

The Years at SMC Before, During, After Chattel Slavery

SMC was born into slavery, grew up in slavery, and until 1864 lived its first 172 years under slavery. Not until the year 2036 will SMC have been around 172 years after slavery was abolished in Maryland.




In 1649, just 15 years after the 1634 establishment of St. Mary's City as the first English settlement in what became Maryland, a small company of Virginia Puritans, bringing enslaved persons with them, settled on the fertile land of the Broadneck Peninsula.

A small group of Anglican settlers followed the Virginia Puritans onto the Broadneck Peninsula along with Puritans who had joined the Church of England after restoration of the English Crown. Together they became the first members of *Broade Necke* Parish, reportedly worshipping in a community meeting house built by Puritans.

SMC traces its official start to June 9, 1692. On that date nearly 330 years ago, Sir Lionel Copley, Maryland's first colonial governor signed The Act. The Act made the Church of England the official church of colonial Maryland, and established 30 Anglican parishes in Maryland, including *Broade Necke* Parish.

Episcopal churches continue in 29 of these first 30 parishes now within the Episcopal dioceses of Maryland, Washington DC, and Easton MD.

In 1664, Maryland had legalized slavery throughout the colony — imported Africans were given the status slaves for life. In 1692, fewer than 1,000 persons of African descent were enslaved in Maryland. Likely several hundred enslaved persons were on the Broadneck Peninsula and held by the first colonial members of what became SMC.

Typical Small Farm	
<small>Note: By 1760, more than half of the households in Maryland were tenant farmers or small farmers/planters who owned no labor outside their family members.</small>	
Tobacco Planter	Wheat Farmer
3-4 acres planted in tobacco 7-8 acres planted in corn	15-20 acres planted in wheat 7-8 acres planted in corn
10-12 acres total plus garden	22-28 acres total plus garden
Yield: 1,000 pounds tobacco = £4-£6 p/a	Yield: 175-200 bu. wheat = £8-£20 p/a
	

Jump one hundred years to 1790 and the first United States census: Anne Arundel County's population had reached nearly 23,000 persons, and more than 10,000 persons were enslaved persons of African descent. Forty-five per cent of the county's population in 1790 was made up of enslaved persons. On the Broadneck Peninsula. 80 white families maintained farms or plantations; 31 of these 80 families, including SMC families, held enslaved persons.

Life for enslaved persons was brutal, particularly knowing they would serve a lifetime in bondage. Enslaved persons lived with minimal amounts of food, clothing, rest, and shelter. Masters might be considered good persons simply if enslaved persons could congregate after work, attend church services on Sunday, enjoy the same holidays whites celebrated, hunt, fish, and not be afraid of being sold.

By the start of the 1800s, slavery's hold on the Broadneck Peninsula was lessening, due more to economic conditions than to any moral uprising against slavery. White land-owning families grew larger. Whites raised and sold farm crops including wheat, corn, vegetables, and fruits. They relied less on tobacco. The number of enslaved persons required to raise farm crops was less than the number required to raise tobacco.

Still, census records from the mid 1800s show Henry Aisquith+ while rector held two male and two female enslaved persons. Samuel Ridout+ while rector held one male and three female enslaved persons.

Broadneck Peninsula would not again successfully grow tobacco until the end of the 19th century, decades after the end of chattel slavery when new growing methods were introduced to go along with what was a strawberry farm. Perhaps several generations of free blacks still living nearby worked the tobacco and the strawberries. In Maryland by 1860, at least 50,000 formerly enslaved persons had received freedom, making Maryland the state with the largest population of free blacks among all states at the start of the Civil War. On November 1, 1864, after 200 years, legalized slavery ended in Maryland.

Broade Necke Parish in 1695 had started functioning as a wilderness parish and by 1697 likely completed its first church building (1697-1731). At least three of the first six vestry men were slaveholders. By 1697 *Broade Necke* Parish had become Westminster Parish and the Bishop of London sent the Rev. Edward Topp, Jr. to serve as rector. On land of about 400 feet square (a little less than an acre) donated by Colonel John Hammond, the Rev. Mr. Topp would arrive at a church, a vestry house, and some glebe land all situated in a place known today as Cape St. Claire.

About the same time the name *St. Margaret's Church* was appended to Westminster Parish and the original boundaries of the parish were extended

- North of the northern bank of Severn River
- East to the Chesapeake Bay
- South of the southern bank of the Patapsco River,
- West to Anne Arundel County's western boundary

These boundaries, except perhaps the western boundary, would remain in place until the 20th century. The English and Virginia parish administration and enforcement system would gain little traction in Westminster Parish.

Unlike Virginia, the colonial vestry in Westminster parish apparently had little interest in punishing sins forbade by the ten commandments, and significant interest in collecting taxes to support the parish and its minister. Chattel slavery, of course, was accepted and the fact that persons of African descent were held as property and were considered to be property was normal.

In 1731, the colonial Assembly of Maryland gave to the vestry of Westminster Parish permission to abandon the first church and to build the second SMC (reportedly brick) on two acres of land at Severn Heights (now Winchester) and to construct a chapel of ease — Marley Chapel — on Curtis Creek in northern Anne Arundel County (today's Glen Burnie).



Construction of this new church and the chapel of ease within the confines of Westminster Parish occurred at the same time and would be financed by a colonial lottery. The second church building and the cemetery were abandoned in 1803 after the church building burned. The church building and the cemetery have since been buried beneath the Route 2/Route450/Route 50 interchange.

In 1824, after 22 years with no church building except for the inconveniently located Marley Chapel, Westminster Parish acquired one acre of land at today's Pleasant Plains Road location. In 1825 construction started on what would be the first of three church buildings completed at this site. The wooden frame structure burned before completion. While tradition reported that a brick church building was completed and dedicated in 1827, research shows that the 1827 church building was wooden framework. The second church building on the present-day site — the 1852 church building — was re-built in less than one year after a fire in 1851 destroyed the 1827 church building.

The third church building on the present-day site was completed in 1895, three years after some of the crumbling 1852 church was destroyed by fire. The 1895 church was built at a cost of \$1,200.00 and was supposedly sited in some small part just south of the two earlier church buildings. Inside the church we know today are some charred remains from the 1852 and 1827 churches.

The bell and bell tower were dedicated in 1908. Stained glass windows would come later. The first stained glass window sits high on the west wall of the sanctuary. Ten of the stained glass windows were dedicated March 1929. In 1958, the Sunday School Building was added along the southern exterior of the church building. By 1986, the parish completed its enhanced restoration that significantly enlarged, changed, and completely renovated the church building. Interior and exterior renovations have been made since 1986, and loving care of the church continues.

In 1884, eight acres of land passed to SMC. The deed prohibited use of the land for burials. Still, burials began upon this land and in 1951 the deed would be changed, legalizing past and future burials. The columbarium was dedicated in 2003.

Since 1900, four parish halls have been built on the campus, including the existing parish hall constructed in 1970, and significantly upgraded during succeeding years. Two rectories have been built on the campus and the surviving 1960 rectory has become administrative offices. The parish completed a \$4 million formation and pre-school building in 2015.

After slavery was abolished in Maryland in 1864 some changes would come to the Broadneck Peninsula. Changes also came to SMC: eight acres of additional land in 1884, a reconstructed church by 1895; and new generations attending church — albeit coming from the families who had lived with slavery as normal. Broadneck Peninsula families had held enslaved persons for as long as 200 years.



Before the end of the nineteenth century Marley Chapel would slip away, St. Alban's Church would open, and *Westminster Parish* would become anachronistic — though the term would remain in use at SMC until 2017.

At its core SMC would experience little change from 1864 until 1982. There was little change following the end of chattel slavery! Little change during the Jim Crow years! Little change during the years legal and illegal segregation! Little change as the waves of desegregation, civil rights, voting rights, and open housing swept over the land!

There was little change as whites moved to the Broadneck Peninsula, seeking escape from persons in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Prince Georges County who were moving into their former neighborhoods and who did not look like t



This brass reading lectern was passed to SMC in 1900 and has remained in use ever since. The lectern was given by Hester Chase Ridout to St. Anne's Parish to use at East Street Chapel. St. Anne's Parish may have been closing the East Street Chapel about the same time as the launching of the St. Philips Colored Mission that would precede St. Philips Church first on Northwest Street and now located on Bestgate Road. This forming *colored* mission church requested the
lectern and

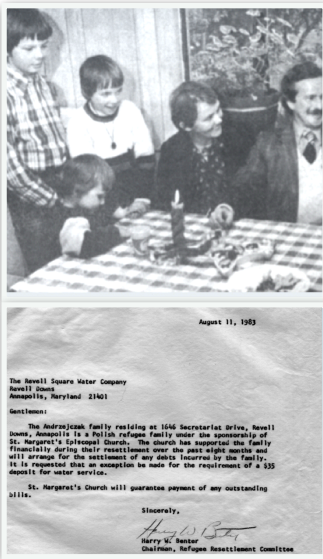
1948 – Houses on Pleasant Plains Road



In 1946, William H. Labrot gave 1,000 shares of stock in Standard Oil Company of NY, sold in 1948 to build two simple houses across from St. Margaret's Church. These houses were not to be sold nor used for clergy housing, providing forever a steady stream of rental income. Sale of both houses in 1961 built a new rectory, by 1997 the administration building.

No structure on this church-owned property acquired in 1938 was to be used for consumption of alcohol, and selling alcoholic beverages was forbidden. No person of color was to ever live in any house built on this property.

And there was little change with the 1966 desegregation of Anne Arundel County Schools! Little change as the Viet Nam war tore at the core of America's soul! Little change when for the first time in 1968 voting tallies in Anne Arundel County did not report separate vote counts for *Colored* and White.



In 1982, things did begin to change — a little — when SMC resettled a Polish family then living in Chile onto the Broadneck Peninsula as part of an international effort to sponsor Christian families who had fled communism.



Generations of systematic racism would still seep forward when the leader of this effort, vestry member Capt. Harry Benter (USN Ret) was encouraged to resettle the white family when the parish was offered three families and only one of the families was white.

1990 saw the flourishing of our companion parish relationship with St. Gabriel's Nerima (Tokyo, Japan) and membership in Annapolis Area Ministries (precursor of The Light House) following the retirement of the Rev. Forrest Ferris after 21 years as rector. 1992 brought the year-long

300th anniversary celebration and launch of a new ministry starting March 1, under the leadership of the Rev. Mary Douglas Glasspool (rector 1992-2001) and now a bishop in the Episcopal Diocese of New York.

Mack Ridout would return from 25 years of separation and bring back the joust with its stories and its crowds. Mack was senior warden when the parish received the multi-million dollar gift permitting the parish to finally escape from debt and launch its endowment grants program serving the world. SMC began its now 30-year run of servant ministry, continuing through three rectors, committed to taking the work and the resources of SMC into the world.

Since 1998 and through 2021, St. Margaret's Church has made endowment grants into the world totaling \$2,583,925. Criteria for making endowment grants were developed in 2007. Applying criteria for reparations of the Diocese of Maryland and the Episcopal Church, it appears that since 1998 SMC has made endowment fund grants that meet reparations criteria of just under \$1 million, including

- \$600,585 (23% of all endowment fund grants) in reparation grants into the Western Hemisphere
- \$362,515 (14% of all endowment fund grants) in reparation grants into Africa.

A complete list is at the back of this report on pages 42-44.

It is likely that when grants from SMC's

Mission Commission			
5620 · Missions	-226.41	0.00	12,000.00
5621 · Two Degrees Outreach	0.00	0.00	0.00

Missions Commission drawn from the general fund (such as the 2021 budget line item shown above) and other general fund grants, and grants from groups such as Women's Guild are combined — then reparation grants from SMC since 1998 and through 2021 surpass \$1 million.

2021 Endowment Funds Grants From St. Margaret's Church into the World

Dagene Girls - \$15,000
Drip irrigation system, greenhouse, milling machine and grain storage silos for its agriculture program that teaches Tanzanian girls sustainable farming techniques.

American Friends of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan - \$12,500
Expansion of a school for refugee children in South Sudan.

Siempre Unidos - \$10,900
Provide 10 HIV positive patients and their families with two month's worth of food, a stove, bed and bedding and roof repair materials/labor to address multiple hurricane damage in Honduras.

Joel Nafuma Refugee Center - \$10,000
Daily breakfasts, essential supplies and an emergency fund for urgent needs of refugees in Rome.

Anne Arundel County Food Bank - \$10,000
Food purchase program that distributes to nearly 80 food pantries, soup kitchens and other programs.

Franciscan Center - \$10,000
Healthy and good tasting food to the homeless in Baltimore City.

Next One Up - \$6,600
Develop and implement meaningful remote learning engagement strategies for at risk youth in Baltimore City.

Kenya Connect - \$5,000
Renovations for the organization's learning resource center to create a makerspace.

Center of Help - \$5,000
Support of their adult academy which offers a range of courses and workshops that provide educational opportunities for adult immigrants in Annapolis and surrounding areas.

Seeds for Success - \$5,000
Support for their Foster Grandparent program that pairs low-income seniors with low-income youth in the public school system in Anne Arundel County.

Clothing Depot - \$5,000
Provide clothing and shoes to children and families in Anne Arundel County.