



**St. John's Episcopal Church
3427 Olney Laytonsville Road
Olney, Maryland 20832**

St. John's Episcopal Church
Olney, Maryland

Our History from the
Perspective of Race and Racism

Researched and Compiled by William H. and Pamela S. Fleming

October 2024

Introduction

As a result of an EDOW Leadership Body Retreat held on February 24, 2024, all parishes in the Diocese of Washington were encouraged to examine their histories from the perspective of race and racism. Numerous histories have been written about St. John's Episcopal Church over the years (1942, 1955, 1967, 1992, 2002, 2004, and 2017) usually to mark an anniversary of its founding. This history of St. John's Episcopal Church follows the EDOW guidelines which emphasize facts contained in historical records supported with sources in a bibliography.

The State of Maryland became a plantation colony in the 17th Century. In 1700 there was a population of about 25,000 people and by 1750 that had increased more than five times to about 130,000. By 1755, about 40% of Maryland's population was black. Enslaved Africans and African Americans provided the foundation for Maryland's economy and formed its society during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The fortunes amassed from the labor of enslaved workers permitted many of Maryland's plantation owners to dominate state and local affairs of governance.

Prominent families in Montgomery County, Anglican and Quaker, owned prosperous plantations, and their names are still part of the community: Brooke, Waters, Magruder, Davis, Cashell, Riggs, Holland, Gaither, Griffin, and Bowie, to name a few. Many of the Episcopal families who founded St. John's Episcopal Church in 1842 were descendants of the early Anglicans who attended Hawlings River Chapel in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and many were members of the vestry of St. Bartholomew's Parish, including Allen Bowie Davis, William B. Magruder, Elisha J. Hall and Enoch B. Hutton, cousin of the first Rector of St. John's. Several have memorial windows in St. John's Episcopal Church, and many are buried in St. John's Cemetery. They also had numerous slaves, which is evident in the slave rosters and slave cemeteries on their estates.

On June 22, 1842, land was donated by Ignatius Waters and his wife Elizabeth ("Eliza) Dorsey for a church and graveyard in Mechanicsville (now Olney), Maryland. The Waters family of *Belmont* owned an estate that extended from Olney to Brookeville. They were slaveholders. The first vestry of St. John's was comprised of eight men, all of whom were plantation owners and slaveholders. The first rector of St. John's was the Reverend Orlando Hutton, who served from 1844 - 1861. According to the 1860 Census (Slave Schedule), Reverend Hutton owned two slaves. The church was consecrated on August 22, 1845, by the Bishop of Maryland, Bishop William Rollinson Whittingham. St. John's is the oldest Episcopal church building in continuous use in Montgomery County and is listed as a Maryland State Historical Site.

Although St. John's is in possession of the original Parish Register (1845-1889), Reverend Hutton did not keep records of Baptisms, Marriages, Confirmations, and Funerals; however, he often mentioned these numbers in his parochial reports which are included in the Journals of the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Maryland. Although no Vestry records exist during the Civil War period of 1863-1865, we are fortunate to have access to the Diary of Hester Ann Bowie (wife of Allen Bowie Davis) which gives detailed accounts of life at their *Greenwood* estate, both before and after the Emancipation of their 60 remaining slaves in 1864.



The Reverend Henry P. McQueen, Rector (2016 - Present)

"This is but one chapter of how the Episcopal Church both lived into our Baptismal covenant in respecting the dignity of every human being, and how the Episcopal Church failed to do so. The Episcopal Church's history, our nation's history, and St. John's history are complex and confused. Woven throughout these histories are stories that will make us proud and stories that will make us ashamed for things done and things left undone."

(The Bell Tower, February 12, 2021)

St John's Rectors 1844 - Present

Top Row

The Rev. Orlando Hutton	1844-1861
The Rev. Benjamin F. Brown	1862-1866
The Rev. Peter Tinsley	1866-1867
The Rev. James Poindexter	1867-1868

Second Row

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Duncan	1868-1875
The Rev. Richard Mason	1875-1876
The Rev. William H. Laird	1877-1896
The Rev. Peter M. Boyden	1897-1907

Third Row

The Rev. Charles D. Lafferty	1908-1913
The Rev. Henry H. Marsden	1913-1917
The Rev. Franklin J. Bohanan	1917-1920
The Rev. Guy C. Kagey	1921-1928

Fourth Row

The Rev. Philip A. Dales	1929-1931
The Rev. Thomas F. Opie	1931-1940
The Rev. Arthur LeBaron Ribble	1941-1948
The Rev. James Valliant	1949-1970

Fifth Row

The Rev. Jack S. Scott	1970-1993
The Rev. Dr. Benjamin A. Shambaugh	1995-2005
The Rev. Dr. Rock Schuler	2006-2008
The Rev. Canon Carol C. Flanagan	2010-2016

Previous Page

The Rev. Henry P. McQueen	2016-Pres.
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ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, OLNEY, MARYLAND

Historical Background

In 1760, the earliest village at the present site of what is known as Olney was named Fair Hill. This name came from one of Montgomery County's earliest homes, *Fair Hill*, built before the Revolutionary War by Col. Richard Brooke. Col. Brooke was a Quaker and served with distinction during the Revolutionary War. It is significant that he established and housed a Quaker school at *Fair Hill* for forty-six years. In 1826, the Mechanicsville Post Office was established at Fair Hill and the village became known as Mechanicsville after a number of artisans and craftsmen settled in the area. In 1851 the name of the community was officially changed to Olney.

Dedicated in 1845, St. John's Episcopal Church, Olney, Maryland, is the oldest Episcopal church building in continuous use in Montgomery County, Maryland. The land for St. John's Episcopal Church and cemetery was donated on June 22, 1842, by Ignatius Waters (1773-1842) and his wife Elizabeth ("Eliza") Dorsey (1786-1846). The deed is recorded at the Montgomery County Courthouse in Rockville, Maryland. At the time of its founding, St. John's Episcopal was part of the Diocese of Maryland until the Diocese of Washington was established in 1895.

The original St. John's Church was organized as a separate congregation of St. Bartholomew's Parish and located in Mechanicsville (now Olney), Maryland. According to the Maryland Historical Trust, the original church was "of barn construction of native timbers." It had four windows on each side and was situated on what is now the lower side of the cemetery. The church was consecrated on August 22, 1845, by the Bishop of Maryland, Bishop William Rollinson Whittingham, who came by horseback for the consecration. The Bishop stayed overnight at *Roseneath*, the home of the Senior Warden Thomas J. Bowie. The Bishop's twenty-five page hand-written text is on file in the Diocese of Maryland Archives.

At that time, the village was a rural crossroads between Rockville, Baltimore, and Washington, DC. To the west, was Cracklintown (now Laytonsville). Brookeville, established by Quakers in 1794, was just two miles to the north, and to the east was Sandy Spring, another Quaker community. While Sandy Spring was the religious center of the Quaker community, Brookeville was the center for trade and commerce.

According to the original Parish Register (1845-1889), the eleven founding members of St. John's Episcopal Church were: Thomas J. Bowie, William B. Magruder, Elizabeth Davis, Washington Bowie, Richard Holmes, Millicent R. Wilcoxon, Elisha J. Hall, Allen Bowie Davis, Caleb Gartrell, Dr. William P. Palmer, and Enoch Hutton. These founding members subscribed certain sums of money to construct a church building and elected a "committee of Richard Holmes, William B. Magruder, and Thomas J. Bowie to carry into effect the object and purpose of the aforesaid promises and agreements." The first vestrymen elected were Thomas J. Bowie, Richard Holmes, Elisha J. Hall, William B. Magruder, Remus Riggs, Ephraim Gaither, John W. Darby, and Enoch B. Hutton. (STJEC Register 1845-1889)

According to the Centennial History of St. John's, on April 27, 1844, the Vestry of St. Bartholomew's Parish elected The Reverend Orlando Hutton (1815-1891) to serve as Rector of both St. Bartholomew's Parish (more commonly called Hawlings River Chapel) and St. John's Episcopal Church. A house centrally located in the village of Brookeville was purchased for the new Rector of the two churches until his resignation in 1861. The rectory burned in 1912 and, although it was believed that all the church records were destroyed in the fire, the original Parish Register from 1845-1889 was returned to the Reverend Jack Scott on October 28, 1990. The register was in the possession of Dr. Jacob Wheeler Bird (1885-1959), founder of Montgomery Hospital and Register for St. John's Vestry for many years. Unfortunately, no records of marriages, baptisms, or confirmations were recorded in these two Parish Registers prior to 1897.

On January 2, 1847, the Building Committee authorized funds "to have the following work completed, namely: the pews finished; the weights of the windows hung; the door of the vestibule finished, and also seats made for the gallery." The archives of St. John's contain a photograph of the interior of the original church on the occasion of the marriage of Alletta Magruder Waters (1874-1947) to John Edwin Muncaster (1869-1955) on January 10, 1901. Alletta was the granddaughter of the aforementioned Ignatius Waters and his wife Elizabeth. The interior of the photo clearly shows a gallery on both sides of the church. Although there are no records that support the use of these galleries at St. John's for use by enslaved persons, a survey conducted by Bishop William R. Whittingham (1805-1879) in 1844 stated that the inclusion of a gallery for the use of slaves was a common feature of early Episcopal churches in Maryland. (source: marylandepiscopalian.org/2020/08/19)



On June 22, 1910, a petition was submitted to the Vestry of St. John's which stated: "We the undersigned members and subscribers for the maintenance of said church, do hereby respectfully petition your Honorable body to change the present location of said church so that it will face the Laytonsville Road, believing that such change will be more satisfactory and desirable to the members of said church, and greatly inspire the appearance thereof." (STJEC Register 1890-1918) This was approved by the Vestry and the original church was moved on rollers by mule teams from within the cemetery to its present location.



Following the relocation of the original wood frame church, renovation and remodeling was accomplished that included a recessed chancel, vestibule with Dutch style bell tower, and removal of galleries to accommodate stained glass memorial windows. The work was completed in time for Christmas Eve services on December 24, 1910.



Our Anglican Roots

As early as 1692, the Church of England, also known as the Anglican Church, became the established church of the Province of Maryland, which at the time consisted of ten counties, including St. Mary's, Anne Arundel, Calvert, and Prince Georges Counties. After the Revolutionary War, the parishes in Maryland became part of the Diocese of Maryland, and in 1895 they became part of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington.

In the mid-1700s, Quakers first arrived "onto the hunting ground of the Piscataway, onto Parr's Ridge at the threshold of the piedmont." They, along with many Anglicans, came from the Tidewater area in search of new land to grow tobacco and corn. (*Sandy Spring Legacy*, p. 16) Although early Anglicans and Quakers had many diverse beliefs, they were hard workers and progressive farmers, struggling to adapt to piedmont soils.

Many of their homes exist today on the historic register. Although the homes were called "plantations," they were usually not the mansions with pillars one would find among Tidewater planters. Rather they began as one or two-room cabins with a pitched roof to cover a porch. Additions may have been constructed of brick or fieldstone, as were the fireplaces. The large walk-in fireplaces were in the cellar or outside in a separate structure in case of fire. Near the house would be a barn and one or more tobacco barns for drying the leaves. A springhouse was usually near-by for the water supply and for keeping the milk cans cool. Many farms had a smokehouse for curing meat.

Prominent families in the county, Anglican and Quaker, owned prosperous plantations, and their names are still part of the community: Brooke, Waters, Magruder, Davis, Cashell, Riggs, Holland, Gaither, Griffin, and Bowie, to name a few. Many of the Episcopal families who founded St. John's Episcopal Church in 1842 were descendants of the early Anglicans who attended Hawlings River Chapel in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and many were members of the vestry of St. Bartholomew's Parish, including Allen Bowie Davis, William B. Magruder, Elisha J. Hall and Enoch B. Hutton, cousin of the first Rector of St. John's. Several have memorial windows in St. John's church, and many are buried in the cemetery. They also had numerous slaves, which is evident in the slave rosters and slave cemeteries on their estates.

In the 1750's and 1760's, Anglicans in early Montgomery County often held worship services in the home of John Holland, still called *Prospect Hill*, near the Hawlings River on Brighton Dam Road. From Montgomery County historical records for the home, one room (now the dining room) in the house served as a chapel of worship. During the American Revolution it was a meeting room for local patriots.

Parishioners, many of whom were ancestors of Episcopal families in the Cracklintown (now Laytonsville) and Mechanicsville (now Olney) areas, expressed a need to build a more convenient and permanent chapel, so in May 1761 seventy members of the Church of England petitioned Maryland Governor Horatio Sharpe:

“To His excellency Horatio Sharpe Esq. Governor and Commander-in-Chief, in and over the Province of Maryland, and to the Honorables, the Upper and lower Houses of Assembly, at this time convened.

“The petition of the Vestry and inhabitants of Prince George Parish in Frederick and Prince George Counties humbly sheweth, - That the parishioners residing in and upon the neighborhood of a branch of Patuxent, commonly called the Hawlings River, are in the greatest want of a Chapel of Ease.

“This petition therefore most humbly prayeth that his Excellency and the Honorables, the Upper and Lower Houses of Assembly, would be graciously pleased to act to empower commissioners of Frederick and Prince Georges Counties to levy upon the taxable inhabitants of Prince George Parish such sum of money as to their Honors it may appear sufficient for erecting a chapel to be located upon or near the branch of Patuxent commonly called Hawlings River, and to his Excellency and their Honors, petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray.”

Signed by Order of the Vestry, May 1761 Pr Simon Nichols Regr.

According to the Montgomery County Cemetery Inventory for the Hawlings River Chapel of Ease Cemetery, the petition was signed by Anglicans who would later become associated with St. Bartholomew's Parish, including William Waters, Thomas Riggs, Elisha Riggs, Robert Owen, Thomas Davis, Benjamin Gaither, Stephen Gatherill, Aaron Gatherill, Richard Clarke, Henry Luke, Jr., Josiah Holland, and John Holland. Descendants of the Waters, Riggs, and Davis families founded St. John's Episcopal Church in 1842.

The petition was eventually granted and a Chapel of Ease was erected at Crowtown (now Brighton), only to be destroyed by a severe storm a few years later. This location is close to the site of St. Luke's Episcopal Church built 1870, according to St. Luke's records. However, not until 1812 was permission granted to build a separate parish called St. Bartholomew's on land purchased for twenty-five dollars from Margaret Brooke. The small log and frame structure was located where Unity-Laytonsville Road, Route 420, crosses the Hawlings River-- and often referred to as the “Hawlings River Chapel.”



St. Bartholomew's Parish Vestry minutes provide insight into the early years from 1813 until 1844. For example, the entry for Easter Monday 1813 stated:

"At a meeting of a number of parishioners of St. Bartholomew's Parish on Easter Monday 1813 at Bowman's Store (in Cracklintown) agreeably to publick notice, they proceeded to the Election of a Vestry for said parish, the ballots being deposited, upon counting the same it appeared that Thomas Davis, Edward Burgess, Ephraim Gaither, John H. Riggs, James Whiting and Rezin Darby, Henry Gaither, and Anthony Ricketts had a majority of votes, they were therefore declared to be the vestry of said parish for the year ensuing."

It should be noted that Thomas Davis (1768-1833) is an example of a St. Bartholomew's Parish Vestry member who was a prominent ancestor of Episcopalians of Mechanicsville in 1842. Thomas Davis, father of Allen Bowie Davis, served on the St. Bartholomew's Parish Vestry from 1813 until 1832, at which time A.B. Davis served. Others families familiar to St. John's are Waters, Riggs, Darby, and Magruder.

On May 9, 1819, the St. Bartholomew's Parish Vestry petitioned James Kemp, D.D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Maryland:

"Sir: In as much as our Church has never yet been consecrated, we therefore request you to perform that sacred office; and to set it apart, as the parish Church of St. Bartholomew's in Montgomery County, State of Maryland, for the worship of Almighty God." Signed Thomas Davis, John H. Riggs, Henry Griffith, Frederick Gaither, H.C. Gaither, Lyde Griffith, Remus Riggs

The church was consecrated as St. Bartholomew's, commonly referred to as the "Hawlings River Chapel," and formally admitted to the Diocese of Maryland as a separate congregation. The Rector of Christ Church in Rockville provided infrequent services because of the long journey by horse back or carriage. (www.saintlukesbrighton.com/centennial-history)

Later, a more sturdy building of stone was built which had "a carved wooden gallery in the back where black servants and slaves of parish members sat during services." (*The Olney Courier-Gazette*, May 6, 1992, p.A-54) The Rev. Thomas G. Allen's Parochial Report to the Diocese of Maryland in 1821 did not single out the number of "coloreds" whom he had baptized or married in Prince George's Parish, Rockville or in St. Bartholomew's Parish, but he did state: "*St. Bartholomew's Parish, Montgomery County has one good stone church, the salary depending on contributions, but the condition of the parish esteemed flourishing and the church not sufficiently capacious.*" In addition, the distance was too great between Unity in upper Montgomery County and Rockville for one rector on horseback or in a horse-drawn carriage to serve adequately.

The June 5, 1822 entry stated: "*By the convention held in the City of Washington, St. Bartholomew's Parish was so enlarged at the instance of the rector, as to include the farm of Jonathan Duley, Esquire, which lies on the road leading from John Belts to Snell's Bridge.* (An addition noted that "*Previous to this, the boundaries for St. Bartholomew's Parish began at "a bridge near Harry W. Dorseys—on Sineca (sic) River—running with the road by John Belts to*

Snell's bridge, including all the upper part, from Montgomery County between Sineca (sic) and Patuxent Rivers."

The following Register excerpted entries for St. Bartholomew's Parish also mentioned several Vestry members who helped found St. John's or were on the first Vestry at St. John's in 1845.

Easter Monday March 31, 1834

"At a meeting of the parishioners of St. Bartholomew's Parish held at the church in said parish...they then proceeded to fill the vacancy, on counting the ballots it appeared that John W. Magruder, Henry Griffith, Sr., Samuel R. Gaither, Dr. Washington Waters, Dr. William B. Magruder, Henry C. Gaither, Elisha R. Griffith, and Allen B. Davis had the greatest number of votes, they are therefore duly Elected Vestry of said parish for the ensuing year."

October 8, 1840 A.B. Davis handed in his resignation as a member of the vestry. *They then proceeded to the election of a rector. When on counting the ballots, it appeared that the Rev. L.I. Gillis received five votes and was declared elected for the ensuing year as rector.*

March 16, 1844 Allen Bowie Davis was elected back on the Vestry of St. Bartholomew's Parish.

Easter Monday April 8, 1844

"At a meeting of the parishioners of St. Bartholomew's Parish held at the Church in said parish agreeably to previous notice—on motion of E.J. Hall, Major Ephraim Gaither was appointed Chairman and Dr. Rufus H. Speake elected Secretary, Mr. A. B. Davis offered the following: (Excerpted)

Resolved -That the spiritual interest and welfare of this Parish would be greatly strengthened and promoted by having Divine Service in the Church every Sabbath and the rector to reside in some central location within the Parish

Resolved – that to accomplish this desirable end, and for the mutual advantage and welfare of each, it is expedient for this Church to form a union with the new Chapel erected near Mechanicsville, in the employment and support of a Minister to reside between the two and to officiate alternately at each

Resolved – That the vestry of this Parish are hereby requested to take measures to form a union between this Church and the Chapel near Mechanicsville (St. John's Episcopal Church) upon such terms and conditions as to them may seem right and proper."

By 1842 parishioners affected by the distance had founded a separate church in Mechanicsville (now Olney) which they named St. John's Episcopal Church and called its first rector, the Reverend Orlando Hutton, in 1844. Until 1861, the Rector served St. John's Episcopal Church

and St. Bartholomew's Parish in Montgomery County, and Mount Calvary Church in Glenwood, Howard County, which is no longer an Episcopalian church. Allen Bowie Davis, a prominent St. John's parishioner, once lived at the Wilson House, part of Roxbury Mill in Howard County, so he assisted Hutton in establishing Mount Calvary Church. By 1870, St. John's Episcopal Church and St. Bartholomew's Parish (Hawlings River Chapel) also shared a rector with St. Luke's in Brighton and St. Mark's in Highland (in Howard County). From the diary of Hester Ann Bowie Davis, it is evident that as late as 1861, parishioners in Mechanicsville occasionally attended St. Bartholomew's Parish, which they still called "Hawlings River Chapel," as well as St. John's, which they often called "Mechanicsville," and Mt. Calvary.

Today, only the Hawlings River Chapel of Ease Cemetery is barely visible in an extremely overgrown wooded area opposite 5600 Sundown Road at 4925 Sundown Road (near Unity) in Laytonsville, Maryland. The St. Bartholomew's Vestry minutes mentioned meeting at the "church at Unity" on June 27, 1868 and December 14, 1873. In November 1918, the Vestry, consisting of William B. Mobley, Richard H. Lansdale, T.C. Griffith, Robert P. Magruder, Alton C. Bell, Henry H. Griffith, Douglas Riggs, and Greenberry Griffith, made the motion which carried to arrange for the consecration of St. Bartholomew's Church, Laytonsville:

"It being the one hundredth anniversary of the consecration of the Mother Church on Hawlings River, it having been found possible to raise the amount of indebtedness by that time...It was also decided to present the two chancel chairs of walnut that were used in Old Saint Bartholomew's to St. Luke's Church, Brighton..."

On September 18, 1919, *"a motion was made and carried to have the furniture, etc removed from Unity Chapel which is rapidly going to decay, the pews to be presented to some chapel in the diocese in need of them, the lamps, bookcase and books to be placed in St. Bartholomew's Church."* This refers to St. Bartholomew's located in Laytonsville, Maryland, since 1919.

Many of the parishioners of The Reverend Orlando Hutton (1815-1891), whether they attended St. Bartholomew's Parish where he served from 1844 until 1866 or St. John's Church where he served from 1844 until 1861, supported and fought for the Confederacy. Hutton had been on the Board of Trustees of Brookeville Academy but resigned in 1848 to better serve his congregations; he was also secretary of the Board during the Civil War, resigning again in 1864. The Reverend Hutton also served Mount Calvary in Glenwood, Maryland, from 1857 until 1860. Then returned in 1873 and served until his death in 1890; he is buried there. Mount Calvary still stands on the east side of Roxbury Mills Road (Route 97), but it is now Glenwood Baptist.

Hutton was known as an historian who wrote the 1890 biography of William Pinkney, the fifth Episcopal Bishop of Maryland. The following excerpts from The Rev. Orlando Hutton's Parochial Responses found in the Journals of the Annual Conventions of the Diocese of Maryland provide enlightenment on his attitudes before the Civil War.

**Reports in the Journals of the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Maryland from
1841-1845 and 1846-1849 as they relate to Rev. Orlando Hutton**

In 1841, Bishop William Rollinson Whittingham, Bishop of the Diocese of Maryland from 1840 until 1879, noted in the Journal of the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Maryland for 1841 (pp.21-22): *“I preached in Christ Church, Calvert County, confirmed twelve persons, and administered the Lord’s Supper...A notice by the rector of services designed for the colored population afforded me an acceptable opportunity of expressing to the white congregation my sense of their responsibility to God for the eternal condition of that neglected portion of His heritage...a heavy burden lies on us, my brethren, both the clergy and of the laity, until we do more, much more, than is done now, for the servile portion of our church...”*

In 1844, Bishop Whittingham developed a survey of parishes in his diocese. According to Mary Klein, Diocesan archivist, one interesting question posed by Bishop Whittingham to his clergy and vestries was, “What accommodation is there for servants and free colored persons?” (Whittingham always used the term “servants” to refer to enslaved persons.) One of the responses is of special note since the Reverend Orlando Hutton became the first rector of St. John’s Episcopal Church, Olney, on June 1, 1844, and he also served St. Bartholomew’s Parish, then located near Unity (Sunshine), Maryland.

In early 1844, the Rev. Orlando Hutton was still rector of St. Margaret’s Parish, Westminster, Annapolis, a position he had held since 1839. Hutton reported that he had baptized 4 white infants and 16 colored infants, and all five of the marriages he had performed were for African Americans. Further, he stated that his parish church was frame and had a gallery for the servants and free blacks. The chapel (Marley Chapel, which is now St. Alban’s, Glen Burnie) was brick and the back seats were reserved for the use of African Americans. (Note: Galleries and separate entrances for the slaves were common in early Episcopal churches in Maryland. In later renovation, the galleries were often removed or converted to organ or choir lofts.)

Orlando Hutton was rector of St. John’s from 1844 until 1861 and St. Bartholomew’s Parish from 1844 until 1866. He did not keep records in the St. John’s Register for Baptisms, Marriages, Confirmations, and Funerals with the number of blacks; however, he often mentioned these numbers in his parochial reports included in the Journals of the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Maryland. Before St. John’s was consecrated as a separate church in August 1845, Hutton reported for St. Bartholomew’s Parish in the Journal of the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Maryland for 1845 (p.104): Baptisms - white 7, colored 12; Communicants - died 2,

removed 3, added 3—present number 50; Marriages - white 2, colored 1; Funerals - white 8, colored 10. Further, he reported *“In the southern section a new church has been organized as a separate congregation, under the name of St. John’s Church, Montgomery County. A very excellent and commodious church with galleries, 26 by 40, exclusive of the vestry room, and being all paid for, is now ready for consecration.”*

In the 1848 Journal of the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Maryland, Rev. Hutton did not distinguish whites and blacks; however, in the notation for St. John’s, he wrote, *“Occasional services are held in this church for the benefit of the colored people. One Sunday afternoon in every month is devoted to the catechetical instruction of the children. During the winter season divine services are conducted on the Sunday evenings in the village of Brookeville, with expository lectures upon the Holy scriptures. The prospects of success and usefulness are encouraging.”* (p. 120)

In the 1849 Journal of the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Maryland, Rev. Hutton did break down the numbers: Baptisms- adults, white 2; infants, white 9, colored 6; Confirmed – 7; Communicants – last reported 18, added 7, removed 2, present number 23; Funerals 5. *“The Church seems to be quietly and steadily progressing. The congregations are good and the prospects of increased usefulness are encouraging. In addition to the Divine services which are conducted in this Church and in St. Bartholomew’s, the Rector also officiates regularly in the village of Brookeville.”*

For the 1847 and 1848 Conventions, Allen Bowie Davis was the lay delegate for St. Bartholomew’s Parish. This is interesting to note because Davis was a founding member of St. John’s Olney in 1842 and deeded the land for Mount Calvary Church in 1857.

Reports in the Journals of the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Maryland from 1860 – 1865 as they relate to Rev. Orlando Hutton and Reverend Benjamin F. Brown

The Journal of the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Maryland 1860 – 1865 contains Parochial Reports from the Civil War years by both the Reverend Orlando Hutton and the Reverend Benjamin F. Brown who was called to St. John’s Episcopal Church in 1862 and served until 1866. During these years, Bishop Whittingham was still the Bishop of the Diocese of Maryland. There was no Convention report for 1861.

For 1860, Reverend Hutton’s Parochial Report to the Diocese of Maryland included white and “colored” for both St. Bartholomew’s Parish and St. John’s Church on p. 69:

For St. Bartholomew's Parish: Baptisms - Adult, wh 1, Infant, wh.5. Communicants - whole number, wh. 46. Marriages – wh. 2, col. 1; Funerals – wh. 4, col. 2. Contributions for Missions, Diocesan \$21.00, General domestic \$11.05, Foreign \$5.39; for other Church purposes \$40.00; also contributions to the amount of \$586.00 towards the erection of Mount Calvary Mission Church in Howard County.

For St. John's Church: Baptisms – Infant, wh. 4, col. 3. Communicants – added, wh 2, whole number, wh. 26; Marriages – wh. 2, col. 2; Funerals – wh. 8.

For his 1862 Parochial Report to the Diocese, Rev. Orlando Hutton signed his report for St. John's Church, Montgomery County, as "late rector," and a report from the Lay Reader followed in which Charles Abert, a member of St. John's, stated, *"I have officiated in St. John's Church, Mechanicsville, since the 23rd Sunday after Trinity, being the 3rd of November 1861, reading the Church Service and a Sermon on every Sunday except five, On two of those, the 4th Sunday in Advent, and the 4th Sunday in Lent, our late rector, the Rev. Orlando Hutton officiated, and administered the Holy Communion."*

The Reverend Benjamin F. Brown was called to serve at St. John's from 1862 until 1866, as well as serving at Prince George's Parish, Christ Church, Rockville. Therefore, Brown gave the 1863 Parochial Report to the Diocese for St. John's on p. 43. Baptisms – Infant, 5, (of which were privately performed 5, col. 4); Communicants – added by removal 1, died 1, present 33; Burials – 1. *...The Congregation is in prosperous condition...The Congregations have been good. I regret to say that the great distance of most of the families from the Church renders it impossible to collect the children in Church for Chatechisings. The same circumstance renders it impossible to organize a Sunday School."*

For 1864 on p. 41, Rev. B. F. Brown reported to the Diocese: Baptisms – Infant 10 (of which were privately performed 10, col. 4); Communicants – white 33.

For 1865 on p. 61, Rev. Brown reported to the Diocese: Baptisms – Infant 1 (of which were privately performed 1); Confirmed – wh. 3; Communicants, admitted 4; added by removal 1; present number, wh. 37. He added, *"The Parish is in a healthy condition. There are manifestations of increasing interest in the services of the Church. The Rector cannot render this report without mention of the ever prompt and acceptable services of his Lay reader, Mr. Charles Abert, whose valuable assistance relieves me from the burden of labor at one point, and enables me to give Mission services at a new and very promising station."*

The Civil War and Montgomery County, Maryland (1861-1865)

Allen Bowie Davis (1809-1889), son of Thomas Davis and Elizabeth Bowie, is just one example of a founding member of St. John's caught in Civil War tensions. He was president of the Brookeville Academy for 26 years and organized the Montgomery County Agricultural Society. In addition, he was director of the C&O Canal Company, delegate to two state constitutional conventions, and a member of the State House of Delegates. However, Allen Bowie Davis was a major landowner. He inherited his family estate which combined *Gold's Branch* and *Hygham* into a much larger colonial estate in Brookeville which he called *Greenwood*. With over 1,000 acres and approximately 60 to 100 slaves during various years, Davis rejected the abolition of slavery but did oppose secession.

On April 18, 1861, Maryland Governor Hicks announced that troops from Maryland would only have to protect the nation's capital, but when Baltimore was attacked, troops from Olney were called. Local Episcopalians Ridgely Brown of *Elton* Farm near Unity and Captain Thomas Griffith of *Edgehill* in Laytonsville headed volunteers flying the Confederate flag to defend Baltimore. While Maryland's General Assembly debated the secession ordinance, men from Montgomery County crossed the Potomac to enlist in Virginia regiments. This included George R. Gaither who led a detachment from Montgomery County to join the 1st Virginia Cavalry. In June 1861, Ridgely Brown also crossed the Potomac to join the Confederates. When the 1st Maryland Cavalry was organized, Brown became a captain, then lieutenant colonel in the regiment, but was killed at South Anna River in Virginia in June 1864. (*A Grateful Remembrance*, p.169-170) Colonel Benjamin Duvall Canby was a Colonel in the 1st Maryland Cavalry. Both Canby (1837-1918) and Griffith (1831-1912) are buried at St. John's.

In 1862, Montgomery County Unionists held a meeting in Rockville to deplore the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia as unconstitutional and called for the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act. The resolutions were drafted by Allen Bowie Davis, Charles Abert, and Zachariah Waters. (*A Grateful Remembrance*, p. 179)

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states, "are and henceforward shall be free." In a recollection in *The County Courier*, dated September 9, 1978, Allen Bowie Davis is said to have announced the Proclamation to his slaves and reactions varied: "Some slaves ran right at that moment, and some went back to their work. Bowie's wife mentioned in her diary that one slave, Charlotte, a milkmaid, died the next day from the excitement. A few slaves stayed on after being given their freedom. They were Dick Powell, a one-armed gardener, Ike Wallace, a wagoner, Wilson Johnson, a blacksmith and miller, and Rubyn Lynn, a coachman. Most of these men remained at *Greenwood* for the rest of their lives. Some were given land near *Greenwood* on which they lived." In 1939, Mary Dorsey Davis bequeathed St. John's Church the Greenwood/ Davis Cemetery. The *Greenwood* Slave Cemetery on the property has not been definitively located by Montgomery County Historical Society.

The Diary of Hester Ann Wilkins Davis 1861-1864



"The darkest hours are often harbingers of a bright dawn."

As stated previously, St. John's Episcopal Church has the Registers with Vestry minutes from 1845-1889 and 1890-1946. However, the years 1863-1865 were not included in the minutes. Therefore, the excerpts from the diary of Hester Wilkins Davis, wife of Allen Bowie Davis, from March 4, 1861 to December 28, 1864 are quite relevant, especially since her husband was very much involved in St. John's affairs and Montgomery County government and owned one of the largest plantations in the area. Hester's diary entries included her candid opinions about the life of a prominent pro-slavery household during the Civil War, though she did not believe that Maryland should cede from the Union. Mr. and Mrs. Davis often hosted both Union and Confederate troops at their plantation *Greenwood*, but Hester complained bitterly when the horses and food were taken and their home robbed.

Hester also commented on the sermons in the local churches and on the Reverend Benjamin F. Brown, Rector of St. John's (which she often referred to as Mechanicsville), who spent many Sunday evenings at the Davis home and "chatted away" all night. She continued to attend the "Hawlings River Church" as late as 1862, but seemed to prefer the Methodist Churches in Brookeville and Rockville and in Baltimore where her family lived.

She worried about her ailing son William Wilkins Davis, "Wilkins," who met and travelled with Bishop Henry Whipple in Minnesota after the US-Dakota War of 1862. He wrote his mother often about visiting the imprisoned Indians and assisting Whipple in setting up missions and schools. Hester's diary even described Whipple's visit to the Olney area, preaching at St. John's, and staying at *Greenwood* where the Bishop also preached to the Davis servants and sang with them, as did Enmegahbowh, the first Native American Episcopal priest, who was the Bishop's interpreter during his missionary work with the Dakota and Ojibwe and companion on his travels to the United States. (NOTE: In 1867, the stained glass window of St. John the Evangelist was given by the Davises in memory of their son "Wilkins" who died of tuberculosis soon after marrying the daughter of Bishop Whipple in Minnesota. It was the altar window until 1980 when it was moved to the new west transept during Church renovation and enlargement.)

After the slaves were emancipated in 1864, all the females left *Greenwood* and only the blacksmith, wagoner and gardener remained. In her last diary entry on December 28, 1864, Hester noted, *"The darkest hours are often the harbingers of a bright dawn."*

Included here are excerpts from Hester's written diary which relate to St. John's Episcopal Church, her church attendance in general, and some of her opinions about the Civil War between 1861 and 1864. She often referred to her husband as "Mr. D." The church in "Mechanicsville" was St. John's Episcopal Church, and The Reverend Mr. Brown was the priest at St. John's from 1861-1866. Specific dates are included if Hester wrote them in her entries.

(p. 37) 1861 Sunday - The family went to Hawlings River Church in the morning and Mt. Calvary in the afternoon.

(p. 48) May 11, 1862 – Went to Salem Church and heard an excellent sermon from Mr. Hopkins. Dr. Howard and Mr. Abert came to dinner. (Note: Howard and Abert were members of St. John's)

(pp.82-83) Dec 21, 1862 – Rev. Mr. Brown at night. Children may be a good many but according to my view he indulged too much in desultory conversation and tells too many ludicrous stories on the Sabbath for my strict notions of Sabbath observance.

(p. 84) Dec 25, 1862 – Church at Mechanicville. Misses Riggs and Thompson, Neall and Bowie Magruder to spend the evening. "Servant Martha was married. There was feasting and finery. Red, white, and blue rosettes. The negroes have enjoyed themselves very much. They alone had parties in (sic) the holidays. With Emancipation their exemption from care cannot possibly continue, as they will be compelled to make provisions for their own wants."

(p. 87) Jan. 4, 1863 – Went to Mechanicsville. Heard Mr. Brown "and he shall be called Jesus." Quite an Evangelical discourse. The church is very prettily dressed. In front of the choir Glory to God in the Highest. Over the Pulpit Emmanuel surrounded by a star, and in perspective a cross. The pulpit, galleries, and pillars wreathed in green. The children have been much praised for this performance...

(p.87) Jan. 5, 1863 – Bowie (her son Wilkins) reached Fairbault, MN (sic) the evening before Christmas and "met the finest man I ever saw, Bishop Whipple."

(p.94) Feb. 1863 – Wilkins has visited the Chippewa Indians and acted as secretary in their counsel with the Bishop...Wilkins is much improved.

(p.114) May 1863 – Called on Rev. M Boyle and lady of our new minister located in Brookeville...went to Mechanicsville church, Mr. Brown preached. He says true things but in a commonplace manner, is not an interesting preacher.

(pp.124-125) July 20, 1863 - ...Thomas Gaither has been arrested and confined in the central guard house Washington. Major Arthur Chichester of Gen. Hill's staff is a prisoner in Washington. It is reported in the neighborhood that the Confeds said they intended ousting Mr. D but refrained because I and my daughter were "sickish".

(p. 136) Sunday Aug. 30, 1863 – Went to St. John's. Mr. Abert read the service.

(p. 151) Sunday Oct. 18, 1863 – Heard Mr. Brown. Communion. I was standing on the steps. Mrs. Beattie and Mrs. Bowie brushed past me and got into Mrs. Bowie's carriage without speaking to me...went in afternoon to Brookeville Methodist Church.

(p. 156) Sunday Oct. 25, 1863 – Went to St. John's Church.

(p.159) Sunday Nov. 1, 1863 – St. John's Church. During service Mr. Riggs walked up to the pew and spoke to Mr. Davis, who left the church. It seemed to produce much excitement. In a half hour, he returned. A lady informed me after service all our servants had left, but had been stopped on the road...The driver of the vehicle (a white man) was sent to jail to stand his trial next week. Mr. T. Riggs drove us home...

(p. 162) Sunday Nov. 15, 1863 – At noon not a male servant to feed the stock. Our coachman did not make his appearance. Just before 3 o'clock a small boy came home and took us in the one-horse Rockaway to church which we reached when the sermon was half over. I asked Mr. D to drive us to church, but he refused and rode off to see his cousin T. Gaither, but he had gone to see a neighbor. He (Gaither) is in wretched health, evidently in decline. And thus people trifle with the Sabbath and the commandments of God. I have just read Wilberforce's life...

(p. 163) Thursday Nov 19, 1863 – Went to Mr. Ignatius Waters. Two men went to Mr. Benson's, asked for food, when seated at the table said this was not what they wanted. They must have money, drew their revolvers, and searched the house taking \$200 in gold.

(p. 168) Sunday Dec. 6, 1863 – Mechanicsville Church. Mr. Abert read the service and sermon. How much have I read prayers, even the beautiful service of the Episcopal church, and read sermons denounced by ignorant persons, or prejudicial persons. But I certainly found God in the prayers, in the hymns, in the Psalms and in the sermon. I certainly beyond all deception, or hallucination, or superstition had a mysterious, but realizing sense of the presence offered. To his name be praise forever and ever. Amen.

(p. 170) Dec. 25, 1863 – Went to Church. Very handsomely dressed. Over the chancel a star and the Word in green letters of ivy "of Bethlehem," round the church "thou shalt call his name Jesus." Misses Bowie and Thompson to dinner.

(p. 170) Saturday, Dec. 26, 1863 – Servant Len married this morning. A great wedding dinner. I gave them one shoulder of bacon, a large roast of beef, a pickled round, and 4 chickens, 3 pound cake and 2 pounds candies and little extras for the bride's cake.

(p. 171) Friday, Jan. 1, 1864 – Mr. Davis dined with T.J. Bowie with a number of gentlemen. Eggnog, apple toddy, and wine abundant. "Oh, my soul. Come not show into this secret." A little boy comes in crying, "he is very cold." Servant Sallie pulls off his shoes, he has no stockings. Staid (sic) all night.

(p. 172) Sunday Jan. 3, 1864 – Our coachman does not make his appearance. Kind servant Becky's free husband Tom to drive us. So much for succession—took communion. We had plum pudding. It was bitter cold and the air made me very hungry and I ate freely of it. Felt lethargic all afternoon.

(pp. 175-176) Sunday, Jan. 17, 1864 – Went to St. John's. Rev. Mr. Brown spent the night. What a talker. Certainly allows himself great latitudes for he likes Pollard's History of the War and says he sat up til a late hour reading it. I never allowed my children to read newspapers, general

literature, write letters or study lessons on Sunday, and they strictly adhere to it. The last Sunday night he staid (sic) until a late hour reading a political speech.

(p. 182) Monday, Feb. 29, 1864 – Mr. D has taken servants Sallie and Caroline out of jail and hired them to Mr. Trail in Rockville. They cost him in one week in jail \$9.20...

(p. 184) Tuesday, Mar. 8, 1864 - ...Two detectives came up from Washington this morning with an order from Col. Baker, emanating from Sec. of War putting Mr. Davis under arrest, before leaving he wrote to Misses Blair, Rev. Johnson, and lawyer Bradly requesting their kind offices to procure his parole. "Oh, Lord, I will praise thee for thy protecting care, in raising up friends to care for me in this emergency..."

(p. 185) Friday, Mar. 11, 1864 – Mr. Bowman did not come up and there was no male in the home save old Washington, nor in the quarters but Tom Brown, a free colored man, and once this Mr. D. owned 63 servants—besides losing 20 children...

(p. 188) Sunday, Mar. 13, 1864 – Mr. Brown preached a dull sermon on the duty of supporting a Ministry and directing part of our substance to God.

(p. 193) Friday, April 8, 1864 – Bishop Whipple, Mr. Hinman and Mr. Emegaughta (sic), missionaries Pepe and Toope Dacotas (sic) the latter a chief, who had rescued 200 whites during the Sioux massacre and a young Indian theological student arrived 7 and ½ o'clock P.M. Mr. Thompson escorted them and remained all night. I had a bad headache.

(p. 193-194) Sunday, April 10, 1864 – Bishop Whipple preached at St. John's in the morning, at M. P. in Brookeville in the afternoon and at my house to the servants at night. They even came in the dining hall and housekeeper's room. The Bishop asked them to sing hymns with which they were all familiar. This they did. He seemed much affected and said it recalled to mind past years when he preached to his brethren in S. Carolina and united in singing the same hymns. Mr. Enmegaugh (sic) made a feeling address to them, contrasting them to his poor brethren in Christ, who have no gospel, no bible, no Christian privileges, told them how the great spirit comforted him in his heart, that his son a youth of 17 years, said to his mother, weep not for me, I am going to the white man's God. Father, pray much and do good, and then expired. Then followed the Benediction by the Bishop, when the negroes sang spontaneously the doxology. Mr. E. said with much emotion, "I wish to shake hands with these Christian people" which was cordially responded to.

(p. 206) Sunday, July 1864 - On bringing out the carriage our two bridles were gone, all except the blinds which lay on the floor. Heard Mr. Brown. A Confederate died at Mr. Lansdale's and was buried today at Mt. Calvary by Mr. Hutton.

(p. 208) Sunday, July 1864 – Hester described fighting in Rockville, then church service. ...went to hear Mr. Brown preach an excellent sermon from "these light afflictions which are but for a workout for a far more exceeding weight of glory." I certainly returned home profited. I certainly am a tried woman.

(p. 209) Sunday July 1864 – Mr. Davis started and went as far as Brookeville enroute to church, but learning the Confeds were in Clarksburg, (which proved untrue) he returned home.

(p. 214) Sunday, Oct. 1864 - Rev. Brown returned from church with us spent the night. Chatted away most furiously...Bishop Whipple gone to Europe. Wilkins finds great difficulty in getting hands for his farm. Mr. Brown putting up a tenant house...

(pp. 214-216) This is the 12th of October. The vote on the new Constitution is cast today. One article Emancipates the blacks, the 1st of November...I leave it all to God. He has some purpose to fulfill, and when he appoints, who dare resist. If it is in the order of Divine Providence, he will make up all that is lacking...

The paper yesterday entertained the Governor's proclamation, given (sic) freedom to the slaves under the new Constitution. The home vote against it was nearly 2000, but the soldiers' vote gave a majority of almost 300 for it. This vote was illegal but was forced upon the people. Our servants all went to work as usual. After breakfast, Mr. D summoned them to the quarters and announced it to them, telling them he was pleased with their good behaviour, and they were at liberty to remain until they could suit themselves with homes. He did not ask me to remain. Wilson, the miller and blacksmith, Isaac the wagoner, and Dick the gardener expressed a desire to remain. Our household consisted hitherto of 7 servants; white housekeeper, cooks, chambermaid, laundress and 3 dining room and parlour servants; 3 or 4 at the dairy besides women (who) worked only. In August, Rachel the cook ran off. Last winter Sallie and Caroline dining room servants went. Becky dairy woman came into cook. She has gone to housekeeping in Brookeville. Harriet chambermaid goes to housekeeping at Dr. Magruder's. Louisa, Catharine (waiter) and her son Mortimer go to John Stablers. So we part with all our women. It is best to make a clean sweep...

(pp. 217-218) Saturday Oct. 1864 - ...Harriet left with two cart loads of valuables. Charlotte's father asked Mr. D to hire her, he did not want her. I said I would try her, if she wished to stay. Mr. D proposed it to her, but she said all the rest of the women were going, it would be too lonesome for her, so they had agreed to leave us without a servant if possible. Her father would not let her come to his house, and she could not hear of a place, so Becky invited her to stay with her until she could get a place. She (Charlotte) was very much worried. Came home and milked, was suddenly taken with apoplexy and lingered until Saturday night and died very hard.

The servants were all to have left Saturday but remained (for) her funeral this morning. Warner Cook preached her funeral sermon. Mrs. Whitmore will attend to the chambers and assist in housekeeping and the milk and butter. Louisa and Catharine left this evening in a five horse wagon well piled up. It is my firm impression they went well provided with corn, potatoes, cabbages, and apples...

(p. 219) Friday, Nov. 11, 1864 – Went to Mr. Waters. Very ill with typhoid fever. Lincoln is elected and Johnson V. President. Sherman has burned Atlanta.

(p.221) Sunday Dec. 25, 1864 – Xmas day. Went to St. John's an admirable sermon by Mr. Abert. PS XL iii.3v. Mr. Muncaster to tea, staid (sic) all night.

(p. 222) Last diary entry on December 28, 1864 - *"The darkest hours are often the harbingers of a bright dawn."*

Early Black Churches in Montgomery County

In 1790 a plot of land was purchased for five shillings and the first log church was built in Cracklintown (now Laytonsville) for the Goshen Methodist Church. The church was re-built three times. Prior to the 1860s, “Black people were allowed to worship with white members of Goshen Methodist Church (now Goshen Mennonite Church) on Brink Road (formerly Goshen Road). Blacks were required to sit in the upstairs gallery. The majority of blacks who attended were unhappy with the situation and decided to form a separate congregation.” (www.goshenunited.org)

By 1810, more than 650 free blacks lived in Montgomery County, but 7,575 were still enslaved and constituted almost 46 percent of the population. As early as 1777, the community of Quakers who had founded Brookeville and Sandy Spring had “internally outlawed members of the church from enslaving people,” and enslaved people settled alongside the Quakers in the area. They eventually worked together to make Sandy Spring a waypoint on the Underground Railroad, helping enslaved people from the South escape to the North. (NOTE: Manumission Records of the Sandy Spring Quakers are located in the Sandy Spring Museum Library)

The oldest Black church in Montgomery County is the Sharp Street Church on Olney-Sandy Spring Road in Sandy Spring formed by Black Methodists in 1822. According to the Sharp Street Methodist Episcopal Church history, “Quaker settlers were instrumental in Sharp Street's beginning when they freed their slaves after the Revolutionary War.” The church was named for the Sharp Street Methodist Church that was established in Baltimore in 1802. Sharp Street's first place of worship was a little cabin referred to as ‘An Independent Methodist Church for Colored People of Sandy Spring.’ “During those times, Maryland laws prohibited assembly of blacks without white supervision. An acre of land was conveyed to blacks by Thomas L. Brooke and Sophia Brooke in 1854 for the purpose of erecting a place of worship.”

Slaveholders at St. John's Episcopal Church

As mentioned previously, landowners who gave the property for St. John's Episcopal Church were Ignatius and Eliza Dorsey Waters of *Belmont*, an estate that extended from Olney to Brookeville. Family members also owned much of what is now Germantown, Maryland, and four hundred acres in Goshen, Maryland. They were slaveholders.

In addition, the first vestry of St. John's Episcopal Church was comprised of eight men, all of whom were plantation owners and slaveholders: Thomas J. Bowie of *Roseneath*, Richard Holmes of *Llewelyn Fields*, Elisha John Hall of *Longwood* and headmaster of Brookeville Academy, Dr. William Bowie Magruder of *Oakley*, Remus Riggs of *Pleasant Hill*, Ephraim Gaither of *Clover Hill*, John W. Darby, and Enoch B. Hutton. Hutton's family had purchased a portion of *Oakley* plantation, and Enoch Hutton had nine slaves listed on the 1860 Slave Schedule. It is interesting to note that his cousin Reverend Orlando Hutton, rector at St. John's from 1844 until 1861, had two male slaves listed. They were, no doubt, the slaves who took care of his horse and drove his carriage to the three churches he served.

Allen Bowie, Jr. (1737-1803) was a prominent planter and one of the founders of Montgomery County. He owned the plantation *Hermitage*, formerly in Lower Frederick County but later in Montgomery County. As early as 1793, Allen Bowie, Jr., sold plots of land to four of his “infirm former slaves.” According to “The Underground Railroad Trail” overview, Richard Bott, Josiah Beans, Henry Biggarly, and David Biggarly became among the first African Americans in the county to own property.

Allen Bowie’s son Washington Bowie I purchased *Oatland*, which no longer exists, off Bowie Mill Road in Olney. Washington’s one son was Thomas Johns Bowie of *Roseneath* who was on St. John’s first Vestry and a founding member. His other son inherited *Oatland*, but he had no heirs so *Oatland* was left to a sister and passed into the family of Washington Bowie Chichester, Sr. Elizabeth Bowie, another daughter of Washington Bowie, was Allen Bowie Davis’s mother.

A.B. Davis inherited *Greenwood* with 1,000 acres and approximately one hundred slaves. During the Civil War, Davis had sixty slaves and as late as the slave record of 1867, he named twenty freed slaves, but at this time his land was cultivated by tenant farmers. When he died in 1889, Davis’s pallbearers were his freed slaves who lived in their own homes on *Greenwood*. St. John’s Vestry made a memorial tribute, calling Davis “*an active, intelligent, and generous member of St. John’s Church Vestry. His work for the Church was animated by Christian devotion and zeal comporting with his character as a faithful communicant.*” In his book on Montgomery County published in 1952, Roger Brooke Farquhar called Davis “*a benevolent master*” who was “*acclaimed by his county and state as one of its first citizens.*” (p. 169)

According to county records, the Griffith family’s *Edgehill* Farm in Laytonsville, Maryland, is “a rare surviving example of an intact and cohesive complex of domestic and agricultural buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries.” Situated on 282 acres of land off Griffith Road, this Maryland Centennial Farm includes the farmhouse, built in three distinct phases from the late 18th to mid-19th centuries, several historic outbuildings, including a log slave quarters, log smokehouse, and a frame chicken house; a 19th-century drive-thru corn crib, a bank barn rebuilt in 1933, and a 20th-century dairy building. In addition, there are three cemeteries on the property.

Edgehill was originally built by Henry Griffith II, one of the largest landowners in Montgomery County, on land inherited from his father, the Honorable Henry Griffith. Henry Griffith is well known as a Maryland leader in the American Revolution. During the Civil War, Thomas Griffith ran the farm with at least 15 slaves, and his sons fought for the Confederacy. The farm is still owned by Griffith descendants.

Sarah Griffith Brown of *Elton* Farm, a member of Hawlings River Chapel (St. Bartholomew’s Parish), owned the slave Enoch George Howard (1814-1895). The Maryland Archives and Preservation Maryland relate the biography of this black who purchased his own freedom from Griffith on March 1, 1851. He then purchased his wife Harriet’s freedom from Samuel R. Gaither in 1853. In 1862, George Howard purchased Locust Villa and 289 acres of land from the Gaither family. Howard continued buying and selling land in Montgomery and Howard Counties through the 1880s and amassed over 650 acres of farmland. He sold a tenth of an acre for an African American School noted as “Schl.Ho. No. 2” on the Hopkins 1879 map of

Montgomery County. He also built Howard Chapel and Cemetery near the school, which today is in Patuxent River State Park. Howard and his wife were both buried in the family cemetery. A noteworthy pictorial display has been presented by the Sandy Spring Slave Museum and African Art Gallery entitled “Enoch George Howard and John Henry Howard/The Dorsey, Williams and Johnson Connections.”

By 1842, wealthy farmer and physician Dr. William Bowie Magruder was an active member of St. John’s Episcopal Church. However, Magruder was also a slaveholder in Montgomery County. In 1836, Magruder purchased the three-hundred-acre *Oakley* Farm from Ephraim Gaither, father of his second wife Elizabeth Worthington Gaither. Magruder owned nineteen slaves in 1853 and thirty slaves by 1860. It was noted by his son, however, that all Magruder’s slaves were inherited except for one who was purchased to keep a black family together. Located north of Sandy Spring, *Oakley* included a surviving log cabin which served as a slave quarter until Maryland Emancipation. Today, historic Oakley Log Cabin is open to the public.

These prosperous parish members of St. John’s helped build and renovate the church through the years and provided a home and salary for the rector. They also purchased or bequeathed belongings to the church and purchased stained glass windows. In 1867, Allen and Hester Ann Bowie gave the St. John the Evangelist window in honor of their son. Other stained glass windows around the church include memorials to the families of Howard, Strain, Cashell (3 windows), Hutton, Chichester, Jones, Dorsey, and Bowie, which are discussed below.

Early Women of St. John’s Episcopal Church

Among the slaveholders in Montgomery County, Maryland, women were often named as owners because they supervised the house slaves; they were also listed as slaveholder if their husband or father was deceased. Wives were also on deeds of transfer of land or property to St. John’s, as was Elizabeth Dorsey Waters on the deed of land to St. John’s in 1842. Two women are among the eleven founders of St. John’s: Elizabeth Bowie Davis and Millicent Ruth Wilcoxon. Elizabeth, who died in 1840, was the wife of Thomas Davis and mother of Allen Bowie Davis.

Although early Vestry members could only be “male persons, twenty-one years of age and contributors of at least two dollars a year,” the women of St. John’s became more visible as they devoted time and effort to supporting the church and the community. In 1872, the Mite Society began to provide funds for church repairs. At first, it was overseen by men and women, then just women. In 1875, the women of St. John’s were members of the Women’s Auxiliary, organized by Mrs. Mason, wife of the rector Reverend Richard Mason (1875-1876). The Auxiliary was one of the first established by the National Council of Episcopal Churches.

In 1891, Rebecca Davis presented the Vestry with two silver chalices “...*in loving memory of my parents Allen Bowie and Hester Ann Davis. They are made from some silver used by my great grandparents Allen and Ruth Bowie.*” Mary Dorsey Davis (1845-1939) gave new pews for the church in 1894. In 1939, she bequeathed Greenwood/Davis Cemetery to St. John’s.

In September 1961, Mrs. Miriam W. Sherwin was named as the first Head of St. John’s Episcopal School. In 1975, the Women of St. John’s celebrated their 100th anniversary. In 1976,

women in the church oversaw African Palms, which had been initiated by A. Hotch Young with Virginia McIntyre as chairman. In that same year, the St. John's Church Building Committee was established with A. Hotch Young, Patricia Lansdale, Lee and Barbara Henry, and Esther Deel to determine restoration and renovation needs to enlarge the present structure. This committee of men and women would not have been conceivable in 1842 when St. John's Episcopal Church was founded. In 2010, the Canon Carol Cole Flanagan was called to serve as the first female Rector of St. John's.

Slavery and Demographic Trends in Montgomery County, Maryland

Pre-Civil War slavery divided Montgomery County just as it did throughout the nation. Unlike the large tobacco plantations in the Chesapeake area and cotton plantations in the deep South, Montgomery County did not have large plantations with hundreds of slaves. Only 36 Montgomery County farmers owned 20 or more slaves in 1790. One third of the slave owners in the County owned only one or two slaves and 80 percent owned fewer than 10 slaves. A slave insurrection in Virginia during the summer of 1831 caused alarm in Maryland, and a number of legislative actions were taken by the General Assembly in 1831, and made even more stringent in 1839. The State of Maryland discouraged slave owners from emancipating their slaves due to the fear of slave uprisings, and statutes were passed in the General Assembly to prohibit the importation of freed blacks from other states. (*A Grateful Remembrance*, pp. 151-152)

The 1850 census showed a total population in Montgomery County of 15,860 that was 40.5% Black that included 5,114 enslaved and 1,311 freed Blacks. By 1860, the total population increased to 18,322 and an increase to 5,421 enslaved Blacks and 1,552 freed Blacks. On November 1, 1864, the State of Maryland became the first state below the Mason-Dixon Line to free slaves within its boundaries by popular vote. This is reflected in the 1870 census which showed a total number of 7,432 freed Blacks (36.1% of the total population) of which none were enslaved.

The following table from the U.S. Bureau of the Census shows the actual white, slave, free black, and total populations from 1790 to 1870:

<u>Year</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Slaves</u>	<u>Free Black</u>	<u>Total Black</u>	<u>Percentage Black</u>	<u>Total Population</u>
1790	11,679	6,030	294	6,324	35.1	18,003
1800	8,508	6,288	262	6,550	43.5	15,058
1810	9,731	7,572	677	8,249	45.8	17,980
1820	9,082	6,396	923	7,319	44.6	16,401
1830	12,103	6,447	1,266	7,713	38.9	19,816
1840	8,766	5,377	1,313	6,690	43.3	15,456
1850	9,435	5,114	1,311	6,425	40.5	15,860
1860	11,349	5,421	1,552	6,973	38.1	18,322
1870	13,128		7,432	7,432	36.1	20,560

Post Civil War - St. John's Episcopal Church

After the Civil War, St. John's Episcopal Church called three priests who had served as chaplains in the Confederacy – Reverend Peter Tinsley in 1867, Reverend Thomas Duncan in 1868, and Reverend William Henry Laird in 1877. The Reverend Tinsley (1833-1908) served as a chaplain and doctor in the Virginia 28th Infantry from 1861 until 1865. Tinsley was called to serve as Rector of St. John's and St. Bartholomew's in 1866; he resigned in 1867 to accept a position at the University of Virginia. He is credited with starting St. John's Sunday School.

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Duncan (1828-1918) served as a chaplain in the Maryland Line. Duncan was called to serve as Rector of St. John's in 1868 and resigned in 1875. The Reverend Laird (1842-1896) served in the 1st Maryland Infantry from 1861-1865. After the Confederate surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, Laird attended Virginia Theological Seminary. In 1877, the Reverend Laird was called as Rector of several local houses of worship, including St. John's, St. Bartholomew's, St. Luke's, a chapel in Howard County and a chapel in his home in Brookeville until his death in 1896.

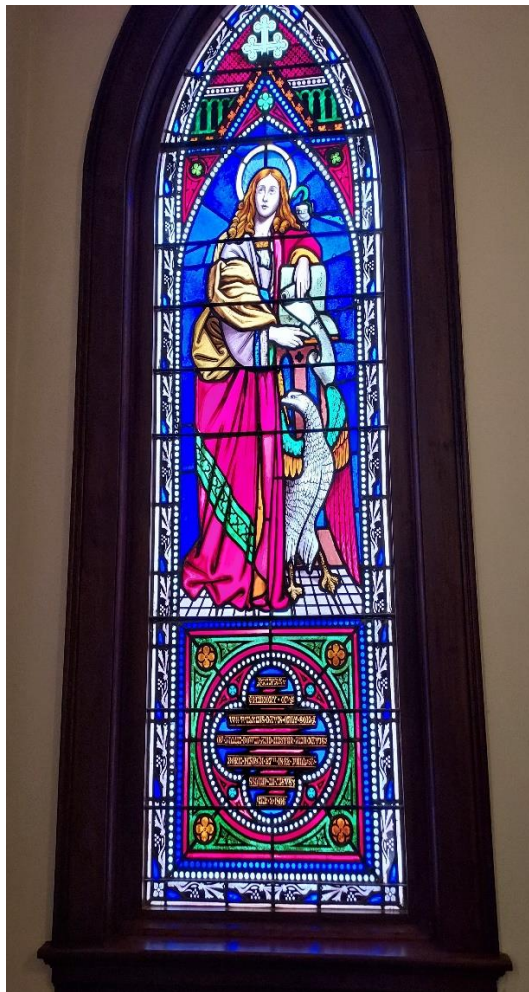
Two known Confederate veterans are buried in St. John's Episcopal Cemetery—Benjamin Duvall Canby and Thomas Griffith. Benjamin Duvall Canby was born 1 January 1837 to Thomas Canby III and Deborah Washington Duvall of *Rose Hill*, a home in the Duvall family with free and enslaved labor. Benjamin enlisted in the 1st Maryland Cavalry, a Confederate battalion. His brother William was imprisoned in 1864 for sheltering a Confederate spy. Benjamin Canby died 31 October 1918.

Captain Thomas Griffith, Jr., was born 29 April 1831. He served as 3rd Lieutenant, 2nd Company K, 1st Virginia Cavalry, CSA. He resided in the Griffith family home, *Edgehill*, at the time of the Civil War, and his three brothers also enlisted in the Army of the Confederate States. Thomas Griffith died 23 July 1912.

Lt. Col. Ridgely Brown, CSA, was a Griffith uncle whose mother was Sarah Ridgely Griffith, daughter of Nicholas and Ann Ridgely Griffith of *Edgehill*. As noted previously, former slave Enoch George Howard bought his freedom from Sarah Griffith in 1851. Sarah married Amos Brown and their son Ridgely lived at *Elton*, located about one mile north of Unity, when he entered the First Maryland Cavalry. The sign dedicated to Ridgely Brown is now missing from Elton Farm Road. In addition, at one time there was a bronze plaque placed in Brown's memory in the west transept of St. John's Episcopal Church. (R.B. Farquhar, p.145)

19th Century Stained Glass Windows in St. John's Episcopal Church

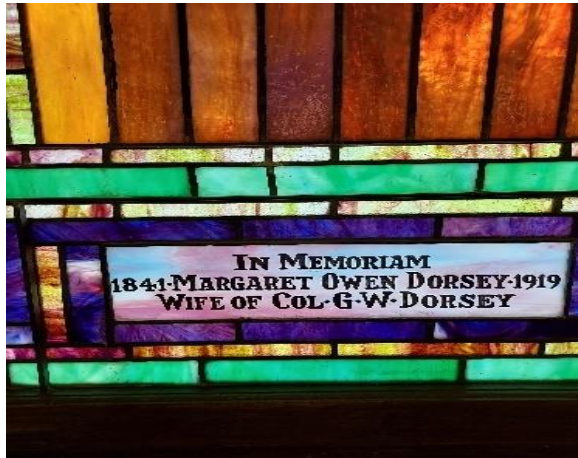
St. John Window was the altar window, given in 1867, by Allen Bowie Davis and his wife Hester Ann Wilkins Davis in memory of their son William Wilkins Davis who died of tuberculosis while travelling with Bishop Henry Benjamin Whipple, the first Episcopal Bishop of Minnesota. St. John the Evangelist, Bishop of Ephesus, is portrayed wearing Bishop robes with his symbols—an eagle, scroll, chalice, and serpent. In 1980, when the church was renovated and enlarged, the St. John the Evangelist window was moved from the altar to the west transept and replaced with the Good Shepherd window, “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” given in memory of Chloe Lansdale Riggs (1888-1975).



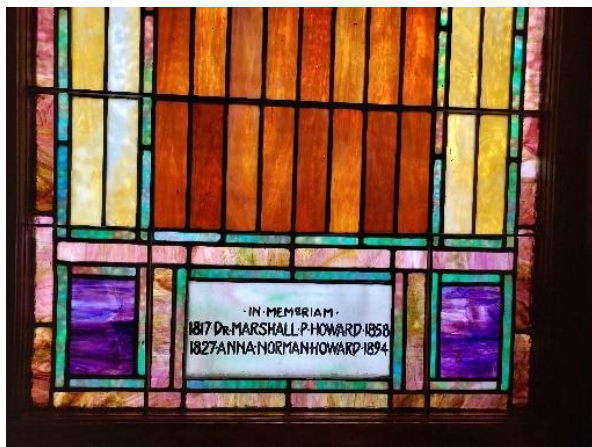
The window inscription reads:

“In memory of William Wilkins Davis, son of Allen Bowie and Hester Davis, born 3-27-1842, fell asleep in Jesus 3-2-1866.”

One of the stained glass memorials in St. John's was dedicated by Col. G. W. Dorsey (1835-1911) to his wife Margaret Owen Dorsey (1841-1919). Gustavus Warfield Dorsey was the son of Mary Riggs and Samuel Owings Dorsey of *Dorsey Hall* in Howard County, Maryland. G. W. Dorsey served as Confederate Cavalry commander in the 1st Maryland Cavalry, Army of Northern Virginia. When cavalry commander J.E.B. Stuart was shot and mortally wounded at the Battle of Yellow Tavern, he fell into Dorsey's arms. "Gus" was a farmer and life-long resident of the Brookeville area. The Dorseys were buried in the Owen Family Cemetery in Brookeville.



Dr. Marshall P. Howard 1817-1858 and Anna Norman Howard 1827-1894. One 12-year-old female was listed for Anna in the 1860 Slave Schedule. They were buried in St. John's Cemetery. Their son was Marshall Pleasants Howard (1858-1943) and daughter was Laura Howard who married Samuel Riggs (1843-1915). One of their six children was Douglas Riggs who married Chloe Lansdale in whose memory the Good Shepherd stained glass window was dedicated. (see 20th century windows below.)



Enoch B. Hutton 1810-1867 and Elizabeth A. Hutton 1815-1874. Nine slaves were listed on the 1860 Slave Schedule. Hutton was a member of the Maryland House of Delegates. He died suddenly in 1867 at the City Hotel in Annapolis and was buried in St. John's Cemetery.



Washington B. Chichester 1828-1902 and Lydia H. Chichester 1831-1888. Four black children and four the ages of 16, 27, 60, and 65 were listed on the 1860 Slave Schedule. Washington Bowie Chichester, Sr., came from Leesburg, Virginia, as a boy to live at *Oatland* in Olney with his Aunt Margaret. He, his wife, and son Washington Bowie, Jr. were buried in St. John's Cemetery. Washington Bowie Chichester, Jr. never married.



Washington B. Chichester, Jr. 1868-1918.



Gustavus Jones 1818-1896 and Elizabeth Jones 1825 -1885. Two slaves, ages 17 and 35, were listed, as well as five female slaves for wife Elizabeth. Gustavus is buried with three others in the Gustavus Jones Cemetery in Brookeville. His mother Nancy “Annie” Waters (1786-1874) was buried in St. John’s Cemetery. Her marker that says “Pleasant Valley Farm” is located behind the large stone of Josiah W. Jones (1810-1896).



Hazel B. Cashell 1808-1886 and Caroline Cashell 1804-1859. H.B. Cashell had 10 slaves listed. There are three windows dedicated to Cashells. One was dedicated to an infant and young child.



Samuel S. Cashell 1813-1885 and Christiana Cashell 1810-1891. The 1850 Federal Census listed Samuel Cashell with one enslaved female. In 1840, his father Washington Cashell was listed with four free colored persons. They lived in Berry, which was District 5 in Montgomery County that included Sandy Spring, Spencerville, and Colesville. Samuel Swearingen Cashell and his wife Christiana Groomes Cashell were buried in St. John’s Cemetery along with 23 other Cashells.



Thomas J. Bowie 1800-1850 and Catherine W. Bowie 1803-1888. Five slaves, ages infant to 21, were listed for Thomas and 26, ages 2-75, for Catherine. Catherine Worthington Davis Bowie was the sister of Allen Bowie Davis. According to the *Frederick News*, her funeral was held at St. John's, but she was buried with her husband in the Bowie Family Cemetery in Olney where *Oatland* plantation was torn down. Thomas Johns Bowie was a founding member of St. John's and on the first Vestry in 1845.



John H. Strain 1812-1888 and Cornelia N. Strain 1834-1892. Captain John Higgins Strain was a California pioneer who served with General Sam Houston in Texas and Mexico. Cornelia Nancrede Strain was the daughter of Houston relative John Hopkins Houston. The early Houstons were born on a Virginia plantation and owned many slaves. The Strain residence was called Aureola near Brookeville. They were both buried in Oak Hill Cemetery, Washington, DC.



20th Century Stained Glass Windows in St. John's Episcopal Church

Francis B. Gordon 1905-1973 and Mary V. Gordon 1907-1973. The couple's tragic death was related in the February 1974 *Journal of Infectious Diseases*. They had left New York on the Greek ship *Eurygenes* on October 19 for London. Two days later, a fire broke out, and as they were abandoning ship, they were both swept into the sea from their lifeboat. Dr. Gordon was retired Director of the Department of Microbiology of the Naval Medical Research Institute (NMRI). Their tombstone in St. John's Cemetery has the fish symbol and says, "Parted at Sea October 22, 1973. Together in Spirit." Son William was buried in St. John's Cemetery in 1997.



Our Altar Window. The Good Shepherd, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," given in memory of Chloe Lansdale Riggs (1888-1975). She was buried in St. John's Cemetery with 38 other Riggs and 6 members of the Lansdale family.



St. John's Episcopal School



In 1960, the Vestry of St. John's Episcopal Church authorized Rector James Valliant to appoint a committee which was to study the feasibility of establishing a school and report back by February 1961. The Committee advised the Vestry to sponsor such a school provided that it offer

an education as good or better than that of the public schools and that daily chapel services were to be held in addition to Christian education classes. The Vestry agreed to this in addition to the fact that students of any race or creed could apply for admission.

In June 1961 Rector Valliant wrote a Statement of Purpose, in which he stated: *"The pupil in a Church School is more apt to develop as a thinking individual who is aware that he is a child of God, and that he is an important person in his own right, with his own characteristics and personality. Not only does he learn from textbooks, but that he is taught who he is, the kind of world in which he lives and his place and opportunities in the world of tomorrow."* In September 1961, St. John's Episcopal School opened the doors of the Church Parish Hall to 25 students in grades 1 through 4. Mrs. Miriam W. Sherwin was named as the first Head of School. By September 1963, the school had 90 students in kindergarten through 6th grade. The 7th grade was added in September 1964, and on Thanksgiving Day 1964 a new school building was blessed by the Bishop of Washington. The 8th grade was added in September 1965.

In the fall of 1961, Montgomery County, Maryland, became the first major school system in the State to completely eliminate separate school facilities for black students following the historic United States Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954. This landmark civil rights case unanimously ruled that State sanctioned segregation of public schools was a violation of the 14th Amendment and therefore unconstitutional. Newspaper headlines dating from the post-Supreme Court decision, pre-integration time period, demonstrate the division within the county. School Board files contain petitions dating from March 1955 and signed by almost 300 up-county residents opposing any action taken on integration "at this time." Another petition, cited by the *Montgomery County Sentinel* called for gradual rather than immediate integration; 3,000 people, primarily up-county, signed it.

Conclusion

"Our past can inform our future, be a lamp unto our feet, and strengthen our ongoing journey to fully realize the great commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves."
(Franklin A. Robinson, Jr., EDOW Reparations Task Force)



St. John's Episcopal Church Olney, Maryland

Pre-1842 Chronology of Our Anglican Roots

- 1750's Anglicans in upper Montgomery County often held worship services in the home of John Holland, still called *Prospect Hill*, near the Hawlings River on Brighton Dam Road. From Montgomery County historical records for the home, one room (now the dining room) in the house served as a chapel of worship; during the American Revolution it was a meeting room for local patriots.
- May 1761 Parishioners, many of whom were ancestors of Episcopal families in the Cracklintown (now Laytonsville) and Mechanicsville (now Olney) areas, wanted to build a more convenient and permanent chapel, so seventy members of the Church of England petitioned Maryland Governor Horatio Sharpe: ...
- That the parishioners residing in and upon the neighborhood of a branch of Patuxent, commonly called the Hawlings River, are in the greatest want of a Chapel of Ease...*
- According to the Montgomery County Cemetery Inventory for the Hawlings River Chapel of Ease Cemetery, the petition was signed by Anglicans whose descendants would later become associated with St. Bartholomew's Parish and St. John's Episcopal Church, including William Waters, Thomas Riggs, Elisha Riggs, Robert Owen, Thomas Davis, Benjamin Gaither, Stephen Gatherill, Aaron Gatherill, Richard Clarke, Henry Luke, Jr., Josiah Holland, and John Holland. The petition was eventually granted and a chapel of ease was erected at Crowtown (now Brighton), only to be destroyed a few years later.
- 1812 Permission was granted to build a separate parish called St. Bartholomew's on land purchased for twenty-five dollars from Margaret Brooke. The small log and frame structure was located where Unity-Laytonsville Road, Route 420, crosses the Hawlings River-- and often referred to as "The Hawlings River Church."
- Easter Monday 1813 (from St. Bartholomew's Parish Vestry typed and redacted minutes)
- "At a meeting of a number of parishioners of St. Bartholomew's Parish on Easter Monday 1813 at Bowman's Store (in Cracklintown) agreeably to publick notice, they proceeded to the Election of a Vestry for said parish, the ballots being deposited, upon counting the same it appeared that Thomas Davis, Edward Burgess, Ephraim Gaither, John H. Riggs, James Whiting and Rezin Darby, Henry Gaither, and Anthony Ricketts had a majority of votes, they were therefore declared to be the vestry of said parish for the year ensuing."*
- May 9, 1819 The St. Bartholomew's Parish Vestry petitioned James Kemp, D.D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Maryland:

“Sir: In as much as our Church has never yet been consecrated, we therefore request you to perform that sacred office; and to set it apart, as the parish Church of St. Bartholomew’s in Montgomery County, State of Maryland, for the worship of Almighty God.” Signed Thomas Davis, John H. Riggs, Henry Griffith, Frederick Gaither, H.C. Gaither, Lyde Griffith, Remus Riggs

Easter Monday March 31, 1834

At a meeting of the parishioners of St. Bartholomew’s Parish held at the church in said parish...they then proceeded to fill the vacancy, on counting the ballots it appeared that John W. Magruder, Henry Griffith, Sr., Samuel R. Gaither, Dr. Washington Waters, Dr. William B. Magruder, Henry C. Gaither, Elisha R. Griffith, and Allen B. Davis had the greatest number of votes, they are therefore duly Elected Vestry of said parish for the ensuing year.

October 8, 1840 ...A.B. Davis handed in his resignation as a member of the vestry.
(By March 16, 1844, Allen Bowie Davis was elected back on the Vestry of St. Bartholomew’s Parish

Easter Monday April 8, 1844

At a meeting of the parishioners of St. Bartholomew’s Parish held at the Church in said parish agreeably to previous notice—on motion of E.J. Hall, Major Ephraim Gaither was appointed Chairman and Dr. Rufus H. Speake elected Secretary, Mr. A. B. Davis offered the following: (Excerpted)

Resolved -That the spiritual interest and welfare of this Parish would be greatly strengthened and promoted by having Divine Service in the Church every Sabbath and the rector to reside in some central location within the Parish

Resolved – that to accomplish this desirable end, and for the mutual advantage and welfare of each, it is expedient for this Church to form a union with the new Chapel erected near Mechanicsville, in the employment and support of a Minister to reside between the two and to officiate alternately at each

Resolved – That the vestry of this Parish are hereby requested to take measures to form a union between this Church and the Chapel near Mechanicsville (St. John’s Episcopal Church) upon such terms and conditions as to them may seem right and proper

NOTE: Allen Bowie Davis was instrumental in establishing St. John’s Episcopal Church in 1842, as was his mother Elizabeth Bowie Davis. In addition, William B. Magruder was a member of the first vestry of St. John’s in 1845, as were Enoch B. Hutton who was elected to the Vestry of St. Bartholomew’s Parish in 1842 and Elisha J. Hall in 1844. Enoch Hutton was a cousin of St. John’s first rector, the Reverend Orlando Hutton.

St. John's Episcopal Church Olney, Maryland

Chronology 1842-1980

- June 22, 1842 St. John's Episcopal Church, named for St. John the Evangelist, is the oldest Episcopal church building in continuous use in Montgomery County, Maryland. It was built in Mechanicsville (now Olney), Maryland, on land donated for a church and graveyard by Ignatius (1773-1842) and Eliza Waters of *Belmont* and originally inhabited by Piscataway Indians.
- June 1, 1844 The Reverend Orlando Hutton was called as the first Rector of St. John's, which included the area from approximately Norbeck Road on the south to the Howard county line above Sunshine on the north, and west toward Laytonsville and east to the Patuxent River. At that time, the Church was a wooden structure located in the present-day cemetery.
- Mar. 25, 1845 The first vestry of eight men was elected by "male persons, twenty-one years of age and contributors of at least two dollars in the past year to St. John's Church." The vestry included: Thomas J. Bowie, Richard Holmes, Elisha J. Hall, William B. Magruder, Remus Riggs, Ephraim Gaither, John W. Darby, and Enoch B. Hutton. In August 1845, St. John's was consecrated by Bishop Worthington of the Diocese of Maryland and dedicated "as a separate Congregation in St. Bartholomew's Parish as provided in the Thirteenth Canon of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Maryland and the Maryland Act of Assembly in 1802."
- 1861 The Reverend Hutton (1815-1892) resigned from St. John's, writing "I am no longer able to perform the laborious duties, which for so many years, I have strove to discharge among you, in connection with like duties in St. Bartholomew's Parish, and more recently, Mt. Calvary Church." On October 29, 1861, St. John's and St. Bartholomew's Parish church near Unity resolved "that it would be mutually advantageous" for each church to supply its own rector. St. John's called the Reverend Benjamin F. Brown who served until 1866.
- 1863-1865 No Vestry records included in the St. John's Register. However, you may consult the diary entries of Hester Ann Wilkins Bowie from March 4, 1861 to December 28, 1864, included in the church history. These provide personal insights of an upper-class woman in Montgomery County on the impact of the Civil War locally and on *Greenwood* farm, her impression of the priest at St. John's, and her son Wilkin's assistance to Bishop Henry Whipple (the first Episcopal Bishop of Minnesota) after the US-Dakota War of 1862.

- 1867 St. John's called three Rectors who had served as chaplains during the Civil War: Reverend Peter Tinsley in 1867, Reverend Thomas Duncan in 1868, and Reverend William Henry Laird in 1877. The Reverend Peter Tinsley (1833-1908) is credited with starting St. John's Sunday School; however, within a year he resigned to accept a position at the University of Virginia. The Reverend Joseph E. Poindexter then served as Rector until February 29, 1868.
- In 1867, the stained glass window of St. John the Evangelist was given by church member Allen Bowie Davis (1809-1889) and his wife Hester (1809-1888) in memory of their son William Wilkins Bowie (1842-1866) who died of tuberculosis soon after marrying the daughter of Bishop Henry Whipple in Minnesota. It was the altar window until 1980 when it was moved to the new west transept during church renovation and enlargement.
- 1868 The Reverend Thomas Duncan was called and accepted the Rectorship.
- 1869 Valley House, the original Rectory in Brookeville, was conveyed to St. John's by Allen Bowie Davis and his wife. It was to be used by the Rector or rented; however, it was sold in 1873.
- 1870 With the building of St. Luke's in Brighton, the Reverend Duncan served not only St. John's and St. Luke's but also St. Bartholomew's Parish church near Unity, and St. Mark's in Highland. On October 16, 1870, St. John's purchased a new organ.
- 1874 Property that was occupied by the Rector was purchased from the Brookeville Academy Trustees for the Rectory.
- 1875 After serving for seven years, the Reverend Duncan resigned. The Reverend Mason was called and served as Rector until October 1876.
- 1877 The Reverend William Henry Laird (1842-1896) was called as Rector of St. John's, St. Bartholomew's, St. Luke's, a chapel in Howard County, and a chapel in his residency in Brookeville until his death in 1896.
- 1881 A Cemetery lot was designated for use by the Reverend Orlando Hutton "in consideration of his manifest interest in our Church and services as well as our personal regard for our friend and former pastor." Three of Hutton's young sons were interred in the Davis Cemetery at *Greenwood*, the Brookeville home of Allen Bowie Davis.
- 1883 Mechanicsville became Olney, Maryland. To prevent confusion with other towns named Mechanicsville, the local post office was called Olney based on Olney House, the home of Charles and Sarah Brooke Farquhar.
- 1886 Seats in St. John's were reserved for students of Mr. Hallowell's Academy and Brookeville Academy.

- 1887 Individuals who did not belong to St. John's were charged twenty dollars for a cemetery lot. A new roof was put on the Church.
- 1889 A memorial tribute was given to Allen Bowie Davis upon his death, "an active, intelligent, and generous member of St. John's Church Vestry."
- 1891 Two silver chalices were donated to St. John's by Rebecca Davis in memory of her parents, Hester and Allen Bowie Davis.
- 1895 St. John's became part of the Diocese of Washington, which was formed from the Western Shore of Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Montgomery, Prince George's, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties.
- 1896 The Reverend William Laird passed, and Reverend P.M. Boyden was called and served as Rector until 1906.
- 1898 "Under the guidance of Mrs. M. Boyden, wife of the Rector, St. John's branch of the Women's Auxiliary was organized."
- 1910 St. John's was moved on rollers by a mule team from the cemetery to its present location facing Olney-Laytonsville Road (Route 108). The Church was remodeled in time for Christmas Eve services.
- 1912 The Rectory at Brookeville was destroyed by fire. A new Rectory was built on a lot adjoining the St. John's Cemetery.
- 1913 The Reverend H.H. Marsden was called to serve as Rector, but resigned in 1917 to become a chaplain in World War I.
- 1917 The Reverend Frank J. Bohanan was called as Rector and served until 1920.
- 1918 The horse used by the Rector was sold and a Ford automobile purchased.
- 1919 St. Bartholomew's Church was constructed in Laytonsville, Maryland and continued to be served by the Rector of St. John's.
- 1921 The Reverend Guy E. Kagey was called as Rector and served until 1928.
- 1924 Based on the Resolution passed by a Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in April 1923, St. John's was to "confer upon women in the Congregation the right to hold office and have a voice in all Parish affairs."
- 1928 The Reverend P.A. Dales was called as Rector but resigned December 3, 1930.
- 1930 The Laird Memorial Room was established at Montgomery General Hospital for use of patients approved by St. John's and St. Luke's Church Committee.

- 1936 The electric organ was given by L. D. Probert in memory of his wife.
- 1939 Mary Davis, daughter of Allen Bowie Davis, left the Davis/Greenwood Cemetery to St. John's Episcopal Church.
- 1941 The Reverend Arthur LeBaron Ribble was called as Rector but was given a leave of absence in 1942 to serve as a Marine Chaplain in World War II; he returned to St. John's in 1945.
- 1948 Bishop Dun of the Washington Diocese approved St. John's and St. Luke's separation from St. Bartholomew's Church. Bishop Dun also presided over the laying of the cornerstone for the St. John's Parish Hall. The Reverend James Valliant was called as Rector and served until his retirement July 31, 1970.
- 1961 St. John's Episcopal School was founded.
- 1976 St. John's became the headquarters of African Palms USA.
- 1980 A second renovation of St. John's Episcopal Church was completed.

(Chronology 1842-1980 was adapted with revisions from *St. John's Church History, The First 160 Years 1842-2002* by Florence Wesp, Historiographer. In addition, Vestry Minutes were used from St. John's Register 1845-1889 and St. John's Register 1890-1918.)

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Individual Sources – Acknowledgements:

Lydia Fraser, archivist at Sandy Spring Museum

Ann Stitts at St. Bartholomew's Church via e-mail

Site search – Hawlings River Chapel of Ease Cemetery, Sundown Road, Laytonsville, MD; it was not visible in the brush and undergrowth

Site search – Greenwood/Davis Cemetery, Brookeville, MD. Spoke with current owner, John Abernathy and son Chris

Site search – St. John's Episcopal Church Cemetery, Olney, MD

Site Search – Howard Chapel Cemetery. Patuxent State Park. Montgomery County, MD

Site search – Oakley Slave Cabin

Site search – Sandy Spring Slave Museum and African Art Gallery

