

REV. DR. THOMAS LYELL
Served First Church 1799-1800

In 1799, when Thomas Lyell was appointed by Bishop Francis Asbury to the Richmond, Virginia Methodist Charge which was to become First Church, the predecessor to Trinity United Methodist Church, he faced a formidable task. With the exception of a small Baptist congregation and the Church of England's St. John's, there were no organized churches in the Richmond area. Admitted on trial, e.g. accepted into the ministry, in the Methodist system in 1792, he was ordained Deacon by Asbury in November 1794. He was ready to face this formidable task by virtue of family background, practical experience and personality. Lyell was born in Richmond County, Virginia on May 13, 1775 to John and Sarah Lyell, members of the Church of England, who came under the influence of itinerant Methodist preachers. Service at Washington, Fairfax, Alexandria and Baltimore provided experience for the neophyte preacher.

Surveying his congregation of twenty-eight members, all white, assembled in facilities borrowed in the Virginia State Capital Building, Reverend Lyell decided that a physical building was an imperative to establish a congregation which knew itself as a church. The neighbors, whose peace was disturbed by the vociferous singing, shouting, praising and exhortation, agreed. Rev. Lyell was a popular preacher and zealously sought subscriptions to build a church. Within less than a year a "neat and commodious house"¹ was situated at the intersection of 19th and Franklin Streets. On September 8, 1799, Bishop Francis Asbury records that he domiciled two miles from Richmond, and that "I would have preached within the walls of our new house at Richmond, but the excessive rain we have had of late prevented."² Despite weather, the growing congregation could attend three services on Sunday and one on a week night.

From the infant Richmond church Thomas Lyell moved on with typical Methodist itinerancy to the Federal Chapel in Montgomery County, Maryland, Georgetown, and on north to Boston and Lynn, Massachusetts within the space of four years. On June 11, 1804, Bishop Asbury recorded:

Today, Mr. Thomas Lyell *spoke out* in a letter to me, saying that he wished to be located [cease traveling a circuit]. I thought that I had discovered his designs... during the sitting of the General Conference in Baltimore: I am willing that he should belong to the Church people [Church of England]: I believe they have more need of him than the Methodists have. I answered Mr. Lyell, by telling him that I would do what I could to procure him a location at the Boston Conference.³

It was more than "location." The minutes of the 1804 Conference note him as

¹ Sue Ould Marmon and Dorothy Wilber Peers, *Reflections of Faith, A Bicentennial History* (Richmond, VA: Trinity United Methodist Church, 1990), p. 8.

² *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, Vol. II, *The Journal 1794 to 1816*, Elmer T. Clark, Editor-in-chief (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 205.

³ *Ibid*, p. 433.

“withdrawn,” and Asbury’s Journal entry of August 7, 1804 states, “Mr. Lyell has engaged with Mr. Pilmore’s old congregation, at £ 450 a year: so, farewell to Tommy Lyell!”⁴

Subsequent to ministry in the new church in Richmond and prevenient to his “withdrawal” and service at Christ Episcopal Church in New York City, he served as the fourth chaplain of the U. S. House of Representatives having been appointed November 27, 1800. From that observation point he noted that Thomas Jefferson neglected to have a grace prayed at his first official dinner.

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Lyell served Christ Church Episcopal for forty-four years and provided leadership in many education and mission activities of his denomination. He married three times and was survived by his third wife when influenza stilled his body and silenced his voice on March 4, 1848. He was buried in New York in St. Paul’s Episcopal Chapel and Churchyard in the vault of Mr. Barrows.

The Rev. Dr. William Berrian is representative of Thomas Lyell’s many mourners, as with both grand eloquence and sincerity, he described a peace-loving man with a character “as pure as the gold which is refined from its dross; ... he was as warm as the climate and as frank as the manners, of the region in which he was born. In his hospitality, he was as free and open as a Virginian.”⁵ It may have been providence, Francis Asbury, or both, but Thomas Lyell was the right man to start the church that became Trinity United Methodist Church.

⁴ Asbury, p. 439.

⁵ “Christ Church – Rev. Hugh Miller Thompson’s Congregation” (Excerpt from *The Correspondence of John Henry Hobart*), *New York Times*, September 28, 1874, p. 17.

OTHER SOURCES:

“Chaplains of the United States House of Representatives,”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaplain_of_the_House_of_Representatives

Edward Leigh Pell, ed., *A Hundred Years of Richmond Methodism* (Richmond, Va: The Idea Printing Co., undated), pp. 25-27.

Lyon Gardiner Tyler, “Biography of Thomas Lyell,” *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF VIRGINIA BIOGRAPHY*, Vol. II, (New York: Historical Publishing Co., 1915).

Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Vol. 2 (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, Printers, 1840), p. 150.

William W. Bennett, *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia* (Richmond, Va.: published by the author, 1871), pp. 374-376.

REV. MOSES BLACK
Served First Church 1800-1801

Moses Black was born near Charleston, South Carolina in 1770. He was admitted on trial as a Methodist preacher in 1796, was continued on trial in 1797 and was ordained into full connection in 1798.

Accompanying Bishop Francis Asbury, the new circuit rider traveled toward his first appointments in his home state of South Carolina. The bishop noted the crucial assistance provided to him by Rev. Black in his journal entry of March 4, 1796: "I was under some difficulties about getting along, owing to the great rains, which have so raised the water-courses that they are impassable. . . . [But] with deep wading, by the assistance of brother Moses Black, and by the blessing of Providence, we came to father E__'s, . . ." ⁶ With the good opinion of the bishop, partnering with providence, and the experience of serving three appointments in South Carolina – Bladin, Bush River and Broad River, Moses Black was appointed to the new, as yet unnamed, church in Richmond. He served with the Rev. Moses Floyd, who had been admitted on trial to the conference in 1800.

Rev. Black's appointments from 1803 through 1809 were in the Holston District of the Western Conference: five churches in the relative wilderness where the borders of Tennessee and Virginia run together.

Asbury mentions Moses Black in his October 17 journal entry from Tennessee: "...we saw Moses Black and his wife—he about 40, and she 15: such are the wise contracts Methodist preachers sometimes make." ⁷ Asbury's opinion of Moses Black's marriage has a wider context than the obvious question of age difference. Indeed, the latter teen years were considered a marriageable age in that era. Asbury's journal entry of July 19, 1800 expresses his concern: "I found some difficulty in stationing the married preachers." ⁸ Asbury's whimsical observation in the journal entry of January 8, 1806, while not relevant to Black's marriage, is worth noting: "...this [wedding] is a matter of moment, as some men have but one during life, and some find that one to have been one too many." ⁹ The Rev. John G. Jones, in his *History of Methodism* describes the problem of matrimony and itinerancy in the barely tamed wilderness of the early nineteenth century America: "There was a limit to endurance, even for single men, and for those with families to continue going became impossible in the present time, to say nothing of the lack of any provision in the future." ¹⁰ An enthusiastic young itinerant circuit rider, once he wed, often became a local preacher, no longer an itinerant circuit rider. Indeed, Moses Black located at Carter's Valley in the Holston District in 1809.

⁶ *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, Vol. II, *The Journal 1794 to 1816*, Elmer T. Clark, Editor-in-Chief, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 79.

⁷ Asbury, p. 483.

⁸ Asbury, p. 240.

⁹ Asbury, p. 493.

¹⁰ Holland N. McTyeire, *History of Methodism*, Vol. II (Nashville: Publishing House of the M.E. C., South, 1888), p. 465.

However, it might have been health rather than marriage responsibilities that prompted Black's location. The Virginia Conference minutes of 1810 report his death at age 40. Asbury's estimate of his age in 1805 was off by five years. The Minutes record that Moses Black:

. . . died on Carter's Valley Circuit, the 3^d day of February, 1810. He told one of his attendants, (not long before he departed this life,) that he possessed an unshaken confidence in God. Just before he bid the world adieu, he was very restless in consequence of a violent attack of the colic; he requested his friends to move him and open the windows and doors; he then cried out, "Behold! How beautiful everything looks; I shall soon go now." In a few minutes he left the inclement clime of human life, apparently with great peace and tranquility of soul.

It may be said with great propriety that our beloved brother Moses Black is taken from the evil to come; but in a moment death delivered him from all his misery, dispersed the gloom, and opened the bright scenes of eternity to his departed soul.¹¹

It may be wished, also with great propriety, that Moses Black's memory of his tenure at the church that would later be named "Trinity" inspired his inner vision to see "how beautiful everything looks."

¹¹ W. D. Keene Jr., Ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), p. 23.

OTHER SOURCE:

Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Vol. 2 (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, Printers, 1840).

REV. MOSES FLOYD
Served First Church 1800-1801

Moses Floyd's first appointment in 1800, after his admission on trial in the Methodist system, was to the young church in Richmond. He served with Moses Black whose status as on trial plus his tenure in full connection totaled four years and experience at three other appointments in South Carolina suggests that Floyd was possibly an assistant or apprentice to Black.

He was soon on his own, however, as he was sent to the church in the community of Swannanoa, near Asheville, North Carolina, in 1801. In 1802 he served the Green Circuit in the Holston District. His next appointment in 1803 provided a dramatic turn in his career. He headed for Natchez, Mississippi, to serve with the Rev. Tobias Gibson.

Tobias Gibson, referred to by Bishop Asbury as a "faithful fellow-labourer,"¹² had endured a strenuous trek by horseback, canoe and Mississippi river flatboat to be a volunteer circuit rider for the untamed Natchez District. His ministerial duties in this extremely large area were exhausting. After three years he asked Asbury for assistance, as his health was deteriorating. His request was granted in the person of Moses Floyd, who served with Gibson in 1803. Gibson died in April 1804.

In 1887, Rev. John G. Jones wrote a retrospective account of Moses Floyd's ministry:

The settlements soon learned to esteem Mr. Floyd, a man of medium size, rather spare, fair complexion, high forehead, mild and benevolent countenance, soft and agreeable manners, rather feeble preaching voice, with good style and delivery, clear and logical. The burden of the territory fell on him and his already pale face, and failing strength soon told that the burden was more than he could bear.¹³

Failing health notwithstanding, Moses Floyd married Hannah Griffing, daughter in a prominent Methodist family. Because the groom was "evidently falling into bad health, was poor and engaged in a calling which promised but little for the maintenance of a family,"¹⁴ the bride's father opposed the marriage. The marriage occurred without parental consent. "Mr. Floyd looked upon the rule, then in the Discipline, which said, 'Yet even then a Methodist preacher ought not to be married to her that is without the consent of her parents' . . . [as] merely advisory and not mandatory."¹⁵

¹² *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, Vol. II, *The Journal 1794 to 1816*, Elmer T. Clark, Editor-in-Chief (published jointly by Epworth Press, London and Abingdon Press, first published in 1958), p. 9.

¹³ A Complete History of Methodism, Rev. John G. Jones; summarized by Bren Cloud, "Early Southwest Mississippi Territory – Rev. Moses Floyd and Early Families" p. 3. www.natchezelle.org

¹⁴ John Griffing Jones, *A Complete History of Methodism as connected with The Mississippi Conference of the MEC, South*, Vol.1, 1799 to 1817 (Nashville: Publishing House of the MEC, South, 1908). p. 94. <https://books.google.com/books?id=pt.TAAAAMAAJ>

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 95.

The marriage was a subject of heated discussion in the community and church, and the church suffered a decrease in membership. Floyd was briefly suspended from preaching. Without a preaching assignment, he studied medicine and became a practitioner. Reverend Jones provided a doleful characterization of Floyd's life after marriage:

After his marriage his was a life of change, toil, disappointment, and poverty . . . Mr. Floyd, everywhere and in all the trying circumstances of life, maintained his Christian and ministerial character without reproach, and finally died in the Lord. He left his family consisting of his wife, three sons, and two daughters, homeless and penniless. One of his sons died in infancy; the other two lived to middle age, but never married, and both died out of the Church. The oldest son became deranged and finally committed suicide. The daughters grew up . . . and married eligibly. The younger of the two died early in life. The older . . . lived to a good old age, a zealous and consistent Methodist. Mrs. Floyd lived in widowhood and poverty for thirty years after the death of her husband. . . She was dependent on her relatives, and generally lived where it was most convenient for them to provide for her...She finally found a home of peace and plenty with her brother, Rev. James Griffing, of Claiborne County, Mississippi.¹⁶

After his marriage and subsequent issues, he relocated often in the northwest corner of Mississippi and the northeast corner of Louisiana: St. Albans, Prairie Jefferson, Adams County, Pine Ridge, and finally Natchez. He continued some preaching, practicing medicine, farming, and teaching until his death from measles in Natchez in 1814.

Historians other than Rev. John Jones, cited above, have considered the life and ministry of Moses Floyd. W. C. Black in *A Centennial Retrospect: Methodism in Natchez, Mississippi, 1799-1884*, evaluated the life and contributions of Moses Floyd and concluded, "He commanded the respect and confidence of the entire community."¹⁷ Nathan Bangs, in his *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church* opines enthusiastically that Gibson and Floyd "by their patient and indefatigable labors in the newly settled country...laid a foundation for the erection of the superstructure of Methodism, which has since reared itself in those western wilds."¹⁸

¹⁶ Jones, pp. 96-99.

¹⁷ W. C. Black, *A Centennial Retrospect: Methodism in Natchez, Mississippi, 1799-1884*.

¹⁸ Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Vol. 2 (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1840), p.83.

REV. ISAAC NEWTON COOK
Served First Church 1801

Isaac Newton Cook was born September 5, 1774, in Charleston, South Carolina. His parents were Benjamin Cook and Sibble Tyler Cook, natives of Connecticut.¹⁹

As a young man, he was converted and united with the Methodist Church. He was ordained to the ministry in 1801 by Bishop Francis Asbury.²⁰ In that year, he was admitted on trial and stationed at First Church in Richmond with Benjamin Jones. In 1802 he was admitted into full connection, ordained a deacon and assigned to Watkinsville Methodist Church²¹ in Appalachee, Georgia. In 1803 he was assigned to St. Mary's, Georgia. In 1804 he was ordained as an elder and assigned to Oconee, Georgia, with Josias Randle. In 1805 he was assigned a second time to St. Mary's, Georgia. In 1806 he located.²²

Lorenzo Dow, an eccentric itinerant evangelist, whose autobiography was once the second-best-selling book in the United States²³, reported in his journal that he met Cook in 1803. He wrote:

December 3d. I crossed the Altamaha [river in Georgia], and met brother Isaac Cook, who came missionary from conference here [sic], the most dismal, marshy part I ever was in. I found he had good success, though he was not without his enemies; but God, for his indefatigable labors, gave him upwards of a hundred members this year, and he had two meeting-houses erected for the connection.²⁴

During his second service at St. Mary's, on September 5, 1805, he married Rachel Graham. Between 1810 and 1821 they had five children, three of whom died young.²⁵

Cook served in the itinerant ministry for many years, and also served several years from time to time as Presiding Elder.²⁶ When the Mississippi Territory (now the states of Mississippi and Alabama) was opened, Isaac was sent there, and this is where some of his children were born.²⁷ Among his other pastorates were Milledgeville, Georgia; Tallahassee, Florida; and Thomasville, in Thomas County, Georgia. In about 1828 Isaac

¹⁹ <http://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/2:2:S1N5-F31>

²⁰ "Cook Isaac Newton," accessed June 13, 2014, <http://archives.rootsweb.ancestry.com/tb/read/SCROOTS/1999-12/0946427346>.

²¹ <http://www.watkumc.org/about-us/church-history>.

²² *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Years 1773-1828*, Volume 1 (New York: T. Maxon and G. Lane, 1840).

²³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lorenzo_Dow.

²⁴ *The Life, Travels, Labors, and Writings of Lorenzo Dow* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1856).

²⁵ <http://rootsweb.com>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ <http://www.familysearch.org>.

and Rachel settled in Thomasville and spent their last years there, where she died in 1855 and he in 1856 and 1855.²⁸

²⁸ Ibid.

REV. BENJAMIN JONES
Served First Church 1801–1802

Benjamin Jones, a native of South Carolina, was admitted to the Virginia Conference on trial in 1801. His first appointment was to the Richmond circuit, which included First Church, still Richmond's only Methodist house of worship. Isaac Cook, also admitted on trial in 1801, was appointed to serve with him.

Jones then returned to his native state, where he was appointed in 1802 to serve the Oconee Circuit of the South Carolina Conference with Samuel Cowles; the Bush River Circuit with Levi Garrison in 1803; and the Bladen Circuit with Hugh Porter in 1804.

In January 1804, after Jones had been recently appointed to the Bladen Circuit, he died suddenly while traveling. Although he was only about 30 years of age, Jones was described as "subject to apoplexy,"²⁹ which may have contributed to his "untimely and alarming"³⁰ death. In any case, he fell into Brown Marsh near Waccamaw Lake and drowned in two feet of water.

Jones' death was not only mysterious (was it caused by an apoplectic fit or by drowning?) but accompanied by what was described as a "singular circumstance"³¹ in the *Minutes of 1805*. "A person who had travelled with [Jones] some weeks was stopped by the lameness of his horse the day Benjamin Jones died; the same young man filled the station, and his horse only felt or showed his lameness for that day."³² The young man was presumably Hugh Porter.

In *Memoirs*, Jones was described as "Our dear brother, ... a man of signal solemnity of countenance and manners, deeply serious; of a gentle mind and Christian spirit, having always walked as the Christian and minister, and having made himself acceptable to the South Carolina Conference, of which he was a worthy, useful, upright, and holy member."³³

Jones' ministry, while relatively brief, evidently made a favorable impact on Bishop Francis Asbury. When told of Jones' death, Bishop Asbury wrote the following passage in his journal on February 4, 1804:

Brother Benjamin Jones, who had come on Bladen circuit, about ten days back, died upon the road, whether by fits, to which he was subject, or by drowning, we have yet to learn. He was a native of South Carolina, near to Georgetown, a pious, good young man of unblemished life; he had travelled five years, and is

²⁹ *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, Vol. II, *The Journal 1794 to 1816*, Elmer T. Clark Editor-in-Chief (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 424, footnote 12.

³⁰ W. D. Keene Jr., Ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), p. 12.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

now gone to rest. Lord, what is man! Lord, what is life! Let us, let me be also ready!³⁴

³⁴ Asbury, p. 424.



REV. ALEXANDER McCAINE
Served First Church 1802-1803

Alexander McCaine was born February 17, 1773 in Tipperary, Ireland. Upon arriving in America about 1790 in Charleston, South Carolina, he met inspiring Methodist ministers as well as Bishop Asbury. McCaine was admitted on trial in 1797 and continued on trial in 1798. His first appointments were to Broad River in South Carolina and Washington, Georgia. He was accepted into full connection and ordained deacon in 1799 at age 26.

This same year, he was appointed to Norfolk, followed by Huntington; Fells Point, Maryland; and then in 1802 to the Richmond Circuit where he served First Church. This appointment was followed by Greenville on the Norfolk Circuit. In 1804 he was elected presiding elder of the Salisbury, North Carolina District, which was in the Virginia Conference at that time. McCaine served as Asbury's travelling companion at times, and Bishop Asbury's journal in 1804 recorded references to McCaine preaching where Asbury was conducting services. McCaine signed the minutes as secretary when the Virginia Conference met in 1803, 1804 and 1805. He was appointed to Baltimore in 1805 and 1806, and withdrew from the ministry after that.

Rev. McCaine married to Kituel Mezzick Hall in Baltimore in 1805. It is believed that "Mezzick" was her maiden name, thus making this her second marriage. They had three children – Alexander Mezzick, Sarah Ann and Baptist Joshua. He became a widower in 1815. His oldest son and namesake predeceased him by 12 years.

After Kituel's death, McCaine was persuaded to re-enter the ministry – this time in the Philadelphia Conference. An appointment to Trenton, New Jersey in 1818 was followed by an 1819 appointment to Brooklyn in the New York Conference. Though not elected as a delegate to the General Conference in 1820, McCaine, known for his skills and past experience, was elected secretary.

McCaine was deemed as a writer to be "scholarly, clear and forcible, although at times caustic and severe." He was further described as a striking figure with a majestic head and clearly cut features, endowed with great native eloquence. He despised shams and was impetuous in defense of what he thought was the truth; bold to bluntness in dealing with personalities, a characteristic which often laid him open to criticism.³⁵

As division in politics, society and even religion increased in the 1820s-1860s, the Methodist Church fractured into groups favoring slavery or abolition of slavery and

³⁵ Jouett Taylor Prisley, *The Rev. Alexander McCaine, Immigrant* (unpublished, 2005), with grateful acknowledgement to Fred Presley (author's son and four times great grandson of McCaine) for making this material available to us.

organizing under the old episcopal form or other forms seen as more democratic. Many heated debates and pamphlets promoted one side or the other. Even though McCaine had located and was now headmaster of a school for boys in Baltimore, he identified with the Reformers and claimed that the form of organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church had never been sanctified by John Wesley. He wrote two pamphlets – one, *“History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy”* was published in 1827. Rev. Nathan Bangs wrote:

A pamphlet had been issued, as was erroneously supposed at the time under the sanction of the Union Society,³⁶ by Rev. Alexander M’Caine, in which he attempted to prove that surreptitious means had been used in the establishment of our Church; that our episcopacy was spurious, gotten up against the wishes and without the knowledge of Mr. Wesley — thus impugning the motives and impeaching the honesty of such men as Coke, Asbury, Whatcoat, and all those venerable men who composed the General Conference of 1784, and assisted in the organization of our Church.³⁷

McCaine would be tried, found guilty of publishing this work that went against the doctrine of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and suspended from the Church in 1827.

The General Conference held in May 1828 rejected “all petitions of the Reformers.” Thus convinced “that there was no chance at conciliation . . . the Reformers began to withdraw to form separate congregations.”³⁸ McCaine remained active in the Reform movement and in May 1829 when a group from Virginia met in Lynchburg to organize a conference, they elected McCaine president. The Reformers established the Methodist Protestant Church November 2, 1830, at a General Conference in Baltimore. The most noticeable differences between the two denominations at that time were that the newly organized church allowed for a president instead of a bishop and for lay delegates to their conference.

³⁶ Union Societies were local organizations formed to advocate for reform of the Church.

³⁷ Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Vol. 2, (New York: T. Mason & G. Lane, 1840), pp. 404-405.

³⁸ William Warren Sweet, *Virginia Methodism, A History* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1955), p. 185.

It was not until April 1939, almost 109 years later, that the denominations would be brought together again when the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church united to form The Methodist Church.

At some unknown point in time, McCaine relocated to Hillabee, Talladega County, Alabama, where he engaged in mining and farming. A staunch anti-abolitionist, he owned 15 slaves at the time of his death. He left the Hillabee property to his surviving son, Baptist Joshua, but as the property was believed to contain valuable minerals, his will made provision for the disposition of profits from same should it occur.

For about the last year of his life, Rev. McCaine was living with his daughter, Sarah Ann, and her husband, James Mulcahy Brett, in Augusta, Georgia, where he died in 1856. He is buried in Magnolia Cemetery, Augusta



REV. CURTIS WILLIAMS
Served First Church 1803-1804

Curtis Williams is one of the ministers for whom there is little information. Possibly born around 1775, he lived during a time of revolution and change in America. As the new democracy was forming, Rev. Williams served as an itinerant preacher in the Maryland and Virginia areas. From the few surviving records, we know that in 1795 he was on trial for the Methodist Episcopal Church and rode the Baltimore Circuit. In the last year of George Washington's presidency, 1796, Williams became a deacon in full connection.

For the Baltimore Methodist Episcopal Church, he rode the Berkley Circuit with Frederick Curp, under Joshua Wells, elder; and in Lancaster with Morris Howe and again under Joshua Wells, elder. Rev. Williams served as a deacon in Fairfax and Alexandria from 1797 to 1798 with Daniel Hitt and Thomas Lyell, under Philip Bruce, presiding elder.

The following year, 1799, Rev. Williams took up the Rockingham Circuit and then in 1800 he rode the Federal Circuit with Thomas Lyell and J. Shane, under Christopher Spry, presiding elder³⁹. He returned to the Baltimore Circuit in 1801 with John Pitts, under Wilson Lee, presiding elder. In 1802, Rev. Williams found himself in Frederick with Fielder Parker, Henry Willis and Jonathan Forrest, under Wilson Lee, Presiding Elder⁴⁰. Francis Asbury commented on this particular ministry in his Journal: "I rejoiced to find the work of God spreading and growing in Frederick Circuit, under the ministry of Curtis Williams and Fielding Parker" (Thursday 12, 1802)⁴¹. This ministry is also mentioned in a short biography of Henry Willis⁴².

Rev. Williams came to Richmond in 1803 and served in the Virginia Conference under Daniel Hall, presiding elder.⁴³ In Richmond, First Church fell within his itinerant preaching circuit. Finally, in 1805, Rev. Williams located to the Baltimore Conference because of ". . . bodily weakness or family concerns"⁴⁴.

He died January 14, 1824.

³⁹ T. Mason and G. Lane, *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Years 1773-1828, Volume 1, 1840.*

⁴⁰ Lane, p. 105.

⁴¹ Lane & Scott, *Journal of Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1852.* Note that the only month in 1802 that had its 12th day on a Thursday was August.²

⁴² Rev. Edwin Warriner, *Old Sands Street Methodist Episcopal Church of Brooklyn, N. Y. - An Illustrated Centennial Record, Historical and Biographical, Phillips & Hunt, 1885, pp. 75-77.*

⁴³ Lane, p. 111.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

REV. PETER B. DAVIS
Served First Church 1804-1805

Born in 1771 in Gloucester County, Virginia, Peter Davis was orphaned by the age of five. At the young age of 15, he was inspired to enter the Methodist ministry by the Rev. Thomas Fleming. For a while he was a member of the Baptist Church, but returned to his roots and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Although he felt "it was his duty to 'call sinners to repentance,'"⁴⁵ he resisted this calling and worked for a time in business in Richmond County. However, he still felt the presence of God drawing him to ministry, but still attempted to avoid this guidance from above and began a journey to Kentucky. On his way he fell ill and was taken in by a Methodist friend in Frederick County. The friend helped nurse him back to health. Continuing to disobey the will of the Lord and needing funds, he took up business in Frederick County until he fell ill almost to the point of death. While gravely sick he vowed to God that if healed he would cease to "confer with flesh and blood"⁴⁶ but would join the ministry and bring "glad tidings of salvation."⁴⁷

Rev. Davis kept his promise, and in May 1799 he was admitted on trial at the Baltimore Methodist Episcopal Conference. He first served in the Alleghany Circuit (1799) and later went on to found circuits in western Pennsylvania and Ohio, including Shenango (1800), Federal (1801), Clarksburg (1802) and Montgomery (1803), the latter circuits in present day West Virginia. Davis faced the struggles of living in the American frontier. His obituary recounts a story of his losing his horse and being unable to pay off his debt for the purchase of a new one, he despaired that his reputation would be surely ruined. One day upon passing by the post office. He discovered that a friend from his previous circuit had sent money to help him settle in the new area. He always remembered this event and used it as a means to illustrate the scripture, "The Lord will provide."⁴⁸

In 1804 Rev. Davis transferred from the Baltimore Conference to the Virginia Conference and was a delegate to General Conference that year. His ministry included time spent at First Church in Richmond (1804) and in Gloucester (1805). He married Peggy Mann in 1805 and settled in King and Queen County, where he continued his ministry as a local preacher until his death following a short illness.

He died September 25, 1824 at the age of 53. The last words he uttered to his friend Rev. Hezekiah McLelland were, "Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife, and let me languish into life," and then finally, "Tell me, my soul, can this be death."⁴⁹

⁴⁵ "OBITUARY, Death of the Rev. Peter B. Davis," *The Methodist Magazine*, Vol. VIII (New York: N. Bangs and J. Emory, Methodist Printing Office, 1825), p.119. Digitized by Google.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid and Genesis 22:14 (KJV).

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 120.

REV. HUMPHREY WOOD
Served First Church 1805-1806

The Rev. Humphrey Wood served First Church in 1805-1806 as part of the Richmond-Hanover-Williamsburg Circuit, of which he was preacher in charge. This appointment was part of a ministry that spanned more than 40 years in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was a member of the Virginia Conference for more than 20 years.

Wood was born in Pasquotank County, North Carolina. Although the exact date of his birth is not known, his name appears on the Pasquotank census as early as 1767. A Virginia Conference Sentinel tribute dated November 1836 and written at the time of his death noted that he was born to pious parents and instructed from an early age in the doctrines of the church.⁵⁰

Wood was ordained on trial in 1795, as deacon in 1796 or 1797, in full connection in 1797, and as elder in 1799. He traveled as an itinerant preacher and served various churches in Virginia and North Carolina until 1815.

At the Conference held in Lynchburg in February 1815, Wood was placed on location. He soon married, settling in Beaufort County, North Carolina. He died there on October 6, 1836, leaving behind his wife and two children.

According to the Virginia Conference Sentinel, Francis Asbury ordained Wood both as deacon and as elder. Asbury notes in his journals that he traveled with Humphrey Wood in March of 1804 and dined in the home of Wood's mother. Wood was a delegate from the Virginia Conference to the May 1804 General Conference in Baltimore; Bishop Asbury was also present as a president of that General Conference.⁵¹

As preacher in charge of the circuit that included First Church, Wood was assisted by Joshua Wilkerson Kilpatrick, who had just been accepted on trial.

The writer of Wood's tribute in the Virginia Conference Sentinel describes Wood as a "good divine" who brought words of life and salvation to his listeners, even though he was "not fluent in speech." Wood was known for preaching about the love of God and for proclaiming, "God is Love." This message was no doubt one he brought to the pulpit of First Church in 1805.

⁵⁰ *The Virginia Conference Sentinel*, November 11, 1836, Vol. 1, Number 36 (Richmond, VA: Published by W. A. Smith, M. Brock and J. Early, Leroy M. Lee, Editor), Letter by G.N.G.

⁵¹ *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, Vol. II, *The Journal 1794 to 1816*, Elmer T. Clark, Editor-in-Chief, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 427.



REV. JOSHUA WILKERSON KILPATRICK
Served First Church 1805–1806

Joshua Kilpatrick was born on April 7, 1782 in Iredell County, North Carolina. His family was of Scottish descent, and the family name was originally spelled Kirkpatrick. He was brought up Presbyterian. His father, Andrew Kilpatrick, was one of the ruling elders of his church. When Joshua was young, he lost his mother, Jane Nichols Kilpatrick, a lovely and faithful, intelligent and amicable woman. His father was devastated by the death of his wife, causing him to be deeply depressed. As a result, this depression affected the quality of education that Joshua and his brothers received. As a young adult, Joshua enjoyed his earthly pleasures. Although he did not openly sin or get drunk, he was social and loved to be entertained.

A revival in 1800 changed him forever. Although it did not come without inner struggle and discomfort, Joshua finally and happily converted to become a faithful servant of Christ, turning away from youthful indulgences. He soon heard a calling to preach the Gospel at a time when itinerant Methodist preachers were attracting attention in his part of North Carolina. In the new “Arminianism” doctrine, anyone who had faith in Jesus would be saved. This was quite a departure from the familiar Calvinistic message in which people were either saved or not, and they could not change their destiny. Mr. Kilpatrick had been learning from the Rev. Mark Whittaker, a Methodist, and felt convinced by the new doctrine. He decided to devote his life to the message.

His adoption of Methodism was a huge disappointment to his Presbyterian brethren, particularly his family. They persecuted and ostracized him, but he was never swayed or tempted to change back. He remained steadfast in his beliefs.

Kilpatrick was admitted into the Virginia Conference and served on trial in 1805 and 1806. He was received in full connection and ordained deacon by Bishop Asbury in 1807. His first appointment in 1805 was to the Richmond-Hanover-Williamsburg Circuit, which included First Church. He served as a junior preacher under Humphrey Wood. The next year he and Wood were appointed to the Cumberland Circuit. In 1807, he served the Mecklenburg, North Carolina, and in 1808, the Salisbury, North Carolina Circuits.

Rev. Kilpatrick married Sally Hobson of Cumberland County, Virginia, in January 1809. He located and lived in Virginia until December 1809 when they moved to North Carolina. In the winter of 1811 to 1812, Kilpatrick emigrated to Maury County, Tennessee, where he and his family settled.

Prior to his marriage, Kilpatrick travelled and preached a great deal. However, between 1809 and 1823 he did not work in circuits or perform regular work in the ministry, but he did work hard in other capacities. He promoted revivals, organized groups and evangelized. He was among the first preachers who worked alongside “colored people” in his mission work. He had a tendency to decline prominent positions and instead took

jobs among the poor and destitute – the type of work about which he felt most passionate. In 1823, Kilpatrick was readmitted into the itinerancy, circu

In December 1834, he and his family moved from Tennessee to LaGrange, Alabama, where he served the Franklin Circuit and also organized and supplied the Courtland colored Mission. He located in the fall of 1837 and moved his family to Monroe County, Mississippi, an area within the bounds of the Alabama Conference. Shortly thereafter, Rev. Kilpatrick became a local preacher again. He was skilled at preaching in a way that did not attack anyone's belief. He simply preached the truth, "as it is in Jesus,"⁵² according to the Methodist doctrines. He succeeded in spreading the Good News and brought many people into the church. He had plans to offer his services to the Alabama Conference at its next session, but was unable to fulfill his plans.

In September 1839, he helped a neighbor whose property was being destroyed by a fire. Unfortunately, this intense physical effort brought on a fever that led to his death in October 1839 at his home in Monroe County, Mississippi. He is buried in Verona Cemetery, Verona, Mississippi. His final illness prevented him from delivering a scheduled sermon at a nearby camp meeting.

Rev. Kilpatrick was described as of stout frame and "his carriage firm, his manners gentle, and his conduct grave and ministerial. In the pulpit, he was often a preacher of great power, and was instrumental in many gracious revivals of religion."⁵³

⁵² John B. M'Ferrin, *History of Methodism in Tennessee*, Vol. III, 1818 to 1840 (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1873). pp. 260.

http://archive.org/stream/27325095.516.emory.edu/27325095_516_djvu.txt

⁵³ Ibid, p. 262.

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"Find A Grave Memorial # 27173352", created by Jonathan Phillips, record added May 28, 2008.