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Artist unknown. (1842). *Gang of Slaves Journeying to Be Sold in a Southern Market, Near Fredericksburg, Va.* [Painting]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2022641806/>

The 1844 Debates on Slavery and the Beginning of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South: Part III, The Protest, the Plan, the Reply, and the Exit

By Pamela C. Crosby

This is the third part of a three-part series on the 1844 Debates of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC). The delegates (some 200 male ministers) met in New York City from May 1 to June 11 with intentions to still the unrest that had spread through the denomination. Instead, attempts at unity failed, with the debates setting the stage for Southern Methodism to cut its ties with the MEC. The causes of the schism extended beyond the issue of slavery and can best be illustrated by the voices of leaders who penned resolutions and replies at the Conference.

(cont. on p. 2)



Inside This Issue

Debates (cont.)	2-11
Florida Conference	11-12
John Wesley	12-14
Memory Adams	14-18
Joel Blake	18-20
Leadership Info	20
Making History	21-24
From the Editor	24

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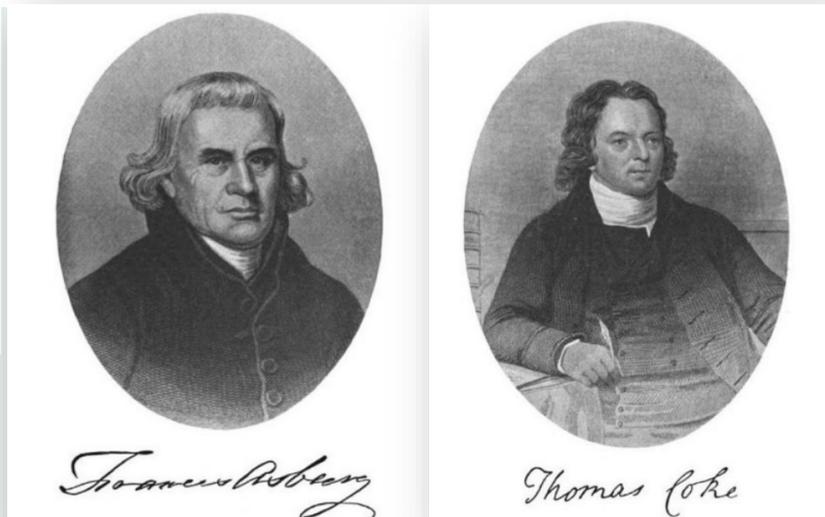
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Images of early American Methodist church leaders Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke in J. M. Buckley. (1898). *A History of Methodism in the United States Volume 1*. Harper & brothers, 157, 270.

In the early years, MEC leaders, most famously **John Wesley**, **Francis Asbury**, and **Thomas Coke**, were initially unyielding in their opposition to slavery. However, Asbury and Coke later conceded to Southern delegates' insistence to add compromising language in the *Discipline* (Purifoy, 1966, p. 14; Bascom, 1845, p. 6).

The result of this leniency was far-reaching. Although Church law prohibiting slavery had been established in the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1785, there was an "adjustment" in later years regarding slavery. This adjustment occurred as an "informal contract of mutual concession," which allowed for "exceptions" such as for those who lived in states where it was illegal for owners to emancipate their enslaved people (West, 1844, p. 204).

But the appeasement of the Southern delegates satisfied neither the Northern abolitionists nor the Southerner sympathizer (regarding slave ownership), as will be made convincingly clear. A major issue was how to address the consequences faced by Southern ministers living in states where emancipation was illegal (Crosby, 2025, p. 2).

Thus, as noted in earlier articles in this series, a core theme regarding slavery addressed in the early days of the Conference was itineracy; it involved two cases. The first one concerned **Rev. Francis Harding** of the Baltimore Conference.

This Annual Conference included churches in Maryland and Virginia (slave states) and Pennsylvania (a free state). Rev. Harding was relieved of his duties as an itinerant preacher for refusing to free some slaves he had acquired through marriage, which prohibited him from serving all of the states in his conference. As a result, Harding looked to the General Conference to reverse his suspension. The vote of the Conference denied him the reversal (Crosby, 2025; 2024; Norwood, 1923, pp. 61-62).

The second case involved **James O. Andrew** from Georgia, who had acquired enslaved people through marriage and inheritance after he became a bishop. His episcopal role required travel across the region's denomination, and as a known owner of enslaved people, he would not be able to preside over Northern conferences. A resolution submitted by **Rev. Alfred Griffith** and **Rev. John Davis** from the Baltimore Conference directed Bishop Andrew to resign, arguing that it was impossible for him to conduct his episcopal duties as an owner of enslaved people. Instead of the resolution going to a vote, **Rev. James Bradley Finley** and **Rev. Joseph M. Trimble** proposed a substitute for the Griffith-Davis resolution: "[the Bishop must] desist from the exercise of this office so long as this impediment [being an enslaver] remains." Finley's "resolution offered a compromise that recognized Bishop Andrew as an enslaver but did not defame his character." According to the resolution, Bishop Andrew could return to his duties once he no longer was an enslaver (Crosby, 2025, pp. 2, 5, 7-8).

I. Statement of Protest

Background

The Finley Resolution was the breaking point of the Conference of 1844 with the vote being 111 to 60 approving. Immediately after Finley's substitute resolution passed, Southerners insisted

that they would submit a letter of protest. The document was finalized and then read June 6. The Protest came from representatives from “thirteen annual conferences” and “portions of the ministry and membership of several other conferences,” who referred to themselves as the “minority” while those who voted for the resolution concerning Bishop Andrew’s proposed suspension were known as the “majority” (Norwood, 1923, pp. 80-81; West, 1844, p. 203).

Insight into the earlier modifications and variations of the *Discipline* helps to provide context regarding reasons for the Protest. In 1804, two versions of the *Discipline* had been printed to appease the slaveholding states: one including a section on slavery and one without the section. According to the *Discipline* in 1816, a slave owner was not eligible to serve in “any official station” in the church “where the laws of the state” in which he lived allowed “emancipation” (Lawrence, 2018, p. 15; Hood, 1973, p. 2; Emory & Strickland, 1857, p. 331).

The minority interpreted this law to mean that those ministers who owned enslaved people living in a state that did not allow emancipation were not banned from serving in *any* office sanctioned by the MEC. Logically, it did not follow because the law did not explicitly say that those living in a state



Image of Rev. James Bradley Finley in Finley, J. B. (1857). *Sketches of Western Methodism: Biographical, Historical, and Miscellaneous Illustrative of Pioneer Life*. Methodist Book Concern.

where emancipation was prohibited could hold any office (this is a fallacy in logic called “Denying the Consequence”). When Southerners insisted on their interpretation of the law, the Conference allowed “exceptions” to the earlier law in the *Discipline*. So while the *Discipline* did not explicitly say those who could not emancipate could hold office, it was often strongly implied (Redfern, 1875, p. 10; West, 1844, p. 204-205).

A summary of the contents of the Statement of Protest follows.

Position of the Minority (Southern Delegates)

The Purpose and Tone of the Finley Resolution Were to Punish Bishop Andrew

According to the Statement of Protest penned by the minority, the purpose of the Finley Resolution had been to “degrade and punish” Bishop Andrew by suspending him until he no longer owned enslaved people. Southerners also complained that the tone and words of the Finley Resolution constituted an “imperative and mandatory” expectation. However, some Northerners claimed that it was merely a form of “advising or recommending” while others denied it was merely advice. Although the majority did not agree on whether the Resolution was binding, it was clear to the Southerners that the bishop’s suspension would be the result (West, 1844, p. 204, 207).

The Compromise Laws Forbade Northern Interference

The Southern delegates argued that the compromise laws (referring to additions in the 1804 and 1816 *Disciplines*) forbade Northern Conferences from interference in their matters relating to slavery. These laws made sure that Northern Conferences would not exclude ministers who owned enslaved people “in states where emancipation” was “not practicable” from serving (West, 1844, p. 205).

Bishops Were Included in the Compromise Laws

The minority further challenged the Finley Resolution by stating that the compromise laws included bishops. In other words, bishops were among those ministers who—when living

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Image of James Osgood Andrew in J. M. Buckley. (1898). *A History of Methodism in the United States Volume 1*. Harper & Brothers, 453.

in a state that forbade emancipation—were exempt from being banned from office if they were slave owners (West, 1844, pp. 205).

Bishops Are Not Under the Authority of the General Conference

Importantly, Southern delegates accused Northern delegates of ignoring established procedure by not bringing the matter to a formal trial. It was not Bishop Andrew who had violated the law, they claimed, but rather Northerners who had suspended Bishop Andrew without due process. The Finley Resolution was just a simple vote by members of the General Conference, but a bishop, according to the Protest, could be removed only by official legal procedures specified in the *Discipline* (West, 1844, pp. 206, 209).

In an attempt to prove that the bishop was not under the authority of the General Conference, Southern delegates argued in their Protest Statement that only the bishops—not another member or body—could set the time and date of the meeting of the Annual Conferences. If bishops did not set the time and date, the Annual Conferences could not be held. This necessary role of the bishop proved to the minority that a bishop was not simply “a creature” who was “subject to the will” of the General Conference because the General Conference was dependent upon the delegates

chosen at the Annual Conferences (West, 1844, p. 209).

Northerners Had Given Southerners Permission to Allow Preachers to Own Enslaved People

Southerners pointed out that the MEC laws had allowed preachers in Southern states to serve in their positions while at the same time owning enslaved people, noting,

All our provisional legislation on the subject has proceeded on the assumption that slavery is an element of society—a principle of action—a household reality in the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. It is part and parcel of the economy of American Methodism in every subjective sense. It has given birth to law and right, conventional arrangements, numerous missions, and official trusts. Every bishop, every minister, every member of the Church is of necessity connected with slavery. Each is brother and co-member, both with slave and master, by the very laws and organization of the Church. (West, 1844, p. 208)

The Law Is Flawed

In short, Bishop Andrew had not broken any church laws, according to the minority. Rather, the law itself was flawed, and the Northern Conferences should focus on changing the law (West, 1844, p. 207).

Northerners Valued Their Anti-Slavery Position over Unity

The problem was with the Northern majority, claimed the Southern minority, which had undermined the unity of the MEC by prioritizing their anti-slavery position over the union of the Northern and Southern churches (West, 1844, p. 211).

Signed by the following delegates, viz.,

Kentucky Conference.—H. B. Bascom, Wm. Gunn, H. H. Kavanaugh, E. Stevenson, B. T. Crouch, G. W. Brush.

Missouri.—W. W. Redman, W. Patten, J. C. Berryman, J. M. Jameson.

Holston.—E. F. Sevier, S. Patten, T. Stringfield.

Tennessee.—R. Paine, J. B. McFerrin, A. L. P.

Green, T. Madden,

North Carolina—J. T. Blake, J. Jameson, P. Doub.

Ohio.—E. W. Sehon.

Memphis.—G. W. D. Harris, S. S. Moody, W. M'Mahon, T. Joyner.
 Arkansas.—J. C. Parker, W. P. Ratcliffe, A. Hunter.
 Virginia.—J. Early, T. Crowder, W. A. Smith, L. M. Lee.
 Mississippi.—W. Winans, B. M. Drake, J. Lane, G. M. Rogers.
 Philadelphia.—I. T. Cooper, W. Cooper, T. I. Thompson, Henry White.
 Texas.—L. Fowler.
 Illinois.—N. C. Berryman, J. Stamper.
 Alabama.—J. Boring, J. Hamilton, W. Murrah, G. Garrett.
 Georgia.—G. F. Pierce, W. J. Parks, L. Pierce, J. W. Glenn, J. E. Evans, A.B. Longstreet.
 South Carolina.—W. Capers, W. M. Wightman, C. Betts, S. Dunwoody, H. A C. Walker.
 New-Jersey.—T. Sovereign, T. Neal.

II. Plan of Separation

Background

It was clear that the core message of the Statement of Protest was that Southerners believed that the actions of the Northern-dominated General Conference made it difficult for churches in the South to remain in the MEC (West, 1844, pp. 203- 212).



Image of Robert Paine in Rivers, R. H. (1884). *The Life of Robert Paine, D. D.* Southern Methodist Publishing House, Front Matter.

Given the minority's intense resistance as outlined in the Protest, a committee of nine drew up a report to plan for an orderly and peaceful division of the church *if at some point a separation seemed unavoidable*. Their intention was to send to the Annual Conferences the report for approval. The Committee—made up of three delegates from the South, three from the middle states, and three from the North—worked for three days while the “subcommittee . . . worked by night as well as by day” (West, 1844, pp. 217, 222, 223).

Resolutions

On June 7, **Rev. Robert Paine** of the Tennessee Conference read the report, and some of the contents are summarized below.

First Resolution

The first resolution stated that if the Southern states' conferences created their own church, the Northern conferences would not be involved with any groups choosing to stay within the Southern connection. Congregations located in border areas could choose to join either the Southern or Northern Church by majority vote but not those in the “interior.” Any Southern state or conference could form a separate church. The same rule applied to the separated Southern Church. It could not interfere with any conferences or border congregations that voted to remain with the Northern MEC (West, 1844, p. 218).

Second Resolution

The second resolution would give clergy members the freedom to follow their convictions and choose either denomination without being blamed or disciplined (West, 1844, p. 218).

Third Resolution

The third resolution related to the Book Concern (publishing house) such that it was not to “appropriate . . .to any purpose other than for the benefit of the travelling, supernumerary, superannuated, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows and children,” and other purposes determined by a General Conference vote (West, 1844, p. 218).

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Fourth Resolution

The fourth resolution explained how publishing assets and accounts were to be transferred to the new Southern denomination (West, 1844, p. 218).

Fifth Resolution

The fifth resolution described how the assets of the Methodist Book Concern would be divided (West, 1844, p. 218).

Sixth Resolution

The sixth resolution of this 1844 Plan laid out the financial agreement for how the new Southern Methodist Church would receive its portion of the Methodist Book Concern's assets (West, 1844, p. 218).

Other Resolutions

And other resolutions dealt with further financial matters (West, 1844, p. 219).

Bishops were “respectfully requested to lay that part of this report requiring the action of the annual conferences before them as soon as possible, beginning with the New-York Conference” (West, 1844, p. 219).

The document was signed,

New-York, June 7, 1844.

ROBERT PAINE, Chairman

A crucial part of the Plan of Separation was the Sixth Resolution, which pertained to the suspension of the Sixth Restrictive Rule, which related to dividing property and sharing rights and profits of the Book Concern in order to facilitate a fair portion for each side. This rule would be an ongoing point of contention long after the separation of the Church. Because the suspension of the rule needed constitutional changes, it was the only part of the Plan that the Annual Conferences would vote on. The Plan of Separation itself was not subject to ratification by the Annual Conferences (Norwood, 1923, p. 117; West, 1844, p. 225).

Reaction at the General Conference to the Plan

Dr. Charles Elliott of the Ohio Conference



[Image of Rev. Alfred Griffith]. Find a Grave. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/27535273/alfred-griffith>

motioned to adopt the plan, stating that it benefited the Church, conformed with the Scriptures, and had historical merit: Such large religious bodies in the past had become “unwieldy.” This was also the case for the MEC; it was becoming too large to do business efficiently (West, 1844, p. 219).

Mr. Porter (not clear whether J. S. Porter of New Jersey or J. Porter of New England) expressed his view that the committee’s report was convincing in that the Plan was the most suitable resolution considering the “circumstances,” and nothing could be done until all of the Annual Conferences had voted on the Sixth Rule. The South would have the time by that occasion to have considered what they wanted to do (West, 1844, p. 225).

There was opposition to the Plan and/or separation as had been expected. Rev. Alfred Griffith of the Maryland Conference argued that the Plan was unconstitutional because the entire Plan was not subject to the Annual Conferences for vote first. Also, Griffith said that the Plan lacked proper authority and unfairly disenfranchised individual members by denying them a choice because the plan forced members in the interior (geographically of a Conference) to align with a Northern or Southern branch according to where they lived, regardless of their convictions (West, 1844, p. 219).

Rev. Peter Cartwright of the Illinois Conference indicated that he thought the Plan would instigate unrest within the border conferences (where enslaved and free territories were next to each other) and “break the Church into a thousand ramifications.” **Dr. Thomas E. Bond** of the Baltimore Conference also thought that ongoing disputes about slavery in the border regions—including along the Ohio River—would eventually affect the entire Church (Debates...,” 1844, pp. 220, 224).

Dr. Peter P. Sandford of the New York Conference was reluctant to vote for any plan that he thought encouraged the Southern Conferences to separate by promising assets before they separate; rather, this should be worked out after they separated (West, 1844, p. 225).



Image of Leonidas Lent Hamline in Palmer, W. C. (1866). *Life and Letters of Leonidas L. Hamline, D.D.* Carolton & Porter, Front matter.

Changes to the Plan

Rev. Leonidas Hamline of the Ohio Conference suggested that the division of the Book Concern should be subject to a two-thirds majority vote of Annual Conferences instead of a simple majority to insure fairness of division of property (West, 1844, p. 226).

The Vote

The first resolution in the Plan of Separation passed by a vote (final actual count) of 146-16; second, 139-17; third, 146-10; fifth, 151-13; with other votes not reported (Norwood, note 17, p. 87, 1923).

III. Northern Reply to the Protest

On June 10, Northern delegates presented a reply to the South’s Statement of Protest, which had been delivered earlier. The Reply was read by **Dr. John Price Durbin** of the Philadelphia Conference (West, 1844, p. 229). Among the important points were the following with a summary below.

Bishop Andrew Knew What the Church Expected of Bishops

The General Conference learned that for several years, Bishop Andrew had owned slaves. Shortly after his election as bishop, a woman from Augusta bequeathed to him an enslaved young female. His instructions were to send the child to Liberia when she reached the age of nineteen if she would agree. However, she refused to go to Liberia. Although she was allowed privileges that her former owner had designated in her will, by Georgia law, she and any children she might have in the future would still be enslaved. Bishop Andrew had also become the owner of another enslaved person who had belonged to his wife before their marriage (West, 1844, p. 230).

The Reply to the Protest argued that the Bishop was aware that being the owner of enslaved persons did not meet MEC expectations regarding slavery, and it certainly was not merely an *assumption* that Bishop Andrew was a slave owner as the Protest had claimed. In the words of the Northern Reply,

All the usual and necessary conditions of slavery have their fulfilment in the relation of these [enslaved] persons to Bishop Andrew. Their labor and their earnings are subject to his control and inure to his benefit and that of his family. They are now liable, or they may be hereafter, to be sold; they and their offspring are doomed, as the case now stands, to a bondage that is perpetual, and they are liable and likely to descend to his heirs. Beyond all reasonable doubt, the condition of Bishop Andrew’s slaves will be attended, while he lives, with all the alleviations—and these are many and great—which a very benevolent and Christian master can provide. Still it must be slavery. In the view of the law of the land, and of the law of the Discipline, in all its more weighty and permanent consequences to the bondman, it is and must be slavery. (West, 1844, pp. 230-231)

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Strong Anti-Slavery Feelings Had Long Existed in the North

The news of Bishop Andrew's slave ownership had led to a peak in emotions regarding slavery, which had long simmered in the Northern states (West, 1844, pp. 230).

The MEC Leadership Was Not Divided Along Regional Lines

In their Reply, Northern delegates accused Southern delegates of defying the Church's leadership by dividing it along regional lines while the MEC was expected to be unified and national (West, 1844, pp. 230).

No MEC Bishop Had Ever Owned Enslaved People

Before Bishop Andrew, no slave owner had ever been elected bishop of the MEC, though some candidates had been qualified in every other way. The explanation, according to the Northern Reply, was that

it was "improper" for the shepherd and bishop of eleven hundred thousand souls either deliberately or heedlessly to place himself in direct and irreconcilable conflict with the known and cherished moral sentiments of a large majority of his vast flock. (West, 1844, pp. 231)

Delegates from Conferences in the slaveholding states had gathered to advise Bishop Andrew against resigning, although knowing that he was going against the position of the majority of the Church concerning slavery (West, 1844, pp. 231).

The Episcopacy Was Not an Equal Branch or Superior Branch over the General Conference

Southern delegates had argued in the Protest that because bishops generally had the authority to ordain other bishops, a bishop's power originated from other bishops, not from the General Conference that elected them. Northerners replied that the ordination of bishops is merely a ceremony while authority comes from the elected as embodied in the General Conference (West, 1844, pp. 234).

The authors of the Statement of Protest maintained that the General Conference was obligated to submit to the authority of the episcopacy be-



"John Price Durbin, 27th Chaplain of the United States Senate, 1831-1832." Wikipedia. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John_Price_Durbin.jpg

cause bishops alone had the constitutional power to set the time for Annual Conferences. If bishops refused to call Annual Conferences, delegates could not be chosen, and therefore the General Conference could not exist (West, 1844, pp 234-235).

Northerners in reply pointed out that the name "annual Conference" implied that it was required to meet once a year and was just a procedural practice, not one of Church authority. Northerners accused Southerners of using an absurd argument when they concluded that bishops were made authorities over the General Conference by the fact that they set the time of the Annual Conferences. In fact, authors of the Northern Reply argued that the *Discipline* answered the question, "To whom is a bishop amenable for his conduct?" by simply saying, "To the General Conference, who have power to expel him for improper conduct, if they see it necessary" (West, 1844, pp. 235).

It Was Not Necessary for the *Discipline* to Specify That Bishops Were Forbidden to Own Enslaved Persons

Southerners argued in the Protest that the *Discipline* did not specifically forbid bishops from

owning slaves, and therefore they were allowed to do so. Northerners responded by saying that “ordinary travelling preachers,” because of their confinement to regions where state laws forbade them to emancipate, were given leeway to own enslaved persons. However bishops were over an extensive area that included both free and slave owning districts (West, 1844, pp. 233).

Civil Law Did Not Guarantee Church Law

Southerners also argued in their Protest that both the Constitution and state laws protected slave ownership as the “supreme law of the land.” As a result, the General Conference could not force a bishop to free his slaves, particularly because Georgia law made emancipation nearly impossible. Specifically, the Constitution permitted its citizens to own enslaved people, and the MEC must submit to laws as stated in the U. S. Constitution. In sum, owning enslaved people was a basic right (West, 1844, pp. 234)

Northerners rejected that argument that the MEC must guarantee as law what was guaranteed by civil law, arguing that the U.S. also allowed citizens to “keep theatres and grog-shops”—but per-

sons who did so were not considered suitable for leadership of the Church. The implication was that just because an action was legal did not mean that it was acceptable behavior for a Methodist bishop. The Northern delegates did not agree that owning enslaved people was a basic right (West, 1844, pp. 234).

Conclusion

In closing, the Northern authors of the Reply wrote that when the an “impartial community” reviews the “facts in the case,” they will ask,

Who first introduced slavery into the episcopacy? And the answer will be, Not the General Conference. Who opposed the attempt to withdraw it from the episcopacy? Not the General Conference. Who resisted the measure of peace that was proposed the mildest that the case allowed? Not the majority. Who first sounded the knell of division, and declared that it would be impossible longer to remain under the jurisdiction of the M. E. Church? Not the majority...

Finally, we cannot but hope that the minority, after reviewing the entire action of the conference, will find that, both in their Declaration and their Protest, they have taken too strong a view of the case; and that by presenting it in its true light before their people, they may be able to check any feelings of

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“Rev. William P. Corbit Preaching to Thieves and Harlots” in the Greene Street Methodist Episcopal church on April 1, 1860. An engraving of Corbit preaching in the Greene Street ME Church, New York, was published in the April 14, 1860, page 232, in the issue of *Harper's Weekly*. This image shows the inside of the Greene Street Church, where the General Conference of MEC took place in 1844. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015006963360&seq=222>

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discord that may have arisen, so that the Methodist Episcopal Church may still continue as one body, engaged in its proper work of "spreading Scriptural holiness over these lands." (West, 1844, pp. 235-236)

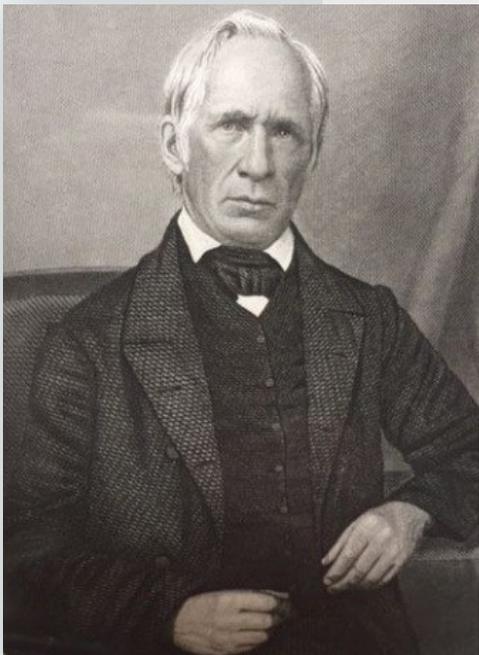
The reply was signed

J. P. DURBIN, Chairman.
GEORGE PECK,
CHARLES ELLIOT

The Northern Reply to the Statement of Protest was read on the afternoon of June 10, and that evening the motion to approve it was made, followed by several remarks by Southern delegates in response to the Northern Reply.

Reporter **Robert West** described the emotional remarks that were made on that evening:

As the matter stood before that report was brought in, he [Rev. Thomas Crowder of Virginia Conference] had hoped they might yet avoid division. The passage of that report [Northern Reply] would render division inevitable. They had no choice left. And there were statements in that report which were contrary to fact. . . . There were statements ... in reference to Bishop Andrew which had never been made known to the conference before; and on the general question of the connection of slavery with the M. E. Church there were positions taken by that report, to the truth of which he [Crowder] could not subscribe. The document he could not but regard as



"Charles Elliott." Find a Grave. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/71490908/charles-elliott>

an

insult to the whole south. Mr. C. then repeated, with much earnestness and warmth, his convictions as to the evil and disastrous consequences that would result from the publication of such a document [Northern Reply] by the General Conference, and declared he should not be surprised at its leading to a civil war, so utterly did it deny the rights and trample upon the feelings of all the slaveholding states. (West, 1944, p 237)

Other remarks from Southerners had a similar tone such that after the reading of the Northern Reply, any attempts to repair the damage done appeared to be hopeless, and division seemed to be inevitable. There, at the Conference, delegates would need to decide on what they wanted to do: leave the MEC or remain (Norwood, 1923, p. 81).

The Southern delegates decided that it was time to make their move. On June 11, before they left the Conference, they met. At their meeting, they put together a plan for Annual Conferences to send delegates to Louisville, Kentucky, on May 1, 1845 (Norwood, 1923, pp. 90-91).

These were the first steps in the creation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In Louisville, about eleven months later, a report from the Committee on Organization was read on May 15 to the delegates of the Southern Annual Conferences. It included descriptions of resolutions to be voted on. The first resolution from the Report was a "formal declaration of independence" of Southern churches. It dissolved the authority of the General Conference over the Southern Annual Conferences but included the fundamental laws and rights as outlined in the existing *Discipline*. It passed by a vote of 95 to 2. A vote concerning the second resolution expressing hope for "fraternal" discourse between the Northern and Southern Churches in hopes that some aspect of brotherhood might remain was approved "unanimously" (Norwood, 1923, pp. 99-100).

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A "Firm and Manly Course Pursued": The Florida Annual Conference Votes in 1845

Immediately after the adjournment of the 1844 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the decision to form a "separate ecclesiastical jurisdiction" had not yet been made. The decision largely rested upon the reactions of the Annual Conferences within the slaveholding states, who had the authority to determine if the necessity to separate existed. The Florida Annual Conference was formed in February 1845 and met in Tallahassee. Delegates at the inaugural meeting voted to approve the Plan of Separation, authored and submitted at the General Conference, and to send delegates to the 1845 Convention, who would vote on separation. Below are the quoted responses of delegates of the Florida Conference, who reacted to the events at the General Conference; the Plan of Separation's mandatory vote on the change of the sixth article of the restrictive rule (concerning the division of book publishing rights and profits); and the election of delegates to the May 1st Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, to vote on a Plan of Compromise to separate.

FLORIDA CONFERENCE

The committee to whom was referred the subject of the action of the late General Conference in the cases of Bishop Andrew and F. A. Harding—also the Report of the Committee of Nine in the late General Conference on the subject of a peaceable separation of the Church—also the resolution of the Holston Conference on the same subject—submit the following resolutions, to wit

1. *Resolved, That we disapprove of the course of the late General Conference in the cases of Bishop Andrew and F. A. Harding.*
2. *That we heartily approve the proposed Plan of Separation as adopted by the General Conference, under which the Southern and South-western Conferences are authorized to unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection.*
3. *That we are satisfied that the peace and success of the Church in the South demand a separate and distinct organization.*
4. *That we commend and admire the firm and manly course pursued by Bishop Andrew under the trials he has had to encounter, and that we still regard him as possessing all his Episcopal functions.*

(cont. on p. 12)

(cont. from p 11)

5. That the course pursued by our venerable senior Superintendent, Bishop Soule, in defending the Discipline of our Church, has served but to endear him to us more and more, and we heartily approve his course in inviting Bishop Andrew to assist him in his Episcopal visitations.

6. That we tender our warmest thanks to all those brethren who voted in the minority in Bishop Andrew's case.

7. That we approve of the proposed Convention to be held in Louisville the 1st of May next, and will proceed to elect delegates to said Convention.

8. That we do not concur in the resolutions of the Holston Conference, proposing the election of delegates for forming a Plan of Compromise.

9. That we do concur in the recommendation of the late General Conference for the change of the sixth article in the restrictive rules in the Book of Discipline, allowing an equitable pro rata division of the Book Concern.

P. P. SMITH, T. C. BENNING, J. W. YARBROUGH, W. W. GRIFFIN, A. MARTIN, S. P. RICHARDSON, R. H. LUCKEY, R. H. HOWREN, A. PEELER.

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“Better to Have No Wealth”: John Wesley’s Thoughts on Slavery

In 1736, when John Wesley was a missionary in the state of Georgia, he encountered slavery for the first time. This experience and others relating to slavery evoked in him feelings of strong opposition to what he called “reverent evils”—meaning long established and approved arguments and practices supporting an evil habit or custom. These evils are described in *Thoughts Upon Slavery*, published in 1774. In this widely read work, Wesley argued against the institution of slavery, replying to common excuses used to attempt to justify it (Wesley. . .,” n.d.).

What Is the Real Law?

One proposed justification was that the law, itself, “authorized” the enslavement of people. Wesley responded by saying,

But can Law, Human Law, change the nature of things? Can it turn Darkness into Light, or evil into good? By no means. Notwithstanding ten thousand Laws, right is right, and wrong is wrong still. There must still remain an essential difference between Justice and Injustice, Cruelty and Mercy. So that I still ask, Who can reconcile this treatment of the Negroes, first and last, with either Mercy or Justice?

Where is the Justice of inflicting the reverent evils, on those that have done us no wrong? Of depriving those that never injured us in word or deed, of every



Image of John Wesley in Wesley, J. (1872). *The works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* Wesleyan Conference Office, Front matter.

comfort of life? Of tearing them from their native country, and depriving them of liberty itself? To which an Angolan, has the same natural right as an Englishman, and on which he sets as high a value? Yea where is the Justice of taking away the Lives of innocent, inoffensive men? Murdering thousands of them in their own land, by the hands of their own Countrymen. Many Thousands, year after year... (p. 16)

Another attempt at justification was to say that enslaved people provided the necessary commerce for the “Wealth and “Glory” of the “Nation.” Wesley responded by saying,

Wealth is not necessary to the Glory of any Nation; but Wisdom, Virtue, Justice, Mercy, Generosity, Public Spirit, Love of our Country. These are necessary to the real Glory of a Nation; but abundance of Wealth is not. . . . Better no Trade, than trade procured by villainy. It is far better to have no Wealth, than to gain Wealth at the expense of Virtue. Better is honest Poverty, than all the Riches bought by the tears, and sweat and blood of our fellow-creatures. (pp. 20-21)

Wesley directed his words to those offenders who directly benefitted from slavery:

. . . to the Captains employed in this trade. Most of You know, the country of Guinea: Several parts of it at least, between the River Senegal and the kingdom of Angola. Perhaps now, by your means, part of it is become a dreary uncultivated wilderness, the inhabitants being all murdered or carried away, so that there are none left to till the ground. But you well know how populous, how fruitful, how pleasant it was a few years ago. You know the people were not . . . savage, fierce, cruel, treacherous, or unkind to strangers. On the contrary, they were in most parts, a sensible and ingenious people. They were kind and friendly, courteous and obliging, and remarkably fair and just in their dealings. Such are the men whom you hire their own country-men, to tear away from this lovely country; part by stealth, part by force, part made captive in those wars, which you raise or foment on purpose. (pp. 23-24)

You have seen them torn away, Children from their Parents, Parents from their Children, Husbands from their Wives, Wives from their beloved Hus-

bands, Brethren and Sisters from each other. You have dragged them who had never done you any wrong, perhaps in chains, from their native shore. You have forced them into your ships like an herd of swine, them who had souls immortal as your own: (Only some of them leaped into the sea, and resolutely stayed under water, till they could suffer no more from you.) You have stowed them together as close as ever they could lie, with-out any regard either to decency . . . (p. 24)

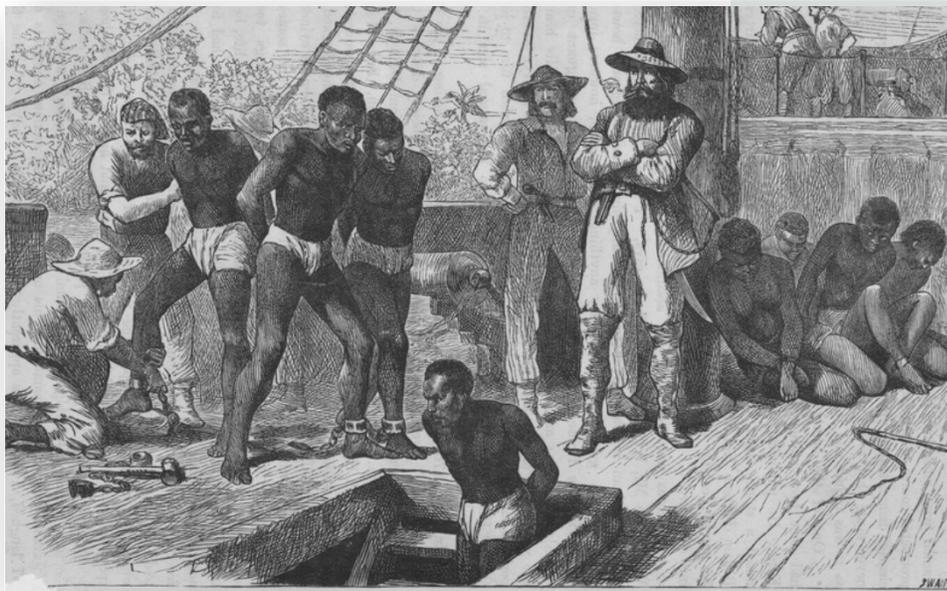
Wesley also directed his comments to the businessmen of the slave trade.

This equally concerns every Merchant, who is engaged in the Slave-trade. It is You that induce the African villain to fell his countrymen; and in order thereto, to steal, rob, murder men, women and children without number: By enabling the English Villain to pay him for so doing; whom you over pay for his execrable labour. It is your money, that is the spring of all, that impowers him to go on: So that whatever he or the African does in this matter is all your act and deed. And is your conscience quite reconciled to this? Does it never reproach you at all? Has gold entirely blinded your eyes, and stupefied your heart? Can you feel, can you feel no harm therein? Is it doing as you would be done to? (pp. 25-26)

Wesley quoted an enslaved man in Liverpool who asked his master,

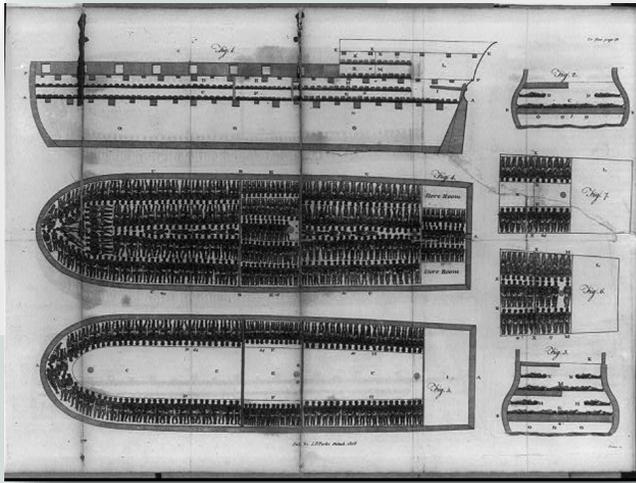
" . . . What if some of my countrymen were to come here, and take away my Mistress [the master's wife] and Master Tommy and Master Billy

(cont. on p. 14)



Swain, J. (1835). *On Board a Slave-Ship* [Painting]. Wikipedia. Note: Slaves aboard a slave ship being shackled before being put in the hold. A wooden engraving. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:On Board a Slave-Ship_engraving_by_Swain_c._1835.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:On_Board_a_Slave-Ship_engraving_by_Swain_c._1835.jpg)

(cont. from p. 13)



Artist unknown. (1808). [Cutaway sectional views of a slave ship, showing every bit of space occupied by prone slaves]. [Engraving]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2022651737/>

[the children] and carry them into our country, and make them slaves, how would you like it?"

[The man's] answer was worthy of a man: "I will never buy a slave more while I live."

O let his resolution be Yours! Have no more any part in this detestable business. . . . Be you a man! Not a wolf, a devourer of the human species! Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy. (p. 26)

Wesley spoke to the plantation owner:

And this equally concerns every Gentleman that has an estate in our American Plantations: Yea all Slave-holders of whatever rank and degree: seeing Man-buyers are exactly on a level with Men-

slavers. Indeed you say, "I pay honestly for my goods and I am not concerned to know how they are come by: Nay but you are: You are deeply concerned to know they are honestly come by. (p. 26)

Otherwise you are partaker with a thief, and are not a jot honestier than Him. . . . Now it is your money that pays the Merchant, and thro' him the Captain, and the African Butchers. You therefore are guilty, yea principally guilty, of all these frauds, robberies and murders. You are the spring that puts all the rest in motion they would not stir a step without you....(p. 26)

And Wesley's words address inheritance, an issue relevant to the Bishop Andrew case:

Perhaps you will say, "I do not buy any Negroes: I only use those left me by my Father....Had your Father, have you, has any man living a right to use another as a slave? It cannot be that either War, or contract, can give any man such a property as another as he has in his sheep and oxen. Much less is it profitable that any child of man, should ever be born a slave. Liberty is the right of every human creature, as soon as he breathes the vital air. And no human law can deprive him of that right which he derives from the law of nature.

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A World's Fair Memory: Memory Adams, Trinity's Celebrated Ambassador

By Pamela C. Crosby

As noted in the series on the 1844 Debates, the first recorded church officers to attend a business meeting at the church we now call Trinity were **Peletiah Whitehurst, Davis Floyd, Benjamin Thornton, and Miles Blake**—all owners of enslaved people ("Third..," 1829; Schweninger & Howell, 2003, pp. 142, 143, 144, 150; "Miles Blake," n.d.).

To serve these men and others who were profiting in some way from slavery, Tallahassee maintained an extensive slave trade center—one of the

largest in Florida because the town was located in the "heart of the cotton belt." A considerable percentage of those traded were brought in from different areas by professional traders. Many arrived at St Marks on cargo ships and put into holding slave pens whose structures had special cells (Smith, 2017, pp. 28-29).

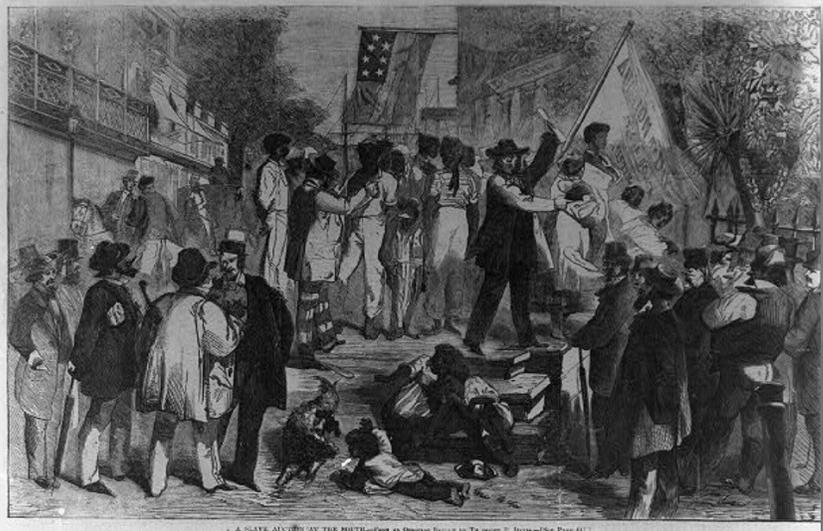
One of the enslaved who came to our town in the 1840s was a young woman named **Memory Adams**. She had been born into slavery in 1822 in Virginia, and when she had reached the age of

25, a slave dealer named **Knight** forced her and other enslaved people to walk from Virginia to Tallahassee to be sold. After Memory came to Tallahassee, she was put up for sale on the slave auction block, and sold for \$800 to **John Argyle**, a Tallahassee merchant (1870 US Fed. Census; “Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1).

Argyle had moved to Tallahassee in 1828, bringing with him five enslaved people and two wagons of equipment. He would serve as a city council man, receiver of public moneys for the District of Tallahassee, and a cotton merchant (“Pilot. . .,” 1972, p. 3E; Sevigay, 2001, p.2B; Appointed...,” 1844, p. 2; Smith, 2024, p. 12).

Memory’s duties included caring for the Argyle children. During that time, she learned how to read and write by helping them with their studies. Even after emancipation, she lived with the Argyles for a period of years (“Guide. . .,” n.d.2; “Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1). She became very close to at least one of the children as we shall see later.

After emancipation, Memory¹ served as a house servant for some of Tallahassee’s most prominent families, as well as a cleaner for businesses in the city’s downtown. Because prestigious families knew her and were impressed with



Artist unknown. (1861). *A Slave Auction in the South*. [Engraving]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/resouce/ds.10813/>

her, she had opportunities not afforded other freed Blacks in the city (“Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1; “Guide. . .,” n.d.2).

Memory’s husband was **John Adams**. It is not clear exactly what year she married him. Government documents indicate he had been born in Maryland around 1824. He worked for a railroad company and owned real estate that was valued at \$300. They had no children. Unfortunately, he died by drowning on June 30, 1870—further details of his death are not available (Image 82; Image 136).

A person of impeccable character, Memory was described by one newspaper as being so “strictly honest” she could “get credit at any store in the city” (“A Distinguished. . .,” 1893, p. 3; *Guide. . .*,” n.d.; *Savannah...*, 1893, p. 3).

This loveable and charming character was also described as a “a specimen of the old antebellum type. . . rapidly disappearing as the years roll by.” Known by everyone in town, she “dressed always the same, wearing gingham, made with plain, tight waist and full skirt, a long, full white apron, tied in the back with a large bow, and a white handkerchief crossed on her breast.” She sang as she walked, carrying “a little hearth broom, dusting feathers, old-fashioned water can and bag in one hand, and her umbrella in the other.” The broom afforded two purposes: one for (cont. on p. 16)



Kirkbride, J.J. (1884-1891). *Old Slave Pen-Thomasville, Georgia* [Photograph]. <https://www.loc.gov/item/00650898/> Memory was likely housed before her auction in a building resembling a large warehouse because Tallahassee was a huge trade center of enslaved people.

(cont. from p. 15)

cleaning—the other for brushing sticks aside in her path because she refused to step over them—a fear she had that others called an amusing superstition (“Distinguish. . .,” 1893, p. 3; Old...,” 1924, p. 1; *Savannah...*, 1893, p. 3).

Yet, in some ways, she embodied the modern, independent woman when she traveled alone from Tallahassee to the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893. Memory was in her 70s when she first heard about the world exhibition from her employer, **Judge Jesse Bernard**, a lay leader at Trinity. After learning the details from Judge Bernard, a World’s Fair commissioner, she set her mind to going there, selling photos of herself to earn money for expenses (“Guide. . .,” n.d.; “Bringing...,” n.d.; [Aunt Memory....], n.d).

Although she had never traveled over 30 miles from Tallahassee after coming here, she wanted to go to the world exhibition “to see how man [had] used the wisdom God given him.” And if God would give her enough “health and strength,” it was her “Christian duty” to make the trip (“Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1; “Savannah...,” p. 3).

It took her three days to say good-bye to all of her friends in Tallahassee. She was still close to the Argyle family, and a daughter pleaded with her not to go, explaining that she might not ever see her again. Memory replied, jokingly, that the daughter certainly would not see her again—if the daughter died before she got back (“Distinguish...,” 1893, p. 3; Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1).

When the time came to board the train, she had with her—along with her baggage and her usual items—sandwiches, sweets, bottles of coffee, and two baked chickens (Distinguish. . .,” 1893, p. 3).

Upon her arrival to Chicago a janitor, whom Judge Bernard had contacted, met her to take her to a boarding house. On the following Monday morning, Judge Bernard invited her to meet the other World’s Fair commissioners. They, like everyone else at the fair, were drawn to her old-fashioned clothes and warm and lively personality. When she was asked what church she attended, she responded proudly that she was a



[Aunt Memory Adams posed for a photo - Tallahassee, Florida].[n.d.]. RC00722. [Photograph]. Florida Memory. <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/24745>

“Methodist from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet” (“Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1).

Memory was a phenomenal sensation at the fair, which attracted more than 25 million people from all over the globe. In fact, an entire column about her visit to the exhibition was published in a Chicago newspaper—drawing international attention to her. Feeling very pleased to see her name in the paper, she said, “Now my name is known all over the country”—and she was right! (“Guide. . .,” n.d.; “World’s. . .,” n.d.; “Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1).

After she returned to Tallahassee, she resumed her life here. Even though Black churches had their own services, she had been attending Trinity for many years. The 1893 Chicago World’s Fair happened the same year that the Methodist Church (we now know as Trinity) would oversee

the construction of a new building, which would replace the 1840/1875 church structure. So after Memory returned from her extraordinary visit, she would soon be attending services in a brand new church building (“Guide. . .,” n.d.; History, n.d.; “Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1).

Even though Black churches had their own services and following, Memory was the only Black person who attended Trinity for many years after emancipation, according to Tallahassee accounts. The enslaved and later emancipated Blacks had been expected to sit in the galley in the former 1840 church. After the 1893 church structure was built without a gallery, Memory found a place where she loved to sit: on the pulpit steps in the front of the sanctuary. Although fellow congregants suggested she might want to sit where there was plenty of room in the back of the sanctuary, she protested, insisting that she had come to hear the gospel, and being up close allowed her to “drink in every word” (“Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1).

Seeing she was determined, church members made sure that an armchair was positioned near the pulpit where she would be more comfortable, and that is where she sat every Sunday until her

death. But Memory always came in late—sometimes it was after the minister had been half-way through his sermon before she would make her way to her seat. When she was ready to sit down,

she didn't quietly take her seat, but her chair was turned this way and that [way] until she got the required position, then laying aside her broom, water can, bag, and umbrella, she would listen with rapt attention to the discourse” (“Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1).

At one point, in 1896, Memory was not at church as had been normally expected, and she also was not continuing with her daily responsibilities. Her friends were troubled to learn that she was very sick. The daughter of John Argyle, her former owner, nursed her during her illness (“Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1; “Florida,” 1898, p. 6).

Memory refused to take any medicine because she felt God’s will would be done, and she believed that when the time came for her death, God would raise her up to heaven. In fact, she died, sitting in a chair in her house. She was around 76 years old (“Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1; “Florida,” 1898, p. 6; 1870 US Fed. Census).

Her funeral took place at Trinity, the church that she loved and who loved her. **Rev. J. B. Lee**, Trinity’s pastor, officiated, and mostly Whites of the city and Trinity members attended her funeral. During her life, she had saved her earned money for a house of her own, and she willed the house to the city’s African Methodist Episcopal Church (“Old. . .,” 1924, p. 1).

Note

1. Memory Adams was known as “Aunt Memory Adams,” a title commonly used to address older Black women during that time. Although likely used by some in her community as a mark of respect and/or endearment, this term was widely applied by White society during the 1800s to deny Black women the respect of titles like “Miss” or “Mrs.”

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(cont. on p. 18)



Image 136. Freedman’s Bureau. 566522 - Registers of Signatures of Depositors, 1865-1874. Roll 05: Tallahassee, Florida; Aug 25, 1866-Jan 15, 1872 <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/183918:8755?tid=&pid=&queryid=f6fb6860-7da2-4e2b-af2b->

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"Joel Is Dead!": A Civil War Story

By Mike Melder

To honor the 175th year of the founding of (what we now know as) Trinity United Methodist Church, the edited volume, *Trinity Methodist Church: Tallahassee's First Church 1824-1999*, was published in 1999. This book is a worthy record that captures most of the history of the church; however, the information provided for the period of the American Civil War (1861-1865) is wanting (Yates, 1999).

Unheard Voices

Church records for this period are absent other than the *Quarterly Conference Minutes*, which are notes of meetings of the lay leaders, as well as those of the pastors, who were **John W. Harwell** (1861), **J. O. Branch** (1862-1863), **F. A. Branch** (1864), and **A. J. Wooldridge** (1865). However, there is a great need to add to the archives stories of the experiences of those people who were associated with the church while being directly affected by the war during this crucial time (McLarty, n.d.).

A Divided Church

In 1860, Christians made up the largest part of

Florida's population: Methodists, 30,360 members; Baptist, 20,325 members; Presbyterians, 9,580 members; Catholics, 4,350; and Episcopalians 3,175. The Methodists had split over the issue of slavery a year after Florida's statehood (1845). **John Wesley** was the founder of the Methodist movement, and he was opposed to slavery. By the early nineteenth century, the national Methodist Church was mostly silent on the issue. Abolitionism grew stronger by the 1830s, and the two sides became more outspoken. The Georgia Annual Conference in 1837 resolved that "Slavery as it exists in the United States, is not a moral evil." Southern Methodists withdrew from the national church in 1845 (Parker, 2018, pp. 117-118).

A Divided Florida

States' rights and secession were compelling issues leading up to the Civil War. While most of Florida's leaders supported disunion, **Richard Keith Call** of Tallahassee was among those who opposed it. Although he was among the owners in Florida with the largest number of enslaved indi-



[Miles Blake]. [n.d.]. [Photo] Find a Grave. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/5541301/miles-blake>.
[Susan Parish Blake]. [Photo] Find a Grave. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/5541303/susan-blake>

viduals, he strongly opposed secession. He was twice territorial governor of Florida and a Florida delegate to Congress. While the secession of Florida from the union was not a totally unified effort; nevertheless, Florida’s delegates voted to leave the union on January 10, 1861 (McConville, 2016; The Grove, n.d.; “Rejoining the Union,” 2018).

The Blake Family

The Blake family of Miccosukee, Florida, would be severely affected by this decision. **Miles Blake** was a recording steward in the early days of the church. Miles moved to Middle Florida from North Carolina in 1826, shortly after Florida became a U. S. territory in 1821. He was a successful merchant, but in his later life, he became a planter (Second...,” 1830; Crosby, 2023, p. 2; “Miles Blake,” 1840).

He and his wife, **Susan Parish Blake** established Blakely Plantation in eastern Leon County. Miles and Susan’s children included **Joel Clifton, Walter Raleigh, Isham Miles, and Ann Eliza** (“Blake ...,” n.d.).

Joel was born on Blakely Plantation in 1831. He married **Laura A. Parish** on May 30, 1853. Joel and Laura established Ingleside Plantation by purchasing land (2,600 acres) to the east of Blakely Plantation. Ingleside was located in extreme northeast Leon County on Lake Miccosukee. In 1860, there were 118 slaves working Ingleside to provide cotton as a cash crop. Today

much of Ingleside is known as Ring Oak Plantation (“Blake...,” n.d.; Wellendorf, 2015, pp. 12-17; “Joel...,” “Ingleside...,” “1860...,” n.d.).

Three Brothers Go to War

Joel, Walter, and Isham joined the Florida 5th infantry regiment CSA in February 1862. Joel served as a 1st Lieutenant in company K. The 5th Florida regiment was assigned to the Army of Northern Virginia, fighting in all major battles involving the army from 1862–1865 and beginning with over 1,000 troops. By the time of the Army’s surrender at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, however, the names of only 53 men were left on the roll (Greenwalt, 2018; Robertson, 1903, p. 152; Wright, 1958, p. 366; “5th Florida...,” n.d.; “5th Regiment...,” n.d.).

A Fallen Son

Among the most significant battles of the American Civil War was the Battle of Gettysburg. It was fought on July 1, 2, and 3, 1863. **Gen. Robert E. Lee** and the Army of Northern Virginia were seeking to take the war north with the aim of a major victory and the hope of an end to the war. On July 2, the 5th Florida Infantry Regiment



(cont. on p. 20)

[Joel Clifton Blake]. (n.d.) [Photo]. Ancestry. <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/collection/1030/tree/19983978/person/888143753/media/b991139b-d863-4806-a5fe-e136c2bf104f?queryId=54081172-d9a9-4d7f-a78ab73d30b1c5e0&searchContextTreeId=&searchContextPersonId=& phsrc=Ujh43& phstart=successSource>

(cont. from p. 19)

was part of an assault near the center of the Union line (Foote, 1994; Hawk, 1986).

This assault was not successful, and the regiment suffered many casualties. Met by union artillery fire in the late afternoon, Lt. Joel Blake was among the fallen (Greenwalt, 2018).

A story published in the *Apalachee* recounts that

Lieutenant Blake was so violently killed at Gettysburg that his body was never found. A strange phenomenon occurred in connection with his death. Family tradition reports that his mother, Susan, was eating dinner at Blakely Plantation when all at once she screamed, "Oh my God, my Joel is dead!" It was later claimed that Lieutenant Blake was killed at this exact time. (Reaver, 1962 p. 5)

The Aftermath

Joel had written several letters to his wife Laura and his sister Annie during 1862 and 1863. The letters provide an insight into the conditions of the time and his love toward his wife and family. Copies of the letters are preserved in the Yates Center for review and safe keeping (Reaver, 1962).

Miles Blake died on Blakely Plantation in 1840 at the age of 54. Susan Parish Blake died in Leon County in 1868 at the age of 59. Laura Parish Blake, Joel's wife, later married Joel's brother Walter in 1871. She died in 1878 at age 43. It is worth noting that Laura's uncle was **William R King**, Vice President of the United States under **President Franklin Pierce**. Brothers Walter and Isham survived the war and returned to Leon County. Sister Ann married **John Cromartie** and lived until 1903 ("Miles L. Blake," n.d.; "Joel...," n.d.; "Brooks...," 2003; "Ann Elizabeth...," n.d.; "Ann Eliza...," n.d.).

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Trinity UMC Historical Society

Cecile Baker, Chr. of Com. for the Pres. of Church History
Pamela C. Crosby, Pub. Editor & Webmaster
E. Lynn McLarty, Church Hist; **Amy Jones**, Ld. Archivist
Pat Striplin, Record. Sec.; **Rhonda Work**, Retiring Chair
Nancy Kerce, & **Susan Mick**, Project Leaders
Marti Chumbler, **Gloria Colvin**, **Amy Henderson**,
Judy Levy, **Cindy McDuffie**, & **Mike Melder**,
Supportive Members

Making History: News from Trinity's Historical Society and Committee for the Preservation of Church History

By the Leadership Team

Publication of Trinity's History Addendum

Trinity United Methodist Church, Trinity's official history book, covers the years 1824 to 1999. A supplement that features years 2000 to the Bicentennial year of 2024, as well as its observance in 2025, will soon be published. Plans are underway to select a publisher within the month. **Marti Chumbler** has researched and written the chapter, which provides a valuable addition to the ongoing historical narrative of Trinity.

A Treasured Record of Trinity Life, the Back Issues of the Church Newsletter Is Now Complete

Earl A. McIntyre edited the first church newsletter, *The Tower* whose inaugural issue was published in April 1957. McIntyre, an FSU journalism professor, oversaw one associate editor and 15 content editors, according to the inaugural issue. The name of the publication changed in May to *Spire News* and again in October to *Trinity Tidings*, a total of three different names in one year!



Amy Henderson has worked in multiple roles to preserve records, including as a transcriber for membership rolls and scanning *Tidings* back issues.

There was no newsletter from 1963 to 1973; instead, information about church events was squeezed into the Sunday's worship bulletin. In 1974-1994, church news was presented in a newspaper format, edited by **Linda Yates**, whose experience included editing the official journal of the Florida Bar. Over the decades, various versions of the newsletters would undergo transitions, reflecting editors' skills, audience demands, and technology of the current day.

Since 2011, issues have been posted online. To complete the archives, **Amy Henderson** scanned hundreds of pages from issues spanning 1957 to 2011 (with the exception of the gap years). Lynn McLarty saved the PDFs on thumb drives and dropped off the drives to **Pam Crosby**, webmaster, who uploaded the early issues on the site.

With **Lynn McLarty's** vision and direction, the project has brought to online readership one of the most valuable and treasured collections of historical records in Trinity's history.

Crossroads Article Wins National Award

"From Miccosukee to Soochow: Sue Blake, Florida's First Female Medical Missionary," an article published in the October 2023 issue of *Crossroads* and authored by **Pam Crosby**, received national attention at the annual awards ceremony of UMCcommunications, the official denominational agency, and the United Methodist Association of Communicators (UMAC), a professional organization for church communicators. The ceremony was held in Kansas City on October 28, 2025.

The UMAC Awards of Excellence selection process recognizes distinction in the areas of print and digital media, visual arts, and social media and podcasts. Crosby's article won third place in the feature article category of print media, which is a human-interest story or article that focuses on a particular person, place, or event; is not closely

(cont. on p. 22)



Playmates at the Soochow Woman's Hospital in Crosby, P. (2023, October). "From Miccosukee to Soochow: Sue Blake, Florida's First Female Medical Missionary." *Crossroads*, p. 7.

tied to a recent news happening; and is often written in a narrative format.

The spirit of this competition is to recognize the achievements of those who played a key role in the creative process (writing, designing, producing, etc.) and in producing communication material based on these categories: purpose, content, creativity, execution, and regard for target audience. Competition included submissions from professional staff as well as volunteers.



Amy Jones, lead archivist, is now leading efforts to preserve Trinity's photos as her latest project.

The article details the life of **Sue P. Blake**, a woman from Miccosukee, who became Florida's first female medical missionary. After converting to Christianity at 17, Blake trained as a nurse in Chicago in 1890 with the support of the Woman's Missionary Board of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MECS). She went on to serve at the Woman's Hospital in Soochow, China, starting in September 1892. A stained-glass window panel in the 1893 church (Trinity MEC, South) was dedicated to her, bearing her name. The story illustrates the impact of female leadership on early international medical missions. You can read the award-winning article at <https://www.tumcthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-October-Crossroads.pdf>

Amy Jones Declares 2026 the "Year of the Picture" in the Yates Center

Amy Jones, lead archivist of Trinity's Committee for the Preservation of Church History, came to Trinity in 2023 and as a new church member quickly volunteered to organize the archives in the Yates Center. Now that she has overseen, as well as done, most of the heavy work in organizing and sorting documents, she is turning her attention to directing her team of assistants in sorting and filing photos that are currently stored in room 310 in the Center.

The purpose of photo preservation is to provide historical documentation of events and persons as well as to provide a store of selections to be used for future research articles. The photos in our collection are in many formats—paper, slides, and negatives, as well as digital media. Some are labeled, with persons identified, but most are not.

We welcome volunteers to assist in sorting, identifying, and and/or labeling photos in this "Year of the Photos." Those who need more information, should write **Pam Crosby**, *Crossroads* editor, at pcrosby@tumct.org.

A Call to Action to Preserve Trinity's History

In "Preserving Our History: A Vision for Trinity's Membership Records" (from January 2026

Tidings), **E. Lynn McLarty** describes the church's membership records as invaluable primary sources for tracking church growth and family lineages. Because these documents play a foundational role in Tallahassee's development, he, along with his team of volunteers, has undertaken proactive steps to preserve these fragile records, making them available for contemporary and future generations. Below are the individuals involved in the 30-year effort to digitize and preserve the church's historical records that continues to this day (organized by Google Gemini).



Cindy McDuffie with Lynn McLarty auditing membership records in the Yates Center.

I. Project Leadership and Early Support

E. Lynn McLarty (Church Historian): The visionary and lead coordinator of the project. Over the course of 30 years, he transcribed the records into Excel, developed the protocols for auditing, and managed the team of volunteers to move the records from paper to the internet.

Nellie Bird Mims: A long-time member and genealogist who provided the initial encouragement and "wholehearted" support for McLarty's idea.

Vernon and Jamie Parramore: The co-chairpersons of the Church History Committee in the early 1990s. They introduced McLarty to the physical membership books and helped gain official church approval and support for the project.

Rev. Dr. David Hortin: The Senior Minister, who gave the formal approval to proceed with the project.

Committee Leadership and Motivation

Linda and Bob Yates: Co-chairs of the Preservation of Church History Committee starting in 2003. They acted as "constant motivators," frequently checking on the project's progress and discussing how to make the records accessible to the public.

Transcription and Auditing Team

Judy Tait Levy: Joined in 2010 as the first "chairside auditor." She spent years working closely with McLarty to edit, format, and decipher handwritten entries in the early books.

Amy Henderson: Recruited in 2016, she served as a transcriber, working remotely to enter data from photocopies into Excel templates.

Earline Welch Adkison: Took over as chairside auditor in 2021 after Judy moved, helping verify the complex alphabetical sections of the later books.

Cecile Williamson Baker: An archives volunteer who helped audit the final sections of Books 8 and 9 and took the lead in putting Book 10 into electronic format.

Cindy McDuffie: Provided the final verification as a chairside auditor for the last two sections of the project in 2025.

Digital and Web Transition

Colleen McConnell: The first technical partner to join the team (2014). She transformed the static Excel databases into an easy-to-use, searchable format for online use, making the "internet reality" of the project possible.

Pamela Crosby: Succeeded McConnell as the technical lead. She reformatted the data for online presentation, developed a strategy for incremental updates, and eventually became the webmaster for the dedicated historical website (tumcthistory.org).

Trinity's History Digital Archives

Lynn McLarty is Trinity Historical Society's ambassador speaker. Since the beginning of 2024, he has spoken on various history

(cont. on p. 24)

topics to the local Kiwanis Club and Grey Memorial UMC, as well as our Lay Academy. He has also given several talks to the TUMC Circle # 1 Alpha members—a group of the United Methodist Women of Faith. On January 12, 2026, he presented a demonstration to this Circle group, which meets in the Westminster community, on the different communication sources at Trinity, with emphasis on online sources such as those in our digital ar-

chives at tumethistory.org.

Trinity's website features important records for family and scholarly research, audios and videos, back issues of the church's major publications, and other media. Regular reports of the website's analytics are presented at Historical Society meetings. The report recorded over 1200 views since its launching in July 2025.

From the Editor: What We Do with What We Learn from History

By Pamela C. Crosby, Crossroads Editor

The history of American Methodism is both complex and contradictory. Tragically, our history casts a harsh light on Trinity's founders and the leaders of the Florida Conference, who rejected the anti-slavery principles of **John Wesley**, the denomination's founding father. Of course, we should not forget that one of our church's most beloved members was a former enslaved woman. Yet, as we have seen in this issue, the Northern Reply, read by **Durbin, Peck and Elliot**, to Southern delegates, emphasized that despite **Bishop Andrew's** benevolent reputation, the right to own and sell human beings and the doomed inheritance of their children shape a reality such that it "must be slavery"—with all of its evil consequences.

Why should we learn about these uncomfortable facts in our Church's history? An article in the *Washington Post* can help answer that question. **Sidney Page** told the stories of **Kai Höss** and **Mike Igel**, whose ancestors were on opposite sides in WWII: Kai's grandfather was the notorious Auschwitz commandant **Rudolf Höss**, and Mike's grandparents were Holocaust survivors.

Kai has grappled for decades with the shame of his family's dark legacy. As a pastor he has dedicated his life to speaking out about the horrors of the Holocaust, driven by the conviction that "*the truth is painful, but silence is more dangerous.*" Mike underscores the fact that *Kai should not be held accountable for his grandfather's actions, but rather, he should be held accountable for*

what he does with the knowledge of those actions. In other words, descendants cannot change their lineage, but they can control how they face their futures.

Slavery is part of Trinity's dark history, and we should never act as though it had not happened. We continue to benefit from the legacy of the financial support of Trinity's founders, whose ownership of enslaved people was part of their (and has contributed to our Church's) economic prosperity. As your Historical Society, we pledge that we will not be silent about our church's past. Our history can teach us that prejudice and cruelty in a society that fails to recognize and restrain their influence can result in acts that steer us to unimaginable atrocities.

The Southern Statement of Protest made an unsettling claim: Because slavery was a part of the social and economic reality of the United States and in turn, that of the Methodist Church, it was connected to every member of the Church—regardless of personal conviction. Knowing our society's susceptibility to such atrocities must surely lead us to responsible actions that can help us work to prevent these evils from occurring again.

You can read Mike's and Kai's stories in the *Post* at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2025/03/27/rudolf-hoss-holocaustmuseum--mike-igel>