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Two London's in Williamsburg: Using Historical Imagination to Reinterpret the Meaning of
Reconciliation and Memorialization in the Archives

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in History from
The College of William and Mary


by

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Accepted for Highest Honors
(Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors)


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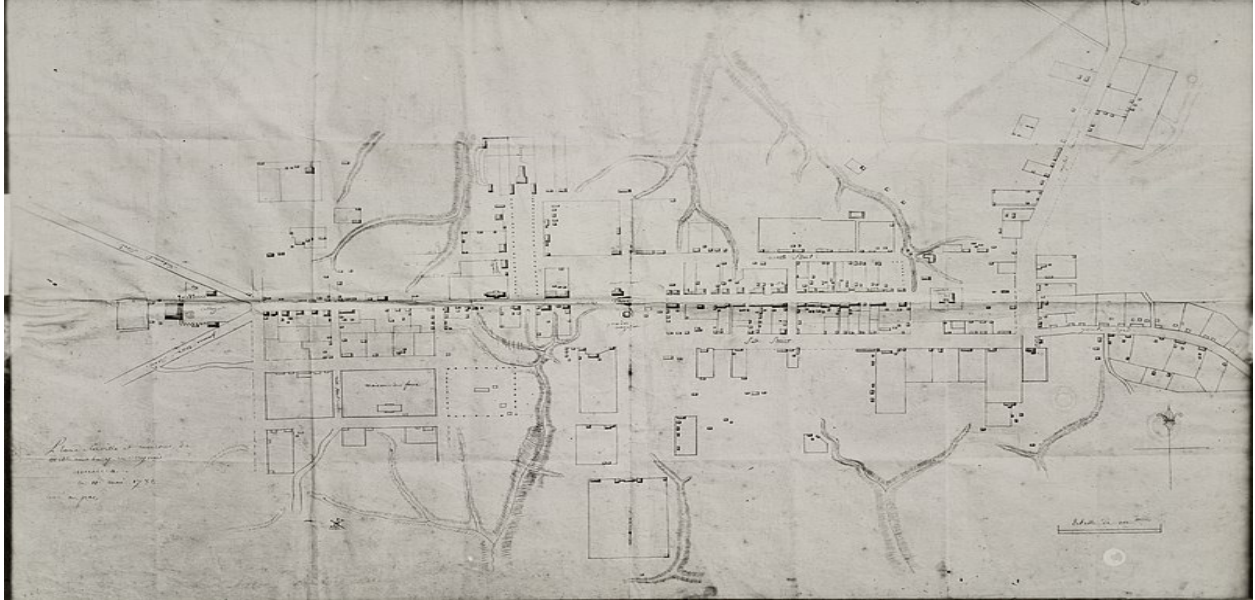
Abstract

This is the story of two enslaved Black males, both named London, who lived in 18th and 19th century Williamsburg, Virginia. One was a body servant, which served a similar function to a personal attendant, to the sons of Carter Braxton, when they were students at William & Mary.

The second London attended the Bray school, one of the first schools for free and enslaved African Americans in the continental United States. He was enslaved by a woman . . . who owned and operated a tavern in the town. Since both London's are largely absent from the archives, there is no way to fully account for their lives, but there is a way to imagine what their lives might have been like. This thesis argues that something can be learned about their existence by considering them through the experiences of their enslaved contemporaries, James Hambleton

Christian, a body servant, and tavern worker Gowan Pamphlet, who, for different reasons, are present in the archives.

Chapter I: Introducing London's- the Power of Historical Imagination, Reconciliation, and Memorialization defined and explored through Onomastics and a short history of William & Mary's involvement with Enslavement



Photograph of the "Frenchman's Map," ca. 1935 photograph of 1781 manuscript, A.D. White Architectural Photographs, Cornell University Library.

Chapter I: Introduction

In the last decade, the Lemon Project at the College of William & Mary has made significant progress uncovering the relationship between William & Mary and the enslaved communities that built the college into the esteemed institution it is today. The project has memorialized dozens of names previously lost to history, brought to life narratives that have been willfully ignored, and brought critical historical context to the reputation and deep history of William & Mary. These efforts have culminated in the creation of the Hearth: Memorial to the Enslaved, a physical reminder of the neglected aspects of Williamsburg's history with enslavement. Despite this tremendous progress, there remains a crucial gap in the history that has yet to be addressed. Various studies have examined the historical impact of the institution of slavery on the operations of campus, yet there is still a lack of data on the impact of certain enslaved communities at the College of William & Mary. This honor's thesis exposes the indirect ways in which the city of Williamsburg participated in slavery and reveals the scale of slavery at William & Mary. A lack of scholarly research has contributed to a lack of understanding of the university's more abstract involvement in mechanisms of slavery. The processes of slavery examined in this study have not been thoroughly evaluated by other scholars, in large part because some enslaved peoples were not related, via documentation in the archive, to William & Mary. As a result, William & Mary could distance itself from these more abstract processes of enslavement by simply omitting the names of those oppressed by the University. This thesis will attempt to fill the information gaps in the unknown histories of hundreds of enslaved individuals who have been memorialized at William & Mary.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this thesis includes:

1. How should historians transform their approach to memorialization to accurately reflect the histories of the many unnamed enslaved people in the archives?
2. How does the use of historical imagination impact reconciliation and memorialization?
3. How does an examination of a historian's positionality within their scholarship influence their work as a whole?

Main Argument

As a student historian examining the current state of memorialization of enslaved African Americans, I found the current techniques used to reconcile the histories of these individuals inadequate. It is imperative that new approaches to memorialization are employed, and that the historical record reflects the individual experiences of all enslaved peoples, not just those documented in the archive. To create this transformation, historians must go beyond tradition within the academy and use innovative methods, such as historical imagination. This process involves inserting agency into the incomplete narratives of individuals. While some critics may argue that historical imagination creates presumptions that may not reflect the realities of enslaved African Americans, their mere survival within an oppressive system is a form of resistance and one of the only things we can ascribe to these individuals. This paper attempts to reconcile the gaps in the memorialization process by promoting a form of reconciliation using historical imagination.

Methodology

This thesis uses an interdisciplinary approach to incorporate case studies, archival research, and experiences that have shaped my position as a historian. While this thesis approaches memorialization in a new and innovative way, it is rooted in the work of prior historians whose approaches to reconciliation and historical imagination have revolutionized memorialization. Ultimately this approach to memorialization promotes reconciliation and healing instead of being limited by the confines of the archive, and the traditional rules of

historiography.

Operational Definitions

Memorialization- refers to “A process that provides the spaces necessary to those affected by human rights violations to articulate their narratives. Memorial practices should stimulate and promote civic engagement, critical thinking and discussion regarding the representation of the past, but equally the contemporary challenges of exclusion and violence.”¹

One pertinent commentary about memorialization is Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Trouillot’s description of the historicization of slavery in postmodern America surfaces a critical analysis of how historical representation can address the inadequate representations of narratives on slavery. Trouillot notes that his work “Deals with the many ways in which the production of historical narratives involves the uneven contribution of competing groups and individuals who have unequal access to the means for such production.”² This work attempts to address the oversaturation of “Conceptualizations of history [that] tend to privilege one side of historicity over the other.”³ Trouillot concludes that “Most debates about the nature of history, in turn, spring from one or another version of this one-sidedness; and that this one sidedness itself is possible because most theories of history are built

¹ “History and Memorialisation: Narratives about the Past Examined through the Lens of Cultural Rights,” OHCHR, accessed March 28, 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-cultural-rights/history-and-memorialisation-narratives-about-past-examined-through-lens-cultural-rights>.

This research definition is taken from the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner

² Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Ebook of Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, c2015), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb04595.0001.001>.

³ Trouillot, 146

without much attention to the process of production of specific historical narratives while slavery hangs on as an issue.”⁴

Reconciliation- refers to “A comprehensive [process] to seek a more... ethically informed understanding of slavery’s role in the University’s pre-Civil War founding and post-war history.”⁵

One of the best examples of a commentary on reconciliation within the historical archive and the significance of archival silence is found in the work of Marissa J. Fuentes book, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*. Fuentes reckons with the contours of an archive that bends toward the historical oppressors and offers research methodologies to promote healing and suggests ways to overcome these archival obstacles. Fuentes’ comments on the process of archival reconciliation in her epilogue. She notes "This process of historicization demands strategies to manage the emotional response one has to such brutality in order to persist with these subjects—to be willing to take up and sit with this aspect of human degradation and to find meaning.”⁶ Meaning in the context of reconciliation involves a process that “Bring[s] otherwise invisible lives to historical representation in a way that challenges the reproduction of invisibility and commodification.”⁷

⁴ Trouillot, 157

⁵ “Research Summary | The University of the South,” accessed April 7, 2023, <https://new.sewanee.edu/roberson-project/learn-more/research-summary/>. This definition is taken from the University of the South (Sewanee).

⁶ “Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive on JSTOR,” accessed December 2, 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1c5chbv>.

⁷ Fuentes, 147

This thesis embodies the spirit of Fuentes's view of reconciliation as noted in her statement "gesture toward a reckoning of our own time. It is a history of our present."⁸

Historical Imagination-

Historian R.G. Collingwood defines historical imagination as "...The historian's picture of the past is...in every detail an imaginary picture..."⁹

Saiⁱdiya Hartman incorporates different practices that compose the act of historical imagination. While not explicit in defining historical imagination, Hartman identifies approaches that comprise critical fabulation including narrative restraint, and imagination to bridge the past and the present. Historical imagination is a "History of an unrecoverable past; it is a narrative of what might have been or could have been; it is a history written with and against the archive."¹⁰ Hartman's methodology does not "give voice to the slave, but rather... imagine[s] what cannot be verified."¹¹ The methodology of Critical Fabulation, Hartman notes, cannot be achieved properly without careful attention to narrative restraint. Narrative restraint is defined as "the refusal to fill in the gaps and provide closure."¹²

Hartman's utilization of critical fabulation, narrative restraint, and approach for bridging

⁸ Fuentes, 148

⁹ Lynn Speer Lemisko, "The Historical Imagination: Collingwood in the Classroom," n.d. This quote is attributed to R.G. Collingwood

¹⁰ Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (July 17, 2008): 1-14.

¹¹ Hartman, 12

¹² Ibid.

the past and the present compose the best practices for historical imagination.

Here, historical imagination is defined as “the threshold between what historians consider to be proper, imagination-free history and the malpractice of excessive imagination, asking where the boundary between the two sits and the limits of permitted imagination for the historian.”¹³

Structure

This thesis is divided into three chapters; Chapter I- Introduction, Chapter II- London and James Hambleton Christian, Chapter III- London and Gowan Pamphlet, and Conclusion.

The first chapter serves as a general overview and provides context for the history of enslavement at William & Mary. It also includes a brief history of the onomastics of the names of the individuals examined in my case study. Additionally, chapter I addresses the historical impact of this thesis along with an explanation of the questions considered.

The second and third chapters are case studies of enslaved individuals in Williamsburg. Chapter II introduces historical imagination and uses this technique to compare London, an

¹³ “Historical Imagination | Department of History.” Accessed April 8, 2023.

<https://history.osu.edu/publications/historical-imagination>. This definition is taken from the Ohio State University and Author David G. Staley

enslaved Bray School student, with Gowan Pamphlet, a more documented enslaved individual in the historical archive. This chapter details my time at the Bray Lab, my introduction to historical imagination, and the way I found the subjects for this thesis.

Chapter III employs a similar structure that outlines another case study that addresses the historic importance of reconciliation within the archive. Chapters two and three use a case study format to create a comparison between two enslaved individuals to identify different forms of resistance to systems of oppression and examine why the historic record includes certain individuals and excludes others. While these case studies are a dominant component of this thesis, they are merely illuminating how historians can approach memorialization in a new way that provides agency and a critical spotlight for the millions of enslaved people who are left voiceless within the archive.

Historical Impact

To contextualize the histories of enslaved people whose stories are unavailable in the archive, it is imperative to examine the historical impact of systemization of enslavement, and its influence in erasing the narratives of these enslaved individuals in the historical record. The Hoover Institution Library & Archives at Stanford University defines an archive as “documents that are no longer needed for their original purpose yet have significant informational and

evidential value for the purpose of writing history.”¹⁴ The importance of taking everyday information and using it to build a narrative of the history of enslavement is critical to understanding how stakeholders cooperated to institutionalize slavery in Williamsburg. For example, artifacts like the 1754 Bursar’s report commoditized the lives of enslaved peoples and turned them into one of myriad revenues listed on their accounting ledger. This Bursar’s report was one of many examples at William & Mary, and the greater Williamsburg area more broadly, where histories of people of color were overlooked in the archives and history books. Were it not for historians like Alonzo Thomas Dill, who actively sought out these histories even when they did not fall under the primary scope of their research, ascribing names to these enslaved persons would be impossible. The research discovered in the development of this thesis implicates many of the figures who shaped the City of Williamsburg, and whose names are emblazoned on academic buildings and residence halls across William & Mary’s 1,200 acres.¹⁵

A Brief History of Slavery Prior to the Revolutionary War at William & Mary

In order to reinforce the contextualization of Williamsburg’s systemization of enslavement, using the College of William & Mary as an example, one must first examine William & Mary’s historical exploitation of enslaved individuals. This examination begins with a brief overview of the university’s participation in systems of enslavement prior to the Revolutionary War followed by an overview of the College’s historic indifference towards

¹⁴ “Conducting Archival Research | Hume Center for Writing and Speaking,” accessed April 21, 2023, <https://hume.stanford.edu/resources/student-resources/writing-resources/research-and-library-resources/conducting-archival>.

¹⁵ “Numbers at a Glance,” William & Mary, accessed May 10, 2023, <https://www.wm.edu/offices/facilities/about/numbers-at-a-glance/index.php>.

recognizing its history of enslavement and concludes with an introduction to the Lemon Project: A Journey of Reconciliation and William & Mary's attempt to address its past.

Slavery as an institution played an outsized role in the founding of William & Mary. Author Craig Steven Wilder notes that one of the primary factors in the decision by Great Britain to grant a charter for William & Mary was the need to regulate a large population of enslaved people.¹⁶ Furthermore, the trustees of the charter were primarily planters and merchants from Virginia's leading landholding and slave holding families, and the profits from slave labor were apportioned by the charter to help fund the school.¹⁷ The charter itself specifically outlines that revenue from cash crops like tobacco are to be applied to "building and adorning the edifices and other necessities for the said college."¹⁸ Scholars also have suggested that buildings such as the Brafferton School and the Wren Building, in addition to the president's house and the alumni house, were built using enslaved labor.¹⁹ One of the functional ways that slavery operated on campus was through enslaved labor. The 1758 William & Mary statutes listed janitors, gardeners, cooks, butlers, and more as positions potentially occupied by enslaved persons.²⁰ In 1718, trustees received £1000, a portion of which was used to purchase 17 enslaved people for college use. Additionally, some of the funds were used to purchase Nottoway Quarter, a tobacco

¹⁶ Wilder, Craig Steven. *Ebony & Ivy : Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* First U.S. edition. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013.

¹⁷ Wilder, 43

¹⁸ Royal Charter Collection, Special Collections Research Center, Earl Gregg Swem Library, William & Mary.

¹⁹ Meyers, Terry L. *A First Look at the Worst : Slavery and Race Relations at the College of William and Mary* Williamsburg, Va: Marshall Wythe School of Law, 2008.

²⁰ James Blair, "The Statutes of the College of William and Mary in Virginia (1758)," Encyclopedia Virginia, accessed April 25, 2023, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/the-statutes-of-the-college-of-william-and-mary-in-virginia-1758/>.

plantation owned by the college until it was leased and eventually sold in the early 19th century.²¹ Donations or purchases of enslaved people were also made by multiple William & Mary namesakes including Lieutenant Governor Francis Nicholson (Nicholson Hall) and Lord Botetourt (Botetourt Complex).²² As the only college in the south prior to the Revolutionary War, William & Mary's utilization of enslaved labor set the standard for many of the southern institutions founded during the antebellum period, and deeply ingrained slavery and the contributions of enslaved laborers into the college's history.

Post-Antebellum and Contemporary Dialogue on the Ramifications of Slavery at William & Mary

After 200 years, the abolition of slavery, and fires in 1705, 1859, and 1862 that physically remade the campus and burned away many of the physical remnants of slavery at William & Mary, the current dialogue regarding the legacy of William & Mary and its enslaved has been contested by scholars.²³ In the Lemon Project's 2019 report outlining their first eight years, the project noted that "some people remain skeptical about the institution's real, meaningful, and long-term commitment to the work of reconciliation."²⁴ Part of the skepticism directed towards William & Mary and the greater Williamsburg community has to do with the college's dismissive views of slavery since its abolition after the Civil War. Professor Terry

²¹ Wilder, 43

²² Mary Goodwin "William & Mary College Historical Notes" Colonial Williamsburg Research Department, n.d. Oast, *Institutional Slavery*, 131.; Jennifer Oast, *Institutional Slavery: Slaveholding Churches, Schools, Colleges, and Businesses in Virginia, 1680 – 1860* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 159.

²³ Seurattan, Suzanne. "The Wren: You Know the Building; What about Its History?" William & Mary, December 22, 2015. <https://www.wm.edu/news/stories/2015/the-wren-you-know-the-building,-but-do-you-know-its-history.php>; "Historical Chronology." William & Mary Vital Facts. William & Mary, n.d. <http://www.wm.edu/vitalfacts/nineteenth2.php>.

²⁴ "The Lemon Project: A Journey of Reconciliation." Accessed December 16, 2023. https://www.wm.edu/sites/lemonproject/_documents/the-lemon-project-report.pdf.

Meyers notes that efforts to deal with the contentious issue of slavery in the College's past have seemed to waver among three possible narratives.²⁵ The first attempt was to walk away, suppressing the subject by silence.²⁶ The second, to mythologize slavery as beneficent and misunderstood.²⁷ And the third, was to emphasize what Alfred Brophy described as the colleges' "enormous contributions to the cause of antislavery [which today] are in danger of being lost amidst talk of slavery at William and Mary" and forgotten permanently.²⁸

Dr. Jody Allen, professor and director of the Lemon Project,²⁹ Dew noted in his address at the opening of the college on 10 October 1836 that William & Mary was "under attack by the "...³⁰ Dew ultimately believed that serious critical inquiries into slavery, and studies regarding the extent of the mechanisms of slavery at William & Mary not only "threaten[ed] to involve [the college] in universal ruin but,³¹ This narrative remained the statusquo for William & Mary until the founding of the Lemon Project.

The establishment of the project marked the start of a movement towards transparency and reconciliation in order to illuminate the scale of William & Mary's participation in slavery. The Lemon Project notes that it is only recently that scholars and the university alike have begun

²⁵ Meyers, Terry L. "Thinking About Slavery at the College of William and Mary." *The William and Mary Bill of Rights journal* 21, no. 4 (2013): 1215–.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Jody L. Allen, "Thomas Dew and the Rise of Proslavery Ideology at William & Mary," *Slavery & Abolition* 39, no. 2 (April 3, 2018): 267–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144039X.2018.1446783>.

³⁰ Allen, 275

³¹ *Ibid.*

asking questions of the university's role in perpetuating slavery and racial discrimination.³² In a William & Mary Board of Visitors resolution apologizing for the university's participation in enslavement, the Board acknowledged that "William & Mary enslaved people, exploited them and their labor, and perpetuated the legacies of racial discrimination." Additionally, this apology called on the project to continue in the work towards transparency. For many, the Lemon Project and studies on the history of slavery at William & Mary is seen as a source of positive transparency in the search for uncovering William & Mary's history. Professors Terry Meyers and Joanne Braxton noted in January 2006 memorandum to the Provost of William & Mary, "In the last several years, the two of us have become increasingly interested in the history of race relations at the College, from its earliest days through contemporary times."³³ As William & Mary has progressed in its response to its history with enslavement, the dialogue about how to address the university's complex history with slavery has evolved with it. As a result, scholars for the first time can attempt to reconcile and amend the college's legacy, and provide healing for descendant communities and stakeholders at William & Mary.

Ultimately, the impact of this research is multifaceted and nuanced. It is critical to understand the legacy and historical significance of the city of Williamsburg's indifference towards the lives of enslaved individuals because it is only once you understand this impact that you can properly recognize the importance of approaching memorialization in a new way.

³² "The Lemon Project," William & Mary, accessed April 21, 2023, <https://www.wm.edu/sites/lemonproject/>.

³³ Lemon Project, 55

The Onomastics of London

The importance of a name is critical. For millions of people the relationship they have with their name represents ancestry, tradition, and a legacy passed from generation to generation. For enslaved people however, this convention is rooted in oppression, and the history of naming, or onomastics, takes on a new meaning. According to historian Itibari M. Zulu, the traditional processes of naming in the African context represented an essential cultural grounding activity, as well as an open diary of recorded information that can be preserved, retrieved, and disseminated throughout society.³⁴ Zulu notes that systems of enslavement take away the basic right of naming “without an afterthought.”³⁵ Zulu believes that slavery ultimately burdened millions of individuals of “African heritage... around the world” with European names.³⁶ Ultimately this process that implicated millions of enslaved peoples and enslavers alike results in “violence by naming,” and institutionalized “a personal conscience or subconscious that would accept or internalize the views of the dominant society (e.g., British colonialism) over his/her own ethnic group, and thus, participate in internalized oppression/racism.”³⁷

While onomastics and the importance of naming conventions remained critical for those of African heritage around the world, specific rules and regulations made the study of onomastics more difficult in the United States due to a lack of centralized records up until the

³⁴ Zulu, Itibari M. "Synergizing Culture: African American Cultural Recovery through African Name Acquisition and Usage." *Journal of Pan African Studies* 10, no. 5 (2017): 128+. *Gale Literature Resource Center* (accessed April 21, 2023). https://link-gale-com.proxy.wm.edu/apps/doc/A518337660/LitRC?u=viva_wm&sid=bookmark-LitRC&xid=cc223899.

³⁵ Zulu, 130

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Zulu, 131

Freedmen's Bureau during reconstruction.³⁸ As a result, some of the most seminal research on Onomastics and the transatlantic slave trade was done in the Caribbean. In *Slave Naming Patterns: Onomastics and the Taxonomy of Race in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica* author Trevor Burnard explores the genesis of a variety of naming patterns in Jamaica. According to Burnard, Jamaican law mandated that slave owners submit a list of their enslaved people annually.³⁹ These lists were collected by local vestryman, and in the modern day “thousands of slaves survive[d] [in the archive] most often noted in the inventories of deceased white Jamaicans.”⁴⁰ In this article, Burnard sought to “explor[e] the names of slaves as recorded in white generated sources and speculat[e] about their derivation.”⁴¹ Burnard believed that a deconstruction of the onomastics of the names of those enslaved in Jamaica would “help to determine the extent to which African cultural practices were retained or transformed in the movement of Africans to Jamaica.”⁴²

The specific study of the taxonomy of names in Jamaica pointed to a multitude of trends. One of the first trends was the concentration of names used among enslavers. In Jamaica, twenty-five names accounted for 87.2 percent of 1,227 boys baptized between 1722 and 1758 in Kingston Parish.⁴³ Furthermore, 48% of males in this survey “were called John, William, Thomas, or James.”⁴⁴ While certain Anglican names dominated, the taxonomy of males also

³⁸ Cook, Lisa D., Trevon D. Logan, and John M. Parman. “Distinctively Black Names in the American Past.” *Explorations in economic history* 53 (2014): 64–82.

³⁹ Trevor Burnard, “Slave Naming Patterns: Onomastics and the Taxonomy of Race in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 31, no. 3 (2001): 325–46.

⁴⁰ Burnard, 325

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Burnard, 328

⁴³ Burnard, 326

⁴⁴ Ibid.

varied outside of this strong majority. According to Burnard, many of these enslaved people had classical names. Burnard notes that owners “ransacked classical literature” to come up with names like “Apollo, Jupiter,... Hercules” and others.⁴⁵ While classical literature was one common pattern seen in the archives, another significant trend among enslavers was “remember[ing] their homeland.”⁴⁶ To honor the UK many enslavers named Black males after English towns and counties such as “London, York, Leicester, Bristol, Cambridge, and Oxford.”⁴⁷ Even though it is unclear how common the name London was in Jamaica, in a 1753 inventory from Spanish Town, Jamaica, London was not one of the 20 most popular names.⁴⁸

Timothy Burnard’s seminal study of onomastics and the taxonomy of enslaved peoples in Jamaica provides a thesis for the proliferation of the name London among enslaved peoples in the Americas. However, his study cannot be localized to explain the occurrence of this name in the Colony of Virginia. Author Iman Makeba Laversuch helps fill this theoretical gap with her work studying the first names of fugitive slaves advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* between 1736 and 1776.⁴⁹ Laversuch analyzes 251 first names found in 960 fugitive slave advertisements.⁵⁰ Laversuch continues her analysis by sorting these names into descriptive categories. In Laversuch’s categorization, the name London fell into the category of “Placenames” which can be described as “personal names [given] in honor of a particular locality to which the name-giver

⁴⁵ Burnard, 335

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Burnard, 336

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Iman Makeba Laversuch, “Runaway Slave Names Recaptured: An Investigation of the Personal First Names of Fugitive Slaves Advertised in the Virginia Gazette between 1736 and 1776,” *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* 54, no. 4 (December 12, 2006): 331–62, <https://doi.org/10.1179/nam.2006.54.4.331>.

⁵⁰ Laversuch, 331

feels a strong, close personal tie.”⁵¹ Laversuch speculates that the names identified in the *Virginia Gazette* were named “after the homes they had left behind.”⁵²

The onomastic motivations identified by Burnard in Jamaica were the same as those identified by Laversuch in Colonial Virginia. In a table compiled by Makeba Laversuch of all the mentions of enslaved fugitives listed in the *Virginia Gazette* from 1726-1776, the name London is listed three times.⁵³ This geographical connection not only cements the repeated occurrence of the name London in Virginia, but also critically places the name London within a place of resistance and subversion to systems of oppression and creates the possibility that the enslaved figures studied in this thesis did in fact run away.

It is within this context that both Londons from Williamsburg were named. While the onomastics of their name point to the history of the people who enslaved them rather than the history of their ancestors, the triviality in which both slaves were named in addition to the erasure of what could have been a key piece of evidence in their ancestry and genealogy represents a tradition of violence and oppression analyzed in this thesis. The facilitation of historic erasure from birth through naming is a representation of the all-consuming nature of oppression, and a reminder that these systems are internalized from birth through death.

⁵¹ Laversuch, 343

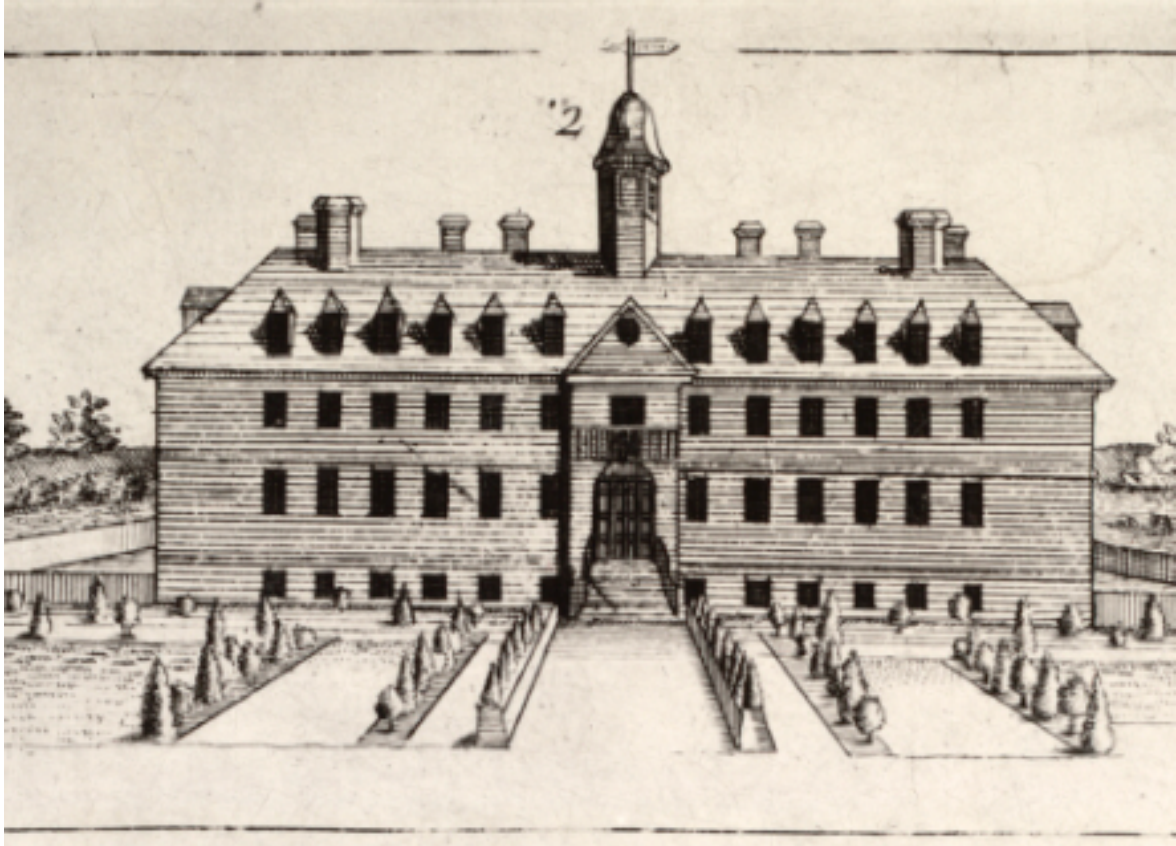
⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Laversuch, 337

Conclusion

This structure of this introductory chapter was designed to serve a dual purpose. The first intention was to detail the structural framework and goals that this thesis addresses. The second purpose was to provide a critical contextual foundation that answers critical initial questions of the history of enslavement and onomastics that are addressed in subsequent case studies. Chapter two introduces memorialization and uses this technique to compare an enslaved body servant named London to James Hambleton Christian, a more recognized figure within the historical record.

Chapter II: London and James Hambleton Christian



“Bodleian Plate,” Detail, modern print from ca. 1740 copperplate,
The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Introduction

The enslaved labor force in Colonial America drove the colonial economy and ruled the social and political realities of the gentry in the colonies and Williamsburg Virginia more specifically. While a vast majority of enslaved labor produced raw materials, the less tangible legacy of enslavement within the nuclear family and its ramifications has yet to be fully explored. One of the most prominent examples of this form of domestic labor comes in the form of body servants. According to historian Carl Lounsbury, the role of the body servant was to take care of the everyday needs of their enslavers.⁵⁴ In Williamsburg, these body servants often resided and worked in some of the most powerful institutions in the city. The stories of these enslaved individuals who groomed and influenced some of the most prominent men in the history of America's foundation has only fully crystallized in the past century. Led by scholar Susan Kern, the function of body servants was brought to the academic mainstream. The story of Jupiter, Thomas Jefferson's body servant, served as a template for greater exploration into this subset of slavery and served as an example of the relationship between the practice of chattel slavery and the College of William & Mary.⁵⁵ While Jupiter's connection to Williamsburg is more tenuous, both London and James Hambleton Christian have concrete connections to Williamsburg during the 18th and 19th century. Christian, a body servant for John Tyler during his time as a William & Mary student, and London, the body servant for Carter Braxton, during his time at the college, illustrate the subversion of education and their ongoing importance as

⁵⁴ Lounsbury, Carl, Laura Pass Barry, and Cary Carson. *The Material World of Eyre Hall : Four Centuries of Chesapeake History*. Edited by Carl Lounsbury. Baltimore, Maryland: Maryland Center for History and Culture in association with D Giles Limited, 2023.

⁵⁵ Kern, Susan. *The Jeffersons at Shadwell*. New Haven, UNITED STATES: Yale University Press, 2010. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cwm/detail.action?docID=3420989>.]

figures of educational resistance in the city of Williamsburg and on a greater scale.⁵⁶ For both London and Christian, the power of being in immediate proximity to one of the best sources of higher education in the colonies afforded the opportunity for both of them to garner knowledge off limits to a majority of enslaved individuals and utilize this information for the rest of their lives. While the story of the impact of London's subversion is limited to a single deed, James Hambleton Christian's life and importance as a central figure in John Tyler's life is more extensive. The way Christian's story was extensively captured in comparison to London's speaks to a disparate level of political privilege that both encountered. While London served as a body servant for Carter Braxton, his political existence was limited to the Virginia Colony, Christian's experience in the White House demonstrates how the archive bends to the power of privilege. The discrepancy between Christian and London in the archives could be attributed to their existence during two disparate periods in American history. The importance of both of their lives, and the contextualization that can be made based upon the primary source evidence of their existence allows historians to draw conclusions and comparisons between these two individuals, their subversion against systematic oppression, and the way in which their existence on the page represents distinctions of privilege.

⁵⁶ John Tyler, the man who enslaved James Hambleton Christian eventually became the tenth president of the United States. Carter Braxton, the enslaver of London, is notable as the only person in Virginia to sign the Declaration of Independence.

William Still and *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narrative, Letters, &c.*

The legacy of restrictions to literacy and education for African Americans during London's life in the colonial period had an outsized impact on the lives of enslaved people like William Still and James Hambleton Christian in the antebellum period. In publishing *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narrative, Letters, &c* Still's background as an author and crucial figure in the Underground Railroad coalesces to create this text that highlights Christian's unique life story. Like many Black authors during the antebellum period William Still taught himself how to read and write.⁵⁷ The author utilized his ability to write in his activism efforts as a clerk for the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery.⁵⁸ During his time in Philadelphia, Still was an outspoken critic against a variety of discriminatory practices, most notably writing to the press "protesting the racial discrimination that African Americans faced on Philadelphia streetcars."⁵⁹ After publishing a book that expanded on his letter critiquing the practices of Philadelphia streetcars, Still integrated his experiences as an "active agent" in the Underground Railroad to highlight the stories of the fugitive slaves who ardently pursued freedom.⁶⁰ In "*A New Enterprise in Our History*": *William Still, Conductor of The Underground Rail Road (1872)* by Alex Black, William Still notes that he "found interesting narratives of the escapes of many men, women and children, from the prison-house of bondage."⁶¹ The importance of illuminating these narratives resulted in an extensive compilation of histories

⁵⁷ "William Still's National Significance · William Still: An African-American Abolitionist." Accessed April 17, 2023. <http://stillfamily.library.temple.edu/exhibits/show/william-still/historical-perspective/william-still---s-national-sig>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Black, Alex W. "'A New Enterprise in Our History': William Still, Conductor of *The Underground Rail Road (1872)*." *American Literary History* 32, no. 4 (December 1, 2020): 668–90. <https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajaa029>.

expanding over 780 pages.⁶² This book was unique in its ability to “mak[e] accessible the histories of the fugitives themselves” in a way other pieces of scholarship had not attempted.⁶³ According to Alex Black, this book distinguished itself as “neither a history nor an archive, it’s come to be theorized.”⁶⁴ Unlike a traditional archive, or as Alex Black argues, the enslavers archive, which is marked by loss, fragmentation, and profound irreparable violence,” Still’s work can be best classified as a counter archive.⁶⁵ Unlike the labels of traditional scholars or more contemporary definitions by author Alex Black, William Still viewed his work as a book of records.⁶⁶ In the preface of *The Underground Railroad* William Still notes that he used his interest... [in] narratives of the escapes of many men, women and children” to create “A RECORD . . . of the Slaves in their efforts for Freedom.”⁶⁷ Ultimately Still’s use of a counter archive to frame narratives of enslavement ran against the established practices of historians in the centuries prior and served as a preamble to the narratives of not only Christian but also London, the body servant.

Still’s activist approach to scholarly methodology extended into the editorial process along with the release and reception of the novel. The first editorial decision that framed the release of his book was his choice to self-publish.⁶⁸ Still’s decision to retain complete control over the editing process was rooted in his motivation to remove the influence of primarily White editorial staffs that exerted influence over Black authors.⁶⁹ The importance of editorial

⁶² Black, 669

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Black, 669

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Black, 672

⁶⁹ Black, 673

independence heavily influenced the final version of *The Underground Railroad*. Prior to deciding on self-publication, author William Still believed that working with a large publishing company, like the publishing house he eventually decided on, Porter and Coates, would “sell a great many more copies than myself.”⁷⁰ However, after eleven months the publishing contract between Still and publishers Porter and Coates was terminated by mutual consent.⁷¹ Author Alex Black noted that the publishing house not only failed to adequately market the book, but also deprived “Still of a Black readership” because of its biased hiring practices.⁷² Ultimately, William Still realized that the best practice to ensure the legacy of the thousands of enslaved individuals chronicled in his account was to resist efforts of large racially biased institutions like Porter and Coates to co-opt these historical accounts of African American History.

Another way in which Still sought to revolutionize through his book was via his subscription- based service. According to Alex Black, the subscription service was “a system in which a publisher’s agents sold books directly to readers.”⁷³ While subscription-based services were popular among authors, William Still “engaged forms of Black organization that preceded them.”⁷⁴ Still, who employed Black men and Black women in the publishing process, believed that a wide circulation of his book through the subscription service was positive “not only for the sake of the money they might make but for the sake of the general good as well.”⁷⁵ These business practices exemplify how William Still’s efforts to promote African American

⁷⁰ Black, 672

⁷¹ Black, 673

⁷² Black, 673

⁷³ Black, 670

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

independence in publishing corresponded with the author's focus on enslaved runaways and their narratives.

William Still's work chronicling James Hambleton Christian sheds light on the importance of The Underground Railroad as the only piece of the archive that documents Christian's life. In order to understand the life of Christian it is critical to contextualize the work that depicts him. Additionally, the decisions of author William Still to maintain editorial independence as well as control over the method of sale represented the subversion of systems that reinforced slavery such as the co-optation of the Black experience through financial measures. This was a form of direct resistance through Still's education that he used to write, edit, publish, and market his book. This subversion and resistance are represented in the story of James Hambleton Christian and is a technique that can also be used to analyze and historicize London, the body servant.

James Hambleton Christian

James Hambleton Christian's existence in the archive underscores the tradition of privilege, the legacy of education, and the principles of oppression that impacted each enslaved individual in Williamsburg. James Hambleton Christian's similarities to London, the body servant, serve as a reference point to what his life might have been like. Christian was born in Charles City County on Glen Plantation.⁷⁶ James Hambleton Christian was enslaved by Major

⁷⁶ William Still, "The Underground Railroad., Rev. Ed.," Text, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/15263/15263-h/15263-h.htm>, accessed December 6, 2022, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/15263/pg15263-images.html.utf8>.

Christian, and after his death ownership of James Hambleton Christian was passed to his son.⁷⁷ Christian was of mixed-race descent and author and abolitionist William Still noted that his background “gave him no inconsiderable claim to sympathy and care.”⁷⁸ In his interview with Still, Christian noted that he was well-fed and always treated well.⁷⁹ After the death of Major Christian, James Hambleton Christian became the property of Major’s son James and accompanied him to William & Mary.⁸⁰ Christian was one of 17 individuals serving as body servants,⁸¹ and noted that he enjoyed his treatment in the south.⁸² During his interview with abolitionist William Still, Christian not only expressed gratitude for the kindness of other students but notably mentioned that he “picked up a trifling of book learning.”⁸³ After his time at Glen Plantation, Christian ended up “in the hands of” former President John Tyler’s family as a member of their domestic household prior to Tyler’s time in the White House from 1841-1845.⁸⁴ Christian’s time as a body servant coincided with Tyler’s political rise to the White House, and Tyler took tremendous pains to qualify [Hambleton-Christian] completely for his calling.⁸⁵ As a result, Christian’s training “in the arts [and] sciences” as well as his time at William & Mary is not a coincidence.⁸⁶ Unlike his treatment as a body servant for Major Christian and his son James, James Hambleton Christian did not enjoy his treatment under Tyler.⁸⁷ According to Christian, Tyler was a cross man who treated the servants cruelly.⁸⁸ Although Christian made the

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ “Names of the Enslaved,” William & Mary, accessed April 21, 2023, <https://www.wm.edu/sites/enslavedmemorial/enslaved-names/>.

This calculation was taken by adding up the names of people enslaved by students at William & Mary.

⁸² Still

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

distinction that he was treated better due to his standing as a “house servant” who could be protected by Tyler’s wife, his experiences with the Tyler family were sullied due to their family’s economic status in comparison to the Christian’s.⁸⁹

Despite the satisfaction Christian felt at being in “such pleasant quarters,” his goal was freedom.⁹⁰ During Christian’s time serving as a body servant, he “became enamored of a young and respectable free girl in Richmond.”⁹¹ Even though Christian’s love interest was free, they were not able to marry “solely because he was a slave.”⁹² Christian came to believe that he would “stand a better chance of gaining his object in Canada than by remaining in Virginia.”⁹³ It is during these efforts fleeing enslavement that Christian met William Still and was introduced to the Acting Vigilant Committee of the Philadelphia Branch of the Underground Railroad. The committee’s synopsis of Christian’s experience stated the following, “feeling assured that the struggles and hardships he had submitted to in escaping, as well as the luxuries he was leaving behind, were nothing to be compared with the blessings of liberty and a free wife in Canada.”⁹⁴

The Role of Body Servants at William & Mary

While the history of contracted slave labor has been extensively covered in scholarship on slavery at William & Mary, there has only been a brief glimpse into other, more passive forms of slavery that proliferated the campus. One prime example William & Mary’s secondary

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Still

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

participation in enslavement was through the taxation of individual student's body servants. Body servants were enslaved persons who worked as house servants and held a position of trust and privilege among their enslavers.⁹⁵ Typical functions performed by a body servant include cooking, laundering, and, in general, performing unpleasant tasks, and anticipating the wants and needs of their enslavers.⁹⁶ These body servants sometimes accompanied their master to college. There were eight body servants listed in the 1754 bursar's report responsible for accounting for the finances of the college during this time period.⁹⁷ In this report, body servants were listed as property of their enslavers and each of these students were responsible for paying a £10 fee for their body servant, in addition to common expenses like room and board and tuition.⁹⁸ In the bursar's book, these payments were underlined in a specific category and noted as a "to do for boy."⁹⁹ Additionally, there were specific notations under the names of certain students outlining supplementary details on the nature of each student's body servant.¹⁰⁰ In a January 1898 edition of the *William and Mary Quarterly*, on the topic of students in 1754 at William & Mary, the *Quarterly* remarks that the eight students outlined in the Bursars report came from wealth and the body servants resided at the college to "wait on them."¹⁰¹ While it is well documented that William & Mary built housing for those enslaved by the college, it is unclear where these body servants resided.¹⁰² Dr. Carl Lounsbury speculates that body servants for the eight William &

⁹⁵ Barrow, Charles Kelly, et al, compilers and editors. *Black Confederates*. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, Inc., 1995, 129.

⁹⁶ Barrow, 71

⁹⁷ Bursar Account Book, 1745-1770, id305611, Box: 2. Office of the Bursar Records, UA 72. Special Collections Research Center.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

In the Bursars book when looking at the specific detail on this particular addendum, I was unable to make out the specific details of the notation outside of the words "The servants board".

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ "Students in 1754 at William and Mary College." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1898): 187-88. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1914605>.

¹⁰² Meyers, 1145

Mary students probably slept in a passage outside each student's door and took their meals in the kitchen beneath the great hall.¹⁰³ Ultimately, further information on body servants and their lives on campus is most likely non-existent or absent from the archives.

Carter Braxton

Carter Braxton's time at the College of William & Mary was relatively brief. As author Alonzo Thomas Dill notes, Carter and his brother George both cut their studies short before completing their formal education.¹⁰⁴ Even though Carter and George left William & Mary early, receiving a formal education was of the utmost importance to Carter's father. George Braxton Sr. went to tremendous lengths to ensure Carter received a proper education, and in the case of his passing, named John Robinson, a William & Mary alumnus, as one of two guardians for Carter in his will.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, George Sr. outlined that Carter and his brother be accompanied by his "man London" during their time at the university.¹⁰⁶ At William & Mary, Carter failed to "take his studies seriously." and in a letter to his uncle lamented his "lack of professional knowledge... in [his] arguments."¹⁰⁷ During Carter's time in Williamsburg, he met his eventual wife Ann Blair, and courted her until they married on December 6, 1753.¹⁰⁸ After leaving school and entering the family business, Carter utilized his connections at the college to improve the

¹⁰³ Lounsbury, Carl, Laura Pass Barry, and Cary Carson. *The Material World of Eyre Hall : Four Centuries of Chesapeake History* Baltimore, Maryland: Maryland Center for History and Culture in association with D Giles Limited, 2023. In a conversation with Dr. Lounsbury, he noted that this sentence was a passing moment in his description of Severn Eyre's college experience, and could not offer additional information on the claim he posited.

¹⁰⁴ Dill, Alonzo Thomas. *Carter Braxton, Virginia Signer : a Conservative in Revolt* Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983.

¹⁰⁵ Lenora Higginbotham Sweeny, "Amherst County Chancery Suits," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (1939): 318–24, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1925264>.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Dill, 17

¹⁰⁸ Dill, 18

fortunes of his family business.¹⁰⁹ Braxton’s reverence for the college was evident in his government affairs. Braxton joined the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1761.¹¹⁰ In one bill Braxton introduced an amendment that required land surveyors in the state of Virginia to be accredited at William & Mary.¹¹¹ Ultimately even though Carter Braxton had tremendous land holdings, at one point in 1782 holding 4,426 acres of taxable land in King William County, and a lengthy experience in government, Braxton hit multiple roadblocks and fell into a tremendous amount of debt in his later years, in addition to multiple political failures the longer he stayed in office.¹¹² Braxton’s subsequent legal entanglements and failures were overshadowed by his contribution to the founding of our nation as a signer of the Declaration of Independence.¹¹³ Braxton’s nuanced legacy is in many ways comparable to the legacy of William & Mary prior to the Revolutionary War and was one that many historians have overlooked in light of his accomplishments.

Finding the Lemon Project: My participation in with the Lemon Project and journey to understand the Importance of Reconciliation

As a historian examining the legacies of enslavement, the central importance of reconciliation and memorialization extends beyond the academy into the work of activists, descendant communities, and even individuals perpetuating historic injustice. The process of reconciliation is central to the current story of William & Mary and Williamsburg as a whole.

¹⁰⁹ Dill, 38

¹¹⁰ Alonzo Thomas Dill, “Carter Braxton (1736–1797),” Encyclopedia Virginia, accessed April 21, 2023, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/braxton-carter-1736-1797/>.

¹¹¹ Dill, 127

¹¹² Dill, 169

¹¹³ “Carter Braxton: Virginia.” Signers of the Declaration- Biographical Sketches. U.S. Department of the Interior. Accessed December 16, 2023. https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/declaration/bio4.htm.

Unlike other University led initiatives studying slavery, The Lemon Project's journey of reconciliation not only encouraged student participation but was fueled by student activism. My journey as a student historian started with the Lemon Project, and I hope this text embodies the work of reconciliation and memorialization central to the Lemon Project mission. My first introduction to the Lemon project came via Dr. Jody Allen, director of the Lemon Project. In our class examining Urban Education in predominantly African American communities, Dr. Allen designed the curriculum to highlight the importance of pairing historical inquiry into the past with solutions and initiatives to bridge the gap of educational inequality. Unlike traditional methods of historical inquiry, the importance of implementing solutions to improve the future was always at the forefront of the way in which Dr. Allen taught. This vision of history revolutionized my previous conceptions of the history field, and I knew that I wanted to become more involved.

In the summer of 2021, I started my journey with the Lemon Project. One of the first assignments I was given was to participate in descendant engagement with a group local to William & Mary. The Lemon Project's mission to engage with descendant communities impacted by the historic oppression of African Americans in Williamsburg is central to the journey of reconciliation. After conversations with these descendants, I gained critical insight into their histories and the extent to which the ideals and values that perpetuated the historic marginalization of these communities continued for generations. In hearing the stories of how resilient communities had to adapt to their changing circumstances it became clear that the legacy of oppression that was enforced during slavery continued, even if it existed in different forms.

Another form of activism that coincided with the Lemon Project's mission of reconciliation was the Lemons Learners project. Lemons Learners was a community-based initiative that worked with rising 9th graders to provide them with crucial resources and techniques to engage with the Public Humanities at a young age. This camp was fundamental in my conception of reconciliation as it allowed me to understand the importance of restorative practices, and reinforced the ideal that understanding and contextualizing the past is still acutely relevant even hundreds of years later.

After these foundational experiences that allowed me to form my own conception of historic inquiry and archival research, I received my assignment to find the names of the seven body servants listed in the 1754 Bursar's report. The goals of this assignment reflected all those values I had come to keenly understand through my various interactions with the Lemon Project. These experiences allowed me to become fully aware of the power of contextualization as a tool for memorialization and descendant engagement. Additionally, these learnings allowed me to properly prioritize the stories of those being enslaved instead of those perpetuating enslavement.

Ultimately, my experiences at the Lemon Project were foundational in my research process of finding London and my own personal journey to understand the importance of reconciliation as central to the work of naming and giving agency to the hundreds of unknown enslaved peoples at William & Mary. Understanding that reconciliation is an active process,

providing historical context to those who have vital information from the archive is a step in the journey towards contextualizing the past that has underpinned my work and the mission of this thesis. While the techniques used in this thesis require methods eschewed by more traditional historians, the historic importance of prioritizing those enslaved over their enslavers is a critical precedent rooted in my personal journey as a historian and archivist rooted in my experiences with the Lemon Project.

Finding London, the Body Servant

Finding London was quite unexpected, and is a prime example of how prior historians, without any intent, can lay the groundwork for major discovery. At the outset of my research process, my goal was memorializing the names of the body servants listed in the bursar's report, and I felt that a thorough search of the backgrounds of each student in this case study would be the best avenue for finding the names of the body servants in question. The first name I started with was Carter Braxton. After looking into his background and finding out that he was related to King Carter, who I had studied extensively in another class, I decided he would be the first person I focused on for my case study. Following our class session with research librarian Mary Oberlies, I found a biography on Carter Braxton by Alonzo Thomas Dill. Initially a cursory examination of the book provided little information on Braxton's body servant. I ended up following other leads but after a few days I was drawn back to the book and examined the index for any mention of body servant's or William & Mary. It was at this moment that I found my breakthrough. In the glossary it listed William & Mary on the 16th and 17th page. On the top of page 16, Dill quotes the will of Carter's father George who upon his death proclaimed his

“desire... that [his] sons be kept at the College or under some good Tutor till they come of full age. And that my Man London wait on them till that time.”¹¹⁴ Later, Dill notes that “the attendant of George and Carter was no doubt the faithful London mentioned in their father’s will.”¹¹⁵ In the midst of this discovery, I reflexively checked the footnotes and was able to trace the findings to the “Amherst Chancery Suit” and find the specific “interlineation” that listed London in the record.¹¹⁶ These findings all lead me to my initial conclusion that London was the enslaved body servant in question. Even amid this mounting evidence of London’s connection to William & Mary, I still had doubts over the validity of my discovery. In a meeting with Dr. Jajuan Johnson we searched the Library of Virginia’s Lost Records Localities Digital Collection, and found an agreement between Robert Andrews and Carter Braxton, in which Carter Braxton mortgaged many enslaved, including London, due to significant financial debt after the Revolutionary War.¹¹⁷ This agreement was significant because it validated my initial conclusion that London was an enslaved body servant and removed all doubt over London’s place in William & Mary history. While I was unable to find out more information on London himself, in a conversation with Dr. Carl Lounsbury I learned more about his biographer Alonzo Thomas Dill. According to Lounsbury, Dill was a contemporary of his and a well-known historian in Williamsburg.¹¹⁸ Lounsbury noted that he had in the past received calls from Dill seeking information on his various projects.¹¹⁹ Alonzo Thomas Dill also was inspired to write his biography on Carter Braxton because of Dill’s background. Dill’s obituary notes that he wrote

¹¹⁴ Dill, 16

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Lenora Higginbotham Sweeny, “Amherst County Chancery Suits,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (1939): 318–24, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1925264>.

¹¹⁷ Lost Records Localities Digital Collection, King William County, Braxton, Carter to Augustine Claiborne: Deed, 1784. Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA 23219.’

¹¹⁸ Carl Lounsbury, interview by author, Williamsburg, November 18, 2023.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

this biography in large part because he “happened to live on land formerly owned by [Braxton] just outside West Point.”¹²⁰ Dill’s sense of place and motivation to provide needed historical context to those who inhabited the land before him was a similar driver in my research, and his passion and insistence on collaboration were pillars I strived for during my archival process.

Conclusion

The narratives of London and James Hambleton Christian in the evolving understanding of Williamsburg’s complicity and active participation in systems of enslavement serve as a critical piece in the contextualization of these individuals within the archive. While enslavement permeated every landmark emblazoned on the notorious Frenchman’s map that outlined the city’s existence in permanent ink, the legacy of slavery in the city’s most powerful institutions such as the College of William & Mary and the capitol encompass a critical facet of Williamsburg’s legacy. London and Christian highlight this ignored component of history and offer a critical rebuttal to the political and educational elite that believed knowledge and education were reserved for one race. Additionally, the way each of these individuals parlayed their time as body servants to increase their “value” is a crucial example of how their existence and more specifically the fulfillment of their forced labor obligations represents a resistance facilitated by their proximity to knowledge and power. Even though these respective themes were equally represented by both individuals, the discrepancy between both individuals in the archives is emblematic of the power of privilege and the hold that enslavers had in the archival

¹²⁰ Daily Press, “Area Historian Alonzo T. Dill, 79,” Daily Press, August 7, 2023, <https://www.dailypress.com/news/dp-xpm-19930722-1993-07-22-9307220047-story.html>.

existence of these enslaved individuals. Ultimately the stories of London and Christian, and the themes represented in the historic narrative as well as the archive, are critical in framing what is considered by many scholars to be considered a more passive form of slavery. Even though body servitude is not the foremost image of some of the more brutal forms written about by scholars and historians, this history is incredibly fundamental to the continued contextualization of forced bondage in Williamsburg and the colonies more broadly.

Chapter III: London and Gowan Pamphlet



Photograph of Bray-Digges House, ca. 1920-1921, Special Collections, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

London, the Bray School Student: How Academic Enrichment and Religious Exploration were Intertwined in Colonial Williamsburg

Introduction

The Williamsburg’s Bray School and First Baptist Church are regarded as foundational representations of African Americans in Colonial Williamsburg, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and America. During a ceremony celebrating the opening of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, former President Barack Obama remarked that ringing the historic Freedom Bell from First Baptist Church “will be echoed by others, in houses of worship... all across this country.”¹²¹ As the country’s oldest continuously active Black congregation, First Baptist Church’s significance as a representation of African American religious expression places it among the most important African American landmarks in the country.¹²² Gowan Pamphlet is at the forefront of this legacy. Pamphlet utilized his ability to read and write, potentially acquired as a Bray School student, to establish First Baptist Church as a congregation.¹²³ In the face of tremendous political and religious opposition, the importance of religion as a unifying force in the evolution of the African American experience originated in the stories of enslaved African Americans in Williamsburg. Consequently, religion was inextricably linked with the educational efforts of the Williamsburg Bray School. Gowan Pamphlet's establishment of First Baptist Church is based upon a foundation of religious expression, agency, and liberation, potentially gleaned from the Williamsburg Bray School despite the organizers intention to implement and enforce systems of enslavement. It is because of these systems that

¹²¹ “Watch Obamas Ring First Baptist’s ‘Freedom Bell’ at NMAAHC Dedication.”

¹²² “United States Department of the Interior National Park ... - Virginia,” accessed April 6, 2023, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wpcontent/uploads/2018/04/1375071_First_Baptist_Church_2017_NRHP_FINAL.pdf

¹²³ Bly, “In Pursuit of Letters.”, 450

little is remembered about London, a Bray School student baptized at Bruton Parish Church, who is largely absent from the historical archive. The impact of these systems of enslavement was universal and unraveling these complicated legacies to uncover how educational indoctrination facilitated the creation of the nascent Black church is multifaceted.

While Gowan's evolution from a potential Bray School student to a religious revolutionary has been explored, evidence of London's existence in the archive has been nearly erased. Even though there are only two documents in the archive to situate London's legacy, the archival evidence of education and its ability to foment religious and civil resistance is ever-present. Gowan's exploration into overt forms of rebellion against religious and racial oppression is heavily documented and as a result, his impact on African American history has been remembered for centuries. London's existence is a reminder of a more subtle resistance, the act of simply surviving within systems of enslavement, that is overlooked in the archive. Because of this lack of archival evidence, the only way to interpret London's resistance is through the historical imagination drawn from rebellious leaders like Gowan whose resistance made the front pages. This academic imagination is a reminder of how the archives are sculpted by the perpetrators of oppression who sought to extend their control of African Americans beyond the plantation and into spaces reserved for the Academy. Seemingly the only way to have resistance remembered is through criminality as defined and recorded by those framing the historical narrative.

Finding the Bray School: An Exercise in the Power of Historical Imagination

The legacy of the Williamsburg Bray School has been redefined due to the efforts of William & Mary's Bray Lab and scholars like Nicole Brown and Maureen Elgersman Lee. In order to reconceptualize the history of an institution that has maintained a specific interpretation and legacy for centuries the Bray Lab has “aspire[d] to transform traditional accounts of America's history into a multi-layered story.”¹²⁴ This transformation has occurred through historical interpretation, bringing to life the story of Anne Wager through Nicole Brown's portrayal at Colonial Williamsburg. This transformation has also occurred via descendant engagement. The stories of the Bray Lab descendants are amplified in a variety of ways, most notably through Bray Lab genealogist Tonia Meredith, a Bray School descendant herself. In the field of academia, the Bray School exercised its interest in redefining traditional historical practices through the use of historical imagination.

Historical imagination attempts to discover the stories of individuals absent in the archive using techniques introduced by historians such as Saidiya Hartman. The Bray Lab's use of this technique has been groundbreaking and transcends the archives into multimedia representations meant to inform the masses. A superb example of this technique in practice is Adam & Fanny's World. Adam & Fanny's world is a virtual story map that “provides context” for the lives of Bray School students by taking you through what their daily life would look like as a Bray School student.¹²⁵ Even though archival records do not paint a complete picture of the

¹²⁴ “Bray School Lab | William & Mary,” accessed April 6, 2023, <https://www.wm.edu/sites/brayschool/>

¹²⁵ “Adam and Fanny's World,” StoryMapJS, accessed April 6, 2023, <https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/1b4039ba81379c075642e38bad29638c/adam-and-fannys-world/index.html>.

daily schedule for Adam & Fanny, Bray Lab historians tie together different pieces of historical context along with the technique of historical imagination to provide a complete picture that did not previously exist.

While all the Bray School techniques aimed at transforming the historical record had an impact on me, I immediately saw the power of historical imagination as a technique meant to redefine, memorialize and repair the previously irreconcilable archives. In my conversations with Bray Lab leaders, in addition to hearing their talks and lectures, I understood how expanding the traditional methods of the historians craft was vital for recontextualizing the history of African Americans. In a discipline not prone to change, the Bray Lab was redefining the way African American history was done at a rapid pace, in a way that not only included but celebrated the participation of students like me. My time at the Bray Lab was fundamental in my evolution as a historian and empowered me to think critically and creatively to find answers to questions that had not been asked previously. Ultimately, without the Bray Lab I would have viewed archival silence as a stopping point in the journey to reconciliation. My experiences at the lab encouraged me to think of this gap as a vehicle for creativity that allows historians like me to define the lives of those historically forgotten through a lens of agency and resistance instead of letting their stories remain silent.

Finding London, the Bray School Student

The process of finding London started in the spring of last year after meeting with Nicole Brown and joining the Bray Lab team. London is one of as many as 400 children educated by the Bray School and represents one of the many untold stories.¹²⁶ My first introduction to London came during my first visit to the Bray Lab. After spending a significant amount of time researching London, the body servant, my interest was piqued when I saw the name on a map listing the locations of all the Bray School students.¹²⁷ Initially I assumed that a name as rare as London's popping up could not be a coincidence and both mentions referred to the same person. Once I dug a little deeper and explored their theoretical ages I realized that it would be impossible for this to be one person (London the body servant is older than London the Bray School student), I became fascinated with the potential connections between these two individuals. What could I learn about two potential enslaved people, living during the same time period, in the same place. Could I connect these two individuals and draw further connections? Should I explore their narratives separately? I was incredibly motivated to learn more and contextualize this London's experience in Williamsburg. In diving into the records, I found similar roadblocks that I encountered in my previous archival research. Outside of finding London's baptism records and him being listed on the student enrollment list for the Bray School, there were no other records in the archive. I knew that there was not enough for me to connect each of these London's to one another, but I was confident that historical imagination would help me fill in some of the gaps in the record that I could not address. While the Bray lab

¹²⁶ "Q&A: W&M's Bray School Lab Works to Uncover School's History and Its Students' Stories," *W&M News* (blog), accessed April 6, 2023, <https://news.wm.edu/2023/02/09/qa-wms-bray-school-lab/>

¹²⁷ "Williamsburg Bray School Map," accessed April 6, 2023, <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/learn/research-and-education/architectural-research/williamsburg-bray-school-initiative/williamsburg-bray-school-map/>.

used historical imagination to illuminate and contextualize individuals, I felt a comparison between a prolific enslaved figure in the archive and someone like London could tease out critical connections that could not be done solely through focusing on one individual. Additionally, my goal to reconcile the past as a historian made it imperative that themes of agency and resistance were amplified against the historical backdrop of marginalization and oppression that dominates the archive of enslaved African Americans during the Colonial period. While I had learned about Gowan Pamphlet in a multitude of my classes I did not consider him as a possible source of comparison until I attended the 2023 William & Mary Slate Seminar. During a panel with Maureen Elgersman Lee and other historians, Elgersman Lee mentioned that she felt it was probable that Gowan Pamphlet attended the Bray School.¹²⁸ At that moment I knew I wanted to dig deeper. Once I started looking at the similarities between London and Gowan I was incredibly surprised. Their collective connection to religion, participation in the same spaces in the church and at home all spoke to significant themes of agency and resistance in a manner I did not expect. It became clear that Gowan's life represents a distinct possibility of what London's life could have been.

Ultimately the process to find, connect, and explore the lives of London and Gowan was a remarkable process with significant ramifications for the methodology and presentation of this thesis. This historical interpretation, and the methodology used to connect London and Gowan takes historical imagination to a new place, and allows historians, activists, and emerging scholars a new way to explore history previously ignored by the archive. Additionally, this technique also allows the story of London and thousands of other anonymous enslaved peoples

¹²⁸ Maureen Elgersman Lee, "The Place of History: Scholarship, Interpretation, and Audience at Historic Sites" (Slate Seminar, Williamsburg, Virginia, October 29th, 2023)

like him to be written about from a perspective of resistance and agency instead of being exclusively a part of a larger narrative of enslavement that prioritizes the systems of enslavement over the resistance against them.

London From the Bray School

London's lack of representation within the historic record dictates gaps in the archive that render an accurate portrayal of his life based on available evidence impossible. Although London's archival existence is not representative of his individual experience, the prominence of religion and education as the two vehicles to situate his archival existence represent the inherent power of these structures. Documentary evidence of London's time attending the Bray School is scant. The first documentation of London's existence in the archive comes in the form of a letter from Bray School trustees Robert Carter Nicholas and William Yates to Reverend John Waring the general secretary of the Bray Associates. In this letter, London is listed as being seven years old¹²⁹, and therefore born between 1755 and 1756, as well as "being under the care of Mrs. Christiana Campbell."¹³⁰ Although others enslaved by Christiana Campbell are listed in student records from 1765 and 1769 London is never listed again.¹³¹

¹²⁹ In Antonio Bly's *In Pursuit of Letters* the author notes that it is more likely London was 9 years old.

¹³⁰ John Nicholas, "Letter from William Yates and Robert Carter Nicholas to Rev. John Waring (September 30, 1762)," *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed December 20, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/letter-from-william-yates-and-robert-carter-nicholas-to-rev-john-waring-september-30-1762/>.

¹³¹ While it is possible that London could have perished before reaching adulthood, been sold to another enslaver, or migrated to a different location, available archival evidence, and exploration into the will of Christiana Campbell and her immediate relatives, does not lead to any conclusion as most likely. However, if London continued to be enslaved by Christiana Campbell into adulthood this exercise in historical imagination paints the most accurate portrayal of the likelihood of his survival into adulthood.

London's absence from future student records can likely be attributed to two possibilities. One likely outcome is that London was prematurely removed from school immediately after he attained literacy. Enclosed in the same letter listing London in the 1762 student log was a list of Bray School rules and regulations along with a short preamble informing the associates of the school's state of affairs.¹³² One of the concerns mentioned in the preamble that prompted the creation of the school's rules and regulations was the observation that many "who put their Negroes to School, have taken them Home again so soon as they began to read."¹³³ This utilization of the Bray School was regarded as an "impediment" to the school's mission and was something both Robert Carter Nicholas and William Yates "strive[d] to guard against."¹³⁴ The attached rules and regulations reflected these fears in its decree that "Every Owner before a Negro Child is admitted into the School, must consent that such Child shall continue there for the Space of three years at least if the school should be so long continued."¹³⁵ Another possible reason for London's absence in the record is that he matriculated out of the Bray School before 1765. While Bray School regulations required each student to enroll for three years, the 1762 rule did not mandate subsequent education.¹³⁶ As historian Antonio Bly notes, most Bray School scholars finished their education after three years.¹³⁷ Although other possibilities exist for London's omission from later Bray School records, culpability for London's absence in the archive rests with Christiana Campbell or the Bray Associates and not

¹³² John Nicholas, "Letter from William Yates and Robert Carter Nicholas to Rev. John Waring (September 30, 1762)," *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed December 20, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/letter-from-william-yates-and-robert-carter-nicholas-to-rev-john-wareing-september-30-1762/>.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ John Nicholas, "Letter from William Yates and Robert Carter Nicholas to Rev. John Waring (September 30, 1762)," *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed December 20, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/letter-from-william-yates-and-robert-carter-nicholas-to-rev-john-wareing-september-30-1762/>.

¹³⁶ Bly, Antonio T. "In Pursuit of Letters: A History of the Bray Schools for Enslaved Children in Colonial Virginia." *History of education quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2011): 441.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

with London.

The second reference to London in the archive is in the Bruton Parish Baptismal records. This mention is brief, listing only his baptism, and documenting that he was under the care of Christiana Campbell.¹³⁸ London is recorded as having been baptized at Bruton Parish Church along with six other enslaved individuals.¹³⁹ Unlike other Bray School students baptized at Bruton Parish, key facts such as the date of his baptism along with his age at the time of his baptism were omitted.¹⁴⁰ While other Bray School scholars had more specific records, enslaved Bray School students owned by Christiana Campbell had similarly brief notations in the archive. The abundance of baptismal records of Bray School students was reflected in Robert Carter Nicholas' assessment of Williamsburg to the Bray Associates. Carter Nicholas notes that "it is a pretty general Practice all over Virginia for Negro Parents to have their Children christened."¹⁴¹

Reference to London in the archive after his enrollment and baptism is nonexistent. As a result, it is impossible to conceptualize with certainty what London's life looked like after the age of seven. Using the historical record as a guide it is possible to situate London's existence within the broader context of the archival landscape, and therefore properly contextualize what his life might have looked like despite his absences in the historical record.

¹³⁸ Brown, Nicole, and Helene Kriner. "Bruton Parish Register: 1662-1797 Baptism Records. ," n.d.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ John Nicholas, "Letter from William Yates and Robert Carter Nicholas to Rev. John Waring (September 30, 1762)," *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed December 20, 2022,

London in Relation to Christiana Campbell

Because London's archival record does not portray his day-to-day life, London's everyday existence is best imagined through the context of his enslaver, Christiana Campbell. This form of interpretation is representative of the fundamental inequity granted to enslaved people in the archive due to a lack of ability to write and record their existence. Furthermore, even if London had left records, written or otherwise, the historical importance of this documentation would still have been questioned or scrutinized by historians.

London would have most likely resided in Christiana Campbell's Tavern during its operation from 1760 through the Revolutionary War.¹⁴² London's time working in Campbell's Tavern intersected with Williamsburg's political apex in the mid-18th century and he would have likely interacted with major political figures such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson who were frequent guests of the tavern. The use of enslaved labor was critical to the continued operation of the Campbell's family tavern. It is possible that London's family was bequeathed by John Burdett, Christiana's father, in his will.¹⁴³

According to research on Christiana Campbell, London most likely would have moved with Campbell into the reconstructed James Anderson house in 1760 and assisted her in opening and operating their family Tavern at this site in April of 1761.¹⁴⁴ In a 1771 Virginia Gazette advertisement announcing the opening of Campbell's Tavern and London's likely residence, the

¹⁴² "Mrs. Campbell's Coffee Shop Block No. 7 Colonial Lots 21 & 22 Archaeological Area Building 45 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library," accessed December 6, 2022,

<https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRRR1100.xml>.

¹⁴³ "Dictionary of Virginia Biography - Christiana Burdett Campbell Biography," accessed December 18, 2022,

https://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.php?b=Campbell_Christiana_Burdett.

¹⁴⁴ "Christiana Campbell's Tavern Architectural Report, Block 7 Building 45 Lot 21 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library," accessed November 28, 2022,

<https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRRR1101.xml>.

tavern keeper announced that she had “opened a tavern in the House, behind the capitol.”¹⁴⁵ Campbell marketed her tavern as offering “genteel accommodations” and catered to planter elite in the Virginia colony.¹⁴⁶ Campbell’s emphasis on luxury could have motivated her to send London to the Bray School in the first place. As William Yates and Robert Carter Nicholas have noted, the Bray School had a “direct Tendency to reform [enslaved peoples] Manners,”¹⁴⁷ and London’s education likely included lessons in comportment. Campbell’s Tavern included eight rooms, multiple porches and passageways, and a traditional tavern bar.¹⁴⁸ The tavern oriented itself around entertainment and offered gambling as a primary attraction.¹⁴⁹ According to one 18th-century visitor, the tables in Campbell’s Tavern were “battered with the [gaming] boxes.”¹⁵⁰ In order to maintain an extensive gambling outfit, having workers versed in math is critical. As a result, London’s schooling in arithmetic from Ann Wager likely made him an indispensable member of the tavern.

The ability to gamble set Campbell’s Tavern apart from others in Williamsburg as a unique success unlike the other “Publick houses in Virginia.”¹⁵¹ While Campbell’s indulgent atmosphere differentiated her tavern from other entertainment in the colony, she faced competition from other tavern owners such as Jane Vobe, who was known to be a “rival tavern

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ John Nicholas, “Letter from William Yates and Robert Carter Nicholas to Rev. John Waring (September 30, 1762),” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed November 30, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/letter-from-william-yates-and-robert-carter-nicholas-to-rev-john-wareing-september-30-1762/>.

¹⁴⁸ “Christiana Campbell’s Tavern Architectural Report, Block 7 Building 45 Lot 21 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library,” accessed November 28, 2022, <https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR1101.xml>.

¹⁴⁹ “Christiana Campbell’s Tavern Architectural Report, Block 7 Building 45 Lot 21 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library,” accessed November 28, 2022, <https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR1101.xml>.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

hostess.”¹⁵² Just prior to the start of the Revolutionary War Jane Vobe owned and operated her tavern in east Williamsburg. Jane Vobe rented and then eventually sold the property to Christiana Campbell. After selling this property Vobe moved across the street to open Kings Arms Tavern, a direct competitor to Campbell’s Tavern.¹⁵³ The downfall of Campbell’s Tavern was set in motion in the aftermath of the Revolutionary War. Campbell previously faced three lawsuits for debt litigated in the York County court from 1766-1768. However, the courts were a common mechanism for resolving legal disputes, Campbell also utilized litigation after 1771 to collect debts.¹⁵⁴ Her business began to decline in 1780 after the capitol moved to Richmond. By 1783, Campbell had closed her tavern permanently and lived the last years of her life in the tavern until her passing in 1792.¹⁵⁵

The Williamsburg Bray School

The Williamsburg Bray School is one of the most unique and misunderstood institutions in the city’s colonial history. The Bray School is lauded by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation as “an 18th-century institution dedicated to the education of free and enslaved African Americans.”¹⁵⁶ However, its history and legacy has transformed because contemporary scholars have reconceptualized the purposes and motivations of the Bray Associates and the enslavers who sent their children to the school for academic and religious

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ “Christiana Campbell’s Tavern Architectural Report, Block 7 Building 45 Lot 21 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library,” accessed November 28, 2022, <https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR1101.xml>.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ “Williamsburg Bray School | Colonial Williamsburg Foundation,” accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/learn/research-and-education/architectural-research/williamsburg-bray-school-initiative/>.

enrichment.

The legacy and the creation of the Williamsburg Bray School were shaped by the Bray Associates and their founding as a philanthropic organization in 1724. The Bray Associates were founded by Thomas Bray. Bray, a minister in the Church of England, organized the association in response to a 900-pound bequest from his acquaintance and correspondent Abel Tassin commonly known as Sieur D'Allone.¹⁵⁷ In *An Essay towards Promoting All Necessary and Useful Knowledge* Thomas Bray²⁰ philosophizes that knowledge in topics, such as theology, is considered to be worthy “and of great weight and moment, [because] whatever is greatly useful is highly valuable.”¹⁵⁸ Bray, and his associates upon his death used the relationship between knowledge and value as a guiding principle in the establishment of the Bray Schools and sought to establish schools that provided knowledge and value through “Christian instruction.”¹⁵⁹

The first suggestion for the formation of the Bray School was made by the general secretary of the Bray Associates, John Waring.¹⁶⁰ Waring sought to use other educational missions in Wales as a blueprint for educating African American children.¹⁶¹ After the founding of the first Bray School in 1758 in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin recommended

¹⁵⁷ Brendan Wolfe, “Associates of Dr. Bray,” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed November 30, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/associates-of-dr-bray/>.

¹⁵⁸ Steiner, B. *Rev. Thomas Bray: His Life and Selected Works Relating to Maryland*. Baltimore, Printed by J. Murphy Co.

¹⁵⁹ Brendan Wolfe, “Associates of Dr. Bray,” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed November 30, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/associates-of-dr-bray/>.

¹⁶⁰ Brendan Wolfe, “Associates of Dr. Bray,” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed November 30, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/associates-of-dr-bray/>.

¹⁶¹ Brendan Wolfe, “Associates of Dr. Bray,” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed November 30, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/associates-of-dr-bray/>.

Williamsburg as a possible second location.¹⁶² Author Braden Wolfe suggests that the placement of the school in Williamsburg could be due in part to its “tradition of proselytizing to blacks and Indians.”¹⁶³ During the founding of the school, Franklin selected Reverend Thomas Dawson and William Hunter to run the school.¹⁶⁴ But after the death of Thomas Dawson in 1760 the operation of the school was passed on to Robert Carter Nicholas.¹⁶⁵ Nicholas assumed many of the operational duties and responsibilities of the school and was responsible for fundraising, teacher salaries, and miscellaneous expenses such as rent, books, and other supplies.¹⁶⁶ Even though Nicholas may have had reservations about the religious-based educational methods sought by Waring and the other associates, most notably that it was impossible to reform slaves already corrupted by their enslavers, he faithfully oversaw the operations of the school for over a decade.¹⁶⁷

One of Carter Nicholas' first decisions was hiring Ann Wager. Wager, a widow, had previously worked as a tutor for Virginia families for over a decade.¹⁶⁸ Most notably Wager tutored the children of Carter Burwell, grandson of Robert “King Carter” and a member of the House of Burgesses.¹⁶⁹ Wager’s appointment to the school would be the only appointment made by the associates, and her tenure coincided with the operation of the Bray School in

¹⁶²Bly, Antonio T. “In Pursuit of Letters: A History of the Bray Schools for Enslaved Children in Colonial Virginia.” *History of education quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2011): 434.

¹⁶³ Brendan Wolfe, “Associates of Dr. Bray,” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed November 30, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/associates-of-dr-bray/>.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Brendan Wolfe, “Associates of Dr. Bray,” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed November 30, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/associates-of-dr-bray/>.

¹⁶⁹ Daphne Gentry, “Carter Burwell (1716–1756),” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed December 20, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/burwell-carter-1716-1756/>.

Williamsburg.¹⁷⁰ Although the appointment of Ann Wager settled questions about who would educate the enslaved children, questions remained. In a letter from William Yates to Robert Carter Nicholas, Yates noted some of the challenges faced in educating the scholars at the Bray School, a truly “pious institution.”¹⁷¹ One of the biggest challenges the school faced was altering the perceptions of owners who sent these children to school to boost their utility in the home or prevent mischief and general disobedience.¹⁷² Because these ulterior motives were antithetical to the mission of the Bray Associates to instill a proper Christian education, the Bray School trustee outlined rules and regulations to ensure a smoother operation of the school.¹⁷³ Within these regulations the economic and scholastic value of a Christian education as evangelized by Thomas Bray was exhibited in the everyday expectations for the Bray School students. One of the practices Christian owners had to assent to included “inculcating the enslaved children in Christianity at home.”¹⁷⁴ Additionally, the Bray School curriculum was steeped in Christian principles. As outlined in the Bray School regulations, Ann Wager would “teach them to read the Bible, explain the Church Catechism to them... [that]they shall publicly repeat in Church, or elsewhere, so often as the Trustees shall require.”¹⁷⁵ Strict adherence to these Christian doctrines was mandated by the associates. Therefore, Wager was “frequently examined in School” and evaluated to ensure scholars demonstrated faithful “Improvements of every Sort.”¹⁷⁶ The supervision of Anne Wager by the Bray Associates was not altruistic but a

¹⁷⁰ Brendan Wolfe, “Associates of Dr. Bray,” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed November 30, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/associates-of-dr-bray/>.

¹⁷¹ John Nicholas, “Letter from William Yates and Robert Carter Nicholas to Rev. John Waring (September 30, 1762),” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed December 20, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/letter-from-william-yates-and-robert-carter-nicholas-to-rev-john-wareing-september-30-1762/>.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ John Nicholas, “Letter from William Yates and Robert Carter Nicholas to Rev. John Waring (September 30, 1762),” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed December 20, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/letter-from-william-yates-and-robert-carter-nicholas-to-rev-john-wareing-september-30-1762/>.

practical method to ensure adherence to a strict religious curriculum.

Despite an increase in enrollment to in 1764, strict regulations created a tumultuous relationship between the Bray Associates and trustees back in England.¹⁷⁷ This conflict was compounded by resistance from owners who sent those they enslaved to the school. Instability peaked in 1768 during a financial dispute between Carter Nicholas and the Bray trustees. Carter Nicholas attempted to address an onslaught of expenses by asking for increased funding from the Bray Trustees.¹⁷⁸ Hampered by the lack of interest among enslavers to support the institution financially, Carter Nicholas slashed Wager's salary to reconcile the financial discrepancy.¹⁷⁹ Ultimately, the death of Ann Wager created financial difficulties that culminated in the 1774 closure of the Bray School.¹⁸⁰

Interconnections between London and Gowan

Contextualizing the relationship between London and Gowan Pamphlet helps illuminate the amplifications and silences in the archive. However, the comparison between these two individuals represents more than just an example of the power of historical imagination. The connections between London and Gowan Pamphlet exhibit how the contextual exercise of historical imagination is rooted in archival fact, and the lives of these two individuals and their remembrance are only differentiated by what has and has not been documented.

¹⁷⁷ Bly, 440

¹⁷⁸ Robert Miller Saunders, "The Public Career of Robert Carter Nicholas," n.d.

¹⁷⁹ Saunders, 57

¹⁸⁰ "Williamsburg Bray School | Colonial Williamsburg Foundation," accessed April 23, 2023, <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/learn/research-and-education/architectural-research/williamsburg-bray-school-initiative/>.

One of the most substantial connections shared by Gowan Pamphlet and London is the occupation of their enslavers. Jane Vobe and Christiana Campbell, the enslavers of these two individuals, were both tavern keepers who operated “two of the finer establishments” in Williamsburg. These two women were contemporaries and rivals.¹⁸¹ There is, however, no evidence of direct correspondence between the two or anyone they enslaved, but the likelihood of Gowan and London having knowledge of each other's establishments has precedent. In *Within Her Power: Propertied Women in Colonial Virginia*,² author Linda Sturtz recounts the judicial proceedings of enslaved peoples, Natt and Simon.¹⁸² According to Sturtz, these two individuals “as slaves of tavernkeepers, may well have understood the workings of the victims [enslaved persons] ordinaries since the victims were competitors of their own mistresses in the business.”¹⁸³ The relationship between Natt and Simon is similar to the potential connection between Gowan and London, because of their enslavers' documented interaction. Of note is the common residence each shared in their respective lives. As historian Julie Richter notes, in 1771 Christiana Campbell relocated her tavern to the house Vobe had vacated.¹⁸⁴ Even though further connections via property records are unavailable, Gowan and London can be similarly regarded as contemporaries because both individuals were raised under nearly indistinguishable circumstances. The common characteristics between these two individuals illustrate the validity of this exercise in historical imagination, and the way education fuels resistance and subversion.

¹⁸¹ “Christiana Campbell’s Tavern Architectural Report, Block 7 Building 45 Lot 21 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library,” accessed November 28, 2022,

<https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR1101.xml>.

¹⁸² Sturtz, Linda. *Within Her Power : Propertied Women in Colonial Virginia*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2002. Accessed April 23, 2023. ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁸³ Sturtz, 101

¹⁸⁴ Julie Richter, “Jane Vobe (by 1733–1786),” *Encyclopedia Virginia* (blog), accessed December 19, 2022, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/vobe-jane-by-1733-1786/>.

Resistance at the Williamsburg Bray School

The Williamsburg Bray School serves as a critical example of how the aims of 18th-century institutions to impose systems of oppression were subverted by enslaved people. In the creation of the Bray School the Bray Associates intended to indoctrinate Bray School students as good Christians and therefore more valuable slaves. However, the individual stories, coupled with larger statistical data from the period, paint a different picture of the effects of this institution in enforcing systems of enslavement. One of the best examples of subversion at the Bray School can be seen in the story of Isaac Bee. According to historian Antonio Bly, Isaac Bee was born in 1755 and attended the Williamsburg Bray School from 1765-1769. Bee “was one of many enslaved Virginians who gained knowledge of letters before the American Revolution because of the efforts of the Associates of the Late Thomas Bray.” Isaac Bee’s father was a free man, and his mother was an indentured servant of John Blair. Even though Bee’s mother was white, Bee was bound to indentured servitude as a result of Virginia’s miscegenation laws. While little is known about Bee’s specific experience at the Bray School, he almost certainly learned his letters and was schooled in critical facets of the Anglican faith, such as the Lord’s Prayer. After leaving the Bray School Isaac Bee became the property of Lewis Burwell, the grandson of his former enslaver John Blair. However, shortly after coming into the possession of Lewis Burwell, Isaac Bee fled, and a run-away ad was placed in the Virginia Gazette for his immediate return. Antonio Bly speculates that Bee could have been inspired to flee because of the political climate leading up to the revolutionary war. Bly notes that “Like others who could read, Bee could have followed current events printed in the newspaper.”¹⁸⁵ While Antonio Bly also postulates that Isaac Bee may have received schooling

¹⁸⁵ Bly, 459

in other forms, he believes it is likely that Bee was convinced of the immorality of slavery and used that as a primary reason to flee. Shortly after fleeing, Bee was captured by patrols and returned to Lewis Burwell. Bee did not attempt to flee again and faded from the historical record.¹⁸⁶

While the story of Isaac Bee highlights the individual narratives of resistance that subverted the intentions of the Bray School, the correlation between the systemization of enslavement at the Bray School and a rise in resistance in the city of Williamsburg exemplifies how the Bray School's impact transcended just the scholars it sought to reform. Over 300 students attended the Bray School during its 14 years of operation.¹⁸⁷ While many enslaved people attended the school Bly speculates that "In all likelihood, [students] shared with one another, as well as others, the mystery of letters." The impact of the sharing of learning was

¹⁸⁶ There is some speculation that Isaac Bee may have fled a second time as a result of the discovery of a Runaway ad.

The ad states "THIRTY DOLLARS REWARD. RAN AWAY on Wednesday evening last, from this place, a man slave, named ISAAC BEL. He is a bright Mulatto, between thirty and forty years of age, about five feet eight or nine inches high, and has a very bad burn on the back of his left hand; he is fond of drink, and is a very artful cunning fellow, he can both, read and write, and in all probability he may write him a free pass, or endeavour to pass for a freeman; he had on when he went away, a blue broadcloth coat, with white metal buttons, and a drab coloured great coat, with yellow metal buttons, and had on a cock'd hat; he took with him a horse, saddle and bridle, and a very large pair of saddle bags---the horse is a bright bay, far advanced in years, with a blemish in his right eye, and about four feet eleven inches high, goes well, and is very spirited---the saddle bags contained two large books, relative to the business of sheriff, and a great number of papers, bonds, &c. There was also in the bags, an elegant pair of steel barrel pistols fixed with a belt. Whoever will deliver the said slave to me, or secure him in any jail with the state of Virginia, so that I get him again, shall receive Ten Dollars, and for the horse, saddle and bridle and saddle bags, Twenty Dollars. This fellow was formerly the property of Col. Lewis Burwell, of Mecklenburg, who sold him to Mr. David Lambert of this city, of whom I purchased him. RICHARD LITTLEPAGE. Richmond, March 8, 1793."

While the last name Bee is misspelled all other details match up.

"The Geography of Slavery," accessed April 25, 2023,

<http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/search/relatedAd.php?adFile=vgl793.xml&adId=v1793030012>.

¹⁸⁷ "Williamsburg Bray School | Colonial Williamsburg Foundation," accessed April 25, 2023,

<https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/learn/research-and-education/architectural-research/williamsburg-bray-school-initiative/>.

fundamental to the resistance observed in the stories of Isaac Bee and others. As Antonio Bly notes, “reading held the promise of writing and writing the opportunity for freedom.” In a table compiled by Bly listing the Literacy Characteristics of Virginia Runaways as Reported by Their Owners the number of runaway ads in the Virginia Gazette increased by over 900%, from 72 in 1750-1759 to 648 in the period from 1770-1776, during the Bray School’s operation. The characteristics of the runaway slaves also reflects the continued importance of education in the characteristics of enslaved runaways. During the 36-year period of this study every single enslaved person advertised in the Virginia Gazette was literate in some form. While it is likely that many enslaved people who were not literate ran away, the correlation between education and seeking freedom against enslavement is evident.

Gowan Pamphlet at the Bray School: Evidence From Nicole Brown’s Thesis

Gowan Pamphlet’s documented connections to London as well as his importance to the rise of the First Baptist Church are unquestioned. However, archival evidence pointing towards Gowan’s participation in the Bray School and therefore his connection to London via the Bray School is tenuous. Even though all Bray School scholars acknowledge the lack of documentary evidence placing Gowan at the Bray School, both Antonio Bly and Nicole Brown suggest the possibility that Pamphlet received an education. Antonio Bly first outlines this possibility in his seminal work on the Bray School, *In Pursuit of Letters*. In Bly’s discussion of Jane Vobe, the author notes that after enrolling scholars, Sal and Jack, Vobe may have also sent their brother

Gowan to the Bray School. While Bly does not further explore Gowan's potential schooling, he does note that if he was sent to the Bray School, he "put his lessons to good use."¹⁸⁸

One of the first connections Nicole Brown makes between Gowan and the Bray School is his literacy. Brown first notes that Gowan's ability to read "did not emanate from nowhere."¹⁸⁹ She adds that Gowan was of the right age bracket to attend Wager's school and it is also likely that he had access to religious books via his siblings, Sal and Jack.¹⁹⁰ Brown views the relationships between Gowan and his siblings as interdependent and suggests that in return for Sal and Jack's literary tutoring, Gowan could have encouraged them to join his congregation.¹⁹¹ This relationship is indicative of the methods of subversion flourished in the pursuit of education and independence. Ultimately whether Gowan attended the Bray School or received his education via his siblings Sal and Jack, the Bray School education was a significant influence in Gowan's attainment of literacy and development of the First Baptist Congregation.

¹⁸⁸ Bly, 450

¹⁸⁹ Brown, Nicole Catherine Nioma. "'So Pious an Institution': Religion, Slavery, Education, and the Williamsburg Bray School," 2013.

¹⁹⁰ Brown, 51

¹⁹¹ Brown, 52

Gowan Pamphlet

Gowan Pamphlet's legacy as a revolutionary figure in the evolution of the Black church has been documented for centuries. However, the more complicated influence of the Bray School on Gowan and his religious rebellion has yet to reveal itself. Though it is theorized that Pamphlet was born in the mid 18th century evidence of his age is not present in the archive. Gowan Pamphlet was first mentioned in the archive as being enslaved by Jane Vobe.¹⁹² Vobe, the proprietor of the Kings Arms Tavern, had a reputation for operating one of the most successful businesses in Williamsburg.¹⁹³ As author Linda Rowe notes, Pamphlet and his fellow tavern workers rubbed shoulders with prominent officials and well-to-do travelers at Vobe's up market tavern. Most notably, it was said that Gowan was "well known to most Gentlemen who frequented the general courts" in Williamsburg.¹⁹⁴

Another and perhaps the most critical aspect of Pamphlet's upbringing was his ability to read and write. Rowe claims that Gowan Pamphlet was almost certainly literate.¹⁹⁵ She further notes that the likely source of this literacy was through his work at King's Arms Tavern.¹⁹⁶ The tavern afforded him regular exposure to newspapers, almanacs, and broadsides, as well as all manner of notices posted in the tavern and other written and printed materials.¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, Bibles and prayer books owned by Vobe and the enslaved children she enrolled in a school in Williamsburg were likely a familiar sight.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² Rowe, Linda. "Gowan Pamphlet: Baptist Preacher in Slavery and Freedom." *The Virginia magazine of history and biography* 120, no. 1 (2012): 3-.

¹⁹³ Rowe

¹⁹⁴ Rowe

¹⁹⁵ Linda H. Rowe, "Gowan Pamphlet (Fl. 1779–1807)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, accessed April 23, 2023, <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/pamphlet-gowan-fl-1779-1807/>.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

While Jane Vobe's Kings Arms Tavern offered Gowan the opportunity to attain proficiency in reading and writing, the Bray School was another primary example of how Gowan could have become literate. Critically, Gowan's literacy was fundamental in the subversion of the intentions of some of the most powerful men in Williamsburg. According to Linda Rowe, it was commonplace in Colonial Virginia for enslavers to distribute religious materials to literate slaves to teach other enslaved individuals who could not read.¹⁹⁹ Instead of increasing the adherence of enslaved individuals to traditions of religion that reinforce slavery, this effort of indoctrination was ultimately used by the enslaved to subvert religious efforts to further ingrain systems of oppression and spread a form of Christian faith that represented emancipation from traditional ideals of the Anglican faith. Scholars have been unable to document Gowan's interaction with Bruton Parish Church, but "circumstantial evidence suggests that Vobe probably permitted, even encouraged, some or all of her slaves to [attend church]."²⁰⁰ Due to Vobe's devotion to the Anglican church, it is likely that Gowan or other trusted slaves sat with Vobe in church.²⁰¹ Furthermore, London's baptism at Bruton Parish Church likely indicates he would have been in attendance with Christiana Campbell at the same services as Gowan.²⁰² The Bray School gave Gowan Pamphlet the blueprint to proselytize, and the Great Awakening served as the tool for Gowan's interest in Christianity as a vehicle for increased religious equity and recognition. This religious revival came to Virginia "with the message that before God all people were equally in need of repentance and spiritual renewal."²⁰³ This message of spirituality that was inclusive of all, regardless of the race or liberty, was a direct threat to the Anglican establishment.

¹⁹⁹ Rowe

²⁰⁰ Rowe

²⁰¹ Rowe

²⁰² Rowe

²⁰³ Rowe

Resistance to Gowan's congregation came in the form of the General Association. While he gathered congregants without claiming a religious denomination, repudiation for Gowan Pamphlet's religious expression only came once his congregation evolved into a more organized, and thus more threatening, structure under the Baptist denomination.²⁰⁴ The General Association did not have any direct controls over Pamphlet's congregation, however, its wide-reaching edict that "advised that no person of color should be allowed to preach, on the pain of ex-communication" was a direct impediment to his burgeoning church and its enslaved members.²⁰⁵ By the time that Pamphlet's ministry had reached over 200 members the church was drawing congregants from households spanning the entire city of Williamsburg.²⁰⁶ During First Baptist's rapid growth, Pamphlet left Williamsburg with Jane Vobe for nearly a decade. The preacher returned to the city in 1791 and resumed his religious post.²⁰⁷ After his return Pamphlet attempted to have his congregation recognized and certified by the Dover Baptist Association, an offshoot of the General Association.²⁰⁸ Still enslaved, Pamphlet applied for membership, and in October of 1793 his membership request to the Dover Baptist Association was granted.²⁰⁹

Although Gowan achieved a significant milestone in the quest for his congregation's legitimacy, Pamphlet was recorded in the archive for a different reason. Gowan, tied up in a criminal conspiracy, was recorded in the archive by William Nelson Jr. of Yorktown.²¹⁰ Nelson unjustly claimed Pamphlet had dropped a letter in the streets of Williamsburg that referenced a

²⁰⁴ Rowe

²⁰⁵ Rowe

²⁰⁶ Rowe

²⁰⁷ Rowe

²⁰⁸ Rowe

²⁰⁹ Rowe

²¹⁰ Rowe

“slave revolt by thousands of men" of "our color.”²¹¹ This alleged attack would have occurred in simultaneous revolts across the south from Charleston, South Carolina, to Richmond, Virginia. While this revolt never occurred, accusations about Pamphlet scaled the political flagpole and ultimately reached the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia and the Governor of South Carolina.²¹² Although the accounting of this criminal conspiracy ends after accusations ceased, the religious and racial resistance to Gowan’s subversion exists in the historical record forever.

Despite the turmoil surrounding Gowan throughout his life, in 1793 Pamphlet was manumitted and passed away as a free man.²¹³ In 1804, the Williamsburg congregation grew to over 600 members and by the time of Gowan’s last mention in the archive the religious revolutionary owned multiple pieces of property in Williamsburg and greater James City County.²¹⁴ Pamphlet disappeared from the record in 1807, but his impact on Williamsburg and the expression of African American religion still rings true for all Americans today.²¹⁵

Conclusion

The lives of London and Gowan Pamphlet encompass critical aspects of subversion, resistance, and historical memory in Williamsburg during the Colonial and Revolutionary periods. While the stories of London and Pamphlet’s lives are limited or amplified by the historical record, they are grounded in the importance of the schoolhouse and the church as

²¹¹ Rowe

²¹² Rowe

²¹³ Rowe

²¹⁴ Rowe

²¹⁵ Rowe

central institutions. In the deconstruction and subsequent exploration of London's life and connections to Gowan Pamphlet, their similarities in background and educational influences create a nearly indistinguishable picture outside of how frequently mentioned these individuals are in the archive. This distinction represents a critical example of how and why certain individuals' lives are documented and therefore considered historically significant, and others are silenced.

Gowan's life represented a subversion of the systemization of oppression against African Americans since the inception of chattel slavery. The dogma of inferiority, proselytized from the pulpit and the lectern, were imprinted in every facet of life and sculpted the curves and contours of the scholarly archive. While it is impossible to record every detail from this historic period, how educational subversion fueled religious and human resistance is self-evident. In response to this rebellion, those in power chose to criminalize and marginalize these expressions of liberty. It is for this reason that Gowan's defiance is recorded and remembered today. Even though London's historical significance has been overlooked by the archive, his resistance should not be marginalized in favor of those with more archival footing like Gowan Pamphlet. Historic memory and imagination are critical to illuminating London's. Ultimately it is through exercises like this case study that historians can examine critical questions about what the archive records and omits to facilitate true reconciliation.

Conclusion



Photograph of Hearth: Memorial to the Enslaved, 2023, Baskervill

Conclusion

This paper serves as a culmination of my experience as a historian and reflects every experience that has shaped my approach over the last three years. This thesis addresses the gaps in the process of memorialization by using the approach of historical imagination to promote reconciliation. The principles of recognition, reflection, and imagination are things every person can take and apply outside the confines of the academy. This is not a history thesis but an interdisciplinary thesis that reflects life itself.

Through the process of answering my research questions I found that a way for historians to better approach memorialization is through non-traditional structures that impart agency derived from the archive upon those being memorialized. The examples of both case studies of London's in Williamsburg reflects this approach and contributed to bridging the gaps within the archive. Using historical imagination allows historians, descendants, and community members to better contextualize systems of enslavement in a way that also promotes healing and repair. Additionally, I found that historical imagination is a powerful tool to promote the reconciliation and memorialization process as a solution to the variety of problems an incomplete historical narrative present. The last research question I addressed was the effect of my use of positionality as a scholar within the thesis. A historian's positionality is fundamental to the way historians seek to "find." The principles for research and exploration do not have to be dominated by the traditions of the academy but can be influenced by an interdisciplinary background that seeks to bridge the gaps that traditional principles of scholarship fail to address.

The College of William & Mary, the City of Williamsburg, and college campuses and communities across the nation are at an inflection point. As the histories of enslavement at colleges and universities become more and more difficult to ignore, the importance of memorialization and its promotion of reconciliation and healing rises to the forefront. These institutions will face the same archival challenges that the Lemon Project and other historians addressing enslavement in the historical record have encountered. The use of historical imagination to illuminate the gaps within the archive and repair the histories of the millions of unknown enslaved people whose histories are not accounted for is paramount in the facilitation of healing and repair. While these techniques forego the more traditional and rigid structures of the academy this approach is important because if we do not use historical imagination as a tool we are only left with the horrors of slavery.

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