

## Enslavement and Emancipation at Holy Trinity

by Peter J. Albert

*And it shall come to pass . . .  
that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow,  
and from thy fear,  
and from the hard bondage  
wherein thou wast made to serve.  
(Isaiah 14:3)*

On Apr. 16, 1862, months before he issued the general Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed an Emancipation Act ending slavery in the District of Columbia. The act freed “all persons held to service or labor” in the District “by reason of African descent,” compensated enslavers who were loyal to the Union, and encouraged the newly freed to emigrate. Within months, the oversight board created by the act had approved compensation to the enslavers of some 2,989 African Americans. Those who had been enslaved, however, received no compensation. (1)

How were Holy Trinity parishioners engaged with enslavement? What was the impact of the Emancipation Act? What became of some of those freed?

Holy Trinity’s pew rent records help us answer some of these questions. In the absence of parish membership lists, the pew rent records that survive for specific years offer us proxy rosters of parishioners for those time periods, both White and African American. Comparing names in the pew rent records with those in the District of Columbia’s emancipation records helps us identify parishioners who were enslavers and as well as many of those they enslaved, and the decennial federal censuses provide us with further information.

What do these records reveal?

Of the 54 White parishioners who rented pews at Holy Trinity between 1831 and 1833 who can be located in the 1840 census, 31 (57%) were enslavers. They enslaved 77 African Americans. (2)

Of the 53 White parishioners renting pews between 1842 and 1851 who can be located in the 1850 census, 32 (60%) were enslavers. They enslaved 77 African Americans. (3)

Of the 76 White parishioners renting pews in 1862, 32 (42%) can be identified as enslavers in the 1860 census or in the District's emancipation records. Of these, 20 can be found both in the 1860 census and in the emancipation records. They were compensated for the emancipation of 98 African Americans by the emancipation commissioners. The other 12 parishioners, identified as enslavers in the 1860 census but not found in the emancipation records, enslaved 35 African Americans. (4)

Who were the enslaved? What became of them? Here we can present only the bare outlines of some of their stories. The enslavers named here were parishioners who appear in our pew rent records. The enslaved people named here were held by these parishioners and appear in the District of Columbia's emancipation records, where they are named along with their enslavers. Some can also be found in our parish records.

Five of the freed African Americans rented pews at Holy Trinity, either during or after their enslavement: (5)

**Caroline Butler Gray**, aged 46 in 1862, rented a pew between 1854 and 1865. She was enslaved by parishioner Joseph Fearson of Georgetown, who bought her and her children in Montgomery County, Md. Caroline's daughter Jane Agnes had 5 children of her own while enslaved by Fearson – Frank, Benjamin, Phebe, Nebraska Bill, and Abraham Dixie. Caroline's husband Hiram (or Hyman) Gray was enslaved by a Mr. Summers, who does not appear in the emancipation records nor in our pew rent records. Two of Caroline's daughters were baptized at Holy Trinity – Harriett Ann in 1837 and Jane Agnes in 1844. After emancipation, the family lived in Georgetown. Mr. Fearson was also compensated for the emancipation of Sarah Douglas, aged 68 in 1862, whom he had inherited from his parents. She had been purchased in 1812 from an enslaver in Charles County, Md. (6)

**Ellen Worthy**, aged around 40 in 1862, rented a seat in a pew from 1857 to 1859 while she was enslaved by parishioner Sarah Simpson of Georgetown, whose husband had bought Worthy in Washington in 1853. After emancipation Worthy left Georgetown and in the 1880s was working as a domestic elsewhere in the District. (7)

Enslaved by parishioner Mary Bibb of Georgetown, **Harriet Williams**, age 28 in 1862, had been brought here from Kentucky. After emancipation she continued to live in Georgetown together with her husband Logan Williams, a barber, also from Kentucky, and their children Charles and Mary. She rented a pew at Holy Trinity in 1862. Employed as a domestic, she died in 1903 and was buried at Holy Rood Cemetery. (8)

**Lucian Jones**, aged 35 in 1862, was enslaved by parishioner Alfred Boucher, who purchased him in Georgetown. Lucian rented a pew between 1867 and 1871. Initially paying his pew rent in cash, he later pumped the bellows for the church organ in lieu of making cash payments. According to city directories, he worked as a teamster or cart driver after his emancipation, and later, after moving out of Georgetown, he was a laborer. (9)

**Ann Carter**, aged 43 in 1862, was enslaved by parishioner Mary Helen Keith Forrest, the wife of Bladen Forrest. After she was freed, Carter lived in Georgetown – in 1870 with her daughter Sallie and son John who were emancipated with her; by 1880 she was a widow and lived with Sallie, John, and two grandchildren, Charles and William. She rented a pew at Holy Trinity from 1874 to 1876. In 1870 her daughter Adelaide was working as a domestic servant in Georgetown. Forrest was also compensated for the emancipation of George Carter, 40; Theodore Butler, 19; Mary Carter, 16; and Susan Mason, 90. (10)

Few of the formerly enslaved listed in the emancipation records appear in our parish records as pew renters. Information on the following African Americans enslaved by Holy Trinity parishioners comes from emancipation and census records.

Two sisters, **Hannah**, aged 36, and **Rachel Ogle**, aged 25 in 1862, were acquired as children by parishioner Lewis Brooks of Georgetown from an estate in Anne Arundel County, Md. After emancipation, Rachel married Daniel Carroll, a laborer who subsequently became a carter. Hannah lived with them in Georgetown and worked as a domestic. The Carrolls had 5 children – Mary, William, Forrest, Daniel, and Marcellus. Mary Rebecca was baptized at Holy Trinity in 1867, William Henry in 1869, Daniel Isaac in 1876, and Forrest Thomas and Marcellus in 1880. Hannah Ogle was the godmother of Mary, William, and Forrest. Records suggest Mary was buried at Holy Rood Cemetery in 1886. By 1900, Rachel and Daniel had both died, and Hannah, 73, was no

longer living in Georgetown. Working as a laundress, she was head of the family and had eight nieces and nephews living with her. (11)

While enslaved, **Ignatius (Nace) Foster**, aged 34, a carpenter, worked in a household that included 16 enslaved people – 7 hired out for wages, 3 who worked “at home,” and 6 children. They were enslaved by parishioner Mary Ann Clarke, who claimed “the wages derived from her servants have for many years been her only means of support,” without which “she would be entirely destitute.” Foster worked as a laborer after his emancipation and lived in Georgetown with his wife **Mary Ann Norris Foster**, aged 36, who had been enslaved by parishioner Pierce Shoemaker. Their children included Tobias, Evaline, Benjamin, Annie, Cornelius, Catherine, Fannie, Charles, and Mary, several of whom had been enslaved by Shoemaker along with their mother. Annie (Mary Ann Eliza) was baptized at Holy Trinity in 1854, Cornelius in 1856, Catherine Louisa in 1858, and Charles James in 1869.

Mary Ann Clarke was also compensated for the emancipation of Edmund Stewart, 47; Susan Hutchins, 36; Lucy Clarke, 32; Clara Ridgley, 27; Mary Hutchins, 19; Rachel Hutchins, 16; David Hutchins, 15; Tobias Hutchins, 13; George Hutchins, 12; Eliza Hutchins, 9; Louisa Hutchins, 5; Jack Clarke, 7; James Ridgley, 7; and William Ridgely, 3. She had inherited all of them from her father. David Hutchins was working as a domestic servant in Georgetown in 1870; Tobias and George Hutchins or Hutchison were working in Georgetown in 1870 as common laborers. (12)

**Rachel Jackson**, aged 65 in 1862, Nace Foster’s mother, and the mother or grandmother of all but one of those enslaved with him, lived in the same household as he did. Census records show that in 1870, at the age of 73, she was a washerwoman living in Washington. She does not appear in the 1880 census. (13)

**Ann Yates Shorter**, aged 25 in 1862, was enslaved by parishioner Mary Fenwick of Georgetown. After her emancipation, Shorter and her husband Abraham, a laborer, continued for a time to live in Georgetown, but by 1880 they and a number of their children – Lucy, Mary, Sarah, William, and Samuel – were living elsewhere in the city. Her son Robert, also emancipated in 1862, continued to live in Georgetown, where he married and worked as a laborer. Lucy was baptized at Holy Trinity in 1860, Samuel in 1874. By 1900 Ann was a widow and was working as a charwoman. (14)

**Mary Jane Dorsey**, aged 38 in 1862, was enslaved by parishioner Ann Green. By 1870 Dorsey and 5 children – Susan, Francis, Gustavus, Solomon, and Elizabeth – had moved out of Georgetown. She, Susan, Francis, and Gustavus had been enslaved together; the four were all working as domestics in 1870. Two other sons, Henry and Charles, also enslaved with her, were working in 1870 as porters in stores in Washington. Mary Dorsey was also compensated for the emancipation of Thomas Waters, 30; Aaron Edmonston, 27; Vachel Henry Edmonston, 20; and Phebe Edmonston, 22. (15)

**Agnes Bennett**, aged 22 in 1862, and her daughter Anne, aged 5, were enslaved by parishioner Louisa Kearney of Georgetown. By the time of the 1870 census, Agnes was a lodger with a Georgetown family and worked as a domestic, but Anne, now 12, was not living with her mother. Instead, she was still in the household of their former enslaver, who described her as “a smart child to whom the family is much attached.” In 1880 Agnes and Anne were living together in Georgetown, and Agnes was employed as a cook. (16)

**James Summerville**, aged 24 in 1862, was a gardener while enslaved by parishioner John Kidwell. After his emancipation, he moved out of Georgetown and found work as a laborer, living with his wife Jane and their children, Ezekiel, Julia, Isaac, Robert, Clara, and Gertrude. **Sarah Brooks**, aged 20, also enslaved by Kidwell, boarded near Georgetown after her emancipation. Kidwell was also compensated for the emancipation of Mary Somerville, 3. (17)

**Mary Coquire**, aged 7 in 1862, enslaved by parishioner Sarah King, worked as a domestic in a Georgetown household after her emancipation. Sarah King was also compensated for the emancipation of Mary Chase, 64; Rachel Coquire, 28; Selina Coquire, 24; John Coquire, 5; and Annette Coquire, 2. (18)

**Frank Mockabee**, aged about 44 in 1862, was enslaved by parishioner Eliza Mosher of Georgetown. After emancipation he worked in Washington as a laborer. Also freed by Mosher was **Martha Snowden**, aged about 27, the wife of William Snowden who had been enslaved in a different household in Washington. The Snowdens had one son, Samuel. After emancipation, William Snowden worked in Washington as a cartman, then as a coachman. He died in the mid-1880s when he was in his mid-50s.

Eliza Mosher was also compensated for the emancipation of Mary Davis, 21. (19)

**Benjamin Lyles**, aged 44 in 1862, was enslaved along with Mary Ann Norris Foster in the household of parishioner Pierce Shoemaker and continued to work there as a farmhand after his emancipation. By 1880 he was a widower. **Joseph Simms**, aged 27, also worked in this household, and after emancipation he lived near Georgetown with his wife Milly and their children Anna, James, Henry, John, and Ernest. Simms worked as a porter and then as a janitor. Pierce Shoemaker was also compensated for the emancipation of George Dover, 45; Rachel Lyles, 43; Elizabeth Lyles, 26; Matilda Lyles, 24; Albert Lyles, 2; Catharine Lyles, 22; Leander Lyles, 18; Rebecca Lyles, 12; Osceola Lyles, 9; Emma Lyles, 3; John Simms, 18; and Mary Simms, 20. (20)

Other Holy Trinity parishioners who were compensated for the emancipation of enslaved African Americans included Benjamin Clements (for Josephine Furgeson, 15), Dr. John Gibbons (for Rachel Yearby, 35; Kate Adams, 8; and Noble Harris, 14), Thomas Newman (for William Mills, 24; and Harriet Davis, 40), Ann R. O’Neale (for Lloyd Mason, 45; Hillary Young, 40; and George Phenix, 20), William Peters (for Louisa Carter, 16), and John M. Williams (for Nace Claxton, 58). (21)

These 20 parishioners were paid \$29,696.40 (\$923,749.16 in 2024 dollars) by the emancipation commissioners. (22)

## Notes

1. An Act for the Release of certain Persons held to Service or Labor in the District of Columbia.

2. “Receipts – Pew Rent, [1831-33],” Archives of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, box 101, folder 14, Georgetown University Archives, Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Washington, D.C. Enslavers who rented pews at Holy Trinity between 1831 and 1833 included Richard Adams, Bernard Bryan, Lewis Carbery, Stephen Cassin, Mrs. Mary Chambers, Robert Clarke, Bennett Clement, John

Clements, Corcoran, Mrs. Susan Decatur, Peter Donnoghue, Mrs. Teresa Fenwick, John T. Ford, Benjamin Fowler, Giveney, John Green, James Harvey, Enoch Heard, Madam de Iturbide, Charles King, Enoch King, John A. King, John Laurence, George Mahoney, John May, Clem Newton, Offut, James O'Reilly, Raphael Semmes, Miss Mary Thompson, and Mrs. Mary Winter (given names were sometimes omitted in the pew rent lists).

3. Pew Rent Records, 1842-51, Holy Trinity Church Arch., box 6, folder 3, Georgetown Univ. Arch., Booth Center. Enslavers who rented pews at Holy Trinity between 1842 and 1851 included Joshua Bateman, Dolly Boarman, Sally Boarman, Alfred Boucher, Jos. Brooks, Lewis Brooks, B. Bryan, Mrs. Mary Chambers, Mrs. Susan Decatur, Timothy Donoghue, James Dyer, J. N. Fearson, Eleonora Fenwick, Mrs. Rebecca Ford, Mrs. Richard Jones, Charles King, Mary King, John Laurence, George Mahoney, Matthew McCleod, George Meem, Michael Miller, Joseph Mounts, Ann Queen, Samuel Rainey, James Reilly, Dr. Joshua Ritchie, Mrs. Mary Semmes, Bennet Sewall, T. Simpson, Vincent Taylor, and George Templeman.

4. Pew Rent Records, 1851-71, box 3, folder 1, Holy Trinity Church Arch.; *Compensated Emancipation in the District of Columbia: Petitions under the Act of April 16, 1862*, ed. Dorothy S. Provine (Westminster, Md., 2008). Enslavers who rented pews at Holy Trinity in 1862 and can be identified in the emancipation records included Mary Bibb, Alfred Boucher, Lewis Brooks, Mary Ann Clarke, Benjamin Clements, Joseph Fearson, Mary Fenwick, Mary Helen Keith Forrest, John Gibbons, Ann Green, Louisa Kearney, John Kidwell, Sarah King, Eliza Mosher, Thomas Newman, Anne R. O'Neale, William Peters, Pierce Shoemaker, Sarah Simpson, and John M. Williams. Enslavers who rented pews but who cannot be identified as receiving compensation for emancipations included L. Clements, Wm. Herron, Wm. Homiller, H. M Hurdle, L. Kengla, H. Loughborough, Mary McDaniel, Miss McLeod, Benjamin F. Moxley, J. A. Ritchie, Mrs. A. M. Stewart, and Mrs. H. Trunnell.

5. Peter J. Albert, "Climbing the Back Stairs': Segregated Church Seating at Holy

Trinity,” above; *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petitions 185, 564, 792, 550, 715; 1870, 1880, and 1900 federal censuses and Washington, D.C.; city directories for Washington, D.C.

6. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petition 185; Holy Trinity Church, Baptisms, 1835-58, Digital Georgetown Manuscripts Collection, Georgetown Univ. Arch., pp. 38, 169,  
[https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/556991/B2\\_1835\\_58.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/556991/B2_1835_58.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

7. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petition 564.

8. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petition 792.

9. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petition 550.

10. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petition 715.

11. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petition 85; 1870, 1880, and 1900 federal censuses; Holy Trinity Church, Baptisms, 1858-71, Digital Georgetown Manuscripts Coll., Georgetown Univ. Arch., pp. 262, 299,  
[https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/556992/B3\\_1858\\_71.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/556992/B3_1858_71.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y); Holy Trinity Church, Baptisms, 1871-80, Digital Georgetown Manuscripts Coll., Georgetown Univ. Arch., pp. 259, 435,  
[https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/556993/B4\\_1871\\_80.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/556993/B4_1871_80.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

12. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petitions 367, 494; 1870 and 1880 federal censuses; Holy Trinity Church, Baptisms, 1835-58, pp. 328, 375, 423; Holy Trinity Church, Baptisms, 1858-71, p. 298.



13. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petition 367; 1870 and 1880 federal censuses.
14. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petition 343; 1870, 1880, and 1900 federal censuses; Holy Trinity Church, Baptisms, 1858-71, p. 59; Holy Trinity Church, Baptisms, 1871-1880, p. 171.
15. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petition 780; 1870 federal census.
16. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petition 43; 1870 and 1880 federal censuses.
17. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petition 435; 1870 and 1880 federal censuses.
18. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petition 461; 1870 federal census.
19. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petitions 885, 616; 1870 and 1880 federal censuses; Washington, D.C., city directories.
20. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petitions 494, 748; 1870 and 1880 federal censuses.
21. *Compensated Emancipation*, ed. Provine, petitions 819, 177, 274, 905, 338, and 50.
22. <https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/1862?amount=30178.20>.