

GREENWICH AND THE PECULIAR INSTITUTION

James Cooke, local historian, recalls "Uncle" Lias Brooks who had been a slave and servant of the Greens and Veeders at Greenwich, Virginia. As a boy Cook remembers that the old Negro liked to tell a story of his sitting on a fence during a Civil War battle. A cannon ball hit the top rail and knocked him off. He didn't say whether it was a Rebel or Yankee missile. "Uncle" Lias lived to be one of the last remaining emancipated slaves in the community. There is a picture of black Brooks among a group of white men on the porch of the old Wood's store in Greenwich. (3-89)

At the time of the Civil War the majority of slaves were found in tidewater and coastal areas and in the deep South. (See appendix) Many slaves were owned by rich planters. Yeoman farmers and others had smaller numbers of slaves. Most white Southerners did not possess such servants.

Few Scottish and Scotch-Irish kept slaves. The later Scotch-Irish had come to the country in part because of their own "political and economic slavery." More persons of English extract owned slaves than others.

Englishman Charles Green owned slaves. The 1840 Savannah census revealed that he had two male and one female slaves living in his household on what is now Oglethorpe Avenue. (1-1) In 1860 he also had 7 adult and 9 slaves who had reached the age of 13 at Greenwich where he had a second residence and sheepfarm. One of these was Brooks a black coachman. (4-1,3)

The Reverend Thomas Bloomer Balch, Presbyterian Minister of the Greenwich Congregation prior to the Civil War owned slaves. He married Susan Carter of the wealthy and distinguished Virginia family in Fairfax. Possibly Susan inherited the slaves from her father.

Joseph Arthur Jeffries of Fauquier County on occasion visited the parson. He said of Balch, "From being a man of considerable means, he was literally eaten out by a number of Negro slaves that he owned and kept around him, for the most part in idleness, while his wife and children did most of the necessary domestic work. It is said to be fact that in winter one of his Negro men would go to him and say, 'Master, it is snowing hard and there is not wood at the woodpile, what must we do?' He would reply, 'You had all better go to bed and cover up warm till the storm is over.'" (6-1)

In some areas slaveholders treated their slaves brutally, justifying their treatment because they considered slaves only property. On the other hand Southerners like Balch treated slaves with care and affection and as members of their household. The same affection seemed to exist in the household of Charles Green. Brooks the black coachman drove Mrs. Lucy Green, to Macon, Georgia to confer with her husband. Their son, Edward Green, "misses Brooks particularly: so does his brother Gilbert..." (4-1) While slaves and masters often had close relationships at work and even in the home, socially the lines of separation were sharp.

Slaves sometimes participated in the worship of white churches. Greenwich and Warrenton Presbyterian and other sanctuaries had slave galleries. Generally in churches in the area blacks were not only segregated in the balcony but denied vote and office. Many did receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. After the Civil War joint worship ceased for the most part. (7-1)

Warrenton and Greenwich were joined together with one minister and a common Session for several years. The minutes reveal just prior to the Civil War that Warrenton had four slaves as members, Greenwich none.

It is possible that some blacks may be buried in the Greenwich Church Cemetery but there are no records that this is true. As a child, Mrs. Minnie McMichael, member of Greenwich Church, remembers one black person being buried on the property which now belongs to her son, Earle. Sunken ground and depressions indicate a number of graves. No markers are visible. The property was earlier known as Weaver's Plantation.



St. Paul's Episcopal Church of nearby Haymarket still has Cemetery by-laws which specifically exclude persons of African descent from being buried there. At Leesburg Presbyterian deceased black members were buried in graves alongside white members with whom they had not been permitted to sit inside the building, "an interesting contrast between time and eternity." (7-21)

Slave owners instructed blacks in the Bible. Some promoted conversion among the slaves. Others were afraid that the implication of "one in Christ" would endanger black servility.

White slave owners taught a basic morality to slaves. Little effort was given to controlling sexual affairs since reproduction was profitable to the owners. Charles Green seemed to have exerted more than usual concern. Anne Green said of the Green slaves that "their matrimonial affairs became so tangled during the war that a parson rode to The Lawn each Christmas to marry all couples afresh to the consorts of the moment. It was more respectable." (4-1)

The minutes of the Session meeting of June 10, 1860 reveal that the Moderator, Rev. J. W. Pugh, called the elders to deal with a "common rumor, that Anne, a servant of Mr. P. S. Johnson and a member of this church, has had a child born to her, she being unmarried and further that said Anne has been guilty of further conduct unbecoming a Christian in falsely accusing a member of the Church of seeking to have criminal intercourse with her..." (11-20)

On June 23rd Anne appeared before the Session to answer charges of fornication and falsehood against her. Anne admitted to the birth of the child but said that she did not think she was committing a sin since she planned to marry the father. Her marriage to him was prevented by the father being sold by his owner, Mr Tavenner.

Two other slave women were brought to testify that Anne has said in their presence that Mr. Johnson had "twice endeavored to have criminal intercourse with her and wanted to keep her as his mistress." (11-12) The Session found Anne guilty of both the charges of fornication and falsehood and expelled her from the Warrenton church.

Masters were especially concerned about the use of alcohol by blacks. A white member of the Greenwich Church, Charles Kulp, appeared before the Session to answer charges of breaking the Sabbath, card playing and the "constant practice of selling liquor to slaves and all others who wanted to purchase." (11-12) Charles Green was appointed his counsel for defense but Kulp was suspended until he showed satisfactory signs of repentance, which he never did.

Southern Christians lived in a secular culture which pressured them to behave in manners which their Christian convictions told them were sinful. This produced considerable internal conflict. Some historians say this underlying sense of guilt may have been a major contribution to the loss of the Civil War by the South. (2-23)

The slavery issue and the Civil War still influences the theology of the South. Many Southerners adopted "purity of the church" attitude which maintained that the church should remain separate and apart from all social action. Piety was relegated to no profanity, fornication, and alcohol. The emphasis was on personal salvation as opposed to political involvement. A "purity of the church" concept seems strange since prior to the end of the war the church was one of the greatest influences in Southern society and had much to do with the support of the war effort. Ministers exerted much influence and regularly preached on social and political issues including protests against abolition.

Virginia came close to passing a bill for the abolition of slavery in 1832 but the issue was lost in the House of Delegates by 7 votes. Robert E. Lee favored gradual emancipation. Members of the African Colonization Society sought emancipation and removal to Africa with financial compensation to owners. President Monroe had earlier worked out agreements with Liberia. Rev. Thomas Bloomer Balch took a great deal of interest in Liberia. He was an active member of the Colonization Society and apparently an agent for it. (8-48)

The "Savannah Daily Morning News," June 13, 1853 said, "The American Colonization Society and its auxiliaries have sent out to Liberia, since 1832, in their various expeditions 7,457 persons." "The Savannah Daily Morning News" of June 16, 1853 reveals that the treasurer of the Georgia Colonization Society was Charles Green. (10-231)

The work of the society was endorsed by churches and it gradually assumed more and more of a Christian enterprise. But the Society failed in its purpose. Blacks no longer had a relationship to Africa. Many sent over succumbed to fevers and died. As the war approached feelings ran too high and the endeavor fell into disrepute. Abolitionist demands from the North continued.



Lincoln finally delivered his Emancipation Proclamation. In 1863 Charles Green's slaves discovered they were free and they "departed capering one morning to return the same night it having occurred to them that there's no place like home when nothing else offers." (4-3)

Freedom for slaves meant massive adjustments for the worn torn nation. Virginia did not suffer as did South Carolina in the Reconstruction era. But it was difficult for persons of Prince William County to get used to the change in the status of the negro. Michael House, elder in Greenwich Church, in a letter of his brother John House, of Morresville, Indiana dated January 11, 1868 wrote that the blacks were considered their superiors.

...They have the elective franchise and was compelled to vote the radical tickets for delegates to a convention to frame a constitution for our state to suit the radical congress. The negroes were formed in what they call a union league and under that league they are sworn to support that party and many of them would have voted the conservative ticket but were afraid to do so. In fact many did and were immediately lynched and many were scared on the penalty of death. Now just think here are these poor ignorant people just from bondage who have but very little knowledge of our political matters who as the President says (truly too) does not know how to cast a vote and in fact many had forgot what names they registered under and on that account could not vote. And here these votes are forced on us to form a convention to make our state convention when I think the very best of our men should only have voted. I am opposed to universal suffrage to the white people. I would not be opposed to the negro voting if her were capable and in time when they become more enlightened than it will be time enough. But most assuredly they were better off in slavery than now. Of course there are some exceptions. But as a whole they were better off. We see nothing here what it is further south but it is enough seen here to confirm what I have said. They are lounging around many half clad and not enough to eat. They could get plenty of work to do it they would but won't until necessity compels them and as a matter of course that makes them dishonest and many have flattered themselves that they would get farms by confiscation but if ever that comes to pass there will be a war of races. Now as for myself I care nothing about slavery, but I feel for them who had scarcely any other property and Lincoln had no more authority (than I had) under the constitution of the United States to set them at liberty. He said it was a military necessity, but now that is stopped..." (5)

The South did not have the will to win the war. The North proved not to have the will to pursue victory in the Reconstruction. Many Southerners were in one way relieved not to have to support slaves they did not need or their consciences disapproved but they had no intention of giving up control over blacks. The war may have been lost over slavery and independence but the peace was "won--for state rights, white supremacy, and honor. In this way, the South could claim 'a moral if not a military, victory.'" (quoted in 2-417)

After the war free blacks were often employed as servants in Greenwich community. There seems to have been little tennant farming as occurred in other parts of the South. Many Negroes moved looking for better opportunities.

Some of the blacks in the area settled in a nearby area known as the settlement shown on the Fauquier county map as Greenville. Robert Turner, 83 years old, said that after the Civil War his ancestor, Silas Green, who had been a slave was given 10 or 11 acres. Silas Green built a little log house, the first in the community, and it was for this Green that the community was named.

Robert Turner does not know who gave his ancestor the land. It is possible that there was some connection between Silas Green and Charles Green of Greenwich since slaves were sometimes named for their masters. Charles Green may have provided the land for Silas Green.

Turner worked in the kitchen at The Lawn, the Green residence, for the family of Ann Green Mackall when he was a little boy, he said. His job was to help with the pots and pans and tend to the fire. He later worked across the road for the family of Mary Green Veeder.

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Greenville community once had a store and a public grammar school. It still has a church, Little Zion Baptist, which was organized 1879 with the help of the Greenwich Oakdale Baptist minister, Rev. Burr Dulin. The first place of worship was a brush arbor with four poles and services could be conducted only in good weather, said Robert Turner.

Before he died Oakley Taylor of Greenwich told James Cooke that The Reverend Alexander Broadnax Carrington, Minister at Greenwich Presbyterian Church, and who remained in the community until he died in 1910, would ask to be driven over to Greenville to perform wedding ceremonies when there was no pastor at Little Zion Baptist Church.

In her will of October 31, 1906 Charles Green's third wife, Aminta Elizabeth Green, said that since son, Andrew Low Green, had died, the portion of the estate that had been determined for him should go, "as a modest memorial to my husband, to The Georgia Infirmary of Savannah, Georgia." Green was greatly interested in the institution. It "is believed to be the oldest institution in this country for the relief and protection of aged and afflicted negroes..." As a result, a number of "Uncle" Lias's may have received some comfort in their last years. (9)

#### Appendix

In 1859 farms in Prince William County would run from a few to 300-400 acres with a number of tracts around 150-200 acres. The value of the land in 1859 was \$10-\$12 per acre. Gilbert Moxley owned 331 acres valued at \$4634 and taxed at \$18.51. (Prince William Land Tax Book 1782-1861)

There was considerable change in the population of Prince William County during the 19th century. After the original top soil was depleted many farmers left and went west. "Charles Green imported guano and salts to improve fertility." (9) Cotton and tobacco did not grow well in the area so there was less demand for black labor than in other areas of the South. A number of Quakers from New York and New Jersey purchased land in the county and discouraged slavery. Slaves were sold South as there was less demand for them locally. (3-24)

In 1790, Virginia's black population was 43.4 percent of the total. In 1860 it was 43.3 percent. According to the Personal Property Tax Lists, Prince William County, for the year 1860, in a section surveyed by R. F. Brawner around Greenwich, there were 762 free white males above 16, 791 slaves who have attained the age of 16, 619 white males exempted because of bodily infirmities, 46 free male Negroes, and 874 slaves who had attained the age of 12.

Most of the residents of the area either had no slaves or only one or two. (The following persons are buried in Greenwich Cemetery.) Personal Property Tax records for 1860 indicate that Joseph Cockerille had 4 adult slaves, Thomas W. Edmonds 2 adult and 2 who had attained the age of 12, J. W. Fitzhugh 1-3, Howson Hooe 0-0, Michael House 2-2, Eliza Green Low 2-1, Andrew Low 0-0, William L. McIntosh 0-0, James H. Moore 2-2, and Charles Green 7-9.

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