

Episcopalians and Slavery in Lancaster County from the Colonial Period to the Civil War

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*The earliest internments at St. John's Church, in Compassville
Lancaster County Historical Society photo, 2-02-02-85*

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Prior to the Civil War, black slavery played an important role in the social and economic life of Lancaster County, the county landscape heavily etched with black people in bondage. Most slaves were owned by well-to-do farmers, entrepreneurs, shop keepers, magistrates and state and federal legislators and other public officials. In Pennsylvania in 1790, Lancaster County (and Dauphin, which was separated from Lancaster in 1785) had the fourth largest slave population in proportion to total population. Between 1759 and 1780 the number of slaves in the county grew eightfold, with slave owners reporting 838 slaves in their possession in 1780. Of those slaves whose age and sex are known, 399 were aged 16 years and over, and 437 were under 16.¹ Slaves were required to perform duties usually pertaining to household and occupational affairs. Most occupations did not depend heavily on bonded labor, the exceptions being iron industries and large farms. The slaves of Lancaster County were controlled by the same rule of subordination that undergirded the entire slavery system: powerless, absolute subjects of their owners, bought and sold and used like merchandise.

When slaves ran away in pursuit of liberty, the law of the land guaranteed their owners the right to retrieve them, just as anyone could rightfully reclaim a

stolen wagon or runaway oxen. Within Lancaster County, a denomination that counted among its members a relatively large number of slave owners was the Episcopal Church.

The American antecedents of the Episcopal Church in Lancaster County can be traced to the establishment of the Church of England parish on Cape Henry, Virginia around the time of the planting of the Jamestown Colony in 1607. Aided by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel of Foreign Parts, founded in 1701, the Church of England spread through all colonies during the seventeenth century. Initially, the goal of the SPG was to enrich the religious vitality of the English colonists—but the Society soon turned also to evangelizing black slaves. Clergymen were employed to preach the Gospel to them and special schools were established to nurture them in the faith. Through the SPG's efforts, hundreds of slaves were baptized and instructed in the basic tenets of Christianity.²

Many slave masters in the American provinces were reluctant to Christianize their black bondsmen—believing that exposing them to Christian beliefs would embolden them to flee to freedom. To alleviate the slave owner's apprehensions, English ecclesiastical authorities assured them that the work of Society missionaries and other like-minded clergy did not infringe upon their legal rights as slave owners: bap-

tism was not a prelude to liberty. As the Bishop of London, in 1727, declared—"Christianity, and the embracing of the Gospel, does not make the least alteration in Civil Property."³ Prior to the Revolutionary War, no Anglican minister or congregation spoke out against the practice of holding blacks in perpetual bondage.⁴

During and after the war, the Church of England lost its tenuous hold on its American churches. Rectors left their parishes, churches were closed. The American terrain was rife with shattered Anglican churches. By 1789, the Church of England had been superseded by the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.

The newly formed Episcopal Church initiated extensive programs among the black people throughout the county. The General Convention, dioceses and congregations urged and supported missionary activities. In the North, slaves and free blacks were received into white parishes. In the South, clergy ministered to blacks on the plantations and in the Episcopal churches. Around the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, black churches were founded in New York City, Philadelphia, Providence, New Haven, Charleston, Detroit and Savannah—to mention but a few. Black Episcopal clergy were precluded from participating in the antislavery movement. A prominent black Clergy-

man—Peter William of New York—was required to withdraw from membership in the American Antislavery Society. And the Diocese of Pennsylvania adopted a canon that disallowed the African Church of St. Thomas from sending representatives to an antislavery convention.⁵

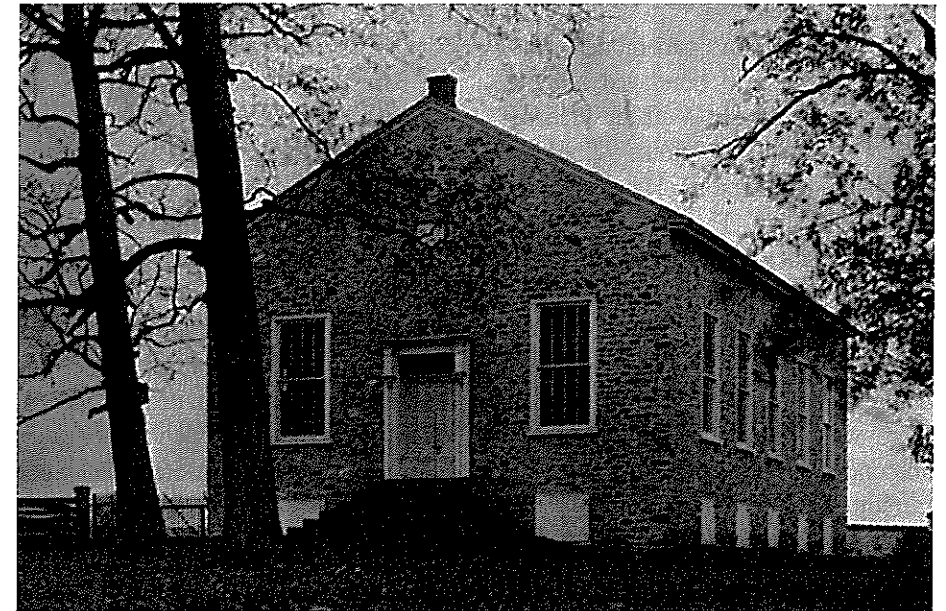
The Episcopal Church in the United States consistently claimed that slavery was a political and sectional issue, not a religious issue. Since slavery did not fall within the purview of church and denominational affairs, the church hierarchy contended: clergy ought not to deal with it or discuss it at religious gatherings. Episcopalians upheld slavery through a deliberate silence. Within the Episcopal churches, a few clergymen and parishioners opposed the practice of black servitude—some calling for emancipation. But their voices resounded little, if at all, among their fellow communicants. There were Episcopalian church primates and other leaders who spoke openly and freely on the legitimacy of slavery—declaring it, for example "right in principle; sanctioned by the Scriptures; not contrary to Divine Law."⁶ The denomination's code of silence notwithstanding, these public declarations favoring the institution of slavery were not frowned upon, much less disavowed, by their fellow churchmen. Following the Revolutionary War and through the antebellum decades, the outstanding clerical leaders and most of

the prominent laymen of the Episcopal Church manifested no interest in breaking the yoke of slavery.⁷

St. John's Church

One of the Episcopal Churches established early on, located adjacent to Lancaster County, was St. John's in Pequea. (Although the church was located on the western edge of Chester County, the church is historically identified with Lancaster County as most members resided in Salisbury Township.) In Pequea in 1729, English, Irish and Scots settlers built a wooden frame church and began worshipping according to the form and manner of the

Church of England. The parish's first four rectors were the Reverends Richard Backhouse, John Blackhall, George Craig and John Barton—all missionaries from England. In 1776, primarily on account of Barton's lack of sentiment for the Revolution, worship at St. John's was discontinued. In the course of the war, a troop of English cavalry used the church as a barracks. After St. John's was reopened in 1783—now free of the Church of England—rectors were regularly appointed and parishioners faithfully gathered for worship. Rectors serving the parish included the Reverend T. Frederick Illing, a Lutheran minister, and the Reverend Edward Young



St. John's Church, in the village of Compassville, just across the Lancaster County line in Chester County, served the residents of Salisbury Township. Lancaster County Historical Society photo, 2-02-02-84

Buchanan, brother of President James Buchanan. Edward Buchanan served as rector 1835–1845. He was married to Eliza Foster, a sister of Stephen Collins Foster—the famous composer of a number of black spirituals that, according to a St. John's chronicler, "powerfully aided the antislavery movement of the time."⁸

The slaveholders in St. John's were notable church members and distinguished citizens. Of the sixteen parish wardens and vestrymen in 1776, at least eight owned slaves:⁹ Archibald Henderson, Sr., James Clemson, James Henderson, James Lytle, Thomas Douglas, Sr., Thomas Douglas, Jr., James Douglas and Leonard Ellmaker.¹⁰

Other St. John's parishioners who, around 1780, held bonded servants were George Leach, William Richardson, John Yeates, John Hopkins, Matthew Henderson, Henry Skiles, Jacob Ellmaker, Thomas Henderson, Daniel Buckley, Archibald Henderson, Jr., John Wilson, John Elliot, Daniel Buckley and Gabriel Davis.¹¹

As there were slaves in the South who escaped North to gain freedom, so there were slaves in the North who absconded from their masters in the pursuit of liberty—including slaves belonging to parishioners of St. John's. Like slaveholders elsewhere, St. John's owners published notices in the press offering rewards to anyone helping to capture their runaways.¹² Nathaniel Ell-

maker, in 1810, promised \$40 to anyone who apprehended his servant boy, William M'Caley, "about fifteen years old, very small, has fair hair," who was wearing "a gray fulled linsey round-about and trowsers....a wool hat too large for him, a checkered madress handkerchief....an old bandanna yellow and red."¹³ Daniel Buckley extended an offer of \$20 to anyone who secured in any jail in the state, his slave Tobe who escaped March 1809, is "about five feet nine or ten inches high....somewhat lame in one foot having had his toes frozen in a drunken frolic two years ago....is much given to liquor and is very saucy when intoxicated, otherwise a good servant....was bred by William Boyd (a Pequea Presbyterian).¹⁴ Frederick Baker, in 1802, promised \$10 to whoever helped to recover his "Negro wench named Hannah." The advertisement described Hannah as "about 16 years of age....stout and well made about the shoulders, small around the waist, she is right black of a smooth skin, big eyes and when she looks at one turns out the white of her eyes very much; had no clothes on or with her but a shift and tow linsey peticoat of bark colour, a copperas colored handkerchief." Eight years later, Baker again publicized an award of \$10 for the capture of Hannah.¹⁵

St. John's Church provided the opportunity for a number of black people of the community to worship at

the church and to engage in the rites of marriage and baptism. At the request of the parish vestry in 1799, John Alison was "employed to make a seat for the black people in a plain, substantial manner along the west end" of the church.¹⁶ Since slavery was still practiced in Lancaster County in 1799, bondsmen may have been among the blacks who initially occupied these separate seats. Later, around 1830 and the following years, when St. John's afforded "colored" the sacraments of marriage and baptism and the privilege of burial in the church cemetery, it was likely not slaves but free blacks who engaged in these religious rites—for by the 1830s slavery had largely disappeared from Lancaster County; its disappearance due in part to the Pennsylvania Assembly's Gradual Emancipation Act in 1780. The Act did not free a single slave born before 1780, but it did free, at age 28, all children of slaves born after 1780. Thus it was from the 1830s to the 1860s that the clergy of St. John's engaged free blacks in various religious observances: at least eight couples joined in marriage; no fewer than seven blacks buried in the church cemetery; and around 15 blacks initiated into membership through baptism—including Jacob Lennon and his five children. Two elderly blacks who were for many years associated with St. John's parish were Jacob and Prudence Thompson, both former slaves. Both lived to a ripe old age—Jacob to 96

years and Prudence to 101. According to the records, Jacob was the "faithful sexton and every Sunday found him at his place, operating the blower of the organ by hand."¹⁷

Bangor Church, Churchtown

The Bangor Church in Churchtown, Caernarvon Township is also one of the oldest Episcopal Churches in Lancaster County. As early as October 1722, the Reverend Robert Weyman, a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, was preaching to mostly Welsh families in Churchtown who frequently assembled for worship under trees as their houses were too small to accommodate everyone. But it was not until 1734 under the guidance of the Reverend Griffith Hughes—another SPG missionary—that the congregation of forty families decided to build a church of square logs. Thirty years later, the Reverend Thomas Barton—Hughes's successor—reported to the Society in London that the congregation had grown to 50 and 60 families and that a new stone church had been constructed. During the Revolution, Barton's loyalties ran contrary to the framers of the Declaration of Independence and, in a display of allegiance to the Crown, Barton closed the doors of the Bangor Church. Subsequently, around 1832, an American Episcopal bishop consecrated a new Episcopal Bangor Church. Thereafter, the church was regularly served by min-

isters, including the Reverends T. Frederick Illing and Joseph Clarkson.¹⁸

Slavery flourished among the parishioners of the Bangor Church. Bangor Church slave owners included Francis Willemine, James Lincoln, Nicholas Hudson, John Davies, Thomas Morgan, Francis Morgan, Henry Shirk, David Old, James Davies, Adam Zell and Mary Davies—virtually all of whom held one or two slaves. Three of the slave-owning members were wealthy iron masters of Caernarvon Township: Lynford Lardner who in 1758 possessed eight slaves; John Edwards who in 1780 held as many as seven slaves; and James Old who in 1780 owned more than seven slaves (his cadre of slave children alone included five females—ages five, four, two, two and nine months; and two males—one five years old and another ten months. James Davis, Edward Hughes and Morris Hudson each owned four chattels; Robert Good and Gabriel Davis each possessed three.¹⁹ Cyrus Jacobs kept five slaves. In 1802 one of them, Caesar, ran away. In advertising a \$50 reward for anyone assisting in “securing” Caesar in jail, Jacobs described the fugitive as “nearly six feet high, well made, walks upright but limps a little if hurried, very black... it is very probable he will change his name and dress; said Negro is a forge man by trade and it is likely he will make for some forge or furnace.”²⁰

The Evans family possessed almost

one-half of all the slaves belonging to Bangor Church parishioners. James Evans Sr., James Evans Jr., John Evans Jr., William Evans and Joshua Evans held in aggregate 19 bonded servants. In addition John Evans Sr. (whose Virginia-born wife brought slaves with her) and Nathan Evans, patriarchs and farmers, each possessed three slaves—raising the total of Evans slaves to 25. Both John Evans Sr. and Nathan Evans lived in elaborate mansions that contained cages in the cellars—commonly dubbed “slave pens.” The one in John Evans’ basement was a frame structure of boards three inches by one inch with trellised bars having a lattice-like appearance. The enclosure in Nathan Evans’ cellar was fenced off by heavy wooden perpendicular bars, two by three inches and a massive door of the same construction—giving the appearance of a fortress. A mystery surrounds the use of these places deep in the bowels of the mansions. According to the recollections of descendants of former slave owners in Caernarvon, these cellar cages were places for harboring disobedient, mutinous slaves until they became tractable; also for holding captured runaway slaves until they were claimed by their masters, sold on the market, or shipped elsewhere. But the chroniclers of the cages insist that the use of these places for punishment must not be exaggerated and that the enclosures were sometimes used for certain household purposes



Bangor Episcopal Church, Churchtown, Caernarvon Township, c. 1885. This stone church, built in 1830, replaced another stone church built in 1754–56, which in turn replaced a log structure built in about 1733. At some time in the nineteenth century, the present church was remodeled with mid-Victorian features. Photo courtesy of the Episcopal Church of Bangor in Caernarvon.

such as serving as living quarters for slaves, storage space for valuable things and areas for keeping whiskey and rum inaccessible to slaves. One thing is certain—these “subterranean dungeons” were not in any way related to the Underground Railroad since no one sheltered fugitive slaves in Caernarvon

Township.²¹

The connection of slaves of Bangor Church members with the church was limited almost entirely to Sunday worship. The Bangor Church edifices provided separate seating galleries for black people—a segregated arrangement that prompted Colonel Zelba Bennerr Phelps

Jr. to comment in his booklet, "It is difficult to believe that this first old (log) church and the one which succeeded it (1756) both had galleries with outside stairways so that slaves might come to hear the gospel yet not mingle with their masters."²²

Notably, few blacks became Bangor Church communicants or were buried in the church cemetery. Seemingly, only two or three blacks, if that, were christened as communicants—one being William Evans' 24-year old slave, Casa. As to burials, apparently the only black interred in the church graveyard was Robert Brown, a slave of Cyrus Jacobs. Where then might black people have been laid to rest? Some were buried in the Methodist Church cemetery at Churchtown and some in fields of Caernarvon Township where rough fieldstones mark their graves. Even "Old Fred" who served as sexton of the Bangor Church...year in and year out through winter's storms and summer's heats, was not permitted a resting place within the...shadow of the church that he loved so much and served so long and faithfully." Instead, on account of his color (though not a slave at the time of his death) he was carried away and laid to rest in an unknown spot on the side of the Welsh Mountains.²³

Hope Church, Penn Township

The first worship service of Episcopalians in the Mt. Hope village, in terri-

tory later named Penn Township, occurred in 1818 at the time Bishop William White baptized Clement Brooks Grubb in the old mansion built by Henry Bates Grubb in 1800. The Reverend Daniel Washburn became Mt. Hope's first missionary in 1849, the year the little edifice named Hope Church was erected. Washburn was succeeded by another missionary—the Reverend George Herbert Walsh who served for three months. From the time of Walsh's resignation until the Civil War, Hope Church lacked a regular minister—relying upon interim lay-readers, calling upon neighboring rectors to administer the sacraments and, on occasion, discontinuing worship for lack of a clergyman.

At least three persons associated with Hope Church were at one time slave owners, including two members of the Grubb family who owned and operated Hopewell Forge in Berks County and Cornwall Furnace in territory first named Dauphin County and later Lebanon County. One was Harriet Amelia Buckley, widow of Henry Bates Grubb, while still living in Cornwall in 1830, possessed four slaves. Years after her husband's death, having taken up residence in Philadelphia, Harriet Grubb founded and contributed funds for the construction of Hope Church in 1849—desiring to do "something for the moral and spiritual uplift" of Cornwall Furnace employees. The other Grubb slaveholder was Clement Grubb (the same



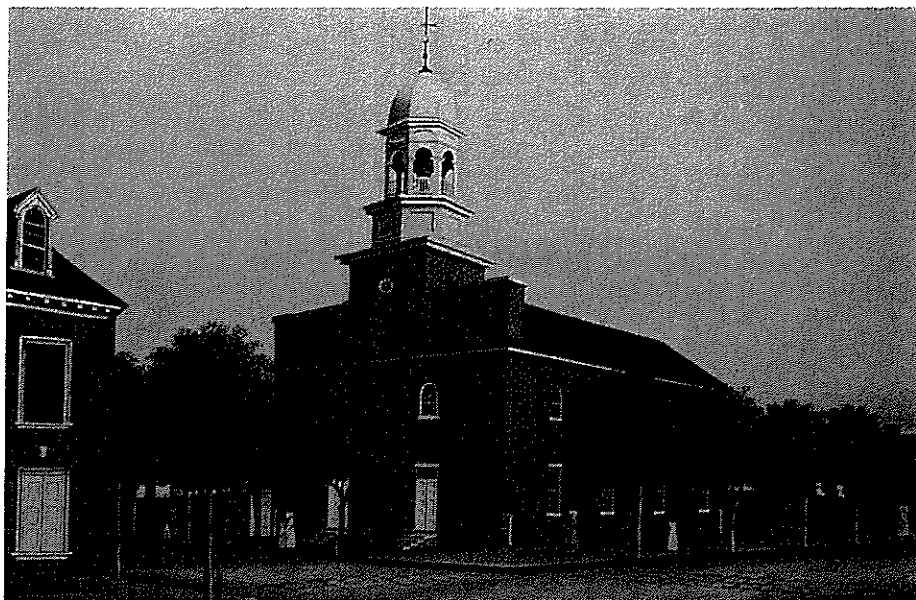
Present day Hope Church, Penn Township

Clement Grubb who was baptized by Bishop William White), one of Hope Church's first vestrymen. A third slave-owning member of the church, also serving on the initial vestry, was Edward Shippen—presumably the distinguished judge of the Lancaster County Court.²⁴

St. James' Church, Lancaster Borough

As early as 1735 the Reverend Richard Backhouse, missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, conducted services in the terri-

tory that became Lancaster Borough. For years the Society nurtured the Episcopalians, who were scattered throughout the area, in the faith of their fathers. In 1744 the Reverend Richard Locke of the Society, organized the St. James' Parish. Construction of a stone church began in 1745 and was completed in 1750. One year later Locke was succeeded by another Society missionary—the Reverend George Craig. In 1759 the Reverend Thomas Barton followed Craig and served until 1776 when, because of



St. James' Episcopal Church, Lancaster City, c. 1844. From H. M. J. Klein and William F. Diller, *The History of St. James' Church 1744-1944*, p. 130.

Barton's and some of his parishioner's heightened feelings about the Revolution, St. James' was closed. After the war, the church was opened again with the Reverend Joseph Hutchins as rector from 1783 to 1790. Hutchins was succeeded by the Reverend Elisha Rigg, followed in 1799 by the Reverend Joseph Clarkson.²⁵

Many Episcopalians of St. James' Church possessed slaves—virtually all men of money, power and privilege and occupying principal offices of the church. John Postlethwaite, one of the founders of St. James' Parish, was a slave owner. As early as 1754 three St. James' members held bondsmen: Elizabeth

Smout, David Stout and George Sanderson—with Sanderson shown in the 1754 Lampeter township tax list as owning "1 cow and 2 negroes." Among the other slaveholders affiliated with St. James' Church, most owning one to three slaves, were William Slough, Fanny Slough, John Parr, James Hopkins, William Henry, John Gibson, George McCullough, John F. Steinman, Isaac Atlee, William Atlee, Jasper Yeates, John Okely, John Jordan, Samuel Boyd, Abraham Carpenter, William White, John Stone, William Montgomery, Adam Reigart, Robert Reed, William McCally, William Jenkins, Robert Lockman, John Reed, Jacob Reiger, William White and

Charles Hamilton.²⁶

Some St. James' members possessed a relatively large number of bonded servants. George Ross held as many as seven. Robert Coleman, a very wealthy ironworks owner, used slave labor to operate his Martic Forge. Four members of the Grubb Family possessed slaves: Clement B. Grubb, Harriet Amelia Buckley Grubb (as indicated above, both also associated later with Hope Church), Henry Bates Grubb and Peter Grubb II (the latter owned eleven slaves). The Grubbs counted upon chattel servants to help operate Hopewell Forge and Cornwall Furnace. (The other major Grubb family furnace entrepreneur, Curtis Grubb, was not an Episcopalian.)²⁷

William and Grace Parr together owned ten slaves. When they registered their bondsmen with the county in 1780, as was required of all Pennsylvania slave owners, they recorded them as follows: a Mulatto Wench named Mary, aged 46, a slave for life and her four daughters—Amelia, Poll, Sally and Janet aged about 22, 13, 7 and 3, respectively, and a son Jack, 24 years old. Jack was leased to another master for labor, working at sea on board the Jolly Trooper. The others included Cato aged about 24, a runaway and supposed to be gone to the enemy; Tom aged about 12 and apprenticed to a weaver in Oxford Township, Philadelphia County, until age 21; Gable aged about 24, a cooper

by trade and leased to Fetter of Lancaster Borough; and Fanny aged 14, bound until she was 18 and sent to live with Samuel Head, a shopkeeper in Philadelphia.²⁸

Marketing slaves in Lancaster County was, of course, an altogether pecuniary transaction with most slaves being bought from and sold to other slave owners. Ulrich Reigart put on sale "a likely healthy Negroe Boy about 14 years of age... who has had the small Pox and Measels... and who was fit to wait on a Gentleman."²⁹ James Burd, proprietor of a wine store, advertised "as likewise" among his items in stock "a Negroe Man, has had the Small Pox, about 30 years of age, fit for County Business... a very handy Fellow and might be very serviceable at an Iron Works."³⁰

Thomas Boude, in 1802 purchased as an indentured servant—Stephen Smith, a five-year old child born in slavery. Shortly after Boude brought Stephen to Columbia, the boy's mother escaped from her slave mistress (a Miss Cochran in Paxton) and journeyed to Columbia to join Stephen. Learning of her chattel's escape, Miss Cochran arrived at Boude's home on horseback, entered his house during his absence and attempted to drag Stephen's mother onto the street. Upon hearing her outcry, Boude and his neighbors hastened into the house and came to the woman's rescue. Cochran returned home without her fugitive.

Boude harbored Stephen's mother, then later purchased her to allay the wrath of Miss Cochran. As the years passed, Stephen Smith became the manager of Boude's lumberyard in Columbia and was later permitted by his owner to buy his freedom for one hundred dollars (money that Quaker friend, John Barber, gave him). Smith eventually gained considerable wealth, turned to religion, was ordained as a minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and later became an uncompromising abolitionist.³¹

Slaveholders of St. James' Parish offered monetary rewards to anyone helping to capture their escaped slaves. Emanuel Reigart, in 1807, promised \$20 to anyone helping to retrieve his runaway slave "named Larry, sometimes calls himself Charley Brookens, near 21 years of age, 6 feet high, raw-boned, small face, small eyes, down look when spoken to...strong and active, very quarrelsome when in liquor...took with him a heavy turned hickory stick." The advertisement ends with the warning, "All masters of vessels are forbid harbouring or taking away said run-away at their peril." Having been unsuccessful in securing his fleeing slave in 1807, one year later Reigart increased the amount of the reward to \$40. Edward Hand, in 1802, offered to pay \$30 to anyone who apprehended his escaped slave, Frank. The announcement describes this man as being "about thirty years of age and

about five feet eight inches high, stout made but not corpulent, perfectly black, has a pleasing countenance, his speech is mild and his voice rather effeminate when sober but he is very noisy and impertinent when in liquor; he was bred to the farming business." The notice concludes by stating that the fugitive possessed a sealed certificate which belonged to a free Negro named "Prince Wheel, now dead" and that he "intends passing by that name."³³

St. James' Church engaged slaves and free blacks in the parish's spiritual ceremonies including baptisms, marriages and burials, most occurring during the time just prior to and following the Revolutionary War. In 1755 Thomas Boude was asked by the vestry to employ workmen to finish various features of the church, including creating separate pews as "servants seats"—later designated as "seats for Negroes and servants." In 1769 a rail and a few banisters were fixed to the end of pew 12 to prevent the owners of the pew "from being incommoded by servants and others who have easy access thereto and often take possession of it."³⁴

Around 1771 James Rathell, a St. James' curate, opened a school to instruct "several Negroes belonging to different Families of the Church." As he taught them on Sunday evenings in a schoolhouse, he undertook "to instruct them in their Catechism and some of the plainest Duties of Religion and Morality" by which he hoped "these poor Crea-

tures will be much benefited."³⁵

St James' Parish initiated a relatively large number of blacks into church membership through baptism. Among the slaves receiving baptism were Louisa and James (slaves of Paul Zantzingler, Lutheran); Priscilla, slave of Robert Lockham; Phoebe, slave of William McCally; Peter Yellet, slave of John Okeley; Margaret Carrigan, a slave child, age 5, of George and Catharine Leonard; Sarah, about 10 years old, slave of William Parr; Mary, an adult slave of Isaac Richardson; Mazete Reed, "Negro man" of Robert Reed; Ellen Berben, the daughter of Stephen Johnson, a slave of Walter Franklin; Violet, a slave child of Miss Fanny Slough; and Venus Laurel, a child whose father was raised as a slave of James Work in Donegal. Other blacks who were granted the rite of baptism numbered no fewer than twenty "Negroes" and "adult mulattos." Among them were John, a "Negro man from Guinea about 60 years of age...very well informed on baptism"; Isaac and Charlotte Gilmore's eight children named Jacob, Elizabeth, Jonathan, Isaac and David; and James Clendenin, one of the founding fathers of the Bethel African Methodist Church in Lancaster Borough whose entry in the St. James' baptismal record in 1823 states: "James Clendenin, a coloured man quite respectable, 67 years of age—born August 1756—received Adult Baptism in Lancaster."³⁶

The rectors of St. James' performed the nuptial ceremony for at least sixteen black couples, almost all taking place after the Revolution. Of this number, two individuals are identified as slaves: Catherine, said to be a slave of Joseph and James Simon (not Episcopalians) who was united with Pleasants Tolbet, "a free Negro"; and Richard, a "mulatto and servnt of George Ross" who was joined with Elizabeth Otley, "a free woman." The other fourteen black couples that St. James' rectors united in marriage were free people.³⁷

The section of St. James' cemetery facing directly on North Duke Street, tradition tells us, was marked out for the burial of slave and free blacks. Apparently the Reverend Joseph Clarkson, rector from 1799 to 1830, felt that the use of the cemetery by blacks must be carefully supervised. On one occasion he objected to the burial in the churchyard of a black boy named Voltaire, slave of Jasper Yeates. At another time, Clarkson rejected a request of a black man, Isaac Gilmore, to bury his wife in the church cemetery. Clarkson also complained about a mulatto child who was buried in the church cemetery; his objection being that the child was "said to belong here, but was only on a visit at the time of its death." Evidently, though, St. James' Parish was quite amenable to the idea of putting slaves and free blacks to rest in the churchyard and Clarkson himself presided over a number of the

burial services. According to the entries of the cemetery records between 1800 and 1860 at least 30 blacks were interred in the churchyard and, in addition, around 60 other persons without full name or color identity were buried in the cemetery. Among the blacks interred in St. James' churchyard who can be identified were two children of John Atlee; a black man living with William Jenkins who was buried by order of Robert Coleman, parish Warden; Dinah Webster, wife of the "faithful sexton" of St. James' parish; and Dinah McIntire, more than 100 years of age—at one time the property of Matthias Slough and known as Dinah the Fortune Teller. Regarding the 60 persons whose identities are unknown, one chronicler of graveyard records suggests that many of them may have been black people—some slave, some free. Which is as likely as not a most reasonable suggestion since black people were commonly fated to the fringe of anonymity.³⁹

The African Colonization Movement

One of the slavery-related national movements behind which Episcopalians of Lancaster County—mostly St. James' communicants—rallied was the African Colonization movement. The avowed purpose of this activity on behalf of blacks was to spare the country's manumitted slaves the racial animosity they would inevitably suffer in America by sending them to a "congenial home" in

Africa where they would be delivered from the godlessness of their pagan darkness by the efforts of black and white American Protestant missionaries. The Colonization movement got underway with the establishment of the American Colonization Society in 1816 and thereafter many auxiliary colonization societies formed—including the Pennsylvania Colonization Society in 1829; the Columbia Auxiliary Colonization Society in 1830; and the Lancaster County Colonization Society in 1835 which supplanted the Columbia Society.³⁹

Several prominent Episcopalians of Lancaster County were identified with the colonization movement—serving as officers and board members; providing meeting places; and contributing money for colonization societies. The Reverend E. Y. Buchanan, pastor of Leacock Christ Church, opened his house of worship to colonization meetings. John Yeates, then of the Leacock Christ Church, served as a vice president of the Lancaster County Colonization Society. Raymond Conyngnam, a member of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Paradise Township, helped formulate a resolution to create the Lancaster Colonization Society. The Reverend Samuel Bowman, rector of St. James' Church, at a meeting at the First Presbyterian Church, offered a resolution requesting the meeting to approve the principles and operations of the Young Men's Colonization Society of Pennsylvania. Adam Reigart urged the adoption of

the resolution. Four parishioners of St. James' Church served as officers of the Lancaster County Colonization Society: Edward B. Grubb and Adam Reigart as vice presidents; Thomas E. Franklin as recording secretary; and John Brown as manager. In still other ways members of the St. James' Parish joined in advancing colonization: Dr. George Moore served as an officer of the Columbia Auxiliary Colonization Society; James Hopkins provided counsel for the Columbia Society; and James Patterson contributed money to the missionary work of the Presbyterian Church in Africa.⁴⁰

The one county Episcopalian who subscribed most heartily to the designs of African colonization was the Reverend William Augustus Muhlenberg, a young associate rector of St. James' Parish from 1820 to 1826. His testimony on behalf of colonization, however, occurred before and after—not during—his assistant rectorship at St. James' Church. In 1820, the same year that he came to Lancaster Borough but while still Bishop White's assistant in Philadelphia, Muhlenberg preached a sermon that condemned slavery as "an immense national evil" and urged that America pay its "moral debt" to black people by sending them to Africa where they would be offered "the blessings of our arts, our civilization and our religion." For whatever reason, during his six-year term at St. James', Muhlenberg remained distinctly distant from matters

of slavery, including the subject of colonization. Then, after leaving St. James' Church in 1826, Muhlenberg, as a writer and minister in New York, again denounced slavery as "making cattle of my fellow creatures"; decried emancipation as "a wild scheme of philanthropy"; and insisted that the most plausible course of action on behalf of blacks was to establish "an asylum for free Africans and emancipated slaves" in Africa.⁴¹

Whatever reasons may have persuaded Lancaster County Episcopalians to support African colonization, the majority of people whose burdens they sought to lighten regarded colonization as a despicable scheme, perpetuating further the degradation of black people. There were blacks who, having concluded that they would never gain equality and citizenship in America, boarded ships for the journey to Liberia—some under the auspices of colonization societies and others independent of them. But most blacks strongly opposed removing themselves to Africa. In their minds, the driving force of this professed benevolent and philanthropic endeavor was unclouded racism—white people's antipathy toward black people. Protests erupted—among many places, in Philadelphia and Columbia, Lancaster County. In Philadelphia in 1817 about three thousand blacks gathered in the Bethel Church and declared that colonization branded free black people as "a dangerous and useless part of the com-

munity."⁴² In Columbia in 1831 free blacks assembled under the leadership of the onetime slave, Stephen Smith, and denounced colonization as "mere sophistry, not worthy of our notice as freemen" and as an attempt "to send us to the burning shores of Africa" and as a scheme "which has as its basis prejudice and hatred."⁴³

Abolition Societies

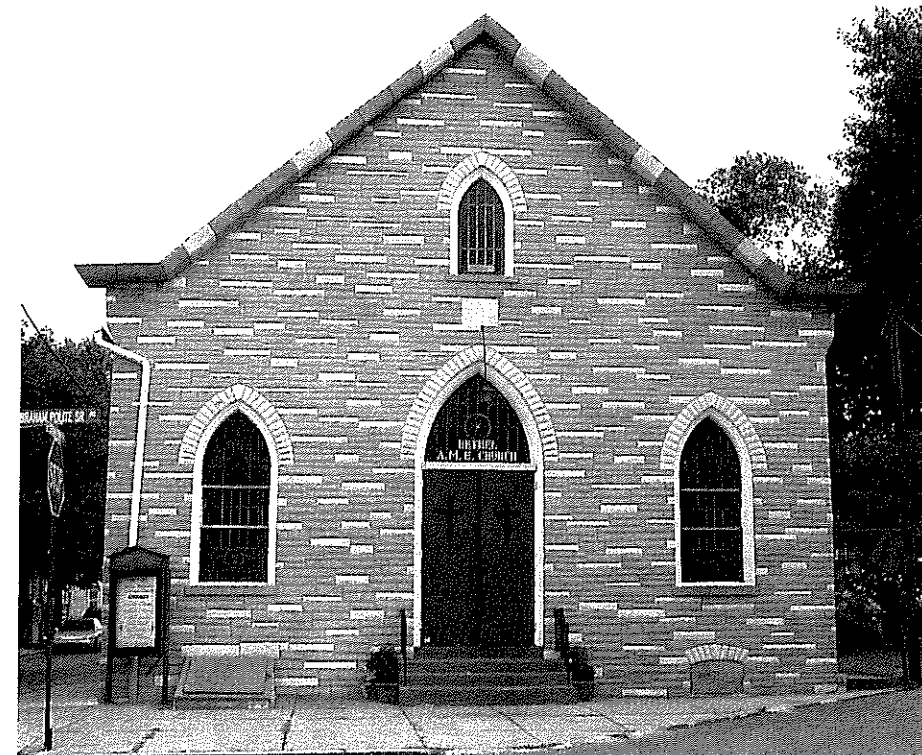
Some Episcopalians in Lancaster County were associated with one of three major abolition societies, although the number of participants was quite modest. When the "American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and Improving the Conditions of the African Race" convened in Philadelphia in 1819, at least two St. James' Episcopalians—George Boyd and David Paul Brown—were present. The Columbia Abolition Society was created in 1819. At one time James Hopkins and William Jenkins of St. James' Parish served as counselors for the society. The American Anti-Slavery Society was established in 1833. Among the sixty-one persons who signed the Society's original antislavery declaration was St. James' member David Jones.⁴⁴

Although the societies were called "abolitionist," not all members were singularly intent upon bringing about immediate and unconditional emancipation. Abolitionists did not always agree among themselves as to the proper

course of action. Some advocated ameliorative measures on behalf of slaves that fell far short of outright liberation. Thus the extent to which the Lancaster Episcopalian members of two of the antislavery organizations championed the end of slavery is a matter of speculation. As to the work of the Columbia Abolition Society, the society's preeminent preoccupation was not abolishing slavery but rather assisting fugitives in their flight north; improving the plight of freed slaves by opposing discriminatory legislation; combating the practice of kidnapping; and educating black children and adults.⁴⁵

The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Lancaster

Several members of St. James' Church aided free blacks in their founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Lancaster Borough. On June 10, 1817 about fifty black people met and expressed their desire to have their own place of worship. To achieve this end, they asked several members of St. James' to take action on their behalf—including Walter Franklin, Robert Coleman, William Jenkins and Adam Reigart. On June 23, 1817 these men along with others met at William Slough's home, approved the black people's plans for creating a church, and agreed to help them accomplish their goal. Within four years the African Bethel meeting house was completed



Present-day Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Lancaster.

and consecrated.⁴⁶

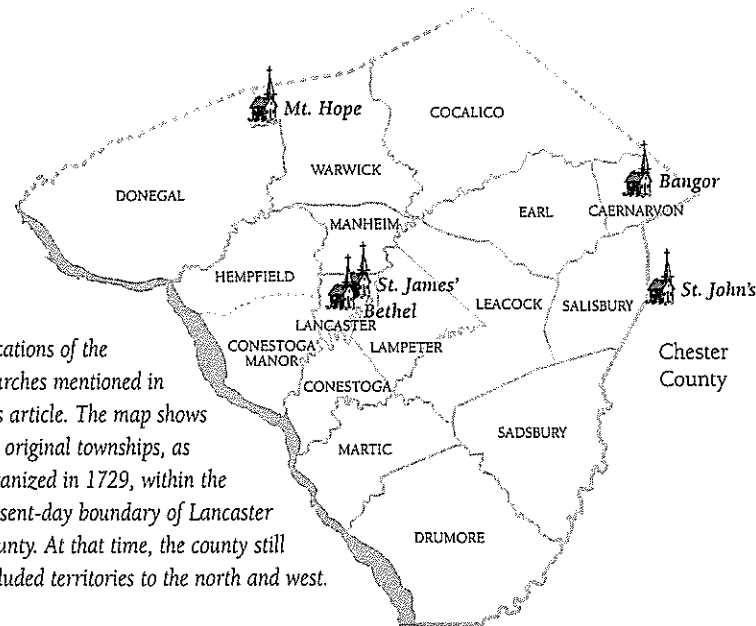
Protest against expansion of slavery

Walter Franklin and William Jenkins, along with James Hopkins, voiced a protest against the expansion of the chattel system throughout the nation. In November 1819 the three St. James' parishioners—Franklin, Jenkins and Hopkins—joined with Presbyterian James Buchanan at a meeting of citizens in the courthouse in Lancaster to issue a statement requesting members of the National Legislature "to prevent the exist-

ence of slavery in any of the territories or states which may be created by Congress." (An anti-slavery stance that Buchanan later abandoned.) The resolution was adopted unanimously by these present.⁴⁷



Previously this study delineated the ways in which three Episcopal churches of Lancaster County sought to nurture the spiritual life of black people, albeit with varying degrees of earnest-



Locations of the churches mentioned in this article. The map shows the original townships, as organized in 1729, within the present-day boundary of Lancaster County. At that time, the county still included territories to the north and west.

ness and inclusiveness. To summarize: Bangor set aside a section of the sanctuary for black slaves and servants to occupy during Sunday worship; St. John's and St. James' churches provided separate seating, administered the rites of baptism and marriage, and permitted burials in their church cemeteries. It is noteworthy that the Episcopal churches of Lancaster County engaged more blacks in religious worship and sacramental rites than did any of the churches of other denominations in the county. It is noteworthy too that the Episcopalians extended religious rites and services to both slave and free blacks for, in the minds of most Northerners, all blacks (slave and free) were

relegated to the bottom of the social pyramid and viewed with indifference if not downright scorn.

The idea of black people, especially slaves, participating in the religious observances of Episcopal churches was not a simple matter—not for Episcopalians and not for slaves. Episcopalians, especially the slave owners, were confronted with the question: Is it wise to welcome slaves into the life of our churches? Did not many of their churchmen throughout the country contend that the association of slaves with Christian churches might imbue slaves with visions of racial equality and incite them to make daring thrusts for freedom. At the same time, many Episcopalians also

believed that since these chattel people suffered the curse of pagan darkness, idolatry and superstitions of Africa, the church was commanded by God to bring these spiritually impoverished people within the pale of the Christian faith. As for the slaves, they were confronted with the question: How could they not harbor deep misgivings about engaging in the religious worship and rites of their white masters' churches? Did not these religious observances oblige slaves to glorify a white patriarchal God—a God whose clerical intermediaries and interpreters conveyed through the unspoken, if not the spoken, word the message that blacks were rightly confined to perpetual servitude and that they ought always to be obedient to their masters? Thus little wonder that relatively few slaves were engaged in the religious worship and sacramental rites of the Episcopal churches.⁴⁸

The vast majority of Episcopalians in Lancaster County—clergy and laymen—kept their distance from the subject of slavery, neither justifying it nor denouncing it. In the minds of the clergy, slavery was not germane to religion, not a matter to impose on ecclesiastical affairs. The clergy deemed it their duty to foster “assent to formal doctrine, traditional confessions and ritual observances.” Some Episcopal clergymen elsewhere in the nation issued pronouncements on the rightfulness of the bondage system. But, apparently, the

clergy in Lancaster County refrained from doing so. Nor in Lancaster County did Episcopalian laymen openly champion in any concerted manner the cause of slavery, with one notable exception. Around 1850 the Whig Party in Lancaster County split into two factions: the Anti-slavery Whigs and the Silver Grey Whigs, who were conservative on slavery. The newspaper voice for the conservative Silver Grey Whigs was the Lancaster Examiner and Herald, owned and edited by Edward D. Darlington, a vestryman at St. James' Church. Darlington took the position that anyone questioning slavery should defer to the consciousness of the Southerners. Thomas E. Franklin, also of St. James' Church and a member of Silver Grey Whigs, joined Darlington in his pro-slavery stance. The leader of the Anti-slavery Whigs was abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens, who was not a member of First Presbyterian Church but paid pew rent to that church and to other local churches, expressed his anti-slavery views through the newspaper, The Independent Way. Thus slavery pitted Episcopalians Edward D. Darlington and Thomas E. Franklin and the Examiner and Herald against Thaddeus Stevens and The Independent Way.⁴⁹

“No declarations against Negro servitude,” writes Conrad J. Engelder, “had ever been adopted by the Protestant Episcopal Church.”⁵⁰ In Lancaster County, whatever arguments individual

Episcopalians may have advanced—whether as members of colonization or abolition societies or otherwise—for terminating the practice of shackling human beings in bondage, their fellow churchmen remained overwhelmingly unpersuaded. The Episcopalians of Lancaster County were pro-slavery. Although none of the rectors of the county owned slaves, quite a number of laymen did. The names of many of the slave owners have previously been cited. Those listed were owners primarily around 1780, the year the Gradual Emancipation Act was enacted, which required all slave holders to register their bondsmen. Most records on owners before and after 1780—especially before—give only a modicum of information. Furthermore, some Episcopal church membership records have been lost and some that are extant are less than complete, ensuring that the names of some slave-owning churchmen remain concealed in antiquity. The lack of records notwithstanding, existing documents make it plain that during the colonial and post-revolutionary years the number of Episcopal slave owners was substantial. Like their fellow churchmen throughout America, the Episcopalians of Lancaster County believed that holding blacks in servitude was morally and religiously legitimate—a belief they steadily adhered to until the Civil War.



Endnotes

- 1 Gary B. Nash and Jean R. Soderland, *Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and its Aftermath* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 32, 38, 110.
- 2 Lester B. Scherer, *Slavery and the Churches in Early America 1619–1819* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 83–84.
- 3 Conrad James Engelder, *The Churches and Slavery: A Study of the Attitudes Toward Slavery of the Major Protestant Denominations*, A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Michigan, 1964, 259.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 258.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 264–265; W. D. Weatherford, *American Churches and the Negro* (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1957), 45.
- 6 Engelder, *The Churches and Slavery*, 270–271.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 269.
- 8 Franklin Ellis and Samuel Evans, *History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Everts and Peck, 1883), 1048–1049; H. M. J. Klein (ed), *Lancaster County Pennsylvania: A History* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc.), Vol. II, 825–827. For Edward Young Buchanan, see R. Chester Ross, *Two Hundred Years of Church History:*

The history of St. John's, Pequea Protestant Episcopal Church (Lancaster: The Intelligencer Printing Co., 1989), 76—Ross states that among Foster's most familiar songs are "My Old Kentucky Home," "Swanee River," "Old Black Joe," and "Massa's in the Cold, Cold, Ground." "It is of interest to know," Ross Says, "That many of these melodies were tried out by his sister, Mrs. Buchanan, in her home in Paradise, Lancaster County. She would play them over on her melodeon for her brother and they would sing them together."

- 9 For identifying the slave owners in Lancaster County, the main sources were *First Census of the United States, 1790, Pennsylvania* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), 126 ff; *Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Tax Records, 1750–1855* (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1976); *Records of Return of Slave Children Born After March 1, 1780*, Book No. 2, 1780, records made by the Clerk of Peace for the County of Lancaster; *Register of Negro and Mulatto Slaves and Servants, 1780* (photocopy of handwritten record). Other sources include articles published in the *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society*: Mary N. Robinson, "Sidelights on Slavery," vol. XV, no. 5, 1911, 135–141; Martha B. Clark, "Lancaster County's Relation to Slavery," vol. XV, no. 2, 1911, 53–61; and Lottie M. Bausman, "The General Position of Lancaster County in Negro

Slavery," vol. XV, no. 1, 1911, 12–21. To determine the Episcopalian Identity of slave owners, sources were mainly published and unpublished histories of individual churches. These sources will be cited in subsequent endnotes, as the study focuses upon the slave owners of the respective churches.

- 10 Several Episcopal Church communicants were concurrently or at different times affiliated with a church of a different denomination—examples being William Bausman, Adam Reigart and Edward Shippen, who were associated with Lancaster's First Presbyterian Church; and Thomas Banton, George Ross and Matthias Slough, who joined with Lancaster's Trinity Lutheran Church.
- 11 Edith Baldwin, "Old St. John's, Pequea," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society*, vol. XIII, no. 2, 1909, 142–147. For identity of St. John's Slave-holding Wardens and vestrymen, see p. 142.
- 12 Throughout the article, the quotations from the public notices on runaway slaves reproduce the order and spelling of the words.
- 13 Gary T. Hawbaker (ed.), *Runaways, Rascals, and Rogues: Missing Spouses, Servants, and Slaves*. Abstracts from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Newspapers, *Lancaster Journal* 1794–1810, vol. I, 1987, 131.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 124.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 56, 132.

- 16 Baldwin, "Old St. John's, Pequea," 145.
- 17 B. F. Owen, *Five Episcopal Churches*, Unpublished document, Lancaster County Historical Society Library, 73-86. William Henry Egle, *Notes and Queries: Historical Biographical and Genealogical* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1970), 16-17, 22, 28. For Jacob and Prudence Thompson, see Ross, *Two Hundred Years*, 177.
- 18 Mary T. Petrofske, *Recollections of Caernarvon Township* (West Kennebunk, Maine: Phoenix Publishing, 1993), 10-12.
- 19 J. B. Lincoln, "The Story of Caernarvon," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society*: vol. 18, no. 3, March 1914, 73. William Frederic Worner, "The Church of England in Lancaster County," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society*, vol. 37, 1933, 73-77. Traugott Frederick Illing, *Register of Marriages and Baptisms* (Harrisburg: Harrisburg Publishing Company, 1891), 11.
- 20 Hawbaker, *Runaways, Rascals, and Rogues*.
- 21 Robert E. Simpson, *The Caernarvon Rambler* (Churchtown, Pennsylvania, 1958), 196-201. C. Z. Mast and Robert E. Simpson, *Annals of the Conestoga Valley in Lancaster, Berks, and Chester Counties, Pennsylvania* (Churchtown, Pennsylvania, 1942), 490.
- 22 Petrofske, *Recollections of Caernarvon Township*, 11-12.
- 23 Ellis and Evans, *History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania*, 692. For baptism of Casa, see F. Edward Wright, *Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Church Records of the 18th Century*, vol. 3, (1994), 93. For burial of Robert Brown, see Mast and Simpson, *Annals of the Conestoga Valley in Lancaster, Berks, and Chester Counties, Pennsylvania*, 486.
- 24 William Frederic Worner, "Hope Church, Mount Hope," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society*, vol. 26, no. 10, 1922, 219-221.
- 25 Ellis and Evans, *History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania*, 464-465. H. M. J. Klein, *Lancaster County Pennsylvania, A History*, 828-832.
- 26 H. M. J. Klein and William F. Diller, *The History of St. James' Church 1744-1944*, Published by vestry of St. James' Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania 1944, 320-330. F. Edward Wright, *Lancaster County, Pennsylvania: Church Records of the 18th Century*, vol. 3, 1994, 75ff. *Vestry Minutes of St. James' from October 3, 1744 to November 13, 1846*, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, St. James' Archives, 5, 17, 40.
- 27 Klein and Diller, *A History of St. James' Church*, 322. James A. Dibert, *Iron, Independence and Inheritance: The Story of Curtis and Peter Grubb* (Cornwall, Pennsylvania: Cornwall Iron Furnace Association, 2000), 5 ff.
- 28 *Register of Negro and Mulatto Slaves 1780*, 43-44.
- 29 Jerome Herman Wood, Jr., *Conestoga Crossroads: The Rise of Lancaster, Pennsylvania*. Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in American Civilization at Brown University, June 1969, vol. 1, 184.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ellis and Evans, *History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania*, 74 and 574.
- 32 Hawbaker, *Runaways, Rascals and Rogues*, 99, 109-110, 120.
- 33 Ibid., 54.
- 34 *Vestry Minutes of St. James' from October 3, 1744 to November 13, 1846*, 13, 29, 40.
- 35 Wood, *Conestoga Crossroads*, vol. II, 419-420.
- 36 Wright, *Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Church Records of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 3, 76ff. Mary N. Robinson, "Sidelights on Slavery," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society*, vol. XV, no. 5, May 1911, 139. Mary N. Robinson, "St. James' Church Records," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society*, vol. V, nos. 3 and 4, 1901, 81-83. Regarding the Baptism of James Clendenin, see Leroy Hopkins, "Bethel African Methodist Church in Lancaster: Prolegomenon to a Social History," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society*, vol. 90, 1986, 209 and 211-212.
- 37 For total list of black marriages, see Wright, *Ibid.*, 114-128.
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- 40 Ibid., 105 ff.
- 41 Alvin W. Skardon, *Church Leaders in the Cities: William Augustus Muhlenberg* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 238-241.
- 42 Lorone Bennett Jr., *The Shaping of Black America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), 133.
- 43 Worner, "The Lancaster County Colonization Society," 109.
- 44 For the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, see minutes of the meeting of the "American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and Improving the Condition of the African Race," convened in Philadelphia, October 5, 1819, p. 1. For the Columbia Society for Abolition, see Leroy Hopkins, "Black Eldorado on the Susquehanna: The

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- 47 William Frederic Worner, "Meeting to Prevent the Introduction of Slaves into Any Territory or State Admitted into the Union." *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society*, vol. 34, 1930, 63–64.
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