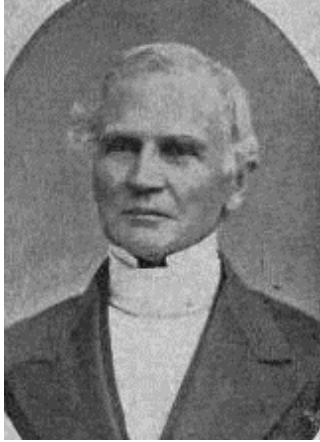


REV. DR. WILLIAM ANDREW SMITH
Served Trinity 1830–1831 and 1836–1838

Rev. William Andrew Smith served Trinity twice. His full profile appears chronologically at the time of his first appointment from 1830 to 1831.

He returned in 1836 after the second building caught fire in 1835 and the failing health of Dr. Leroy Maidson Lee left Lee unable to see rebuilding through to completion. On August 28, 1836, Rev. Smith oversaw the dedication of the third building, described in the Daily Dispatch as “an ornament to the city.” He was reappointed and served Trinity until 1838.



REV. WILLIAM BROOKING ROWZIE
Served Trinity 1838–1839

Sharing a birthday with George Washington surely seems an illustrious beginning to anyone's life, and if Rev. William Brooking Rowzie's life and career are any indication, it served him well. Rev. Rowzie was born February 22, 1806 near the Rappahannock River in Essex County, Virginia. He was the oldest son of John and Matilda Sale Rowzie's nine children. His family was moderately well-off, and Rowzie attended the local school where he studied English, geography, arithmetic and geometry. His religious education began at home and was broadened by his attendance at the Protestant Episcopal Church. At the age of 17, Rowzie became acquainted with the Methodist ministry through his association with Dr. William I. Waller and Reverends Robert Wilkerson and William S. Peyton, all three of whom traveled the Hanover Circuit.

On July 3, 1826, Rowzie converted to Methodism and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. To put Rowzie's life in historical perspective and further associate it with the founding fathers, it is interesting to note that his conversion took place the day before both Thomas Jefferson and John Adams passed away. Right away, Rowzie began holding prayer meetings for his friends and neighbors, urging them "to abandon sin, and turn to Christ."¹ So it seems only natural that three years later, in February of 1829, at the age of 23, Rowzie was received on probation into the Virginia Annual Conference and began service on the Gloucester Circuit. Over the course of his ministry, Rowzie would travel many circuits and occupy many stations and important positions, including his appointment to Trinity Church from 1838 to 1839. In addition to Gloucester, Rowzie's early appointments in the Virginia Conference included the Culpeper, Prince Edward, Chesterfield, Mecklenburg and Charlotte Circuits. He served the Randolph-Macon station in 1837 before his Trinity appointment.

Not known as an intellectual or a speaker of exceeding eloquence and high rhetoric, Rowzie drew people in with his earnestness. His sincerity and plain manner of speaking made him accessible to his congregations, and he witnessed many spontaneous conversions while preaching the Methodist doctrine. People looked up to him as a model of moral principle and Christian character and were moved in his presence to devote themselves more fully to God. Physically, Rowzie was described as being "of stately presence, with a chiseled face, and a certain kindness and gravity of expression, while his voice, measuring words of wisdom, adds to the noble figure."²

Rev. Rowzie, having only a basic education himself, was devoted to the cause of higher education for men and women. When Randolph-Macon opened in 1830, he had the distinction of serving as the first chaplain and was described as "a man who was as complete a model of the Methodist minister as could be found, William B. Rowzie, a walking, living epistle of Christ, 'known and read

¹ John J. Lafferty, *Sketches of the Virginia Conference Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Richmond, Va.: Christian Advocate Office, 1880) p. 18.

² Ibid, p. 17.

of all men.' One better than he could not have been found to inaugurate the religious life of the college."³

For 14 years, Rev. Rowzie served as a trustee of Randolph Macon College and for many years also served as a financial agent. In addition, he put much time, effort and finance into the sustenance of the Buckingham Collegiate Female Institute as well as the Wesleyan Female College in Murfreesboro, North Carolina, where he also served as agent. When, in 1846, he resigned as agent for Randolph-Macon, it was noted: "A better friend the College never had."⁴

In 1847, Rowzie became a presiding elder and served the Petersburg District followed by the Lynchburg and Fredericksburg Districts. After an interval as agent at Wesleyan Female College from 1858 to 1861, he spent the Civil War years as presiding elder on the Danville and Alexandria Districts. Rev. Rowzie returned to traveling the circuit in his later years of ministry.

Rowzie was first married to Mary Ann Campbell, daughter of William and Ann Woolfolk Campbell. He later married Emma Jane Taylor, daughter of William D. Taylor and Annie Matilda Durant of Sussex. That wedding took place at Coman's Well, Sussex, Virginia, December 20, 1855.

In 1884, after 54 years of service to God, Rev. William Rowzie retired from the Virginia Conference. He spent his final years among friends, preaching occasionally. On June 3, 1888, while visiting family and friends in the region of his birthplace, Rowzie passed away and was interred in his family's burial ground.

³ Richard Irby (AB 1844), *History of Randolph-Macon College* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, undated), p.161.

⁴ Ibid, p. 104.

OTHER SOURCES:

Sussex County, Va. Genealogy and History website: http://genealogytrails.com/vir/sussex/news_marriages.html

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

Website: <http://www.genealogy.com/forum/surnames/topics/rowzee/194/>

REV. THOMAS CROWDER
Served Trinity 1839-1941

Thomas Crowder was born in Wake County, North Carolina, in 1798 to parents he described in an autobiographical sketch as respectable, pious members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. They endeavored to raise their numerous children "...in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

¹ Although they lacked the resources to give them the liberal education Thomas desired, he wrote, "They did what they could." ² Thomas realized he would have to do the rest. He worked for his father during the day but took on extra jobs at night to earn the money he needed to attend high school and acquire a classical education. At age 18, he began school in Raleigh where he decided to pursue law as a profession.

While there, he read the Scriptures and listened to preaching that caused him to become troubled about his spiritual condition. This concern culminated in his own version of wrestling with Jacob's angel. On the night of October 19, 1819, after a solitary spiritual struggle in his room between midnight and daybreak, he experienced a conversion.

It was another 12 months, however, before he completely surrendered to this spiritual awakening. He then abandoned his law studies and decided it was his duty to preach the Gospel. This decision was painful, because he knew he would have to give up the education and ambitions he had so long sought. He felt unworthy of his calling and stated, "It haunted me by day and by night. Oh, what anguish did I feel? I said I was unworthy, unable, unprepared, afflicted, and a hundred other things. I got no rest, however, until I reluctantly consented to go and try." ³

Try he did. In 1821 he was recommended to the Virginia Annual Conference, where he was received as a probationary traveling preacher. He traveled extensively, and for 30 plus years was described by his peers and followers as an earnest, successful preacher. In "Memorials of Methodism in Virginia" the Rev. William W. Bennett, D.D. wrote: "As a pastor he was excelled by none; as a disciplinarian he was strict but kind; in his preaching he was close, searching and practical... his sermons were delivered with such fervor as to give them a direct path to the hearts of his hearers. He was a man of great purity of character... he gathered thousands of souls to his ministry..."⁴

During his ministry, Rev. Crowder was a five-time delegate from Virginia to the General Conference and one of nine representatives from Virginia to the Louisville Convention that established the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in May 1845. He was an enthusiastic contributor to the Christian Sentinel newsletter and in 1836 wrote extensively on the issues surrounding ministerial education.

The churches he served included Portsmouth (1829, 1835 to 1836) and Trinity, Richmond (1839 to 1841). In addition, he was presiding elder Norfolk from 1845 to 1848, and Charlottesville from

¹ W. D Keene, Jr., Ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987*, (Decorah, Iowa: The Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), pp. 118-119.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ William W. Bennett, *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia* (Richmond, Va.: published by the author, 1871). pp. 671-672.

1850 to 1851. The last two appointments would have been under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. While in Charlottesville, he became ill with liver disease but would not abandon his calling. At the end, it was noted that even in his delirium, he prayed aloud. Rev. Thomas Crowder went to his eternal rest in December 1852.

The following tribute is etched on his gravestone in Blandford Cemetery, Petersburg, Virginia:

*Here rest the remains of the Rev. Thomas Crowder
For 31 years a member of the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church
Born in Wake Co. N.C. Sept. 20, 1798
Died in Charlottesville, Va. Dec. 3, 1852
Servant of God well done
Rest from thy loved employ
The battle fought, the victory won
Enter thy Master's joy
Erected by the brethren of the Virginia Conference⁵*

⁵ Find A Grave Memorial #28516937, created by Mandy G. Record added: July 25, 2008.

REV. WILLIAM IRA WALLER
Served Trinity 1841–1842

Rev. William Ira Waller served Trinity from 1841 to 1842. He had an unusual and eventful life, as a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Protestant Episcopal Church, president of Shelby College and Observatory in Shelbyville, Kentucky, and even a medical doctor at some point in his life. He also seemed to have a penchant for causing controversy, evidenced by actions in both the Virginia Conference and the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Waller was born in Henry County, Virginia, January 5, 1799, the son of Carr Waller and Elizabeth Martin Waller. The Waller family traced its roots back to colonial Virginia and had settled in King William County. As an adult, Carr Waller moved to Henry County where he raised his family. No records exist of William's childhood or education.

In 1825 Waller joined the Virginia Conference on trial and served initially in Culpeper, Virginia. In 1826 he served the Washington-Plymouth, North Carolina, charge, which was then part of the Virginia Conference. In 1827 he was ordained a deacon and served in Murfreesborough, North Carolina. He moved to Petersburg, Virginia, in 1828.

In 1829 he was ordained elder and moved to serve in Lynchburg, Virginia, where he met and married Maria Louisa Norvall. He then served Shockoe Hill, the predecessor church of Centenary, in Richmond followed by the church in Bedford, Virginia.

In 1832 the Wallers relocated to Little Rock, Arkansas, and remained there until 1836 when they returned to serve again at Shockoe Hill. Two of the Waller children were born in Arkansas.

It is not known why Waller moved to Arkansas. One can speculate that he might have studied medicine and gained his medical license at this time. Also, he could have had medical training prior to his ministry. In 18th century America, one did not attend a medical school but worked alongside an experienced doctor and learned the skill from this mentor. It is noted in several documents, especially when he became president of Shelby College, that he was a medical doctor.

After again serving at Shockoe Hill in 1838, Waller served in Portsmouth and Norfolk before returning to Richmond to serve Trinity in 1841. After leaving Trinity, he returned to Portsmouth and then in 1842 he was reassigned to Shockoe Hill and was pastor there when the church building was sold to a German Lutheran congregation. The Methodist congregation relocated and built Centenary Methodist Church on Grace Street near 5th in downtown Richmond where it is located today.

Waller was the last of seven former Trinity ministers who were on the first board of trustees for Randolph-Macon College, which at that time was located in Boydton, Virginia. This group first met on April 9, 1830.

In 1844 Waller moved to Kentucky and was ordained in the Protestant Episcopal Church. It is not known whether he served a Kentucky church, but in 1847 he became the president and a professor at Shelby College and Observatory, a small liberal arts college in Shelbyville, Kentucky, that was controlled by the Episcopal Church. He was the lead member of a five-person faculty

and listed as “Rev. Wm I. Waller, M. D., President and Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy and Natural Science.”¹

In 1861, while still president of Shelby College, Rev. Waller organized the St. Mark’s Episcopal Mission as a distinct organization for local African Americans. St. Mark’s became the first Episcopal Church founded for Louisville African Americans and was a center for local education for African Americans after the Civil War. He served as president of Shelby College until his retirement in 1868.

The records indicate that Waller was one who stirred up controversy.

The Report of Debates for the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held in New York City in 1844, contains an eight-page accounting of a controversy that occurred when a supporter of Waller’s placed a “memorial” (in this usage meaning a position paper) on the General Conference president’s desk that took to task the Virginia Conference and the Virginia *Christian Advocate* for their position on the matter of baptizing children of non-members. Nowhere in the report is Waller’s position or the position of the Virginia Conference on this subject stated. Much debate and rancor and many parliamentary moves on the issue occupied the conference attendees’ time. Waller caused a great stir among his fellow ministers despite being absent from the conference. Waller left the Virginia Conference that year for Kentucky and the Episcopal ministry. Was there a correlation between these two events? The Report of Debates does not provide the ultimate outcome of the controversy.

Rev. Leroy Lee, the editor of the Virginia *Christian Advocate* stated during this debate that, “He had become so accustomed to having charges from Dr. Waller preferred against him before the Virginia Conference that he went there annually expecting to meet them.”²

The minutes of the Virginia Annual Conference held in Portsmouth, Virginia, November 16-23, 1898 (19 years after Waller’s death) state:

Within the Conference were the Waller troubles. Dr. Waller was a good man, with a facility for getting into difficulties with leading members of the stations he served. Hence there were complaints against him, and though he was in a minority he had a following.³

The report does not state the nature of the difficulties, but it is interesting that the Waller troubles were being discussed almost two decades after his death. Despite these controversies, Waller may have been espousing needed changes and improvements in Methodism. And, he seems to have been a man of faith and talent. The following commendation is quoted in Lafferty’s *Sketches of the Virginia Conference*, probably about 1901:

(Dr. William I. Waller) . . . was a man of decided talent, and considerable attainments, and an interesting preacher. His colloquial powers were of a high order. One of his

¹ Kentucky Illustrated the First Hundred Years, Martin Schmidt (The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky 40508-4008, 1992), p. 122

² Report of Debates in the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in the City of New York, 1844; by Robert Athow West, Official Reporter, p. 10.

³ Minutes of the One Hundred Sixteenth Session of the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, held at Portsmouth, Va., November 16-23, 1898, p.54.

chief characteristics was the interest he manifested in the young men of the country. His fine social habits, and his edifying discourse very greatly attached them to him, and were instrumental in his leading many to Christ.⁴

Waller also appears to have supported Shelby College financially out of his own pocket. In 1855 in the Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, financing is documented for the College with the notation that: “. . . and when the (payment) may be received, (it is to be applied) to the payment of the ascertained indebtedness of the said College (Shelby), to the said Dr. William I. Waller. . . .”⁵

Rev. Waller and his wife, Maria, had eight children. He died April 21, 1879, in Louisville where he lived after his retirement. He is buried in the Grove Hill Cemetery in Shelbyville beside his wife, who died July 8, 1874.

⁴ John J. Lafferty, *Sketches of the Virginia Conference Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1880), pp. 17-18.

⁵ Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, December 31, 1955 (Frankfort, KY: A. G. Hodges, State Printer), p. 277.

OTHER SOURCES:

W. Asbury Christian, D.D., *Richmond Her Past and Present* (Richmond, Va.: Manufactured by L. H. Jenkins, 1912), p. 147.

The Illustrated History of St. James Episcopal Church, founded 1858, Third & Main Streets, Shelbyville, KY.

Gerald L. Smith, Karen Cotton McDaniel, & John A. Hardin, editors, *Kentucky African American Encyclopedia* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2015).

Martin F. Schmidt, *Kentucky Illustrated the First Hundred Years* (Lexington, KY: The University Press, 1992), p. 122.

REV. ISAAC A. WILLIS
Served Trinity 1841-1842

Isaac Willis was among the many early ministers who served Trinity Church. He was also among the lesser known ones as his ministry was cut short by an untimely death at age 30. The following insight into his brief life and ministry was recorded in his memoir from the conference annual minutes:

Isaac A. Willis was born in Orange County, Virginia, July 6, 1816. His parents were respectable and pious members of the Baptist Church. He was awakened and converted, under the ministry of the Rev. David Wood, in the year 1837, and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. Shortly afterwards he became impressed that it was his duty to preach the Gospel, and was admitted as a traveling preacher at the Conference at Edenton in 1839. In 1841 he was ordained a deacon, and in 1843 an elder in the Church of God. He labored with great zeal and diligence, and with much success, on the several circuits and stations to which he was appointed.

Brother Willis was a young man of more than ordinary capacity; his judgment sound, his imagination brilliant, and his elocution easy. But his power lay in his piety. From a heart burning with love there came forth words of fire. His preaching was with the demonstration and power of the Holy Ghost.

At the Conference of 1845 his health was found so feeble that he was given no appointment. His disease was thought to be pulmonary consumption. As he approached his end, he professed a firm unwavering confidence in God, and was heard to say, more than once, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."¹ Almost without a struggle or groan, at the house of his mother, in the county of Culpeper, Virginia, he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus on the last day of April 1846.²

¹ 1 Samuel 3:18 (KJV).

²² *Virginia Conference Annual Minutes*, 1846, "Memoirs," pp. 110-111.



REV. JOSEPH HOOMES DAVIS
Served Trinity 1842-1844

On April 13, 1809, a son was born to Mary Hoomes Davis and Rev. William Edwards Davis at Oak Lawn in Gloucester County, Virginia. He was named Joseph Hoomes Davis. Later he was joined by four siblings - Anna A. Davis, Williams T. Davis, Martha S. Davis and Elizabeth L. Davis. Through the pious example of his parents, Joseph was focused on religious truth to the extent that at age 14 he was converted to God at a camp meeting and connected himself with the Methodist Episcopal Church.

His 1833 marriage to Martha F. Beale was brief because she died young. They had one son, Robert Davis. After Martha's death, her sister, Anne T. Beale, cared for Robert, and in 1838 Anne and Joseph married. Together they raised Robert and their four children.

Martha's death led him to reflect more deeply on God's purpose for his life and the need for complete devotion. Rev. Davis's call to ministry returned with greater urgency. While he was wrestling with a decision, the presiding elder of the Baltimore Conference asked him to fill an appointment. He saw the request as providential and accepted it, a decision that set the course of his life. At the close of his first sermon, a number of penitents presented themselves at prayer and several professed faith in Christ.

Within two months Rev. Davis was licensed to preach and recommended to the Virginia Conference. He was received on trial in February 1836. Davis was ordained deacon in 1838 and elder in 1840. Thus, he became a fourth-generation Methodist preacher following in the footsteps of his father, grandfather and great-grandfather Davis. From this point "through nearly half a century," until his death, "he devoted himself with unfaltering energy to the service of Christ. He received forty-four appointments from the bishop, without interference or murmur."¹

Davis served Trinity Church, Richmond from 1842 to 1844, during the first year of which he was assisted by John Newland Maffitt. It was at this time that Trinity embarked on what appears to have been its first charitable endeavor – Wesley mission on 17th Street.

Rev. Davis was elected as a delegate to the General Conference in 1850, 1858 and 1862. He was presiding elder for 16 years on the Randolph-Macon, Charlottesville, Fredericksburg and Rappahannock Districts. Author Rev. D. G. C. Butts related the following incident that occurred in 1873:

Brother Joseph H. Davis, Presiding Elder of the Rappahannock District had to go up the Potomac River to Washington on a day boat from Nomini River, and then take the night boat to Norfolk in order to reach the seat of Conference. The day boat, having been delayed by heavy freight, arrived in Washington Tuesday night, November 25th after the departure of the boat, 'Lady of the Lake,' for Norfolk. Consequently Bro. Davis did not arrive at the old Cumberland Street Church, where the Conference was in session, till

¹ W. D. Keene Jr., ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), pp. 163-164.

the morning of Thursday, the second day. When the Bishop called Bro. Davis's name he remarked: "You are late getting in, Bro. Davis." The dear old man explaining his tardiness, said, "I was left in Washington, Bishop, by the Lady of the Lake." The Bishop replied with a smile with those keen eyes almost closed: "And you are not the only man who has gotten left in that city by a lady." Bro. Davis sat down in sublime unconsciousness of the humor of the thrust, and the conference laughed till the gavel called for quiet.²

Rev. Davis was president of Wesleyan Female College, Murfreesboro, North Carolina, for five years. One year, he was associated with his professor brother, Williams, in the presidency of the Southern Female College, Petersburg, Virginia.

Williams Davis was married to a third Beale sister, Elizabeth, which made for a close-knit family. Joseph's wife, Anne Beale, inherited the family home, Hickory Hill, in Westmoreland County from her mother, Martha Turberville Beale, who had inherited it from her Turberville grandfather.

Rev. Davis was described as:

Conscientious, diligent, faithful and honest, yet tender and sympathizing, he leaves us an example worthy of all admiration and imitation. As a friend, he was true and trustworthy, and his gentle and truly gentlemanly manners and wise counsels in the family circle left over a blessing in the homes he visited. Our beloved brother was truly a man of God, and the deeds of his heroic and noble life are a rich legacy to the Church, and a cherished heritage to his family.³

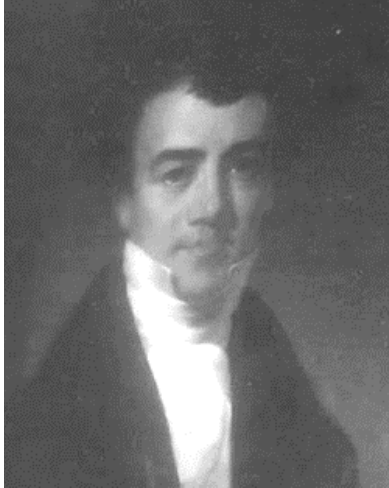
Joseph Hoomes Davis died May 8, 1879 and is buried in Hickory Hill Cemetery, Westmoreland County, Hague, Virginia.

² D. G. C. Butts, *From Saddle to City by Buggy, Boat, and Railway*. 1922, p. 47.

³ Keene, p. 164.

OTHER SOURCES:

Find A Grave Memorial #32406075, created by Candace-Young-Mayo, Dec. 26, 2008; maintained by: dwhitt.
Virginia Kennedy, "Old Trinity," Richmond Newspaper (paper and date unknown), 1940, Trinity Archives.



REV. JOHN NEWLAND MAFFITT, SR.
Served Trinity 1842-1843

If there was ever a good reason to have a time machine, it would be to go back and hear Rev. John Newland Maffitt speak to a congregation of thousands. To feel the palpable excitement and energy in the room, to see the people overcome with renewed devotion to God and to be inspired to spend the next day and every day thereafter striving to be a better disciple of Jesus would be a sight to behold. Rev. Maffitt was known far and wide for his oratory skills and dramatic presentation. He regularly converted dozens at a time, from doubters and criminals to upstanding citizens and people from all classes and regions of the country. Contemporary accounts show that Maffitt had a theatrical bent, high energy and impressive elocutionary skills. These, combined with his devotion to God, made Maffitt well-equipped to embark on a great adventure as a traveling preacher, visiting almost every state constituting the Union at that time.

Rev. Maffitt was born December 28, 1794 in Dublin, Ireland. Though not initially planning to enter the ministry, Maffitt underwent a change of heart and a religious awakening at age 19. At the same age, he married Ann Carnick, and against the wishes of both Ann and his mother, he joined the Methodist ministry. He was a man with a dynamic and dramatic personality. In his youthful innocence and zeal, he would go out and preach in small Irish fishing villages which were sometimes unprepared and caught off guard by his visits and subsequent orations. At that time, Methodism was still new to many people and was sometimes rejected before it was adopted. Rev. Maffitt was often conflicted about how best to go about his ministry.

In 1819, Maffitt's brother William approached him with an idea. William was a doctor in the nearby town of Bray and was interested in going to America. Maffitt decided to take him up on the offer and together they set off on an adventure of a lifetime aboard the ship *Standard*. It was a journey replete with storms, St. Elmo's fire and stops on exotic islands, and the brothers were glad when they made it safely to New York.

Maffitt and his wife already had two children at the time of his emigration and were expecting a third. Soon after Maffitt arrived in New York, Ann Carnic Maffitt set off from Ireland to follow her husband, and their third child was born en route. Named after his father, he later became a famous Confederate naval captain in the Civil War.

Maffitt struggled at first to find his place in the American Methodist ministry. He did not stay long in New York and moved on to join the New England Conference. He rode various circuits in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire from 1822 until 1831, when he withdrew from the conference. The 1830s were a time of great popularity for Maffitt. It is possible he was divorced from his wife during this time, and she moved to Texas. His daughter, Henrietta, became the wife of Mirabeau B. Lamar, second President of the Republic of Texas.

Rev. Maffitt regularly preached to crowds of thousands, sometimes having to climb through a window to reach the pulpit. By all contemporary accounts, his appearance was always fashionable and immaculate. He also was something of a poet and wrote hymns, an autobiography and an *Oratorical Dictionary*. "Maffitt wielded a graceful and glowing pen, inspired sometimes, it seemed, even as his gifted tongue, touched by live coals from the altar...Maffitt's beautiful thoughts, especially those in verse, for he was a poet not only made but born, should be gathered, and as orient pearls be strung."¹

After some controversy regarding his moral conduct in New York, the congregations of the South soon beckoned, and Maffitt moved to Nashville in 1833. He became agent for La Grange College in Alabama in 1836, while also serving as Chair of Elocution and Belles Lettres, but did not remain long in either appointment. In 1837 he moved to Lexington, Kentucky. "On his first appearance in that city every pew in the church was filled, the aisles were crowded to their utmost capacity, and the occasion was distinguished by a quickened religious interest in the popular mind."²

In 1841, Rev. Maffitt became Chaplain of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress where he was frequently heard by John Quincy Adams, then Representative of Massachusetts, along with the many other congressmen of the time. Much sought after as an orator, Maffitt was selected to give the annual commencement oration for the graduating class of Randolph Macon College in June 1842. "And all said, as the morning exercises closed, 'We have heard an orator to-day.'"³ He traveled more than 70 miles for this honor and was remembered for his impeccable appearance and eloquent speech.

He assisted Rev. Joseph H. Davis at Trinity Church in Richmond from 1842 to 1843. Then from 1847 to-1848, he served at Centenary, Richmond. Immediately following this appointment, Maffitt moved to Mobile, Alabama, where he lived out the remaining two years of his life, preaching in a small chapel to a congregation much reduced from the numbers he was accustomed to addressing. He died May 28, 1850 at age 56 and was buried in Magnolia Cemetery, Mobile, Alabama. It is said that he expressed in his last words that "his enemies had broken his heart."⁴

Whether or not any of the controversy surrounding him was true or not, what is certain is that Rev. John Newland Maffitt certainly moved multitudes with his popular sermons and was much adored by many.

¹ Emma Martin Maffitt, *The Life and Services of John Newland Maffitt* (New York: The Neal Publishing Company, 1906).

² Ibid.

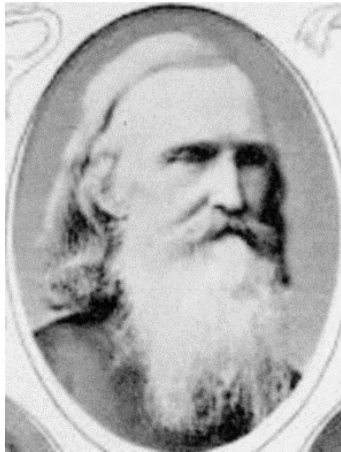
³ Richard Irby (A.B., 1844), *History of Randolph-Macon College* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, undated), p. 97.

⁴ William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. VII (Robert Carter and Brothers, 1859), p. 837.

OTHER SOURCES:

"Find A Grave Memorial #51240435," created by Ray, record added April 17, 2010.

John Newland Maffitt, *Tears of Contrition* (New London: Samuel Green, 1821).



REV. DR. LEONIDAS ROSSER
Served Trinity 1844–1846

A prolific minister who viewed each revival he preached as a pitched battle between good and evil, Dr. Leonidas Rosser is credited with the conversion of 20,000 souls to Methodism. Born July 31, 1815 to Thomas and Christina Elizabeth Rosser, he converted at age 13 on the pulpit steps of the Union Street Methodist Church in his hometown, Petersburg, Virginia. He studied at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, graduating in 1838. Rosser shepherded a Weathersfield, Connecticut, congregation in the New York Conference before joining the Virginia Conference in 1840.

Rosser served the Charlotte Circuit as junior pastor in 1840 and 1841. Next, he served the church in Charlottesville and filled the chaplaincy of the University of Virginia. In 1843, with 100 members from Trinity, he organized Union Station Church in Church Hill. He was appointed to Trinity the following year and served until 1846, holding “extensive revivals” all the while. A contemporary account observed, “His chief delight is in revivals.”¹

Shortly after his ministry at Trinity, he was appointed as the second minister to serve the newly founded Washington Street church in Alexandria. The nucleus of the congregation was composed of the 200 former members of Trinity in Alexandria who had been “expelled from the congregation... because of their Southern sympathies.”² Rosser, “who with his full beard and long white hair looked as if he had stepped out of the Old Testament, traveled throughout the South to drum up support and financing for the new church....He managed to raise \$10,000 during his tour of the South.”³

Rosser first served as presiding elder on the Fredericksburg District in 1853, followed by service in the same position on the Norfolk and Lynchburg Districts. From 1850 to 1866, Dr. Rosser was five times elected a delegate from the Virginia Conference to General Conference. In addition, he served as a trustee of Randolph-Macon College for 36 years, providing hope and encouragement, even in the darker days of the college. Emory and Henry College awarded him a doctor of divinity degree in 1858.

In his later ministry, he wrote six books, including *Baptism*, which later served as a vital text for aspiring ministers to read in seminary. In 1858, Rosser was elected editor of the *Richmond Christian Advocate*, a post he held for two years. One account of his life noted, “His was a busy brain and a busy life.”⁴

¹ John J. Lafferty, *Sketches of the Virginia Conference Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, Christian Advocate Office (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1880), p. 27.

² *Putting on the Armor of the Lord: The Role of Virginia Methodism during the Civil War*, Margaret T. Kidd. M.A. thesis, University of Richmond, 2007, <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/masters-thesis/>

³ Ibid.

⁴ W. D. Keene Jr., ed., *Memoirs-200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987*, (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Company, 1998), p. 230.

Dr. Rosser moved on from this more literary stage when offered the position of superintendent of missions in California, but the Civil War hindered those plans. Instead of heading to solidly Union-leaning California, he chose to minister to Ewell's troops in the Army of Northern Virginia, a post he held from 1862 to 1864. After the war's end, from 1865 to 1869, Rosser served as presiding elder on the Richmond District, and subsequently, on the Randolph-Macon District.

"Dr. Rosser's greatest delight was in revival work...As a revivalist, he was eminently successful."⁵ The revival circuit took Rosser across several states, including Tennessee, where in 1873 he shouted, "The devil is routed at Central [Church]. I left his minions flying. Rally!"⁶ While his "ringing, metallic voice" was something to behold, so was "his tall figure, full flowing gray locks, patriarchal beard, [and] face of intense gaze, [which together] bring to mind the picture of an old prophet."⁷

At one of the Conferences, ... when the usual motion was made to give Dr. Rosser a nominal appointment so he could 'evangelize,' the Bishop hesitated, saying he was not sure that he had the right to make a nominal appointment; Dr. Rosser stepped into the aisle and said in his dramatic manner: "Bishop, would you dare to take the responsibility before the Almighty God of clipping my evangelistic wings."⁸

Dr. Rosser died in Ashland, Virginia, January 25, 1892. However, in the year leading up to his death, he spent most of his time in Texas, delivering about 400 sermons. Evidently, he believed in an active retirement, or put differently, "Few men have had greater success in winning souls."⁹

⁵ Keene, p. 231.

⁶ *Richmond Christian Advocate* (Richmond, Va., May 26, 1932), p. 27.

⁷ Lafferty, p. 26.

⁸ *Advocate*.

⁹ Keene, p. 231.

OTHER SOURCES:

Find-A-Grave: <http://findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSin=Rosser&GSfsn=Leonadas&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSob=n&Grid=7876414&df=all&>



REV. JACOB MANNING
Served Trinity 1846-1848

By the time the Rev. Jacob Manning came to Trinity in 1846, he was well into the first decade of what would become “55 years of faithful and uninterrupted service in the itinerant ranks”¹ of the Virginia Conference – especially remarkable when one considers he had no formal education and was not even a native Virginian. Yet by the end of his career, it was written, “His long career had brought his name to the second place on our Conference roll; his saintly character had brought it to the first in the esteem of his brethren. No man was more generally loved by his brethren, and no man more generously loved them. ‘He was the St. John of the Conference, the beloved disciple, an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile.’”²

Jacob Manning was born near Baltimore January 14, 1816 and raised by a single parent, after his father died while Jacob was young. Jacob’s mother raised him in a Christian home, and he attended Sunday school in Baltimore. He felt a calling at an early age but hesitated to act on it because he lacked training. Instead, he left home at age 12 to seek employment. At age 15, he publicly expressed his faith and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. While working as a clerk in Baltimore, he taught a Sunday school class at the Maryland Penitentiary. When an inmate came to him and converted because of his teaching, Jacob took it as a sign that he should pursue his calling: “Seeing the blessing of God upon his labors in the conversion of a soul one afternoon as he talked to his Sunday school, he determined to resist no longer, but to give himself to the ministry for whatever work he might be thought capable of serving.”³ The Maryland Conference was crowded, and so Jacob collected his certificate of church membership and letters of recommendation from three well-known Baltimore preachers and went to Virginia, which had a shortage of preachers.

Shortly after arriving in Culpeper, Virginia, Manning met the Rev. William H. Starr, who invited him to attend the Quarterly Conference the following weekend. Here his application was accepted, and he became the Rev. Jacob Manning, junior preacher, Louisa Circuit, working as “a colleague of the Rev. Starr, the memory of whose fatherly care and valuable instructions [he] always cherished with the deepest affection.”⁴ At the next Annual Conference in February 1839, he was admitted on trial as a traveling preacher and set out on his own to his appointment on the Culpeper and Rappahannock Circuit. Manning was ordained a deacon in January 1841 and

¹ W. D. Keene Jr, ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), pp. 274-275.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ John J. Lafferty, *Sketches of the Virginia Conference Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Richmond, Va., Whittet & Shepperson, 1880), p.29.

an elder in November 1842. In November 1844 he married Fannie Spooner of Charlottesville, with whom he eventually had three daughters.

Rev. Manning served the Virginia Conference diligently in many appointments until his retirement in 1893. He served Trinity from 1846 to 1847 and was re-appointed in 1848.

Contemporary accounts state that he was never out of his pulpit for more than three successive Sundays, except for 1865 when he served as the Sunday school superintendent in Richmond. He was described as “an exceedingly modest, self-deprecating man, quite willing to take a lowly place,”⁵ possibly due to his lack of formal training, and many accounts note his simple, heart-felt delivery. “In the pulpit, he was plain, practical, persuasive. He did not attempt any display, but tenderly called sinners to repentance, and affectionately urged believers to duty.”⁶ “Adapted to all classes, his discourses are especially effective with those who seek substance rather than mere show, and who want *heart* in a sermon.”⁷ In today’s terms, Rev. Manning went the extra mile to serve his charges. In 1866, while pastor to Rocketts Mission of Trinity, and Sidney and Oregon Missions of Centenary, Rev. Manning reported that worship attendance was lower than anticipated because of severe weather and the large amount of destitution among the congregations. Therefore, he reported, “much of the work of the Pastor will consist in visiting from house to house, praying with and instructing the people at their own houses.”⁸

Jacob Manning died February 15, 1898 at home in the presence of family and friends. About him, Rev. John Lafferty wrote, “His ministry has been a successful one: hundreds of souls will, in eternity, claim him as spiritual father.”⁹

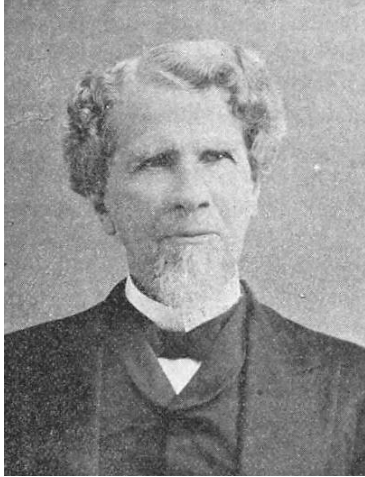
⁵ John J. Lafferty, *Sketches and Portraits of the Virginia Conference, Twentieth Century Edition* (Richmond, Va., 1901), p. 7.

⁶ Keene, p. 275.

⁷ Lafferty, 1901, p. 8.

⁸ Donald R. Traser, *A Tale of Three Churches* (Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1980), p. 21.

⁹ Lafferty, 1901, p. 8.



REV. DR. JOHN ELLIS EDWARDS
Served Trinity 1847-1848 and 1862-1866

Rev. John Ellis Edwards, was born August 1, 1814, in Guilford County, North Carolina, to Thomas and Susannah Edwards. Because his parents lived near the New Garden Quaker (now Guilford College), that is where he received his early education.

He professed conversion at a camp meeting and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church September 11, 1832. Soon after, he expressed interest in entering the ministry and was licensed as a local preacher April 7, 1834, at age 19. He immediately left for his first circuit – Bethel.

In February of the following year, he joined the Virginia Conference and began his regular ministry on the Campbell Circuit. When the Virginia Conference was divided in 1837 to form the North Carolina Conference, Rev. Edwards was appointed to the Raleigh Circuit. By this time, he was a married man with a wife and child to support. His allowance was \$440 for the year.

From 1841 to 1842, he was assigned to Newbern, North Carolina. Rev. Edwards drew a large attendance to his services and by the time he left the Newbern appointment, a new church facility was almost completed.

After leaving Newbern, Edwards was stricken with typhoid fever. His illness left him weak and unable to work during 1843, then spent 1844 and 1845 assigned to Raleigh, North Carolina. At the close of this pastoral assignment, he was transferred, by special request, to the Virginia Conference.

Rev. Edwards's next two appointments were churches in Richmond – Centenary and then Trinity. These churches were followed by appointments to Norfolk and Lynchburg. While at Norfolk, he assisted in the building of Granby Street Church. Regarding his appointment to Court Street Church in Lynchburg, Edwards said, "Lynchburg, then, was a town of 5,000, the largest town I had ever seen. The idea of preaching in such a large town and in a church that had a bell in the cupola scared me frightfully."¹

During his next appointment, to Petersburg, he was largely responsible for the building of Market Street Church. He then again filled the pulpits of the larger churches in Lynchburg and Richmond.

In 1856 Edwards travelled in Europe and upon his return home he published a book, *Travels in Europe*, which sold well, going through several editions in England. He also published several other works including three books – *Life of Rev. John Wesley Childs*, *The Confederate Soldier* and *The Log Meeting House*.

In 1857 Rev. Edwards was appointed to the board of trustees of Randolph-Macon College and about 10 years later was awarded an honorary doctor of divinity degree. He was elected a dele-

¹ "Lynchburg, A Hundred Years Ago," John E. Edwards, reprinted, *Richmond Christian Advocate* (Richmond, Va.: October 11, 1934), p. 21.

gate to all nine General Conferences from 1858 to 1890. The conference scheduled for New Orleans in 1862 had to be cancelled as “the Federal forces had gotten to New Orleans first.”² In 1890 he was assigned the foremost place as chairman of the delegation.

Dr. Edwards’ second appointment to Trinity from 1862 to 1866 coincided with much of the Civil War and the year following. The building of Trinity’s fourth church building, located on the North-east corner of 20th and Broad Streets, had been halted at the start of the war in 1861 with only the basement lecture room completed and dedicated. Under Edwards’ guidance the church was completed with the exception of the steeple. An article in the *Daily Dispatch* for September 17, 1866, reported:

Thus the building stood until the beginning of the present year, when it was determined to make an effort for its completion; and accordingly the faithful and energetic pastor, Rev. J. E. Edwards commenced the difficult and laborious task of raising the necessary funds, in which he so far exceeded as to enable the building committee to put under contract all the work except the steeple...

This beautiful edifice, situated on the corner of Twentieth and Broad Streets, which has just been completed, was yesterday [September 16, 1866] dedicated to the service of Almighty God. Long before the hour for the commencement of the exercises, ladies and gentlemen were flocking into the church, and by 11 o’clock it was densely thronged... The audience room [sanctuary] will comfortably seat about 700 persons. But at the lowest calculation there were not less than 1,000 present at the services yesterday morning.³

In each of Dr. Edwards’s four years, a minister was appointed to Trinity to oversee the church’s mission work at Rocketts. Rev. Joseph E. Martin filled this position from 1862 to-1863. John Bayley was appointed for the following year but apparently did not serve as the record has him in England at that time. The conference minutes for 1864 read “Rocketts Mission – to be supplied.” Rev. C. W. Pethenbridge, a local preacher, was appointed to Trinity to fill this position from 1865 to 1866.

Dr. Edwards continued to fill the pulpits of the largest churches in Lynchburg and Richmond, including Broad Street and Centenary, except for four years spent in Danville. During an appointment at Centenary from 1872 to 1876, the church was enlarged and remodeled at a cost of \$25,000. It was also during this time that Centenary oversaw the building of Park Place Church.

On May 1, 1888, with a church filled to capacity, Mount Vernon Church in Danville honored Dr. and Mrs. Edwards by celebrating their golden wedding anniversary. “Civil dignitaries and ecclesiastical prefects”⁴ were among the attendees.

In 1890, a year before Dr. John Ellis Edwards’ death, Dr. Howard Henderson, of Cincinnati, penned this description of Virginia’s prominent minister:

He is seventy-six years young. He has kept enough summer in his heart to thaw the winter in his veins. About the size of Wesley, elastic, clean, merry. He speaks, dresses,

² William Warren Sweet, *Virginia Methodism, A History* (Richmond, Va., Whittet & Shepperson, 1955), p. 294.

³ “Dedication of Trinity Methodist Church,” *Daily Dispatch*, (Richmond, Va., September 17, 1866).

⁴ “Pen Pictures of Dr. John E. Edwards,” *Richmond Christian Advocate* (Richmond, Va., October 11, 1934), p. 14.

does as he likes and people like him for it. He wore a swallowtail coat and looked nice. His voice is more mellow than that of John Randolph. He can project his voice until it thrills like the notes of Gideon's trumpet. He is a rapid talker. Every vowel rings out. His words blossom; his thoughts are fragrant. Sometimes he is so flowery his hearers feel he has bombarded them with bouquets; but there is healing in the leaves. There is balm as well as beauty. He can frame an anecdote with artistic taste. He casts a subtle thread in the tapestry he weaves. Sometimes he flashes with wit and suffuses his congregation with tropical humor.⁵

He never sought nor accepted appointments as presiding Elder, college president or professorships, "instead resisted all efforts to lure him from the pastorate... Many superb edifices are monuments of his church building zeal."⁶

Dr. Edwards was married in 1838 to Elizabeth Agnes Clark of Prince Edward County, Virginia. They had three sons – Leroy S., William E. and Landon B. Edwards. His son, Dr. William E. Edwards, and his grandson, William E. Edwards Jr. became members of the Virginia Conference.

Having served the ministry for 57 years, death came to Dr. Edwards at age 77 on March 31, 1891, while serving his fourth pastorate at Court Street Church, Lynchburg, Virginia. Among his survivors was his wife of more than 52 years. Burial was in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond.

⁵ Edwards, p. 14.

⁶ Ibid.