

## **FROM THE ASHES**

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The Church of England in the American colonies (usually spoken of or referred to as simply “the Church”) was a healthy, thriving organization in the years before the Revolution, serving as a strong unifying force within and between the colonies and the government, but by 1770 the anti-colonial policies of the King and Parliament were creating distrust and spreading resentment toward most British institutions, including the Church. Loyalist ministers began leaving the colonies, and natural attrition and lack of recruitment further depleted the number of clergy. Then, after Independence was declared in 1776, the states began requiring the remaining ministers to swear allegiance to the new government, and some, though they might have had patriot sympathies, felt unable to do so, because they had previously been required to swear allegiance to the King in order to be ordained; and so, more of them left or simply retired.

At the same time, dissenting Baptists, Presbyterians and Quakers made it clear that they would not support the War for Independence unless they were exempt from the Parish Levy and unless legal assurances were made for their religious equality with the established church; and legislatures, anxious to secure unity for the revolutionary effort, were persuaded to change the laws providing legal authority for the vestries. Consequently, the vestries were made powerless and soon became ineffective so that remaining patriot ministers who were trying to make an accommodation were left to serve in unofficial diverse capacities, usually unsalaried and thus dependent on solicitation for individual parochial services as a means of support. As a result of all this, most of the parishes then found themselves without ministers and organized vestry leadership at a time when they were needed the most: during the war and disestablishment.

As the War for Independence unfolded, boycotts, loss of trade and lack of capital disrupted the economy. The destruction of homes, lives and property from British raids along the Carolina and Virginia coasts and the depredations of the British Army as it pillaged and plundered in its campaign across the Carolinas and Virginia created hatred of the British and all things perceived as British. A

prime target became the Church.

In 1779, Methodists in North Carolina and Virginia withdrew from Anglican parishes and began conducting their own ordinations. In other states, some Methodists were opposed and appealed to John Wesley in England, who responded by sending Dr. Thomas Coke in 1784 to act as a Methodist Superintendent Bishop to the former colonies. Coke soon revealed his true mission, however, when he began attacking the Anglican Church for being heretical, denying certain doctrines, and for preaching and practicing immorality. In an attempt at reconciliation, the Anglicans introduced a resolution to explore ways of preventing a split, but the Methodists promptly settled the issue by conclusively voting it down.

It was not until after peace became official in 1783 that Anglican leadership emerged from its preoccupation with the war effort and turned its attention to rebuilding in conformity with the new political order. In the colonial period, the Church considered all who lived within the boundaries of a parish to be its members; whereas now, only those who voluntarily associated themselves with the parish would be its members. In the colonial period, the parish was a functioning arm of local government supported by taxes; whereas now, the Church would have to invent a self-governing body under a representative convention, and find new ways of financing a parish without its property and tax support. Now, rising to the task, various state conventions began organizing and drafting preliminary plans for a constitution and incorporation, and a date was set for the first National General Convention in September 1785. Subsequent annual National General Conventions over the next four years continued to work diligently hammering out agreements on liturgy, policy, organization and function, as well as on relationships with the various state conventions and legislatures. At last, in 1789 the National General Convention in Philadelphia adopted the Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

In the meantime, however, a formidable problem facing the American Church was that of obtaining bishops within the line of apostolic succession, The Church of England could not consecrate bishops without an oath of allegiance to the King; and so, in 1784 when the Church in Connecticut sent the

Rev. Samuel Seabury for consecration as their bishop, he was forced to go to Scotland where he was consecrated by non-juring bishops. Then, in 1786, Parliament eliminated the laws requiring Americans to swear allegiance to the King, and thereupon, the Rev. William White of Pennsylvania and the Rev. Samuel Provoost of New York were elected by the churches of those states and sent to London where they were consecrated the following year (1787) in Lambeth Palace. Next, the Virginia Convention of 1790 elected as its bishop the President of the College of William and Mary, the Rev. James Monroe (not the future fourth President of the United States, but his cousin and namesake), and he was duly consecrated in London the following year (1791). Now, with four bishops (Bishop Seabury being included with the others when the New England churches ratified the Constitution of the Episcopal Church), the episcopate in the United States became self-perpetuating and assured, making the American Church truly independent.

However, the churches in the Carolinas and Georgia had taken no part in these initial organizing events, and Bishop White began trying to identify the southern churches and bring them into union with the national organization. He wrote to Gov. Samuel Johnston of North Carolina in 1789 requesting his assistance, and Gov. Johnston passed the letter on to the Rev. Charles Pettigrew, who was serving at St. Paul's Parish in Edenton and preaching in the area. Pettigrew contacted the clergy in the state known to him, and in June 1790, two clergy and two laymen met in Tarboro, voted to accept the constitution of the Episcopal Church and called a convention in November, at which time a Standing Committee was appointed and a date was set for the next Diocesan Convention in October 1791. Although there were no North Carolina delegates present at the 1792 General Convention, the Convention voted to "preserve" the resolutions of the Tarboro Convention. The North Carolina Convention in Nov. 1793 attracted only three clergy and three laymen, but in May 1794 sixteen delegates met in Tarboro and adopted a constitution for the Diocese of North Carolina. They then elected a reluctant "Parson" Charles Pettigrew as bishop to be consecrated at the 1795 General Convention in Philadelphia.

It might seem reasonable to think that the Church in North Carolina and Virginia would now be in

a position for rejuvenation and growth, but the problems that would besiege the church were only just beginning. Lingering resentment of the preferential treatment previously enjoyed by the established church prompted other denominations to attempt to claim the property of the colonial parishes as public property. This did not become a seriously persistent problem in other states, but in Virginia (the largest of all the states in terms of geographical area as well as in number of parishes) the Presbyterians and Baptists introduced legislation, year after year, aimed at having all the property of the colonial parishes – including their church buildings and yards, their glebes, and even their communion silver and bibles – sold at auction for the benefit of local governments, and they persisted in this purpose every year repeatedly until well toward the end of the first decade of the next century. This was the daunting situation that Bishop Madison had to contend with throughout most of his episcopate, which was consequently consumed by lawsuits, legislative petitions, and lobbying in efforts to defend the property of the Church from vindictive confiscation. When the diocese lost its final property case on appeal in 1804, a disheartened Bishop Madison more or less gave up in despair as the viability and prestige of the church fell into ever deepening decline while competing denominations experienced rapid growth.

When Bishop Madison died in 1812, the clergy elected the Rev. John Bracken bishop. Bracken was rector of Bruton Parish in Williamsburg and had succeeded Madison as President of the College of William and Mary; he was 66 years old and already had as much as he could be expected to manage in trying to save the struggling college, which was on the brink of financial collapse. Consequently, a small but determined and powerful group of young ministers and influential laymen centered in Alexandria decided that it was time for younger, more proactive leadership, and they began courting the Rev. Richard Channing Moore, a talented New York minister with a record of rebuilding parishes. They arranged a parish for Moore – a new one, Monumental Church in Richmond – and pressured Bracken to resign his election at the 1813 Virginia Convention. Moore then agreed to accept the call with the understanding that he would be elected at the 1814 Virginia Convention. By this time, the appalling decline of the Church in Virginia over the preceding decade and a half had

become evident. In 1799, there had been 59 surviving parishes with settled ministers, but now, in 1814, when Moore was to be nominated, there were only 19 parishes remaining. The complete collapse of the Virginia Church seemed eminent!

Only seven clergy attended the convention and six of them voted for Moore, sight unseen. The lone negative vote was cast by the Rev. James Buchanan, who objected to the rough shod methods of the nominating group. Only two weeks after his election, the new bishop was consecrated at the General Convention in Philadelphia, barely missing on his journey the plundering of Washington and the burning of the President's House by the British in the War of 1812, when some homes and churches in the Northern Neck of Virginia were also destroyed. (The President's House was not called the White House until after its subsequent refurbishing.)

In North Carolina, the prospects for revitalization of the church were even more bleak. In 1795 when Bishop-elect Charles Pettigrew set out for consecration in Philadelphia, he heard rumors of yellow fever and turned back before reaching Norfolk on the first stage of his journey. This was as close as he ever came to consecration, and his motivation dwindled as time passed. Although he did make some effort to encourage organization of the church in the state, he seemed content to preach for the rest of his life in the area around Edenton and Tyrell County, where he was also devoting increasing time and effort to developing an expanding plantation. Bishop-elect Pettigrew lived until 1807, but though he could neither confirm members nor ordain clergy, for some reason he failed to offer his resignation so that a new bishop could be elected, and thereafter, the Church steadily faded away, so that when "Parson" Nathaniel Blount of Beaufort County died in September 1816 there was not a single surviving clergyman of "the Old Church" left in North Carolina.

As ministers died or retired, as one glebe after another was sold, and as parish buildings literally crumbled, the prospects for survival of the Church in the two dioceses of North Carolina and Virginia seemed remote. Nevertheless, the Church refused to die, and in fact, it was kept alive by the Book of Common Prayer. In the absence of ministers, lay readers continued services, and where there were

no organized services or places of worship, families used the liturgy in their homes. Any literate person could read morning and evening prayer, lead family prayer or the burial service, and teach the catechism. Often it was the women of the family who saw that these things were appropriately done.

As if the continuing decline of the Church in North Carolina and Virginia were not enough to dismay the most hopeful of Episcopalians (as they were now beginning to call themselves), the vigorous growth of Methodism swept the states and numerous former Episcopalians defected to the Methodist Church, succumbing to the attractions of evangelistic, bombastic preaching, spectacular healing and conversion services and highly emotional prayer and camp meetings. One such Methodist meeting in Washington County was observed in 1806 by Ebenezer Pettigrew, the son of the bishop-elect, and he depicted it thus in a letter to his friend, James Iredell:

“While preaching they are tolerable orderly but immediately after; they get together as they call it to pray and be prayed for; there will be half a dozen praying at a time some singing, some slapping hands, some laughing, some crying, some falling dead, with what they call the spirit of conviction. They lay in an entire state of insensibility, and some times with their limbs so stiff that it is believed they would break rather than bend, for 12, 24, and some 48 hours. They will have no medical aid used to recover them. They say he that struck them down will raise them again.”

In Virginia, soon after his consecration in 1814, Bishop Moore took over the reins of the church there and began at this critical point to reverse its steady decline. Fortunately, notwithstanding his revolutionary election, he proved to have the experience, skills and energy to rebuild the church, and he threw himself into the task. He made himself and the church visible by criss-crossing the state to bring episcopal services, confirming members, performing funerals, consecrating churches and ordaining clergy. Within a few years, he had the annual Virginia Convention rotating among the towns and cities that could host it, and it became a moveable feast that drew large audiences on a more sophisticated social scale and intellectual plane than the Methodist and Baptist camp meetings. By drawing attention to the church, its bishop and clergy, its influential laymen and its distinctiveness in liturgy and polity, these Diocesan Conventions became one of the most effective ways to draw old

members back and attract the new while countering the attraction of evangelistic prayer and camp meetings favored by other denominations, but in addition, like other denominations, Episcopalians began to contribute to growth by supporting tract distribution, Sunday Schools and women's church societies.

Meanwhile, in North Carolina, the scattered few old parishes planted in colonial times were quietly germinating, held together by a handful of prominent old families, laymen and layreaders (often schoolmasters or local officials) and nurtured occasionally by visiting or missionary clergy from other states. In what was then Granville (now Vance) County, St. John's Parish with its colonial church in Williamsboro was among those few surviving. It had the active services of William Mercer Green, a teacher and lay reader in the community, and it received support and occasional missionary visits from the Rev. John S. Ravenscroft, rector of nearby St. James Parish, an actively functioning parish just across the border in the Virginia Diocese. As a matter of fact, due to the relative growth of the black population and the rector's diligence, more blacks than whites had actually been baptized annually in that parish for several years.

Finally, two months after the last surviving clergyman's death, the renaissance of the Church in North Carolina began at last in November 1816, when the Rev. Adam Empie from Long Island took charge of St. James Church in Wilmington. Two months later, the Rev. Curtis Clay from Pennsylvania became the rector of Christ Church, New Bern. The Rev. Bethel Judd from Connecticut joined Empie in Wilmington at about the same time but soon left for Fayetteville, where on 1 May 1817, he organized a new church, St. John's, and became its rector. On 21 April 1817, these three clergymen (the only ones in the state at the time) and six laymen representing New Bern, Wilmington, Fayetteville and Edenton, met in New Bern, prepared a constitution for the church in North Carolina, and acceded to the Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. They requested recognition from the General Convention, and on 21 May the new Diocese was so recognized. Having no bishop, however, they asked Bishop Moore of Virginia "to visit and perform the Episcopal offices in this state." At the next Diocesan Convention in 1818, it was reported that Bishop Moore

was agreeable to the request of the previous year and would be ready to make visitations in the summer or fall, and the delegates admitted St. Jude's Parish in Orange County (now Alamance) into union with the diocese.

Bishop Moore presided over the 1819 Diocesan Convention held in Wilmington, and on the way he stopped in Fayetteville and confirmed 48 persons, the first ever recorded in North Carolina. At this convention, St. John's Parish, Williamsboro, Trinity Parish, Tarboro and St. Mary's Parish, Orange County were admitted into union with the Diocese. Afterward, Bishop Moore also visited and preached at New Bern, Washington, Greenville and Tarboro.

Because the formation of a parish and the erection of a church in the state capital was a major objective, the Diocese resolved to hold the 1821 Convention in Raleigh, even though that city had inherited no colonial church building. On his way to preside at this Convention, Bishop Moore visited and preached in Warrenton, confirming 10 persons, and a few days later at the Convention Emmanuel Parish, Warrenton was admitted into union. In August of the same year, Christ Church, Raleigh was organized, and at the next Convention in 1822, when the it again met in Raleigh, Christ Church, Raleigh was brought into union.

Hoping to strengthen its influence west of Raleigh, the Diocese held the 1823 convention in Salisbury. The need for a bishop had become more and more pressing, and the delegates were determined to elect one. When the time came for the Episcopal election, however, there was a pause of some length before the Rev. William Mercer Green (the newly ordained same former teacher and lay reader in Williamsboro) who was performing part time missionary work in the eastern part of the diocese, nominated the Rev. John Stark Ravenscroft of St. James Parish in the Diocese of Virginia. There were no other nominations, and Ravenscroft was unanimously elected by the clergy and by the laity. Twelve days later, Green arrived at "Makeshift," Ravenscroft's home near Boydton to inform the bishop-elect of what had taken place, and Ravenscroft accepted the following day. A few weeks later he traveled to the General Convention in Philadelphia, and on 22 May 1823, he was consecrated in St. Paul's Church. At long last, 29 years after a failed attempt, North Carolina had a consecrated



bishop of its own!

The new bishop began his visitations in Williamsboro, then traveled to Oxford, to Orange County and to Raleigh, where he had been invited to serve as rector at Christ Church on a half-time basis. After taking residence there in December, he resumed his visitations and in his first year visited almost all of the congregations in the central and eastern parts of North Carolina. The 1824 Diocesan Convention was held in Williamsboro, and in his sermon on the first day, the bishop identified the Episcopal Church in North Carolina as a “branch of the true vine” and laid down a five point plan for its revival. He promptly set about giving himself to the service of the church and his episcopate, welding his clergymen into a united and harmonious team, leading their parishioners toward exclusive and faithful commitment to the Episcopal Church. Ravenscroft proved to be a strong, defiant and firm leader, just what was needed during his episcopate. With utmost humility, yet with the magnificent assurance to be intolerant of other religious bodies he deemed less than apostolic, Bishop Ravenscroft formed his flock into an intimate Christian minority fervently devoted to the Episcopal Church.

By 1828, however, Ravenscroft’s health and fortune were declining, and he accepted a call to St. John’s, Williamsboro, believing it small enough to enable him to attend to its congregation while still administering Diocesan responsibilities. A year later, the 1829 Diocesan Convention provided a stipend for its bishop so that he was able to relinquish his duties at Williamsboro and attend the General Convention in Philadelphia, where he also underwent two surgical procedures. Planning to move to Fayetteville, he returned to Williamsboro, but while visiting in Raleigh, he died on 5 March 1830. At the time of his death, there were 21 active congregations in the diocese, including, in the central part of the state, Raleigh, Hillsborough, Fayetteville, Williamsboro and Warrenton.

The Rev. Levi Stillman Ives was the 53 year old rector of St. Luke’s in New York when he was elected in May 1831 and consecrated the new bishop of North Carolina on 22 September. His first visitation was to Warrenton, where he preached and confirmed 19 persons. Next, he visited St. John’s, Williamsboro and then Oxford, where he held a service in the Court House. Within seven months of his consecration, Ives had visited every Episcopal Church in the diocese with the exception

of St. Andrew's in Burke county, which he intended to visit in May after the 1832 Diocesan Convention on his way to Tennessee and Kentucky, where he had been invited to visit by those dioceses. In October, he traveled to the General Convention in New York and returned to Oxford in November 1832 to lay the cornerstone of St. Stephen's Church.

While Bishop Ives was in Oxford, he was told about a small cluster of Episcopalians who were worshipping in their homes around Bank's Chapel, built during the 1760's, about 9 miles south of Oxford as a chapel-of-ease for St. John's Parish. Ives visited the area and found a "few warm friends and communicants" whose chapel had been confiscated by the overwhelming growth of the Methodists there. He stored this information in his memory and then continued his journey onward to finally settle in Raleigh by January 1833. Fortunately for the Bank's Chapel Episcopalians, at about this time, an Oxford native and respectable Methodist minister, Lewis Taylor, determined to leave Methodism and convert to the Episcopal Church. Bishop Ives ordained him deacon in April 1833 and promptly assigned him at once to reorganize the Episcopalians at Bank's Chapel. They formed a church, named it St. James' Church, Granville County and tried to share the chapel with the Methodists, but after a year or two, disagreements arose, and on the bishop's advice, the Episcopalians purchased an acre of land about a mile north of the chapel and built their own church there, near the present day village of Wilton.

Meanwhile, in the 1830's, a small community called "Chalk Level" was forming in the center of the area bordered by St. John's to the north, St. James to the south, Emmanuel to the east and St. Stephen's to the west. This was where the stage road from the north to Raleigh and the road from Halifax to Hillsborough crossed, and the coaches changed their horses there, about where the present day Northern Vance High School is now located. There were some blacksmith shops, livery stables, a tavern and inn, a few stores and residences. However, another community was also growing about a mile and a half southward, where there were two tobacco warehouses, a hotel, Reavis' Tavern, wheelwright and blacksmith shops, a shoemaker and a tailor-haberdasher, and some residences. By 1839, the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad had reached this point, having been offered a three mile

right-of-way and a lot by Lewis B. Reavis as an inducement to place a station there and by-pass "Chalk Level." Reavisville was proposed as the name for this new community, but Reavis declined the honor and substituted the name of Henderson, in honor of his friend Leonard Henderson, Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court. The following year, 1841, the legislature granted Henderson its charter as an incorporated township.

The handful of Episcopalians in the area had been planning to organize and build a church in the town, but they had lacked an adequate impetus until John Rust Eaton, the only child of Sarah Burwell and John Somerville Eaton, lost his life in a hunting accident on 11 September 1841. The boy's distraught parents turned to the Church for solace and support, and 10 days later, on 21 September, John Somerville Eaton and two others were confirmed in the Eaton home. This home was originally the dwelling house of William Eaton, the pioneer and great grandfather of John Somerville Eaton. It had served as the site of the first court to be held in Granville County when it was set apart from Edgecomb County in 1746, and it was located at what is now the present-day junction of Old County Home and Vance Academy Roads.

A missionary from Connecticut, the Rev. Robert M. Chapman, was preaching in the area, and Bishop Ives asked him to help establish a parish and serve as rector. Services were held in the Eaton home that autumn and the remainder of the year, and in a surprisingly short time, the parish was organized with ten communicants by Easter 1842 and a church had been constructed in Henderson. It was consecrated on Pentecost, 15 May, and named the Church of the Holy Innocents in reference to the thirteen year old boy whose untimely death stimulated the origin of the church in the home of his parents. The parish was admitted into union with the diocese in the same year (1842) in which it had been organized.

The single story wood frame church building in Henderson stood facing Garnett Street on a 100 x 100 foot lot at the present day corner of Garnett Street (100 ft.) and Church Street (100 ft.) where the Methodist Church now stands, with space for a small cemetery behind the church. The lot was given by Lewis B. Reavis, the lumber for the building was provided by John S. Eaton, and the labor

for construction was furnished by the carpenters and work force of both men.

It was at this time that a native of Guilford Court House, Sterling Yancey McMasters, was in Henderson on a Methodist preaching mission and came under Chapman's influence and instruction so that he decided to enter the ministry of the Episcopal Church. In September 1842, he and his wife were confirmed in the church, and the first baptisms in the building were those of their two infant children, Mary and Martha McMasters, and two others, Ann and Lucy Hawkins, adults. In the same year, there were three burials from the church and one interment in the cemetery. The first marriage in the church was in 1843 when Matilda Burwell and Lewis D. Burwell (cousins) were married, and in the same year, the first ordination to deacon was that of Dr. J.J. Ridley.

When the Henderson Male Academy was incorporated in 1843, the Rev. Mr. Chapman served as Principal of the Academy, as well as rector of the church, but when he left to return to the north at the end of the year, McMasters assumed the rectorship of the church, and a little over a year later, in 1845, he and Ridley were ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Ives in the church. By this time, there were twenty-five communicants.

The third rector, the Rev. Cameron Farquhar McRae, served from 1847 to January 1849, but the parish register contains very few entries concerning his tenure. The fourth rector, the Rev. Cornelius Donald McLeod, came to the parish in January 1849, but had removed to New York by May. From Advent 1849 to 20 February 1850, Bishop Ives made Henderson and Holy Innocents his home but it must have been at about this time that Ives' Protestantism was beginning to waver, because in August he rocked the Diocese by issuing an 80 page "Pastoral letter to the Clergy and Laity of His Diocese" in which he asserted and defended doctrines of secular confession, private absolution, prayers for the dead, invocation of the saints, and the "real presence" in the Eucharist. An uproar erupted, yet afterward, by the 1851 Diocesan Convention, it seemed to be smoothed over and the bishop continued his ministry as though no trouble had existed. While all of this was taking place, Holy Innocents and St. John's, Williamsboro, acquired a joint rector, the Rev. Thomas Frederick Davis, Jr., who was ordained priest in Holy Innocents in 1852, the third ordination in the church.

In September 1852, the Diocesan Standing Committee advanced the bishop \$912 of his salary and granted him a six month absence to travel abroad for his health and that of his wife. The next definite news of Ives came in a letter from Rome, dated 22 December 1852, in which he announced that he had determined to submit to the Roman Church and to resign as Bishop of North Carolina. The widespread reaction to this apostasy was probably best stated by the Rt. Rev. William Mercer Green, now Bishop of Mississippi: "I congratulate my dear native Diocese the deliverance it has lately met with." The Committee on the State of the Church reported to the General Convention that year: "It would be difficult to find a single person in North Carolina whose allegiance to the church has been at all shaken by the apostasy of her late bishop. On the contrary, it is believed that all members, having been tried, have come forth stronger in the faith and stronger in love to the church."

At the end of Ives' episcopate, the number of catechumens in the diocese stood at 1,022 and the number of communicants at 1,778, and a new bishop, the Rt. Rev. Thomas Atkinson, D.D. of Baltimore was elected at the Diocesan Convention in May 1853. In March 1855, the Rev. Richard C. Hines, Jr. was ordained priest in St. John's, Williamsboro and lived in the rectory there while serving as joint rector for St. John's and Holy Innocents until he removed to Tennessee in 1857.

At about this time, the resort community of Kittrell's Springs, where there was a new large hotel, was becoming quite fashionable, with many visitors, brought from the north and south by railroad to the popular mineral springs. The parishioners of St. James, Granville County, decided that much better prospects for the growth of their church lay a few miles to the east in the growing village; so in 1859 they dismantled their church building, reassembled it in Kittrell's Springs and moved their congregation there.

In 1859, the Rev. Henry Hedges Prout became the joint rector to Holy Innocents and St. John's, Williamsboro, living in the Williamsboro rectory until 1865, when he returned to his native New York, though he left Holy Innocents in 1863 when he was replaced as rector by the Rev. Joseph W. Murphy in November of that year.

The Rev. Mr. Murphy was an Irish immigrant who had served in the Confederate States Army.

Before accepting the call to the church, he requested a rectory, and the Vestry “by an effort which did credit to them bought a building for the rectory, expending therefor the sum of \$2,000 Confederate money,” thus making its first attempt to “stand-alone” without relying on sharing the rectories of St. John’s or Emmanuel. This rectory was situated on a lot of approximately 300 feet on the east side of Garnett Street directly across from the church, where the railroad underpass is now located. The lot was narrow, however, and so near the railroad that on one occasion an engine fell from the turntable into the rectory back yard. Murphy was particularly interested in the church school, in which he enrolled a list of 46 names, and he baptized and married many blacks in the church. He was a high churchman who opened the church for divine services every Wednesday and Friday and all holy days. In the last days of the War for Southern Independence, however, he recorded in the parish record “a grievous loss to the parish.” Yet, it was not the course of the war to which he referred, but the loss of his Senior Warden, Thomas Lewis Brodie. The lamented warden and his family had come to Holy Innocents from St. James’ Church, Granville County, in 1853 when he purchased a 1200 acre tract for a homestead on the western outskirts of the twelve year old town. Brodie had been an active lay worker and diocesan delegate at St. James’ and he continued this pattern at Holy Innocents until February 1865, when Sherman’s Union Army was advancing from the south across the state toward Raleigh, and senior reserves and Home Guard were called up to protect citizen’s homes. Brodie’s two elder sons were already in service, and he was in camp awaiting further orders when he contracted pneumonia and died, leaving his widow and nine children with the homestead and \$18.00 U.S. in “good money”.

Reconstruction after the war was accompanied by severe economic hardship so that by 1867 it became the sad duty of Brodie’s elder son, Edmund, who had become by this time Secretary of the Vestry, to notify the Rev. Mr. Murphy that regardless of the congregation’s esteem for him, the parish could no longer support a rector with a family in those difficult years. There was therefore no rector in the parish in 1869, and “on November 10, Bishop Atkinson presiding, upon representation of a want of unity of action, and...unless the vestry yield to dictation or demand, it was decided that

the vestry resign.” The record does not inform us what the basis of the disagreement was, but on November 20 at a meeting of the congregation, a new vestry was elected and at this meeting, the vestry voted to call the Rev. William Shepherd Pettigrew as rector. At the end of the year, “thanks were rendered Mr. F.A. Fetter, lay reader, for his service in opening the church and having services every Sabbath.”

The Rev. Mr. Pettigrew, educated at the Bingham School in Hillsborough and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was a bachelor and the grandson of the first elected bishop of North Carolina. Whether this had anything to do with the vestry disagreement in November is unknown, but at any rate, he began to serve jointly as rector of Holy Innocents and St. John’s, Williamsboro in February 1870. In the same year, a new rectory was built on a 186 1/2 x 129 ft. lot on the west side of Chestnut Street, where the Church Office is now located, and Pettigrew was given the use of it the following year. He remained as rector at Holy Innocents until 1878, when he became rector of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd in Ridgeway and the Chapel of Heavenly Rest in Middleburg, as well as also continuing as rector of St. John’s, Williamsboro until his death in 1900.

By the time the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew left Holy Innocents, Henderson and the church were growing rapidly. The population was 545 in 1870 and increased to 1,421 by 1880. Land was cheap because of the break up of the pre-war plantation system, and this attracted immigrants from Canada, Great Britain and Germany. Tobacco auction sales began in 1872 and tobacco manufacturing and mercantile business followed, so that by 1890, population reached 4,191.

A new rector, the Rev. Julian Edward Ingle, a native of Washington, came to Holy Innocents as a 41 year old widower in June of 1879. He found 40 communicants when he arrived, but the growth of the town and the surrounding area with an increasing number of new members made the need for a new and larger church building urgent. The vestry sold the old rectory and lot on Garnett Street in 1883 and moved the church building to a lot at the corner of what is now Pettigrew and Walnut Streets, where it was used for a school for the parish children. Work began 12 November 1883 on the new Chestnut Street Neo-Gothic brick church building where it now stands, and in the interim

services were held in Burwell Hall, located at the present day site of the Senior Center on Garnett Street. By 19 July 1885 construction had advanced enough to begin services in the new building, and the following year, 1886, the vestry sold the old Garnett Street church lot to the Trustees of the Methodist Church.

Although Hill C. Linthicum was the architect and A.J. Kivette was the builder of the new church, the Rev. Mr. Ingle drew the chancel plan and supervised the continuing work on the interior furnishing. The pulpit was installed in 1888, and the first memorial windows were placed above the altar in the same year. The altar and reredos, ecclesiastical wood-work, sedilia, prayer desks and stalls, the eagle lectern and Glastonbury chair were installed in the months prior to the consecration of the church on 19 April 1892. This must have been an especially busy time for the rector, because less than a month later, he married his second wife, Amanda P. Dunlop, in Richmond on 10 May 1892. In the preceding year, Ingle had commissioned a 3,050 lb. bell to be cast by the McShane Bell Foundry of Baltimore and christened "Annette Lewis Ingle" in memory of his first wife, and on 28 October 1892 it was installed in the tower as a gift to the church by the rector. The Rev. Mr. Ingle gained the reputation of being "the highest churchman in the Diocese of North Carolina: he observed all holy days, feasts and fasts and beginning in 1893 on week days in Lent he held Evening Prayer daily with Gregorian chanting." Even so, he was also known to have a puckish sense of humor. When he would hear the sexton ring the Verger's Call on the tower bell for the choir to assemble before services, he was known to say to his new bride, "Well, Amanda, now I must leave you; Annette is calling!" In 1900, the vestry of the Church of the Holy Innocents authorized two parishioners, Col. Henry Perry and John D. Rose, to solicit funds and secure a location for a mission at Henderson Mills. This culminated in the establishment of St. John's Mission on 5 April 1908 in the closing days of Mr. Ingle's twenty-nine years as rector.

The next rector, the Rev. Isaac Wayne Hughes, came to the parish in September 1909, and almost immediately began overseeing a series of changes and developments in the growing parish. He soon had the choir vested, moved from the south transept to the choir stalls in the chancel and appointed



the choir's first crucifer, Thomas Skinner Kittrell. Funds canvassed from the congregation of Holy Innocents financed the building of St. John's Mission Church which was completed in 1912 on a lot given by Mrs. David Young Cooper. In 1915, the lot on Chestnut Street adjacent to the Church was acquired and the Holy Innocents Parish House was built in 1916. In 1921, as a memorial to her husband, Mrs. Alexander Cooper gave St. John's Mission its Parish House, and the parish houses of both churches have continued to be shared for parish and community uses in various outreach and parish programs. In 1924, the organ in Holy Innocents was extensively repaired. A new rectory for the church, replacing the one built on the same site in 1870, was completed in 1930 and occupied by the rector and his family. The influence and growth of the church increased over the next decade, but in the midst of World War II, Mr. Hughes died in 1943, widely mourned, after 32 years as rector, having served the longest period of any rector to date.

At this time, the communicants numbered 373 and the population of the town was approximately 7,647. The Church of the Holy Innocents had existed for 101 years since its founding with the last 61 years of this time under the guidance of only two rectors. Now, for the next 60 years, the parish entered a period in which there were multiple rectors (nine) of varying tenures, unique personalities and diverse talents. There also followed a long series of adjustments, changes, adaptations, improvements and expansions reflecting the growth and continued evolution of the parish. For instance, the lower hall of the Parish House was extensively renovated in 1951, and a much needed school wing annex was built in 1957, with further extensive renovations in 1976. In 1962, the lot at the corner of Montgomery and Walnut Streets was given to the church as a memorial, and has been used since then by the city as a public playground. A new pipe organ was installed in 1960, the organ console was moved from the nave to the choir in the chancel, and air conditioning was installed. In the meantime, Mrs. Alexander Cooper had built a residence on the lot at the corner of Pettigrew and Walnut Streets in which she lived until her death, when the house was deeded to the church. The church has subsequently used this building for housing an Addiction Recovery Center or a refuge for abused family members or similar outreach programs. A new rectory in a residential

location more pleasing to modern rectors was acquired in 1965, and the building adjacent to the church which previously served as the rectory was used by the North Carolina Legal Assistance Program from 1982 until 1993. It was finally renovated as the Church Office, and a former rector gifted the construction of a gateway and plaza entry from Pettigrew Street. The Memorial Garden and columbarium behind the church were built between 1988 and 1992. An entirely new organ was gifted by a generous parishioner in 2000. Many other gifts, memorials, improvements, renovations and repairs too numerous to list further have been made over the 60 year period in the evolution and growth of the church.

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The story of how the ancient heritage of our church was refined in the fire of the American Revolution and emerged from the ashes of disestablishment and of how the Church of the Holy Innocents came to be where and what it is does not end at the present, nor will it in the future, for the story is ongoing and continues, as the power of the Holy Spirit, having brought us to this point in time and place, grows and evolves with us and the church.

Thanks be for the Glory of God!

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