Land Acknowledgement & Personal Verse for the Day

Today we meet on lands that were once the home of the Piscataway Conoy and its related tribes. May we remember and honor them.

Matthew 22:37-40 “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”
Enslavement and the Church in Maryland, 1692-1864
Who am I?

• Franklin A. Robinson, Jr., archivist with the Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, and a lifelong Episcopalian (St. Thomas’ Parish, Prince George’s County), and the parish historian.

• Contracted to research on the root parishes (8) of the EDOW, 1692-1864.
Finding Your Roots! Things to keep in mind:

Research is ongoing. Completion is contemplated for early 2023.

Maryland is not Virginia. In Maryland, the Anglican Church was not Established until 1692.

Anglicans are not Jesuits.

Governmental support of parishes ended in 1776.

Parish records are very spotty and incomplete, many types of records no longer exist.

1807-1808 the United States and Great Britain outlaw the Atlantic slave trade.

April 1862 slavery abolished in the District of Columbia.

Maryland abolishes slavery in November 1864.

EDOW was created out of the EDOM in 1895, history prior to is at the EDOM Archives in Baltimore.

The eight parishes researched are the root of all current parishes in the EDOW and indicative of all Maryland parishes prior to 1864.
So, Who Are We Talking About?

The original eight 1692 parishes that now lie within the EDOW:

• **St. Mary’s County**: William & Mary (Valley Lee), King & Queen (Chaptico), All Faiths (Charlotte Hall);

• **Prince George’s County**: St. Paul’s (Baden) and Piscataway (St. Johns, Broad Creek);

• **Charles County**: William & Mary (Pickawaxon)(Wayside), Port Tobacco (La Plata), Nanjemoy (Durham)(Ironsides).
EDOW Posed 3 Questions:

• Did any parish engage in slavery by owning enslaved persons or by participating in the sale or transportation of them?

• Did any parish benefit directly from slavery by the use of enslaved labor to work church lands, to erect church buildings, or through the sale of enslaved persons to fund church bequests?

• Did any parish benefit indirectly from slavery by receiving gifts, subsidies or bequests from the wealth accumulated
Overall . . .

- **Everyone** participated in an economy that was in part supported by enslaved labor.

- The spiritual life of the enslaved was a concern, even if the church usually avoided debating the condition of enslavement. 1704 law passed in Maryland to ensure baptism did not confer freedom.

- Some priests committed to including the enslaved as a part of their ministry and offered baptism, confirmation, and marriage. This is true for the entire time period to 1864.

- By law enslaved were not to work on the Sabbath Day. 1723 AMD, Vol. 34, pgs. 733-737.

- Enslaved persons did attend church services, the Rev. Mr. Giles Ransford of St. Paul’s Parish notes that one enslaved man, “... Was a constant communicant.” (1724) This is also true for the time period researched to 1864.
Question 1. Did any parish engage in slavery by owning enslaved persons or by participating in the sale or transportation of them?

- To date I have found only one instance of a parish owning and selling enslaved. December 1796, William and Mary Parish, Charles County was authorized by the Maryland General Assembly to sell the enslaved in their possession, “and the money arising from such sales to invest in real or other property, in their discretion, for the use and benefit of the said parish.” (Ref: Archives of Maryland, Volume 105, pages 160, 230-231, 1796)

- Some vestryman and priests owned enslaved persons. Of the 48 original vestrymen elected in 1692 (6 vestrymen per parish), 20 owned enslaved at the time of their deaths, a total of 307 persons, on average 15 enslaved per vestryman.
Question 1 (continued)

- Both Maryland Commissaries (representatives of the Bishop of London) Jacob Henderson (Western Shore) and Christopher Wilkinson (Eastern Shore) owned enslaved and held indentures.

- Jacob Henderson (?-1751) at his death owned twenty-two enslaved and one indentured: Bellinder, Bess, Daphney, Davie, Dick, blind George, Hercules, “new” Jack, Jamey, Jerry, Kate, Nacey “(a boy)”, Nan, Nell, Pegg, Peter, Sam, Sue, Tobey, Tom, Will (who was infirm) and Willer, ranging in age from three-month-old Sue to one-hundred-year-old Bess. John, a white indenture, still had two years and two months left on his indenture. “old Jenny” had been set free in 1719. (Prince George’s Court Record, Liber H, pg. 930, Nov. Ct. 1719, MSA; Prince George’s County Will Book, 1740-1770, pgs. 441-442, MSA; Henderson’s inventory, Prince George’s County Inventories 1747-1758, pgs. 379-386, dtd. 19 November 1751 and an additional inventory dtd. 13 November 1753, MSA.)

- Christopher Wilkinson (?-1729) owned at least 7 enslaved and indentured at his death: John Dorson (white), Jenny, Moll, Mary, Alfred, Little Tom (white), Robin (mixed race), Shoalloe (mixed race), John Moore. Once recommended all parishes be provided with glebes and houses with “mulattos, . . . (once the right of the church) . . . ” being supplied as glebe servants and managers. This was never instituted. (FP, Vol. 3, microfilm Reel 1, pg. 69, LoC; Manross, Fulham, pgs. xiii, 34-38; Perry, Collections, Vol. 4, pgs. 231-232.)
Did any parish benefit directly from slavery by the use of enslaved labor to work church lands, to erect church buildings, or through the sale of enslaved persons to fund church bequests?

- Yes . . . and . . ., this is complicated as vestrymen occasionally allowed their enslaved to act as sextons, laborers, or to do labor for the parish. Sometimes this work was done for pay, sometimes not, but absent detailed financial records we do not know if any of those payments were allowed to be kept by the enslaved or given to the enslaver. The records researched to date indicate that it was on a case-by-case basis. Simply yes, enslaved were used on occasion for church work.

- For sale of enslaved persons, see answer to question 1.
Question 3: Did any parish benefit indirectly from slavery by receiving gifts, subsidies or bequests from the wealth accumulated through the use of slave labor?

• Yes, again, a bit harder to track due to lack of records. No doubt wealth accumulated by persons owning enslaved who were also Anglican made its way into the parish accounts either by donation, gift, or bequest. To date, no indirect or direct subsidies or bequests have been discovered.
QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!!! (More to come!)