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INTRODUCTION

My first interest in history was at the age of ten, in 1898 when I could hardly wait for the Providence Evening Bulletin to arrive, my parents to finish reading it so I could cut out pictures of battleships to paste in my own scrap book.

There was a family scrap book containing articles mainly about the Negro which I read. Many old clippings have been transferred to my files which have been a great source of interest in my later research.

In 1935, when Governor William H. Vanderbilt announced the first appointments to the Rhode Island Tercentenary Committee, there was Negro representation, so at the request and suggestion of the Providence branch of the NAACP, the following were added:- Joseph G. LeCount, Esq., Miss Reberta J. Dunbar, Dr. Andrew L. Jackson, Sr., Mrs. Ulysses T. Carter, Sr., Dr. Carl R. Gross of Providence, Mrs. Beverly Tinsley, Mr. Leroy Williams and Mr. William H. Hilton of Newport.

The group met at Miss Dunbar's home on December 11, 1935 to organize and plan the scope of their activities. Many suggestions were presented but the one having the greatest appeal was to have different members write on various categories such as art, law, legislators, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, teachers clubs etc and to compile and publish a Pamphlet on the History of the Negro in Rhode Island. Mr. LeCount was named to serve as chairman and Dr. Gross, as secretary. I have all the correspondence pertaining to this effort still in my possession, (1970).

Financial assistance was not forthcoming from the general committee although they thought well of the project due to lack of money, so the effort slumped.

My interest became intensified from the great amount of material that was collected so in the late fifties I began to research and authenticate to compile the following information.

Carl R. Gross, M. D.
Providence, R. I. 1970

The Chronological Notes on the Negro in Rhode Island denies any liability for statement of facts or opinions by contributors

Files on:- ART CHURCHES CLUBS ORGANIZATIONS DENTISTRY LAW
EDUCATION INVENTORS LEGISLATURE MEDICINE MILITARY
PHARMACY PRESS NURSES MISCE

FROM FILES ON NEGRO HISTORY IN RHODE ISLAND

ON

ART

CHURCHES

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

DENTISTRY

EDUCATION

INVENTORS

LAW

LEGISLATURE

MEDICINE

MILITARY

NURSES

PHARMACY

PRESS

MISCE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I should like to acknowledge the many people who have so kindly contributed in numerous ways to have made this effort a most interesting one by telling me of people, events, giving me material such as books, medals, personal note-books etc., knowing of my interest in the history of the Negro in Rhode Island, some of which I should like to personally mention.

Newspaper clippings from the Gross family scrap book.

Providence Sunday and Daily Journal

Providence Evening Bulletin

Baltimore Afro-American on Madame Sissieretta Joyner Jones

History of the Providence Chronicle by William D. Wiley, Editor

Rhode Island State Library on Legislature and Law

Providence Medical Association Library

Rhode Island Council of Churches

Rhode Island Historical Society

Rhode Island College of Negro Graduates

Rhode Island Bar Journal Vol xv Biography on William A. Heathman Esq.

The early life of the Colored People of Providence by William J. Brown Angell and Company, Providence, R. I. 1883

Negroes on the Island of Rhode Island by Charles A. Battle, 1932

Sketch of the Life of George Thomas Downing, by S. M. M. Washington, Newport, R. I. The Milne Printery, 1910

Brown University Directory on Graduates from Brown and Pembroke up to 1950, library of William A. Heathman, Esq.

Hand written notes on Negro Churches in Rhode Island by Mrs. Ulysses T. Carter, Sr., assisted by Mrs. Beverly Tinsley, (Tercentenary material)

"These Plantations" by J. Earl Clauson Eve Bul 2-1-35 Oldest Negro Church?

Newport Gardner's Life by J. Earl Clauson, Prov Jour 5-20-36

The personal note-book of Miss Reberta J. Dunbar with dates of lectures in Rhode Island on the Negro. Given to me by Mrs. W. D. Wiley, former matron at the Bannister House, 45 East Transit Street, Prov.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Address by William P. H. Freeman, January 1, 1937, Annual Anniversary of the Emancipation at the Beneficent Congregational (Round Top) Church, Providence, R. I. Providence branch of the NAACP.

A Tercentenary History of 300 Years, arranged and illustrated by Winfred R. Cyr, (c) Eve Bul 10-8-36.

Personal notes on Negro Churches in Rhode Island by Mrs. Ulysses T. Carter, Sr., assisted by Mrs. Beverly Tinsley. 1936.

A scrap book of press releases all over the United States and Canada, three gold medals out of seventeen she wore in concert, six photographs, a flyer of the California tour belonging to Madame Sissierette Joyner Jones, "The Black Patti" given to me by William P. H. Freeman and I in turn presented all to the Jesse E. Moorland Collection, Howard University, Washington, D. C., also a short history on the life of Madame Jones as I knew her. CRG

161st Anniversary program of Bethel AME Church, 1795-1956, the first Negro church in Providence, R. I., with church history inside cover.

Negro Churches in Rhode Island before 1860 by Robert Glenn Scherer, Jr., Rhode Island History, January 1966.

Original minute book of the first Quarterly Conference of the AME of the Zion connection formed by Jehiel Bemene, Sept. 2nd 1837. Below on the same page informant Sister Catherine Chesbrow tells of how the church started.

Anti-Negro Prejudice and Discrimination in Rhode Island, 1860-1900 by Jean Girard, (RICHIE Honors), June 7, 1966. A great amount of information was given to him by Carl R. Gross, M. D. See his paper.

History of Negro Masonry in Rhode Island from the proceedings of the Most Worshipful Eureka Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Rhode Island, from 1902 to 1906, including a Historical Sketch. Printed by the Mercury Publishing Company, Newport, R. I., 1907. Encl

Letter of appointment of a Negro group to the Rhode Island State Tercentenary Committee and the minutes of that group by Carl R. Gross, M. D., secretary, 1935-1936

INTERVIEWS

William A. Heathman, Esq. * Many times when he was 94 years old after a professional visit I would sit and talk at his home and he would tell me about his disappointments as well as his achievements; about the first four members of the Rhode Island General Assembly, (see file on them), how one was not too vocal, he was a listener, so the Speaker at the end of the session would give him a nod, he would address the chair saying, Mr. Speaker, "I move the House do now adjourn"; He told me of a slave who was shipped North who became the coachman for Mr. Corliss of the Corliss steam engine company and was called, William "Boxpeel" Jones; about being thrown off a trolley car by a conductor who had recently come here from the South, Mr. Heathman was talking with the son of the judge who tried the case, who had correct information about the case, (This and more are in an article of the Rhode Island Bar Journal on Mr. Heathman, June 1967, Vol xv No 9); About Mr. Monroe, a walking encyclopedia on Rhode Island Law, who finished his law course in tow instead of three years, plus many more facts about the Negro here. (Bar Journal enclosed); He was the Republican member of the Rhode Island State Returning Board, now the State Board of Elections, from 1903 to 1919.

Mrs. Florence West Ward *, the oldest living member of Bethel AME Church, age 95, now residing at the Bannister House who told me about the sub-cellar in the church which was a station of the Underground Railway in Providence. Bethel was the first church in Providence, 1795- 1961 when it was sold to Brown University. The members bought another church where they are now, 1970, how there first building was built by the male members, had no mortgage when finished and owing not a penny. I was told her mother allowed her to play only with certain children, did not allow her to wash dishes or her clothes, bringing her up as a lady, changing her clothes twice daily, (This was told to me by Mrs. James A Gilbert.)

Mrs. James Gross; nee Margaret West, another of the older members of Bethel, telling me about its past.

Mr. Sidney Brown *who gave me an anniversary program of the 161st year with a wonderful history of Bethel AME Church. He was also a member, how he worked for Mr. Peter Sims, a member, an ash remover who had his men screen ashes from east side homes, pick out the clinkers and sell by the bushel basket. During financial stress, Bethel Church was heated on a Sunday by many bushels given by Mr. Sims.

Mrs. James A. Gilbert * of Providence, told me about the Neptune Yacht Club on the west side of the bay; "The Inquirers Club" which met for discussions on current subjects; "Contraband", a term used for slaves who had fled North, who were housed in barracks at Camp Fremont, (Dexter Training Ground) where whites would come to engage their services until they had permanent jobs; about the old Indian Burial Ground at Thayer and Olive Streets, how for progress, the bodies were exhumed and re-buried out ^A around the North Burial Ground;

* Native born Rhode Islander continued

INTERVIEWS

Mrs. Gilbert continued

Zebedee Howland, his Indian name was Howling Lands was her grand-father on her mother's side, she had his commission as Sargeant-Major of the 14th Rhode Island Volunteers, Heavy Artillery, an all Negro Regiment in the Civil War, (1800), signed by Colonel Viall and Adjunt Whiting, commissioned officers white, non-commissioned officers Negro; Zebedee Howland as a child went to a school for colored children and meeting his teacher, (white) on the street, he raised his hat to him, for this he was rebuked by him and told if he did that again, he would thrash him, (Prov Sun Jour).

Joseph G. LeCount, Esq., of Providence who gave me the names and dates of admission to the Rhode Island Bar before his, May 5, 1914. He said in cases of discrimination, there was a small fine on the books and instead of sin no more, the owners of buisnesses would gladly pay the fine and sin again. Now there is a Commission on Human Rights, the successor to the old State Commission on Discrimination which puts more teeth in the act. He spoke of many cases that would be ready to go to trial and the complainant or witnesses would back down because of fear of loss of their job or retaliation in some form.

Oliver C. Nurton of Newport telling of helping to carry an x-ray machine belonging to Dr. Marcus F. Wheatland also of Newport who had one of the first x-ray machines in the state. He promised Charles A. Battle of Newport who wrote in his pamphlet of the x-slaves who fought in the Battle of Rhode Island that he would work to establish a suitable memorial to their memory. Thirty years later this was culmated on July 4, 1967 near the site of that famous battle, sponsored by the Newport NAACP, State, Veterans organizations and Portsmouth officials.

Walter S. Gladding told me of his boss, an orthopedic surgeon here in Providence used to borrow Dr. Wheatland's tube when his tube was bad.

George Reilly, supertendent of the RISPCA, 372 Fountain Street, Providence, R. I., told me the stories about Sarah Gardner and the Scettlanford fight, about the plaque in honor of Sarah Gardner.

Mrs. Percival G. Moore-Browne on the history of the Church of the Saviour, Providence, R. I.

Mr. Luke N. Fears, a member who gave me a history of the Church of God and the Saints of Christ, Providence, R. I.

Mrs. George Farrow* (Annie Perry) who told me of many happenings of the Algonquin Council and her father's farm on Dugaway Hill, Cranston

* Native born Rhode Islander

1696- Historians accept 1696 as the year of the introduction of slavery into Rhode Island when the first cargo of Negro slaves arrived in Newport, R. I., from Barbadoes, BWI., and were sold for 30 or 40 pounds apiece. Part of the cargo was unloaded, the ship stayed overnight, the next day sailing for Boston, Mass. More than 25 distilleries made rum in Newport and over 180 ships made their port there. A slaver paid 115 gallons for a healthy male, 95 for a healthy female, the slave trade became so large that a tax of 3 pounds was levied on each sale to help pave the streets of Newport, this later being repealed in 1732. Newport became the chief slave market in America, Boston, second and Charleston, S. C. , third.

There were several slave markets in Newport, one at the corner of Mill and Spring Streets, another at North Baptist and Thames Streets. If they became overcrowded or the sales became slow, they were kept at Gravelly Point, now the city dock, until times were better.

In May of 1652, it was enacted by the General Assembly: "Whereas there is a common custom practiced among Englishmen to buy negars so that they may have them for service or slaves forever; for the preventing of such practice among us, let it be ordered that no black mankind or white, being forced by covenant, bond or otherwise, to serve any man or his assignees, longer than ten years or until they be twenty four years of age, if they be taken in under fourteen, from the time of

comings within the liberties of the Colonie and at the end of ten years, to set them free as in the manner of English servants. And that man that will not let them go free or shall sell them away to others for a long time, hee or they shall forfeit to the Colonie, forty pounds."

This legislation was the first positive declaration against slavery by any of the Colonies. (CAB-WPHF)

1730- The earliest census in Providence, showed 3916 whites and 128 Negroes. (see chart 2a by John C. Minkins, number and percentage distributions 1730-1860.)

1735- The population of Rhode Island was 71936, 1648 Negroes and 936 Indians, 69352 whites. (RJD)

1744- Newport Gardner (Occramer Marycoco) 1744-1826

His parents hearing of the great opportunities in America, entrusted their son, age 14 to a white Ship's captain to bring to America to gain an education but instead he was sold to Captain Caleb Gardner, a sympathetic person. Mrs. Gardner helped to teach him English, made it possible for him to take music lessons from a white teacher who came from Boston and one of her friends taught him French. After six months he had surpassed his teacher, maintaining a room on High Street where he gave music lessons to some of the leading families. He took a woman of colour to be his wife, had children and a home of his own on Pope Street.

Gardner was a very religious man who came under the influence of the Rev. Dr. Hopkins, paster of the First Congragational

1730- Number and Percentage distributions of Whites and Negroes in Providence. 1730-1860

Year	Total	Number Negroes	Per Cent Negroes
1730	3916	128	3.2
1748	3452	225	6.5
1774	4321	305	7.0
1783	4310	2833	6.6
1790	6380	475	7.4
1800	7614	656	8.6
1810	10071	871	8.6
1820	11767	979	8.3
1830	16836	1213	7.2
1840	23172	1302	5.3
1850	41513	1499	3.6
1860	50666	1537	3.3

These statistics were collected by John C. Minkins who at one time (was the editor of a white newspaper, The Providence News from 1906-1911,) (From his autobiography)

1745- Newport Gardner continued

Church in Newport who listened to his dreams and gave him encouragement. Gardner's home on Pope Street was the scene of many religious meetings, the forerunner of the Union Congregational Church in Newport in 1859. Gardner's interests were helping his people, religion, sacred music, his freedom and to return to his homeland, He never forgot his native language. He with nine others bought a lottery ticket which won \$2000.00, this helped to increase the funds of the African Colonization Society so he with 23 others left Newport, arriving in Boston, December 18, 1825. The brig "Vine" left Boston, January 4, 1826, reaching Liberia February 6, 1826 in his 81st year. He and his chief lieutenant, Salmer Nubia fell victim to African fever dying soon after their arrival. At the age of 50, he composed an anthem, "Promise" the most famous of many, published in Boston and sung in many Negro churches. The only known copy in existence was in the hands of the widow of Dr. Alonza M. Van Horne. (CAB Negroes on the Island of Rhode Island)

"One of the most remarkable men, black or white, the State has known." (These Plantations Eve Bul 2-1-35 J.E.Clauson)

1758- Patience Borden, 1758-1811, a free woman of colour left a will dated March 12, 1811.....as a fund, the interests of which to be applied for the relief of indigent persons of colour who shall be members of her church, the First Baptist Church in America." She died April 1, 1811 in her 53rd year.

(Rhode Island History, Winter 1869, p 26)

1760- The last slave to die in Rhode Island was James Buffum, of Jamestown, R. I., age 100 years on January 3, 1860.

(Eve Bul 2-1-35 J. Earl Clauson)

1763- The first school for colored children was opened by the Rev. Marmaduke Browne, the rector of Trinity Church at the corner of Division and Mary Streets, October of 1763. Girls were given the rudiments of education and domestic work while boys received class-room work and were apprenticed to black-smiths, carpenters, coopers etc. Battle in his pamphlet mentions that Neptune Thurston, a slave and a cooper by trade gave Gilbert Stuart, his first lessons in painting. After Rev. Browne's death, the school was carried on by Mrs. Mary G. Brett until the outbreak of the Revolution, re-opened in 1785, closing upon her death April 14, 1799. Again it was re-opened under the auspices of the African Benevolent Society whose sole purpose was maintaining a school for colored children. It had a Constitution calling for a set of officers, a board of directors of nine members, five of whom shall be colored. Newport Gardner was elected President and Issac Rice to be secretary. The school charged fifty cents yearly and went on with varying success until the City of Newport took over education in 1842. (CAB)

Rev. Hopkins on going down to the wharves, saw such conditions which caused him to preach strongly against slavery that members of his church voted to exclude all members that were slave holders and in this cause he was joined by the Quakers and Episcopalians.

1760- The last slave to die in Rhode Island was James Buffum, at the age of 100 years of Jamestown, R. I., on January

1770- Rev. Hopkins was the father of the idea of civilizing and Christianizing Africans and to send them back to Africa as missionaries. The first African Colonizing Society was the out-growth of his idea. (CAB)

1778- In February of 1778, the General Assembly of Rhode Island, voted and resolved, " That every able bodied Negro, mulatto or Indian slave in this State, may enlist to enter either of two battalions, to serve during the continuance of the war with Great Britain, that every slave so enlisted shall be entitled to receive all bounties, wages and encouragements allowed by the Continental Congress to any soldier enlisted in the service."

" It is further voted and resolved, that every soldier so enlisting shall upon passing muster before Colonel Christopher Greene, be immediately discharged from his master or mistress and shall be absolutely free, as though he had never been encumbered with any kind of servitude or slavery and in case such slave shall, by sickness or otherwise be unable to maintain himself, he shall be supported by the State, not his master or his mistress. And Whereas slaves have been deemed by law, the property of their owner, compensation ought to be made for the loss of their services."

" It was further voted and resolved, That there be allowed and paid by this State to the owners for every slave enlisting, a sum according to his worth, a price not exceeding one hundred and twenty pounds for the most valuable slave and in proportion for a slave of less value. (continued on p 6)

1778- Provided, the owner shall deliver to the officer who enlist him, the clothes of said slave or otherwise he shall not be entitled to said sum".

These regiments created by the General Assembly were the first in the history of the Nation to be received and accepted into the armed services of the country on terms of equality with other soldiers.

(CAB)

1778- The first major contribution of the Negro to the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations was in the formation of the first Negro regiment in America which fought so bravely in the Battle of Rhode Island, August 29, 1778 at Portsmouth, R. I. These men both slaves and free, more than proved their fighting ability, withstanding the Hessians and taking a toll of five for every man they lost. The Hessian officer refused to lead his men in battle the next day for fear of his life and asked to be transferred. After this battle, General Greene's regiment was sent South and following its leader, was wiped out to a man in the Battle of Point Bridge, N. Y., May 13, 1781. In August of 1928, the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Rhode Island was celebrated, at that time a suggestion was made that the State honor in stone or bronze, the memory of Colonel Greene's regiment. Mr. Oliver C. Burton, Jr., of the Newport chapter of the NAACP promised Charles A. Battle that he would work to help establish such a memorial, enlisting the aid of Senator Erich A. O'Day Taylor of Newport, 39 years later on July 4, 1967 a site at Barker's Bridge R. I., was dedicated.

1778- continued

with appropriate ceremonies attended by representatives of the State, Portsmouth, Newport, veterans organizations, the NAACP and general public. (CAB Eve Bul 7-5-67 & 8-30-68)

1779- The General Assembly passed an Act in 1779, prohibiting the sale of slaves to parties outside the State against their will unless said slave prove to be a person of bad character.

(CAB)

1780- A meeting was held at the residence of Abraham Casey on Levin Street, Newport, November 10, 1780 to consider the present condition of the Negro and their future. Subsequent meetings were held in the Old Fourth Baptist Meeting House, one of the important considerations was the adoption of a Constitution also a motion was made, "We raise a sum of money in such a way as may be best, to purchase four books for records, one for births, one for marriages, one for deaths, and one for other important records." Vital statistics of Negroes were not faithfully kept until after the Civil War so these books tell much of the history of the past. Another wise provision was leaving much of this material in the possession of the Union Congregational Church and when in 1964 they merged with a white group to become the United Congregational Church of Newport, the material is still preserved, there.

(CAB & JWD

1783- " Is there an older church?" It was at the home of Newport Gardner, some members of the African Union Society met for religious purposes, followed by meetings in other members

1783- Homes. Gardner had come under the influence of Rev. Hopkins, the pastor of the First Congregational Church in Newport, also became a member. Inspired by the formation of the African Union Meeting House in Providence, in 1819, twelve men met at Gardner's house on January 6, 1824, again on February 24, 1824. They established the Colored Union Church, feeling their were advantages in a Negro organization electing Gardner and Shadrack Hawkins, deacons, the Rev. Mr. Patten (white) treasurer, Ahama Gardner, clerk. Issac Rice, Turnbridge Hammond and Ishmael Fayerweather were appointed to find a site for a church. They purchased a lot, 100x60 at the corner of Church and Division Streets, and on this site the first Colored Church was built and dedicated, June 23, 1824 in Newport, R. I. Their pastor, Rev. Jacob C. Perry of Narragansett, served from 1826-1845 and outgrowing their quarters, in 1835 they acquired the Fourth Baptist Meeting House, called the "Old Salt Box with services there in February of 1835. Rev. Luke Waldron of Narragansett was the next pastor from 1845-1852 and under him the church was incorporated under the laws of Rhode Island. Charles W. Gardner, 1852-1858, stressed the importance of the Sunday School. Under Benjamin Lynch, 1858-1863, the church lost its community aspect, recognized by a council, March 29, 1859 as an orthodox Congregational church. In the fall it was re-incorporated as the Union Congregational Church, Newport, R. I.

1783- An older Negro church?

Rev. Lynch resigned as pastor to become a chaplain in a newly regiment in the Civil War. Rev. Samuel Harrison came in 1863 and resigned in 1865. Rev. Malon A. Van Horne next as acting pastor in September of 1868 and was made permanent in January, 1869. He was a member of the first class to graduate from Lincoln University in Oxford, Pa. The church grew enormously under his 29 years as pastor. In 1871, the church was demolished with work on the new edifice, which commenced in May, the cornerstone laid, June 15, 1871 and the new church was dedicated in the October following. Rev. Van Horne was active in civic work, a member of the Newport School Committee from 1873 to 1892, being chairman of several committees, also one of the committee on examination for the State Normal School; elected to the Rhode Island legislature in 1885, served for three years and in 1897, he resigned his pastorate upon being appointed by President William McKinley as U. S. Consul to St. Thomas, Danish West Indies, resigning from the diplomatic service in 1908. Among some ministers following were: Rev. Byron U. Gunner; Rev. Clifford L. Miller, the ablest financier; the church being in great debt when he came in 1913, but when he left in 1917, every debt had been removed, with many improvements made and paid for; Rev. A. T. Peters was the scholar, a graduate from Lincoln University, Oxford, Pa., Yale University school of Religion, Ph.D., Brown University, LL.D Cambridge College, England, and many others. The church dwindled and in 1964, merged under the name of the United Congregational Church,.

1781- The Rhode Island Regiment of Negroes who fought at the Battle of Rhode Island, August 29th, 1778, were wiped out at the Battle of Point Bridge, New York, May 13th, 1781. CAB

1784- An act passed in 1784, provided that all children born after March 1st, 1784 were to be free, their support and education to be provided by the towns in which they resided.

This Act was later amended to put the cost of rearing a child upon the mother's owner. CAB

1787- An Act passed in 1787, under its provisions, the slave trade in the State was abolished as well as trading with the West Indies. A fine of 100 pounds for every person imported and 1,000 pounds for each ship engaged in this traffic. CAB

1791- A call was sent out by Newport Gardner to members of the African Union Society for a "Slaves Thanksgiving Service", April 28, 1791. The last of these services was held in April of 1824 in the Fourth Baptist Meeting House and the sermon was preached by Professor William Gammell of Brown University.

The original Thanksgiving Proclamation was in the possession of the Union Congregational Church in Newport as well as other colonial records about Negroes. These records are in the possession of the United Congregational Church of Newport with which the Union Congregational Church, merged in 1964, CAB JWD

1792- Issac Rice, a free man was born in Narragansett in 1792 and died in Newport, 1866. He was brought to Newport in his early life, embraced religion and joined the First Congregational Church (white). Later he was one of the ~~shanters~~ members of the Union Congregational Church (Negro) and its clerk., also gave the church its first organ.

1792- Isaac A. Rice, continued

A gardner by trade, he worked for some of the leading families of Newport and while working for Governor Gibbs, he planned and planted the trees in Touro Park there. He was a great worker in the anti-slavery cause, forming the acquaintance of Frederick Douglass, after his escape from the South to New Bedford, Mass., which became a life long friendship. His home was a station of the Underground Railroad in Newport at the corner of William and Thomas Streets, (still in the family). Later he entered the catering buisness with a fashionable establishment on Cotton Court and he and Downing were the caterers for a great reunion of the Sons and Daughters of Newport in 1859.

CAB

1795- The African Freedman's Society which later developed into Bethel A. M. E. Church of Providence, R. I., was founded exactly 100 years before the incorporation of Bethel in 1839. In 1795, it was a free mission and in 1800, in May, it joined with four other ~~African~~ Methodist Episcopal bodies:- (Mother) Bethel in Philadelphia, Pa., Bethel in Baltimore, Md., Bethel in New York, N. Y., and Emanuel in Charlestown S. C. It was the only organization, owned, operated and controled in whole, by the American Negro, the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The members first met in various homes, a tenement at Thayer and Cushing Streets, the southwest corner and in 1820 they purchased a lot at 193 Meeting Street, where a church of logs was built. In September of 1838, fifteen persons led by Daniel Morse and Ichabod Northup met, organized and in 1839, incorporated as Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

1795- Bethel continued

of Providence, R. I. The church of logs was set afire by some Indians and destroyed. The cornerstone of a larger brick church was laid, June 22nd, 1865 and it was completed in 1866. The church had a cellar and subcellar which was a station of the Underground Railroad. (see the history of this church in the 161st Anniversary program of October 21, 1956, enclosed.) The church weathered the financial storms very well until the early 30ths, when a mortgage was obtained to buy a parsonage on Lippitt Street, the depression came, they lost the house, leaving the church with a \$5,000.00 debt. Numerically and financially the church dwindled and in August of 1961, they sold the property to Brown University, which had wanted it, for \$50,000.00 for their expansion program, their last service vice held in September of 1961. The congregation still striving to hold on, bought a small church and parsonage on Rochambeau Avenue, Providence, R. I., where they are at the present. (see file on Negro churches; compiled from notes by Mrs. U. T. Carter of Providence and Mrs. Beverly Tinsley of Newport; the 161st Anniversary program, 1956, history of Bethel, ~~1956~~.)

1797- A brief history of Negro Masonry in Rhode Island, from Hiram Lodge, No. 3, Free and Accepted Masons, PH, when Prince Hall, who was deputized to form new lodges in America among Negroes, instituted and received a warrant to work as a lodge, June, 25th, 1797 up to the present, (1971). see enclosure.

1797- Harvey Chace was born in Somerset, Massachusetts, August 31, 1797, the son of Oliver and Sussannah Buffington Chace, the eldest of seven children. He moved to Valley Falls, Rhode Island

1797- Hiram Lodge, No. 3, F. & A. M., (Prince Hall), the first Negro lodge of Mason in Rhode Island, was given license on the 25th of June, 1797, by Prince Hall, master of African Lodge, No. 459, to assemble and work as a lodge. This was the second Negro lodge created in the United States, the officers were installed by Prince Hall, Grand Master., September 22, 1797. (From the proceedings of the Most Worshipful Eureka Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Rhode Island, from 1902 to 1906, including a Historical Sketch, Printed by the Mercury Publishing Company, Newport, R. I., 1907.)

1797- Hawey Chace B. Somerset, born 8-31-1797
 His father, Oliver, named Susannah
 Buffington 9-15-1796. He had seven
 children: - Harvey, Samuel B., Asenath,
 Mary, Jonathon, Elizabeth and
 Oliver Jr. He moved to Valley Falls R.I.
 in 1843, p 267 Nat Biographical Pub.,
 Co., Prov. 1881.

P 268 "His home being a safe way station
 of the Underground Railroad," also in
 the Biographical Cyclopaedia of Representa-
tive Men of R.I. 1881 Prov.

P 163 map of R.R. in Warrland
Colored American Magazine, January 1903
 P. 165, picture of house of Elizabeth
Buffum Chase; Valley Falls, R.I., sister
 of Harvey Chace. Could this be their home?
 A.R.S. 1971

1797- Harvey Chace continued

land in 1843 and "His home being a safe way station of the Underground Railroad." (pp 267-268 National Biographical Cyclopedia of Representative Men in Rhode Island, National Biographical Publishing Company, Providence, R. I. , 1881.)

The Colored American Magazine, January, 1903, on p 163 shows a map of the Underground Railroad in New England and p 165, a picture of the home of Elizabeth Buffum Chace, also in Valley Falls, Rhode Island, as a station of the Underground Railroad. (Oliver Chace had seven children: Harvey; Samuel B; Aseneth; Mary; Jonathon; Elizabeth and Oliver, Jr.)

CRG

1800- Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church of Providence, R. I.; in 1800 became the fifth Bethel affiliate in America.

1808- Rhode Island General Assembly abolished slavery in R. I.

1808- The school for colored children which was started by the Rev. Mermaduke Browne in Newport, in 1763, was re-opened by Newport Gardner as teacher in 1808.

CAB

1819- George Henry, 1819-1900, was born a slave in Virginia of slave parents, spending his early years on a plantation there but not being satisfied with farm life, he left, going to sea as a cook in 1831, for 17 years. He was promoted to be the master of the coastal schooner, Llevelyn owned by Sally Griffin and her nephew. She lived on King Street, Alexander, Va. For three or four years he was engaged in running timber from Virginia to Baltimore and the knowledge thus acquired of different grades of timber was so great that when the aqueduct was built across the Georgetown River, the selection of all

George Henry continued

the piles to be used were left entirely to him. On his last trip as skipper, he left the ship in Baltimore, going on to Philadelphia, then to Providence in 1847, found a position on a boat plying between Providence and New York finally leaving the sea. He became sexton of St. Stephens Episcopal Church here for 25 years, where he became a member. In 1859, he founded a society, known as the Henry and Brown Society, the sole purpose of which was to educate colored youths in the higher branches of learning, denied them at that time. Together with Downing and Jefferson, they instituted and maintained a long fight to desegregate and have equal schoolings in Rhode Island, which resulted successfully in 1871. In 1872, drawn on jury duty in the Superior Court, he became the first Negro to serve on a Rhode Island Jury. John F. Toby, Chr. of the House Judiciary Committee opposed the repeal of the intermarriage laws, and because of his stand in this matter and his remarks, he was defeated in the next three elections by the efforts of Mr. Henry and others of his race. A few years later he led an assault on the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, forcing them to give somewhat near equal benefits to the colored people.

In 1895, he presented to Livingstone College in Salisbury, N. C., his entire library, comprising of valuable and rare books on the history of the race during the first half century, the entire works of Charles Sumner, several excellent cases, together with an oil painting of himself, portraits of Touissant L'Overture; John Brown; Charles Sumner and

George Henry continued

others. This is among, if not the best gift that Livingstone has ever received from a member of the race. In 1894, he presented to Ives Post, No. 13, G.A.R., Department of Rhode Island, an immense volume designed to contain personal war sketches etc. This book cost \$100.00. These sketches written in by me in 1898, (William A. Heathman, Esq.) who was the post historian, and turned over to the Post, August 4th of that year.

In closing:- his own words, "Let me give glory to God on high and peace to men on earth. My country, flag and the Republican Party and its principles, first, last and forever."

(Notes by William A. Heathman, Esq., P.E.B., Jan. 24, 1900. CRG)

1819- GEORGE T. DOWNING was born in New York city, December 30, 1819 and died in Newport, Rhode Island, July, 21, 1903. He attended public schools in New York with men who later became famous, Henry Garnett, Professor Reason and Doctor Crummell. These men with others began at the age of 14 and 16 to be involved in civil rights adopting a resolution, refraining from celebrating the Fourth of July, since to colored people the Declaration of Independence was a mockery. As a youth, he was an agent of the Underground Railroad, spiriting away "Little Henry", a slave who had been put in jail there.....aa member of a committee to fight the Fugitive Slave Law also he fought to abolish the property qualification act that colored had to have \$250.00 worth of real estate to vote. He was in the participation of the agitation over the fugitive slave, Anthony Burns. (See Providence Sunday Journal, October 13, 1957 entitled "RACE TROUBLE IN BOSTON", copy attached.)

RHODE ISLANDS ALBUM

1636 1936

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL, WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 1936

Newport Gardner's Life

Story Comes Down

1746 the Years

~~1746~~ 1836

By J. Earl Clauson

The stretch of a woman's love for her son can hardly be greater than that of the mother of Newport Gardner. She was a Negro living on a low, malarial stretch of the African west coast, where she watched the slavers come and go and picked up scraps of information about the shores they sailed for.

There was something over beyond the horizon line her own people ought to have. She was too old to go after it, but she had a boy of 14 who might make the trip and bring back some saving graces of white civilization.

Finally she plucked up courage to ask a captain to take her son across and give him an opportunity. He promised—and promptly on arrival at Newport sold the boy for what he would bring in the slave market.

It was by a lucky chance that he fell into the hands of Caleb Gardner, a prominent merchant with human sympathies. The lad's native name, now forgotten, was changed to Newport Gardner, and as Newport Gardner his story has come down the years, one of the most remarkable concerning his race in America.

Gift for Music

He was a boy of more than ordinary perceptiveness, docile and anxious to learn. He quickly picked up English, but by some process of self-discipline retained throughout his life the speech to which he had been born. The mission to which his mother had devoted him he never forgot.

To his other talents he added a distinct gift for music. Mrs. Gardner made it possible for him to join a singing class. Soon he had distanced the professor and became a teacher in his own right. He read and composed music. His voice was excellent. He did not attempt to master any instrument, and confined himself to sacred music.

Newport took a wife of his own color and they had children and eventually a house of their own on Pope street. Not far away on High street he maintained a room where he gave music lessons.

Still he and all of his were slaves. The project his mother had outlined to him in boyhood seemed beyond possibility of realization; first he and the family must gain their freedom, and next they must gather somehow the money necessary for the pro-



.... CONFINED HIMSELF TO SACRED MUSIC

posed expedition to Africa. His mother, of course, must be long dead; he never had heard from her.

A strong religious faith kept him going and the flame of hope alight. He took encouragement from Rev. Dr. Hopkins, who settled in the Newport Congregational pulpit in 1770 and manifested deep interest in the enslaved Negroes. Dr. Hopkins listened with attention to Newport's life dream and lent his aid.

Full Liberty.

In 1791 Newport with nine other slaves bought a lottery ticket which won a \$2000 prize. This helped a little toward buying freedom. Some time later Caleb Gardner, his master, heard Newport praying that he and his family might be liberated. Moved by the appeal, and considering the years of service he had had, he gave Newport, his wife and children their full liberty.

He was free to depart, but means still were lacking. And

the years were piling up on Newport's head. Little by little, however, special collections had been added to a fund for African colonization plan and finally at the end of December, 1825, Newport, his son and a little band of associates stood on the deck of a ship and watched Boston Harbor sink into the blue behind.

They were off on the great mission thought of which Newport had cherished ever since his mother outlined it to him, a boy of 14. Now he was 80. He must have wondered whether he was to be spared to realize any part of his and his mother's dream.

He was not. The brig reached her destination Feb. 6, 1826, and the little band of Negro missionaries went ashore. But a month later Newport and his chief lieutenant, Salmar Nubia, were dead of disease, and within a short time Newport's son followed.

(Copyright, 1936, by the Providence Journal)

GROSS P. 78

8-18-78

to Newport Historical Society

A HISTORY OF THE NEGRO TROOPS IN THE
WAR OF THE REBELLION
1861-1865

By

George W. Williams, LL.D.

Colonel and late Judge Advocate
of the Grand Army of the Republic

Preceded by

A Review of the Military Services of Negroes
in Ancient and Modern Times

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

NEW YORK

Originally published by Harper and Brothers in 1888

Reprinted 1969 by Negro Universities Press, a Division of the
Greenwood Publishing Corp, New York

Library of Congress Cat. Card No. 68-55921 SBN 8371-1404-4
Printed in United States of America

Preface xiii 2nd paragraph

p 23 last paragraph....2-Jan 78 Gen Varnum wrote Gen Wash-
ington about a plan.... continued on p 24.....

p 31 footnote 2 Rider gives 88 names in all while only nine
tall with the roll..... continued on p 32, footnote

Col. Williams disputes Rider, calling "his literary workman-
ship very imperfect."

He seem to authenticate his reasoning very thoroughly.

I have brought this book to the attention of the Rhode Island
Historical Society and thought you might also be interested

History Emerges From Razing

By RONALD B. HARRISON

From the confines of a small black box history tumbled onto Meeting Street the other day.

The box, part of a cornerstone-laying ceremony on June 22, 1865, had been placed in the foundation by the congregation of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church at 193 Meeting St.

And, until Tuesday when it was discovered by Joseph Duhamel and Harry Baccaire, two Providence building wreckers, it lay undisturbed for almost 101 years.

President Lincoln had just been assassinated and the nation was in mourning. Gov. James Y. Smith, a slender-faced, beardless man, had proclaimed June 1 as a day of "mourning and humiliation." And one thin dime looked like a small dollar bill.

Dr. Duhamel, 27, of 22 Atwood St., a building wrecker for the H. & B. Building Wrecking Co., related how he and Mr. Baccaire, the firm's owner, found the box.

"When we pushed over the cornerstone, there it was. We thought we had found gold or something so we broke it open with a screwdriver."

The church, which echoed with organ chords and sermon intonations for the last time in September, 1961, is being razed for future construction by Brown University. The university bought the building in August, 1961, for \$50,000.

The university now plans to make a garden on the site to go along with the planned Pembroke College Alumnae Center, scheduled to be ready for June graduation. Samuel Lerner, a Brown professor of engineering and secretary of the planning and building committee, said last night that it is hoped the garden will be finished at the same time.

Professor Lerner said that since the church building was bought by the university, it had been used for storage. "But it became a fire hazard," he said.

The church has been described as the oldest African Methodist Episcopal Church in Providence, springing from a religious group organized in 1815. The original structure, built of logs by slaves for their meeting place, was destroyed by fire set by Indians.

The existence of the cornerstone and its contents has been known by succeeding pastors, but attempts to find the "time capsule" in the past were unsuccessful—at least until this week.

The Rev. George J. Richardson, pastor of the church in

1951, tried for two years to find the stone so that the date of the building's construction could be established.

Historians and others might regard the contents as a treasure trove. Two newspapers, the Providence Daily Journal and the Manufacturers and Farmers Journal, precursors of these newspapers, were found in excellent condition, marred only by small spots of mildew.

Other newspapers, the New York Independent, dated June 22, 1865, and the Anglo-African, dated March 25, 1865, were in the same good condition. The oldest newspaper in the box was the Connecticut Courant, dated Oct. 29, 1764, the year Brown University was founded in Warren.

Two Indian head pennies, minted in 1863 and 1864, were found in the box. A local coin dealer says they are worth \$2 to \$5 depending on condition.

Besides the pictures of Governor Smith, the anti-slavery proclamation by President Lincoln and the newspapers, the item with the most personal touch was a small Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church with "T. H. Green" lettered on the side of the pages.

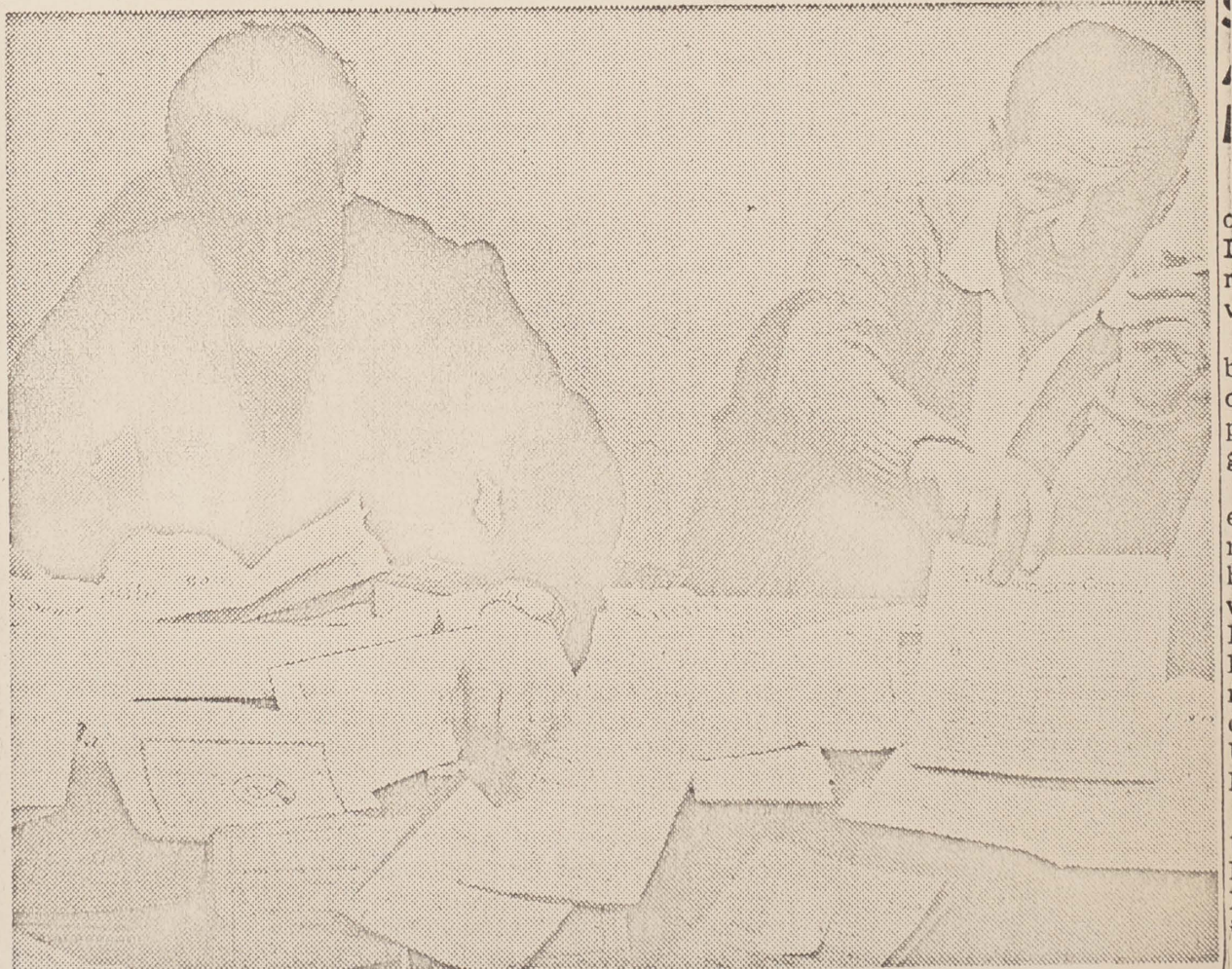
Tucked inside the pages of a

hymn book and still not yellowed by age was a clipping from an unknown newspaper. It told that "the slaves of Maryland are emancipated and slavery forever abolished." A 500-gun salute was scheduled by the mayor of Baltimore three times a day and citizens were urged to display flags.

The contents may be valuable to some school or university or as a part of the state archives. Mr. Baccaire, 51, who lives at 105 Sunbury St., says he had an offer to buy from a Pawtucket man the night of the discovery.

Asked what he intended to do with the effects, Mr. Baccaire said: "Just say they're for sale."

*Providence Journal
March 5, 1966*



Contents of box found under cornerstone of church are examined by Joseph Duhamel (left) and Harry Baccaire of the H&B Building Wrecking Co.

—Journal-Bulletin Photo

1865 Cornerstone Box Found

GROSS P. 89

The church had a sub-
cellar below the
basement which was
a station of the
underground Railway
see church history
Enclosed

L.R. Tyson, III
1970

God Our Father

Christ Our Redeemer

Man Our Brother

1795

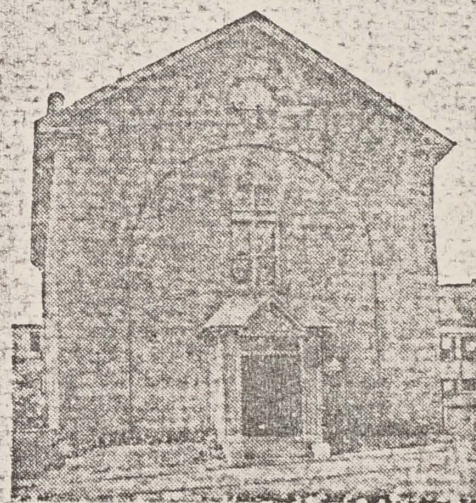
— 1956

BETHEL

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

193 Meeting Street

Providence, R. I.



REV. LASCELLE M. WATTS, Pastor

REV. W. H. TURNER, Associate Pastor

161st Anniversary

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1956

at 3:30 P.M.

Motto:

"ENTER TO WORSHIP . . . LEAVE TO SERVE"

CROSS P. 90

CHURCH HISTORY

The heritage which is ours is one of both age and wisdom, one of constant struggle, and one of minimized success. As we here at Bethel Church look back through the pages of history, our hearts cry out in appreciation for a history able to stand firm though challenged and threatened at every turn.

The African Freedman's Society, the organization which later developed into Bethel A.M.E. Church, was founded and established in Rhode Island exactly 100 years before the incorporation of Bethel. Slaves had begun to steal away in the evenings, gathering in the woods out of the vision of their masters, to hear God's word as preached by one of their brethren. History has revealed that they met with such consistency that an organization was automatically formed. Such was the humble beginnings of what is today . . . a section of the only organization of international makeup, which is owned, operated, and controlled by the American Negro—the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

From 1739 to 1795, the church wavered but remained in existence. At first there were laws which did not permit the congregating of slaves. In spite of this, God was guiding and directing his children out of the path of hurt, harm, and danger. When the shackles of bondage were snapped, African Methodism immediately sprang into existence in Rhode Island. The people created a definite organization. A building was secured on Thayer Street and named Bethel A.M.E. Church.

Though there were those who waged constant warfare on Bethel, the church lived on. Men and women of color were ostracized, criticized, arrested, and some even convicted for the crime of organizing a church that they might worship under their own vine and fig tree. Nevertheless, the church continued to stand as a symbol of freedom of worship. When one was removed by the authorities, he was miraculously replaced by two or three.

The church struggled but continued to prosper. Escaped slaves were led by Harriet Tubman via the underground railroad up through Philadelphia, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, into Bethel, Providence. The significance of Bethel began to grow until slaves, though shackled in bondage on the red clay of South Carolina, became acquainted with this monument to freedom.

By this time the walls of Bethel were bulging, unable to accommodate the hundreds of folk who rushed there for worship. The lot on which the church is now located was purchased in 1820 and the present building was constructed.

Among the men who have played a role in the preservation of this great church are Reverends J. B. Franklin Lacey, Pottinger, Newby, C. C. Dunlap, W. H. Thomas, Cole, Witten, Hamilton, Campbell, Delaney, J. Julian Jenkins, C. B. Barrows, R. A. Hildebrand, Griffith, Pitts, Richardson, W. J. Laws, George Rue, H. H. Burley Collins, and the present Minister the Rev. Lascelle M. Watts.

Today we are standing on the threshold of still another era. An era of awakening, an era in which the good people of this great city, as well as the great citizenry of New England have said in concrete language, "We shall preserve this great heritage."

Yes, though the church still suffers trials and tribulations we now face a bright tomorrow. We know that Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church shall continue to live. We know that a beacon light shall remain aflame in this corner of God's vineyard, signifying the motto of African Methodism—GOD THE FATHER . . . CHRIST OUR REDEEMER . . . MAN OUR BROTHER.

Baltimore Afro-American

"I am a man of peace; God knows how I love peace. But I hope I shall never be such a coward as to mistake oppression for peace."

—Hungarian Freedom Fighter
Kossuth.



Prayer Of The Week
Hear us, O God of mercy,
and unto our minds show
the light of Thy grace.
Through our Lord. Amen.

APRIL 30, 1966

Bishop Baber Directs An Anniversary

150
1816

Coming in May is the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

The church has a place in the city's history different from any other.

The first conference of organized AMEs was held in Baltimore. No written records of any kind antedate those of Baltimore.

The first elected bishop was a Baltimorean, Daniel Coker. When he couldn't serve, the honor went to Richard Allen of Philadelphia.

The first church was Bethel. The chief AME churches of that same name are in every large city.

It was a pastor of Baltimore's Bethel, who carried a delegation to the military authorities during the

Civil War, saying to them, "You do not need to force our colored people to serve in the army. Just tell us how many volunteers you want and we will produce them."

That Bethel pastor became a chaplain in the army, one of the first, and 8,000 colored volunteers from Maryland went with him.

The story of the AMEs, like the story of the Methodists and Baptists, spans this same hundred and fifty years.

Its bishops, devoted pastors and elders constitute the leaders of the city as well as the leaders of the state.

Under the direction of Bishop George Baber, we do well to mark their achievements.

George Henry

notes by William A
1. Beathman, Esq., an Geo
1 Henry. C.R. 5

Born Virginia 1816-1819

from the book Life of Geo Henry H F Gould
& Co., Prov
1894

Went to sea in 1831 - followed sea for 17 years

Promoted to Commander of coasting schooner Llewellyn
and for 3 or 4 years engaged in running timber from
Va. to Baltimore.

Knowledge thus acquired of different
grades of timber was so great that when the aqueduct was
built across the Georgetown River, the selection of all the
piles to be used was left entirely to him.

Came to Prov. in 1847 - secured employment sexton
St. Stephen's church - there 25 yrs.

In 1859 he founded a society known as the Henry & Brown
society the sole purpose of which was to educate colored youths
in the higher branches of learning denied them at that time.

Together with Downing & Jefferson - he instituted & maintained
a 12 yr fight for equal school privileges in R.I. - resulted
successfully in 1871

12

In 1872 - drawn on jury - Supreme Court - five weeks -
being 1st colored man to serve on a R. I. jury.

Repeal of intermarriage laws. — John F. Tobey - Chs.
House Judiciary Com. — opposed. — Because of Tobey's
stand in this matter & his remarks — he was defeated at
the next 3 successive elections by the efforts of Wm Henry
& other leaders of the race.

A few years later he led an assault upon the
Metropolitan Life Ins. Co. & forced them to give somewhere
near equal benefits to the colored people.

In 1895 he presented to Livingstone College — his entire
library of ~~choice & rare books~~ comprising many valuable
& rare books on the history of the race during the 1st half
century and the entire works of Chas. Sumner, — several
excellent cases, together with an oil painting of himself
& portraits of Touissant L'Overture — John Brown — Chas.
Sumner & others. This gift is among, if not
the best gift that Livingstone has ever rec'd. from a
member of the race.

In 1894 - he presented to Inez Post #13, G.A.R. Department of R.I. - An immense volume designed to contain personal ^{war} sketches etc. This book cost \$100. - Sketches compiled & written in by me in 1898 - Also Personal Sketch of the Donor - and turned over to the Post, Aug. 4th of that year.

I was Post Historian

In Closing:- his own words " Let us give glory to God on high & peace to men on earth. My country I love as I do my life and I will stand by the American flag and the Republican Party & its principles, first last and forever"
