

2018
2019



PILGRIMAGE TO OUR PAST

Celebrating 200/225 Years of Students & Parishioners for Others

The Civil War Years

The Civil War not only divided the country, but also divided Georgetown College—or at least its students.

Many of the Jesuits associated with the university, like their brothers in the Maryland Province, favored the South in the years leading up to the Civil War and the Confederacy once conflict broke out.

John Early, S.J., the president of Georgetown University 1858-1866 and again 1870-1873, said that the reason that the university survived the war was that he insisted that the faculty maintain neutrality—at least publicly—during the conflict.

Students were less restrained. The debating society had to be suspended after a brawl broke out in response to a debate on the issue of secession at the end of 1859. Eventually, 1,141 Georgetown students fought in the war and 106 died. The college drew most of its students from the South and 925 served in the Confederate army while 216 fought with the Union.

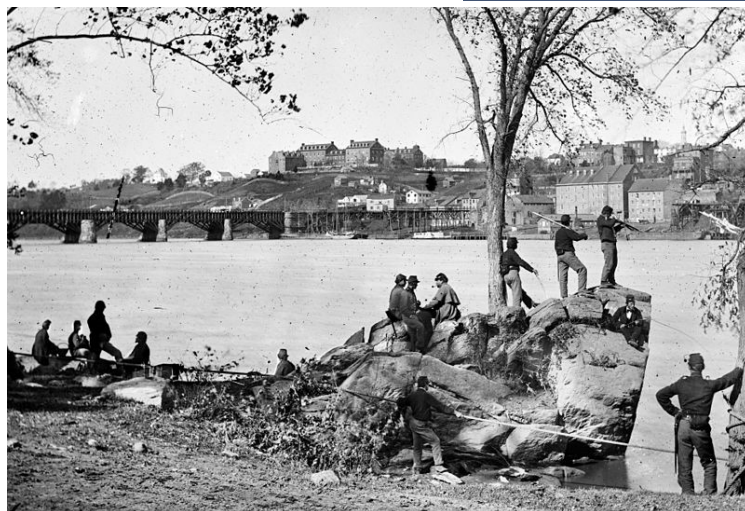
The Battle of Bull Run in July 1861 was a rude awakening for the Union. The day after the Confederate victory at Bull Run, Julius Garesche, the chief of staff to the U.S. Army of the Columbias, who had attended Georgetown from 1833 to 1837, wrote to John Early, S.J., the president of Georgetown, and appealed for Jesuit priests to be sent to the Confederate hospital near Manassas to administer the sacraments to the dying Union soldiers.

Garesche wrote, “All our sick and wounded, I suppose, are in the hands of the Confederate army. At least one third of them must be Catholics - with no priests to care for them! Now this is a heaven-sent opportunity to show the men of both sides, to the whole country that our good Priests, true ministers of peace, though they have not girded themselves with weapons and made themselves ridiculous in uniforms, are prompt to offer their services.” Three Jesuits went the day the letter arrived.

Following the Union rout at Bull Run, Holy Trinity Church as well as Georgetown College buildings were requisitioned to serve as hospitals for Union wounded. Fortunately, the Union officer in charge of occupying Holy Trinity’s property was Captain Strong, a Catholic, from Pennsylvania. His brother, George Strong, was a Jesuit. A false floor was erected above the pews and sanctuary, and Captain Strong made sure that the church was not damaged.

Cont. on page 2

November 2018



A 1861 view of Georgetown taken from the Virginia side of the Potomac River.

The History of Holy Rood

Did you know that Holy Trinity has had three cemeteries since its founding? The first was a small burial ground adjacent to Trinity Church, the present-day Chapel of St. Ignatius. Several headstones in the chapel garden commemorate this site.

The second cemetery, called the College Ground, was established in 1818 on the Georgetown College campus, near 37th and P Streets, NW. According to church records, between 1831-1832, College Ground burials increased 250%, most likely because of the Asian Cholera epidemic and high rates of infant and child mortality.

In need of more burial space, in 1832 Pastor James M. Lucas, S.J., directed the purchase of land on High Street (now 2126 Wisconsin Avenue, NW) for Holy Trinity’s third cemetery. The new cemetery, known as the Upper Graveyard, was just north of Georgetown on a hillside with panoramic view of the city. Thomas Corcoran, a prosperous businessman twice elected mayor of Georgetown, donated additional land for the *Upper Graveyard*, and his son, William Wilson Corcoran endowed the cemetery.

In 1853, Holy Trinity’s pastor, Joseph Aschwandten, S.J., added several more sections to the Upper Graveyard, completing the six and a half acre cemetery. He also had a house for the sexton/grave digger built near the entrance.

Cont. on page 4

Civil War Years, *cont. from page 1*

Toward the end of the war, the church was returned to the Jesuits and the congregation. The false floor had been removed and the parish was paid \$350 for use of the church —eleven years later!.

While the main church was being used as a hospital, the Jesuit fathers continued serve the Holy Trinity community by utilizing the chapel for Masses, Baptisms, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The funeral for Major General Amiel Weeks Wipple, who was mortally wounded at Chancellorsville, was held at Holy Trinity in May 1863. Wipple, a convert to Catholicism, commanded one of the defensive forts surrounding Washington, and led a division at Fredricksburg. President Lincoln attended his funeral Mass. The sexton at Holy Trinity had been warned to keep the center aisle clear for the President. However, when Lincoln arrived the sexton did not recognize the president and tried to keep him out of the center aisle. Lincoln is reputed to have said, “would that my officials were as exact in the performance of their duty as your good sexton.”

General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox April 9, 1865. The joy of victory and peace was quickly followed by the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln April 15. The bells of Holy Trinity joined that of other churches in Georgetown and Washington to toll for him and mourn the loss of the man who had kept the country together and promised a peace of reconciliation.

However, the story did not end there. There was a connection between Georgetown and the assassination. Three of the eight persons convicted of conspiracy to assassinate Lincoln had graduated from Georgetown University. When the authorities combed Georgetown for

John Wilkes Booth, the assassin, they arrested the Jesuit John B. Guida, who taught Philosophy at Georgetown from 1863 to 1868. He bore a close resemblance to Booth and was arrested near Georgetown's villa in Tenleytown and taken to a military camp in Virginia until the real Booth was arrested.

—Bernie & Rosemary Cook

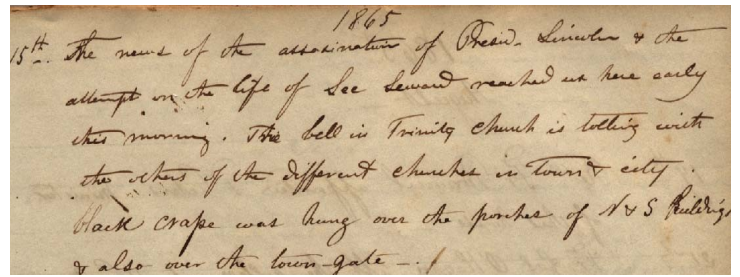
Resources:

John Early, S.J. Georgetown President, 1858-1866 and 1870-1873, Georgetown University Archives, www.library.georgetown.edu/exhibition/shades-blue-and-gray-georgetown-and-civil-war

Letter from Julius P. Garesche to Georgetown President John Early, S.J., July 22, 1861 (Rev. John Early, S.J. Papers, box 1 folder 1). Georgetown University Archives, www.library.georgetown.edu/exhibition/shades-blue-and-gray-georgetown-and-civil-war

Rev. Lawrence J. Kelly, S.J., *History of Holy Trinity Parish Washington, D.C., 1795-1945*, (Baltimore: John D. Lucas Printing Co, 1945), p. 27. Wipple's two sons, William and David, had attended Georgetown. John Early, S.J., credited Wipple for restraining the impact of the Federal requisitioning of Georgetown and Holy Trinity property. Letter to Georgetown President John Early, S.J., from the Surgeon General's office, requisitioning campus buildings, August 31, 1862 (Rev. John Early, S.J. Papers, box 1, folder 1).

Shades of Blue and Gray: Georgetown and the Civil War, Howard W. Gunlocke Rare Book and Special Collections Room, Georgetown University, 2011, www.library.georgetown.edu/exhibition/shades-blue-and-gray-georgetown-and-civil-war



Jesuit Community House Diary Entry from April 15, 1865: “The news of the assassination of President Lincoln and the attempt on the life of Sec Seward reached us here early this morning. The bell in Trinity Church is tolling with the others of the different churches in Town and city.”



SAVE THE DATE!

225TH ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATIVE ITEMS, INCLUDING:
ORNAMENTS, BISTRO MUGS & MORE
WILL BE ON SALE
DECEMBER 2
AFTER ALL MASSES!

DONATE TO THE AUCTION!

DONATE TO THE
200TH/225TH ANNIVERSARY BENEFIT
TAKING PLACE MARCH 2

DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO
A SPECIAL TOUR AT THE CAPITOL
OR A MUSEUM?

TICKETS TO A SPORTING EVENT OR
CONCERT?

WANT TO HOST A SIGN-UP PARTY?
JOIN THE CELEBRATION!

HT225@TRINITY.ORG

Holy Rood, *cont. from page 1*

Following the Civil War, the Upper Graveyard's name was changed to Holy Rood, taken from the Scottish *haly ruid* meaning "Holy Cross." Further improvements to the cemetery were made, including an entrance gate, a stone retaining wall along Wisconsin Avenue and a small brownstone holding crypt or vault.

A Resting Place for Generations of Parishioners

Many generations of Holy Trinity parishioners are buried at Holy Rood, including the families of European immigrants who helped build the C&O Canal and much of Washington, DC. One of the earliest graves is that of Joseph Nevitt (1753-1834), a Minuteman who fought the British along the Potomac River at the Battle of St. George Island, the first Revolutionary War battle fought on Maryland soil.

Holy Rood is also the resting place of Confederate and Union veterans. The May 30, 1891 issue of the *Washington Star* reported 40 Union veterans buried in Holy Rood, their graves marked by distinctive white headstones the Quartermaster General furnished. Among Civil War veterans are three sons of the Clements family of Georgetown: Horace, a Confederate volunteer, and Andrew and Joseph, who fought for the Union.

Until the mid-19th century, approximately one third of Holy Trinity's congregation was African American. Early African American parishioners came to Georgetown with the Catholic families who moved up from southern Maryland. Local historians believe that Holy Rood may be the best documented burial ground in the District of Columbia of persons who were enslaved. Many free blacks are also buried at Holy Rood, including the family of Anne Marie Becraft, a prominent Catholic educator in Georgetown, who died in 1833.



Holy Rood Cemetery Today

The last cemetery lot at Holy Rood was sold in 1915, and the cemetery was closed to further burials in 1985. Without revenue from lot sales, funds for cemetery maintenance were scarce, and Holy Trinity's involvement with the cemetery diminished. As founder of Holy Trinity, Georgetown University owned all of Holy Trinity's land, including Holy Rood. For many years, the University has kept the grass at Holy Rood mowed, but did little other maintenance, with one exception. In 2002, the University rebuilt the stone retaining wall along Wisconsin Ave. that was in danger of collapsing, at a cost of \$1.5 million.

In 2010, a group of Holy Trinity parishioners "rediscovered" Holy Rood Cemetery. Led by current pastor, Kevin Gillespie, S.J., Holy Trinity and Georgetown University reached an agreement in September 2018 on a plan to restore the cemetery and to insure its good upkeep. As part of this plan, Holy Trinity will build a columbarium at Holy Rood for the remains of parishioners and others. The next chapter in the history of Holy Trinity's third, and most likely final, cemetery is about to begin.

—Grace Bateman

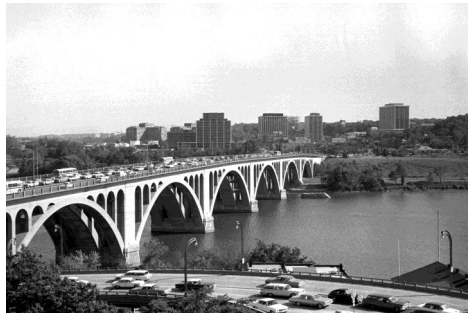
You are invited to share stories and memories of how your experiences at Holy Trinity have shaped your life, your faith and your family. Stories will be selected for use on our website and in the bulletin. All stories will be added to the parish archives. Please submit stories HT225@trinity.org. Photos are also welcome!

Parishioner Reflections

Step by Step

I was a freshman at Holy Trinity High School from 1963 to 1964. On October 23, 1963, some of my classmates and I heard that Bobby Kennedy was on the grounds. We dashed out to the courtyard (where the playground is now), and there he was with some of his aides. We each handed him pieces of paper for his autograph, and he patiently signed them all. I was struck by his youth and good looks and how kind he was. Of course, none of us could have imagined then what lay ahead only weeks away.

On November 22, when the news broke about the assassination of President Kennedy, we were dismissed from class and sent home. My family lived in Arlington, and I took the public bus to school. When I had the time, I would catch the bus at the Rosslyn stop to save a dime on my fare. I loved the scenic walk across Key Bridge. That day, as I headed home, I opted to walk to Rosslyn to catch the bus. I was so shocked and saddened at



A view of Key Bridge and Rosslyn in the 1960s.

the news of President Kennedy's death that I felt weak, and I could hardly breathe. But I forged ahead, clutching my books against my chest and, looking down, watched my saddle oxford shoes, step by step, as I crossed the bridge, willing myself to keep going. This image has stayed with me over the years and sometimes, when I have something physically difficult to do, I am reminded of my sad, determined walk across Key Bridge on the day President Kennedy died.

—Judy Keating

John F. Kennedy

Our Nation's Catholic President



Photo by United Press International

November 27, 1960. President-elect John F. Kennedy carries daughter Caroline's doll as he chats with newsmen and Secret Service men after attending services at Holy Trinity Church.

While living in Georgetown as a representative, senator and president-elect, John F. Kennedy regularly attended Mass at Holy Trinity, including on the morning of his inauguration.

He attended Mass on November 1, 1963, which was the last Mass he attended in Washington. Kennedy is remembered on a plaque outside Holy Trinity, which features the presidential seal and an image of PT-109, the ill-fated boat he commanded during World War II.

Anniversary Sponsors!

as of November 1, 2018

— LEGACY LEADERS —

Anonymous donor on behalf of:



— JUBILEE SPONSORS —



— CENTENNIAL SPONSORS —



- HOST COMMITTEE -

Ashley & Brendan Burke
Kristi & John Cecchi
Danielle DeGarmo
Jill & Tim Doyle
Katherine & Keith Fleming
Diane Favret & Bill Gallagher
Joe Figini & Jason Denby
Gonzaga College High School
Meredith Hanley & Michael Correia
Anna & Nick Harris
Margaret Heimbold/Long & Foster
Peter Higgins
Bridget & Warren Holmes
Ashley & Paul Klick
Michelle & John Korsmo
Karen McCooey Studio
Colleen & Bill McGinley
Tasha & Doug McGinn
Brittany & Bill Milby
Julie & Keith Moellering
Sarah & Matthew Oetgen
Lauren & Cayce Roy
Listi & Alan Sobba
Splitfinger Strategies
Alanna & Ryan Temme
Jen & Tim Touchette
Julia & Mike Torrey
Kristin & Adam VanFossen

*Interested in becoming a sponsor?
Visit www.trinity.org/225*