as "34 female (2 colored), 11 male (1 colored)."[101] In October 1852 he was again at St. Thomas', where he noted "colored 1 male 2 female" among the communicants.[102] Since communicant status had to be exercised in order not to lapse, it is a safe assumption that those who received the Eucharist from the bishop were regular communicants.

Although there is no local evidence as to how the Eucharist was administered to black parishioners, the evidence from elsewhere, both North and South, indicates that they came to the communion rail last, after the white communicants.[103] The apparent ease with which Bishop Whittingham was able to record numbers of black communicants during his visits to Washington County churches supports the likelihood that they communed in a distinct group.

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[99] Baltimore, Diocesan Archives, Whittingham's Personal Journal, entry for 15 July 1840.

[100] Ibid., 1840, 5.

[101] Ibid., 1846, 71-72, 127.

[102] Ibid., 1851, 121-22.

[103] J. Carleton Hayden, "After the War: The Mission and Growth of the Episcopal Church among Blacks in the South, 1865-1877," *The Historical Magazine of the Episcopal Church* 42 (1973): 405, 408; Miller, "Slaves and Southern Catholicism," 135; "Prejudice in the Church," *The Colored American*, 11 March 1837; "Planters and Slave Religion," 123-24.

MARRIAGE

Of all the rites of the church, a church wedding was the one that potentially offered blacks the most tangible benefit. As property, slaves had no legal standing to enter into contracts, including marriage contracts, and so their marriages had no standing in law.[104] Across the South, slave marriages were routinely broken up at the whim of a master, who could choose to sell one spouse (or one or more children) and let him or her be removed from the neighborhood, county, or state. In places like Washington County, where most slaveholdings were small, the great majority of slave marriages were between partners who belonged to two different masters, thus increasing both the challenges of family life and the risk of losing a spouse to sale or migration.[105] Virginia ex-slave Matthew Jarrett recognized the impermanence of traditional slave weddings, often performed by the slaveholder: "We slaves knowed that them words wasn't bindin'. Don't mean nothin' lessen you say 'What God done jined, cain't no man pull asunder.' But dey never would say dat. Jus' say, 'Now you married.'"[106] Implicit in this ex-slave's recollection is the assumption that a wedding performed according to the rites of the church ("What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder") *would* be "binding": that its indissolubility would be recognized by masters as well as by the spouses themselves. In fact the Episcopal bishop of South Carolina argued in the 1850s, albeit unsuccessfully, that slave marriages should officially be treated as sacred.[107]

Despite the small size of the sample, the Washington County records seem to provide some support for the idea that church weddings of blacks were taken seriously by whites. At St. Thomas', Hancock, twenty African-American marriages were recorded between 1841 and 1851—more than at any other Episcopal church in the county before Emancipation. Ten of the forty "colored"

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[104] Dusinberre, *Strategies for Survival*, 178-79.
[105] Fields, *Slavery and Freedom*, 24-28.
[106] Perdue et al., *Weevils in the Wheat*, 158.
[107] Dorn, *Challenges on the Emmaus Road*, 35.

individuals being married were described as free, twenty-four were described as "servants" (i.e., slaves) belonging to named slaveholders, and only three couples were not labeled with their free or slave status. At St. Thomas's, so-called "abroad" marriages prevailed: eight of the twenty marriages were between slaves belonging to two different masters, and another eight were between one free and one slave partner. Only one wedding explicitly involved two free black partners.[108] Thus in almost all of these cases the possibility existed that one spouse might be sold away from the other. And indeed the church wedding may have been some protection against such separation. In several cases there is evidence that the marriage lasted until Emancipation. Nelson Proctor, a free man, married a slave named Eliza Job in 1842; they were still together in Hancock in 1870. Similarly, freeman Henry Long married a slave named Ann Maria in 1851; in 1870 they and their seven children were resident in Hancock.[109] John Swan and Mary Jane Younker, slaves belonging to different owners, married in 1850 and were living with their seven children in Hancock in 1880.[110] Slaves Osburn and Evaline, who married in 1841, may be identifiable as Osburn and "Caroline" Duckett, living in Hancock in 1870.[111] In another case time overtook a spouse before Emancipation: "Aunt Eve," who married "Uncle Allen" at St. Thomas' in 1846 (when she was probably still a slave), died in 1850.[112] But in no case has evidence yet emerged that slaves who married in the Episcopal Church in this county were then separated by sale or by their masters' moving away. However tenuously, this suggests that local Episcopal slaveholders did respect black

[108] Hancock, St. Thomas' Register 1, 109-13. The St. John's register contains thirteen African-American marriages in the years 1842-50, but these individuals have proved more difficult to trace, in part because the register provides less information about them; Annapolis, MSA, SC 2634, M 855-1 (St. John's Parish Register 1816-93), 213-18.

[109] Hancock, St. Thomas' Register 1, 109, 113; 1870 Census, Washington County, MD, District 5 and Hancock District, 204 B and 218A, NARA microfilm M593, roll 596.

[110] Hancock, St. Thomas' Register 1, 113; 1880 Census, Washington County, MD, Hancock District, 131B, NARA microfilm T9, roll 516.

[111] Hancock, St. Thomas' Register 1, 109; 1870 Census, Washington County, MD, Hancock District, 216B, NARA microfilm M593, roll 596.

[112] Hancock, St. Thomas' Register 1, 111, 150.

marriages performed in the church. Perhaps, also, regular church attendance and participation in the same church rites and sacraments as whites, along with the context of religion and the possible advocacy of priests, helped present African Americans to their masters as more multifaceted and sympathetic individuals, and thus helped to develop some increased advantages for the slaves, as white slaveholders and neighbors became more willing to do favors for and grant benefits to the black individuals they knew from church, or were simply less likely to do them active harm.

One instance at the College of St. James provides an extraordinary glimpse of the pastoral response to a mariage torn apart by slavery. Margaret, an apparently free African-American woman, was employed at the college. Her enslaved husband, B. Green, was sold away from the area in about 1854; three years later Green sent Margaret a letter saying he had taken a new partner. Margaret then married a man named Collins, a waiter at the college. Both were Episcopal communicants, but they were married by a black minister while away "on vacation." Collins died in 1858; in 1861 Margaret wished to remarry again, this time in the church. Her priest and employer, John Kerfoot, was sympathetic to her situation and believed the church should grant her a divorce (from Green, her first husband, on the grounds of his "adultery"), since the state would not do so, because it did not recognize her ability to marry at all. Kerfoot wrote to Bishop Whittingham:

> I have told Margaret . . . that unless I can get her a legal [i.e., a church-sanctioned] divorce I will not officiate. My own conscience would hesitate unless I had episcopal recognition of what *I* believe does exist ever since the man [Green] took another woman—a divorce *ipso facto* by the law and in the eye of Christ. I advise Margaret to wait, but I have not felt authorized to press on her conscience the doctrine that this proposed [third] union would be unlawful and sinful, when all that is lacking is the *civil* act.[113]

[113] Baltimore, Diocesan Archives, J. B. Kerfoot letter to W. R. Whittingham, 27 March 1861. I thank the anonymous reviewer for *Anglican & Episcopal History* for drawing my attention to this case.

Kerfoot's repeated applications to the bishop on Margaret's behalf, however, proved fruitless, as Whittingham replied each time that Margaret had "no course but that of chaste widowhood."[114] Ironically, Margaret found her priest—himself a slaveholder—sensitive to some of the particular hardships facing enslaved persons, but her bishop much less so. If she did indeed remarry, she must have done so outside the Episcopal Church.

After the Civil War, many ex-slaves wanted or needed to prove that they had been married, especially if they were claiming benefits owed to the survivors of United States Colored Troops (USCT) who had fought in the war. Having a parish register record of one's marriage would then be of quantifiable value. This was the case, however, only if the record had actually been made, and records at several of the Washington County churches seem on their face to be incomplete. Some African-American couples later said they had been married in local Episcopal churches where there is no such record. When applying for a pension in 1892, USCT veteran Robert Moxley said there might be a record of his 1849 marriage to Eliza Grove "in [the] Episcopal Church at Hagerstown, Md."[115] And a granddaughter of Isaac and Letty Ann Warfield stated, in an oral history recorded in the 1970s, that the Warfields had been married at St. Mark's, Lappans, where they are indeed buried.[116] In neither case does such a record survive in the parish register. On the other hand, a connection to the Episcopal Church did not mean that slaves who desired marriage by a clergyman would necessarily be married in the Episcopal Church. Mary Cammelville or Campbell, enslaved just a mile from St. Mark's on the Tilghman estate at Rockland, was married to freeman Daniel Coon by the Rev. John Lanehan, apparently a traveling preacher.[117]

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[114] Baltimore, Diocesan Archives, J. B. Kerfoot letter to W. R. Whittingham, 27 March 1861; William Francis Brand, *Life of William Rollinson Whittingham, Fourth Bishop of Maryland* (New York, 1883), 102-3.

[115] MSA, SC 4126-1-499-0005, online at mdhistory.net.

[116] Letitia Comer, interviewed by Marguerite Kelsh Doleman, n.d., Doleman Black Heritage Museum, http://archives.dolemanblackheritagemuseum.org/documents/Family-Papers-Warfield-Allen-Dolemam.pdf.

[117] MSA SC 4126-1-488-0013, -0014, online at mdhistory.net.

What were church weddings of African Americans like? When a Hagerstown newspaper described the 1850 wedding of free blacks John Wagoner and Emily Guynn at St. John's, it mentioned the "great pomp and display" as well as the three hundred guests "of both colours."[118] An occasion that could inspire such a description must have been quite impressive; in this case the families probably spent lavishly on clothes and other accoutrements. In most cases, though, this would not have been possible. Across the South, slaveholders might provide slave brides and grooms with secondhand wedding clothes and help them prepare for the ceremony, especially when the slaves were well known to the owners.[119] Given the small-scale slave holdings of Washington County and the formality of Episcopal services, it is likely that the latter pattern was typical of slave weddings that took place in local Episcopal churches.

BURIAL

Most rural slaves, like many slaveholders, were buried on farms, in the small family graveyards that dot the Washington County countryside. In 1814 two local white farmers took out a newspaper ad complaining that "citizens of Hagers-town and its vicinity" were burying slaves in these men's fields.[120] A white writer who grew up locally remembered two mulatto slave girls, Lucy and Mary, who were cherished by their owners but died around 1861 and "were quietly laid away in one corner of a field kept for that purpose."[121] Clergy sometimes officiated at these burials on private land. For example, the St. Mark's register records that eighty-year-old Jerry, a slave belonging to John Dall, was buried on the latter's estate in 1850; three years later the register notes the burial of seventeen-year-old Jane, belonging

[118] *The Weekly Casket*, 12 January 1850, online at whilbr.org.
[119] Mutti Burke, *On Slavery's Border*, 205-6; Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York, 1976), 274.
[120] Maryland *Herald*, 23 March 1814, whilbr.org.
[121] Bingham, *Little Boy*, 37.

to a Dall relative, on the same property.[122] The Dall family had continued to worship at St. John's, Hagerstown, after the founding of St. Mark's in 1849,[123] but it is possible that slaves from Dallton attended the newer St. Mark's, which was much closer; the records are silent on whether Jerry and Jane were parishioners, and on who arranged for these burials. Other African American burials in the St. Mark's register took place variously at "the Methodist ground" in Hagerstown, the College of St. James, and the "Old Chapel Burial Ground." Unusually, St. Mark's has an identifiable Civil War-era African-American section in its graveyard, although only one surviving headstone in it (that of twelve-year-old Cornelius Johnson) is pre-emancipation in date. At least four other individuals who were born in slave times were buried in this section, between 1898 and 1930.[124]

Black funerals were held routinely at St. Thomas', Hancock, with burial usually in the "village grave yard", which lay adjacent to the parish churchyard. As noted above, the Rev. Alexander Berger recorded in the parish register brief descriptions of funerals where he officiated. Thus, for example, in October 1848, the rector "read the burial service in the burying ground at Hancock over the grave of a colored child called Molly Beall."[125] At some black funerals he made *ex tempore* remarks, either from a text or not. These addresses were delivered variously in the church, in the village graveyard next door, and on private land, and the texts selected were the same ones used at white funerals.[126]

At St. John's, Hagerstown, African-American funerals were recorded in large numbers in the early 1840s—when they made up nearly forty percent of the funerals in the parish register—and then in decreasing numbers over the next two decades (as the

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[122] Boonsboro, St. Mark's Parish Register 1849-98, 67; for links between the Dalls and the Andersons, Hagerstown, Maryland, St. John's Episcopal Church, cemetery records.

[123] Annapolis, MSA, SC 2634, M 855-1, 308.

[124] Boonsboro, St. Mark's Parish Register 1849-98, 67-69; Boonsboro, St. Mark's Parish Register 1893-1957, 100-04.

[125] Hancock, St. Thomas' Register 1, 137, 138-41.

[126] Ibid., 139-40.

slave population of the county fell too). When a burial place was noted, it was never the parish cemetery (the most frequent resting place for white parishioners), but instead the "cemetery of the Bethel meeting house," which was located about half a mile away on Bethel Street in Hagerstown, next to two black churches. At least one African-American member of St. John's, Jesse Gwynne (d. 1844), was buried at the large black cemetery (now lost) in Halfway, outside of Hagerstown.[127] Funerals were major occasions in the local black community; the Episcopal burial service probably made up only part of how each passing was marked.[128]

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Episcopal churches in Washington County also ran Sunday schools for children of both races, and sometimes for adults. Attendance statistics were not usually broken down by race, but occasional reports give a glimpse either of separate African American Sunday Schools or of such large numbers as to suggest separate classes. Thus, at St. John's in 1825, "Two Sunday schools have been put in operation . . . one for white children of both sexes, the other for colored females, children and adults. Unfavourable circumstances have occasioned a discontinuance of the former, but . . . [the] latter for colored females, has experienced no interruption, and promises to be productive of no little good."[129] In 1843 St. Thomas' reported that its Sunday School was attended by sixty white scholars and forty colored.[130] These two churches also had the largest numbers of black confirmands and communicants; their black Sunday Schools were probably the successful feeder programs that produced those results. Less

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[127] Annapolis, MSA, SC 2634, M 855-1, 352-64; Hagerstown, Washington County Free Library, Western Maryland Room, *Washington County Maryland, Cemetery Records*, vi: 1 (repaginated as 3); Western Maryland Room, Don Brown cemetery files: Box 1, "Hagerstown: West Bethel/Prospect," File 1, 2.

[128] Grivno, *Gleanings of Freedom*, 121; Henry, *From Slavery to Salvation*, 35.

[129] *Convention Journal*, 1825, 25.

[130] *Convention Journal*, 1843, 96

knowable are the outcomes of other local instructional programs. In 1860 a teacher at the College of St. James reported that he had been "holding a regular Sunday evening service for the colored persons of the College and in its neighborhood; Teachers, male 2, fem. 2; Scholars, male 10 female 7."[131] In 1863, a time when St. Paul's, Sharpsburg, was conducting all activities in private homes because of war damage to the church building, it reported having three Sunday school teachers and "Scholars, col[ored] at home, 5."[132] Across the county's churches, much more instruction of both slaves and free blacks probably went on than was recorded.

There is little specific information about what was taught in local Sunday schools. Many catechisms and other instructional books for young people were published in the nineteenth century, such as the 1838 volume entitled *Questions on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* that was given as a Christmas gift to a white student in the St. Mark's Sunday School in 1861.[133] Catechisms written especially for the instruction of slaves were very popular across the South; such volumes covered the fundamentals of the Christian faith and also dwelt at some length on the duties of servants to their masters.[134] In 1859 the monthly magazine *The Southern Episcopalian* published a seven-page "Plantation Catechism," written by an anonymous South Carolina priest who had "considerable experience in the instruction of negroes"; the editors recommended its use in teaching "the Gospel to our servants."[135] The catechism covered the basics of Christianity in simplified terms; the half page devoted to the fourth and fifth commandments was specific to slavery, stating a requirement to work for six days, declaring that "idling, and visiting about on the Sabbath

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[131] *Convention Journal*, 1860, 86.

[132] *Convention Journal*, 1863, 50

[133] Preserved at Boonsboro, St. Mark's Church, Lappans: *Questions on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (New York, 1838), inscribed "Samuel Maddox/ St. Mark's Sunday School/Christmas 1861."

[134] Hood, "From a Headstart," 280-81; Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 115; Charles C. Jones, *A Catechism of Scripture Doctrine and Practice, for Families and Sabbath Schools, Designed Also, for the Oral Instruction of Colored Persons*, 3rd edn. (Savannah, 1844).

[135] "A Plantation Catechism," *The Southern Episcopalian: A Monthly Periodical*, 7 (1859): 369-75, 381.

day" were forbidden, and explaining that God required the slave "to respect and obey my father and mother, my master and mistress, and every body else that has authority over me."[136] There is no evidence of the use of slave catechisms in Washington County, but catechisms in general were certainly used. No matter what books served as the basis for teaching, most religious teaching for African Americans had to be conducted orally, since most slaves could not read.

Washington County slaves were also given religious instruction by slaveholders at home. Mary Emma Williams, a young woman living with her parents near Williamsport, wrote in her diary in 1850: "Sabbath, [February] 17th, . . . I spent nearly all afternoon in my room except the time I was engaged teaching the servants." On other occasions she mentioned instructing the slave children on Sundays. Williams, while not Episcopalian, socialized with the Episcopalian Dall family, and it is likely that her practice of giving religious instruction to young slaves was shared by other local slaveholding women.[137] Informally, the Episcopal Church in the South recognized and encouraged such activities.[138]

INTERRACIAL RELATIONS IN THE CHURCH

Other than records of slaveholding, few traces remain of the relationships between individual black and white Episcopal church members, either in or outside of church. As seen above, slaveholders, especially mistresses, often served as sponsors when slaves were baptized, and white neighbors and employers did the same for free blacks. The idea of sponsorship is perhaps an apt metaphor for some other interactions that took place between white and black Episcopalians. It has been suggested above that African Americans who attended a white church increased the likelihood that they would be treated decently by white church

[136] Ibid., 373.

[137] Hagerstown, Washington County Historical Society, "Diaries" vertical file, typescript of the "Diary of Mary Emma Williams from Rose Mill Manor," 7, 13, 15, 31.

[138] *Journal of the Sixty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Richmond, 1860), 64-65.

members, because of their shared religious experience. The status conferred by a sacrament may also have given African Americans some benefits in their dealings with whites, most notably in protecting their marriages from being broken up.

The ultimate benefit that a slave might look for from a master or mistress was manumission, and in this regard there are some interesting cases among the black members of St. Mark's. Nine years after Jeremiah and Malinda James, described as "slaves of Mr. Booth," were married at St. Mark's in 1849, Malinda was freed by Margaret Booth. She went to live in Hagerstown with two of her children and another free black woman, although Jeremiah continued in slavery under George French, a local Booth relative. The James family eventually reunited after Emancipation.[139] Another example is that of Elizabeth, long enslaved to Daniel Donelly, one of the founders of St. Mark's. She had married Abraham Howard, who belonged to James Magruder, and as soon as the church was built in 1849 the Howards' two small daughters were baptized there. This event was followed in 1857 by Abraham's manumission and in 1858 by Elizabeth's (at the hands of Daniel Donelly's three daughters). The couple lived together in nearby Williamsport while their children apparently continued in slavery; after Emancipation the family was reunited.[140] Together with the next case, these make four instances of manumission in 1857-58 connected with St. Mark's. It seems likely that this was a cluster of actions in which people influenced each other to some extent.

A somewhat different dynamic may have been at work in the fourth case, that of Charles Hinton, enslaved by St. Mark's member Ezekiel Cheney. In 1857 Hinton purchased his freedom for $400, a sum which was advanced to him by Dr. Thomas Maddox, one of the pillars of the St. Mark's congregation, to be paid back

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[139] See note 2 above; and Mount Pleasant, SC, Maddox Family Papers, Ledger 1857-63, 56.

[140] Hagerstown, Washington County Historical Society, Drawer 3, S85; Boonsboro, St. Mark's Parish Register 1849-98, 46-47; Washington County Court Land Records, mdlandrec.net, MSA CE 18-8, Book IN 13, 192-93; Marsha Lynne Fuller, *African American Manumissions of Washington County, Maryland* (Westminster, MD, 2001), no. B143c; 1860 Census, Washington County, MD, Williamsport, 394, NARA microfilm M653, roll 483; 1870 Census, Cumberland County, PA, West Pennsboro, 553B, NARA microfilm M593, roll 1333.

over "one, two, or three years." Hinton worked for Maddox as a farmhand, at $10 a month, to pay off the price of his freedom; his wife Rachel, who was free, worked for Maddox "for 6 or 8 years" as a cook, for 75 cents a week (plus extra amounts when she cooked for the harvest), supporting the Hinton family. Maddox judged Rachel Hinton to be "a good cook, . . . polite, obliging, punctual."[141] The Hintons were also near neighbors to the Maddoxes. In 1860 Rachel and her three children were baptized at St. Mark's; in 1863 a fourth Hinton child was baptized there, with Mrs. Maddox serving as sponsor.[142] Clearly a close and cordial relationship had developed between this black family and their white employers, in which the religious element emerged later rather than at the beginning. The power dynamic, however, remained vastly unequal.

For some white Episcopalians, such as Thomas Maddox, deep religious convictions may have produced a tendency to treat African Americans relatively well. Though he owned four slaves in 1850 and five in 1860 (all women and children), he employed mostly free labor (both black and white) on his farm. Two of the casual laborers he employed most frequently were free blacks Charles and Marian Solomon; in 1863 Maddox sponsored their infant son William for baptism at St. Mark's. In June 1863 Maddox gave work to Warren Daniel, whom he identified as a "contraband," a slave fleeing from bondage during the upheaval of war.[143] At a time when some of his neighbors felt that too much was being done for blacks at the expense of whites,[144] Maddox, a man of strong religious principle, acted with compassion toward his African American neighbors. Yet Maddox sometimes hired slave labor, and there is no evidence that he freed his own household slaves. After emancipation, in a letter he wrote to the bishop in 1865, Maddox expressed deep concern

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[141] Maddox Ledger 1857-63, 10-11, 61.

[142] Boonsboro, St. Mark's Parish Register 1849-98, 50-51; 1860 Census, Washington County, MD, Tilmington District, 474, NARA microfilm M653, roll 483.

[143] Maddox Ledger 1857-63, 110, 114, and loose papers; Maddox Ledger 1863-73, table of contents and 3, 31, 52, 68, 109, 113; Boonsboro, St. Mark's Parish Register 1849-98, 50-51.

[144] "Money for Contrabands—None for the People," *Maryland Free Press*, 6 February 1863.

for those he saw as needing Christian education and charity; he listed seemingly every group ("Schools, colleges, asylums for the deaf, blind, aged, helpless, . . . widowed ladies & helpless children") except the freedpersons, who were so conspicuously in want.[145] In Maddox one sees the paradox of the "good" slave master, mythologized by Southern apologists but undeniably grounded in real human relations,[146] and further complicated by shared religion.

Another instance of what might be considered Episcopal-affiliated manumission is recounted by local A.M.E. minister Thomas Henry in his autobiography. Sometime in the 1840s, a slave woman named Catharine Peeker was jailed in Hagerstown and stood in danger of being sold away. A white man, unnamed in the narrative but connected with the College of St. James, not only bought Peeker out of the jail but also went to the owner of Peeker's thirteen-year-old daughter and purchased her as well, keeping mother and daughter together. This Episcopalian then took both women to St. James', "and in less than three years they were both free," according to Henry.[147] It seems this purchase was either planned as leading to manumission, or was viewed that way in hindsight by the black community.

The Younker family provides several examples of the complexity of family relationships in a slave system. In Hancock, a woman named Charlotte, enslaved by Kitty Reynolds, maintained a relationship for more than twenty years with "a white man named Younker," the father of her eleven children, all of whom bore his surname. Most of the children were baptized at St. Thomas', where their mistress was a member. In 1850 Charlotte's daughter Mary Jane Younker, who was not quite thirteen years old, married "in the lecture room of the church . . . John Swan (colored) servant of Richard Murray"; census records suggest that Swan may have been twenty years old. When Reynolds died in 1852,

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[145] Mount Pleasant, SC, Maddox Family Papers, Woodley Farm Journal, 5; Ledger 1857-63, 56; 1860 Census, slave schedule, Washington County, MD, Tilmington District, 12, NARA microfilm 653; Baltimore, Diocesan Archives, Thomas Maddox letter to Bishop Whittingham, 28 October 1865.

[146] Dusinberre, *Strategies for Survival*, 15-27.

[147] Henry, *From Slavery to Salvation*, 43.

her will freed Charlotte, but left Charlotte's children to her niece and heir, to remain in slavery until each reached the age of thirty. The Episcopalian executor, however, sold sixteen-year-old Mary Jane to the family who owned her husband John Swan—presumably an arrangement for the enslaved couple's benefit. Ten-year-old Elizabeth Ellen Younker was also sold, for unknown reasons, while the eldest sibling, twenty-one-year-old Henry Younker, was able to purchase his own freedom for $400. It appears that these slaveholders acted in ways that provided some, albeit limited, advantages to members of the Younker family, within the restrictive framework of enslavement.[148] The strong possibility exists, however, that little Elizabeth was sold away from her siblings for the benefit of the estate.

Sometimes families actively resisted such threats. Isaac and Letty Ann Warfield, enslaved in the neighborhood of St. Mark's and reportedly married at the church, felt so endangered that they took the extreme and risky course of fleeing. Isaac overheard someone say that one of his young daughters was going to be sold (almost certainly by an Episcopalian master), so the whole Warfield family ran away to Pennsylvania. In the 1870s the Warfield family returned to Maryland, to the same area, probably because of family ties. In 1908, at the age of seventy-five, Isaac Warfield was baptized and confirmed at St. Mark's, with two white women serving as sponsors. Though the Warfields were illiterate, they owned a family Bible, given to them by another white Episcopal woman, inscribed, "An Easter gift to Isaac Warfield from his friend Elizabeth Rench, Hagerstown, Md., March 25, 1883."[149] A story like the Warfields' defies easy categorization.

Still, the preponderance of the evidence indicates that Episcopal masters were slaveholders first and fellow Christians second if

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[148] Hancock, St. Thomas' Parish Register 1, 21, 27, 113; Baltimore, Diocesan Archives, Journal of Rev. A.J. Berger, entry for 7 October 1849; Hagerstown, Washington County Courthouse, Register of Wills, Will Book E, 160; Sales Book T, 260; Accounts Book 17, 594-95, 634-46. My thanks to Tracy Salvagno for drawing my attention to the Reynolds estate documents.

[149] Boonsboro, St. Mark's Register 1893-1930s, 56, 72; "Miscellaneous Photos" and "Family-Papers-Warfield-Allen-Doleman," Document Archives Website, Doleman Black Heritage Museum, dolemanblackheritagemuseum.org.

ever. James Pennington's description of slave life on the Tilghman estate is hair-raising, even though he wrote that Tilghman was far from being "one of the most cruel masters."[150] John Dall of St. John's reported at least two runaways in September 1846.[151] Emory Edwards, a member of St. Luke's, Brownsville, was reputedly the harshest master in the neighborhood, whipping his slaves and allegedly rubbing salt in the wounds.[152] When Alexander Grim, also of St. Luke's, died in 1852, his estate included two families of slaves: the extended Matthews family, consisting of two adult brothers, the wife of one of them, and two children; and the nuclear Word family, consisting of father, mother, and five children. The executors divided up both enslaved families among Grim's three heirs, separating parents from children and spouses from each other.[153] When Thomas Clagett died in 1846, four of his slaves, including two children, were put up for sale at public auction by the Episcopalian executor.[154] John Breathed of St. Mark's left a will in 1852 dispersing his slaves to his various heirs; one servant was to be free when he reached age twenty-eight, but the rest were not.[155] Episcopalian slaveholders also sold slaves into the deep South—the fate that every enslaved person dreaded most. In 1846, the senior Frisby Tilghman sold eight slaves—four men aged nineteen to twenty-four, a twenty-four-year-old woman named Maria, and Maria's three small children—to G. W. Sargent of Louisiana for the sum of $2800.[156] In 1860 the Clagett brothers of Pleasant Valley sold fourteen slaves to a dealer from the deeper South.[157] Slaves could not depend on

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[150] Pennington, *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, 3, 7-10.

[151] "Something Wrong," Hagerstown *Herald of Freedom*, 18 September 1846.

[152] Oral tradition recounted by John Frye, 3 April 2014, recalling a story told by his grandmother, who was born in 1872.

[153] Hagerstown, Washington County Courthouse, Register of Wills, Liber 17, 411.

[154] Advertisement in Hagerstown *Torch Light*, 7 January 1847.

[155] Hagerstown, Washington County Courthouse, Register of Wills, Book E, 148.

[156] Washington County Court Land Records, mdlandrec.net, MSA CE 67-47, Book IN 2, p. 30; Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison, 1996), 163-69.

[157] Hagerstown, Western Maryland Room, vertical file "Boonsboro, MD," extracts from *Boonsboro Odd Fellow*, 5.

the Episcopal Church, or their own membership in it, to ameliorate either the conditions in which they lived and worked or the threats that hung constantly over their families.

CONCLUSION

The Episcopal congregations of western Maryland, like the larger Episcopal Church, were white churches, designed to serve white ends. Thus the place of blacks in them was fundamentally fragile and ambiguous. African Americans held no positions of leadership or authority in the churches; their names and concerns are absent from vestry minutes and financial records of the time. When they appeared in the parish registers, taking part in baptism, confirmation, marriage, and burial, they were distinguished from whites, often in demeaning ways. In the sanctuary itself they were segregated, and it is likely that they sometimes heard a separate, corrupted, version of the Gospel through sermons intended to reinforce slavery. The more closely one looks, the more one sees how poorly the church served and accommodated the blacks who attended it, who partook of its rites, or who identified with it in other ways.

Yet to some extent the church did serve them. On an individual basis, those African Americans who chose the Episcopal Church or who had it chosen for them might find there a spiritual life, fellowship with family and black friends, a potentially more secure marriage, access to a church funeral, and the possibility of useful, albeit unbalanced, relationships with some white neighbors. For many, this formed the basis of a lasting faith that they took with them into freedom. For a few, it forged a lasting relationship with the Episcopal Church that survived the upheavals of Emancipation. For most, though, it was not enough to keep them in the Episcopal Church once they were free fully to choose their own spiritual paths, their own religious leaders, and their own places of worship.[158]

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[158] Lewis, *Yet With a Steady Beat*, 39-46; Hood, "From a Headstart," 284-96; Dvorak, "After Apocalypse, Moses," 173, 180-91; Shattuck, *Episcopalians & Race*, 1-29.