

# THE HISTORIOGRAPHER



OF THE NATIONAL EPISCOPAL HISTORIANS AND ARCHIVISTS  
AND THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
AND THE EPISCOPAL WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

Published to promote the preserving of church records and the writing  
of parochial and diocesan history

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## Social Gospel takes root in Harlem

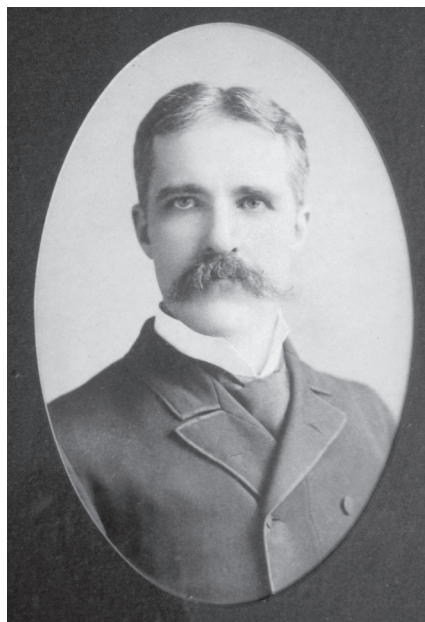
George and Margaret Pratt build a free church and outreach ministry for the welfare of all “without regard for creed or condition”

by Mark Hansen

Manhattan at the turn of the twentieth century was a place where church buildings were erected and burned down with considerable frequency, and new Episcopal parishes and missions were established only to be moved, merged or liquidated within a generation or two. It was also a time when some Episcopal clergy seemed to heed literally their contemporary hymnal's injunction to: “Go labor on, spend and be spent.”

While the Protestantism of the late 19th and early 20th century may be more noted for its zeal in overseas missions, a similar energy was in fact directed at domestic initiatives, both urban and rural. As early as 1835, the Episcopal Church, including all its lay members, had formally constituted itself as the “Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.” The ensuing efforts on a number of fronts, driven primarily by voluntary ecclesiastical associations, yielded impressive fruit: between 1880 and 1920 the number of Episcopal churches doubled from 4,151 to 8,365 and the number of parishioners tripled from 345,433 to 1,075,820.”

In the urban sphere, Social Gospel theologians such as Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbush were especially influential. Seeking to apply biblical teaching to the challenges of industrialization, these thinkers hewed to



source: St. Michael's archives

The Rev. George S. Pratt, photographed during his early ministry as curate at St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Manhattan. He left the Baptist Church for the Episcopal Church in 1886 and was ordained priest in 1888 by New York's Bishop Henry Codman Potter.

a progressive view of history predicated on the essential goodness of humanity. Such thinking was embraced within the Episcopal Church as part of the contemporaneous “broad church” movement, which widened the scope of church concerns to include social and even political issues. This constituted a significant departure from the positions of the two parties that had held sway since the 1820s, when

the “high-church” Hobartian perspective came into its own and began to do battle with the “low church” evangelical ecclesiology of longer standing. Notwithstanding the heatedness of the inter-ecumenical disputes, both parties agreed that the church as an institution should limit its concern to formally “religious” matters, with the salvation of souls and the moral and spiritual development of the individual as the goal.

Nowhere can this expansion of focus be seen more clearly than in the proceedings of the Church Congress, which, as described by historian Robert Prichard, was “the primary institutional manifestation of the broad church vision, and whose prominent leaders included Phillips Brooks. “From its first meeting in 1874,” historian Richard M. Spielmann bluntly wrote, the Congress “cast aside the Episcopal church's avoidance of societal concerns.” As we shall see, however, the embrace of a broad church perspective did not entail a dilution of the zeal with which its adherents undertook their mission.

The partnership between the clergyman George S. Pratt and his wife Margaret, demonstrating a total commitment to the work of establishing All Souls Church in Harlem, illustrates the missionary spirit of the broad church movement as well as the expanding role of women in church institutions.

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## THE HISTORIOGRAPHER

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The National Episcopal Historians and Archivists were founded in 1961 to encourage every diocese, congregation, and organization in the Episcopal Church to collect, preserve, and organize its records and to share its history.

[episcopalhistorians.org](http://episcopalhistorians.org)

The Historical Society of the Episcopal Church was founded in 1910 to promote the preservation of the particular heritage of the Episcopal Church and its antecedents, publish and distribute a scholarly historical journal and to cooperate with other societies concerned with the history of the Episcopal Church and the other churches of the Anglican Communion.

[hsec.us](http://hsec.us)

Begun on faith and the proverbial shoestring, The Episcopal Women's History Project was organized in 1980 by a handful of dedicated Episcopal Churchwomen in New York City.

Formed to raise the consciousness and conscience of the Episcopal Church to the historic contributions of its women, EWHP began, and has continued to gather the life stories of Episcopal Churchwomen who have served God faithfully and selflessly.

[ewhp.org](http://ewhp.org)

The *Historiographical Newsletter* was established in 1961 shortly after the founding of the National Episcopal Historians and Archivists (NEHA). It was later renamed *The Historiographer*, and in 1999 it became a joint publication of NEHA and the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church (HSEC). In 2018 the Episcopal Women's History Project (EWHP) became a joint publisher. Back issues are posted online two years after the original publication at <https://issuu.com/thehistoriographer>

# IN THIS ISSUE

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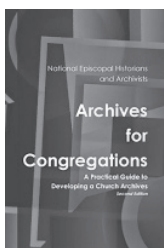
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## Historiographer deadlines

**Winter 2021: January 15**

**Spring 2021: April 15**

**Summer 2021: July 15**

# IN BRIEF

## HSEC expands resources on website

In our Google-search world, providing information via website opens the possibility of discovery beyond historians and archivists. The Historical Society of the Episcopal Church has started expanding its website with such searches in mind. A number of lists, such as "Diocesan Dates of Formation" and "First Episcopal Churches by State," have been added to the site with more to come ([hsec.us/lists](https://hsec.us/lists)). A teaching bibliography provides quality books and articles for teaching or learning about Episcopal Church History ([hsec.us/bibliography](https://hsec.us/bibliography)). Sample syllabi from educators of Episcopal Church history are available, but you will need to be a member of the Historical Society to access these. If you have an idea of a list to provide or other resources that might be available, contact the HSEC director of operations at [administration@hsec.us](mailto:administration@hsec.us)

## Death of Dean Steven Peay

The Very Rev. Steven Peay, dean emeritus of Nashotah House seminary, died August 31. Dean Peay, a former Benedictine and priest of the Roman Catholic Church, was received by the Episcopal Diocese of Albany in 2010 after joining the faculty of Nashotah House where he became academic dean in 2012 and two years later was elected dean-president. After stepping down as dean in 2017 due to health, he joined the staff of the Cathedral Church of All Saints in Milwaukee as associate dean on September 1, 2018. He was elected and installed as canon residentiary in October 2018. He was appointed canon to the ordinary for the Diocese of Milwaukee in December 2019.

A longtime member of the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church, he was to present the 2020 Manross Lecture on the history of religious orders in the Episcopal Church, his current research interest. With the onset of the pandemic, the lecture was planned to be a video, but this plan was interrupted by the recurrence of Dean Peay's cancer. The Executive Committee will examine other avenues to present the Manross Lecture in memory of Dean Peay.

A visitation was held September 5 at All Saints Cathedral Milwaukee, followed by a private funeral service in keeping with diocesan Covid-19 guidelines. Dean Peay is survived by his wife Julie, stepsons Jeremy Strandt and Matthew Strandt, and numerous family, friends and colleagues.

## Lambeth Conference set for 2022

The archbishop of Canterbury has announced revised dates for the 15th Lambeth Conference. Hosted in Canterbury, Kent, the face-to-face conference will be planned for July 27 – Aug. 8, 2022. With the theme of "God's Church for God's World: Walking, Listening and Witnessing Together," the conference will focus on what it means for the Anglican Communion – shaped by the five marks of mission – to be responsive to the needs and challenges of a rapidly changing world in the 21st century.



# The waste remains

## commentary



Our long nightmare of the Trump presidency is over, but a longer, deeper, nightmare still festers, one that corrodes with ever increasing intensity our nation's cultural, political, social, and even religious life. I am not speaking of the pandemic so much as the decades-long erosion of the civic-minded spirit that once informed our work and relationships as Americans. Once what was thought as immutable — trust in our institutions, respect for differing views, the primacy of science and reasoned discourse, and allegiance to bedrock principles enshrined in the Declaration — is now under assault from both ends of our socio-political spectrum.

Peaceful Black Lives Matter protests are undercut by antifascist and anarchic groups' vandalism and their efforts to incite a backlash; right wing militias brandishing automatic rifles storm state capitals and form gauntlets around voting lines. Days after the election an Arkansas police chief spreads spurious QAnon conspiracies and calls for "Death to all Marxist Democrats." Reason withers in the face of intolerance.

It is as if we have contracted a wasting disease, bringing to mind a poem I once parsed for a freshman English lit course, William Empson's *Missing Dates*. I can still call up the haunting refrain: "slowly the poison the whole bloodstream fills, the waste remains, the waste remains and kills."

We are being killed by simmering resentments, paranoia, self-adulation, bigotry, and a callous disregard of the worth of those who look differently, think differently, speak differently, live differently, and worship differently than ourselves.

Our condition has not been hidden, or so variable as to defy diagnosis: a slew of authors have attempted to decipher the disease: Bill Bishop in *The Big Sort* attributes it to a migration of self-selection over the decades, wherein increased mobility allowed people to choose like-minded communities, places "that reinforced their identities, where they could find comfort among others like themselves." Charles Murray sees the presenting issue as a deepening socio-economic divide between mainstream Americans and a new upper class, a managerial and professional "narrow elite" which oversees the nation's political, economic, and cultural institutions. The onus for repairing this breach lies with the narrow elite, says Murray in his book *Coming Apart*. Those of the upper class must embrace American exceptionalism, defined by Murray as industriousness, neighborliness, self-reliance, and a middle-class attitude. An exceptionalism though that is skewed to libertarian philosophy: less authority and responsibility to government, the one player that could have blunted this pandemic, and our more festering divisions, if properly led.

In his 1979 book, *The Culture of Narcissism*, Christopher Lasch posited that the forces driving Bishop's *Big Sort* were creating a pathology of narcissism across society. "Long-term social changes," he wrote, have "created a scarcity of jobs, devalued the wisdom of the ages and brought all forms of authority (including the authority of experience) into disrepute."

The waste remains and continues to kill even as this four-year nightmare fades away.

In the aftermath of the Biden-Harris victory, revelers were dancing in the streets, releasing four years of anxiety over a chaotic and callous Trump administration, as if the 2016 election was an anomaly and now the country could return to sanity. We have lived through the convergence of a con man and an aggrieved, gullible segment of the citizenry willing to grasp at any promise of a better standard of living and validation of their cultural and religious convictions, no matter how far-fetched and thread-bare that promise ultimately proved to be. An aberration it was not.

Trump's (hopefully) orderly departure from the Oval Office will not lower the curtain or turn a page on the four-year tragedy we have endured, or cure the fever that is corroding our democracy. We may be divided over policy, but it is a fundamental disagreement over what constitutes a just and moral society that threatens the viability of our republic. We cast our votes based on our hopes and our fears, driven by dreams of expansion of opportunity, or of its contraction. They are not equally valid positions. To claim they are is a repudiation of this nation's Declaration, and an exercise in false equivalency, as vapid and baseless as Trump's claim that there were "fine people on both sides" of the Charlottesville demonstrations, as if aligning with Neo-Nazis is on the same moral plane as opposing racial injustice.

That 73 million Americans were willing to cast their votes for a man who has mocked the disabled, disparaged wounded veterans, encouraged white supremacists, colluded with foreign agents, undermined our intelligence agencies, demonized the press, politicized the Justice Department, and utterly failed at managing the nation's response to a global pandemic, let alone express a smidgeon of empathy for those who have suffered or lost loved ones, is at this point, four years on, not so much mind-boggling as profoundly depressing.

In interviews with reporters, Trump voters said they overlook his lies, his diatribes, vindictiveness and self-approbation because of his stances on reproductive rights, immigration, law enforcement, trade protections, dismantling church-state separation, and civil rights (grouped under the pejorative label of "political correctness"). Or what they thought were his stances. Whether or not Trump believed in any of these positions, his supporters liked the way he presented them and himself: green lighting intolerance and denigration of others, spreading conspiracy theories, and undercutting democratic institutions.

The narrow margins of victory in key states like Wisconsin and Georgia speak to the thin line that separates a democracy from an autocracy. Who can say what four more years would bring with Trump reelected. Would protests and clashes with law enforcement bring about a declaration of martial law and a suspension (again) of habeas corpus, or invocation of the Insurrection Act? Would continuing critical coverage by the media lead to a revocation of broadcast licenses and investigations by the Justice Department? Would civil service employees be required to take loyalty oaths to the president? These once unheard of scenarios could have played out given what this

## a message from the president of NEHA



**Jean Ballard Terepka**  
President Pro Tem, National Episcopal Historians and Archivists

# *Inviting others into our archives*

Our church archives must be protected, kept carefully under lock and key. Archival materials must be effectively preserved and meticulously organized. You can't have "just anyone" mucking about in the archives.

All true ... but it conveys the wrong idea about what archivists do.

We don't keep people out: we like to invite them in.

The archives contain our churches' accumulated accounts of themselves, of ourselves. Sacramental registers, vestry minutes and convention reports, legal and financial documents, correspondence and letter collections, monthly congregation publications, guild meeting notes, special event pictures, and ephemera of all sorts – "Send it to the Archives!" and "Just put that box in the closet at the back of the sacristy" and "Wasn't that deacon, the one now who retired to -- where was that? wasn't the deacon in charge of those files?" – all these materials contain our formal histories and informal stories, both known and unknown, familiar and as yet unrevealed.

Stories are meant to be told. They are meant to be shared.

Diocesan archivists and historiographers are used to being consulted about legal and practical matters. Genealogical requests abound for cathedral and church archivists alike. Sometimes the biographers of famous people – robber barons, philanthropists, civic leaders – turn to archivists for context and reference confirmation.

But at this moment in our country's history, as well as the history of our church, we must be more deliberate, more generous, more systematic and more intentional than ever before in opening and exploring our archives. Many years ago, in 1980, our colleagues in the Episcopal Women's History Project (EWHP) set us a good example in their deliberate search for stories of women's leadership in our church; EWHP members have been elegant in their use of cathedral and church archives to uncover previously untold stories of women's contributions to the church.

Now, we must turn to our archives with new discipline and energy to find our church's previously untold stories of people of color, of indigenous people and immigrants, of the politically disenfranchised and the economically marginalized. To effectively confront the legacies of slavery and racism in our midst, we must know the history. Accurate historical facts constitute the vocabulary necessary for the discussions that will precede reconciliation and reparation. Each church and each cathedral must know its history.

Church archivists and historians are leaders in this work. We issue open and uncompromising invitations into the search for truth.

### **Invitations to historical truth: Work Within Congregations**

In churches, archivists and historians, both professional and amateur, can lead teams to uncover congregational truths. In

some churches, these teams call themselves History Ministries; they have their clergy's support and encouragement. History Ministries identify the questions their individual congregations need to confront and then figure out how to answer them. Who exactly were those people whose memorial plaques are on the sanctuary walls? Why did the racial make-up of the congregation change when it did? Who came to your church's soup kitchen during the Depression?... and did they come to Sunday services, too?

The elders of your congregation are invaluable resources. Members of History Ministries can take oral histories. Tapes and transcriptions become part of the archives.

Use important parish events – church or building anniversaries; rector installations; Sunday School meeting room renovations – to organize photo-labeling parties or write special occasion pamphlets for insertion in Sunday service bulletins and posting on the church website.

### **Invitations to Truth: Coordination with the Diocese**

Cathedral and diocesan archivists and historiographers oversee huge quantities of archival materials and typically have an exceptionally clear overview of their collections. As more and more diocesan and general conventions pass resolutions calling on churches to confront their racist histories, the church's local, regional and national archives must be open to examination. Materials already mined for familiar stories have to be reconsidered for unfamiliar, often more difficult stories. Materials that have never been explored at all must now be delved into.

Collaboration between diocesan archivists and church 'history ministers' – even those who've never before set foot in the cathedral archives – will unearth historical truths long unacknowledged. What actually happened when that particular church closed? Those two churches merged? Who benefited financially? Who left and never came back? How did your church respond when changing banking policies or tax shifts caused real estate collapses and demographic shifts?

### **Invitations to Truth: Collaboration With Local Libraries, Museums and Historical Societies**

Our church isn't alone in confronting its racist past. Museum associations and organizations such as the web-based Inclusion are writing new inclusion policies affecting collection assessment, acquisition and deaccessioning strategies, audience expansion and hiring criteria. Historical societies and libraries are presenting exhibits of previously 'untold' stories. The American Association of State and Local History publishes guides on the development of community activism around the celebration of newly redefined local identity and the National Council for Public History maintains an active professional working group on Dismantling White Public History.

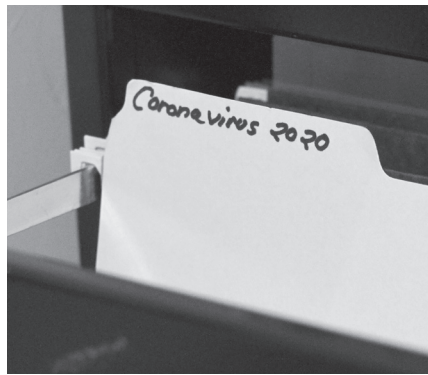
Curators, librarians and directors are actively engaged in non-traditional collaboration across professional lines. Partnerships with local church historians and archivists can only enhance their work ... and ours. Difficult questions about neighbors and strangers – others, those who aren't 'us,' but whose lives butt

SEE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE PAGE 6

# NEHA project to preserve Covid-19 records

As we move through this Covid-19 pandemic, begun during Lent 2020, our churches face unprecedented challenges. Our worship-in-community has been suspended as clergy and lay leaders struggle to develop new technologies to share adapted liturgies. Our bishops, priests and deacons are stretched to nearly unimaginable limits in their pastoral responsibilities. Nothing is as it was before, and when this pandemic is “over,” we will move into something new; we won’t ever go back to exactly the way it used to be.

All our dioceses and churches and organizations are coping with the difficult situation with energy, creativity and determination. Innovations and adaptations of all sorts are being used to preserve spiritual traditions that are centuries old, to ensure that communities living at long distances from each other can feel unified and to provide spiritual succor, stability and inspiration.



What exactly is each diocese doing? Each church? Who is keeping track of this significant moment in national and church history? Who is ensuring that diocesan and congregational records of responses to the pandemic are collected and organized so that historians a century from now will understand our church’s daily life in this time of crisis? Who? NEHA’s current and future members. NEHA’s historians and archivists.

NEHA is initiating the NEHA Covid-19 Episcopal Church Records Project. We are asking members to

- share their churches’ Covid-19 responses and adaptations
- describe how they’re tracking and preserving them
- describe how they are using their Covid-19 stay-at-home time. Transcribing documents? Developing a filing system? Writing histories?

Please send your responses, descriptions and questions to [nehacommunications92@gmail.com](mailto:nehacommunications92@gmail.com). We’ll post some responses. We’ll gather responses and the Project Team will analyze the patterns that emerge with an eye to publication in *The Historiographer* in a year. Together, NEHA members can assemble an accurate and detailed picture of daily life in the Episcopal Church during the Covid-19 pandemic. We will provide an invaluable service to historians of the future.

## ANGLICAN & EPISCOPAL History September 2020

Historical Revisionism—Re-examining the “Saint” Edward Colston

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## President’s message

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

up against ours – can be answered when we reach beyond our own walls, extending truth-quest invitations to our secular colleagues and responding graciously to theirs. At a time when our church is asking itself how, in the work of racial reconciliation and reparation, we can connect with our neighbors, then the development of historical projects that bring together churches and local secular institutions will move us forward in positive ways.

### Invitations to Truth: Affirmation of Spiritual Community

When church archivists and historians invite their congregations, their colleague congregations and their secular neighbors into the archives to look for historical truths, then the spirit of hospitality that is so central to our faith is affirmed. And when the historical truths – the familiar and the new, the comfortable and the difficult – are shared and the stories exchanged, then the invitation to truth is successfully transformed into an invitation to community.

## *The waste remains*

commentary

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

nation has endured under a president swayed by white supremacists, QAnon followers, quack cure advocates, science deniers, and extreme nationalists bent on deconstructing the federal administration.

We have dodged that horror but are we likely to tip the battle for what constitutes this nation’s soul toward civility, empathy, tolerance, and, to quote the Baptistal Covenant, respecting the dignity of every person? Could Mitch McConnell summon his moral courage and seek common purpose with his Democratic colleagues, and vice versa? Could conservative evangelicals turn their hearts to the “love wins” message of fellow evangelical Rob Bell and away from the prosperity gospel pitched by Paula White and Joel Osteen? Could more emphasis and resources be put to the study of civics and history in our schools? Could a draft be reinstated, not for military conscription,

but for national service in support of health care, elderly care, environmental care, child care, mentoring students, building homes for low income and homeless families, feeding the poor, and more?

If not, we may be able only to staunch the bleeding and not alter the course of the disease. Pundits and posters have been turning repeatedly over the past few months to modern poetry’s most oft quoted poem, W.B. Yeats’ *The Second Coming*, his 1919 lament over the crumbling of two millennia of Christianity and Enlightenment infused civilization. So much of the emphasis has been on the first stanza’s ending lines: “the best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.” Given how little has shifted in the struggle to restore this commonwealth, perhaps more attention should have been paid to the closing lines of the last stanza: “And what rough beast, its hour come round at last, slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?”



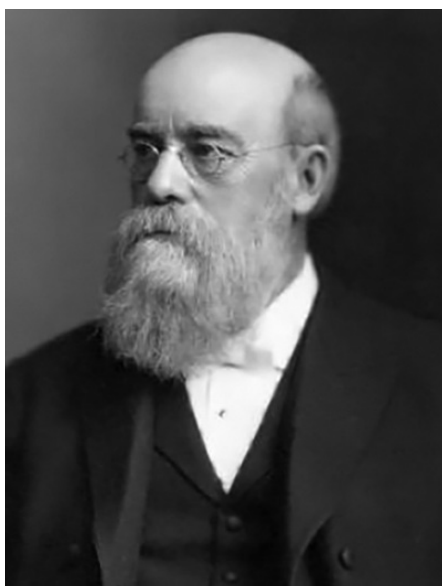
# Social Gospel

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

“I am an Episcopalian and a great believer in my Church,” Pratt stated to the press, “but when it comes to saving people I care little for church distinctions.” Such distinctions were probably those that had commanded attention since earlier years, such as high versus low, and, beginning with the latter part of the 19th century, those promoted under the banner of catholic revival. With respect to Anglo-Catholicism, some adherents subscribed to the “branch theory,” wherein Anglicanism was understood as constituting a distinct major tradition within Christendom alongside the Reformed, Roman Catholic and Orthodox branches, while others vigorously sought en masse if not the corporate reunion of Episcopalians with Rome.

In contrast, George and Margaret invested themselves with singularity of purpose to the building of what he called “a free, home, neighborhood Christian church” (emphasis added). Dedicated in 1905 and still standing with its stone façade and iron gates at St. Nicholas Avenue and 114th Street, the facility’s design was largely the product of George Pratt’s vision working in close association with an architect who was also a personal friend. George continued to serve as rector until a few months before his death at age 72 in 1920; Margaret continued to live as a widow in the parish house residential quarters into the 1930’s.

A native of rural upstate New York who began his ordained ministry in northern Vermont, Pratt cut his teeth in urban work during the 1890s as an assistant at St. Michael’s Church on Manhattan’s Upper West Side, “one of the oldest and most influential institutional Episcopal churches in New York City.” Margaret was very much a partner in ministry from the beginning, heading up a variety of fundraising events and appeals and formally engaged in the management of the Women’s Missionary Society, the Women’s Auxiliary, the Industrial Society and the St. Michael’s Athletic Club. With males enjoying a monopoly of leadership in the liturgical arena, it was not unusual for women to take on leadership in a variety of other areas; indeed, during their four years in residence at St. Michael’s, Margaret garnered more mentions in the parish periodical than her cleric-husband.



source: Ohiohistorycentral.org

Congregational pastor Washington Gladden along with Walter Rauschenbush was a leading proponent of what came to be known as the Social Gospel. He spoke out for rights of workers to collectively bargain, for ending monopolistic practices, and for ending racial segregation.

This array of activities, addressing the vocational and physical well being of the neighborhood along with more traditional spiritual endeavors, exemplifies not only the scope of activities embraced under the broad church banner, but also the growing importance of women in a variety of new and highly responsible – if not “top leadership” – positions.

One component of Pratt’s portfolio which the couple embraced with particular zeal was the revival of an essentially defunct mission congregation in Harlem near the present site of All Souls. By 1901, thanks to their effective hard work and a growing local population, the congregation then known as Church of the Archangel was showing enough promise for the Pratts to go and labor there on a full-time basis, leaving behind the security of a well-established cure of souls. In some ways the contemporary equivalent of today’s storefront church, the first meeting place the Pratts secured for worship and social outreach was a preexisting hall on the current site of All Souls.

Although the Archangel was described in a Daily Tribune headline as a “neighborhood church in Harlem’s forsaken district,” there was no racial prejudice implied. Rather, there simply were no other churches functioning in a burgeoning population center already served by four public schools. At the turn of the twentieth century, in fact, there was no significant

Black population in the western Harlem valley. Nevertheless, a racial element would not have been a deterrent to establishing a new congregation as the Pratts were part of a ministry enterprise already committed to racial inclusivity: during the same years as the Pratts were undertaking their work in Harlem, St. Michael’s was actively supporting work among the “colony of colored people” on West 99th Street. Pratt’s personal commitment to principles of inclusivity had already been demonstrated by his high-profile support of the women’s suffrage movement, having delivered a benediction at the 1894 Woman Suffrage Convention in New York City where Susan B. Anthony was a headline speaker. At the same time, it should be noted that, unlike other parts of Manhattan, this neighborhood was not a significant destination for recent immigrants, an element of the urban demographic most notably served by the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, it was the profusion of an unchurched “Anglo-Saxon” element that constituted a major incentive for an Episcopal initiative.

The degree of devotion invested by the Pratts in pursuing their vocation to establish a new ministry in Harlem was certainly equal to the zeal associated with those being drawn to perilous and exotic overseas missions at the time. Personal financial interests were utterly sacrificed to the exigencies of erecting a structure that would glorify God and serve a community described by the senior warden as “minimum income... the families of janitors, etc.” The Pratts’ abnegation was well understood by their former supervising rector when he wrote that Pratt “was for ten years at St. Michael’s and left an assured position and salary to take up a forlorn hope and work for the Church.”

Much more than the Pratts’ financial comfort and security were at stake. The threat of financial insolvency and stress-induced illness were very real, if the senior warden’s description is even remotely accurate:

... [Pratt] has had to stand the strain. For years his salary was probably but one third his necessary living expenses. He had some little accumulations, and his wife had a small income. Both these have been used to the limit. His own resources were exhausted a year ago. Even the results of his wife’s little summer cottage went in this way.

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# Social Gospel

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While coming from a background of some privilege, the Pratts' motivation was deeper than the noblesse oblige associated with an elite denomination whose prominent members at the time included Pierpont Morgan and Theodore Roosevelt. The couple's sense of total commitment to a joint vocation – one theoretically paid and the other fully “volunteer” – contrasts with the current emphasis on the ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church as being an individual profession to be exercised with clearly enforced boundaries between the professional and the personal. Even by the vocational standards of his day, however, Pratt's commitment to the “upbuilding of the Archangel has necessarily been more than usually a personal matter” (emphasis added) in the senior warden's judgment. Pratt's rector at St. Michael's went further in stating, “I have been afraid more than once of a complete breakdown on Mr. Pratt's part, the burden was so heavy.”

Such sacrifices were necessary in order to meet the parish's operating expenses and a mortgage loan that had been assumed in addition to outright grants totaling some \$31,000 from the estate of Mrs. Pratt's late uncle, Edward Whitney of Boston. The lay members of the parish were clearly inspired to do their part. According to the senior warden, “the people of the parish, slight as are their resources... secured or paid – and most of it has been paid by themselves – about thirty thousand dollars toward their present building, and outsiders have given about ten thousand.”

The new building was designed to serve “the entire neighborhood, without regard for creed or condition,” as Pratt stated to the press; “All will be welcomed.” The New York Times hailed it as an “Uptown People's Palace,” alluding to a well-known institution of arts and culture for the poor of London's East End, going on to describe it as “an Unsectarian Rendezvous for Recreation, Instruction and Social Intercourse.” The Times might well have cited a model of social engagement closer to home in the form of the settlement house, the first American version of which had been established in Manhattan in 1886, with seven more being founded in the borough during the 1890s. Episcopalians, with the noteworthy leadership of women, were in the forefront of that movement nationally, accounting for the founding of eleven of the 38 such establishments created during that period. Consistent with the settlement house commitment to being part and parcel of

its surrounding community, the New York Daily Tribune highlighted the fact that the parish's “Guild House is always to be free to the entire neighborhood for all meetings, irrespective of church affiliations.” Even the term “settlement” applied to the Pratt's philosophy of parish ministry, insofar as it derived movement's expectation that the more privileged “leaders” would go and live on the premises of their establishments. In the case of the Pratts, Margaret continued

“... the great point is to get people to realize the Fatherhood of God. That is what social work is for. Otherwise I would have little use for it. Our social work is to get people together in this big city, where they have so little other opportunity. Then when we get them together we want to reach their hearts, inspire them, and in that way do some permanent good.”

*The Rev. George S. Pratt quoted in The New York Daily Tribune February 25 1905*

to reside in the rector's quarters within the Guild House for a number of years following her husband's death in 1920.

The architecture of the new facility consciously reflected a broad church philosophy of ministry, with the “place of worship and guild house to be under the same roof,” a design that struck contemporary observers as a “novel church scheme.” Not only the roof but the entire stone façade on St. Nicholas Avenue presented a unified appearance, with no delineation between the sacred and profane portions of the building. The west portal, gothic-arched, did not lead directly into the center aisle of

the traditional gothic nave, but into a vestibule granting equal access to other functional areas of the facility. These included a large auditorium below and meeting rooms and the rector's residential quarters above. Aside from its aesthetic style, the façade's only other detail suggesting an ecclesiastical purpose was a short and unassuming belfry, almost unnoticeable from the street perspective.

While the parish's mission in Harlem was to encompass a wide range of social and spiritual benefits for the neighborhood at large, the ultimate purpose was spiritual, if not explicitly conversion to Christianity or the garnering of new members. An inner transformation of the person, then, rather than the restructuring of society was the animating purpose of his ministry. Consistent with his support of women's suffrage, Pratt's goal was to unlock the creative potential of all persons, allowing them to exercise their natural freedom. Given the

assumption of the inherent goodness of human nature, a more harmonious society under a loving, personal God would ensue.

While not of paramount importance initially, formal incorporation of members into the institutional structure of the parish would of necessity be a practical concern. As a “free” church, the Archangel was participating in an organized movement initiated by William Augustus Muhlenberg to “substitute voluntary offerings for the renting of pews that was the general rule in nineteenth century Protestant churches.” A reliable stream of freewill income would need to come from a core group of



“confirmed communicants in good standing.” However, in the early days of the ministry Pratt pointed more broadly to the “movement and strength” that “has been achieved by our success in getting hold of and organizing a parish already numbering 1000 families recognizing connections out of the material furnished by this immediate and hitherto churchless neighborhood.” Connections of all kinds were to be valued, and not just formal affiliation or Sunday attendance.

At the same time, Pratt recognized that the abundance of people was not matched by an abundance of means. “There are no persons of wealth in the congregation of the Archangel,” Pratt stated, and there was little prospect of their attracting such persons in the future:

...we have not yet reached, and are not likely soon to reach the point when the average church family who are both able and willing to rent pews in more imposing edifices, with congregations deemed more consonant with their better-to-do circumstances, will not avail themselves of the distinction of doing so.”

Along with the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians constituted a “destination” denomination for the social climbers of the day. But the creation of a parish with an impressive physical, social and financial profile to attract such constituents was hardly a motive for Pratt. Rather, a desire to be of service to others was at work, as when he wrote: “There is a great multitude here, such as moved the Saviour to compassion, because they were as sheep having no Shepherd.”

Beyond the economic limitations inherent in the local mission model embraced by the Pratts, there was a wider ecclesiastical environment whose fluidity and dynamism reflected the city itself and which afforded potential sources of funding.

For Archangel, the prospect of achieving financial stability through merger with another parish was initially considered in 1902 as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (present-day Resurrection) on East 74th Street was considering closure. Surviving documents suggest that questions regarding the ethical reputation of the proposed partner-rector (who would have been made “emeritus”) and political conflicts within that parish caused the plan to be scuttled. The latter concern was articulated by Pratt in a letter to the bishop where he mentioned the potential for “cantankerous

New York Tribune photo source: author



Church of the Archangels as it appeared in February 1905, two months before the new building was consecrated. The following December the parish had a new name, All Souls, which it adopted following the merger with a nearby parish of that name which was on the brink of closing.

action on the part of the dissentients” at Holy Sepulchre.

In the wake of the first failed merger attempt, the Pratts’ reserves of strength and commitment would literally be tested by fire. The very next year, in 1903, with the building already being used for worship and about to be consecrated, a fire swept through and completely destroyed the facility. The painstaking work of rebuilding then began, but the biggest part of the debt-burden, associated with the cost of the land, was not offset by insurance, while mortgage payments continued to come due.

Even after the reconstruction was completed and a formal consecration ceremony had finally taken place in April of 1905, the rug was again pulled out from under the long-suffering Pratts and their parishioners. An agreement of merger between the vestries of the Archangel and another parish contemplating closure was reached that same month. The assets of the closing parish, All Souls, were to be liquidated and distributed in such a manner as to cover the Archangel’s indebtedness. Pratt would continue as rector of the consolidated parish, now to be named All Souls and housed in the extraordinary facility for which he and his wife and her family had given so much. Efforts at external fundraising, no longer required, were brought to a close. Then, shockingly, the diocesan Standing Committee withheld consent for

the legal consummation of the transaction. Two Episcopal parishes in the general vicinity had lodged complaints alleging the new congregation was encroaching on their terrain and posing a threat to their well-being. Another adverse argument was that the proceeds from the liquidation of All Souls should be entirely dedicated to new mission work in the Bronx.

The situation at Archangel became so dire that Pratt was forced to plead that we are “behind in all our current expenses... we have not a bushel of coal.” Fortunately, the claims of the neighboring parishes were roundly rebutted by an array of geographic and demographic facts. With respect to the emphasis on new mission work in the Bronx, Pratt pointed to the fact that his parish was already sponsoring a new mission congregation in that borough; were the financial yoke to be removed from Archangel, Pratt wrote, “I will gladly pledge myself and the parish to take the entire burden of the expense of that mission, with the expectation of making it an independent and successful parish as soon as can be reasonably done.” In face of such compelling arguments, the Standing Committee’s support was ultimately secured, and a legal agreement formalizing the merger was executed on December 5, 1905. Thenceforth the parish was to bear the name “All Souls” even as the towering image of St. Michael the Archangel as

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# Social Gospel

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a knight in mediaeval armor continued to peer down upon the congregation from the stained glass window above the high altar – a fitting reminder of ecclesiastical battles endured and perhaps to come.

On a recent visit to All Soul's, the author was encouraged to find the downstairs community "lyceum" and its kitchen abuzz with activity in preparation for the Wednesday Community Vegetarian Meal. Jointly sponsored by the parish, the Manhattan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Center, and the Mandala Café, the majority of perhaps a dozen volunteers had been recruited by a secular Jewish social action organization. Very much in evidence was a continuing commitment to service "without regard for creed or condition." On the main floor, two plaques figure prominently: one, in the nave, commemorates the Rev. George Starkweather Pratt's rectorship from 1888 to 1920; the other, in the guild-house vestibule, memorializes Edward Whitney, the financial benefactor. Perhaps a third testimonial would be in order: one to Margaret Whitney Pratt, who in partnership with her husband undertook to "go labor on, spend and be spent" in the mission fields of Manhattan.

*Mark Hansen is lay pastor at St Clement's Episcopal Church in Massey, MD*

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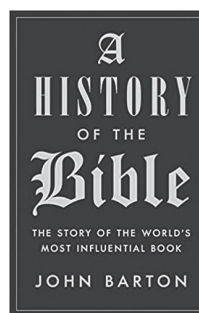
*The Messenger* St. Michael's Church, New York City (from the parish archives, special thanks to parish archivist Jean-Ballard Terepka)

## Help needed from archivists & scholars

The Rev. Dr. Ivan R. Buxeda, historiographer of the Diocese of Puerto Rico (Episcopal Church), is working on a project to write a history of the Anglican Church in the Caribbean. Help is needed from historiographers and scholars from different dioceses to write their own history. Interested or know someone who might be? Share the interest with Fr. Ivan at [ivanrbuxeda@outlook.com](mailto:ivanrbuxeda@outlook.com)

The Historical Magazine of the Episcopal Church (predecessor of *Anglican and Episcopal History*) last published a bibliography of diocesan histories in 1974. It is time to update this list. Diocesan historiographers, archivists, and others interested in serving on the team to update the bibliography should contact Tom Rightmyer at [trightmy@gmail.com](mailto:trightmy@gmail.com) and tell him if you'd like to help.

## Book Shelf



by John Barton.  
Viking, June 4  
2019, 640 pages,  
illustrated  
ISBN-10:  
0525428771

"Barton gently invites us to question our simplistic reading of scripture and to deepen our understanding of the relationship between scripture, the creeds, and the Christian community." — Elizabeth De Gaynor, assistant professor of Practical Theology and Christian Formation, VTS

## Hines preaching award submissions

The application process for the 2021 John Hines Award is underway, with a deadline of January 15, 2021, for submissions from the current liturgical year (Advent 2019 through the last Sunday of Pentecost 2020). A significant change from earlier years: Submission can be by audio file and/or hard copy paper submissions. Video is not applicable; an audio file must be submitted. Please visit the VTS website at <https://www.vts.edu/alumni/awards> for further information.

Named for former Presiding Bishop John Hines (VTS '33), the award celebrates the ministry of preaching and its importance in our church by recognizing outstanding sermons that are deeply grounded in scripture and focused on the seen and unseen needs of the worshipping community, the nation, and the world.

# The first bishop for the Pacific Northwest challenged by limited funds and few clergy

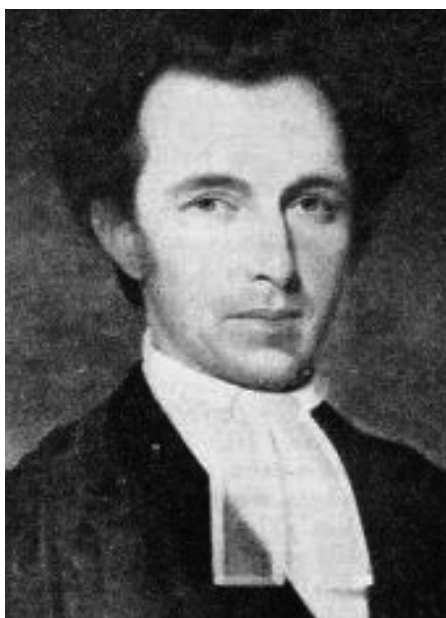
by Lawrence Crumb

The Episcopal Church's first bishop in the Pacific Northwest was Thomas Fielding Scott, whose jurisdiction included the present states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and parts of Montana and Wyoming. He served for only thirteen years (1854-1867) and left thinking he had been a failure. But was he?

Scott was born 12 March 1807 in Iredell County, North Carolina. He graduated from the University of Georgia in 1829 and was licensed to preach in the Presbyterian Church. He married Evelyn Jane Appleby in 1830; they had three daughters, born between 1835 and 1844. He served several churches in Georgia and Tennessee until 1842, when he met Bishops James Hervey Otey of Tennessee and Leonidas Polk, Missionary Bishop of the Southwest (later, of Louisiana). They were both converts to the Episcopal Church, and under their influence he came to decide that the claims of episcopacy were true. He was ordained deacon in 1843 and priest in 1844 by Bishop Stephen Elliott of Georgia, serving churches in Marietta and Columbus.

The General Convention of 1853 established the missionary jurisdiction of the Oregon and Washington Territories, and Scott was elected as its first bishop. Unlike William Ingraham Kip, who was elected at the same time for California and consecrated at the convention with several bishops taking part, Scott was consecrated at Christ Church, Savannah, on 8 January 1854, with only three bishops (Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina) participating. Given the breadth of his jurisdiction, Scott, like Jackson Kemper in 1835, was "the bishop of all outdoors." Unlike Kemper, however, he had but small success in recruiting clergy from the East, and no success in having his territory divided. (Idaho was separated in 1867 and joined with Montana and Utah, but it was just as Scott was leaving.)

Scott traveled to Oregon with his wife, Evelyn, by ship and then overland transit of the Isthmus of Panama before taking the final leg by ship to Portland, arriving there on 22 April 1854. He must have cut an imposing figure, over six feet tall and weighing 250 pounds. Hale and hearty at forty-six, he needed his strength for the



source: The North Carolina Churchman  
Bishop Thomas Fielding Scott pictured around the time he was ordained priest in the Episcopal Church in 1845.

long journeys by stagecoach over rough roads; on one occasion, he was thrown out when the coach overturned.

There were only two priests in the area when Scott arrived: the Rev. John McCartney, an army chaplain at Fort Vancouver in Washington, who also served Trinity Church, Portland; and the Rev. Michael Fackler, then living in Oregon City. They were joined in 1855 by Johnston McCormack, a deacon (ordained priest 1857) and in 1856 by the Sellwood brothers: John, a priest, and James, a deacon (ordained priest in 1860). A visit to New York in 1859 gave an opportunity to recruit at the General Theological Seminary, where four responded. One estimate of lay communicants in 1854 put the number at twenty, mostly in Portland. His first confirmation, on 20 July 1854, happened to be a woman whose husband, James Birnie, had been confirmed in Scotland by Bishop John Skinner, one of the consecrators of Samuel Seabury of Connecticut in 1784. By 1859, there were 79 communicants in eight places.

Mrs. Birnie (née Charlotte Beaulieu) was from Canada and is described as "part Indian." There were many of that community "from near and far" who attended two Birnie weddings on successive days,

described as making a colorful contrast to the bishop's black and white vestments. Although Scott arrived "prepared to face the horrors of Indian disturbances" – the Whitman massacre had taken place at Walla Walla in 1847 – he does not seem to have interacted directly with Native Americans. The Rev. Mr. Willis is recorded as having organized a class for Native American boys in his Sunday School at the church in Olympia. They ranged in age from ten to sixteen years and were "excellent pupils and seem to have taken part in all the regular activities including the Christmas party."

The Civil War took its toll, both personally and financially, on the church in Oregon. The bishop had friends who were fellow-southerners and in favor of slavery, although the practice was outlawed in the territory. He was able to preserve peace within the church, partly because the national church had not taken an official position on the issue. He referred to the war only once in his addresses to Convocation (as the convention of a missionary district was called), and that was in 1861, at the very beginning of the conflict. He said,

"We have confined ourselves strictly to our mission as a Church, leaving all political and social disputes where they properly belong – to the State, and to the progress of Christian civilization. Let us ever cherish a spirit of charity, of considered thoughtfulness of each other's views and feelings ... let us never import the disputes of others to mar our harmony."

One of the clergy had been supported by the diocese of South Carolina, and this aid ceased completely, while aid from the North was diminished. Moreover, the Idaho gold rush of 1861 caused a decrease in population west of the Cascades. In 1862, Scott submitted his resignation, but the House of Bishops asked him to take a leave of absence instead. In May 1867 he announced his intention to request a transfer to the East Coast, citing his wife's health. Thomas E. Jessett, the Episcopal Church's premier historian of the Pacific Northwest, describes Scott as:

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# Ann Marie Mitchell's delightful adventure

Daphne B Noyes

Born in Hinsdale, New Hampshire, in 1869 to Joseph B. Mitchell and Mary Ann (Taylor) Mitchell, Ann Maria Mitchell graduated from Wellesley College in 1890 with the Bachelor of Science degree. Her father, a tinsmith, had died three years before her graduation; her mother would die the year after.

After completing her studies, Miss Mitchell lodged in the Boston household of James Grimes, MD, his wife, Eliza, and their four children, ranging in age from 18 years old to two months old, and a servant. The six other lodgers comprised two salesmen, two nurses, a stenographer, and a bookkeeper. They lived in a five-story brick building with bow windows at 428 Massachusetts Avenue, near the intersection of Columbus Avenue. Throughout her time in Boston, her occupation was listed variously as school teacher, social worker, and superintendent.

She was also a writer, penning articles on varied topics: "A Novel Garden Party" (*Good Housekeeping*, 1896), "Old Days and New in Northfield" (*New England Magazine*, 1897), "The White Blackberry" (*Rhodora*, 1899). Her heart for social justice is evidenced by a letter she wrote in April 1907 to Louis D. Brandeis, associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, reporting that Metropolitan Life Insurance agents were "conducting inquiries among Negro policy holders in order to learn whether they had made deposits in savings banks." As far as she could tell, no white policy holders had been questioned. Brandeis promptly wrote back: "I am much gratified by your interest in the subject."

By 1909, she had moved to 14 Concord Square, a gracious brick townhouse on a quiet side street in Boston's South End, where she lived for several years. Sometime before 1925, she took a position as superintendent at the Home for Incurables (now The Boston Home); she was 56 years old. Located at 2049 Dorchester Avenue, the Home for Incurables cared for chronically ill young men and women who had no place to live. An article from the *Boston Evening Transcript* of March 13, 1926, describes how young female residents of the home, after years of treatment, were "waiting word from the medical staff, and from the superintendent, Miss Ann Maria Mitchell, and



source: courtesy of the Dorchester Historical Society  
Ann Marie Mitchell served as superintendent of Boston's Home for the Incurables in the 1920s before taking the position of parish historian at Church of the Advent. The Home for the Incurables is now The Boston Home serving patients with advanced neurological disease.

the head nurse, Mrs. Helen F. Buxton, that will open to them a life on equal footing with their girl friends of the outside world."

Miss Mitchell's work at the Home may be the most concrete clue to her association with the Episcopal Church. The Home for Incurables was founded "to address itself to the sorest need" in 1881 by Cordelia Harmon and the Rev. Philips Brooks, then rector of Trinity Church in Boston; Charles R. Codman, Trinity's junior warden, was on the board. During Miss Mitchell's time there, the Home embarked on a fundraising campaign to expand their crowded facility, allowing the patient population to increase to 61 from 41; the staff, numbering 24, would grow commensurately.

After leaving her position at the Home for Incurables, she lived at 81 Revere Street, near Charles Street — and the Church of the Advent. Here, in the final years of her life, she found a true calling as a parish historian. "Serving as Parish Historian is inherently a delightful adventure," she wrote in *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Volume VII, 1938). "Our religious forebears were generally meticulous in keeping full records of their daily activities, a task which they seem thoroughly to have enjoyed."

In the same article, she relates the history of the role of parish historian, and traces the evolution of the library of the Diocese of Massachusetts, culminating in June 1928 with a dedicated room on the sixth floor of the Diocesan House at 1 Joy Street.

Her description of the diocesan library is a fine example of her eye for detail and lively writing style.

"The room...is a delight. It faces the South and West, is flooded with sunshine, with a view extending to the Blue Hills of Milton and over the Charles River Basin to Brookline. An oriental rug, twenty-four feet by twelve, made by the Kurds of southern Persia, in the Shah Abbas design, is on the floor, a gift to the new library. At one time this rug was much larger, experts say, twenty feet wide, and the length in proportion. The rug is known as the 'Iron rug of the East,' and, as originally made, its value was several thousands of dollars.

"There is a roomy fireplace, and over it hangs a portrait painting of Bishop Brooks. There is a variety of chairs, some of historic value, two of these formerly owned by Bishop Brooks and presented to the library by his two brothers, and other chairs of less value but extremely comfortable. There are old chests, desks and tables, each with its history. The library has recently acquired a glass showcase, in which small articles may be kept on exhibition...The library is indeed a delightful place in which to linger and refresh one's soul."

She is less poetic and more pragmatic, but equally thorough, in reporting how "...a canon was enacted in 1935, which decrees that the rector of each parish shall appoint a Parish Historian" in the Diocese of Massachusetts. (An editor's note appears with her article: "This story is printed with

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# Mitchell

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the hope that other dioceses in the Church will follow the example of Massachusetts both in building a diocesan library and the appointment of Parish Historians.”) She continues by giving examples of the duties of the parish historian: “first, gathering current material pertaining to the parish and its activities; second, studying and interpreting the past with a view to writing parish history.

“As it grows, a parish develops a personality of its own. The town of Provincetown at the tip end of Cape Cod rejoices with reason over the parish church, St. Mary’s-of-the-Harbor. Though young and small, few parishes have a more distinctive place of worship. By joining forces with the summer colony of skilled craftsmen in various arts, the parish can point to a result which, while strictly churchly, has an atmosphere in keeping with its unique New England setting.

“Pre-Revolutionary Trinity Parish raised the money for its foundation by subscriptions carrying with them the right to the ownership of pews; this was a distinctly American method of procedure. The pew-holders were called the proprietors and held the governing power in the parish....

“In contrast to this, the Parish of the Advent, not yet one hundred years old, founded as a free Catholic parish, knew at the time of its founding that it faced bitter animosity. The founders took careful precautions to ensure the perpetuity of the ideals with which it came into being. The control of the parish was vested in a close, self-perpetuating corporation, a startling procedure for that time, as close corporations did not begin to become common or popular in the business world until two decades later.”

She further displayed the historian’s “privilege and duty of familiarity” with both institutional history and theological developments in a lengthy article published in *The Living Church* (December 14, 1935), exploring the origins of the Church of the Advent and rightly identifying its beginning as “a youth movement.”

“The church of the Laodiceans is rebuked in the Book of the Revelation of St. John the Divine because it is neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. The parish of the Church of the Advent, Boston, whatever its errors in the past may have been, has never



source: Church of the Advent, Boston

The nave of the Church of Advent as it appeared in 1944 on the 100th anniversary of its founding. Unlike older Episcopal parishes in Boston it relied on free will offerings for its support instead of pew rentals.

been accused of tepidity. Very soon after it struggled into existence on Advent Sunday, 1844, it found itself in hot water and for over ten years the waters seethed and boiled with the struggle between the two rectors, the saintly Dr. Crosswell and his successor, the doughty Bishop Southgate, on one side, and the obstinate and irascible head of the diocese, Bishop Eastburn, on the other.

“The reasons for the new parish as formulated by its founders sound unobjectionable

“It was to be a church with open doors  
‘formed on the spirit and principles of the  
Book of Common Prayer; a church supported  
by free will contributions of the worshippers,  
with free seats where rich and poor meet alike  
without distinction for worship . . .”

enough. It was to be a church with open doors ‘formed on the spirit and principles of the Book of Common Prayer; a church supported by free will contributions of the worshippers, with free seats where rich and poor meet alike without distinction for worship; a church where daily as well as Sunday services can be held.’

“The majority of the group who met on Beacon Hill to make plans for the new church as above outlined were men under thirty, resolute and fearless in their

determination that Boston should have a place for worship where a vital, living faith might be preached and practised instead of the dry formalism of the Puritans which dominated alike the Prayer Book churches and the various Congregational bodies. It was a democratic group, composed of men from various walks of life, but alike and united in their determination to see through the task they had undertaken. This was essentially a youth movement, a sort of by-product of the Tractarian or Oxford Movement in England, reports of which had traveled across the Atlantic.”

The Advent Archives hold her notes on a presentation she made about the parish historian, and biographical manuscripts on Charles Chapman Grafton, a young Advent parishioner who went on to become the parish’s rector from 1872 to 1888, then Bishop of Fond du Lac, and Martha Sever, a young nurse in the Civil War who on her death at age 25 left a substantial bequest to the Church of the Advent. (“Miss Mitchell I like this” the rector, Whitney Hale, wrote in the margin.) Her typescript “Advent Annals” or “Annals of the Advent Parish, Boston” is a work-in-progress of eight chapters. None of these manuscripts is dated, nor has the date of her appointment as parish historian been found; most of her work in this area was likely done between 1935 and 1942.

Miss Mitchell’s residence in the 1940 census is 273 Clarendon Street, known as

Morville House, a home for aged women owned by the Diocese of Massachusetts. She died in April 1942 at age 73; the Rev. Whitney Hale, the Advent’s tenth rector (from 1937 to 1960), presided at her funeral. No eulogy or obituary survives, if indeed one was ever created. Her work is briefly recognized in John T. Maltzberger’s Preface to *The Church of the Advent, First Years*, published in 1986: “Ann Maria Mitchell, an historian of the parish before 1942, took

SEE MITCHELL PAGE 14



# Scholarship trust's racist criteria exposed

by David Paulsen  
Episcopal News Service

In November 1992, North Carolina Bishop Robert Estill received a letter marked “privileged and confidential” from The Episcopal Church’s Office of the Treasurer in New York. The intention of the letter, drafted the week before Thanksgiving, was to inform Estill of the criteria that diocesan bishops in seven Southern states had been using for decades to nominate scholarship recipients from a charitable entity known as the Corbin Trust.

The trust had been established according to the terms of a will left by Claude Florence Corbin, a 42-year-old woman who died in 1919 of multiple sclerosis in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Today, a century after her death, The Episcopal Church still distributes thousands of dollars each year on behalf of the Corbin Trust to college students and seminarians from 15 dioceses, yet details of this benefactor’s life are unknown to most Episcopalians.

An echo of that life can be heard in the specificity of the terms that Estill was asked to review. The criteria for scholarships were as racist as they were clear: Recipients should come from Southern states. Corbin’s will preferred they be Episcopalians. It insisted they be white.

To varying degrees, church leaders accommodated that overt discrimination throughout most of the 20th century and into the early 2000s. By the 1990s, Southern bishops who objected were told they had no legal recourse to change the terms of an independent trust. They either accepted the conditions on the money or

had to refuse to nominate anyone from their dioceses for the non-competitive scholarships. The church finally stopped heeding the will’s offensive terms in 2004, thanks in part to prodding by one of Estill’s successors, North Carolina Bishop Michael Curry, the South’s first Black diocesan bishop.

## Mitchell

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her work so seriously that special stationery was printed for her task.”

Wallace Goodrich is slightly more effusive in his foreword to the centennial volume, *The Church of the Advent, Boston, 1844-1944*: “Miss Ann Maria Mitchell, a devoted communicant of the Church of the Advent and the appointed Historian of the Parish, prior to her death in 1942 had assembled much valuable material relating to the parish from its earliest days, which has been most helpful in the compilation of this work.”

But surely this is the right time, and the right place, to let Miss Mitchell have the last word.

“[The] common conflicts and difficulties of the past gave the parish of the Advent a solidarity which stands well the

test of time. The parish tie is a close one and many who are connected with it but are called to live elsewhere, will, when opportunity offers, return to its fold like children to a beloved home. ‘No place can seem quite like the Advent,’ they say.

“There has also been fostered a spirit of sturdy independence in the parishioners. ...On occasion they may become vocal in a manner and to a degree which will give those who have parish matters in charge unhappy and anxious moments. On the other hand, true to the tradition of the whole Anglican communion, they are able to turn and present to the world a solid and united front as befits the members of an honorable and historic clan.”

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## Amateur Archivist

John Rawlinson

Most archives contain confidential information. Still, there are reasons to keep such materials. Confidential information about hiring procedures may later be needed for a legal demonstration of a lack of bias or discrimination. Evaluations of contractors may demonstrate fairness in a bidding process. There may be personal evaluations which could create bad personal feelings, but which years later might provide important historical insight. So there are reasons to keep the materials, and other reasons for maintaining confidentiality.

Sometimes a material’s donor will require all, or part of, it to be “sealed” for a stated period of time. This is common in oral history interviews. That information

needs to be carefully recorded on the material, and the archivist is responsible for enforcing those provisions. Without being argumentative, sometimes the archivist should question the need for declaring materials confidential. Other times the independent judgment of the archivist must consider, and hold, some materials confidential on a case-by-case basis.

The archivist is responsible for reviewing some materials — such as staff files about various congregations. Generally congregational materials should be available for historical purposes. In reviewing one congregational file I came across many letters labeling a priest “communist.” That could have been legally actionable, so to protect all parties, it was withheld from the congregation’s history

## Protecting confidentiality

committee. This illustrates the need for reviewing materials.

The principal “do no harm” applies to archival materials. The archivist must exercise judgment so that the materials are not used to do harm to others.

If a volunteer archivist is able to enlist the support of other volunteers, it is important that they are able to respect the confidences involved. It is also possible to assign such volunteers work which does not place them in contact with any confidential materials.

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# Bishop Scott

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Deeply disappointed by the failure of the General Convention of 1865 . . . to provide him with episcopal relief, tired of the continual isolation from his episcopal colleagues now almost eight years long, worn out with the hardships of travel, and despairing of being able to meet the demands of his office in view of the constantly expanding population in his vast jurisdiction.

In 1867, Scott journeyed to New York with the intention of resigning, feeling that he had been a complete failure. Contracting a fever on shipboard, he died on 14 July, shortly after arriving in New York, where he was buried in the newer churchyard of Trinity Church at Broadway and Riverside Drive. Mrs. Scott returned to Georgia, where she died in 1893.

Despite Scott's feeling of failure, there were many successes, all the more

remarkable because of the difficult conditions. These are described in their manifold nature in Scott's entry in the Dictionary of American Biography: The district placed in his charge was extensive, conditions of travel were painfully arduous, means of communication were inconstant, money was scarce, and competent assistants almost impossible to secure.

During his time in office, the number of communicants increased from about fifty to over two hundred; of clergy, from two to ten (eight in Oregon); of church buildings, from one unfinished to thirteen completed (nine in Oregon), two built at the bishop's expense. Three churches (Trinity and St. Stephen's, Portland; St. Paul's, Salem) had become self-supporting. Two diocesan schools, in Oswego (later merged into Lake Oswego) and Milwaukie, were opened, although they had to be closed in 1866 for financial reasons; a parish school in Astoria remained open until 1878. (One of the schools, Spencer Hall for Girls in Milwaukie, was administered by Mrs. Scott when the headmistress left shortly after the opening.) A diocesan paper,

The Oregon Churchman, was begun in 1861 but ceased two years later, again for financial reasons. (It was revived in 1869; after several changes of title, it became The Oregon Episcopal Church News in 1989.) He left more than his vestments to his successor: he had laid a foundation upon which another would build.

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*Lawrence Crumb is retired priest of the Diocese of Oregon and associate professor emeritus of the University of Oregon.*

## our new puzzler

# Can you name and place this church?



The first services for this church were held in a community hall in 1912 and within a year construction began on a wood frame building that still serves as the sanctuary today. A two room vicarage was built in 1921, and in the 1980s an expanded narthex was built. The church became a shared ministry in the late 1960s, and the sole Anglican church in its coastal region with the closure of a neighboring town's parish. The surrounding community is a top tourist destination for surfers, anglers, hikers and whale watchers. It has a number of festivals that draw thousands, including a oyster festival, shore-bird festival, food and wine gala, and its most popular, the lantern festival. The area is a magnet for counter-culture and eco-minded life styles. It features both an eco-village and a floating off-the-grid art gallery.

Email your best guess to [thehistoriographer@gmail.com](mailto:thehistoriographer@gmail.com)

Beverly Bradley of St. John's in Oklahoma City was the first to correctly identify last issue's puzzler: St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Pawhuska, Ok. Shawn Pendley of St. John's in Norman, Ok. was runner-up.

# THE HISTORIOGRAPHER

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