

2018

Making a Home Out of No Home: 'Colored' Orphan Asylums in Virginia, 1867–1930

August Butler

William & Mary - Arts & Sciences, augustmbutler@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Butler, August, "Making a Home Out of No Home: 'Colored' Orphan Asylums in Virginia, 1867–1930" (2018). *Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects*. William & Mary. Paper 1563898917.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.21220/s2-dg43-1492>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.

Making a Home out of No Home: 'Colored' Orphan Asylums in Virginia, 1867–1930

August M Butler

Richmond, Virginia

Master of Arts, College of William & Mary, 2014

Bachelor of Arts, Texas A&M University, 2010

A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty of The College of William &
Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Lyon G. Tyler Department of History

College of William & Mary

May, 2019

APPROVAL PAGE

This Dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy



August M Butler


Approved by the Committee December 2018



Committee Chair
Professor Scott Reynolds Nelson, History
University of Georgia



Professor Melvin Patrick Ely, History
College of William & Mary



Professor Frederick Corney, History
College of William & Mary



Associate Professor Catherine A. Jones, History
University of California, Santa Cruz

ABSTRACT

No research has been done on institutions created for African American orphans in the South after the Civil War, leaving a significant gap in the literature surrounding not only the nature and operation of these institutions but also how they reflected the various conceptions of the New South that competed for acceptance during Reconstruction and beyond. How individuals and organizations, particularly religious organizations, imagined the “problem” of the black orphan and the nature of a society that failed to deal with it affected the “solutions” they devised in the form of orphan asylums.

Four case studies of orphanages in Virginia, operated by individuals from four different Christian denominations in different periods following the Civil War, provide insight into the changing visions of the New South over approximately fifty years. These visions in turn affected the operational values of each institution and the factors which ultimately led to their success or failure.

Chapter 1 examines the Friends’ Asylum for Colored Orphans in Richmond, a Quaker orphanage begun during Reconstruction and which saw the African American orphan as emblematic of the hope and opportunity available post-emancipation. This motivated the inclusion of and eventual transfer to African American leadership, which enabled the institution to continue into the mid-twentieth century. Chapter 2 looks at the Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School, an institution founded by an Episcopalian minister during the violent reactionary period of the 1890s; his imagined orphan was dangerous, suggestible, and representative of an out-of-control society. His goal was to raise a tractable generation of African American children to restore white superiority which precluded any African American involvement in the project; this, combined with personal failings, resulted in the closure of the orphanage within a decade. Chapter 3 inspects the St. Francis Colored Foundling and Orphan Asylum and its later iteration Holy Innocents’ Asylum, Catholic foundling orphanages in Richmond also started in the 1890s. These saw African American orphans as little more than potential converts, a view somewhere between the hope and control models of the previous two institutions, and this white, foreign-led institution lasted just over twenty years. Chapter 4 analyzes the Weaver Orphan Home, a Hampton orphanage operated by a black Baptist family during the height of Jim Crow segregation. Their early adoption of a family-based model of child welfare, centered on promoting the dignity and personhood of the child, was hugely successful and enabled them to operate for over half a century.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
Dedication	iv
Introduction The Garden of Lilies	1
Chapter 1. “Things needful for the comfort of the children”: Friends’ Asylum for Colored Orphans (Richmond), 1868–1969	26
Chapter 2. “We must lift up the negro or he will pull us down”: Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School, 1890–1898	59
Chapter 3. “Under the care of a good Catholic white woman”: St. Francis Colored Foundling and Orphan Asylum and Holy Innocents’ Asylum (Richmond), 1894–1897, 1897–c.1920	92
Chapter 4. “As near like a real home as possible”: Weaver Orphan Home (Hampton), 1904–1965	126
Conclusion Legacies	172
Bibliography	177

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wow, where to begin? Seven years is a long time, and in truth this journey started even before I got to graduate school. But while “the very beginning” may be “a very good place to start,” I think in this case it makes more sense to work backwards.

And so first, my committee: Kate Jones, who kindly took notice of me while on her fellowship at the Library of Virginia and gave me invaluable advice in the earliest days of this project, before returning at the end as an incisive outside reader; Fred Corney, whose humor and easygoing charm got me through the doldrums of years four and five; and Mel Ely, whose thoughtful and thorough comments exceeded my expectations and sharpened this dissertation immeasurably. Scott Nelson made his seminar my first year of grad school so engaging, refreshing, and *fun* that I knew I wanted to work with him forever. His advising over the past six years has been the perfect fit for me, and I would not have gotten through without him.

This last year was made possible through the generous provisions of the Provost Dissertation Fellowship, and my heartfelt thanks go out to Dean Virginia Torczon for deciding my project was worth her time, energy, and funding. And to Sarah Glosson, whose ingenious “boot camp” enabled me to get more work done last summer than I had ever thought possible and whose continuing encouragement throughout the year was very welcome. Kristen, Molly, Jan, Tyler, Neeve, Mallory, and Summer were the best cohort anyone could have asked for.

This dissertation would not have gotten far without the wonderful librarians and archivists I had the pleasure of working with. Audrey McElhinney was my best friend at the Library of Virginia for a few months while I pestered her about looking at the Weaver Home records. She, along with Jim Greve and Chad Underwood, fought hard for me to access those, and were unfailingly friendly about it, too. Katie Lemza, of the Office of Archives and Black/Asian Catholics in the Diocese of Richmond, got me the diocesan records of St. Joseph’s Parish. Carla Canady and Sister Celia Struck, the archivists for the Josephites and the Franciscan Sisters respectively, were enormously helpful over email, and special mention must go to Sister Ellen Carr, who “did some digging” in the Baltimore archives while in town on her own business! J. David Young is not an archivist, but the Executive Director of the FRIENDS Association for Children, and took the time to speak to me on the phone about the history of the organization and Lucy Goode Brooks. Lara Vapnek is likewise not an archivist, but she took the time to advise a fellow historian on the practice of wet nursing and recommend additional resources in that vein.

The administrative apparatuses of William & Mary are more helpful and, indeed, friendly than most. History department mavens Daneene Kelley and Gail Conner, before her untimely passing, kept us all on track with funds, forms, and food. Swem Library graciously allowed me to keep books for years on end, and the Inter-Library Loan department more than earned their pay with all the books I asked them for.

Beyond the administration, William & Mary’s academic programs and institutes are unparalleled. The Omohundro Institute gave me more than just the ability to footnote properly (although that was a significant benefit); they also continued to employ me for several freelance projects that kept my editing pen sharp and my bank account comfy. Many thanks to Ginny Chew, Meg Musselwhite, Kathy Burdette, Nadine

Zimmerli, and of course Gil Kelly, esq. That first year of graduate school of course led to many more, and I would be remiss not to mention all those who taught me something (in a classroom) along the way: Karin Wulf, Chandos Brown, Guillaume Aubert, Scott Nelson, Cindy Hahamovitch, Liz Barnes, Hiroshi Kitamura, Susan Kern, Fred Corney, Paul Mapp, Mel Ely, and Michelle Lelievre.

The “other institute” bears special mention, as it is no exaggeration to say that I would not have been at William & Mary, or even in graduate school, without it. NIAHD entered my life at the tender age of sixteen and I refused to leave for the next fourteen years. It incited a desire to study history critically and an interest in Virginia and its unique place in the national story; it provided an environment in which to blossom not only as a student and teenager, but as a burgeoning leader; and it gave me valuable experience as a supervisor, manager, problem-solver, and teacher. “It” of course is only as good as its people: the Whittenburgs and Dave Corlett, who have been there since the beginning; Sarah McCartney, who taught me so much of what I know; and Julie Richter, who has solicited my opinions as an equal. Not to mention the hundreds of students I have watched grow into young adults, the dozens of RPAs I have enjoyed the insanity with, and the fellow instructors who *know*. As we say at my alma mater, Texas A&M, “From the outside looking in, you can’t understand it. And from the inside looking out, you can’t explain it.”

Finally, to those fellow-travelers along this grad school journey. Only two remain from our original cohort of five, but Kristen Beales has been a perfect traveling companion these last seven years—encouraging, thoughtful, and kind; always pushing me to be better and never yielding to despair; and never allowing commiseration to slip into condemnation. We were both adopted to some degree by the larger cohorts immediately above and below us, and I cannot say enough good things about Casey, Hannah, Beth, Cara, Katie, Spencer, Mark, Mark, Michaela, Ian, Nate, Caylin, and David. And on either side of those cohorts, my special thanks to Laura and Kasey, truly delightful roommates.

And to those friends who have nothing to do with graduate school, but who provided necessary perspective and welcome laughter (and the occasional shoulder to cry on)—especially Bob, Heather, and Jeana—thank you. You are my second family. My first family—Dad, Mom, Amanda, Hunter, Indira, Lilith, and Soren—deserves all the praise for believing that seven years in an ivory tower was a worthy endeavor.

For all of Richmond's foster children, especially

J

K & K

B

M

D & S

A & X & K & I & J

and the families who love them.

Introduction

The Garden of Lilies

At the eastern edge of the city of Richmond, Stony Run Parkway meanders through the woods along the pebble-filled creek it is named for. Abruptly, the fresh black asphalt gives way to an older grey pavement. Straddling this unusually visible boundary between Richmond City and Henrico County, a small clearing opens in the surrounding swamp oak forest. Three large, semi-finished blocks of granite are arranged in a rough U-shape, only highlighting the absence of the visitors they invite to sit. A bronze plaque faces the road, though only a gap in the guardrail allows one to pull over onto the road's tiny shoulder. The plaque reads:

The Burying Ground - For Colored Paupers

The Garden of Lilies

This colored paupers' cemetery was originally founded in 1895 by William Forrester as a part of Greenwood Memorial Cemetery in Henrico County. Many of the colored cemeteries in the city were overgrown due to lack of appropriate care, and Mr. Forrester wanted to provide burial plots for colored people in the city where they could take pride in burying their ancestors. His dream was not limited to African-Americans; burials were open to all non-white ethnicities from any economic background.

In 1896, William Forrester stepped down as president of this cemetery, and Thomas Crumpler was elected president. Six acres of the cemetery that included grave sites were sold to Mr. Bauer of Henrico County to cover the debt on the cemetery. Finding the land uninhabitable for any other purposes, the property was re-sold to the city of Richmond and re-named the Colored Paupers' Cemetery.

Between 1895 and 1896, many infants and children between the ages of 3 and 12 throughout the area died as a result of poor nutrition and childhood diseases. According to early reports of the cemetery superintendent, more than 500 infants and children, many of whom resided in the city streets, orphanages, asylums, and hospitals were laid to rest here.

By the 1970s the cemetery was all but forgotten and was consumed by trees and vegetation. In 2007, historian Veronica A. Davis, the Richmond

Sheriff's Department and Richmond's Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities joined efforts to restore this area of the cemetery to its original appeal. Today it is known as the Garden of Lilies, named for the delicate yet fragile children that are laid to rest here.

The children buried in the "Garden of Lilies" were invisible to the majority of society during their lives—except perhaps as a public health crisis. They have been doubly forgotten in death. Not only are they nameless, lying unmarked in a neglected graveyard, but history has abandoned them as well. The name "Garden of Lilies," bestowed in the twenty-first century to connote the purity and innocence that we now associate with childhood, ironically adorns a site reminiscent of a time when orphans, especially African American orphans, were all too often *not* regarded as pure or innocent.

The phrase "garden of lilies" is also an apt metaphor for the American South after the Civil War. Lilies symbolize purity and innocence but are also commonly associated with funerals. Thus a garden of lilies represents the complex, contradictory array of possibilities open to this region recreating itself from the ashes of a devastating war. Though seen by some as a land of opportunity, this post-Civil War South was weighed down by the efforts of many of its white citizens to withhold that opportunity from their African American neighbors. The black babies buried in the forgotten graveyard suggest the dire consequences of those efforts, reminding us that real children lived and died amid all the political wrangling.

The last years of the Civil War and the immediate aftermath saw an enormous boom in American orphanages, if such an optimistic term can be used for a phenomenon resulting from the massive casualties of that bloody conflict. Most of these new orphan-

ages catered to soldiers' orphans, a newly meaningful category and a focal point for great sentimental and patriotic goodwill. But additionally, an entirely new—and large—category of dependent had sprung into existence in 1863: the Southern black child. Religious organizations and private individuals, spurred by different motivations than those that animated soldiers' orphans homes, constructed institutions to house orphaned (or poor) African American children throughout Reconstruction and into the Progressive Era, including four in Virginia.

The analytical value of each of these institutions is twofold. On the one hand, each of these Virginia orphanages embodied the values of different kinds of Southerner, and their success or failure indicates how different visions of the South competed for dominance after the war. The politics of this time have been well studied, but the ways those politics were enacted through charitable projects—especially toward African American children—remain understudied or even absent from the literature. Examining how the founders and donors of these institutions envisioned solutions to the “problem” of the African American orphan elucidates how they viewed the problems of the postwar South and the solutions thereto. But these orphanages also brought those visions into contact with the real children they were purportedly designed to help. Thus the second benefit of studying these institutions is a glimpse into the lived experience of African American children and families in Reconstruction and Jim Crow Virginia, experiences which were shaped by state and national politics but also remarkably continuous in the face of seemingly epochal transformations occurring over the forty years following the Civil War.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, myriad Souths existed—or were dreamed of—along racial, gender, religious, geographical, economic, and political lines. The possibility of black political equality, for example, was very real between 1865 and about 1870, a thrilling possibility to African Americans and most Republicans but feared by white Democrats. Robert Engs demonstrates the effect of this representation on “freedom’s first generation,” those who grew up in Hampton, Virginia, in the brief period between the end of slavery and the rigid segregation of the 1890s, and it is clear that they lived in and imagined a different South than the one the Redeemers eventually brought to fruition.¹

The twelve years immediately following the Civil War are of course known as Reconstruction, and generally divided into the white-supremacist Presidential Reconstruction of 1865–1867, and the more egalitarian Congressional Reconstruction, headed by the Radical Republicans from 1867 until President Rutherford B. Hayes finally withdrew troops from the South in 1877. From a Northern perspective, “Reconstruction” implied a twofold mission: the South needed to be rebuilt physically, so that half the country could again contribute to the national economy, and former Confederates also needed to have their minds rebuilt to align with the Unionist ideals that had just proved victorious. For many white Southerners, “Reconstruction” was just a thin veneer for military occupation. But for African Americans, Reconstruction represented the promise of the Emancipation Proclamation finally fulfilled—a promise ultimately betrayed.²

¹ Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (Oxford, 1992). Robert Francis Engs, *Freedom’s First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861–1890* (Philadelphia, 1979).

² Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution: 1863–1877* (New York, 1988).

The federal government, even under the leadership of the Radical Republicans, never put enough teeth into their Reconstruction efforts to adequately combat the determination of the Southern Democrats. Bit by bit, state governments across the South reinstalled former Confederate leaders, “redeeming” their territory from Yankee “carpetbaggers” as well as black and white Southern Republicans, whom they blamed for the depression that would last through the 1870s. The South’s financial problems actually resulted from a number of factors: worthless Confederate currency and an overall lack of capital, diminishing returns from cotton-depleted soil and a largely undiversified agriculture, railroad development rapidly altering the economic landscape, and the stultifying effect of sharecropping.³

Virginia was the first state claimed by the Redeemer Democrats, via the victory of the Conservative party—a coalition of white conservatives and “moderate” Republicans that eventually pushed its Republican members to the rear—in 1869.⁴ Redeemers began walking back the significant gains made by African Americans in the early days of Reconstruction, though this process was far from linear. The Readjuster movement, another inter-party coalition which included significant African American support, gained power in Virginia in the early 1880s. But black assemblymen and representatives were slowly pushed out of office as conservative Democrats suppressed African American votes over the next twenty years. Along with this gradual, unofficial disfranchisement (it would become official in 1902), Jim Crow laws implemented haltingly and unevenly throughout

³ Howard N. Rabinowitz, *The First New South, 1865–1920* (Arlington Heights, Ill., 1992); Edward L. Ayers, *Southern Crossing: A History of the American South, 1877–1906* (Oxford, 1995).

⁴ Ayers, *Southern Crossing*, 5–7.

the 1880s and 1890s created a segregated society novel to a region that had long lived intimately intertwined.⁵ The new legal equality granted by the Reconstruction amendments had made this previous intimacy impossible to stomach for many white Southerners, as demonstrated most graphically by the epidemic of violent lynchings perpetrated against black men from the 1890s to the 1910s.⁶ Even those on the lowest rungs of the societal ladder felt this shift, as poorhouses that had always been unsegregated before the war began to split into black and white.

The traditional divide between Presidential and Congressional Reconstruction is a convenient demarcation for historians, but it may not have been nearly so visible to those who lived through it—especially those whose political power remained unaffected because they had no rights under any system of government. For Southern children, black and white, the question of who lived in the governor’s mansion was far less important than who their father was and whether he had come home from the war. Their lives may have been indirectly affected by the political maneuverings at the state and federal level, but they were much more immediately and profoundly shaped by their geographic and religious environment.

Two of the institutions under consideration here operated in Richmond, Virginia’s capital and largest city, while the other two deliberately purchased acres of farmland outside smaller cities. “The South” was a different place for people living in cities and the majority who lived in rural areas, although the contours of this divide were being rapidly

⁵ C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York, 1955).

⁶ Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York, 1998); Crystal N. Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Cambridge, Mass., 2009).

altered by the development of railroads criss-crossing the region. There were cities in the South before the war, of course, and they had been growing and industrializing along with their Northern counterparts, though perhaps not as quickly; Richmond was a leading example. Denser population, proximity to centers of transportation and trade, and exposure to more and different kinds of people made cities places of faster communication, innovation, and reaction to change. This only increased with the railroad boom in the postwar period; railroads determined where people, money, and ideas went—which was sometimes where they had been before, and sometimes was not. Budding cities died when bypassed by the railroads, and once-rural areas suddenly became buzzing regional hubs.⁷ These sudden economic shifts contributed to the migration of African Americans into cities, and their increased visibility in closer quarters exacerbated white anxieties.⁸ Some orphanage founders chose to place their institutions in cities, where the orphan “problem” was most visible, while others thought the solution lay in a rural upbringing and an agricultural education.

Then, too, there were the different religious affiliations Southerners claimed, which varied in their political and social power. Episcopalianism, though it had waned considerably since the days of the established Anglican church in the colonies, still had an influential presence in Virginia, particularly among upper-class whites. Baptists had rapidly grown in numbers since their own colonial beginnings; the revivalism of the nine-

⁷ Ayers, *Southern Crossing*; Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Iron Confederacies: Southern Railways, Klan Violence, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1999).

⁸ Blaine A. Brownell and David R. Goldfield, *The City in Southern History: The Growth of Urban Civilization in the South* (London, 1977), 16; Jane Dailey, *Before Jim Crow: The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2000), 111.

teenth century meant that by the 1880s they had, along with the Methodists, claimed eighty percent of Virginia's churchgoing population.⁹ Baptists and Episcopalians had always seen the world—and the place of African Americans in it—in contrasting ways, and these competing theological visions shaped their activities on the temporal plane. This does not even account for minority Christians like Quakers and Catholics, let alone Virginia's not insignificant Jewish population or the growing group who claimed no faith at all.

Southerners and their children were affected far more directly by where they lived and the faith of their community than by the political changes that so often dominate the study of Reconstruction. However, children were mobilized as political symbols for various parties' attempts to rebuild government and infrastructure after the war, and the effectiveness of efforts to provide for children's welfare affords a different measure of the success or failure of Reconstruction.

For the founders of "colored" orphan asylums in Virginia, the black orphan was deeply emblematic of the condition of the South after the Civil War. This first modern, "total war," conducted almost entirely on Southern soil, had devastated the landscape, the population, and the economy, essentially "orphaning" the region. But amid this crushing loss, the orphan was still a child: fragile, dependent, but pliable and full of possibilities. How the child would turn out, which of those possibilities would be nurtured and which left to languish, had much to do with its circumstances and the priorities of those entrusted-

⁹ C. Vann Woodward, *The Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* (Baton Rouge, 1951), 170.

ed with its care. And as with most orphans, the people who had charge of this young New South came and went, priorities shifting as they did. For African Americans and many white Republicans, the future of the South rested on whether the black child could succeed in this ostensibly new society, afforded the civil, social, and economic rights taken for granted by many of his white brethren. For most white Democrats, the South's success depended on restricting those opportunities to those who could return the benefits, a category that did not include the black children they saw as dangerously ungoverned.

This symbolic, or imagined, orphan took on different attributes when employed by different groups to sell their vision of the new South. She might be vulnerable, pitiable, in need of shelter and nurturing. Or he might be a street urchin, intractable and dangerous, to be feared rather than aided. They might be the offspring of degenerate parents, a symptom of wider social dissipation, a call to action against alcohol, or sexual promiscuity, or racial equality. Or perhaps their parents were the victims of tragic circumstance and an unjust society, so that these orphans were imagined as the way into a different, brighter future.¹⁰

But orphans were also a very real, non-metaphorical consequence of the war. Their care, and the care of children rendered dependent by economic depression, was a tangible problem facing Southern society in Reconstruction and beyond. The ways in which individuals, organizations, and the state tackled this problem—like the ways they

¹⁰ Catherine A. Jones, *Intimate Reconstructions: Children in Postemancipation Virginia* (Charlottesville, Va., 2015), 105, 107.

employed the symbolic orphan—reflected the competing and shifting ways in which they imagined themselves and their region.

The first orphanage in what would become the United States was Bethesda Orphan House, founded in 1738 in Savannah, Georgia, by itinerant Methodist preacher George Whitefield. From the beginning, orphanages were private and often religious institutions. Quickly gaining the name “orphan asylums”—which denoted a temporary care arrangement—these institutions were slow to take off in America, in part because systems such as indenture already existed for the placement of poor, parentless, or otherwise needy children. But the growth of immigrant populations in cities in the nineteenth century, coupled with the devastation of the Civil War, caused the rapid expansion of the orphan asylum. Institutional care always had its critics, though, and they grew more vocal in the early twentieth century as the Progressive movement brought to light the abuses and endemic defects of the childcare systems in place. A slow shift to foster care ensued, bearing ironic similarities to the indenture system which had preceded the rise of orphanages. Deinstitutionalization continued throughout the twentieth century until a combination of adoption, compensated foster care, and in-home social services became the primary model of American child welfare.¹¹

The term “orphan” was used loosely; often residents of these institutions were only “half-orphans” (with one living parent) or even had both parents living. Poor par-

¹¹ E. Wayne Carp, “Orphanages vs. Adoption: The Triumph of Biological Kinship, 1800–1933,” in Donald T. Critchlow and Charles H. Parker, eds., *With Us Always: A History of Private Charity and Public Welfare* (Lanham, Md., 1998), 123–144; Matthew A. Crenson, *Building the Invisible Orphanage: A Prehistory of the American Welfare System* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998); Tim Hacsí, “From Indenture to Family Foster Care: A Brief History of Child Placing,” *Child Welfare* 74 (January/February 1995), 162–180.

ents used asylums to give their child the care and education they could not provide, even as the wealthy benefactors and middle-class operators of asylums often thought of those institutions as a means to control the poor and other undesirable elements of society.¹² Until the expansion of orphan asylums in the nineteenth century, the American welfare “system”—really just a hodgepodge of imported English poor laws, accreted traditions, and private charity—did not have a way to provide for children apart from the structure designed for adults.¹³ This adult welfare structure consisted primarily of indenture and the almshouse, and uncounted thousands of poor children found themselves working long, difficult, dangerous hours or living in overcrowded quarters with hundreds of unrelated, desperate, sometimes criminal adults.¹⁴ The even less fortunate, those whose parents had died or abandoned them, who were too young to work or had no family to arrange an indenture contract, might instead be left entirely to themselves; while street life was romanticized in nineteenth-century literature, the reality was much harsher and in truth these children either died or led miserable lives. And it was these children whom orphanages were founded to rescue, in combination with an increasing desire to protect the “child” (as defined in various and shifting ways) from both labor and bad influence.¹⁵

¹² Jessie B. Ramey, *Child Care in Black and White: Working Parents and the History of Orphanages* (Urbana, Ill., 2012); Tim Hacsí, *Second Home: Orphan Asylums and Poor Families in America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997).

¹³ Andrew Billingsley and Jeanne M. Giovannoni, *Children of the Storm: Black Children and American Child Welfare* (New York, 1972), 25. Anthony Brundage, “Private Charity and the 1834 Poor Law,” in Critchlow and Parker, *With Us Always*, 99–119.

¹⁴ “Outdoor relief” formed the third prong of the early American welfare structure, but Billingsley and Giovannoni argue that it “did not develop fully in America; by the nineteenth century it had become only a stingy dole provided by some local communities and private individuals.” *Children of the Storm*, 25.

¹⁵ Billingsley and Giovannoni, *Children of the Storm*; Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York, 1985); Ramey, *Child Care in Black and White*.

The model of child-saving, including orphanages, evolved along with changing conceptions of the state and its relationship to individuals. The general trajectory of almost all communal life in America through the nineteenth century was away from local and private operations and toward more state-owned, or at least subsidized, institutions.¹⁶ This trend had been slowly building in the first half of the nineteenth century, but the Civil War proved a significant turning point as the federal government began flexing its muscle in ways that were often unwelcome but established new norms for state intervention—particularly in the South, where the federal government served as an occupying force for as long as a decade in certain states.¹⁷ Reformers both utilized this shifting relationship and actively drove it, employing sentimentalism to provoke government intervention particularly in cases of cruelty to children.¹⁸ The formation of humane societies dedicated to the prevention of cruelty toward animals and children co-occurred with the boom in orphanages after the Civil War, and while their missions and operations were in some ways quite different, they were born of similar impulses. Particularly when it came to African American children, concerns about abuse and neglect motivated most white orphanage founders.

¹⁶ Schools, for example. See Jones, *Intimate Reconstructions*, 159–160.

¹⁷ Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville, 1983), xv–xxii. Elna Green argues that devastating wartime shortages prompted Southerners to view government aid at all levels as increasingly welcome and necessary, even before Reconstruction; Elna C. Green, *This Business of Relief: Confronting Poverty in a Southern City, 1740–1940* (Athens, Ga., 2003).

¹⁸ Susan J. Pearson, *Rights of the Defenseless: Protecting Animals and Children in Gilded Age America* (Chicago, 2011), 12–13, 204 (n.34). See also Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890–1930* (Urbana, Ill., 1994) and Kriste Lindenmeyer, “A Right to Childhood”: *The U. S. Children’s Bureau and Child Welfare, 1912–46* (Urbana, Ill., 1997).

There were myriad racial assumptions built into the colored orphan asylum. It should first be noted that the term “colored,” while offensive today, originated “as a term of racial pride” among emancipated slaves.¹⁹ Thus, the use of “colored” in the name of orphanages established in the late nineteenth and even early twentieth centuries does not necessarily indicate a negative attitude toward African Americans. In fact, it could signal the opposite: a progressive view of black deservingness for aid. However, even the most progressive whites of the day were bound to cultural norms and racial hierarchies, and they actively reinforced these hierarchies through the types of welfare they supported. They may have recognized that black children deserved care and attention as much as white children, but there was no way in their minds that they could be served by the same institutions.²⁰ Racial categories were not entirely rigid at this time: “black” and “white” were often determined on a case-by-case basis and dependent on context, as with the unusual case of Irish children who “became white” over the course of their train journey from New York to Arizona.²¹ But orphanages were at the leading edge of hardening racial lines, sites of racial negotiation that created clear distinctions between “colored” and “white”; Italian and Irish immigrant children, who were not “colored” but were often not considered “white,” were always housed in white orphanages, for example.²² There was a deep irony involved in the necessity of colored orphan asylums, then. Orphanages

¹⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “coloured”

²⁰ Ramey, *Child Care in Black and White*, 161–162.

²¹ Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001). See also, e.g., Winthrop Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1968); George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Middletown, Conn., 1987); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York, 1991).

²² Ramey, *Child Care in Black and White*, 163–165.

had multiplied in the nineteenth century in part to remove (white) children from the corrupting influence of unsegregated poorhouses, a move which differentiated children from adults.²³ Black children were then refused admission to these orphanages, further establishing the white child—however poor and dependent—as privileged, and denying the black child the protections increasingly afforded to childhood.

Not only were “colored” orphanages separate from white ones, there were far fewer of them. In the late nineteenth century, only major cities like New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Richmond, and railroad hub Lynchburg had an orphanage for black children, and those were outnumbered at least three to one by white orphan asylums. “Colored” orphan homes were also less specialized. White orphans were often divided by sex or religion—e.g. Richmond Male Orphan Asylum, Hebrew Orphan Asylum of New York—but orphanages for black children were generally coeducational and almost exclusively Christian. To a large extent, this was due to the limited availability of funds and staff, a perennial struggle for anyone attempting to help a population that few people of means seemed to care about.²⁴ But some white orphanage founders also saw their charges less as individual children and families than as members of a homogeneous group.²⁵

Early nineteenth-century efforts at reform for all children, regardless of race or denomination, concentrated on moral training and individual responsibility. This was

²³ Billingsley and Giovannoni, *Children of the Storm*, 25–27.

²⁴ Billingsley and Giovannoni, *Children of the Storm*, 28–30.

²⁵ Geraldine Youcha, *Minding the Children: Child Care in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York, 1995); Billingsley and Giovannoni, *Children of the Storm*.

woefully inadequate especially for black children, since—as Andrew Billingsley and Jeanne Giovannoni put it—“whatever education, religion, discipline, and an acceptance of popular morality might do for his soul, they could not change the color of the Black child’s skin; and that was the source of his problems” in a society defined by institutionalized racism.²⁶ However, Jessie Ramey argues that color-blind charity was beneficial for black children since it at least provided for them in the short term; the founders of early black orphanages in New York and Pittsburgh implied that the children they aided deserved “a comfortable home and pleasant surroundings” as much as white children did.²⁷ This was certainly not a given in a time that coincided with the latter years of slavery and, even in free states, saw poor African American children relegated to the squalor of the almshouse. These reformers demonstrate that challenging and reinforcing segregation did not exist as a strict binary, but rather as a complex nest of actions, motivations, and cultural contexts.

African Americans who opened their own orphanages already knew that black children deserved as much care as white children, of course. Self-help within their own communities has been a cornerstone of African American life since the first enslaved Africans were brought to the Americas, and there were numerous systems in place—both informal and formal—to aid dependent black children in the early years of freedom.²⁸

Orphanages were merely one avenue African American adults pursued to take care of the

²⁶ Billingsley and Giovannoni, *Children of the Storm*, 28–29.

²⁷ Julia F. Blair, “Third Annual Report of Home for Colored Children,” 1884, quoted in Ramey, *Child Care in Black and White*, 162.

²⁸ Billingsley and Giovannoni, *Children of the Storm*, 45.

children in their communities. Many of these institutions were financially supported by white individuals and organizations, which both enabled and limited the mission of the black-led orphanage; African American orphan asylums were therefore not wildly more liberal in their attitudes toward racial politics than their white-led counterparts. But while curriculum continued to emphasize individual morality and the value of hard work, a higher priority was placed on an academic or classical education rather than merely industrial or agricultural training.²⁹ There was also less of a savior mentality among African American orphanage founders; all too aware of the structural barriers to success for darker-skinned people in American society, their aim was to address the immediate physical needs of impoverished children.³⁰

These impoverished African American children, especially in the South, have so far been largely absent from historical inquiry. The history of childhood started with a study of upper-class, European white children, and while the field has expanded, the challenge of the documentary record still inhibits studies of less privileged children. African American families have received more attention as a whole, and it is helpful to remember that children—even most children in orphanages—usually functioned as part of a family network. Orphanage studies, a budding subfield, have started to understand this and examine the ways in which families and orphanages interacted and shaped one another, but have largely been limited to Northern or white institutions. This dissertation, then, takes the next step: placing black orphanages not just in the context of the families that needed

²⁹ Mitchell, *Raising Freedom's Child*, 191–192.

³⁰ Billingsley and Giovannoni, *Children of the Storm*, 53

and used them, but in the wider political context of post–Civil War Virginia. By centering black orphans not only in their families and orphanages, but also in Reconstruction and Jim Crow politics, we gain insight into both the orphans and the people trying to “save” them.

The history of childhood, like the history of the children’s parents, has trickled down from the top. Wealthy white children leave the most records behind, both by and about them, and it was the evolution in their position in society that was the focus of Philippe Ariès’s *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (1962), widely regarded as the foundational text in the nascent field of childhood studies. His thesis—that childhood as a distinct and revered time of life was a recent development in European society—shaped childhood studies for decades. Ariès proffered a declension narrative in which increasing distinction of childhood and devotion to child-centered families replaced the more social, public rearing of children. Lloyd deMause’s *The History of Childhood* (1974), on the other hand, proposed that childhood had only improved over time. Opening with the line, “The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken,” deMause explained how parents of each generation took slow, small steps to overcome their own childhood trauma and improve their children’s lives. Linda Pollock argued for continuity rather than either Ariès’s or deMause’s change-over-time themes, providing a more optimistic view of historical parenting in *Forgotten Children: Parent–Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (1983). Pollock’s use of child-produced primary sources like diaries and autobiographies, as well as adult-oriented texts like childrearing manuals, grounds her work more firmly in the experience of child-

hood itself, in contrast to Ariès's interpretation of medieval portraiture and deMause's psychohistorical approach.³¹

Whether portraying declension, progress, or continuity, family history did not significantly include African American families until the 1960s and 70s. African American historians came into their own at the same time that the Civil Rights movement sought to refute the idea that African Americans had been irreparably damaged as a people by the horrors of slavery, and in particular in response to the Moynihan Report of 1965, which infamously asserted that the increasingly single mother-headed African American family had produced a "tangle of pathology." John Blassingame was one of the first to counter Stanley Elkins's 1959 thesis that plantation slavery was a concentration camp-like environment that created infantile "Sambos" who bought into the system they were exploited by. *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (1972) painted a very different picture, one of a vibrant culture existing separate from and invisible to white oppressors, of which family was an important part. Herbert Gutman followed Blassingame with a more detailed look at African American families in *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (1976). He particularly emphasized that, contrary to popular opinion, nuclear families were the norm among even slave communities. Elmer

³¹ American childhood studies inherited the European tradition of focusing on wealthy, or middle-class, white children, particularly in the earlier periods. African American children, like African American women, are doubly disadvantaged in the historiography. Steven Mintz's *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (2004) was an ambitious attempt at a sweeping synthesis. Joseph Illick noted the problematic nature of attempting to conceptualize a single American childhood experience and titled his book accordingly; *American Childhoods* (2002) provides a brief overview comparing Native American, African American, and European American childrearing practices. Priscilla Ferguson Clement's *Growing Pains: Children in the Industrial Age, 1850–1890* (1997) emphasizes that class, race, and gender divisions made for very different childhoods, but geography even more so.

and Joanne Martin explained in *The Black Extended Family* (1978) how nuclear families were part of structured extended family networks that formed the core of the African American community and provided economic and emotional security. Like Gutman and the Martins, this dissertation extends the examination of African American families into freedom, but places them in a wider context of poor families' interactions with social welfare institutions.

While families played an important role in African American historiography, children did not receive much attention beyond their role in those families. Wilma King's *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America* (1995) was the first book on the subject, and one of the first books to focus on the lived experience of children (of any race) rather than the structures serving or oppressing them. Catherine Jones's *Intimate Reconstructions: Children in Postemancipation Virginia* (2015) does the same for children after the Civil War, examining how the shift from a system of formal bondage to informal discrimination led to a changing racial ideology and different privileges and hindrances inherent in black and white childhoods. This dissertation owes a lot to both scholars, particularly Jones, and is able to fill some of the gaps in her excellent book through the use of previously inaccessible sources.

Andrew Billingsley and Jeanne Giovannoni were the first to look at African American children outside of families. *Children of the Storm: Black Children and American Child Welfare* (1972) dissected how the child welfare system was designed for white people and has served black children inadequately from the beginning. Forty years later, Jessie Ramey combined this insight with the historiographical trend that saw welfare sys-

tems not just as top-down social control measures but also as mechanisms actively exploited by poor people for their own ends. *Child Care in Black and White: Working Parents and the History of Orphanages* (2012) was an innovative comparison of two “sister” orphanages in Pittsburgh, one for white children and one for African American; it deftly “demonstrate[d] the ways in which families were active participants in the history of institutional childcare”—though in different ways, depending on their race. This dissertation builds on these works by moving the focus south and further back in time, and by illustrating how the politics of postemancipation Virginia affected the child welfare offerings available to black families.

Even the history of the most disadvantaged in society—orphans—is subject to the same racial disparities as the rest of the field. As a subset of children’s history and childhood studies, the history of orphans and orphanages has only recently emerged; previously, they were only discussed by social scientists or politicians. And while there are several book-length studies of white orphanages—among them Nurith Zmora, *Orphanages Reconsidered: Child Care Institutions in Progressive Era Baltimore* (1994), Timothy Hacsí, *Second Home: Orphan Asylums and Poor Families in America* (1997), William Seraile, *Angels of Mercy: White Women and the History of New York’s Colored Orphan Asylum* (2011), and John E. Murray, *Charleston Orphan House: Children’s Lives in the First Public Orphanage in America* (2013)—there are none of individual black orphanages, though Jessie Ramey comes close with her comparative study. This dissertation addresses that gap in the historiography, as well as exploring how efforts to aid African

American children in Virginia reveal the shifting priorities of various Southerners in the decades following the Civil War.

Virginia offers a unique opportunity to examine how four different groups of Southerners approached a narrowly defined philanthropic effort in a coherent geographical unit over a limited period of time; in other words, it is as close to a controlled experiment as possible in historical research. The institutional histories of these four orphanages for African American children in Virginia reveal how the religious and secular values of their founders informed their leadership and operation, and how those founders navigated the clash between the imagined orphan of their donor base and the real orphan they were responsible for. Each of the four case studies incorporates a different combination of “Southern” values—e.g. education, family, paternalism, agrarianism, racial pride, segregation—stemming from different visions of what “the South” was and should be after the Civil War. These visions evolved over time and sometimes fell by the wayside. As the African American orphan became deeply symbolic of the reasons for the Civil War, for both black and white, as well as the potential of the emerging New South, the operation of orphanages for African American children traced the trajectory of evolving Southern racial politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The first chapter examines the Friends’ Colored Orphan Asylum, an orphanage established by the Richmond Monthly Meeting of Friends in 1867. The idea was actually that of a freedwoman, Lucy Goode Brooks, who approached the Quakers for financial and logistical support. Quakers had a reputation for sympathy toward African Americans, and their members and leadership included several prominent Richmond families. Quak-

ers also tended to view women more equally than many other Christian sects. These denominational characteristics—openness to African Americans, socially prominent members, and gender egalitarianism—not only made the Richmond Quakers initially receptive to Lucy Brooks’ proposal; they enabled the orphanage to operate for over a century.

Richmond Quakers understood the importance of African American leadership in an endeavor that was to provide for African American children. While they spearheaded the startup of the asylum, they included local black churches from the beginning and eventually turned leadership over to them—though still using their own influence as prominent white citizens to sustain and promote the asylum. This Quaker mindset stands in sharp contrast to post-Reconstruction attitudes of other denominations that placed white people in a “savior” role and stigmatized black communities.

Chapter Two addresses the Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School, begun in 1890 as a product of Reverend Abraham Jaeger’s efforts at “racial uplift.” Jaeger was a Jewish convert to Episcopalianism, a staunch Southern Democrat, and very much in line with white Progressive ideas of the 1890s that thought the primary challenges of the African American community were not systemic oppression but rather flaws of character or culture that needed to be eradicated. Jaeger, and the Southern Democrats he was appealing to, were reacting against the freedoms black people had gained during Reconstruction and striving to restore the former racial status quo by raising black children to be docile and subordinate.

Episcopalianism infused Jaeger’s orphanage, structurally if not doctrinally. Its historical status as the established religion in Virginia and its disproportionate representa-

tion among state politicians meant the Episcopalian minister Jaeger was firmly in the center of typical elite Virginia attitudes toward race. Jaeger was not inclined to challenge the racial hierarchy by inviting black members to his Board of Trustees, nor was his attitude toward the African American community particularly sympathetic or nuanced. Additionally, the hierarchical structure of the church lent itself to a top-down approach to support for the orphanage, and Jaeger's fundraising efforts were centered around endorsements from high-status individuals in the church, politics, and education. When Jaeger angered the bishop and lost his support, his whole fundraising structure crumbled.

The third chapter investigates two iterations of a Catholic orphanage in Richmond: St. Francis Colored Orphan and Foundling Asylum and Holy Innocents' Asylum, started in 1894 and reopened in 1897. These were different from the other orphanages under consideration, since they not only admitted infants and younger children but were specifically designed for them. They also had a much higher mortality rate, because foundling infants were often too sickly to survive regardless of the care they received. Even with the short tenure most of their charges had with them, Catholic values were clear: save their souls, via baptism; if they survived, give them a spiritual education.

Foreign-born Catholic leaders of this asylum did not have the same Southern visions for the black orphan as either the Reconstruction-era Quakers or the post-Redemption Democrats. Rather, their priorities were dictated by a general Catholic eagerness to convert as many African Americans as possible in a "golden...harvest of souls."³² For

³² Archbishop Martin J. Spalding to Archbishop John McCloskey, October 9, 1865, quoted in Gerald P. Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism: A History of the Catholic Church in Virginia* (Notre Dame, 2001), 196.

them, black children represented both the hope of a new future and the desire to bring African Americans under (a new kind of) white control.

Chapter Four looks at the Weaver Orphan Home, opened by the African American couple William and Anna Weaver just outside Hampton in 1904. The two central values in the lives and work of the Weavers were family and education. The ethos of black self-reliance and accommodation to white dominance promoted by Booker T. Washington was evident in the Weaver Home. Both William and Anna were teachers and greatly valued education as a tool of African American advancement. They emphasized a strong work ethic and agricultural education as well, but in contrast to an institution like the Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum, they did not view their charges as limited to a life of manual labor.

William Weaver understood that while black leadership was necessary to speak to the actual needs of the black community, white leadership would help enormously in drawing funds from wealthy philanthropists. Unlike the Lynchburg or Catholic asylums, which relied on top-down endorsement from a bishop or priestly authority, the Weavers' funds came largely from individuals or small lay groups within congregations. Women's missionary circles played a significant role, not only contributing their own money but also organizing contributions from others. This decentralized, grassroots funding model gave the Weaver Home a more stable foundation than its higher-church counterparts, enabling it to run for over six decades.

These four institutions, representing four different Southern approaches to the care of African American children in Virginia, reveal the different values emphasized by

each in their philanthropy and the ways that philanthropy interacted with their politics. Southern Christians were, in fact, a diverse bunch, with different attitudes toward giving and how it related to their faith, as well as different views on African Americans. While all took seriously Jesus' admonition to care for "the least of these," they applied that injunction in ways that reveal the varied structures and principles of their particular denomination. Moreover, these different Southerners reflected the competing visions of "the South" that vied for dominance after the Civil War, and just as some of these orphanages did not last, only some of these Souths would survive into the twentieth century and beyond.

History as a discipline began with the study of "great" white men. Only relatively recently have other players—women, people of color, the lower classes—become subjects of their own stories. Now it is children's turn.

Chapter 1

“Things needful for the comfort of the children”¹:

Friends’ Asylum for Colored Orphans (Richmond), 1868–1969

The Civil War destroyed what had been “in one sense...the major child welfare institution for Black children in this country.”² Paternalistic slaveholders had long argued the benefits of their “peculiar institution” in contrast to the callous cruelty of Northern free labor; while these sentiments were clearly motivated by self-interest and in no way outweighed the horror of a system that reduced human beings to property, slavery did have some built-in provisions for non-laborers. The elderly and infirm, no longer “good for” traditional labor, provided childcare in the community without paying rent or buying groceries; W. E. B. Du Bois called this a “primitive sort of old-age pension.”³ Parentless children were absorbed into other families or the community at large, a community that placed less emphasis on nuclear families since they were liable to be broken apart at any time.⁴ It was in slaveowners’ interest to keep enslaved children safe and healthy, because if they did not survive to become productive adult and teen laborers, the owner’s investment would be wasted.

¹ “Article VIII: Committee on Supplies,” *Charter and By-Laws of the Friends’ Asylum for Colored Orphans, in the City of Richmond, Va.* (Richmond, Va., 1883), 8.

² Andrew Billingsley and Jeanne M. Giovannoni, *Children of the Storm: Black Children and American Child Welfare* (New York, 1972), 23.

³ W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (New York, 1935), 9.

⁴ This is not to say that nuclear families were not important to enslaved communities. John Blassingame demonstrated that despite the threat of sale, two-parent nuclear families remained the primary model of enslaved family structure. But nuclear families existed as part of larger community networks, rather than as individual units: Elmer P. Martin and Joanne Mitchell Martin, *The Black Extended Family* (Chicago, 1978).

Employers of free labor have no interest in paying for children's wellbeing until they are part of the labor force, and families struggling to survive and provide for their own children were less inclined to take in someone else's. To be sure, newly free black communities continued to take care of their own; extended family and friends were still the primary source of childcare and orphan placement. But in addition to removing the social welfare system built into slavery, the Civil War killed a lot of people and created a lot of orphans; demand for childcare dramatically outpaced supply, and even white orphanages throughout the United States saw a significant boom during and after the war. Orphan asylums for black children in the South, though, had not existed at all before 1865. The white vision of child-saving had simply not applied to African American children.⁵

Skyrocketing demand combined with individual initiative and community concern, and orphanages for "colored" children began appearing in Southern cities in the late 1860s. One of the first was the Friends' Asylum for Colored Children in Richmond, opened in 1868 and incorporated by the legislature in 1872. The founding of the Friends' Asylum began with the efforts of a lone free black woman, who organized her own community and sought support from sympathetic and influential white men to help realize her goal in an unequal society. The Friends' Asylum was defined by the relationships among these actors, relationships that were in turn shaped by the time in which the orphanage was founded. In the brief, hopeful period of Reconstruction, black leaders were actively

⁵ Billingsley and Giovannoni, *Children of the Storm*, 4.

sought for the asylum, just as they were being elected to state and national government, and African American orphans were treated as individuals in need of physical aid. And while the real orphan was the greater concern, the imagined orphan for the Friends' Asylum represented the possibilities of the postemancipation South.

The Founding: Lucy Goode Brooks

Lucy Goode was born September 13, 1818, the daughter of an enslaved woman, Judith Goode, and a presumed white man, possibly her owner. This owner is unknown, as is the location of the household she grew up in, but it is thought to have been either in the city of Richmond or just outside it. Lucy was fair-skinned and knew how to read, so it is possible she grew up in her master's house and in close proximity to his white children and their lessons. Oral family history holds that one of these sons raped and impregnated Lucy in her youth, and that the son she bore was either sold or ran away when he was twelve. The story is impossible to substantiate in its details, but it is plausible in light of the experience of other enslaved women.⁶

Lucy met Albert Royal Brooks when they were both in their late teens. He was also enslaved, and had been born in Chesterfield County but hired out in Richmond at an early age. "Hardworking, ambitious, and lucky," Albert took advantage of the opportunities available in the city to earn money, gain status, and eventually purchase freedom for his family and himself. Lucy had taught him to read and helped him forge passes so he

⁶ "Mrs. Brooks Is Gone," *Richmond Planet*, October 13, 1900; Charlotte K. Brooks, Joseph K. Brooks, and Walter H. Brooks III, *A Brooks Chronicle: The Lives and Times of an African-American Family* (Washington, D. C., 1989), 13, 15–16; John T. Kneebone & the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, "Lucy Goode Brooks (1818–1900)," August 27, 2015, in *Encyclopedia Virginia*. Accessed January 13, 2018. http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Brooks_Lucy_Goode_1818-1900

could visit and court her; they married on February 2, 1839. (While not legally binding, since both were still enslaved, the literate couple may have recorded the date in a family Bible or elsewhere. They at least passed the date down orally, to eventually be recorded in the published family history.) A certain Mr. Sublett, who had purchased Lucy the year before, allowed her—and eventually their children—to live with Albert.⁷

The death of an owner was cause for alarm among enslaved families, who risked being separated in the settlement of his debts and bequests. When Sublett died in 1858, Lucy and her three youngest children were sold to Richmond tobacco merchant Daniel Van Groning, who agreed to continue allowing them to live with Albert. Some accounts suggest that Albert asked Van Groning to buy them; he at least arranged with Van Groning afterwards to pay \$800 over the next four years to free Lucy and the three children. The four older children, however, still risked being sold away. To keep the family together, Lucy sought out local buyers she could persuade to buy her children, “walking along Main Street with her younger children in tow.” She succeeded; the three boys were allowed to live at home while they worked in tobacco factories, and her oldest daughter’s buyer promised not to sell the girl. Tragically, he broke that promise, and Margaret Ann was sold away to Tennessee at eighteen, where she died in 1862. The loss weighed on Lucy and Albert for the rest of their lives, but they managed to shield the rest of their children from much of the harsh reality of their enslavement until the entire family was

⁷ John T. O’Brien & the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, “Albert R. Brooks (c. 1817–1881),” November 2, 2015, in *Encyclopedia Virginia*. Accessed January 13, 2018. http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Brooks_Albert_Royal_c_1817-1881; Brooks, Brooks, and Brooks, *Brooks Chronicle*, 24; Kneebone, “Lucy Goode Brooks,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*.

finally free in 1865; son Walter recalled that his early childhood was spent in “blissful ignorance of my own condition as property.”⁸

Lucy and Albert were deeply involved with their church, First African Baptist on Nineteenth Street in Richmond, as well as with civil rights efforts in Richmond. Albert was politically active during Reconstruction, leading petitions for universal suffrage and the repeal of laws that continued slavery-era oppression of African Americans. He even served on the jury for Jefferson Davis’s treason trial. Lucy was also heavily involved in activism. She headed the Ladies’ Sewing Circle for Charity, a group found in many churches and central to many women’s civic involvement. She was particularly interested in the plight of black children in Richmond who had been orphaned or separated from their parents in the deadly chaos of the war and its aftermath; her family and historians alike conjecture that she was continually moved by the memory of losing at least one of her children to the unfeeling cruelty of sale. Whatever her motivation, Lucy hit on the idea of an orphanage to house these children and brought her plan to the Ladies’ Sewing Circle. After raising the seed money, Lucy approached John Bacon Crenshaw, a prominent Quaker in the city.⁹

⁸ Kneebone, “Lucy Goode Brooks,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*; Brooks, Brooks, and Brooks, *Brooks Chronicle*, 7–8, 17; O’Brien, “Albert R. Brooks,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*; Daniel Van Groning, “Primary Resource: The Manumission of Lucy Brooks and Her Children (1862),” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, May 21, 2014. Accessed January 13, 2018. https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/The_Manumission_of_Lucy_Brooks_and_Her_Children_1862; Walter Henderson Brooks, quoted in Carter G. Woodson’s introduction to Brooks’s *The Pastor’s Voice: A Collection of Poems* (Washington, D.C., 1945), ix.

⁹ Brooks, Brooks, and Brooks, *Brooks Chronicle*, 8, 73–99; O’Brien, “Albert R. Brooks,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*; Kneebone, “Lucy Goode Brooks,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*.

The Founding: John Crenshaw

John Crenshaw's official biography, penned by his daughter Margaret, fails to mention Lucy Brooks at all, nor is she present in any of the discussions of the orphanage in the Quaker meeting books. Even Lucy's story, researched meticulously by her great-grandchildren, glosses over how she made contact with John and convinced him to take up her cause. Quaker advocacy for abolition was well-known, however, and John himself was locally known as an ally for the black population; he claimed, in 1868, to be the "man in the State who has a right to speak as the true friend of the colored man." The context for this quotation is missing, but perhaps he was thinking of his work on Lucy Brooks's orphanage, since 1868 was the year that the asylum opened.¹⁰

John Bacon Crenshaw was born May 2, 1820, in Henrico County. He was raised by his maternal aunt, his mother having died shortly after his birth, but his father had a clear influence on his life as well. Nathaniel Crenshaw had fought in the War of 1812 before becoming a Quaker; John Bacon would spend his generation's war petitioning the Confederate government on behalf of fellow Quakers and other conscientious objectors who had been drafted. Nathaniel manumitted his slaves, "sending some to Africa and some to the Northern States"; his son was not only an abolitionist, purchasing the freedom of several slaves prior to the Civil War, but advocated the equal distribution of re-

¹⁰ Margaret E. Crenshaw, "John Bacon Crenshaw," in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends Book Committee, eds., *Quaker Biographies: Brief Biographical Sketches Concerning Certain Members of the Religious Society of Friends*, 2nd ser., vol. 3 (Philadelphia, [1926]), 190.

sources to African Americans after Emancipation and opposed colonization because “they have now as much right here as we.”¹¹

John’s biography, written by his daughter, borders on the hagiographic, but even if she exalted his character, his actions can be independently verified. He was not only a central figure in Southern Quaker society, but a Richmond civic leader and a dedicated philanthropist. He traveled frequently and widely, making “numerous visits to Friends’ meetings and families through the South and West.” He briefly published a Quaker paper called *The Southern Friend*, not, he was careful to say, “in any spirit of opposition to the Philadelphia *Friend* or *Friends’ Review*,” but to sustain Southern Quakers during the war “while we are debarred the privilege of receiving” the Northern publications.¹²

John was active in efforts to restore Virginia to the Union after the Civil War. Though Margaret mistakenly places him on the Committee of Nine, a group of conservative Virginians who campaigned against a constitution that included the disfranchisement of former Confederates, he was a conservative Republican who had “a stormy time” with “the ultra Radicals.” Margaret also attributes his candidacy for Virginia’s Constitutional Convention to “the solicitation of some of his colored friends” and asserts, in a nod to conservative stereotyping, that he lost to a “carpetbagger...promising the ignorant blacks, each, ‘forty acres and a mule.’” While he may or may not have been asked to run by African American acquaintances, John Crenshaw was in fact beaten by the formerly en-

¹¹ Crenshaw, “John Bacon Crenshaw,” *Quaker Biographies*, 167, 170, 174–184, 191–194; John B. Crenshaw Papers, Friends Historical Collection, Hege Library, Guilford College, Greensboro, N.C.; accessed January 16, 2018, <http://library.guilford.edu/ms235>

¹² Crenshaw, “John Bacon Crenshaw,” *Quaker Biographies*, 171, 184.

slaved Hanover County native Burwell Toler. He was also appointed to the fledgling school board of Henrico County, the creation of public school systems in the South being a principal benefit of Reconstruction, as well as a magistracy. He served as magistrate long enough to swear in (or rather, “affirm,” since as a Quaker he would not administer an oath) Conservative governor Gilbert C. Walker in 1870, but gave the office up because of his religious opposition to oaths and capital punishment. He then served in the House of Delegates of the General Assembly from 1869 to 1871.¹³

John was involved in multiple crusades both within and outside of his political activities. As his daughter Margaret put it, “Was there any good cause in which he was not interested?” He campaigned against capital punishment and may have been an early supporter of the temperance movement; he was also involved in the establishment of some of the first public schools in the South, as well as starting a “First-day school” for Quaker religious education. And though politically aligned with a coalition that prominently included people who contended that African Americans were an inferior race, he consistently argued that black people were capable and deserving of educational opportunities. In a debate in the General Assembly “on the Disposition of the Land donated by the General Government for Educational Purposes,” he asked his fellow assemblymen, “In consideration of the advantages we have enjoyed in the past does not simple justice call upon us to divide this fund equally[?]” Margaret does not discuss his view on voting

¹³ John Bacon Crenshaw to Judith Ann Crenshaw, December 6, 1869, quoted in Crenshaw, “John Bacon Crenshaw,” *Quaker Biographies*, 197; Crenshaw, “John Bacon Crenshaw,” *Quaker Biographies*, 198–200; Katherine Guertin & the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, “Burwell Toler (ca. 1822–1880),” November 2, 2016, in *Encyclopedia Virginia*. Accessed January 17, 2018. http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Toler_Burwell_ca_1822-1880

rights—she seems uncomfortable discussing African Americans except as reflections of her father’s shining goodwill, and even then only briefly—but he did tell the Congressional Reconstruction Committee in Washington that he believed a majority of Virginians would approve a constitution that included black male suffrage.¹⁴

This concern for the educational rights of African Americans, combined with what appears to have been a consistent enjoyment of children, made John Crenshaw ripe for the idea of an orphanage for “colored” children in Richmond.¹⁵ His rapport and reputation with state and local officials, arising from his political and religious activism, put him in an excellent position to make the idea a reality.

The Orphanage: Administration

It was March of 1872 when the Friends’ Asylum for Colored Orphans was finally incorporated by an act of the General Assembly, though it had already been operational for almost four years. By that time, the Richmond Monthly Meeting of Quakers had brought in representatives from six black Baptist churches in the area to serve on the Board, and the charter included the mechanisms to encourage other African American churches to gain shares in the corporation.¹⁶

Before they invited black church leaders into the operation, though, the asylum had been run for three years by the white Quakers alone. According to Margaret Crenshaw, her father “appealed to the Richmond Monthly Meeting to take up the matter and

¹⁴ Crenshaw, “John Bacon Crenshaw,” *Quaker Biographies*, 172, 191–196, 202–207.

¹⁵ Margaret Crenshaw quotes several people commenting on her father’s ease and popularity with children. Crenshaw, “John Bacon Crenshaw,” *Quaker Biographies*, 171–172, 185.

¹⁶ “A Bill to Incorporate the Friends’ Asylum for Colored Orphans in the City of Richmond,” *Charter and By-Laws*, 1–3.

establish an Orphanage” for the “many colored children” orphaned by the Civil War, and he obtained permission to raise funds and secure a building site.¹⁷ Indeed, the first mention of the orphanage in the minutes of the Monthly Meeting is in August of 1866, when John B. Crenshaw “informed this meeting that he had received from England a donation of \$182 towards establishing a colored Orphanage in Richmond, & requests that a committee be appointed to take charge of the funds and make efforts for the object as way may open for it.”¹⁸ The “Orphanage for Coloured Children” appeared in the minutes approximately every six months for the next year and a half, until in May of 1868 the committee reported that the “home is so far completed as to be ready for occupancy.”¹⁹ In March of 1869 they were directed to apply to a local judge for a charter.²⁰

In the summer of 1871, when the asylum had been open for about three years, the orphanage committee contacted several African American churches in the Richmond area to invite them to participate in the institution’s operation, “in accordance with the original intention when said Orphan House was established.”²¹ They sent a circular letter highlighting their efforts in constructing and operating the orphanage thus far, including the cost, and instructing interested churches to appoint a committee of three trustees each to meet and discuss their role going forward. A Board of Directors was organized in July of

¹⁷ Crenshaw, “John Bacon Crenshaw,” *Quaker Biographies*, 190.

¹⁸ Society of Friends. Richmond Monthly Meeting, “August 1866,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1834–1868. Accession 23607, Church records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219. “As way may open for it” is a standard Quaker phrase indicating submission to the will of God.

¹⁹ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “May 1868,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1834–1868, LVA.

²⁰ Society of Friends. Richmond Monthly Meeting, “March 1869,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893. Accession 23608, Church records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

²¹ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “July 1871,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

1871; though John Crenshaw was president, two prominent African Americans were appointed treasurer and secretary.²² Six churches were initially involved: First African Baptist Church (Lucy and Albert Brooks's congregation), Ebenezer Baptist Church, Fifth Baptist Church, Third Street Methodist Church, Mount Zion Baptist Church, and Manchester Baptist Church. The charter, issued less than a year later, specified the terms by which additional churches could join: buying stock in the now-incorporated "Company."²³

Having incorporated and founded the Board, the Quaker orphanage committee aimed to "complete the organization by appointing committees to receive and bind the children [to employers in apprenticeships]."²⁴ This would seem to indicate that, despite having housed an average of thirty children for over three years and bound dozens out, there had been no systematic approach to how children were accepted into the institution or bound out from it.

The Board ran the overall operation, but the day-to-day management was in the hands of the matron. The by-laws of the institution outlined the qualifications for a matron: "a person of unquestionable moral character, of a kind and motherly disposition and who has some recommendation for business capacity." Her duties included "keep[ing] a correct record of all the children's names, ages, and the date that they enter or leave the

²² Richmond Monthly Meeting, "October 1871," Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA; George W. Williams, *History of the Negro Race in America, from 1619 to 1880: Negroes as Slaves, as Soldiers, and as Citizens* (New York, 1883), II:578; Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, "Ebenezer Baptist Church," African American Historic Sites Database, accessed January 11, 2018, <http://www.aahistoricsites-va.org/items/show/118>.

²³ "Bill to Incorporate," *Charter and By-Laws*, 1–3.

²⁴ Richmond Monthly Meeting, "October 1871," Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

Asylum” and making both monthly and annual reports to the Board of Directors on donations received and, presumably, general operations.²⁵ She also cooperated with both the Committee on Premises, who were to maintain the property and rent available rooms while “not interfering with the matron’s duties,” and the Committee on Supplies, who were to “see that the Matron is supplied as far as possible, with the necessary provisions.”²⁶

The first matron was a young member of the Cedar Creek Monthly (Quaker) Meeting, Ms. Vesta Hawes.²⁷ She would be the youngest matron of the institution, as well as the only white matron, the only single matron until 1930, and the only matron not to live at the orphanage. She moved back to her home state of Maine in August of 1871, which timing corresponded with the invitation of the black churches and the general effort to turn the Asylum over to African American leadership. The Board thus “elected to that position Cora Gray a colored woman of the City of Richmond,” and in October of 1871 noted their “entire satisfaction” with her management and “diligence in the discharge her onerous duties.”²⁸ Cora Gray served as matron until her death from dysentery in 1879, at the age of 74.²⁹ The 1880 census only records the children and the 1890 census is missing, but by 1900 there was a new matron, and a new one on each census fol-

²⁵ “Article X: The Matron,” *Charter and By-Laws*, 8.

²⁶ “Article VI[I]: Committee,” and “Article VIII,” *Charter and By-Laws*, 7–8.

²⁷ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “October 1871,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA; Richmond Monthly Meeting, “August 1871,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

²⁸ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “October 1871,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

²⁹ 1880 Census, Henrico County, Virginia, mortality schedule, City of Richmond, p. 793; digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed January 11, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

lowing. All of them were coded as either “black,” “mulatto,” or “Negro”; all were either married or widowed, except Sallie Brown in 1930; and all were over 40.³⁰

While the management of the orphanage was gradually ceded to the black churches in the years following incorporation, it remained the Friends’ Asylum in name, and the Quakers retained at least a supervisory interest. In 1886, fully fifteen years after inviting the black churches into the venture, a note in the minutes of the Richmond Monthly Meeting records that “the com. to visit the Col’d Orphan assylum attended to the appointment & made a favorable report of the condition of that institution.”³¹ This was the final mention of the orphan asylum in the minutes of the Richmond Monthly Meeting. In 1889, twenty-one years after the orphanage opened, control of the Board was fully turned over to the black churches, and the City transferred the deed to them.³²

In addition to the Quakers, the black churches that took over the ownership of the Friends’ Asylum may have had assistance from the local YWCA. The Richmond YWCA was organized in 1887, the first YWCA in the South. Like the Friends’ Asylum, the YWCA was conceived and launched by a group of motivated women who also ap-

³⁰ 1880 Census, Henrico County, Virginia, supplemental schedule no. 5—homeless children (in institutions), District 94, City of Richmond, Friends’ Colored Orphan Asylum; digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed January 3, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1900 Census, Henrico County, Virginia, population schedule, Jackson Ward District 104, City of Richmond, p. 224, dwelling 307, family 382, Friends’ Orphan Asylum; digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed December 1, 2016, <http://ancestry.com>; 1910 Census, Henrico County, Virginia, population schedule, Henry Ward District 83, City of Richmond, p. 118, dwelling 184, family 241, Friends’ Orphan Asylum for Colored Orphans; digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed December 1, 2016, <http://ancestry.com>; 1920 Census, Henrico County, Virginia, population schedule, Lee Ward District 99, City of Richmond, p. 296, Friends’ Orphan Asylum (Colored); digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed January 4, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1930 Census, Henrico County, Virginia, population schedule, Lee Ward District 116-14, City of Richmond, p. 266, Friends’ Orphan Asylum (Colored); digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed January 4, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>.

³¹ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “March 1886,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

³² Kneebone, “Lucy Goode Brooks,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*.

proached the Richmond Friends for assistance; the Richmond Monthly Meeting was one of several religious organizations in the city to sponsor a room in the YWCA's boarding-house. The Friends would continue to support the YWCA financially, especially when its African American branch opened in 1911 (one of the first in the country). There is no explicit mention of the relationship going both ways, but the YWCA has a history of promoting interracial cooperation, and it is quite possible that the women supported the Friends' Asylum through the provision of teachers, caretakers, rooms, or supplies.³³

The Orphanage: Funding

The first mention of the Orphan Asylum in the Monthly Meeting minutes was in August of 1866, when "John B. Crenshaw informed this meeting that he had received from England a donation of \$182 towards establishing a colored Orphanage in Richmond."³⁴ This set the tone for future references, which were almost all about funding. Accounts for the first few years primarily tracked donations, the only recorded expenses being construction costs. After the orphanage opened in 1868, however, other expenses—and other revenue sources—emerged.

After the initial donation in 1866, it took another year, and another infusion of cash from England and the Half Year's Meeting, for the Orphanage Committee to be "induced...to proceed to let out the work" on the building.³⁵ Meanwhile, the city had agreed to the use of a half-acre lot in the heart of what would become Jackson Ward, a thriving

³³ Richmond Monthly Meeting, "August 1892," Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA; "History," YWCA Richmond, accessed October 26, 2018. <http://ywcarrichmond.org/history/>

³⁴ Richmond Monthly Meeting, "August 1866," Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1865–1868, LVA.

³⁵ Richmond Monthly Meeting, "October 1867," Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1865–1868, LVA.

African American neighborhood known as the “Harlem of the South.”³⁶ Individual donations began to trickle in, too, as word spread of the new venture. By October of 1867, the orphanage account had just over \$1000 against a projected construction cost of \$3600.³⁷

In August of 1868, the Orphanage Committee reported their year-end accounts for 1867 in preparation for the Yearly Meeting. The largest chunk of funds had come from the Dublin (Pennsylvania) Yearly Meeting, who donated almost \$1000, followed by a collection John Crenshaw had drawn “On [his] Trip North” (about \$500). The rest came from individuals donating anywhere from \$1.50 to \$65 each, as well as a small portion from interest on the bank balance. Expenses were simple, if significant: about \$50 for John Crenshaw to travel and distribute pamphlets, and \$500 to John A. Glasscock and \$600 to Davis & Company for construction work on the asylum.³⁸

By the fall of 1868, the orphanage was up and running and the financial picture was beginning to shift. The number of individual donations was ballooning, with some of the larger amounts continuing to come from Philadelphia and now Baltimore. Unusually large and irregular amounts attributed to individuals (such as the \$204.13 from Samuel Buley of Dublin, Pennsylvania) may have been the result of personal fundraising, indicating a dispersed, grassroots effort to raise funds in contrast to the earlier fundraising trip undertaken by John Crenshaw. There were also some small donations from “colored” individuals, the “Colored Society of Richmond,” and the “Independent Order of

³⁶ Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, “Jackson Ward Historic District,” African American Historic Sites Database, accessed January 18, 2018, <http://www.aahistoricsitesva.org/items/show/221>

³⁷ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “October 1867,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1865–1868, LVA.

³⁸ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “August 1868,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1865–1868, LVA.

Good Samaritans, Colored,” as well as \$1000 from the federal Freedmen’s Bureau. (A Brooks family had been making frequent donations even in 1867, but it is unclear whether they were related to Albert and Lucy or even whether they were African American.) The final sources of income were book sales and tuition payments associated with the school the Friends ran, initially out of their meeting house and then in a room of the orphanage itself.³⁹

Construction costs continued to dominate expenses in 1868, and they grew as the work begun at the end of 1867 really got underway. William Davis & Son charged a total of \$1734 for their work, and John A. Glasscock received \$2450. There was also about \$200 of miscellaneous building costs like window springs and painting and \$360 to John Adams, plasterer. Other expenses include payments for the boarding of E. Jones and A. Gibbons, probably teachers from New York or Philadelphia; freight charges for books and other goods sent from Philadelphia, Yorktown, and elsewhere; a gardener; and the salary of Vesta Hawes, the first matron, who was paid \$33.33 for her work up to August 15. Assuming the orphanage opened as scheduled in May of 1868, it appears her salary averaged \$11 per month (though later accounts show larger but irregular payments). These expenses exceeded revenue by \$250, which John Crenshaw loaned the orphanage out of his own pocket in his capacity as treasurer.⁴⁰

The next report was delayed and ended up covering both 1869 and 1870. By this time, construction was finishing up so that expenses were largely directed elsewhere.

³⁹ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “October 1868,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1865–1868, LVA.

⁴⁰ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “October 1868,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1865–1868, LVA.

Revenue, too, was increasingly from public sources, though private donations still held strong. A little over \$800 came from private sources over the two years, including the Philadelphia Quaker congregations and individual Friends in the North. Fully \$1200, however, now came from a combination of the Freedmen's Bureau (\$50 per month) and the City of Richmond (\$100 every two months).⁴¹ Tuition and book sales continued to provide modest sums.⁴²

Construction appears to have been finished by the end of 1868; a well was dug and bricked in October, and final payments to William Davis & Son and John A. Glasscock of about \$150 each were made in December of that year. A few renovation projects emerged, like "Guttering Extention" and the purchase of a stove and pipes, but for the most part expenses shifted to personnel costs. Vesta Hawes was still drawing a salary, about \$200 over the two years but at irregular intervals. "L. Vining" also drew a salary (\$230), as well as "family expenses" (\$150); she is not mentioned elsewhere in the minutes, so it is unclear what her role was, though it was clearly significant. "L. Jones" likewise drew a "salary" twice in the course of two years; it is possible this is the Lemuel Jones who donated to the orphanage in 1868, though again, his role is unknown. Aside from their salaries, Matron Hawes and L. Vining were reimbursed for various "supplies" on the order of about \$100, and there was about \$200 to a "Hundly" for groceries. By the end of 1870, the orphanage was back in the black by \$13.⁴³

⁴¹ The discrepancy in the total vs. monthly amounts results from the spotty accounting in 1870; it is unclear if this funding stopped or was just not accounted for.

⁴² Richmond Monthly Meeting, "September 1870," Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1865–1868, LVA.

⁴³ Richmond Monthly Meeting, "September 1870," Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1865–1868, LVA.

In 1871, revenue continued the trend toward public funding, as well as payments from those renting extra rooms. Only three private donations are recorded for the year, one from New York and one from Pennsylvania, totaling a mere \$61.⁴⁴ The City of Richmond allocated \$1000 to the orphanage for the year, disbursed at uneven intervals. The City also rented a room for use as a school, at a rate of what appears to have been \$75 per quarter. The final source of revenue was board payments from Sarah Hawkes (interim matron) and Rebecca Hoge (possibly a teacher or assistant matron) at \$18 per month for a total of \$288.⁴⁵

Expenses occupied a far larger portion of the account book in 1871 than previously, unsurprising since the orphanage was now fully operational. Several of the costs were to individuals whose names were recorded without specifying the service they provided: “Bates and Woody brothers,” “Subletts bill,” “Dupuys bill,” “John Bowers bill,” etc. These were generally small costs, adding up to a total of about \$100 over the year. Building maintenance continued, of course, some specified (“cleaning privy twice,” “repairing locks”) and some lumped together under “Home Expenses.” Similarly, “home supplies” and reimbursing the matron for “supplies” were sometimes named (“coal,” “shoes”) and sometimes left unspecified. Matron’s salaries—beginning with the end of Vesta Hawes’s tenure, through the brief service of Sarah Hawkes, and into Cora Gray’s headship—to-

⁴⁴ The Pennsylvania donation came from John Bacon Crenshaw’s daughter Deborah’s mother- and sister-in-law, Beulah and Sarah Leeds; 1870 Census, Chester County, Pennsylvania, population schedule, City of West Chester, p. 115, dwelling 912, family 920; digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed January 22, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

⁴⁵ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “October 1871,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1865–1868, LVA. The City either missed the July 1871 rent payment or it was not recorded. Rebecca Hoge may have been related to John Bacon Crenshaw’s first wife, Rachel Hoge.

taled just \$400 for the year. By far the biggest expense was food: milk, potatoes, meat, and other “groceries” came to \$1100, more than half of the entire operating cost of the orphanage for 1871. The account once again drew on treasurer Crenshaw’s personal finances for more than \$500, including \$100 still owed to Vesta Hawes.⁴⁶

The Orphanage: Population

The minutes of the September 1870 meeting note that “there has been maintained in the institution, an average of thirty Children”; moreover, “thirty have been bound out, one of which has been taken back on account of cruel treatment, and five have died.”⁴⁷

The census for 1870, taken in July, recorded twelve boys and sixteen girls in residence, ranging from 2 to 18 years old; more than half of those were 5 to 8 years old, with an average age of 8 for the whole population of the orphanage.⁴⁸ This school-age range was fairly standard for an orphanage of the time: as indicated by the meeting minutes, older children would be bound out, while infants had higher mortality rates (though it is not clear how old the five children who had died were).⁴⁹

The Friends’ Asylum maintained a slightly lower than average population over the next sixty years: about twenty-five children. In 1880, sixteen children lived at the asylum; no age or sex data was recorded, though given names indicate that six or seven were boys and nine or ten were girls.⁵⁰ In 1900, nineteen lived there, eleven boys and eight

⁴⁶ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “October 1871,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1834–1868, LVA.

⁴⁷ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “September 1870,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

⁴⁸ 1870 Census, Henrico County, Virginia, population schedule, Monroe Ward City of Richmond, p. 147, dwelling 812, family 1061, Friends’ Asylum for Colored Orphans; digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed December 1, 2016, <http://ancestry.com>

⁴⁹ For more on infant mortality, see chapter 3.

⁵⁰ 1880 Census.

girls; they ranged in age from 8 months to 19 years, but over two-thirds were between 7 and 12 and the average age was 10.⁵¹ The year 1910 saw twenty children in residence, twelve boys and eight girls ranging from 4 to 20 with almost two-thirds between 10 and 14 years old (average age 12).⁵² The population tripled in 1920, likely due to the influenza pandemic that killed tens of millions around the world and disproportionately affected young adults—those most likely to have young children.⁵³ Of the whopping sixty-one children living at the Friends' Asylum that year, twenty were boys and forty-one girls; ages ran from 2 to 17, but two-thirds were between 6 and 13 with the average dipping down to 9.⁵⁴ With such a large population to manage, it is unsurprising that the oldest children—those 15 to 17—were recorded as “helpers” in the employment column.⁵⁵ By 1930, the numbers had dropped again: only eleven children, all boys, ranging from 4 to 13 with the vast majority between 7 and 12 (average age 9). This decrease coincides with the shift toward foster care, and the sex imbalance may reflect the greater ease with which girls were placed in foster families.⁵⁶

The 1880 census was unusual in that it included supplemental schedules for “Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes”—institutions for those with physical or mental disabilities, orphanages, poorhouses, and prisons. The instructions on these

⁵¹ The census records fifteen inmates as male and only four as female, but four children with unambiguously female names (Rosa, Elsie, Mary) were marked as male and the handwriting indicates that the census-taker may have merely been copying from above rows and not paying close attention. 1900 Census.

⁵² 1910 Census.

⁵³ Lone Simonsen, et al., “Pandemic versus Epidemic Influenza Mortality: A Pattern of Changing Age Distribution,” *The Journal of Infectious Diseases* 178: 1 (July 1998), 53–60.

⁵⁴ 1920 Census.

⁵⁵ 1920 Census.

⁵⁶ 1930 Census.

schedules stipulated that they were indeed to be *supplemental* to the regular population schedules; the official was supposed to record relevant individuals on both forms. The census-taker for Richmond's Jackson Ward, however, did not follow those instructions, which is why there is no information about age or sex (or, indeed, race) on the sixteen children resident at the Friends' Orphan Asylum in 1880. However, the form asks certain other questions that are not on the regular population schedule, offering insight into the intent and concerns of orphanages at the time if not into the lives of these individual children.

The first questions concern the status of the child's parents: whether one or both were living, and whether they had given up their rights to the child. Surprisingly, ten of the sixteen children at the Friends' Asylum were recorded as full orphans; that is, both of their parents were deceased. Only one had a living mother, and two were recorded as having living fathers. Three had no notation regarding their father's status as living or dead, perhaps indicating that these men's whereabouts were unknown. The other two questions in this vein—whether the child had been “abandoned” or “surrendered”—established the asylum's legal custody of the child, and its right to either bind or adopt the child out.⁵⁷ The Friends' Asylum Charter lays this out clearly:

The said Board shall have the right to receive in said Asylum any colored orphan minor who shall be placed under its care by his parents or surviving parent, upon such parent relinquishing all claim to such minor by a duly executed writing; and they may also receive any such colored minor (who cannot be suitably provided for by its parents, and who may have been deserted by them,) upon the order therefor of any court of competent

⁵⁷ 1880 Census.

jurisdiction in the city of Richmond, or the Mayor thereof. Children thus placed in the Asylum by their parents and deserted children shall be held and considered as orphans; and the Board of Directors, upon such agreement entered into or upon such order or Court shall be entitled to the custody of such minor or orphan.

Any minor or orphan under such custody may be bound by said Board, or by any two members thereof, authorized by the Board to do so, as an apprentice to some art, trade, or business...⁵⁸

The remaining questions concern the circumstances the child came from, and reveal the prevailing concerns about the “dependent and delinquent classes.” These include the children’s legitimacy, arrest record, and whether their origins were “respectable” or if they had been “rescued from criminal surroundings.” Unfortunately, the recorded answers for the Friends’ Asylum children are the same for all sixteen, and often nonsensical or contradictory (e.g. “yes” to both “mother deceased” and “separated from living mother,” “no” for “year admitted”).⁵⁹

Orphans in Postemancipation Virginia

Reconstruction was a period of promise for newly emancipated African Americans and an ongoing reminder to white Southerners of the traumatic defeat they had suffered. The end of slavery profoundly disrupted antebellum domestic relationships, which had orbited around the institution whether or not individual families owned slaves, and children were central as both black and white attempted to negotiate the new rules of their society. Labor and dependency, formerly strictly delineated along racial lines, were increasingly defined by age. As families previously dependent on enslaved labor turned

⁵⁸ “Bill to Incorporate,” *Charter and By-Laws*, 4.

⁵⁹ 1880 Census.

to their children to fill some of the gap, children's private labor within their families became distinct from the increasingly unacceptable labor of children in the marketplace. Meanwhile, formerly enslaved families fought hard to keep their children out of the labor force now that they had some say in the matter, but economic necessity often made this an unattainable ideal. Apprenticeships for children, black and white, occupied a strange middle ground between familial labor and market labor, and negotiations over contracts and abuses reveal the ways in which childhood as an idea was forming and evolving in the years following the Civil War.⁶⁰

White children were a point around which former Confederates—divided by class and demoralized by defeat—could rally together. Southerners claimed moral superiority by pointing to their treatment of their children, in contrast to alleged Northern or British cruelty, a thread of antebellum apologetics that remained in the chaos of Reconstruction. Likewise, Confederate orphans became an acceptable way for Southern politicians and social leaders to discuss a South that might not have its own national government but could remain a white supremacist society. Most orphanages created in the South after the Civil War were for Confederate orphans, and it was in part the perception that “existing public mechanisms for providing for orphans were acceptable for black children but inadequate for Confederate orphans” that “helped to naturalize racial segregation in the public sphere,” historian Catherine Jones argues. Framing public services, for adults as

⁶⁰ Catherine A. Jones, *Intimate Reconstructions: Children in Postemancipation Virginia* (Charlottesville, Va., 2015), 2; Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*; Hugh D. Hindman, *Child Labor: An American History* (New York, 2002).

well as children, as “pensions” for Confederate veterans and their families was also a legal way to deny these services to African Americans.⁶¹

Confederate orphans were only one type of “public children,” however, and the fate of others— orphaned, abandoned, or impoverished—was more contentious than unifying. Children were almost universally considered “dependent” and in need of competent oversight, and the raging debates over who was able to provide that oversight echoed and informed the debates over who had authority in wider Virginia society. Children encountered on the streets of Richmond, or brought before the Mayor’s Court, were usually described in terms that highlighted either their pitiful state or the danger they posed to society; the distinction had much to do with their race and gender. Race and gender, then, also deeply influenced the “debate over who had responsibility to provide for them and who had rights to their labor” in the apparent absence of a traditional household, Jones writes. “Their labor” was usually the more salient issue in debates about black children and the “responsibility to provide for them” in those about white; freed children were often forced or lured into “apprenticeships” that more closely resembled the slavery they had just escaped, while white children might be sent to an orphanage or handed over to relatives.⁶²

Quaker Values

This orphanage was not merely the Asylum for Colored Orphans, however; it was the *Friends’* Asylum for Colored Orphans. Its operation was predicated not only on the

⁶¹ Jones, *Intimate Reconstructions*, 13, 78–79, 134, 140; Elna C. Green, *This Business of Relief: Confronting Poverty in a Southern City, 1740–1940* (Athens, Ga., 2003), 118–127.

⁶² Jones, *Intimate Reconstructions*, 104, 132.

realities of funding and the needs of its children, nor even only on the cultural milieu and the personal backgrounds of its founders, but also the religious principles of the governing organization.

The Society of Friends is organized into geographic units based on the frequency of their meeting. The basic unit of administration is the Monthly Meeting, a local congregation or group of congregations that meets once a month for business purposes as well as weekly for worship. Yearly Meetings gather representatives from Monthly Meetings for an annual business meeting. In Richmond in the nineteenth century, Friends also held “Half Years Meetings.” In preparation for these meetings, a series of twelve standard questions, or Queries, were read to each congregation every six months and the answers submitted with their representative to the Meeting. The Queries, and their answers, reveal much about what nineteenth-century Southern Quakers valued in general, as well as how the Richmond Monthly Meeting in particular aligned with those values. Great emphasis was placed on sober behavior, care for the disadvantaged, education, and interpersonal relationships. Of the twelve Queries, three are particularly notable for their relevance to the care of African American orphans.

The third Query concerned the raising of children and the values Quakers attempted to instill in them.

Friends use some care to bring up their children and those under their charge in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and in the plainness of speech, deportment and apparel which the Gospel Enjoins. To guard them against the reading of pernicious books, and from the corrupt conversation

of the world, and encourage their frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures, but we believe more care in these particulars would be profitable.⁶³

What is perhaps most telling about the answer to this Query is the phrase “and those under their charge,” indicating a wider understanding of corporate responsibility than mere biology. Moreover, the phrase was used elsewhere in the Queries to refer to “those of the African race”—not slaves but possibly servants—being “instructed in useful learning,” suggesting a paternalistic attitude toward African Americans that likely bled into the orphanage.⁶⁴

The sixth Query was the one most related to the orphan asylum. “The necessities of the poor and the circumstances of those who appear to require aid are inspected and relieved, and advised and assisted in such employment as they are capable of,” the Friends reported in 1873. “Due care is taken to provide for the school education of their children.”⁶⁵ Aid for poor parents was a major component of nineteenth-century orphanages, even if they were framed as being for the benefit of the children as the Friends’ Asylum was. There is no evidence that the Richmond Quakers assisted the parents of the children they cared for with employment opportunities or other relief, like food or housing; of course, if the 1880 census is any indication, the Friends’ Asylum may have had a higher proportion of true orphans than similar institutions and thus no parents to relieve. The education component of this Query, on the other hand, is certainly evident in the op-

⁶³ e.g. Richmond Monthly Meeting, “September 1873,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

⁶⁴ e.g. Richmond Monthly Meeting, “October 1868,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

⁶⁵ e.g. Richmond Monthly Meeting, “September 1873,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

erations of the Asylum: schooling is the first thing mentioned in the Monthly Meeting minutes after the orphanage was opened.

The final Query was again about the education of children. In 1873, it was answered: “Friends are careful as far as practicable to place their children for tuition under the charge of suitable teachers in membership with us.”⁶⁶ This is an understandable sentiment, and one that reiterates the endogamous nature of Quakers as well as their educational focus. But it also highlights their practicality and flexibility; “as far as practicable” left a lot of wiggle room, especially in a place where Quakers were a small group and Quaker teachers may not have been available.

Not elucidated in the Queries, but evident in the meeting minutes, was the place of women in Quaker fellowship. A central tenet of Quaker faith is “that of God in everyone” or “Inner Light,” a precept which underlies their pacifism, plainness, and care for the poor. It also lends itself to sexual egalitarianism, since both sexes have an equal share in the divine. Religion does not exist in a vacuum, however, and nineteenth-century Southern Quakers were still nineteenth-century Southerners. Thus, the place of women in the Richmond Monthly Meeting was somewhat complex. On the one hand, there was a separate “Women’s Meeting” and a definite sexual division of labor. When a couple petitioned to get married, each was investigated by a committee of their respective sex in order to determine whether they were in good standing and free of other marriage commitments. And when a Friend came up for discipline, they were visited and interviewed

⁶⁶ e.g. Richmond Monthly Meeting, “September 1873,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

by a committee according to their sex. But there were also female ministers, like Sarah F. Smiley who traveled alone up and down the east coast to visit other congregations, and both men and women were appointed representatives to Half Year's Meetings.⁶⁷

Values in Practice

Fully a quarter of the values Quakers regularly reminded themselves to embrace related to the care of children, specifically their education. The third, sixth, and twelfth Queries admonished Quakers to raise their own children, “and those under their charge,” thoughtfully and in the traditions of the Society of Friends, as well as to “provide for the school education” of the children of the poor.⁶⁸ This emphasis on academics rather than industrial or agricultural education, even for the less privileged, was unusual in the nineteenth-century United States. While “childhood” was increasingly understood as a distinct stage of life that should be protected and dedicated to education and play, this was still largely a white, middle-class phenomenon.⁶⁹ Moreover, while free public education was a growing opportunity in the nineteenth-century United States, the South had the least-developed public education system, in which opportunities for African American children were typically even more limited than for whites.⁷⁰ In general, the realities of family life among the poor did not permit children to be excused from contributing to the

⁶⁷ Richmond Monthly Meeting, “June 1866,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1834–1868, LVA; e.g. Richmond Monthly Meeting, “October 1900,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1893–1935, LVA.

⁶⁸ e.g. Richmond Monthly Meeting, “September 1873,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

⁶⁹ See, for example, Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton, N.J., 1985).

⁷⁰ Priscilla Ferguson Clement, “Education for All? Schooling in an Expanding Nation,” in *Growing Pains: Children in the Industrial Age, 1850–1890* (New York, 1997), 81–121.

family income, and the realities of American racism did not imagine that most African American children would be able or allowed to achieve more than a life of manual labor.

That the Friends' Orphan Asylum was dedicated to the book learning of its residents, then, indicates how the Quakers believed success was measured as well as how they viewed the poor African American children in their care. Quakers were practical—they certainly believed in the value of hard work and as a group were famously prosperous—but they were far more interested in self-improvement and sober living than “worldly” success in a trade. And after all, “frequent reading of the Holy Scriptures” required literacy.⁷¹ Literacy had been denied to most enslaved African Americans until just a few years before the orphanage began, understood as it was by both the oppressed and their oppressors as a powerful tool of resistance, self-determination, and freedom. Lucy Brooks's tutelage of her husband Albert had enabled their courtship and freedom of movement. Quaker opposition to slavery and enthusiasm for teaching black children to read and write demonstrates their view of African Americans as at least fellow human beings deserving of equal treatment. Black church leaders' willingness to work with the Quakers indicates that they believed their values were aligned.

The Friends' school was open to more than just residents of the orphanage. A report of 1870 noted that “a school has been kept in the building which all of the Orphans that were old enough attended, The school having an average attendance of 85 scholars.” It was operated in conjunction with the City of Richmond, which provided some teachers

⁷¹ e.g. Richmond Monthly Meeting, “September 1873,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

(supplemented by Quaker teachers from New York) and eventually took over the operation entirely, though “the Orphans” continued to “have the privilege of attending.”⁷² This situation kept the orphanage children engaged with others, rather than sealed away in their own private bubble; this kind of integration was an important element of the Friends’ Orphan Asylum and its operating principles. Historian Timothy Hacsí divided orphanages into three types, “protective, isolating, or integrative,” based on their relationship to the surrounding community and especially the poor families they served. “Protective” institutions tended to serve religious or ethnic minority children, and attempted to preserve their cultural heritage by shielding them from the majority culture. “Isolating” orphanages intended rather the opposite, disallowing contact with family or communities of origin in order to mold “good American” children. “Integrative” asylums, on the other hand, encouraged interaction with the outside world, and for the most part did not emerge until the early twentieth century.⁷³ In this way, the Friends’ Asylum was well ahead of its time. It at least did not view poverty and blackness as moral failings to be trained out of children.

Moreover, the Richmond Quakers do not appear to have seen themselves as white saviors for the African American population—or at least not to the degree some other Virginians did, as later chapters will reveal. While the origin of the orphanage as told by John Crenshaw’s family certainly gives him a lot of credit, the official history fully maintains Lucy Brooks’s seminal role in its founding. More telling, however, is the Quakers’

⁷² Richmond Monthly Meeting, “September 1870,” Monthly Meeting Record Book, 1868–1893, LVA.

⁷³ Timothy A. Hacsí, *Second Home: Orphan Asylums and Poor Families in America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997).

determination from its inception to include and eventually cede control to black leadership. This indicates that they saw their role as facilitators, people with the financial and social capital to make things happen, and not as people who would save African Americans from themselves or even from other white people.

This strikingly egalitarian position seems somewhat at odds with John Bacon Crenshaw's personal politics, which saw him opposing an African American candidate for the Constitutional Convention in 1868 and campaigning for the Conservative gubernatorial candidate in 1870. However, the pattern of the leadership transition at the orphan asylum is actually compatible with this. Crenshaw's wartime diary did not extend into the Reconstruction period, so we cannot know with certainty his internal motivations. But like many conservative Republicans, he may have reasoned that while African Americans were not inherently inferior to white men, their long history of bondage had not prepared them for citizenship or politics; like the orphanage, Virginia and the United States required a period of white stewardship before emerging African American leaders were ready to take on a political role. The asylum, too, only put black men in positions of power over other black people, and women and children at that. That was a far cry from holding office and exercising political power over white men.

Conclusion

John Bacon Crenshaw died in 1889 and Lucy Goode Brooks in 1900. The orphanage they built together, however, continued for decades after. By 1932, the focus shifted from housing orphans to placing abused and neglected children in foster families; in 1969 the original building was demolished, but the organization, now called FRIENDS

Association for Children, lived on.⁷⁴ It continues to operate today as a community center offering childcare, youth development, and family support services.⁷⁵ The asylum's longevity was due to its success in marrying the interests of Richmond's black community with the financial backing of sympathetic whites, and its operation reveals some of the complex, intertwining values of Southern Unionists and conservative Republicans during Reconstruction.

The Friends' Asylum was in many ways the product of its founders' unique backgrounds and personalities. The loss of at least one of her children to sale deeply motivated Lucy Brooks not only to keep her own remaining family together, but also to provide for the care of those children whose families could not. Her activism, and that of her husband, ensured that the Friends' Asylum would continue to serve the African American community in Richmond under black leadership. John Crenshaw's religious convictions made him sympathetic to the cause of the "colored orphan" in Richmond, while his political affiliations made him trustworthy to those who might have opposed the effort. This unusual combination made him an incredibly effective partner to Lucy Brooks.

As well as its founders, however, the Friends' Asylum was a creation of its time. Reconstruction was a time of upheaval, of defeat and renewal, of freedom and uncertainty. As Southerners black and white struggled to reconfigure their society according to new rules, children were both the objects of and proxies for anxieties about labor, authority, and dependency. It was into this milieu that the Friends' Asylum emerged in 1867

⁷⁴ Kneebone, "Lucy Goode Brooks," *Encyclopedia Virginia*.

⁷⁵ "History," FRIENDS Association for Children, accessed June 11, 2018. <http://friendsrva.org/>

and positioned itself in the midst of ongoing debates over both the new racial order of the South and the place of children in families and in society. By taking responsibility for providing for African American children without laying claim to their labor, the Friends' Asylum was implicitly arguing that black children deserved the same type of childhood that was becoming increasingly idealized for middle-class white children.

Chapter 2

“We must lift up the negro up or he will pull us down”¹:

The Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School, 1890–1898

As the annual reports of the Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School (COAIS) put it, African American orphan asylums were erected to end the “SLAVERY OF CHILDREN.”² After emancipation, African American children were commonly indentured or informally contracted out to work for indefinite periods, a practice that stemmed from the disruption of family life under slavery as well as the death and displacement of thousands of parents during and after the Civil War. With parents either absent or unable to provide for them, black children had no recourse but to labor for neighbors or strangers in a system that to a great extent nullified emancipation.³ The COAIS blamed the African American community for the sufferings of black children, mentioning “colored people tried at courts of justice for having beaten to death orphans” or “innumerable orphans practically slaves, groaning under a bitter burden of toil and the lash of taskmasters of their own race.”⁴ In reality, of course, the ranks of these taskmas-

¹ W. W. Landrum, quoted in *Prospectus of the Orphan Asylum and Industrial School for Colored People, to be established near Lynchburg, Virginia* (Richmond, Va., 1888), 6.

² *Report of the Colored Orphan Asylum & Industrial School at Lynchburg, Virginia* (Lynchburg, Va., 1892), [1] (hereafter *1891 Report*), in Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School Records, 1890–1898, Local government records collection, Lynchburg (City) Court Records, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.; *Report of the Colored Orphan Asylum & Industrial School at Lynchburg, Virginia* (Lynchburg, Va., 1894), [2] (hereafter *1894 Report*), in Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School Records, 1890–1898, Local government records collection, Lynchburg (City) Court Records, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.; *[Report of the] Colored Orphan Asylum & Industrial School, Lynchburg, VA* (Lynchburg, Va., 1896), [3] (hereafter *1896 Report*) in Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School Records, 1890–1898, Local government records collection, Lynchburg (City) Court Records, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

³ Mary Niall Mitchell, *Raising Freedom's Child: Black Children and Visions of the Future after Slavery* (New York, 2008), 143–187.

⁴ *Prospectus*, 2; “A Good Work,” in *Christian Union*, Nov. 19, 1892.

ters were hardly limited to African Americans, and black children were probably more likely to face harsh treatment at the hands of white men than black. Many freedchildren were actually bound out indefinitely to their former owners, a particularly distasteful practice that made the thirteenth amendment seem little more than a cruel joke.⁵

The Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School, though similar in name to the Friends' Asylum for Colored Orphans, was a fundamentally different institution. It was a creation both of Christian charity and the nascent Progressive Era drive to help the less fortunate of society; at the same time, however, it was defined by reactionary Southern Democratic politics and upper-class white religiosity. It represented a shift from the promise of Reconstruction to the resurgent paternalism and solidifying segregation of the Jim Crow era; it was constructed as a result of long-held racial ideologies and newly formed racial realities, a product of its place as much as of its time. It was founded, staffed, and funded entirely by white men (and a few women) who saw African American orphans less as individuals in unfortunate circumstances than as representatives of a degenerate race, and themselves as righteous crusaders. They purveyed an image of the black child that reassured Southern Democrats appalled by the profligate freedom they thought Reconstruction had represented. The struggles—and ultimate failure—of this orphanage contrast with the Friends' Asylum to illustrate a competing vision for the New South, one which in some fundamental ways sought to return to the Old South in the face of rising black political power after Reconstruction.

⁵ Mitchell, *Raising Freedom's Child*.

Abraham Jaeger

Several threads run through the course of Abraham Jaeger's life. The first was a willingness to seize opportunities whenever they arose. The second was a hot-headed passion that often got him into trouble. And third, likely a result of the former two, was an apparent inability to settle in any one place for very long.

Abraham Jaeger was born March 25, 1839, in Austria. He was, by his own account, a hot-tempered young man, and "of taming [his] passions [he] never thought."⁶ He was also a devout Jew. In May of 1863, he emigrated to the United States and was naturalized as a citizen in 1870. He moved from Wisconsin to Alabama, and in September of 1870 was certified as a rabbi of the congregations in Selma and Mobile.⁷ By 1873, however, Jaeger had converted to Christianity, a highly controversial move that alienated him from his friends and prompted him to publish a book defending his decision.⁸ This would not be the last time Jaeger made enemies of his religious community.

In 1875, Jaeger married Annie Wilmer, the daughter of Reverend George Thornton Wilmer, a second-generation Episcopal priest and professor at both the College of William and Mary and the University of the South. Through Annie, Jaeger became connected to an old and powerful mid-Atlantic family; the Wilmers had been living in Kent County, Maryland, since 1693. Annie's grandfather, Reverend William Holland Wilmer,

⁶ Abraham Jaeger, *Mind and Heart in Religion: Or, Judaism and Christianity. A Heart's Experience and a Popular Research into the True Religion of the Bible* (New York, 1873), 35.

⁷ "Abraham Jaeger," *U.S. Naturalization Record Indexes, 1791-1992*, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 12, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; Jaeger, *Mind and Heart in Religion*.

⁸ Jaeger, *Mind and Heart in Religion*. Jaeger briefly dabbled in the Baptist denomination before committing to the Episcopal faith, but the precise timing of his various conversions is unclear.

was credited with helping revive the Episcopal Church in Virginia by founding the Theological Seminary of the Diocese of Virginia.⁹ Annie's brother, the Reverend Cary Breckenridge Wilmer, was a third-generation Episcopal priest and would become a paragon of Southern white liberalism in the Progressive Era. (He was, for example, placed on a panel with W. E. B. Du Bois in a moderated discussion on race relations in the United States.)¹⁰ By 1880, Jaeger and his wife had made a household in Franklin, Tennessee, where Annie's father was teaching.¹¹ Jaeger rose quickly in the Episcopal church, becoming a deacon in 1878 and known as a "minister" by 1880.¹² There is not much historical record of Jaeger for the next decade—at some point he was living in South Carolina—but he made enough contacts and garnered enough good will to start founding an orphanage in 1888.¹³

Founding the Orphanage

The 1880s and 1890s were a highly charged time in the South, politically and racially. Redeemers had long ago reclaimed state governments across the South, rolling back Radical Republican attempts to grant civil rights to newly free African Americans even before Reconstruction officially ended in 1877. In Virginia, conflict over whether to

⁹ "Biographical Appendix," *History of Tennessee: From the Earliest Time to the Present; Together with an Historical and a Biographical Sketch of Giles, Lincoln, Franklin and Moore Counties...* (Nashville, Tenn., 1886), 845.

¹⁰ William M. Tuttle, Jr., "W. E. B. DuBois' Confrontation with White Liberalism during the Progressive Era: A Phylon Document," *Phylon* 35:3 (1974), 241–258.

¹¹ 1880 Census, Franklin County, Tennessee, population schedule, Eighteenth District, p. 121, dwelling 73, family 70, A. Jaeger, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 12, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1900 Census, Campbell County, Virginia, population schedule, Brookeville District, p. 34, dwelling 546, family 550, Colored Orphan and Industrial Asylum, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 12, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>.

¹² 1880 Census.

¹³ *1891 Report*, LVA.

fund the state's debt or nascent public schools, among other things, led to the formation of an interracial political coalition known as the Readjusters.

Virginia had entered the Civil War with thirty-three million dollars of debt, borrowed from European lenders to finance the commonwealth's infrastructure development—including the railroad boom of the 1840s and 1850s. By war's end, Virginia had lost its "chief form of taxable property" (slaves), as well as a significant portion of its most profitable territory (West Virginia). What land remained was devalued from the war's destruction, and the railroads that had prompted the borrowing in the first place were all but destroyed. The debt became a hot-button issue in state politics for the next twenty years.¹⁴

At the same time, there was a large population of newly free people eager for the education that had long been denied them. Together with nonelite whites, black Virginians used their new political power to begin advocating for free—and integrated—public schools. Integration did not make it through the 1870 legislative session but a provision for separate free schools did, and public schooling grew increasingly popular through the rest of the decade; Virginians even agreed to higher taxes to pay for it.¹⁵

Even these increased taxes could not cover all the state's services on top of its debt, however. The conservative Democrat government, rather than repudiating the debt as most other Southern states did, invoked their "Southern honor" and decided to cut services instead, including schools. These "Funders" were largely upper-class white profes-

¹⁴ Jane Dailey, *Before Jim Crow: The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2000), 15–18 (quotation on page 18).

¹⁵ Dailey, *Before Jim Crow*, 21–27.

sionals in racially mixed counties, whose personal reputations relied heavily on ideas of honor and who feared rising African American political influence. In contrast stood the “Readjusters,” a coalition of three main populations—landowners in the overwhelmingly white west, farmers from the predominantly black east, and black and immigrant urban workers—who resented the long political domination of elite landholders in northern and eastern Virginia.¹⁶

Support for education in particular was so strong that the Readjusters enjoyed four years of power at the state level. Interracial representation in local government validated African American citizenship, encouraging black Virginians to assert their personhood in other arenas—particularly public spaces. Slavery had codified the racial hierarchy of public behavior before 1865, and Jim Crow laws would recodify this in the 1890s, but the intervening years were a dance of constant renegotiation of who had the right to be where. Whites panicked as African Americans claimed their space not only in the state house but also on the sidewalks and in private businesses. This came to a head in Danville in November 1883 when, after the circulation of a pamphlet blaming the Readjusters for the loss of white jobs to black men and the decline of black “civility,” a not-unusual street fight between a black man and a white man escalated as white Democrats fired into a crowd of African American civilians. The Democrats seized the opportunity to establish armed patrols that kept African Americans off the streets and frightened white voters into swinging Democratic in the election days later. While Readjusters launched

¹⁶ Dailey, *Before Jim Crow*, 32–35.

an investigation into election fraud, Democrats spun the story into a defense of their honor in the face of unbearable insult and pointed the finger at Readjusters for encouraging this new “insolence” among the African Americans in Danville and the rest of Virginia.¹⁷

Five years after the Danville incident, Abraham Jaeger assembled a Board of Trustees to create an institution to “rescue [negro orphans] from sad neglect, brutal treatment, ignorance, superstition, vice and lives of shame and crime.” The board printed a prospectus to publicize their vision for an “Orphan Asylum and Industrial School for Colored People to be established near Lynchburg,” outlining the need as they saw it and their proposed solution.¹⁸ The institution was chartered in 1890 as the “Southern Negro Orphan Asylum,” though the charter was amended in 1892 to change the name to the “Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School.”¹⁹

The Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School (COAIS) actually opened in 1891, housing only 16 children that year. Jaeger appointed himself the general manager, but he enlisted his brother-in-law, Cary B. Wilmer, as the superintendent of the institution; the extant documentation shows significant functional overlap between these two roles, though Jaeger would always retain final executive authority. Several other prominent business and community leaders—all white—served on the board.

Though not a religious institution, the COAIS was closely associated with the Episcopal Church, at least initially. Jaeger himself was an Episcopal minister, as was Wilmer. The initial president and first vice-president of the board, Francis McNeece

¹⁷ Dailey, *Before Jim Crow*, 103–131.

¹⁸ *Prospectus*, 1.

¹⁹ *1891 Report*, LVA, 1.

Whittle and Alfred Magill Randolph, were the Bishop and Assistant Bishop of the Southern Diocese of Virginia; the second vice-president, T. M. Carson, was the rector of St. Paul's Episcopal in Lynchburg. Reverend J. R. McBryde of Grace Memorial Church, Lexington, also served on the board.²⁰ While all these men were on the board according to the institution's prospectus, they did not remain long enough to appear on any of the annual reports. Affiliation with a mainstream white denomination was important to get the COAIS off the ground and may have shaped its early instructional atmosphere, but either the church did not want to remain involved with the tempestuous, unpredictable Jaeger or he did not want it telling him what to do. Losing this official sanction may have been the beginning of the asylum's downfall, even though donations from Episcopal congregations continued for several more years.

The Episcopal Church in Virginia has had a long and, until recently, generally unpleasant relationship with African Americans. Anglicanism was the state religion in the colony in 1619 when the first Africans disembarked at Jamestown and, while disestablished after the American Revolution, Episcopalianism continued to be an important institution among the upper classes in Virginia. Initially reluctant to baptize their slaves lest they become ineligible for servitude, Virginia slaveholders eventually overcame their compunctions about owning fellow Christians and incorporated their slaves into their churches in separate galleries. While they outwardly acceded to their owners' religious practices, most enslaved people clung to their own faith in private and in community with

²⁰ *Prospectus*, 1.

one another.²¹ White Virginia Episcopalians were more moderate than other Protestants in the lead-up to the Civil War, but ultimately sided with secessionists after Lincoln's call to arms.²² Despite this legacy, some African Americans were drawn to the denomination and even pursued ordination.²³ However, in 1889, Bishop Alfred Randolph separated African American clergy and laity from the main body of the Episcopal Church in Virginia, assigning them to Missionary Jurisdiction—that is, financially dependent on the diocese and operating on a probationary basis. This move coincided with increasing restrictions on black civic engagement, and it earned scathing criticism from Northern commentators as it seemed to be a blatant attempt to relegate African American Episcopalians to second-class status in church as well as state.²⁴

Non-clergy members of the orphanage board's executive committee were C. M. Blackford, President of the People's National Bank of Lynchburg, as treasurer, and Major Thomas J. Kirkpatrick, superintendent of the newly formed Lynchburg school board and secretary of the COAIS board.²⁵ These men represented the financial and educational institutions of Lynchburg, major pillars of the community. Blackford and Kirkpatrick, too, did not serve past the chartering of the asylum. Their departure, like that of the bish-

²¹ George F. Bragg, *History of the Afro-American Group of the Episcopal Church* (Baltimore, 1922), 29–30; Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Princeton, N.J., 1979).

²² Leonard I. Sweet, "The Reaction of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia to the Secession Crisis: October 1859 to May, 1861," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 41:2 (June 1972), 137–151.

²³ Bragg, *Afro-American Group*, 185–200.

²⁴ Committee on Race and Reconciliation, "Meet Me in Galilee, Beginning the Journey from Repentance to Reconciliation: A History of Racism and Race in the Diocese of Virginia" (January 2012), accessed May 15, 2018. https://www.episcopalarchives.org/sites/default/files/anti-racism/dioceses/Virginia_Study.pdf; William Kirkus, "The Protestant Episcopal Church and the Colored People," *The Independent* 41 (June 1889), 4–5; "The Negro and the Episcopalians of Virginia," *The Independent* 41 (June 1889), 10.

²⁵ *Prospectus*, 1.

ops and the ministers, may have been in response to something they saw as unfavorable about Jaeger's project—or perhaps their support was only needed to get the asylum rolling, but not to keep it going. Its eventual fate suggests their involvement was more necessary than Jaeger wanted to admit.

Also serving on the board were Virginia governor Fitzhugh Lee, state senator Edward J. Folkes, and federal diplomat Alex MacDonald.²⁶ Lee and MacDonald were on the board for its entire run; Folkes briefly served as president before dying in 1894. Lee was a son of Old Virginia, nephew of Robert E. Lee and a celebrated Confederate general in his own right. His defeat of Republican John Sergeant Wise in the 1885 gubernatorial election marked the collapse of the biracial Readjuster movement and the beginning of white Democratic dominance of Virginia politics, enabled by the increasing restriction of black civic involvement that would solidify the Jim Crow era in Virginia. A powerful name to have attached to the organization, Lee was certainly no friend of black equality. Folkes, too, had served in the Confederate army as a quartermaster, as had his two sons and his brother-in-law. He does not seem to have had a terribly illustrious senate career, since his biographical sketches only include his family and his wartime service.²⁷ MacDonald served as the United States minister to Persia under Democratic President Grover Cleveland. His connection to Virginia, let alone Lynchburg, Jaeger, or the COAIS, is unknown, but as a political appointee of Cleveland, he would have shared Lee's antipathy toward black Republicans. While there is no surviving record explicitly naming Jaeger's

²⁶ *Prospectus*, 1.

²⁷ R. A. Brock, "Senator Edward J. Folkes," in *Virginia and Virginians: Eminent Virginians*, vol. 2 (Richmond, Va., 1888), 566.

political identification, his desire to recruit these powerful Democrats for his project indicates his Democratic allegiances, and his ability to do so demonstrates the project's appeal to Democratic ideologies.

The rest of the board were local: doctors T. L. Walker, G. R. Lewis, and Frank Camm; Samuel Tyree, merchant, real estate agent, and auctioneer; A. H. Burroughs, lawyer; W. M. Lile, law professor at the University of Virginia; John W. Craddock, merchant, manufacturer, and president of the Board of Trade; John Camm, manufacturer; and J. P. Gilmer, farmer.²⁸ Dr. Lewis was actually the superintendent of the white girls' orphanage in Lynchburg, as well as serving as president of the board for the COAIS. While national and state luminaries were included on the board to give the institution credibility and fundraising cachet, these community leaders brought expertise, experience, and local networks to bear on its operation.

The first matron of the COAIS was a former missionary to Africa.²⁹ What she did in Africa (or where) is unknown; it is possible she ran an orphanage and thus had relevant experience. But her qualifications are presented merely as exposure to Africa, a telling insight into how this orphanage viewed its charges: not as American children with dark skin, but as wholly other, having more connection to a far-distant continent than to the state where they had grown up. Moreover, the institution thought it necessary to hire a white woman for this position. This was common practice at orphan asylums around the country but is somewhat ironic in the context of the South's not-so-distant past, a past

²⁸ *Prospectus*, 1.

²⁹ *1891 Report*, LVA, 1.

which generated the romanticized image of black “mammies.” These black women were trusted to raise generations of elite white Southerners, forced to place their own children’s needs second, and yet dependent black children in freedom were placed in the care of white women. But Jaeger’s institution was dedicated to the removal of African American children from the influence of their communities entirely. In his mind, the problems plaguing the African American community could only be solved by starting with a clean slate, raising a generation of black children under white control and sending them back into their communities to implement the changes white Virginia Democrats thought necessary.

Several of the board members had been slaveholders before the War. While that does not necessarily mean they were incapable of treating black children with compassion, the mental conditioning required to justify owning human beings would have been difficult to overcome—especially since, through the orphanage, they exercised almost limitless power over these vulnerable children. On a more exalted scale, they saw in these children an opportunity to form the next generation of African Americans into a mold more to their liking.

Abraham Jaeger was nothing if not bold, and his orphanage reflected that. He and other white Progressives saw in his project potential for the large-scale “regeneration of a race.” This is abundantly clear in the mission statement for the COAIS, in which the management claimed that the black community itself was the source of the “sad neglect, brutal treatment, ignorance, superstition, vice and lives of shame and crime” the COAIS was founded to combat. This orphanage, then, would not merely be for rescuing African

American children, but also for “improving the condition of the whole negro race in the South.”³⁰

The prospectus for the COAIS continued laying out the reasons the African American community could no longer be allowed to take care of its orphans. “The lamentable condition of their race” is clarified: a “large number of orphans” housed in “hovels” because their parents, through “their own improvidence,” died and “left [their children] to the mercy of their poor neighbors.” (“Poor” here could refer to their financial status or to the pity readers should feel for them—or both.) Furthermore, once left to these neighbors, “these unfortunates” risked being “beaten to death”—though this and the other dangers to orphans outlined in the prospectus were not unique to black children. Considerably more space is devoted to how the asylum would benefit “the whole mass” of African Americans.³¹

The COAIS promised to “prepare virtuous examples for the race,” or more poetically, “furnish...the needed leaven” to improve “the future moral condition of so many millions of colored people.” Black colleges were helpful for individuals, the board argued, but did not allow the graduate “to toil in the same plane of life with his people. He is above them.” The asylum, on the other hand, would not only “pluck tender plants out of the sod” and have “absolute control of their lives” from a young age, it would also “return them to the original spot” with “no higher education...than what is necessary to prepare them” for lives as “farmers, mechanics, cooks, &c.” Black children raised in the

³⁰ *Prospectus*, 2–3, 5.

³¹ *Prospectus*, 2, 4.

asylum could therefore return and be examples to the African American community, “removed from the corrupting sphere in tender childhood” only to come back and “exhale a purifying influence upon the sphere from which they had been taken.”³²

The board and other proponents of the COAIS advertised the asylum as of “national importance” and “national interest,” since “the future moral condition of so many millions of colored people must affect the morals, order and prosperity of the whole country.”³³ Presidents Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison endorsed the project; these endorsements were introduced in the annual reports by a paragraph exhorting “every fair-minded person” to see that “the duty of erecting such institutions rests upon the whole land,” repeating “national duty” or “national deed” three times in two sentences.³⁴ A solicitation for the asylum appeared in *Christian Union*, a periodical published in New York, and *The Church Review*—a national Episcopalian publication out of New Haven—recorded donations to the COAIS.³⁵ After it began operating, the name changed from “Southern Negro Orphan Asylum” to “Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School” and annual reports began with a mission statement that included the phrase “orphans of the colored race of the whole continent.”³⁶ The 1891 Report ends with the encouragement that a donation “is the best opportunity for securing a... blessing to your country.”³⁷

³² *Prospectus*, 2–4.

³³ *Prospectus*, 4–5.

³⁴ *Prospectus*, 5–6; *1891 Report*, LVA, 3; *1894 Report*, LVA, [2].

³⁵ “A Good Work,” *Christian Union*, Nov. 19, 1892; “Benefactions and Endowments,” in *Church Review* (April 1890), 57.

³⁶ *1891 Report*, LVA, 1, 5; *1894 Report*, LVA, [2]; *1896 Report*, LVA, [3].

³⁷ *1891 Report*, LVA, 5.

However, the initial prospectus for the COAIS does not explicitly name this project a national one, and in fact defines its reach as encompassing only “the whole negro race in the South.”³⁸ Fully half (ten of twenty-one) of the personal endorsements in the prospectus, from prominent church leaders and politicians, are Virginian, with another three coming out of Washington D.C., and one from a South Carolinian.³⁹ Three of the six newspaper endorsements are from Virginia Democratic papers—the Lynchburg *News* and *Daily Virginian* and the Richmond *State*—plus *The Washington Post* and *The National Republican* (D.C.)⁴⁰ All of the Board of Trustees were also from Virginia.⁴¹ Despite the rhetoric, then, this “national project” in fact remained distinctly white and Southern. The idea of implementing change in a community through training insiders rather than sending “a thousand ministers” was a liberal one, but also reflected the lingering resentments of the Reconstruction South that had been inundated with Yankee teachers.⁴²

The founders of the COAIS were still mired in and reproducing the racial stereotypes of their forebears. Orphanage publications presented African American women as

³⁸ *Prospectus*, 3.

³⁹ *Prospectus*, 5–7; Thomas E. Gay, “Daniel, John Warwick,” *American National Biography Online*, <http://www.anb.org/articles/05/05-00174.html>, accessed Dec. 6, 2013; Manfred Jonas, “Davis, Bancroft,” *American National Biography Online*, <http://www.anb.org/articles/04/04-00301.html>, accessed Dec. 6, 2013; William L. Barney, “Hampton, Wade,” *American National Biography Online*, <http://www.anb.org/articles/04/04-00461.html>, accessed Dec. 6, 2013.

⁴⁰ *Prospectus*, 7–8. Jaeger may have been trying to demonstrate bipartisan support for his venture by including both the Democratic mouthpiece the *Washington Post* and Republican oracle the *National Republican*, but the *Post* absorbed the *National Republican* the same year the *Prospectus* was published. The owners of the *News*, the *State*, and the *Daily Virginian* were all ardent Democrats. “Chamberlayne, John Hampden,” *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, vol. 3 (Richmond, Va., 2006), 146–147; “Carter Glass (1858–1946),” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, accessed May 15, 2018, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Glass_-_Carter_1858-1946; “Charles William Button (1822–1894),” *Education @ Library of Virginia*, accessed May 15, 2018, http://edu.lva.virginia.gov/online_classroom/union_or_secession/people/charles_button.

⁴¹ *Prospectus*, 1; *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, s.v. “Randolph, Alfred Magill,” (New York, 1897); W. Asbury Christian, *Lynchburg and Its People* (Lynchburg, Va., 1900).

⁴² *Prospectus*, 4.

hypersexual, a caricature that persisted from the plantation (and even into the present). “Unchastity, almost universal among the negro masses,” was the example chosen to illustrate the beneficial effect of asylum-raised orphans on the community. “One hundred chaste women” could demonstrate the “blessing of the virtue of chastity,” but “these virtuous women have to be reared.”⁴³ The stereotype of the promiscuous black woman developed during slavery partly in order to justify the pervasive sexual abuse of enslaved women by their white masters.⁴⁴ The asylum’s publications perpetuated this degrading and damaging image, but highlighting chastity also made sense in the context of the orphanage. Presumably, though unstated, “the sin of unchastity” was part of the reason there was such a “large number of orphans” in African American communities.⁴⁵

African American men did not escape being painted in the crudest stereotypes, either, though their sins were presented as the general result of childhood neglect, not specific to African Americans. “Brutal treatment of youths produces brutes,” the prospectus for the COAIS asserts, “and the man unconsciously avenges, by crime, society’s guilt of heartlessly neglecting his innocent childhood.” Thus African American men were not only brutes, but criminals, filling up the “prisons and gibbets.”⁴⁶ “The statistics of crime show that these people furnish, in the matter of homicide, about three times as many...as our foreign born white population and nearly six times as many as our native

⁴³ *Prospectus*, 4.

⁴⁴ Hannah Rosen, “The Rhetoric of Miscegenation and the Reconstruction of Race: Debating Marriage, Sex, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Arkansas,” in *Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World*, ed. Pamela Scully and Diana Paton (Durham, N.C., 2005), 289–309, esp. 291.

⁴⁵ *Prospectus*, 4.

⁴⁶ *Prospectus*, 2–3.

white born population,” said Cary Wilmer in a sermon to a Northern audience.⁴⁷ This characterization as wanton murderers served to further delegitimize African American men’s claims to equal citizenship, and it was equal citizenship that white Democrats feared in 1880s Virginia.⁴⁸ Interestingly, the common racist stereotype of black men as sexual predators is absent from the asylum literature, in contrast to the emphasis on black women’s sexuality.

There was an up-front assumption that black children would never—or, rather, *should* never—amount to more than manual laborers. Donors were repeatedly assured that “no higher education is here contemplated,” and that any promising children “showing superior talent and aspiration” would have to have their education provided for elsewhere.⁴⁹ “Every man...has a right to stand as high as he can climb,” Cary Wilmer preached, responding to proponents of a classical education for African Americans, “but not as high as he can be ‘boosted.’”⁵⁰ While many Southern leaders at this time saw education as impractical and unnecessary for most children, both black and white, public schooling had grown in popularity in Virginia throughout the 1870s and was a significant plank in the platform of the Readjuster party.

In addition to racial caricatures that persisted from the antebellum period, white Southerners had a new concern about African Americans in freedom. The “new negro” was a concept that whites across the South struggled to explain to their Northern neigh-

⁴⁷ Wilmer, “A Race Problem,” *Cambridge Tribune*, June 2, 1894, 7.

⁴⁸ Rosen, “Rhetoric of Miscegenation,” 291.

⁴⁹ *Prospectus*, 2.

⁵⁰ C. B. Wilmer, “A Race Problem,” *Cambridge [Mass.] Tribune*, June 2, 1894, 7.

bors who had, after all, not known the “old negro” and could not “comprehend the peculiar and complex nature of the negroes as well as the men who have always lived among them.”⁵¹ Cary Wilmer, to an audience in Cambridge, Massachusetts, put it this way:

But to understand the situation thoroughly, it is necessary to compare the present with the past, and to see how one has grown out of the other. It is safe to say that there is more crime among the negroes of the South to-day in one week than there was in years before the war....The crucial point of the situation lies in this fact: It is not the old-time darkey who is committing the crime in the South to-day, but the product of the new era.

He went on to explain that the reason for this racial decline and rise in crime was that African Americans were no longer “put under discipline” and “taught...to work.” While Wilmer would “allow that slavery was wrong,” he believed that “the race, as a whole, is not successfully meeting the new conditions, privileges and responsibilities” of emancipation: “The discipline is gone.” Furthermore, “These two races which under the old *regime* lived together...not only harmoniously but bound by the ties of an even romantic affection...are slowly but surely drifting apart.” Recounting the story of a Lynchburg woman whose servants rejected her offer to read the Bible to them, Wilmer urged whites to reach out to blacks before “a wall of separation” made their help entirely unwelcome.⁵² This was the “new negro” in a nutshell—a lazy, “uppity” African American raised in profligate freedom—and it was this new stereotype, as well as the continuing stereotypes of promiscuous women and brutish men, that the COAIS was founded to change. Interestingly, Wilmer clearly believed that his Cambridge audience, children of or perhaps

⁵¹ “A Worthy Charity,” *Cambridge [Mass.] Tribune*, June 2, 1894, 3.

⁵² Wilmer, “A Race Problem,” *Cambridge Tribune*, June 2, 1894, 7.

even themselves abolitionists before the war, would be moved to donate by his description.

The Lynchburg asylum was not merely enacting prejudices old and new, however. It also reflected the racial and political realities of the post-emancipation South and post-Readjuster Virginia. The end of slavery meant the proliferation of black free labor across the South, a development which provoked reaction among white Southerners who feared blurring distinctions between themselves and those they had so long treated as subhuman. Just as wage labor was increasingly unacceptable for white children because formerly enslaved children had entered the marketplace, adults had to find a new framework around which to draw the lines that would ensure their continued superiority: free labor gave way to whiteness as the marker of full personhood and citizenship.⁵³ At the same time, the threat of the black voter—who in Virginia had helped bring the Readjusters to power and been rewarded with patronage positions that put him in authority over white men and women—prompted a backlash that led to the suppression of black votes and the eventual disfranchisement of black men, as well as the promotion of a white identity that politicians could leverage for votes.⁵⁴ (Voter suppression and disfranchisement occurred all over the South, but the timing and specifics varied from state to state.) As whiteness became an increasingly salient piece of Southern culture for conservative Democrats, the

⁵³ Hugh D. Hindman, *Child Labor: An American History* (New York, 2002); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York, 1991); Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York, 1993); C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge, 1951).

⁵⁴ Stephen Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2000); Dailey, *Before Jim Crow*.

lines drawn around African Americans grew increasingly restrictive and the gains of Reconstruction were slowly rolled back. Because children represent the future, child welfare—and orphan asylums in particular—became an important piece of the South’s identity formation after the Civil War as racial categories shifted and solidified.⁵⁵

Life in the Orphanage

There is little indication of what life was actually like for the children in the Lynchburg COAIS. Annual reports were more preoccupied with defending the need for the asylum and, to a lesser degree, tracking its income and expenses. The chancery court records, by which means the annual reports and select board minutes were preserved in the archives, were only interested in the financial dealings of the orphanage and between Abraham Jaeger and Cary Wilmer, who sued Jaeger.

The annual reports do contain some intriguing nuggets, however. For the first year or so, before the main building was finished, the children lived in “the old farm house.”⁵⁶ The children were provided enough basic necessities to “lose that distressed, careworn, half-scared and hungry appearance with which they arrive, and look cheerful and natural,” but the orphanage was far from luxurious: “a hot water heater would not only add to the comfort of all, but materially reduce the expense of fuel.”⁵⁷

The children were kept busy with school, religious services “twice a day,” and chores “such as cooking, laundrying, housework, working in garden, &c.”⁵⁸ Jaeger’s

⁵⁵ Catherine A. Jones, *Intimate Reconstructions: Children in Postemancipation Virginia* (Charlottesville, Va., 2015).

⁵⁶ *1891 Report*, LVA.

⁵⁷ *1894 Report*, LVA.

⁵⁸ *1894 Report*, LVA.

own report is corroborated by a Lynchburg resident, the writer and suffragist Orra Langhorne, who described life in the COAIS thus:

A teacher was employed to assist Mrs. Jaeger, and out of school the older girls were learning housework, sewing and to care for poultry. Dr. Jaeger said two or three of them had been useful to him in the garden, lying along the busy little stream, which adds so much to the beauty of the place. Excellent vegetables in great abundance gave good proof of the little workers' skill under the directions of the faithful friend, who is giving his best efforts to lead them to lives of usefulness and respectability.⁵⁹

Jaeger characterized this as "regular and various occupation, not too hard, with play times interspersed," and lauded the effect that this regimentation had on the children's character; they were "cured of those low sins and vices unfortunately too common in degraded classes."⁶⁰

Orra Langhorne's account tells more than just the prosaic details of the place. It is first of all significant that she "delayed giving an account of it until the main building should be finished and the Asylum in successful operation," indicating that the success of the institution was in question from the beginning, and perhaps suggesting that others had tried and failed to start similar ventures. Langhorne begins by contrasting the "tidy, comfortable and cheerful" orphans with the "dirty, noisy little black-a-moors, so often seen in the streets of Lynchburg." When Langhorne visited, there were only two boys and about fourteen girls in resident; the latter "wore a uniform of blue calico gowns, with white caps, capes and aprons"—a clothing style that calls to mind domestic service. There is something unsettling about the way she characterizes "their happy little faces" as indica-

⁵⁹ Orra Langhorne, "Southern Sketches," *The Southern Workman and Hampton School Record* 22: 9 (September 1893), 140.

⁶⁰ *1894 Report*, LVA.

tive that “they realize the lines hav[e] fallen for them in pleasant places.” Jaeger himself unwittingly adds to this uneasy picture with his portrait of Violet, a nine-year-old girl who “never gives any trouble, but, on the contrary is thoughtful of others and seconds the discipline of the Institution by her sage and motherly advise to the rest.”⁶¹ There is an additional sense of the control the Jaegers exerted when Langhorne prepares to leave; she reports that “Mrs. Jaeger called the children from their play in the grove where they were having school of their own devising, and made them sing for us.”⁶² The Virginian Langhorne may have found this charming, but a visitor from Philadelphia thought it “unpleasant” that “when she left the institution, the negro children were ranged in a line with tin pans, which they were beating.”⁶³

Funding and Decline

Aside from the changing role of black labor in Southern society, another challenge facing African American orphan asylums in the post–Civil War period was finances. There was little, if any, state funding available to these institutions. According to the founders of the Lynchburg asylum, “[i]t were unreasonable...to expect any aid from that quarter” because “the State furnishes equal school facilities for both races, and bears the burden of poor-houses in every county, where the colored people form the majority of beneficiaries.” This was a standard white Democratic assertion, that the state was already providing plenty of (or too much) funding to institutions for African Americans; the initial fight between Readjusters and “Fundlers” was over taking money away from the new

⁶¹ *1894 Report*, LVA.

⁶² Langhorne, “Southern Sketches,” 139–140.

⁶³ “Dr. Jaeger's Trial,” *Baltimore Sun*, August 13, 1898.

public schools, which encouraged black literacy, to “fund” the state debt. *This* institution, the founders of the COAIS smugly asserted, would instead rely on “the unfailing generosity of the American people.”⁶⁴ The American people *were* generous; one “lady in New York handed Rev. Dr. Jaeger a check for \$2,000 for the Asylum at Lynchburg....The same lady had given \$1,000 to the same cause a month ago.”⁶⁵ This was an unusually large amount, but the asylum had many donors who gave hundreds of dollars a year and even more who gave smaller amounts.⁶⁶ But private generosity of this kind had its limits. “The hard times, of course, render the condition of all charities particularly trying,” one plea for funds read.⁶⁷ On top of general economic hardship, many people were reluctant to support the uplift of African Americans. The New York Colored Orphan Asylum—the first orphanage for black children in America—could not find anyone to rent it rooms and was forced to purchase its own building (which became a target and was burned during the 1863 Draft Riot).⁶⁸ The lack of public funding, despite the Lynchburg founders’ cheerful confidence, was a significant limitation; while white orphanages did not receive state funds either at this time, they were generally buoyed by higher levels of private giving. The COAIS, in debt from its inception, limped along for only eight years before go-

⁶⁴ *Prospectus*, 5.

⁶⁵ “Benefactions and Endowments,” *Church Review* (April 1890), 57.

⁶⁶ *1891 Report*, LVA, 6–7; *1894 Report*, LVA, [6–7]; *1896 Report*, LVA, [5–6]; *Report of the Colored Orphan Asylum & Industrial School at Lynchburg, Virginia* (Lynchburg, Va., 1897), [1] (hereafter *1897 Report*), in Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School Records, 1890–1898, Local government records collection, Lynchburg (City) Court Records, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va..

⁶⁷ “A Worthy Charity,” *Cambridge Tribune*, June 2, 1894, 3.

⁶⁸ William Seraile, *Angels of Mercy: White Women and the History of New York’s Colored Orphan Asylum* (New York, 2011), 11.

ing bankrupt. As sociologists Andrew Billingsley and Jeanne Giovannoni put it, “The ‘colored orphan’ was at best an unpopular cause.”⁶⁹

The COAIS attempted to supplement the struggle for charitable contributions with cottage industries on the property. These would serve the dual purpose of providing the children with technical training (and instilling a work ethic) as well as raising income for the institution. To that end, a farm, a brick factory, and a printing press were established at various points throughout the asylum’s short career.

The farm was the first foray into money-making on the property. It was for this purpose that the board had purchased one hundred forty acres on the edges of Lynchburg. It was initially their hope that the farm would just save money by allowing the orphanage to be self-sufficient, or at least that the children could “be fed at a merely nominal cost.” The board acknowledged that the farm would take some time to get off the ground—“The running expenses of the orphanage and farm were necessarily large for this year, it being the first year’s culture of the farm”—but the farm (like the orphanage as a whole) seems never to have emerged from this start-up phase.⁷⁰ There are no records indicating the sale of produce from the farm, and by 1896 they were selling off the livestock to try and recoup some of their losses.⁷¹

Far from the “two or three hundred children” its founders had planned for, the asylum never housed more than about sixty at a time.⁷² This was partly due to their in-

⁶⁹ Billingsley and Giovannoni, *Children of the Storm*, 30.

⁷⁰ *1891 Report*, LVA.

⁷¹ *1896 Report*, LVA.

⁷² *1891 Report*, LVA; *1896 Report*, LVA.

ability to finish the buildings. A brickyard had been installed on the property to help with the second phase of construction; when “want of means prevented the continuance of building,” the management sold the bricks.⁷³ Realizing that this could be a profitable enterprise, they continued brick production apart from construction efforts (which largely ceased). However, this income dropped off too, from a profit of about \$600 in 1891 to just \$60 in 1894.⁷⁴ By 1896, sale of bricks was no longer an income category at all.⁷⁵ Instead, the board leased the brick plant out for three years at \$800 a year with an option to renew.⁷⁶ It would have been much more profitable as a rental property than as a means of production, had the asylum lasted.

In 1897, Jaeger determined that his magazine *Charity* should start being published in-house. “This will not only greatly lessen the cost of publication but form a valuable training for the brighter boys and girls,” he reasoned.⁷⁷ It is unknown where *Charity* was being published before 1897, or for how long, but its cost was apparently overtaking the income that subscriptions provided. It is no coincidence that Jaeger was looking for costs to cut in 1897, as the orphanage entered its last days and struggled to stay afloat.

Though the COAIS faced financial struggles common to all nonprofit organizations, particularly ones attempting to benefit African Americans at the turn of the century, its end was mired in a unique controversy worthy of a soap opera. It all began with “var-

⁷³ 1891 Report, LVA.

⁷⁴ 1891 Report, LVA; 1894 Report, LVA.

⁷⁵ 1896 Report, LVA.

⁷⁶ “Complaint,” in Lynchburg Chancery case 1899-097, C. B. Wilmer, Creditor, vs. Colored Orphan Asylum & Industrial School, etc. Local government records collection, Lynchburg (City) Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

⁷⁷ 1897 Report, LVA.

ious troubles...between [Abraham Jaeger] and said [Cary] Wilmer” in the summer of 1898, “which resulted in a trial before an ecclesiastical court and sundry trials both civil and criminal in the civil courts.”⁷⁸ The nature of the trouble between these brothers-in-law was never quite specified, though tantalizing pieces appear in newspaper articles up and down the east coast covering Jaeger’s “sensational” ecclesiastical trial. Wilmer had at one point tried to get Jaeger committed for “lunacy”; Jaeger had subsequently charged Wilmer with assault, but Wilmer was acquitted.⁷⁹ Wilmer’s anger with Jaeger likely stemmed from the “immoral conduct” that brought him before the ecclesiastical courts—“use of drugs, improper and immoral behavior, falsely accusing teachers...and...sending a telegram with the purpose of deceiving”—particularly that involving Wilmer’s sister, Lucy. At the trial, Lucy “read a lengthy statement...of a startling character” charging Jaeger with “improper and immoral conduct, and telling of one occasion when they came to blows.”⁸⁰ In addition, a former teacher at the asylum “declared that Dr. Jaeger’s manner toward her had been exceedingly repulsive and disagreeable” to the extent that she “had been compelled by Dr. Jaeger’s conduct to leave the asylum.”⁸¹ The sexual implications of this accusation are corroborated by Jaeger’s attempt to “give her a friendly greeting” in court by “walking rapidly toward her with both hands extended”; the prosecutor admonished him to “behave like a gentleman” and the presiding judge had to physically

⁷⁸ “Response,” in Lynchburg Chancery case 1899-097, C. B. Wilmer, Creditor, vs. Colored Orphan Asylum & Industrial School, etc. Local government records collection, Lynchburg (City) Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

⁷⁹ “Charges Against a Preacher,” *Alexandria Gazette*, June 29, 1898.

⁸⁰ “Dr. Jaeger’s Trial,” *Baltimore Sun*, August 12, 1898.

⁸¹ “Trial of Dr. Jaeger,” *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), August 12, 1898.

step between them.⁸² “Such altercations between the court and Dr. Jaeger occupied nearly all of the time,” which did not endear him to his judges, and after a trial lasting sixteen days over the course of a month, Jaeger was found guilty and “degraded from the sacred ministry.”⁸³ This situation so destroyed Jaeger’s reputation, upon which the COAIS heavily rested, that “the result of all this was that about the month of August the Board of Trustees found themselves without money, the former contributors of the Institution having ceased to contribute.”⁸⁴

Having lost that income, the asylum could not continue to function. Jaeger claimed to be afraid that the property would be auctioned off at a fraction of its value, putting the children out with no recourse and paying creditors only a minimal amount of their investment. He thus offered to buy the property himself, continue to provide for the orphans, and pay back creditors at eighty percent of their initial loan, an amount far better than any they could hope for from a bankruptcy settlement, he claimed. Everyone agreed to this arrangement—except Cary Wilmer.

Wilmer was not notified of the agreement—Jaeger claimed not to know that he was a creditor—and when he found out about it, sued Jaeger and the Asylum for what he claimed he was owed. His suit argued that the COAIS had recently been appraised at a value of \$60,000 and that Jaeger had robbed the board and the creditors by buying it for a mere \$7200, a third of which he was “paying” with his own credit in the institution.⁸⁵

⁸² “Dr. Jaeger’s Trial,” *Baltimore Sun*, August 12, 1898.

⁸³ “Dr. Jaeger’s Trial,” *Baltimore Sun*, August 13, 1898; “Dr. Jaeger Found Guilty,” *Baltimore Sun*, September 14, 1898.

⁸⁴ “Response,” LVA.

⁸⁵ “Complaint,” LVA.

(Wilmer was already furious with Jaeger and wanted his money, of course, but he frames his argument to the judge as an appeal to honor against Jaeger's repudiation of the debt, much like the Funders two decades prior.) Moreover, Wilmer claimed that he was owed almost as much as Jaeger for his time working for the orphanage with no salary. Jaeger responded by saying that Wilmer owed *him* for his portion of household expenses while Wilmer was living with Jaeger and his wife (Wilmer's sister).⁸⁶

Wilmer's suit was eventually dismissed and Jaeger absolved of any financial wrongdoing. He was also never tried criminally, but his behavior at his ecclesiastical tribunal, altercations with the bishop, and alienation of several former allies during the Wilmer suit gave him a toxic reputation in Virginia, and he left the state soon after. The whole situation demonstrates both the necessity and the tenuous nature of white financial support for an orphanage benefiting African American children, however. Jaeger's creditors were willing to take a chance on him personally, but they were not interested in supporting the cause once his character was ruined. It is possible that the asylum could have survived without white financial support, if it had spent time cultivating relationships in the black community and could have rallied them in its time of need. But of course, the 1890s were not a time when white Democrats in Virginia were interested in the black community, and without its leaders in a position to temper the white-supremacist mission of the institution, the black community was not interested in the COAIS.

⁸⁶ "Response," LVA.

The orphanage was dead, though sixteen children remained with the Jaegers long enough to be counted on the 1900 census.⁸⁷ The property was considered by several organizations for their own orphanages; though there was some controversy over housing white children in a home that had previously held black children, the Odd Fellows eventually bought the property from Jaeger in 1902.⁸⁸ Having accumulated quite a bit of ill will in Virginia, Jaeger moved to Chicago, where he lived out the rest of his days. He died January 8, 1914, preceded by his wife Annie.⁸⁹

Conclusion

This institution differed from the Friends Asylum in several key ways. First, its leadership—from the Board of Trustees down to the matron and teachers—was entirely white. This was actually remarkably rare in Southern institutions, most of which employed African Americans as menial staff at least, and often as those with the closest proximity to the children. Cary Wilmer thought that white-run orphanages for black children were “necessary both to guarantee the right moral influence and also to keep the races in touch and harmony.”⁹⁰ But despite this ostensibly enlightened claim, the COAIS aimed to remove black children from black influence entirely.

In addition to being white, the leadership and staff of the COAIS was almost entirely male. While they employed a matron early on, she disappeared sometime before

⁸⁷ 1900 Census.

⁸⁸ “A Valuable Property,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 12, 1902.

⁸⁹ “Abraham Jaeger,” Illinois Department of Public Health, “Birth and Death Records, 1916–present,” Division of Vital Records, Springfield, Illinois, published on ancestry.com, *Cook County, Illinois, Deaths Index, 1878–1922*, accessed May 15, 2018.

⁹⁰ Wilmer, “A Race Problem,” *Cambridge Tribune*, June 2, 1894, 7.

1894, leaving Mrs. Jaeger the sole female adult involved with the asylum. There are a few references to other teachers helping Mrs. Jaeger, both in the annual reports and in visitors' reports, but whether they were male or female is not mentioned; while teaching became an increasingly feminine profession through the late nineteenth century, men still made up as much as half of the teaching force in some areas. Furthermore, Abraham Jaeger seems to have driven off any female teachers who did work at the asylum, based on the testimony of those who appeared at his trial. In contrast to the COAIS's patriarchal leadership, the Friends' Asylum was the brainchild of a woman and operated with close support of the local YWCA.

The two institutions' racial and gender makeup can be at least partially attributed to their different denominational affiliations. Quakers, though by no means perfect advocates of equality, were animated by a theology that acknowledged "that of God in every one" and tended toward egalitarianism in their dealings with women and people of color.⁹¹ Episcopalianism, on the other hand, was a denomination of power in Virginia in the late nineteenth century; while eager to support philanthropic causes, Episcopalians tended to be white, wealthy, and committed to the status quo that kept them on top. There were African American Episcopalians, even clergy, but almost exclusively in the Northern states due to the historic requirement of manumission upon conversion. Those black Episcopalians who did exist in the South often absorbed the patriarchal narrative of the white upper-class surrounding them. George Bragg, ordained in 1888 as the "first

⁹¹ George Fox, *A journal or historical account of the life, travels, sufferings, Christian experiences, and labour of love in the work of the ministry of that ancient, eminent, and faithful servant of Jesus Christ, George Fox* (Philadelphia, 1831), 218.

Negro priest on Southern soil,” argued that the Church of England “sought to embrace all of the people, without respect to race” and attributed the lack of black Episcopalians in the South to competing class interests among whites: “Altogether, ‘the Great House’ possibly, was the chief civilizer and Christianizer of the black man.... On the other hand the great masses of the black race... were constantly in contact with and lived in the life of the ‘overseer class,’ and ‘the poor whites,’ and reflecting that low coarse and vulgar life, were likewise transformed into its image.”⁹²

Women within this patriarchal denomination were active, even if barred from leadership positions. Though they did not take vows and were often married, Episcopalian laywomen performed similar roles to Catholic nuns and women religious: cheap, even unpaid, labor in the church’s ministerial work.⁹³ The lack of women involved at the Lynchburg COAIS, then, at least in its later years, likely has more to do with Abraham Jaeger’s unpleasant personality and possible sexual harassment.

All of this contributed to the final major difference. The aim of the Friends’ Asylum, and of most orphanages of this period (both black and white), was essentially poor relief—taking in children whose parents could not care for them, preferably temporarily while parents got back on their feet. The Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School, on the other hand, explicitly desired to remove African American children from the “con-

⁹² Bragg, *Afro-American Group*, [5], 29–31, 270.

⁹³ Rima Lunin Schultz, “Woman’s Work and Woman’s Calling in the Episcopal Church: Chicago, 1880–1989,” in Catherine M. Prelinger, ed., *Episcopal Women* (New York, 1992), 19–71; Joan R. Gunderson, “The Non-Institutional Church: The Religious Role of Women in Eighteenth-Century Virginia,” *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 51: 4 (December 1982), 347–357. For more on the centrality of Catholic women’s orders to ministry, see chapter 3.

taminating influences” of the black community and maintain “absolute control of their lives,” “to be a formatory rather than a re-formatory school.”⁹⁴ This is one of the biggest differences that black leadership could make for an institution—keeping African American children connected to their communities, even when temporarily separated from their parents. Rather than focusing on rescuing children from “ignorance, vice, and lives of shame” and “christianizing” them, black child-savers were more concerned about the life-threatening physical environment many of the children were living in.⁹⁵ The Friends’ Asylum also adopted its children out, for several decades the only institution in Virginia to do so for African American children, again illustrating its desire to keep these children in black families.⁹⁶

While the “who,” “how,” and “why” were the biggest visible differences between the two institutions, “when” played an enormous role in shaping those factors. The Friends’ Asylum began in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War and the early victories of Reconstruction, while the COAIS sprang up after the Readjuster coalition failed and Jim Crow began to take root in Virginia. Reacting to the fear white Southerners had of the “new negro,” Abraham Jaeger pathologized black freedom as license and sold a vision of how to fix black families and restore the old racial order. For him, or at least for the donors to whom he appealed, the imagined orphan was a means to ensure continued white supremacy in Virginia.

⁹⁴ *Prospectus*, 3; *1894 Report*, LVA.

⁹⁵ *1891 Report*, LVA, 1 (“ignorance”), 2 (“christianizing”). Billingsley and Giovannoni, *Children of the Storm*, 52–53.

⁹⁶ “Friends Asylum for Colored Orphans SA-78,” *Marker History*, accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.markerhistory.com/friends-asylum-for-colored-orphans-marker-sa-78/>.

The Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School was ultimately built on too fragile a foundation. Rather than a combination of broad-based support from white allies, solid cooperation between black and white leaders, and marketing the institution as a home-like environment that included a mother figure, the COAIS relied solely on the reputation of its founder. This could be a powerful tool in combination with these other factors, as will be demonstrated in a later chapter; it might have even worked on its own, if Jaeger's reputation could have borne it. Abraham Jaeger's character, however, was not nearly strong enough to support "two to three hundred children."⁹⁷

⁹⁷ 1891 Report, LVA.

Chapter 3

“Under the care of a good Catholic white woman”¹:

St. Francis Colored Foundling and Orphan Asylum and Holy Innocents’ Asylum

(Richmond), 1894–1897, 1897–c.1920

The Friends’ Asylum for Colored Orphans and the Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School explicitly catered to school-aged children and, while residential and holistic in their approach to the children’s wellbeing, placed great emphasis on education. But what of the younger children—infants—whose parents could not care for them? And what services were in place to aid that minority within a minority: Catholic African Americans?

In 1890, the Commission for Catholic Missions among the Colored People and Indians estimated the number of African American Catholics in the United States to be 160,000. The federal census of the same year put the total population of African Americans at approximately seven and a half million. With black Catholics a mere two percent of the African American population, and African Americans barely twelve percent of the total population of the United States, it would not have been surprising if black Catholicism had been left to fend for itself and eventually peter out with no one willing to invest resources into such a tiny population. But in fact, an entire arm of the Catholic mission machine was devoted to black Catholics around the world and, eventually, a smaller

¹ Sisters of St. Francis, “Report of the Convent of Our Lady and Saint Francis,” Richmond, Va., June 1896, Archives of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, Baltimore, Md.

branch dedicated to African Americans in the United States. Their priority was evangelism, creating new Catholics in order to increase the existing population and combat the “leakage” to Protestantism and secularism that they thought was crippling the church.²

For the bishops who conceived St. Francis Colored Foundling and Orphan Asylum (later Holy Innocents’ Asylum) and for the religious brothers and sisters who ran it, the black orphan represented the opportunity to gain converts. As with the Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum, the founders saw the orphan as a stand-in for the whole African American race; these founders also had a similar goal of reining in the “dangerous” outcomes of Reconstruction and bringing black souls back under (the right kind of) white control. But like the Friends’ Asylum, the Catholic orphanage also operated under the new opportunities of emancipation—in this case, the availability of a whole new population to proselytize. What seems like a strange amalgam of white Southern visions was actually white Europeans’ interpretation of Southern visions, illustrating the tensions and similarities that existed between different groups of white Southerners. The availability of detailed admission records offers more insight into the children and families who passed through the Catholic asylum than those at the other three institutions, while at the same time there is less surviving documentation of the administrators’ visions and operation of the orphanage. This chapter, therefore, offers a grounding in the lived experiences of those families that other chapters are unable to provide, while still placing the asylum in its social and political context.

² John T. Gillard, *The Catholic Church and the American Negro* (Baltimore, 1929), 1–2.

Black Catholics in Virginia

While Catholicism got an early start in the American South from French and Spanish colonists, most English settlers were Protestant and despised what they called “papism.”³ With the notable exception of Maryland, which was established as a haven for persecuted English Catholics, English colonies were founded with a strong anti-Catholic sentiment that persisted to at least the Revolutionary era; even Maryland’s Catholic population remained a minority in the colony and suffered persecution after the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89. Virginia was no exception, and in fact as England’s flagship colony it was one of the first to ban Catholicism outright.⁴

In 1786, however, Thomas Jefferson finally got his proudest accomplishment passed, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. While religious tolerance in Virginia had largely been championed by the dissenting Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists, the Statute benefited Catholics as well. It was now legal, if not necessarily socially beneficial, to practice Catholicism in Virginia, and the number of Catholics in the state began to grow. Father John Carroll, America’s first bishop, estimated there to be about 200 Catholics in Virginia in 1785; by 1820, there were enough to justify the formation of their own diocese.⁵

³ James M. Woods, *A History of the Catholic Church in the American South, 1513–1900* (Gainesville, Fla., 2011), 107–108. Cyprian Davis notes that black Spaniards, as well as African slaves fleeing the Carolinas and Georgia, formed a significant black Catholic community in Florida before the Treaty of Paris. Cyprian Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (New York, 1990), 30.

⁴ Woods, *Catholic Church in the American South*, 118–120, 126–129; Gerald P. Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism: A History of the Catholic Church in Virginia* (Notre Dame, 2001).

⁵ Woods, *Catholic Church in the American South*, xiv, 159–160; “History of the Diocese,” Catholic Diocese of Richmond, accessed February 19, 2018. <http://richmonddiocese.org/about-us/history-of-the-diocese/>

There were still very few African American Catholics in Virginia, however. In large part, this was due to lack of exposure. What black Catholics there were in the United States were mostly in Maryland or along the Gulf Coast, especially Louisiana and Florida, former Spanish and French colonies where Catholicism had been part of the culture for a very long time. But what African Americans in the rest of the United States knew of Catholicism hardly endeared it to them. In the Northeast, black anti-Catholicism largely arose from antipathy toward (and from) the Irish stemming from labor competition and racial conflict.⁶ In the South, Catholicism was associated with pro-slavery sentiment. The Catholic Church did not see slavery per se as a moral ill, though it maintained that slaves should be treated well, and abolitionism was a Protestant movement increasingly tied to anti-Catholic sentiment. Moreover, as a minority constantly under suspicion of foreign loyalties, Catholics tended to try to keep their heads down and prove themselves loyal to the prevailing laws and culture. In fact, the Catholic Church was one of the few denominations and political organizations that did not split over the slavery question in the nineteenth century.⁷

Legend holds that the first black Catholic in Virginia was an enslaved young woman named Emily Mitchell, who had been sold into the state from Baltimore in 1846. (African Americans had long formed a significant portion of the Catholic population in Maryland, about twenty percent in 1785 and even higher after the arrival of refugees from Haiti in 1793.) Emily was reportedly concerned that her new owners were not

⁶ Davis, *Black Catholics in the United States*, 96–97.

⁷ Woods, *Catholic Church in the American South*, 119, 239–240, 286; Davis, *Black Catholics in the United States*, 53–54; Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 68, 141.

Catholic, but they assured her they would not interfere with her faith. Eventually known as “Aunt Emily,” she remained a devoted Catholic her whole life, becoming a lay member of the Franciscan Sisters at age seventy-three. She was buried from St. Joseph’s Parish in Richmond, the first black Catholic church in Virginia. Along with America’s first recognized black priest, Rev. Augustine Tolton, she had been commemorated in a stained-glass memorial window at the dedication of St. Joseph’s in 1885.⁸

It was a long road to St. Joseph’s, however. The end of the Civil War brought the long-delayed Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, a meeting of all the bishops in the United States to discuss Church policy and governance. A priority at this particular council was “the future status of the *negro*.” Now free to consider African Americans apart from the property owners to whose conservative opinions they had long deferred, and emboldened by Catholic contributions to the war effort, Southern Catholic leaders saw in the end of slavery a “golden opportunity for reaping a harvest of souls.”⁹ Nevertheless, a proposal to establish a special church officer dedicated to freedmen, though endorsed by the Pope, was fiercely opposed by local bishops, including Bishop John McGill

⁸ Cecilia A. Moore, “African American Catholic Women,” in *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, ed. Rosemary Skinner Keller, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Marie Cantlon (Bloomington, Ind., 2006), 160–168; Louis B. Pastorelli, *History of St. Joseph’s Church* (1937), Office of Archives and Black/Asian Catholics, Catholic Diocese of Richmond, Richmond, Va.; Davis, *Black Catholics in the United States*, 35–36, 84–89; Ernesto Begni, *The Catholic Church in the United States of America*, vol III: The Province of Baltimore and the Province of New York, Section 1 (New York, 1914), 160. Though “Aunt Emily” was not a member of a religious order, her veneration in the windows of St. Joseph alludes to the significant role of black women religious in the development of the African American Catholic community; Davis, *Black Catholics in the United States*, 98–115. The Healy brothers were in fact the first African American priests in the United States, James Augustine even the first black bishop and Patrick the president of Georgetown University, but they appeared as exceptions rather than challenges to the racial status quo and did not use their platforms to speak for other African Americans; while only one of them actively hid his African descent, none of them seem to have truly identified as African American and their descendants largely “pass[ed] successfully into the white race.” Davis, *Black Catholics in the United States*, 151–152.

⁹ Archbishop Martin J. Spalding to Archbishop John McCloskey, October 9, 1865, quoted in Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 196.

of Richmond.¹⁰ McGill did not think that Richmond had enough black Catholics to justify a special office and felt that such an entity would privilege poor blacks rather than aiding all impoverished Richmonders, stating in the session that “so strong was the desire for promoting the salvation of the blacks [it was] as if they alone were derelict and neglected.”¹¹ While this echoed contemporary Democratic and later Funder arguments that African Americans were receiving too much state aid, McGill may have had a point about the number of black Catholics in Richmond. In 1889, Richmond had the third-smallest population of black Catholics in the sixteen Southern dioceses despite having the second-highest population of African Americans.¹² In what African American priest and historian Cyprian Davis called “one of the tragedies of American church history,” the proposal for a national policy of ministry to former slaves ultimately did not pass.¹³ Instead, the council passed a decree urging Catholics to minister to the needs of African Americans—so as not to be outdone by secular and especially Protestant workers—but leaving the particulars to local authorities. The council also suggested localities recruit priests from Europe to supplement the shortage of American priests, a strategy that would undergird the mission in Richmond.¹⁴

¹⁰ Cyprian Davis suggests that it was the proposal to elevate this officer to the rank of bishop that inspired much of the opposition among the gathered bishops; Davis, *Black Catholics in the United States*, 118–119.

¹¹ Minutes of extraordinary session, p. 5, 39A-D5, Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, quoted in Davis, *Black Catholics in the United States*, 119, and Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 197.

¹² Only Savannah had a higher number of African Americans, and only San Antonio and Covington, Kentucky, had a smaller number of African American Catholics. Megan Stout Sibbel, “Reaping the ‘Colored Harvest’: The Catholic Mission in the American South” (PhD diss., Loyola University, 2013), 55, table 1.

¹³ Davis, *Black Catholics in the United States*, 116.

¹⁴ Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 197.

Catholic Missions to African Americans

This increased Catholic interest in African Americans coincided with the efforts of Herbert Vaughan (1832–1903), an English priest who had founded a missionary college in 1869 to prepare missionaries for service throughout the British Empire. Vaughan petitioned the Pope for a specific mission field just as Archbishop Martin Spalding of Baltimore was petitioning for help with the ministry to freed slaves. Thus was born the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, or Josephites, which trained priests at Vaughan’s college for ministry to African Americans in the United States beginning in 1871. The Josephite brothers—and their sister organization, the Sisters of St. Francis—established churches, schools, and a few orphanages for black Catholics throughout the U.S., including Virginia and the rest of the South. In 1893, the Society would be transferred to the authority of the Baltimore diocese.¹⁵

The Catholic mission to African Americans largely took the form of education. The late nineteenth century saw parochial schools appear across the South, largely staffed by orders of women religious though some were operated by male orders. Their primary goal was evangelism, seeking the “colored harvest” of souls to the Catholic faith. This was tempered over the years as the sisters interacted with the communities they served and lived in, and the goals and desires of those communities—which did not, for the most part, include conversion—shaped the mission. Over the course of the twentieth century, Catholic missions to African Americans in the South, and particularly the sisters actually

¹⁵ Davis, *Black Catholics in the United States*, 125–126; “Our History,” Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, accessed March 16, 2018. <http://www.josephites.org/about-us/our-history/>

working there, would become more focused on education for its own sake as well as social justice and civil rights.¹⁶ To some extent, those who worked to minister to, and especially to teach, a population largely thought to be incapable of learning “would share the stigma attached to the black population in America.”¹⁷ Those missions that did not adapt to the needs of their black communities failed.¹⁸

In 1872, Josephite founder Herbert Vaughan visited Richmond as part of his exploratory tour of the South. The newly installed Bishop of Richmond, James Gibbons, was eager to minister to the African Americans in his diocese. Despite both Vaughan’s and Gibbons’s enthusiasm, however, circumstances would prevent the Josephites from establishing a mission in Richmond for another eleven years. First Vaughan was appointed to the bishopric, disrupting the administration of the Mill Hill brothers; his successor agreed to the need for a Catholic school for African American children in Richmond, but determined that the Franciscan Sisters were too new to take on a foreign mission. Then Gibbons himself was promoted and left for Baltimore.¹⁹

Gibbons’s successor in Richmond, Bishop John Keane (1839–1918), was even more devoted to a ministry to the black population. Rather than wait for a black church to be built, a project that had long been discussed but had never borne fruit because of the minuscule number of black Catholics in the city, Keane began holding services for African Americans in the basement of St. Peter’s Catholic Church. Bitterly opposed by

¹⁶ Sibbel, “Reaping the ‘Colored Harvest’”; Isabel Mann, “Benedictine Missionaries and the Intersection of Race and Religion on Skidaway Island, Georgia,” (master’s thesis, University of Georgia, 2018).

¹⁷ Davis, *Black Catholics in the United States*, 130.

¹⁸ Mann, “Skidaway Island.”

¹⁹ Davis, *Black Catholics in the United States*, 127; Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 225–228.

the majority Protestant population, as he had apparently “unsettled Richmond’s usual practice of religious tolerance,” he was nevertheless surprisingly successful, filling the pews during his services and gaining several converts. It seemed the time was ripe to again solicit a dedicated priest for African Americans from the Mill Hill Josephites.²⁰

As it happened, the Josephites had a troublesome young priest they needed to relocate after his defeat in an ecclesiastical election. Father John Slattery (1851–1926) was not happy about his assignment to Richmond in 1883, “the embarrassing condition of the mission” making clear to him that he was being punished for his tactless manner of questioning authority.²¹ While Slattery was perhaps being reminded of his place, both Vaughan and his successor Canon Peter Benoit nevertheless wished Slattery success; they appreciated “the Sacrifices which [Bishop Keane was] making for the poor coloured race” and thought Slattery could help relieve some of Keane’s burden. They advised Keane to give Slattery free rein over the African American mission, both to free up Keane’s time for other things and to salve Slattery’s wounded pride.²²

Keane and Slattery turned out to make a dynamic team. After Keane purchased the land for a new African American Catholic church, he set out on a series of traditional fund-raising trips to speak in Northern churches. Slattery took a more creative tack and solicited pennies from parochial schoolchildren in the Northeast, managing to raise \$8000. Combined with money from the French Society for the Propagation of the Faith,

²⁰ Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 279.

²¹ Stephen J. Ochs, *Desegregating the Altar: The Josephites and the Struggle for Black Priests, 1871–1960* (Baton Rouge, 1990), 58.

²² Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 280.

these funds were enough to start construction on St. Joseph's, the first church in Virginia exclusively for the use of black Catholics. The cornerstone was laid in April and a dedication service held in November 1885. That summer, an anonymous donation enabled the foundation of a school. This school attracted over a hundred students in less than six months and Keane purchased the lot next door to the church in order to expand it. It was staffed by the Franciscan sisters who, unlike a decade previously, were now in a position to send missionaries.²³

The Franciscan Missionary Sisters of St. Joseph developed out of a group of women in Herbert Vaughan's diocese who wanted to organize; Vaughan brought them to Mill Hill, initially to take care of domestic matters at the college, but eventually as their own branch of the mission organization. In 1881, a few of these sisters responded to now-Cardinal Gibbons's invitation to Baltimore to educate African American children. They began their work in the United States by assisting with and expanding an orphanage started by an African American woman in Baltimore. By 1885, the ministry was established enough to expand their efforts to Richmond at the request of Father Slattery and Bishop Keane.²⁴

The Franciscan Sisters were just one iteration of a common theme across the Catholic world. Women religious were a key component of Catholic missions, not least

²³ Fogarty, *Commonwealth Catholicism*, 279-281; "Touring Josephite Missions," *The Josephite Harvest* 77, no. 3 (May-June 1965), 22-23, Archives of the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, Baltimore, Md.; "Dedication of St. Joseph's, Richmond," *St. Joseph's Advocate* 4, no. 1 (January 1886), 133-134.

²⁴ "Our History, Part 2: The Society," St. Joseph's Missionary Society: Mill Hill Missionaries, accessed March 20, 2018. <http://www.millhillmissionaries.co.uk/about-us/our-history/part-2-the-society/>; "History: Franciscan Sisters of Baltimore," Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, accessed March 20, 2018. <http://www.lakeosfs.org/who-we-are/history/>

because they were a cheap source of labor. Especially in the schools which formed the core of Catholic missionary activity to African Americans, employing sisters as teachers kept operational costs down and allowed for the lower tuition which was so attractive to black families seeking good-quality education at an affordable cost. Sisters, too, may have been more adaptable and less threatening than their male counterparts, enabling better integration into the community and a higher responsiveness to its needs.²⁵

From its inception in 1866 until 1893, the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart had served the African American population in the United States but had been directed from the Mill Hill college in England. This long-distance management was taking a toll on the efficiency of the organization and on the efforts and energies of its leadership. In 1893, an independent order of Josephites was organized under the auspices of the Baltimore diocese headed by Cardinal Gibbons, and Father Slattery was named the first Superior General.²⁶

St. Francis Colored Foundling and Orphan Asylum, 1894–1897

Father Lambert Welbers (1862–1946) was the first American brother to pastor St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Richmond, arriving in 1893 after Father Slattery's promotion to Superior General of the American Josephites. He moved quickly, and within a year had opened the St. Francis Colored Foundling and Orphan Asylum. The first infants

²⁵ Sibbel, "Reaping the 'Colored Harvest,'" 66–67. In contrast to Sibbel's analysis of the close relationships and awareness of racial realities that emerged among several orders of women religious working at African American schools in the South, Isabel Mann details the downfall of a male-run school that failed to account for the needs of the community it invaded; Mann, "Skidaway Island."

²⁶ "Our History," Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, accessed March 20, 2018. <http://www.josephites.org/about-us/our-history/>

were admitted in September of 1894, and cared for by “a good Catholic white woman by the name of Mary Anne O’Keefe” with the aid of some “Colored women.”²⁷ In May of 1895, “the [Franciscan] Sisters were appointed by the Mother Abbess at the request of the Pastor, Rev. L. J. Welbers, to take charge” of the asylum; the Mother Abbess was likely English, but it is unclear whether she resided in Richmond herself or directed the Richmond mission from the Franciscan Sisters’ base in Baltimore. By November of that year, “three Sisters went to live in the Home”—including one who had been reassigned from Norfolk—and were “assisted with secular help, a night nurse, a day nurse, and a woman in the kitchen.” The Home was funded by “begging expeditions,” “annual subscribers,” and a steam laundry that doubled as occupational training for the older girls at the convent school; “the money expended on provisions and other things not begged is furnished by the Reverend Father Welbers.”²⁸

In a letter printed in the *St. Joseph’s Advocate*, the order’s quarterly, Father Welbers wrote,

It is quite evident that if this mission is to succeed better, greater efforts are to be made, and new methods must be tried. While the conversion of this people is essentially a work of God’s grace, yet we are bound to do all in our power to ‘catch’ them. After careful study and inquiry, I find that one of the most useful things would be an asylum for children. Experience shows that converts from the day-school cannot be relied upon, and besides these conversions are few. Having the children wholly under our

²⁷ Holy Innocents Foundling Asylum (Richmond, Va.), St Francis Colored Foundling and Orphan Asylum records, 1888-1906 (hereafter St. Francis Admissions), Accession 33477, Church records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.; Sisters of St. Francis, “Report of the Convent,” SSFA; Sisters of St. Francis, “The Beginnings of the First Catholic Colored Church in Richmond, Virginia,” SSFA.

²⁸ Sisters of St. Francis, “Report of the Convent,” SSFA.

control in the Home would give us a chance to lay a good foundation, and thus the mission would be gradually but surely built up.²⁹

His intentions were phrased similarly to those of the Colored Orphan Asylum in Lynchburg. Unlike Abraham Jaeger, however, Welbers was not combatting the supposed dissipation or insolence of the African American community but its Protestantism, and the orphan asylum was only one piece of Welbers's mission to the black Catholic population in Richmond. Catholic attempts to evangelize the black population in the South after the war had found minimal success, due in part to opposition from Protestant majorities but also to the church's own segregationist practices.³⁰ Thus Welbers's determination to build the population by maintaining total ideological control over potential members was acute, but it was not motivated by assumptions of inherent racial inferiority or fears of the changing racial landscape.

Unique to the St. Francis Foundling Asylum is the preservation of their admission records. Attributable at least in part to Catholic administrative bureaucracy, we have access to the names, birthdates, and some biographical details of over 100 children who passed through the orphanage over its almost four-year tenure, from one-month-old twins Joseph and Francis White, parents unknown, admitted September 24, 1894, to Bernard Johnson, admitted by his widowed mother Mary on July 13, 1897.³¹

Because St. Francis was a foundling asylum as well as an orphan asylum, the demographics—particularly the mean age at admission—of its charges were drastically dif-

²⁹ Lambert J. Welbers, in "Richmond, Va.," *St. Joseph's Advocate* III: 10 (April 1894), 539.

³⁰ Sibbel, "Reaping the 'Colored Harvest'"; Mann, "Skidaway Island."

³¹ St. Francis Admissions, LVA.

ferent from the other “colored” asylums in Virginia. Of the 89 children whose age at admission is known (fourteen have no birthdate listed), 51 were under two months old when they came to the asylum. Another 18 were between two and six months, and 6 between seven months and one year, for a total of 84% under one year of age. Only 5 were between one and three years old, and a further 9 were between five and thirteen, but these older children were quickly transferred to a Catholic orphanage in Baltimore.³²

“Foundling” did not necessarily mean an unknown child dumped on the orphanage’s stoop. This may have been the founders’ initial vision of the children they would serve, but the reality quickly broadened the definition of “foundling” to essentially any infant in need. As seen above, most of the children had a known date of birth distinct from the date they were brought to the asylum, and over 80% of them have some record of who brought them to the asylum. Of the 84 children whose “By whom sent” column was filled, 53 were surrendered by a parent, usually their mother. An additional 7 were left by another family member, while 6 were admitted by an unrelated person who either was called their “guardian” or who at least knew their parents’ names. The City brought forth another 12, and 6 were given over by a stranger with whom the child had been abandoned. Furthermore, most of the absent records appear to have resulted from poor bookkeeping, rather than an actual lack of knowledge. The Franciscan Sisters were more meticulous record-keepers than Father Welbers or Mrs. O’Keefe; all but two of the blank records are from the time before the Sisters took over, and the presence of at least one

³² St. Francis Admissions, LVA.

parent's name or a date of birth on all but one of these indicates that the child was in fact left by someone with some knowledge of the family, if not the parents themselves. Knowledge of birth dates may also suggest the Franciscan Sisters were connected to midwives or doctors who attended these births and may themselves have been Catholic. In all, only 3 of the 103 children admitted over the course of three years and ten months were classically "left on the stoop" foundlings.³³

What is unfortunately lacking from the St. Francis records is almost any indication of what happened to the children once they were admitted. Older children were transferred, as noted previously. Mary Monica Thompson is the only child whose death is recorded, perhaps because her baptism *in extremis* by Mrs. O'Keefe rather than by a priest needed to be explained. (Baptism records were another thing the Franciscan Sisters were very careful about; only two children prior to their administration had their baptisms recorded, while every child after did.)³⁴ However, while the circumstances of Mary Monica's baptism may have been unusual, her death was not. At least half of the 103 children recorded in the St. Francis Admission Records died in infancy, almost all of those before the age of one and most within weeks of arriving at the orphanage.³⁵

This was a tragically common feature of infant asylums around the world in the nineteenth century, and in fact fifty percent was on the low end of mortality rates.³⁶ All

³³ St. Francis Admissions, LVA.

³⁴ St. Francis Admissions, LVA.

³⁵ It is likely that the mortality rate was even higher; the 51 children indicated here are merely the ones for whom death records can be easily found, and the Library of Virginia notes that their death records for 1896–1897 are incomplete or absent. Ancestry.com, *Virginia, Deaths and Burials Index, 1853–1917* [database on-line] (Provo, Utah: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011). Accessed March 28–29, 2018.

³⁶ Valerie Fildes, *Wet Nursing: A History from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford, 1988), 200–201.

of the factors which made institutions difficult places to live for people of any age—overcrowding, understaffing, poor hygiene, disease—were all the more dangerous for vulnerable babies. Moreover, African American children have always had a higher mortality rate than white children in America; one statistician estimates that between 1880 and 1910, “about half of all black children died before their 5th birthday.”³⁷ But uniquely detrimental to the institutionalized infant population was a lack of proper nutrition, specifically human breastmilk. Before the development of proprietary infant foods (formulas) in the latter half of the nineteenth century, artificial infant feeding usually consisted of bread or grains mixed with water or animal milk to create a “pap.” Besides being nutritively inadequate, the milk was unpasteurized and the mixture often delivered in a (dirty) rag for the baby to suck on.³⁸

The alternative to “handfeeding” or “dry nursing,” of course, was wet nursing. Wet nursing was an ancient practice, often conducted through informal arrangements within social networks, but had become increasingly marketed as a specialized form of domestic labor throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries. The politics and economics of wet nursing were complex. Wealthy families hired working-class women, who were then forced to leave their own children with either a caretaker who relied on artificial feeding or an infant asylum. The asylum itself would either use artificial

³⁷ Douglas C. Ewbank, “History of Black Mortality and Health before 1940,” *The Milbank Quarterly* 65: Supplement 1 (1987), 107. Samuel Preston and Michael Haines later argued that black child mortality rates around 1900 had been overestimated due to extrapolation from both adult mortality rates and the available data centered in the urban northeast; they place the numbers closer to thirty percent—though still almost double the white infant mortality rate. Samuel H. Preston and Michael R. Haines, *Fatal Years: Child Mortality in Late Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, N.J., 1991), 82, 84.

³⁸ Janet Golden, *A Social History of Wet Nursing: From Breast to Bottle* (Cambridge, 1996), 124.

feeding or might hire an even poorer woman to nurse the infant. The tragic irony was that in seeking employment to provide for her child, the wet nurse often ended up losing it. There was an acknowledged calculus of the relative values of these tiny lives, with the children of wet nurses largely regarded as acceptable sacrifices for the health of wealthier, ethnically “superior” babes. In the North, Irish immigrants were the majority of wet nurses; in the South, enslaved African American women often nursed their owners’ children alongside or instead of their own.³⁹

Wet nursing was skilled labor, and it did not come without risk to the woman performing it. There was significant concern about properly screening and supervising wet nurses, particularly in urban settings where they were more likely to be poor, unwed, and therefore morally and hygienically suspect, but disease transfer went both ways.

Foundling infants were particularly dangerous, since their parents’ health status was unknown and they were often the offspring of prostitutes, sailors, and others likely to contract sexually transmitted infections. In some cases, wet nurses could collect damages if they contracted syphilis from an infant they were feeding.⁴⁰ In almost every institutional setting, demand for wet nurses far exceeded supply. Perhaps this is why there is no indication that St. Francis employed a wet nurse, or that any of the children were sent out to one. The sisters acknowledged that “everyone’s experience in this kind of work seems to

³⁹ Fildes, *Wet Nursing*, 139–143; Golden, *Social History of Wet Nursing*, 77–78, 97–128; Jacqueline H. Wolf, “‘Mercenary Hirelings’ or ‘A Great Blessing’?: Doctors’ and Mothers’ Conflicted Perceptions of Wet Nurses and the Ramifications for Infant Feeding in Chicago, 1871–1961,” *Journal of Social History* 33:1 (Autumn 1999), 97–120; Stephanie Jones-Rogers, “‘[S]he could spare one ample breast for the profit of her owner’: White Mothers and Enslaved Wet Nurses’ Invisible Labor in American Slave Markets,” *Slavery & Abolition* 38:2 (April 2017), 337–355.

⁴⁰ Fildes, *Wet Nursing*, 72, 238–239.

prove that it is impossible to rear a number of infants by hand [with artificial feeding],” and yet that appears to have been “the plan adopted to rear the infants.”⁴¹ Perhaps some, or many, of the infants were left at St. Francis because their mothers were wet nurses themselves.

Because it was not unusual, the administrators of St. Francis fully acknowledged their grim mortality record, writing in an early history of the institution that “these infants were received into the asylum...in such a neglected condition that they did not respond to care and nourishment, and died shortly after admittance.” The priority for the Catholic brothers and sisters in charge, however, was not necessarily the physical survival of the foundlings and orphans but rather their eternal souls and the growth of the black Catholic church in Richmond. The same report which sadly acknowledged the dismal mortality rate of the orphanage proudly noted, “There are two-hundred-eighty-three babes in Heaven today because this home existed.”⁴²

Like outcomes for the children, explicit indications of sibling relationships are also lacking from the records of St. Francis; however, some reasonable inferences can be drawn from surnames, parents’ names, and admission dates. There were surprisingly few sibling groups at St. Francis given the small size of the black Catholic community in Richmond, suggesting that the asylum was sought out by desperate parents and caretakers of all faiths.⁴³ Only 15 children were definitely admitted with or subsequent to a sibling,

⁴¹ Sisters of St. Francis, “Report of the Convent,” SSFA.

⁴² Sisters of St. Francis, “Beginnings of the First Catholic Colored Church,” SSFA.

⁴³ While many of the children’s names as recorded in the asylum’s registers suggest Catholic parentage (e.g. compound girls’ names beginning with “Mary” and a proliferation of saints’ names), it is quite possible that these names were bestowed on them not by their parents but by the Franciscan sisters.

with an additional 6 unconfirmed but possible siblings. Several sets of twins were admitted together: Joseph and Francis White in 1894, Mary and John Forest Thompson in 1895, and Paul and Simon Coleman in 1896. All three pairs came to the orphanage at about one month of age and died within two to three weeks of their arrival, days apart from each other.⁴⁴ Their short life stories mirror those of many infants at St. Francis, but the low birth weight associated with a multiple pregnancy may have contributed to the poor health of these particular children. Interestingly, the Thompson twins were committed by the City but have both parents' names notated; perhaps their parents died in some sort of accident, or the children were removed from an abusive situation.

Other, non-twin siblings tell stories more about social than physical circumstances. Mary Lilian Thompson and her younger brother Clarence Francis (no relation to the Thompson twins) were admitted by their mother Jennie in September of 1895. Lilian, five years old, was transferred to Baltimore since she was too old for St. Francis, and Clarence was reclaimed by his mother after an unspecified period (though at least long enough to be baptized). It is unclear if he was not allowed to stay at St. Francis because he was "Half-witted" or if Jennie's—and their father Henry's—circumstances had improved. The 1900 census reveals a George H. and Jennie Thompson living in Staunton with a son named Clarence, as well as an older brother and a younger sister; Lilian is nowhere to be found, except perhaps in the number of children Jennie had borne who

⁴⁴ St. Francis Admissions, LVA; "Jos. White," "Francis White," "May M. Thompson," "John Thompson," "Paul Coleman," and "Peter Coleman," *Virginia, Deaths and Burials Index, 1853–1917*.

were no longer living.⁴⁵ The Alwyn siblings—Thomas, Eva Mary, and Mary Ellen—came in January of 1896, ranging from five to nine years old. They were placed in St. Francis by an unnamed older sister who had been caring for them for an unknown length of time, presumably in the absence of departed parents. They, too, were transferred to orphanages for older children.⁴⁶

We do not know why Rose Goode and Angelina Jones left their children in the orphanage, but the dates tell some of the story. In August of 1895, Angelina brought her daughters Mary Susan and Gertrude Angela to St. Francis. Their birthdates were not recorded, but Mary was old enough to be transferred to Baltimore while there is no indication that Gertrude was. This may suggest that Gertrude's birth stretched family resources too far, or coincided with a crisis event that necessitated placing both girls in the asylum. Similarly, Ivanhoe Goode was almost a year old when his sister Mary Rose was born in September of 1895. A month later, their mother Rose placed Mary Rose in the asylum, where she died after just ten days. Only after that, in November 1895, was Ivanhoe admitted to St. Francis; he may have been neglected during the attempt to save his sickly sister, or contracted an illness from her, or perhaps a grieving Rose found herself unable to care for her still-infant son.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ The 1900 and 1910 censuses recorded both the number of children a woman had birthed as well as how many were living.

⁴⁶ St. Francis Admissions, LVA; 1900 Census, Augusta County, Virginia, population schedule, Beverly Manor District, City of Staunton, p. 9, dwelling 177, family 189, George Thompson, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 13, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>.

⁴⁷ St. Francis Admissions, LVA.

Beset by funding difficulties, as all orphanages were but especially those for African American children, and burdened by the poor health of the infants, the history of St. Francis is fractured and at times unclear. The Franciscan Sisters' history states that Father Welbers's successor, Father Thomas Donovan, closed the asylum "shortly after he became Pastor in 1896" and reopened it at the end of 1897 with the new name of Holy Innocents' Asylum.⁴⁸ However, the admission records of St. Francis continue smoothly through the transition to Father Donovan until July of 1897.⁴⁹ The Josephite history, and subsequently more general American Catholic histories, merely attribute the creation of Holy Innocents' to Father Welbers, glossing over the transition period entirely.⁵⁰ By some accounts, Father Donovan also turned it over to a new staff of "secular women," but others indicate that the Franciscan Sisters continued to administer it, though "with secular help."⁵¹ Specifics aside, sometime after Father Welbers's departure in 1896, St. Francis Colored Foundling and Orphan Asylum became Holy Innocents' Asylum under Father Donovan.

Holy Innocents' Asylum, 1897–c.1920

The only direct records of Holy Innocents' Asylum remaining extant, or at least available to the public, are the admission records from 1906 to 1908. However, the 1900 census captures a snapshot of the orphanage in the gap between 1897 and 1906. In 1900,

⁴⁸ Sisters of St. Francis, "Beginnings of the First Catholic Colored Church," SSFA.

⁴⁹ St. Francis Admissions, LVA.

⁵⁰ Josephite Fathers, "Richmond, Virginia: St. Joseph," Archives of the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, Baltimore, Md.; Begni, *Catholic Church in the United States*, 160.

⁵¹ Sisters of St. Francis, "Beginnings of the First Catholic Colored Church," SSFA; Sisters of St. Francis, "Report of the Convent," SSFA.

Father Oliver Jackson was the head of the Josephite Mission in Richmond; the young, white, Canadian priest had taken over from Father Donovan in 1899. His assistant was the Reverend Rosco Yates, a white priest from Ohio. More responsible for the operation of the asylum itself and the school on the same property were “Directoress” Mother Cassia, a Franciscan nun out of Mill Hill, England, and “Matron” Mary Balner, a white French Canadian woman who does not appear to have been in the order. Five other English Franciscan sisters, an eighteen-year-old white female teacher, and two servants—a white male cook and a widowed black housekeeper—rounded out the staff.⁵²

Nine children also lived on the property when the census was taken in 1900.

Mercia Davis was the four-year-old daughter of Fannie Davis, the housekeeper, and five-year-old Jerrome Brown was a “pupil” at the school. The rest were listed as “orphans,” five girls and two boys ranging from one to three years old.⁵³ If the census is a representative snapshot of the orphanage’s population, it would seem that the shift from “St. Francis Colored Foundling and Orphan Asylum” to “Holy Innocents’ Asylum” was more than just a name change—the Josephite mission in Richmond was now focusing on young children rather than infants. But perhaps the census just missed the infants, many of whom, after all, did not often live long enough to be recorded anywhere but in a death index. Even the limited admission records available for Holy Innocents’ reflect the same lively—or chaotic—turnover as St. Francis, and in fact even more so: Holy Innocents’

⁵² 1900 Census, Henrico County, Virginia, population schedule, Jackson Ward, City of Richmond, p. 10, dwelling 168, family 216, St. Joseph Society for Colored Missions of Virginia, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 13, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; St. Joseph’s Parish, Miscellaneous records, ABAC.

⁵³ 1900 Census.

saw almost the same number of children come through its doors in two years (99) that St. Francis did in four (103). All but ten of those 99 were under one year of age.⁵⁴

Record-keeping had changed in the ten years since St. Francis had closed. Rather than a hand-drawn table with columns for “Date” of admission, “Name,” “Parents,” “By whom sent,” and “Baptized,” the admission register was now a printed form mimicking the church baptism registers. Included was a blank for place of birth and family’s residence, in contrast to the previous “By whom sent” column which could have included midwives and doctors, relatives, neighbors, or even strangers. This shift indicates an acknowledgement that the asylum was overwhelmingly patronized by families rather than “true” orphans. Not explicitly requested on these forms, but often recorded, were parents’ birthplaces; this may have had to do with administrative requirements to keep services within the parish. The addition of a slot to record the matron at the time of a child’s admission is curious and may speak to an administrative need to evaluate different matrons’ admission criteria, mortality rates, or other statistics. Most useful for reconstructing life stories was the inclusion of a space for miscellaneous “remarks,” often about how the child died but also sometimes the doctor attending their birth, their parents’ birthplaces, or their mother’s religious affiliation (usually non-Catholic). Also added was a blank for “Entrance Fee”; the variable amounts recorded—from \$1 to \$7—and the many left blank indicate that this asylum, like many, charged families on a “pay what you can” basis. The child’s baptism was still recorded, though this shifted from the precise date

⁵⁴ Holy Innocents Foundling Asylum (Richmond, Va.), Holy Innocents Foundling Asylum records, 1906–1912 (hereafter Holy Innocents Admissions), Accession 33478, Church records collection, LVA.

during Matron S. E. Randolph's tenure to a mere "yes" or "no" during the transition to Matron Caroline Still in 1907.⁵⁵

Fourteen of the 99 children recorded were born at the "City Home," the Richmond Almshouse. This was a new development since the days of St. Francis. While the poorhouse had housed a few African Americans before the Civil War, they were all elderly. During Reconstruction, public welfare services grew increasingly segregated as cities and states took responsibility for white citizens in need and the Freedmen's Bureau served the African American population. This model would continue even after the dissolution of the Freedmen's Bureau, and limiting state aid to Confederate veterans and their families became both a socially acceptable form of welfare and a legal way to exclude African Americans. By the turn of the century, however, Progressive activists had organized the Virginia Conference for Charities and Corrections and eventually succeeded in getting the General Assembly to establish a State Board for Charities and Corrections in 1908. Shortly thereafter, a separate building for black paupers was added to the Richmond City Almshouse, accommodating a wider range of impoverished black people, especially women and children.⁵⁶ The fourteen children admitted to Holy Innocents' from the City Home included five true foundlings who were abandoned at the almshouse or brought there by the strangers who discovered them; Felix Joseph, for example, was taken to the City Home after being left on a train arriving from South Carolina. Howev-

⁵⁵ Holy Innocents Admissions, LVA.

⁵⁶ Elna C. Green, *This Business of Relief: Confronting Poverty in a Southern City, 1740–1940* (Athens, Ga., 2003); *Act Creating and By-Laws and Rules Governing the State Board of Charities and Corrections, Virginia* (Richmond, Va., 1908).

er, nine of the fourteen were born to mothers already living in the almshouse. Most of these women did not identify the child's father, and the ones who did do not appear to have been married to the fathers. There were several private and public maternity homes available available for white women in Richmond, including unwed mothers, but even poor white women would often choose to give birth at the almshouse instead, for a variety of reasons. Poor black women had little other choice; a maternity home for black women was not available in Richmond until 1910. As historian Elna Green puts it, "the almshouse was an important part of the maternity medical care of the city during the period, and for black women, the almshouse may have been the central maternity facility for an entire generation."⁵⁷

Siblings made up an even smaller portion of the population at Holy Innocents' than they had at St. Francis, though their relationships are more certain since parents' names were more assiduously recorded. Three sets of twins were admitted between 1906 and 1908, as well as three other sibling pairs. Grace and Harvie Fulton were admitted in early 1907 at six months old and their parents, Ada and Walter, were charged one dollar, on credit. There is no indication that either twin was baptized; they may have been illegitimate, since Ada had a different surname than Walter. There is also no indication in the asylum records of whether they died, but the 1910 census reveals that only one of Ada Fulton's four children was still living: five-month-old Walter, Jr. By 1920, Ada had moved back to her hometown, Washington, D. C., and was living with her children, her

⁵⁷ Holy Innocents Admissions, LVA; "Richmond Almshouse, West Building," African American Historic Sites Database, Virginia, accessed April 5, 2018, <http://www.aahistoricsitesva.org/items/show/358?tour=6&index=27>; Green, *This Business of Relief*, 165.

mother, and her two younger siblings; Walter was working in New York, though they remained married.⁵⁸

One Dr. Hinchman of the City Home brought Carrie Hill's month-old twins Peter and Paul to Holy Innocents' in December of 1907 and paid their entrance fee. They were baptized, though their mother was a Baptist, and Peter survived almost a year before dying in October of 1908; Paul's death was not recorded. In 1910, Carrie Hill was single, living with her parents, and had no children—living or dead—recorded in the census.⁵⁹ Julia Park may have been in a similar situation. Her twin girls Mary and Martha were born in the City Home; the doctor delivered them just two days later to Holy Innocents', where they died within two weeks. Though Julia apparently got married and lived until at least 1965, her parents did not count her among their living children.⁶⁰ Carrie Hill and Julia Park exemplify the desperate situation of unwed women who found themselves pregnant; Julia appears to have been shunned by her parents and forced to live in the City Home, while Carrie seems to have turned to the Home temporarily to hide her pregnancy from her parents.

⁵⁸ Holy Innocents Admissions, LVA; 1910 Census, Henrico County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Richmond, Jefferson Ward, p. 6, dwelling 126, family 140, Walter G. Fulton, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 13, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1920 Census, District of Columbia, population schedule, City of Washington, p. 7, dwelling 89, family 133, Ada Beverly, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 13, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>.

⁵⁹ Holy Innocents Admissions, LVA; 1910 Census, Chesterfield County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Richmond, Washington Ward, p. 6, dwelling 109, family 113, John W. Hill, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 13, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>.

⁶⁰ Holy Innocents Admissions, LVA; "Julia Virginia Birchett," Ancestry.com, *U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936–2007* [database on-line] (Provo, Utah: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011), accessed June 13, 2018; 1910 Census, King William County, Virginia, population schedule, Aquinton Magisterial District, p. 6, dwelling 86, family 93, John J. Parks, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 13, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>.

Ella Dunn brought her two children to Holy Innocents' at the same time, but Willie was almost six while Mabel was just one. There is no record of their baptism; they had different fathers and one or both may have been born out of wedlock. Jessie and Elise Boisseaux, seven and four years old respectively, had the same father and their parents were married, but they were also not baptized. In their case, however, it was because they "left" and "went home"; they must have been in the orphanage a very short time indeed, since most children were baptized within two weeks of admission.⁶¹

The Jackson siblings tell another story, one that illustrates the way an asylum could weave in and out of families' complex lives. Henry and Frances Jackson brought their eight-month-old son, Henry Jr., to Holy Innocents' in July of 1906 and paid five dollars for his admission. Five months later, Henry Jr. was taken back home, apparently without being baptized. Nine months after that, his baby sister Queenie was brought to the asylum, her "mother ill"—perhaps still recovering from Queenie's birth a month earlier. Queenie died within days.⁶² This is the story the admissions register tells and it is fairly straightforward, the only puzzle being that while Queenie's father was Henry Jackson, her mother's name was now listed as Frances Booker. The clue to this mystery appears in the census almost fifteen years later, where Isham and Frances Booker, and Isham's stepdaughter Sarah Jackson, born in 1906, appear.⁶³ These fragments add up to a larger, not uncommon, story: infant Henry was briefly sent to Holy Innocents' while his

⁶¹ Holy Innocents Admissions, LVA.

⁶² Holy Innocents Admissions, LVA.

⁶³ 1920 Census, Henrico County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Richmond, Clay Ward, p. 19, dwelling 378, family 410, Isham Booker, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 13, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>.

mother gave birth to Sarah and recovered; Henry Sr. either died or left the family, leaving Frances with two children under two years old, and another on the way; Frances quickly remarried for the security Isham Booker could provide her young family, but three pregnancies in quick succession had taken their toll on her and Queenie was born sickly, possibly prematurely; Queenie was taken to Holy Innocents' to be baptized and given any care possible, to no avail. The Jacksons thus illuminate how even a single family's relationship with the asylum could be multifaceted, fractured, and long-lasting.

Josephite accounts record that Holy Innocents' closed in 1906, but the admissions register dates from 1906 to 1912 in its title and from 1906 to 1908 in its contents. A 1907 newspaper article discusses a remodeling project on Holy Innocents'. The 1910 Census records twelve children ages 3 and under living on the property with a black matron, nurse, cook, and maid, six white nuns, and eleven children attending school. A Catholic history published in 1914 discusses the asylum in the present tense and lists its value at \$15,000, and it was not until 1922 that the asylum disappeared from parish account books. Much like the muddled transition from St. Francis, the ending of Holy Innocents' is unclear and anticlimactic.⁶⁴

Conclusion

St. Francis Colored Foundling and Orphan Asylum and Holy Innocents' Asylum were in many ways an anomaly among Virginia's African American orphanages: the only

⁶⁴ Josephite Fathers, "Richmond, Virginia: St. Joseph," SSJ; Holy Innocents Admissions, LVA; *Newsleader*, Sept. 3, 1907, ABAC; 1910 Census, Henrico County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Richmond, Monroe Ward Precinct 4, p. 23, dwelling 51, family 58, Holy Innocents Asylum, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 13, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; Begni, *Catholic Church in the United States*, 160–161; St. Joseph's Parish, Miscellaneous records, ABAC.

institution with a majority infant population, the only Catholic institution—and thus the only institution with a non-local governing authority. Its mission, therefore, was fundamentally different from both the Friends’ Asylum for Colored Orphans and the Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum. Rather than try to educate black children out of poverty or raise a subservient generation to serve as models for “the whole race,” the Catholic missionaries running St. Francis and Holy Innocents’ were explicitly focused on saving black souls by making black Catholics. Moreover, these men and women were not Virginians, most not even American. The mission of St. Francis and Holy Innocents’ did not emerge in response to local circumstances or politics, but rather from the global vision of English monks and the Catholic church as a whole.

With such a different goal than the other case studies, it is perhaps unfair to judge the “success” of St. Francis and Holy Innocents’ by the same standards. The Catholic orphanage had an admittedly abysmal mortality rate, and its initial iteration was shuttered within three years—though when it reopened, it continued for at least fifteen years. But did it succeed by its own measure?

The vision of St. Francis and Holy Innocents’ was framed by “The Problem” of the post–Civil War Catholic church: Why had it not been successful at evangelizing the black population?⁶⁵ In contrast to the enormous popularity of various Protestant groups among African Americans, a contemporary Catholic historian wrote that there was a “hostile feeling of the majority of the colored people towards things Catholic.” By 1914,

⁶⁵ Gillard, *Catholic Church and the American Negro*, 1; Sibbel, “Reaping the ‘Colored Harvest.’”

however, even if the population of Catholic African Americans remained small, that “hostile feeling” had “largely disappeared.”⁶⁶ Father Welbers’s solution—to get “children wholly under our control” in order to “lay a good foundation” and “gradually but surely buil[d] up” the black Catholic community in Virginia—seems to have worked, though not in the way he intended.⁶⁷ The attempt to bring children up in Catholic doctrine and practice failed in the face of horrific mortality rates that saw the majority of admittees dead before a year of age and within months, if not weeks, of arrival. But perhaps the orphanage worked its way into the hearts and minds of the community through its continual presence over a quarter century and its ability to take infants who had no other place to go.

St. Francis and Holy Innocents’ had the financial and administrative backing of the white Catholic church. It was largely governed by Catholic priests—white men. However, it was run almost entirely by women in the typical model of Catholic missions in the United States and around the world. The Franciscan sisters were white, English immigrants. How long they intended to live in the United States is unclear, though none of them appear to have stayed longer than about five years. This may have precluded their full integration into the communities they served and lived in, but it was actually not uncommon for white Catholic sisters in African American missions to be seen by black people as safer than other white people, or even as “not white.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Begni, *Catholic Church in the United States*, 160.

⁶⁷ Welbers, “Richmond, Va.,” 539.

⁶⁸ Sibbel, “Reaping the ‘Colored Harvest,’” 165.

By 1906, the asylum had appointed a black woman, Sarah Randolph, to serve as matron. The Friends' Asylum had recruited a black matron decades earlier, and by doing the same Holy Innocents' was perhaps marking a similar shift: from a white-run mission plant among African Americans to a locally operated African American institution. Passing responsibility along to local people is an important and necessary step for any mission, foreign or domestic, to take in order to be sustainable for the long term. Unlike the Friends' Asylum, however, Holy Innocents' never shifted its higher-level (male) governance to African American control. The dearth of black priests had a lot to do with this, and the hesitation to ordain African American men was discussed as potentially hypocritical in light of the standard Catholic practice of establishing local leadership in international missions.⁶⁹ Even had black priests been available to lead Holy Innocents', however, it was never the plan to shift to black management—as it had been the plan, from the beginning, at the Friends' Asylum.

This Catholic orphan asylum, like Catholic schools across the South, did not exist in a vacuum. While the intent of the ecclesiastical authorities was to gain converts, the mission had to adapt to the desires and needs of the real families and communities on the ground. This is why Catholic schools for African Americans, intended by the bishops and brothers who founded them as recruitment tools for the faith, rarely saw large numbers of converts: Most African American families who sent their children to these schools saw them as a means to a high-quality education, not an opportunity to explore a new faith,

⁶⁹ Ochs, *Desegregating the Altar*, 52–53, 294–295.

and in some places even the schools were not welcome if they came with too heavy-handed a proselytizing approach.⁷⁰ Of course, an orphan asylum provided a different service than a school, and a foundling asylum such as St. Francis did not have as much need or opportunity to interact with families. But there are indications that families were still instrumental in shaping how the mission operated; not every child was baptized, for example, suggesting that the sisters would not baptize an infant against their parents' wishes. The Catholic evangelical vision interacted with, and was sometimes subordinate to, the desires of the African American community it served.

African Americans were not the only community in Richmond whose desires and needs had to be taken into account. As foreigners in a time of growing anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic sentiment and as ministers to a marginalized and feared group, the Josephite brothers and Franciscan sisters needed to tread lightly around the white Protestant power structure in Richmond. Bishop Keane had ruffled feathers when he began conducting services for African Americans, but there is no indication that there was significant opposition to the asylum project. By the mid-1890s, Conservative Democrats were firmly entrenched in state government, and voter suppression tactics were ensuring that they remained unchallenged. The Lost Cause mythology took root and motivated high levels of spending on Confederate veterans and their families, at the expense of other poor whites and especially poor blacks who were deemed "unworthy." Private—particularly religious—charity helped fill that gap, and Catholic initiatives were a small but

⁷⁰ Sibbel, "Reaping the 'Colored Harvest,'" 61, 142, 150–181; Mann, "Skidaway Island."

important part of that in Richmond. Efforts to aid women and especially children were generally more socially acceptable, since these groups were seen as inherently dependent (unlike men, who were judged harshly if they were unable to work); founding asylums were particularly unthreatening since infants were unquestionably dependent and, truthfully, rarely survived. In fact, St. Francis and Holy Innocents' relieved the city government of the burden of dealing with indigent "colored" infants, and the city was grateful for it. Keeping their orphan asylums segregated also deflected suspicion from the foreign Catholics that they might be trying to upset the racial order in Richmond.

Virginia may always have been a hopeless cause for Catholic missions, particularly among African Americans. Protestantism was not merely long-established in the state but part of its very foundation. So it is surprising that St. Joseph's attained what success it did, and that Holy Innocents' lasted as long as it did. Perhaps it was the brothers' and sisters' very foreignness that enabled their success. American anti-Catholicism in the late nineteenth century was based on the supposed foreign allegiance or divided loyalties of Catholics in the United States, but the Josephites and the Franciscans were openly foreign agents. And, unlike the Democratic Episcopalians in Lynchburg or the Republican Quakers in Richmond three decades earlier, these English (and Irish, German, and Canadian) missionaries were not invested in local politics. They were responding neither to the needs of the African American community nor to the fears of the white population but to their own problem: reaching the unconverted. In seeking a solution to that problem, they managed to meet a need and assuage some fears. Taking in dying infants was a lost cause, but the attempt gained them some respect among African Americans who might

otherwise have been hostile to their Catholic faith. It also looked innocuous to white Richmonders, since it did not increase the political or social power of African Americans, and they were relieved not to have to expend their own resources dealing with the problem. While it may not have saved many lives, and it is not for us to say whether it saved any souls, the foreign mission in Richmond did what the deeply Virginian Lynchburg project could not: it lasted for nearly three decades.

Chapter 4

“As near like a real home as possible”¹:

The Weaver Orphan Home (Hampton), 1904–1965

By the time William and Anna Weaver founded the Weaver Orphan Home in 1904, emancipation was a distant memory, Reconstruction a long-broken promise, and Jim Crow firmly entrenched in Virginia society. The question now was how to move forward and fight for the rights promised but never realized. The two major schools of thought are generally represented by their most prominent proponents, W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington. Both Du Bois and Washington wanted legal and social equality for African Americans, but prioritized different means to achieve that goal. Washington, born in slavery, believed education, hard work, and quiet dignity were the path to earn white respect and prove black men deserved just as much as white. Du Bois, who was born after the war and in the North, thought African Americans could never do enough to prove their worth to the white supremacists in power, and so advocated legislative reform, political action, and court involvement. While Du Bois’s more activist ideology eventually became the framework of the Civil Rights movement, Washington was not without his supporters, including the Weavers. Leveraging Washingtonian accommodationism to gain prominent white support in Hampton and beyond enabled this African American couple to run their home for over sixty years and accomplish their own vision of black uplift, centered on nurturing the potential of individual children. Living in an

¹ Ruth (Weaver) Fagan, July 26, 1962, in “History of Weaver Orphan Home,” Box 21, Folder 9, Weaver Orphan Home (Hampton, Va.) Records, 1847–1978, Organization records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

era when the imagined orphan was an object of pity, despair, or control rather than hope, William and Anna Weaver were far more concerned with the physical and emotional needs of the real orphan.

The Weavers

William B. Weaver was born free in Winton, Hertford County, North Carolina in April 1853, the sixth of Willis and Sallie Weaver's fourteen children, nine of whom lived to adulthood.² The Weaver family appears to have been close-knit, particularly William and younger brother James, who lived as neighbors for a few years in Gloucester County, Virginia. The nine living Weaver siblings formed the "Weaver Parental Aid Association" as adults, to provide for the aging Willis and Sallie.³ This organization, or at least its "charter" (it is unclear how official this whole endeavor was) demonstrated both filial piety and a considerable degree of communication between adult siblings who were sometimes living at a distance. It also depicts a family that valued education and had a familiarity with legal and business documents. Five of the Weaver children—four boys and one girl—attended the Hampton Institute, and at least three of the brothers, including William, became teachers.⁴

Anna Bolden was born into slavery in July of 1859 on the plantation of Blake Baker Woodson, clerk of the court in Cumberland County, Virginia. Her parents, Archer

² 1900 Census, Gloucester County, Virginia, population schedule, Petsworth District, p. 13, dwelling 243, family 254, William B. and Anna Weaver, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed September 11, 2017, <http://ancestry.com>; E. Franklin Frazier, "Appendix A: Selected Family-History Documents, II: Paper Read at Weaver Family Reunion, Winton, North Carolina, August 8, 1930, by Granddaughter of the Founder of the Family," *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago, 1940), 493–496.

³ "Weaver Parental Aid Association," Box 31, Folder 8, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁴ Frazier, "Paper Read at Weaver Family Reunion," *Negro Family in the United States*, 493.

and Delia Bolden, were likely 17 and 15 at the time of her birth. Anna recalled in an interview in 1939 that a Union colonel had taken “her uncle home with him [to Massachusetts] to be educated”; her uncle later “sent back for her father and mother, and in 1865 they all moved to Williamstown [Massachusetts].” While the details of this arrangement are thin, and filtered through an eighty-year-old’s memory of being five or six, it is clear that the Bolden family departed Virginia after the war and that Anna spent her formative years with her nuclear family in northwestern Massachusetts and eastern New York. Anna’s recollections focus on her integrated education: “along with the little white boys and girls” at “the academy” in Williamstown; a brief stint in Stamford, Vermont; “for four years” in Albany/Troy, New York, “myself and two brothers being the only Negroes”; and finally graduating from Albany High School in 1880, under the patronage of Mrs. Emma Cooper, the wife of a German provisions dealer whom Anna considered her “white mother.” Anna’s brothers, Archer and William, meanwhile, attended Hampton. After graduating, Anna was offered several teaching positions around the country, but her (black) mother urged her to “go back to Virginia.”⁵

William Weaver left Hampton Institute in 1875, though it is unclear whether he actually graduated. For a few years, he taught in North Carolina public schools; in Augusta County, Virginia; and in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. In 1879, he was appointed by

⁵ Anna Weaver, “Former Slave Dedicated Life to Uplifting Her People in the South,” in “History of the Weaver Orphan Home,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA; K. M. Kostyal, *Stonewall Jackson: A Life Portrait* (Dallas, 1999), 7; 1860 Census, Cumberland County, Virginia, slave schedule, p. 51, line 20, B. B. Woodson, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1880 Census, Albany County, New York, population schedule, City of Albany, p. 29, dwelling 228, family 254, Thomas C. Cooper, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; “Bolden, William” and “Bolden, Archer,” *Catalogue of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute* (Hampton, Va., 1878), 11.

Samuel Armstrong, founder and principal of Hampton, to teach in a one-room schoolhouse in Gloucester County, Virginia. It was here that he met Anna when she became his classroom assistant in 1881. They married in 1884, and in 1887 they founded the Gloucester Industrial School, a preparatory school in Cappahosic, Gloucester County, intended to prepare African American students for Hampton.⁶

William and Anna Weaver had five children who lived to adulthood: Orra, Willis, twins Ruth and Raymond, and Julia. Two or three others died in infancy: Julia's twin brother (possibly named Archie after Anna's father and brother) and another child or two who were apparently born and died between censuses.⁷ The oldest Weaver children, Orra and Willis, were out of the house by the time the orphanage was founded, and ended up living far away as adults. Orra went to live with her grandparents in Troy, New York, and graduated from Troy High School in 1906 before attending Albany Normal School. She then moved to Baltimore and eventually Washington, D. C., where she taught public school and even became an assistant principal.⁸ Willis moved to Detroit as a machine operator at the Ford Motor Company. He married Ms. Katie Brooks in 1925 and di-

⁶ Annual Report, 1909–1910, “Annual Reports to the Board of Trustees,” Box 5, Folder 9–11, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA; William Weaver to Dr. Frissell, 1915, “Correspondence - 1915,” Box 17, Folder 23, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA. Anna referred to this venture as “Cappahosic Academy,” but this may have been an informal shorthand. One secondary source suggests that these were two separate institutions, but everything else indicates there was only one which might have been known by different names.

⁷ 1900 Census; 1910 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, p. 10, dwelling 194, family 195, Weaver Orphan Home, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

⁸ “Orra Weaver,” *The Iliad: Published by the Class of '06, Troy High School* (Troy, N.Y., 1906), 83; 1910 Census, Rensselaer County, New York, population schedule, City of Troy, 1st District, p. 10, dwelling 131, family 193, Delia Bolden, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1920 Census, Maryland, population schedule, City of Baltimore, Ward 14, p. 7, dwelling 103, family 184, Arra D. Weaver, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; “Spivey, Orra W.,” *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C., 1928), 1540.

forced her in 1929 for “extreme cruelty”; their son, Robert, remained with his mother despite this accusation.⁹ The younger siblings grew up in the Orphan Home alongside its residents, and stayed closer to home in adulthood. Raymond worked as a barber and married before being committed to Central State (Mental) Hospital in Petersburg, and dying of “General Paralysis of the Insane/Chronic Myocarditis” in 1931.¹⁰ Ruth left home and lived in Pennsylvania for a little while with her husband, but returned to the Home with him to assist her parents and remained an integral part of the leadership for rest of its tenure. Julia married Charles Nelson, a bricklayer for the Hampton Institute, and likewise helped out her parents and sister with the Home.¹¹

Founding the Orphanage

A combination of some unspecified “friction” surrounding the Gloucester School and an increasingly apparent need prompted William Weaver and his wife to begin plans for an orphanage to serve the African American community in Hampton Roads. “It was during Rev. and Mrs. Weaver’s travels across the country soliciting funds for [the Gloucester School] that they became interested in the many neglected children they

⁹ “Willis Archer Weaver,” *Fourth Registration Draft Cards (WWII)*, Michigan State Headquarters, NAI: 623283, The National Archives at St. Louis, Missouri, digital image, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; Michigan Department of Community Health, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics, “Willis A Weaver/Katie Weaver, May 29, 1929,” *Michigan Divorce Records*, digital image, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1930 Census, Wayne County, Michigan, population schedule, City of Detroit, Precinct 21, p. 3, dwelling 2, family 2, Katie Weaver, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

¹⁰ *Certificate of Death: Raymond B. Weaver*, filed Sept. 18, 1931, Commonwealth of Virginia, Dept. of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Registration Dist. 261C, No. 188, digital image, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

¹¹ 1940 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Chesapeake, p. 5, household 78, Julia Nelson, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

found,” their daughter Ruth recalled.¹² William Weaver noted that orphanages were already falling out of favor as a method of care for white children—a trend that would culminate in the mass deinstitutionalization of the 1950s and the national shift to the foster care model—but argued that “for the colored children of the South it is one of the most needful institutions.” He thought this had much to do with the nature of black labor in the South; since most black parents worked in service, he said, they had little control over their schedule and no childcare options. There was also a lack of black families willing and able to take children in, since most had children of their own. And there was the perennial concern that many who did take in orphans wanted them only for their labor. There were, in this argument, hints of classism; Weaver bemoaned the lack of families “of the right makeup & ability to train children as they should be.”¹³ Likewise, Anna recalled of the “fine estate” her family lived in near Troy, New York: “It was here that I learned how nice things could be and how to do them properly.”¹⁴ The Weavers’ relative privilege as part of the emerging black middle class affected their vision of not just their orphanage, but of the struggle for civil rights. In addition, as was typical of orphanages in the nineteenth century, the moral standards of the institution were asserted not only in its schooling and training regimens, but also in its admissions process: the original vision for the Home, at least, was only for “legitimate children.”¹⁵ Sympathy for poor black

¹² Ruth Fagan, August 10, 1952, “History of the Weaver Orphan Home,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA (“it was during...”); Anna Weaver, “Former Slave,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA (“friction”). William wrote that his “nest was stirred” and he was “led of the spirit” to this new venture; William Weaver to Dr. Frissell, “Correspondence - 1915,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹³ W. B. Weaver, Appeal, “History of the Weaver Orphan Home,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹⁴ Anna Weaver, “Former Slave,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹⁵ W. B. Weaver, August 1901, “Broad­sides/Circulars,” Box 9, Folder 6, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

families was more salient for the Weavers than in the broad judgments of Abraham Jaeger, however; they tended to place the blame on circumstances, rather than character or supposed racial traits.

In 1900, the Weavers began to plan for an orphanage. They paid \$2800 for twenty-five acres on the outskirts of the city of Hampton in 1902, and started building in 1903.¹⁶ The Weaver family moved into the house in March 1904 and the Home was opened to children in June 1904; the Weavers' decision to live in the same house with their charges was central to their overall philosophy.¹⁷ The first two children actually moved in in August, and by the end of the year there were twenty-four in residence.¹⁸ The Home initially comprised one building with about twelve rooms; a four-room annex was added in 1920 and further additions between 1923 and 1926.¹⁹ There were perennial pleas for funds to construct a separate dormitory for the boys, who were almost always the minority, as well as a nursery so that the Home could accommodate younger children, but these do not appear to have come to fruition.

Community and Family Support

The Weaver Home relied heavily on William Weaver's stellar reputation in the community; his established history of teaching in and improving schools up and down the East Coast, as well as founding, administering, and promoting the school in Gloucester,

¹⁶ Anna Weaver, "Former Slave," Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA; Annual Report, 1900–1904, "Annual Reports to the Board of Trustees," Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹⁷ Annual Report, 1909–1910, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹⁸ Annual Report, 1900–1904, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹⁹ Annual Reports, 1919–1922, 1923–1926, "Annual Reports to the Board of Trustees," Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

was invaluable bona fides to creditors. The money for the land, for example, was borrowed from Captain L. J. Stuart, an old benefactor of the Cappahosic Academy.²⁰ Testimonials in support of the founding of the orphanage emphasize personal connection to Weaver and his suitability for the job: “I have known Mr. and Mrs. Weaver for many years....I consider them admirably adapted to the work”; “Rev. W. B. Weaver is personally known to me as a man who has the interests of his race at heart and works for their mental, moral, spiritual and financial betterment”; “Brother Weaver is well known to us all and we commend him and his work to the public every where”; “This will introduce to you Professor W. B. Weaver of Gloucester County, who established a Normal and Industrial school for colored children in that county which has been a great success...in the main due to his executive ability”; “He has been in educational and Christian work among us for many years”; “We the undersigned business men of Gloucester County have known Mr. W. B. Weaver for 18 or 20 years, and have had various business transactions with him.”²¹ Even once underway, “Words of Recommendation and Commendation” included in the annual reports are from educational professionals and mention personal connections with both Weaver and other board members.

Weaver’s family was also a large part of his efforts. Anna, of course, was critical to the foundation of the orphanage, as well as serving as its first teacher. In addition to her physical assistance with the running of the place, William Weaver included a touching tribute to her emotional labor in an annual report: “I must say further that my wife has

²⁰ Anna Weaver, “Former Slave,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

²¹ W. B. Weaver, August 1901, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

been with me in every move since our marriage in 1884. She has been my main helper and advisor. Many times in our struggles, dark hours and discouragements when I would have given up in despair [*sic*], she always encouraged and said bear up and hold on a little longer.”²² While William Weaver served as the more public face of the orphanage during his life, the way Anna continued the work after his death speaks to their coequal partnership. This was not his dream alone.

Ruth Weaver followed in her parents’ footsteps and became a teacher. She married Spillman Fagan, of Norfolk, in 1925. The two briefly relocated to “the North” but returned after the death of William Weaver in 1929 to help Anna run the orphanage, Ruth teaching and Spillman managing the farm that had been established on the grounds.²³ Ruth Fagan eventually became the superintendent after her mother died in 1943.²⁴

The Weavers’ other children—Orra, Willis, Raymond, and Julia—were less deeply involved with the orphanage in adulthood, but still helped their family however they could. Julia served as a “School Assistant” between 1919 and 1926, possibly filling in while Ruth was absent from the orphanage.²⁵ She also returned to the orphanage regularly to help her mother after the death of William. Orra and Willis, living out of state,

²² Annual Report, 1909–1910, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

²³ 1920 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, Wythe District, p. 5, dwelling 96, family 97, Ruth Weaver, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1930 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, Wythe District, p. 5, dwelling 95, family 90, Ruth W. Fagan, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1940 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, Wythe District, p. 9, household 227, Ruth Fagan, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; Minutes of the Board of Trustees, March 2, 1936, “Minutes - Board of Trustees,” Box 22, Folder 17–19, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

²⁴ “History of the Weaver Orphan Home,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

²⁵ Annual Report, 1923–1926, “Annual Reports to the Board of Trustees,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

contributed financially, and even donated the first two vehicles the orphanage owned.²⁶ Ruth, Raymond, and Julia were all school-aged during the early years of the Orphan Home, and attended school alongside the inmates of the orphanage.²⁷ In addition to the practical benefits to this arrangement, it may have also served to assure the public of the Weavers' legitimacy and good intentions. According to their daughter Julia, the Weavers encouraged their children "to know and feel that this Home was ours also....to keep the family ties always there by living with them whenever possible and sharing in sacrifice, help and love, as families should."²⁸

Maud Winston, nee Weaver, was the "field agent"—essentially a traveling fundraiser—for the orphanage, and her efforts made a noticeable difference in the level of incoming funds. Maud L. Weaver was born in 1890 to William Weaver's younger brother James and his wife Lizzie, while they were living in Gloucester County, near William and Anna.²⁹ She began serving as the field agent for the Weaver Home in 1918, while she was teaching public school in Norfolk.³⁰ In 1919, she married Harry P. Winston and they

²⁶ Orra Weaver Spivey to Board of Trustees, 1965, "Minutes - Board of Trustees," Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

²⁷ "School Exercises," Box 27, Folder 5, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

²⁸ Julia Weaver Nelson to Board of Trustees, 1965, "Minutes - Board of Trustees," Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

²⁹ 1900 Census, Gloucester County, Virginia, population schedule, Petsworth District, p. 10, dwelling 191, family 200, Maude L. Weaver, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

³⁰ Annual Report, 1915–1919, "Annual Reports to the Board of Trustees," Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

returned to his hometown of Pittsburgh.³¹ Despite her remoteness from the institution, Maud continued to be listed as the “field agent” in the Weaver Home annual reports of 1919–1922 and 1923–1926, bringing in thousands of dollars in collections from individuals and churches from Philadelphia to Newport News.³² She and Harry separated sometime in the 1920s; Maud continued to raise funds for the orphanage from her new home in Rhode Island.³³ In 1930, Maud returned to her mother’s home in Franklin, Virginia, with her young son Harry.³⁴ While she remained connected to the Weaver Home through the Weaver family, she seems to have ceased her official work for them.³⁵ Like most Weavers, she got a job in education—as an elementary school supervisor, a position she continued to hold in 1940 and presumably until her death from uterine cancer in 1947.³⁶

The Board

³¹ 1930 Census, Southampton County, Virginia, population schedule, Franklin District, p. 10, dwelling 173, family 183, Maude W. Winston, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; “Harry P. Winston,” United States Selective Service System, *Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*, National Archives and Records Administration M1509, digital image, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; “Harry P. Winston,” *World War I Veterans Service and Compensation File, 1934–1948*, RG 19, Series 19.91, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg Pennsylvania, digital image, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1920 Census, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, population schedule, City of Pittsburgh, p. 7, dwelling 104, family 138, Harry P. Winston, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

³² Annual Reports 1915–1919, 1919–1922, 1923–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

³³ “Harry P. Winston,” Milwaukee Home for Disabled Veterans, *Historical Register of National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, 1866-1938*, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1749, Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15, National Archives, digital image, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; “Harry P. Winston,” New York City Department of Records/Municipal Archives, “Index to New York City Deaths 1862-1948,” published on ancestry.com, *New York, New York, Extracted Death Index, 1862-1948*, accessed June 14, 2018.

³⁴ “Harry P. Winston,” Dayton Home for Disabled Veterans, *Historical Register of National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, 1866-1938*, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1749, Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15, National Archives, digital image, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; Maude W. Winston, 1930 Census.

³⁵ [Velna Norris], “Undated Correspondence,” Box 19, Folder 18, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

³⁶ Maude W. Winston, 1930 Census; 1940 Census, Southampton County, Virginia, population schedule, Franklin District, p. 4, household 69, Maude Winston, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; *Certificate of Death: Maude Weaver Winston*, filed May 3, 1947, Commonwealth of Virginia, Dept. of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Registration Dist. 2874, No. 44, digital image, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

While the initial advisory board for the Weaver Home was made up of “well-known colored people,” the Board of Trustees for the Tidewater Orphan Association—the nonprofit incorporated in 1911 to manage the Weaver Home—was racially mixed.³⁷ William Weaver made a conscious effort to balance his Board of Trustees with prominent Hampton citizens of both races, though he felt that it would be better to err on the side of whites: “I want a mixed Board, but if it must be all of one race, make it white.”³⁸ As in the case of the Friends’ Asylum and in sharp contrast to the Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School, it is evident that including black leadership in the governance of the asylum was essential to the survival and success of black orphan asylums in the South—but so was the white support that came with the mixed board.

It is the nature of boards to be composed of wealthy, illustrious citizens who can bring their financial and social influence to bear for the benefit of the organization. The Weaver Home Board was no exception. Many of the black board members appear in the Hampton chapter of Arcadia Publishing’s *Black America* series, several of the white ones are listed in Lyon G. Tyler’s *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography*, and both turn up in the *Images of America* book on Hampton. Board members were commercial leaders (bank presidents, grocery store owners, lawyers) as well as civic leaders (church pastors, undertakers, assemblymen). Most of the early white members were also charter members of

³⁷ “Will Ask For Charter,” *Daily Press* (Newport News, Va.), August 24, 1901.

³⁸ William Weaver to W. C. L. Taliaferro, 1910, “History of the Weaver Orphan Home,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

the Hampton Rotary Club, founded by the Weaver Board's first president, and one would even be elected mayor of Hampton.³⁹

Many of the board members were deeply invested in the Weaver Home, both personally and professionally. The executive committee remained unchanged for almost thirty years, the president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer giving up their duties only when forced by poor health or, indeed, death. This long-term continuity of governance not only suggests that these men found the work meaningful and the Weavers competent partners, but also demonstrates the degree to which the Weaver Home was a steady presence in the community and the lives of its residents. Whether these men socialized outside of their board duties is unknown, and board minutes reveal that years often passed between meetings, so it is questionable that these were friends or even close colleagues. As one African American social worker put it, "Among African American social welfare leaders, life circumstances had produced a 'profound distrust of white people' in spite of the fact that some were valued benefactors and others even carried the label 'friend.'"⁴⁰ However, their willingness to work together for such an extended period of time demonstrates the stable, if not harmonious, racial climate of Hampton in the 1910s, '20s, and '30s.

Frank W. Darling, the first president of the board and a white man, was Hampton royalty. His father, James Sands Darling, had started what would become the "largest

³⁹ "Our History," Hampton Rotary Club, <http://hamptonrotaryclub.com/hampton-virginia-rotary-club-history/>; J. Michael Cobb and Wythe Holt, *Hampton* (Charleston, S.C., 2008).

⁴⁰ Iris B. Carlton-LaNey, *African American Leadership: An Empowerment Tradition in Social Welfare History* (Washington, D.C., 2001), xiii.

oyster-planting business in the United States,” by some accounts even “the largest oyster business in the world.”⁴¹ Frank not only inherited the oyster empire, but also became the president of a bank and “spearheaded” “much of Hampton’s development” in the early 1900s. He bought one of the first automobiles in Hampton, owned an enormous mansion in an upscale neighborhood, and convinced the city to connect that neighborhood to downtown with a bridge and a new road.⁴² James, despite being a New Yorker who had served in the Union army, had been among the white business leaders of Hampton who resented the rise of black political power during Reconstruction and worked to undermine it; Frank, on the other hand, seems to have been more positive toward the advancement of African Americans (though supporting a humanitarian cause is not the same as advocating political and social equality).⁴³ Frank was interested in the orphanage even before its incorporation and his appointment as president, paying for plastering in 1906 and providing wood and coal for heating the place annually.⁴⁴ His wife was also heavily involved in the charitable giving; there is not an annual report without her name in the list of donors of food and clothing. Frank Darling served as president of the Weaver Home Board for thirty years, until his death in 1941 when his son James succeeded him.⁴⁵

⁴¹ “Darling, James Sands,” Lyon Gardiner Tyler, *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography* (Richmond, 2005), III:181; Robert Francis Engs, *Freedom’s First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861–1890* (Philadelphia, 1979), 166.

⁴² Cobb and Holt, *Hampton*, 61, 74, 88.

⁴³ “Darling, James Sands,” *Virginia Biography*; Colita Nichols Fairfax, *Hampton, Virginia* (Charleston, S.C., 2005), 111; Engs, *Freedom’s First Generation*, 170.

⁴⁴ Annual Report, 1905–1906, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA; Annual Reports (multiple), Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁴⁵ Minutes of February 27, 1941, “Minutes - Board of Trustees,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

The involvement of such a prominent (and wealthy) Hamptonian family would have been an enormous boon to the fundraising aspect of the orphanage. Darling's money was certainly welcome, and his name inspired his associates and other white citizens to give as well. "The very fact that Mr. F. W. Darling, the President of your Board and a trustee of the Hampton Normal Institute, is such a large hearted philanthropist, ought to merit the most favorable consideration and support. I am personally acquainted with him," wrote James Russell, the principal of a normal school, in an endorsement for the Home.⁴⁶ Did Darling's participation come at a cost to the institution, though? White progressives had their own ideas about what was best for black communities, ideas that often clashed with black pursuit of racial equality and political power. Darling's own father had been involved in the gerrymandering of Hampton to squeeze black representation out of city council after Reconstruction. Darling himself was described as "a real father to the home," a pleasant description but one that fits squarely into the paternalist framework of both slavery and later racial oppression.⁴⁷ Black organizations that had white oversight, or wanted white financial support, often had to toe a more conservative, accommodationist line. William Weaver was a product of the Hampton Institute, a famously accommodationist school, and was operating in a profoundly constrained political context. It is unclear whether he subscribed to his classmate Booker T. Washington's argument for the slow, industrious path to racial equality or whether he merely adopted this facade to keep the Weaver Home running, as so many African Americans found them-

⁴⁶ Annual Report, 1919–1922, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁴⁷ Minutes of March 2, 1936, "Minutes - Board of Trustees," Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

selves doing to secure white support for institutions and organizations providing real aid to black communities. Whether or not Weaver would have pursued something more radical for his orphans on his own, the support of someone like Frank Darling definitely ensured that he did not.

William T. Anderson became vice-president of the board after the death of Lee W. Burroughs, a “mulatto” steamboat porter and his predecessor in the role, in 1912.⁴⁸ Anderson was another African American graduate of the Hampton Institute, and he worked as a clothier and dry goods merchant in his own store.⁴⁹ In 1915, he closed his store and opened a movie theater catering to African Americans in Hampton; the Alhambra only lasted a couple of years, and Anderson returned to merchanting.⁵⁰ Merchants were central figures in small communities like Hampton, serving as not only the “man who knows how to get things” but also as postmen or community message boards.⁵¹ As a black business owner, Anderson represented the generation of African Americans in Hampton that

⁴⁸ 1910 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Hampton, p. 12, dwelling 267, family 267, Lee W. Burroughs, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>. The outdated term “mulatto” is replicated here because its meanings included both bi- or multi-racial individuals as well as light-skinned African Americans, and shifting categories meant the same individual could be marked as “mulatto” in one census and “black” or “negro” in the next. It is unclear which meaning Burroughs, and other individuals mentioned later, embodied.

⁴⁹ Fairfax, *Hampton, Virginia*; “Anderson, Wm. T.,” *Hill’s Newport News (Warwick County, Va.) City Directory* (Richmond, Va., 1937), 608; 1910 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Hampton, p. 3, dwelling 50, family 50, William B. Anderson, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>. Interestingly, Anderson and his wife were counted as “black” in the 1900 census, “mulatto” in 1910, and “white” in 1920 and 1930, illustrating the arbitrary and mutable nature of “race” in America.

⁵⁰ “Hampton Incidents,” *The Southern Workman* 45, no. 4 (April 1916): 262; “Hampton, Va., Notes,” *Moving Picture World* 27, no. 7 (February 19, 1916): 1162; 1920 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Hampton, p. 3, dwelling 55, family 60, W. T. Anderson, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

⁵¹ Jane Dailey, *Before Jim Crow: The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2000), 58; Stephen King and Frank Darabont, *The Shawshank Redemption*, directed by Frank Darabont (1994).

had been able to flourish and achieve unprecedented equality and success in the years before Jim Crow gutted the gains of Reconstruction.⁵² Weaver may have known Anderson through the Hampton Institute, but he likely would have wanted Anderson on his board regardless. Such a pillar of the African American community would have been an excellent representative to the white board members he served with, as well as being well-suited to know the needs and desires of the community and trusted to advocate for them. Anderson served as vice-president of the board until William Weaver's death, when he took his place as secretary. He remained on the board until 1951 when he had to retire due to ill health, making him the longest-serving board member in the Home's history.⁵³

If Frank Darling represented the new money in Hampton, William C. L. Taliaferro most definitely represented the old. Taliaferro was a white attorney in Hampton, a second-generation graduate of the College of William & Mary and a scion of a powerful old Virginia family. His father, like Frank Darling's, had served in the Civil War, but on the Confederate side. Taliaferro, then, was a signal to Virginia's established elite that this was a worthy endeavor—and that Weaver would remain firmly within the patriarchal, paternalist bounds their power was built on. Taliaferro was commissioned the treasurer of the Tidewater Orphan Association at its incorporation in 1911 and served in that capacity for almost thirty years. In addition to his official duties as treasurer of the Board of Trustees, he also assisted the orphanage “in preparing deeds, making transfers and per-

⁵² Engs, *Freedom's First Generation*.

⁵³ Minutes of May 22, 1951, December 2, 1952, and January 5, 1953, “Minutes - Board of Trustees,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

forming much legal service free of charge.”⁵⁴ The board usually met at his offices, and while this was likely both convenient and a suitably professional environment in which to conduct business, it also served as further oversight of the Home’s activities, or at least a subtle reminder of which side their bread was buttered on.⁵⁵

Thus the Weavers carefully constructed the executive committee of their board: two white men, one the wealthiest man in Hampton and one with the most distinguished pedigree, and two black, a shrewd businessman and a humble teacher. Each appealed to a different set of potential supporters of the orphan home, from affluent white philanthropists and proud state politicians to a black community wary of white “saviors” and black families worried about their children. Whether or not Weaver had this in mind when he recruited these men, whether this was a conscious decision or some latent wisdom, it was a recipe for the Weaver Home’s success.

Other board members included Charles H. Jones, a black undertaker who had served as the secretary of the associated board, prior to incorporation.⁵⁶ Dr. Harry D. Howe was a white physician whose parents were from Massachusetts and whose wife was born in Pennsylvania.⁵⁷ George W. Fields, a “mulatto” lawyer, had like Charles Jones served on the advisory committee.⁵⁸ Harry R. Houston was a white state represen-

⁵⁴ Annual Report, 1911–1912, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁵⁵ Minutes (passim), “Minutes - Board of Trustees,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁵⁶ Annual Report, 1901–1904, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA; 1910 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, Wythe District, p. 2, dwelling 36, family 36, Charles H. Jones, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

⁵⁷ 1910 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Hampton, p. 20, dwelling 365, family 368, Harry D. Howe, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

⁵⁸ Annual Report, 1901–1904, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA; 1910 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Hampton, p. 3, dwelling 54, family 54, George W. Fields, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>

tative; Thomas Harmond, a black grocery merchant; Harris Barrett, “mulatto” cashier at a boarding school; and Matthew Chalmers Armstrong, a white real estate agent who also served as vice-president of the Hampton Golf and Country Club.⁵⁹

Funding

Like most childcare institutions (and all black childcare institutions) prior to the mid-twentieth century, the Weaver Home subsisted on private donations from individuals, social organizations, and religious groups. Like the Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School, another semi-rural institution, the Weaver Home attempted to supplement donations with productive labor on the property: the farm and, briefly, a small print publication. Like the Friends’ Colored Orphan Asylum, the other orphanage that survived into the twentieth century, the Weaver Home eventually received some funding through the local Community Chest, as well as subsidies from state welfare organizations.

Money was a constant worry for the privately funded, family-run Weaver Home.

“The Home existed on a very meager and uncertain financial basis,” Ruth Fagan recalled.

“The sources through which we received funds were from interested friends of the Home; from small payments for board made by a few of the parents or relatives for their children

⁵⁹ 1930 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Hampton, p. 19, dwelling 464, family 519, Harry R. Houston, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1920 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, Hampton Magisterial District, p. 35, dwelling 778, family 845, Thomas Harmond, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1910 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Hampton, p. 1, dwelling 6, family 6, Harris Barrett, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1930 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, Wythe District, p. 38, dwelling 880, family 909, Matthew C. Armstrong, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; *Harper’s Official Golf Guide 1901: A Directory of All the Golf Clubs and Golf Associations in the United States, together with Statistical Tables, the Rules of Golf, and Other General Information* (New York, 1901), 286.

(and these payments in many cases were made only occasionally) and through special drives each year sponsored by friends of the Home.”⁶⁰

Lists of donors made up the largest part of each annual report, serving a dual purpose. The first reason, and probably the most conscious, was financial transparency and accountability. By publishing incoming funds and outgoing expenses, the board reassured donors, the public (including parents), and, increasingly, government oversight that the Home was solvent and being run responsibly. The second reason to publish lists of donors and the amount they donated was a subtle social pressure, letting people know which illustrious—or ordinary—citizens were supporting this effort and perhaps inspiring (or shaming) them to do the same. Like having a Darling on the board, some of the donor names lent credibility to the organization in the eyes of the public.

The Home could not rely on passive social pressure to bring in significant donations, however. More concerted efforts were required, and were made. Mr. and Mrs. Weaver did a lot of traveling fundraising themselves; family and personal connections motivated much giving. Several churches and individuals in Troy, New York, were generous and consistent givers, including Anna Weaver’s mother, Delia Bolden, who also organized much of that giving on behalf of her daughter and son-in-law. Interestingly, Oakwood Avenue Presbyterian, St. John’s Episcopal, and First Baptist Troy were all white churches. Lydia Sleicher was the coordinator of the Sunday School donations at First Baptist; as the daughter of German immigrants, she may have had ties to Emma

⁶⁰ Ruth Fagan, August 10, 1952, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

Cooper, Anna Weaver's "white mother," through the German immigrant community.⁶¹ (Lydia Sleicher also bequeathed \$1000 to the Weaver Home in her will, so however she initially heard about the Home, she was clearly deeply personally invested.)⁶² St. John's had a history of mission outreach to African Americans.⁶³ And Oakwood Presbyterian, which would go on to have a crisis over racial integration in the 1960s, neatly demonstrates the disparity between supporting aid to African Americans and a desire for racial equity.⁶⁴

But the best thing to happen to the Home's fundraising efforts was William Weaver's niece, Maud Winston. As the "field agent" for the Weaver Home, Winston traveled the East Coast and networked with churches to hold drives and other fundraising events. Her efforts made a noticeable difference in the incoming funds. In Winston's eleven years working as the Weaver Home field agent, average annual donations almost doubled: donations averaged \$766.99 from 1900 to 1914 and \$1,489.81 from 1915 to 1926.⁶⁵ Perhaps due to her efforts, or the wide-ranging personal connections of the Weaver-Bolden families, there was a surprising number of donations from non-local, even non-Virginia sources. In 1922, William Weaver compiled a table of donations by state. Virginia had by far the highest number, with \$4,643.12 coming from in state. But Pennsylvania followed with \$638.33, then Massachusetts, New York, and West Virginia

⁶¹ Annual Report, 1913–1914, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA; 1900 census

⁶² Annual Report, 1923–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁶³ "Our History," St. John's, Troy, http://www.stjohnstroy.org/page/our_history

⁶⁴ National Register of Historic Places, Oakwood Avenue Presbyterian Church, Troy, Rensselaer County, New York, National Register #12NR06383.

⁶⁵ Annual Reports 1900–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

with over \$200 each. Ohio and Maine each raised over \$100, and North Carolina, Michigan, California, and New Jersey over \$50. Several other states rank with between \$4 and \$40, and Virginia-based missionaries in India and China even got those countries on the list.⁶⁶

In addition to cash donations, many individuals and organizations contributed in-kind gifts. The Hampton Kiwanis Club were longtime supporters of the Home, donating cash as well as a refrigerator and other gifts.⁶⁷ Frank Darling providing heating materials, coal and wood, for years. There was a gendered component to this giving: men tended to donate goods or services related to the building (painting rooms, heating materials, building the barn) while women donated food and clothing. When men donated food, it was usually in their occupational capacity as grocers or bakers.⁶⁸ Occasionally people would donate real estate, often as a bequest after their death, but while the gesture was appreciated, such properties were often more trouble than they were worth.⁶⁹ Sponsoring picnics and outings, Christmas celebrations, and Easter egg hunts was a popular way for church groups or Sunday schools to contribute.

Room and board payments from parents or family members were lamented as minimal and unreliable, and the Home certainly did serve a demographic for whom regular, significant contributions were not a possibility. That was, after all, why their children could not live with them. However, the numbers reveal a slightly different story.

⁶⁶ Annual Report, 1919–1922, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁶⁷ Minutes of June 9, 1948, “Minutes - Board of Trustees,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁶⁸ Annual Reports, 1900–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁶⁹ Minutes of April 4, 1940, “Minutes - Board of Trustees,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

Parental payments made up only four percent of the Home's income from 1900 to 1904, but this was almost entirely a period of fundraising prior to opening the Home; the first children were not admitted until the summer of 1904. By 1905 parental contributions were up to twenty-six percent, and by 1907 they made up over forty percent of the Home's income. From 1910 until 1917, parental payments kept pace with donations and constituted about half of all income for the Home, even exceeding fifty percent in some years. After 1917, parental contributions constituted a much smaller percentage of the total income, but this was not because they decreased in amount. Rather, parental payments held relatively steady in absolute terms, but donations from other parties increased markedly—corresponding to Maud Winston's tenure as field agent.⁷⁰ Parental contributions did eventually start to decline after 1923, a point noted in the 1923–1926 annual report.⁷¹

The income category that never did make much of a dent was sales. The Weaver Home initially tried to produce a print magazine for sale, but this was quickly given up as a money sink. The farm, too, was supposed to provide additional income. But as in Lynchburg, efforts to turn a profit on the farm were ultimately futile. When the occupants of the Home were too young to work the farm, hired help was needed, costing the orphanage more than they were producing. But the farm did supplement the children's diets with fresh produce, eggs, and dairy products (specific portions of milk were a provision childcare institutions were increasingly required to make under growing government

⁷⁰ Annual Reports, 1900–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁷¹ Annual Report, 1923–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

regulation). Moreover, working on the farm was considered a valuable part of at least the boys' educations. Like the nearby Hampton Institute, which realized it could not operate a working farm solely with student labor, the Weaver Home retained the farm more for its educational and nutritional value rather than for profit.⁷²

Appeals for funds were framed in a couple of different ways. The most prominent, especially when targeted to churches, was a religious duty to take care of widows and orphans. Isaiah 1:17–18 and Psalm 68:5, two Bible passages that mention God's care of orphans and man's duty to help them, were featured prominently in each annual report.⁷³ Weaver also appealed to a more secular sense of the particular helplessness and innocence of children; children did not deserve to be poor or homeless, nor could they get themselves out of these situations on their own. This was in line with contemporary conceptualizations of children and childhood which had begun with Victorian middle-class white children but were increasingly applied to lower-income and ethnic minority children as well.⁷⁴ Later appeals leveraged the success of the orphanage, and especially of individual children who had lived there. William Bland became a favorite subject of news articles about the Weaver Home, as well as a point of pride for Anna Weaver and Ruth Fagan personally.⁷⁵ Bedridden by an infection, William Bland learned to draw and paint to great acclaim. He was eventually able to walk with crutches and had a successful

⁷² Minutes of April 4, 1940, "Minutes - Board of Trustees," Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁷³ Annual Reports, 1900–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁷⁴ Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York, 1985.)

⁷⁵ Anna Weaver mentioned Bland in the 1939 interview about her life, and Ruth Fagan saved many newspaper clippings about his accomplishments.

career as an artist for Goodwill Industries, the benevolent organization, even meeting President Lyndon B. Johnson.⁷⁶ This was a success story that the Home wanted to advertise.

The 1920s, building on ideas about “scientific” ways to organize charity that arose in the 1880s, saw the proliferation of “community chests” in localities around the United States.⁷⁷ These organizations collected donations from local businesses and individuals into a central fund and then distributed money to community projects. The Weaver Home was a member agency of both the Hampton and Newport News Community Chests. This had a significant effect on their operations, even if it did not actually increase their income. The Chest was a steady source of income that could be relied upon from month to month and year to year, reducing the anxiety of living from one donation to the next. At the same time, individual donations decreased, either because donors knew the institution was receiving from the Community Chest funds or because they were themselves already contributing to the Chest. Community Chest money also came with restrictions, unlike the previous funding structure; in 1958, for example, the Weaver Home began sending its children to public schools because the Peninsula United Fund was unwilling to pay for a private teacher.⁷⁸ These requirements surrounding funding were occurring at the same time as government regulation on childcare institutions increased.

⁷⁶ “Crippled Youth Learns Art Of Painting, Weaving While Recovering From Affliction,” *Daily Press* (Newport News, Va.), September 19, 1937; Moselle Caldwell, “Crippled Negro Artist Visits The President,” *The Washington Informer*, December 28, 1968.

⁷⁷ Elna C. Green, *This Business of Relief: Confronting Poverty in a Southern City, 1740–1940* (Athens, Ga., 2003), 109–117.

⁷⁸ Ruth Fagan, August 10, 1952, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

Life in the Orphanage

The Weavers at various times advertised the Home as caring for children ages 6–14 or 5–10, but census records reveal that there were, at least occasionally, children outside of those ranges residing there. Girls outnumbered boys until 1920, when the numbers appear to have become and stayed more or less balanced.⁷⁹ This is tricky to measure, however, since self-reports of total admissions stop in 1915 and gender breakdowns were not reported after 1912. The census captures snapshots, but there could easily have been dozens, even hundreds, of boys and girls admitted and discharged in the decade between them. The state-mandated maximum capacity of the Home was thirty-five (later reduced to twenty), and it was frequently full with a waiting list for admission. Turnover was high, especially in the early years; the two-year span from 1913 to 1914 saw thirty-nine children admitted and forty-one discharged.⁸⁰ By 1952, however, Ruth Fagan reported that “the average time spent at the Home by a child is about three years, though some stay six or more years.”⁸¹

Application forms to the Weaver Orphan Home asked for basic information about the child’s family and health: whether the parents were living or separated, whether the child had contracted common diseases or been vaccinated, whether the child’s eyesight

⁷⁹ Annual Reports, 1900–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA; 1920 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, Wythe District, p. 5, dwelling 96, family 97, Weaver Orphan Home, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1930 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, Wythe District, p. 5, dwelling 95, family 90, Weaver Orphan Home, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; 1940 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, Wythe District, p. 10, household 227, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>.

⁸⁰ Annual Report, 1913–1914, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁸¹ Ruth Fagan, August 10, 1952, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

was good and “mentality normal.”⁸² It also asked about the parent’s or guardian’s (or applicant’s) ability and willingness to provide clothing and board payments, whether they were willing for the child to be placed out, and why they wanted the child to be admitted.⁸³ Sometime after 1943, additional questions appeared on the admission application regarding the child’s religion, legitimacy, and “deformity.”⁸⁴ It is unclear whether these were criteria for admission, though given the story of William Bland it seems unlikely that the Home would have barred a “deformed” child on that basis alone. More likely is that an expanding clientele meant certain assumptions could no longer be made, perhaps because referrals were increasingly coming from courts and nonlocal sources that the Home was not familiar with. The board had a discussion about the rates that should be charged for children from “other parts of the state” in 1948, indicating that such admissions were a relatively new—or at least expanding—phenomenon.⁸⁵ In addition to a general certificate of health, families after 1943 needed to provide a birth certificate and a Wasserman Blood Test for syphilis.⁸⁶ Syphilis was, of course, a huge public health concern during World War II, and an institution housing people in close quarters would need to know about infectious disease in its occupants. Birth certificates would have corroborated much of the information provided on the form and proven citizenship. These new requirements may have been government mandated, as state and national welfare agen-

⁸² Application for Admission to The Weaver Orphan Home, “Forms (Blank),” Box 20, Folder 13, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁸³ Application, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁸⁴ Admission Blank, “Forms (Blank),” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁸⁵ Minutes of June 9, 1948, “Minutes - Board of Trustees,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁸⁶ Admission Blank, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

cies had begun regulating childcare institutions more rigorously in the Progressive Era. The United States Children's Bureau was founded in 1912, and what Ruth Fagan referred to as "the State Welfare Children's Bureau in Richmond" followed soon after.⁸⁷ This organization stipulated, among other things, the maximum capacity of the orphanage and nutritional guidelines ("at least a quart of milk a day"), regulations designed to counter the prevailing concerns that had created the Bureau in the first place.⁸⁸

It would be impossible to discern the lived experience of children in the Weaver Home outside of direct interviews, which are prevented for legal privacy reasons (and most of the children resident before 1930 are deceased). However, there are a few things that can give us glimpses into their world. The publications produced by the orphanage itself may have painted things in the best possible light, but they nevertheless provide an outline of expectations and the environment of the Home. Newspaper articles supplement this with more detailed (if still very rosy) descriptions of daily activities. Archival collections contain some of the children's school exercises, so that we can see what they were being taught. And expenditure reports, perhaps the most extensive records available, give insight into what the Home was spending money on and therefore what was available to and provided for these children.

The Weaver Home's annual reports were far more focused on conveying to donors the need for funds and the institution's responsible usage thereof than on communicating the daily life of the children in the Home. Nevertheless, some glimpses peeped

⁸⁷ Ruth Fagan, August 10, 1952, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁸⁸ Anna Weaver, "Former Slave," Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

through, mostly about the schooling, religious instruction, and chores assigned to the children. School was conducted daily, according to William Weaver, eight months out of the year; while instructed by an in-home teacher, residents were kept “abreast with the public school” curriculum.⁸⁹ Weaver never explained why the children were kept out of public schools, but it may have been easier for the administration not to try to keep up with school registrations for children who were in and out of the Home. The instability of their lives and residence would make the more focused attention available from the Weaver Home teacher beneficial for the children as well. Several newspaper articles remarked on the quality education Weaver Home children received (including “regulation desks, blackboards and competent young teachers”) and their lack of difficulty continuing into public high schools and colleges.⁹⁰ Weaver children were finally integrated into public schools in 1958.⁹¹

In addition to school work, William Weaver placed great emphasis on the religious education of the children. William was often called “Reverend Weaver,” but there is no record of his ordination and he never referred to himself that way; it may have been an honorary title or a mistaken assumption based on his vocal faith and dedicated service. “The Word of the Lord is our spiritual food and we peruse it daily with the children,” he reported.⁹² “We have daily morning and evening prayer, Bible service and the In-

⁸⁹ Annual Report, 1923–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA. Annual Report, 1905–1906, 1909–1910, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁹⁰ “77-Year-Old Negro Woman, Born In Slavery, Is Founder And Director Of Orphanage,” *Times-Herald* (Newport News, Va.), May 7, 1936.

⁹¹ Ben Altshuler, “Weaver Home Sets Orphanage Closing,” *unknown*, August 4, 1965, in “Clippings,” Box 15, Folder 15–17, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁹² Annual Report, 1905–1906, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

ternational Sunday school lesson is taught every Sunday.” This emphasis makes sense, given not only Weaver’s personal background but his audience—largely churches and Christian individuals. Perhaps strangely, given this intense focus on religious instruction, “The children are taken out to church” only “when convenient.”⁹³ Like their schooling, it is likely that the chaos of turnover and special needs of the children made it more convenient and beneficial to keep services in-house. A newspaper article reveals another reason, as well as the mitigation: “The children go to church only when someone offers to walk them, as they are too far to walk, but there are frequent visits from pastors.”⁹⁴ Children began attending church services in town in 1949.⁹⁵ Even earlier in the Home’s tenure, however, there was an effort to integrate the children into the wider religious community: “Twenty have been converted since being here and sixteen have joined the various churches of Hampton, while the other four are waiting to be added.”⁹⁶ Similarly, “All in the Home over seven years of age and who have been present twelve months claim to know the Lord.”⁹⁷

The work children were assigned within the Home was also an important part of their education. Chores not only bound residents together in a sense of contributing to the community, but taught them a good work ethic and pride in providing for their fellows—good Hampton Institute principles. “All who are large enough are taught to cook,

⁹³ Annual Report, 1923–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁹⁴ “Weaver Orphan Home Has Notable 35-Year Record,” *Journal and Guide* (Norfolk, Va.), November 1, 1947.

⁹⁵ Altshuler, “Weaver Home Sets Orphanage Closing,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁹⁶ Annual Report, 1905–1906, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁹⁷ Annual Reports, 1907–1908 and 1909–1910, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA. This statement appears verbatim in both.

do laundry work, general house work, farming and gardening,” the institution reported in 1906.⁹⁸ Chores were gendered; girls helped with laundry, cooking, mending, and ironing, while boys worked on the farm and collected firewood.⁹⁹ These chores were considered an acceptable form of child labor at the time because they occurred within a family system, albeit a nontraditional one. The children were not producing goods for the market but for their own consumption, and their compensation was not impersonal cash but the care, support, and provision of a home.¹⁰⁰ In addition, when children left the Weaver Home for an adoptive home, it was not supposed to be for their labor; ideally the relationship would be an affectionate one, but at the very least they were to have the space and time to continue their education. “Children are placed out with the understanding that at the age of 16 or 17, they are to be sent to some boarding school, if their morals, intellectual ability and industrious inclinations merit it.” The Home attempted to ensure this by monitoring “placed out” children “until 21,” but admitted that this was not always possible.¹⁰¹

The most concise description of daily life in the Weaver Home comes from a 1950 newspaper profile of the Home. “During a typical school day, the children get up, clean their rooms, have breakfast, and do chores. The girls have to wash dishes, the boys bring in wood for the stoves. School keeps [them] till noon when there is a break for

⁹⁸ Annual Report, 1905–1906, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

⁹⁹ “Weaver Orphanage Provides Home Life,” *Times-Herald* (Newport News, Va.), Sept. 17, 1953; Nancy King, “Neglected Children Find Orphanage Is Real Home,” *Daily Press* (Newport News, Va.), Sept. 10, 1950.

¹⁰⁰ Hugh D. Hindman, *Child Labor: An American History* (New York, 2002).

¹⁰¹ Annual Report, 1919–1922, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

lunch and a recreation hour. They troop back to the classroom at 2 and continue school till 4 P.M. If any boys still have not brought in their quota of wood they do it then. Girls help out with the washing and ironing. Supper comes at 5:30 P.M.; children study from 7 to 8 and then go reluctantly to bed.”¹⁰²

Weaver was honest about the thin ice the Home was often skating on with regards to food and supplies, especially in the early years, but he assured readers that they had never gone hungry. “There are but few days that we have food enough for more than one day or means with which to buy...[but] we have at no meal been scant or short of enough....About the same is true in respect to wood and coal. Though [demand is] very high, yet we have not suffered for either.”¹⁰³ The health of the children also received frequent mention; a common refrain in reports was “very little sickness and not any suffering for food or clothing.”¹⁰⁴ It therefore comes as a bit of a shock when, in 1926, William Weaver calmly stated his “pleasure to say that workers have all kept in good health in the last four years and no deaths.”¹⁰⁵ There is no indication of death in any other report, so it’s possible that Weaver was alluding to an incident in the wider childcare, missional, or municipal community.

When children were sick, however, medical care was not hard to come by. Dr. W. E. Atkins, a “mulatto” doctor, was the dedicated physician for the Home from its inception until his death in 1927 and provided his services free of charge. When Dr. Atkins

¹⁰² King, “Orphanage Is Real Home,” *Daily Press*, Sept. 10, 1950.

¹⁰³ Annual Report, 1905–1906, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹⁰⁴ Annual Report, 1915–1918, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹⁰⁵ Annual Report, 1923–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

was unavailable, other local doctors provided pro bono medical care for the orphans; “all of the physicians of Hampton, Phoebus or Newport News, white and colored, as far as we have had any cause to call upon them, have always rendered service cheerfully and without charge,” the Home reported.¹⁰⁶ Dr. Clarence Porter Jones, a white “ear, eye, and throat” specialist, was specifically mentioned in the 1913–1914 annual report.¹⁰⁷

There are also small insights into the Home’s physical environment in the annual reports, and more observations in contemporary newspaper articles. A large (“rambling” or “sprawling”) seventeen-room house with a “shaded lawn” formed the core of the orphanage property.¹⁰⁸ Most accounts depict a spare but clean interior, “adequate but not at all elaborate” and “worn with the rough usage of its big family.”¹⁰⁹ Between 1923 and 1926, the kitchen was enlarged and included a dining room, indoor plumbing was put in to make possible the installation of a laundry room and bathrooms, and a school room and additional bedroom were added. With plumbing such a late addition, it is perhaps not surprising that the newer inventions of “electric lights, telephone and a fire plug” were still a dream for the Weavers in 1926; a newspaper article reveals that they finally received electricity in 1931 (thanks to Frank Darling).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ 1920 Census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, Hampton Magisterial District, p. 22, dwelling 469, family 500, W. E. Atkins, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; Annual Report, 1911–1912, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹⁰⁷ 1920 Census, Warwick County, Virginia, population schedule, City of Newport News, p. 3, dwelling 47, family 51, Clarence P. Jones, digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed June 14, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>; Annual Report, 1913–1914, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹⁰⁸ King, “Orphanage Is Real Home,” *Daily Press*, Sept. 10, 1950; “Weaver Orphanage Provides Home Life,” *Times-Herald* (Newport News, Va.), Sept. 17, 1953.

¹⁰⁹ King, “Orphanage Is Real Home,” *Daily Press*, Sept. 10, 1950 (“adequate”); “Provides Home Life,” *Times-Herald*, Sept. 17, 1953 (“worn”); “Notable 35-Year Record,” *Journal and Guide*, November 1, 1947.

¹¹⁰ Annual Report, 1923–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA; “400 Orphans Helped By Weaver’s,” *unknown*, May 12, 1939, “Clippings,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

The emotional environment of the Home is naturally harder to assess, but the many favorable newspaper articles about the Home provide some clues. There is a constant refrain of a “family-like atmosphere” or “real home,” which is backed up by more specific details.¹¹¹ There was some measure of privacy and respect for children’s personal belongings, for example; “each child has his own drawers where he or she can keep his own possessions together.”¹¹² Additionally, care was taken to promote the dignity of the children, who might otherwise be ashamed of the circumstances that brought them into care. In this vein, a local barbershop provided haircuts, which gave “the boys a sense of pride when they attend[ed] church each Sunday.”¹¹³ The children were also provided plenty of free time and intellectual stimuli, an approach far ahead of its time. Thanks to a donor in 1913 who provided a “Victor and 24 records,” and Mrs. Weaver’s own piano, the children were exposed to a variety of music.¹¹⁴ Near the piano was “a shelf of religious and educational books,” providing the children with plenty of (albeit narrowly focused) reading material.¹¹⁵ One article claimed that the Weavers and Fagans “tried to keep the regimentation at the home to a minimum,” allowing “time to sit under a tree on a lazy Summer afternoon reading comic books.”¹¹⁶ Children were encouraged to care for stray animals around the farm, and “gay laughter” rang through the halls when visitors came. This all sounds idyllic and should be taken with a grain of salt, but Anna Weaver

¹¹¹ “Provides Home Life,” *Times-Herald*, Sept. 17, 1953.

¹¹² King, “Orphanage Is Real Home,” *Daily Press*, Sept. 10, 1950.

¹¹³ “Jay-Cees Sponsor Hair Cuts For Weaver Orphan Home Boys,” *Journal and Guide* (Norfolk, Va.), January 24, 1953.

¹¹⁴ Annual Report, 1923–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹¹⁵ “77-Year-Old Negro Woman,” *Times-Herald*, May 7, 1936.

¹¹⁶ King, “Orphanage Is Real Home,” *Daily Press*, Sept. 10, 1950.

always made sure to have a guest room ready for the many former residents who returned to the Home to visit their erstwhile guardians, suggesting they had at least some fond memories of the place.¹¹⁷ One former resident even addressed the Weavers as “My dear Mother & Dad” in a letter.¹¹⁸

A surviving notebook from 1910 gives an incomplete but nevertheless detailed snapshot of what the children were being taught. Glendora Parham was in fifth grade and kept meticulous notes on all her lessons, organized by subject. Her arithmetic lessons included not only practice problems for multi-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, but also long-form explanations of mathematical concepts such as integers, factors, and prime numbers, as well as conversion tables for different measurements. Language arts included lessons on the different kinds of sentences and parts of speech, as well as short tables of masculine, feminine, and neuter nouns (not in the sense of grammatical gender but rather gendered words referring to people or animals, e.g. “boy,” “girl,” “friend”). Geography consisted of defining various topographical features (e.g. mountain, river, cape) and listing facts about the eastern and western hemispheres (e.g. “The hottest division of the Western Continent is South America” and “[The Eastern Hemisphere’s] great body of land is called the Eastern Continent, which contains Europe, Asia and Africa.”) Glendora’s spelling lists seem to have had a daily theme, such as musical terms (“pianissimo,” “tenor,” “octave”), desirable attributes (“obedient,” “industrious,” “peaceable”), or undesirable attributes (“envious,” “gruff,” “insolent”). A long list

¹¹⁷ “Provides Home Life,” *Times-Herald*, Sept. 17, 1953; King, “Orphanage Is Real Home,” *Daily Press*, Sept. 10, 1950.

¹¹⁸ [Velna Norris], “Undated Correspondence,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

of authors “who have written for children and something they have written,” though unlabeled, seems to have been compiled for a literature class. Rounding out Glendora’s notebook are lists of nationalities, abbreviations, and Bible verses corresponding to letters of the alphabet. Sadly, the page for Glendora’s history lesson is blank.¹¹⁹

In addition to Glendora’s notebook, also preserved is a scrap of an arithmetic assignment “for Raymond Weaver”—perhaps homework for an ill student who had missed school.¹²⁰ Raymond Weaver was the son of William and Anna Weaver; he and his sisters, Ruth and Julia, attended school alongside the “inmates” of the Home. There is an element of practicality to that, of course; with a teacher in the house already, why send your children out to school? But it also speaks to the Weavers’ attitude toward their charges. The Weavers strove to make their orphanage “just like a home,” and that included treating their legal charges equally to their biological children.¹²¹ Raymond’s arithmetic assignment is also full of word problems relating to skilled labor like building a fence, pricing meat, or wallpapering and gilt-molding a room with windows.¹²² Schooling, therefore, was focused on practical preparation for adulthood—but Glendora’s notebook demonstrates that it was not merely teaching black children what they would need to be good laborers. Mr. and Mrs. Weaver were both college-educated and the Weaver family valued education highly. They understood that many of their residents would not have the means or opportunity to attend college, and they may have had to appease some of

¹¹⁹ Writing Book, Property of Glendora Parham, “School Exercises,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹²⁰ “School Exercises,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹²¹ “We Aim To Make The Orphanage Just Like A Home,” *Journal and Guide* (Norfolk, Va.), September 16, 1961.

¹²² “School Exercises,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

their donors who might oppose giving black children ideas “above their station.” But they gave their children the best foundation they could and did not assume that all they could or would accomplish was agricultural or manual labor.

The children also frequently wrote thank-you letters to churches or organizations that had hosted them for a picnic or holiday party. A 1909 composition book contains several of these practice letters. There are several common themes in these letters, and it seems clear that the children were given a rubric of what to include. They all began with gratitude, often followed by a statement that the letter-writer was striving to be a “good girl” or “good boy,” or “a christian.”¹²³ Some were less personal, indicating that all the children were “trying to be good children, to show our gratitude.”¹²⁴ Most children included some discussion of their schooling and chores at the orphanage, to reassure donors that they were being instilled with both knowledge and a work ethic. Several also included information about their families: whether their parents were living or dead, or if they had any siblings with them in the Home. These mentions reinforced the necessity of the orphanage. Most letters were signed “your friend” or “your little friend,” emphasizing the youth of the writer and the dependent relationship with the recipient.¹²⁵

Along with thank-you letters, the children also copied poems and sayings from the blackboard to practice their handwriting. It is clear from content of this material that

¹²³ Glendora Parham, Bert Washington, Ruth Annette Reede, and Robert Scott, “Writing Exercises, 1909,” Box 32, Folder 4, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA. Perhaps most affecting of these is Mary Andrews’ rumination on her behavior, which recalls an almost Puritan obsession with morality: “I often sit down and think how I have behaved and if I have been good. Sometimes I go and ask Miss Webster. If she says yes, I am happy and if she says no, I am unhappy.” Mary Andrews, “Writing Exercises, 1909,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹²⁴ Agnes King, “Writing Exercises, 1909,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹²⁵ “Writing Exercises, 1909,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

the children were supposed to absorb the lessons along with the cursive. They are the same sort of glib morality that would have been familiar to colonial American children, though without the Calvinist doom and gloom: “Do what comes to you cheerfully and well”; “Whenever you are feeling blue,/ Something for someone else, go do”; “To be good is to be happy/ To be good is beauty”; “Sow thou sorrow, and thou shalt reap it./ But sow thou joy, and thou shalt keep it.”¹²⁶ No wonder these children were always “trying to be better”!¹²⁷

In addition to the annual reports, newspaper articles, and school assignments, the orphanage’s expenditures offer some insight into the children’s lives. William Weaver, and subsequently Anna Weaver and Ruth Fagan, kept careful records of the money they spent on the Orphan Home. Neat columns of numbers track daily expenditures for each month, revealing not only how much was spent in absolute terms but also the relative amount of the monthly budget given to various expenses. These records survive for the years 1911–1914, the first quarter of 1922, and 1929–1936.

From 1911 to 1914, expenditures were organized simply by date, with the item and amount listed next to it.¹²⁸ In 1912, William Weaver included “a summary” at the end of each month, tallying the amount spent in various categories over the month (e.g. “groceries,” “laundry,” “travelling”).¹²⁹ He abandoned this practice after a year, but Anna

¹²⁶ “Writing Exercises, 1909,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹²⁷ Mary Andrews, “Writing Exercises, 1909,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹²⁸ “Daily Expenses, 1911–1914, 1922,” Volume 7, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹²⁹ Daily Expenditures Oct. 1912, “Daily Expenses, 1911–1914, 1922,” 46–47, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

Weaver seems to have recognized its utility; the records from 1929 to 1936 organized expenditures in rows by date and in columns by category.¹³⁰

The dollar amount spent each month varied considerably, though less so when one accounts for unusual large purchases, such as a horse or cow, and the irregularity of salary payments, particularly in the early years. Relative expenses by category also varied, but dollar amounts within categories were fairly stable. The largest consistent expense each month was always groceries, usually between thirty to forty percent of all expenditures, but sometimes as high as sixty percent. One presumes that grocery expenses fluctuated with the number of children resident in the Home, but since all reports of occupancy are annual at best, there is no way to correlate monthly expenses to changing numbers within the year. The amount spent on groceries, with a few exceptions, ranged from about \$20 to \$40 per month from 1911 to 1914.¹³¹ From 1929 to 1936, the monthly costs remained steady but at a higher level—\$50 to \$60 rather than an average of \$30. Starting in the 1929 records, too, bread was tallied as a category separate from groceries and accounted for an additional \$10 or so.¹³² Wood and coal for heating were another consistent monthly expense, though one that naturally varied with the seasons, ranging from almost forty percent of expenses in the coldest winter months of January and February to zero during some summers. Salaries were, as mentioned, profoundly inconsistent, but in the months that they were paid, they ate up a significant chunk of the budget. For example, in 1912, salaries were paid only in February and December; in February

¹³⁰ “Cash Expenses, 1929–1936,” Volume 1, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹³¹ “Daily Expenses, 1911–1914, 1922,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹³² “Cash Expenses, 1929–1936,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

they comprised \$16.00 of the \$58.97 spent total for the month, and in December a whopping \$104.00 of the \$189.23 monthly total.¹³³

Since grocery costs did not vary too significantly month to month, it can be deduced that the children in the Home were not enduring extremes of privation and plenty. It is difficult to say how much food they received in an absolute sense, but they were certainly receiving regular and consistent meals, if not necessarily large ones. Likewise, with heating costs appropriately high in the winter, we can posit that the Home was kept a safe temperature.

After groceries and fuel, the farm was the biggest expense. Animals—namely a horse and a cow—were large purchases but only occasional; their feed, however, was a continuous expense. Seed, too, was a surprisingly expensive almost-monthly cost, and there was the occasional need to hire farm workers for a task or a season.¹³⁴ Chickens were not recorded in the expense accounts, but there are several notations of chickens being donated.¹³⁵ Between the cow, the chickens, and the seed, the children's diets were supplemented with fresh milk, eggs, and produce. They ate more like rural farm children than urban ones, a condition certainly considered beneficial at the time (e.g. by Charles Loring Brace, who sent New York orphans on trains to rural areas in the west) and with apparent benefits even today.

In order to cover these costs, it was important to maintain connections with donors both near and far away. Stamps and stationery were not large expenses, but they

¹³³ "Daily Expenses, 1911–1914, 1922," Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹³⁴ "Daily Expenses, 1911–1914, 1922," Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹³⁵ Annual Reports, 1904–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

were consistent ones. Travel was also a significant portion of the budget, especially in the early years. Weaver remarked on this in the first annual report, reassuring interested parties that “our traveling expenses are large because of the constant transportation between Hampton and Gloucester before we moved.”¹³⁶ This travel and correspondence spending would not have had a direct impact on the children and their daily lives, but it certainly contributed indirectly to the continuance of their lifestyle.

Other smaller recurring expenses that had a more immediate interest to the children were medicine and laundry. Laundry was recorded as “laundry use” early on; since the Home did not have its own laundry facilities until around 1926, the Weaver Home may have made arrangements with a local business for the use of its space, if not its labor.¹³⁷ In either case, the children’s clothes were kept clean. Clothing itself was not a frequent expense, because most clothing was donated, either by the children’s relatives or by church groups.¹³⁸ There are occasional references to shoe repair, though whether this was for the children’s shoes—poor Southern children were often accustomed to going shoeless, at least in non-winter months—or for Mr. or Mrs. Weaver’s is unclear. The Weavers were so intertwined with their endeavor, it can be difficult to distinguish personal from strictly business finances. (William Weaver would record the expenses of his own haircuts, for example.) Medicine was purchased at irregular intervals, some months multiple times and some months not at all. There was some seasonality to this pattern; unsurprisingly, winter months tended to include slightly more medicinal expenditures.

¹³⁶ Annual Report, 1900–1904, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹³⁷ “Daily Expenses, 1911–1914, 1922,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

¹³⁸ Annual Reports, 1904–1926, Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

But generally, the infrequency of medicinal purchases seems to attest yet again to the general good health of the children.¹³⁹

Building expenses—gas, lamp oil (transitioning to electricity in the 1930s), lumber, paint, and periodic repairs—kept the Home safe and clean for the children. Far from the horror stories of dilapidated, cramped orphanages, some apocryphal but some unfortunately all too true, the Weaver Home was frequently reported to be light and open and tidy. This was hugely important to the development of the children who were raised there, their health, growth, and sense of well-being.

Conclusion

The Weaver Home was in some ways quite similar to the Friends' Asylum. Certainly they both shared the black leadership and female administrative involvement that seem to have been important to the longevity of a “colored” orphan asylum in Virginia. They were also both supported, and in fact co-led, by well-meaning white progressives, whose financial support was indispensable but whose partnership reined in the potential radicalism of these African American institutions. Both the Weaver Home and the Friends' Asylum lasted into the 1920s, allowing them to draw funding from the newly formed Community Chests in their respective cities as well as state welfare organizations.

There were some differences, however. The Friends' Asylum was in Richmond, the capital city and a thriving urban center in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hampton was not a backwater, certainly, but it was a smaller city, and the Weaver

¹³⁹ “Daily Expenses 1911–1914, 1922,” Weaver Orphan Home Records, LVA.

Home was located on the outskirts, in an area sparsely populated enough for the establishment of a twenty-five-acre farm. Moreover, while Richmond remained in Confederate hands for the entirety of the Civil War, Hampton was the home of the Union Fortress Monroe, which never fell to the Confederacy and became known as Freedom Fortress to the many African Americans who fled there to liberate themselves. Hamptonians, therefore, had a head start at figuring out how white and black could live together in freedom.

But the biggest difference between the Weaver Home and the Friends' Asylum is when they were founded. Thirty-seven years is not a very long time in an absolute sense, but the years between 1867 and 1904 saw worlds of change occur in Virginia. Both Lucy Brooks and the Weavers were determined and tenacious in pursuing their dreams of a home for African American children with nowhere else to go. Both enlisted the aid of wealthy, influential white men to achieve that dream. But while the Richmond Quakers quickly relegated Mrs. Brooks to a supporting role, the Weavers retained ownership of their venture for its entire run. This difference was likely due in part to gender—the Quakers, after all, were in favor of black leadership of the asylum generally—but it largely came down to the state of racial politics at their respective times. In 1867, Virginia was reeling from its crushing defeat in the war, federal occupation, economic depression, and the temporary disfranchisement of some Confederates and the enfranchisement of African American men. In the upset of the old racial order, the idea of whiteness was fragile and desperately threatened. It was hard enough getting support for the Friends' Asylum with the likes of John Crenshaw at its head; a black woman in charge might have made it impossible. In contrast, by 1904, African Americans in Virginia had been entirely

disenfranchised and Jim Crow laws had recreated a racial hierarchy that conservative white Virginians could stomach. So long as they remained in their sphere, William and Anna Weaver were safe. The Weavers were all too aware of this and walked a careful tightrope. By inviting in partners like Frank Darling and William Taliaferro and espousing the accommodationist views of Booker T. Washington, they made their institution as nonthreatening to white Virginians as possible. Yet this earned them enough latitude to serve the black community on their own terms, as well. Children at the Weaver Home were raised according to the latest standards of middle-class childhood, with an emphasis on education and plenty of free time for play (especially outdoors). They received a college-preparatory education and constant acknowledgment of their dignity, such as non-uniform clothing and free haircuts. Though forced to do so within the confines of a racist society, and without any guarantee that they would be able to realize their rights as such, the Weavers were raising not just black children but generations of black citizens.

The Weaver Home had much less in common with the Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School. Lynchburg, like Hampton, was a smaller Virginia city but an important shipping town; Lynchburg was a railroad hub and Hampton a seaport. And like William and Anna Weaver, Abraham Jaeger established his orphanage on the edge of town in a spot that could accommodate a farm. Lynchburg, however, was another Virginia town that remained firmly in Confederate control while Hampton, as noted, was Union-occupied long before 1865. The other thing they shared was inception and leadership by an individual and his family. Jaeger did not name the place after himself, but there was little doubt it was connected to his person in the same way that the Weaver

Home was bound up with the Weavers. Like the Weavers, Jaeger's family in the form of his wife and brother-in-law were instrumental to the functioning of the orphanage, though his relationship with them was considerably more fraught than William Weaver's with his siblings and children.

The differences between these two institutions are stark, however, and again come down to the context in which they were founded. The Lynchburg Asylum did not include any black leadership, because its mission was explicitly to "free" black children from the supposedly corrupting influence of black adults—a response, in the wake of the Readjuster movement, to the exercise of black political power and a solace to white Democrats who supported the institution. The Weaver Home, on the other hand, was founded a generation later, when the threat of black political power had been effectively neutralized in Virginia. In the era of Jim Crow laws separating black and white, the African American Weavers started their Home to take care of their own. While the Weaver Home saw its wards as children of families in difficult times, the Lynchburg Asylum saw them as a beachhead in the struggle to control black people and culture.

Despite its financial struggles, the Weaver Orphan Home managed to combine black leadership, an important element of female administration, and white support into a successful sixty-year tenure serving African American children of the peninsula and the rest of Virginia. Working within the now-entrenched racial hierarchy of Jim Crow Virginia, the Weavers leveraged the accommodationist approach to civil rights in order to gain the support of white conservatives and progressives alike. By carefully assuaging their donors' and board members' racial insecurities, William and Anna Weaver carved

out enough space for themselves to raise generations of African American children the way they wanted to. The Weavers created a remarkably familial environment and progressive childrearing regimen that gave their children a good chance at success in their own right, even with their early disadvantages.

Conclusion

Legacies

None of these four institutions remains today, and even the buildings that housed them are gone from the landscape. Lucy Brooks, John Crenshaw, Abraham Jaeger, Cary Wilmer, Lambert Welbers, Mary Anne O’Keefe, and William and Anna Weaver are long dead, as are Violet Walker and her sisters, Bernard Johnson, Henry and Queenie Jackson, and Glendora Parham. In fact, all of the children who lived at the Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum, St. Francis, and Holy Innocents’ Asylum, and most of the children who lived at the Friends’ Asylum and the Weaver Home, lie buried in their own gardens of lilies. Most people are unaware that these places, let alone the children who populated them, ever existed.

Yet their legacy remains. As of April 2018, 39.4% of children in foster care in Virginia were African American or multiracial, and 42.3% were between the ages of 5 and 15. The average time spent in care was 20 months, and half either returned home or were placed with a relative.¹ While the model of child welfare in the United States has shifted from private to public and from orphanages to foster care, these percentages have not changed significantly since the Friends’ Asylum opened in 1867.

The South, too, has continued to wrestle with its identity—or identities—in the years following the Civil War, Reconstruction, Redemption, Jim Crow, and the Civil

¹ Virginia Department of Social Services, “Foster Care Children Demographic Report for April 2018,” Foster Care Related Reports, accessed June 20, 2018, <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/children/fc.cgi>. Just 22.7% of Virginia’s total population is African American or multiracial; U. S. Census Bureau, “QuickFacts Virginia,” accessed June 20, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/VA>

Rights movement. In June of 2018, Richmond’s school board voted to rename J. E. B. Stuart Elementary School—built in 1922—after Barack Obama.² Controversy over Confederate monuments, constructed between 1890 and the 1920s, has resulted in protests and violent neo-Nazi rallies. The Confederate battle flag, which gained popularity during the Civil Rights movement as a reactionary symbol, has come under similar criticism and been similarly defended as a symbol of “heritage” and “Southern identity.” But as is clear from the ways different Southerners imagined and saw African American orphans, and by extension their own futures, there is not one heritage and there was never just one South.

The Civil War shattered the South, cracking open the power structure and allowing new voices to be heard. The devastation presented an opportunity for the region to reinvent itself—but whose vision would prevail?

One South that emerged in the aftermath of the war told a story of hope and opportunity for African Americans, long barred from citizenship and from freedom itself. For freedpeople and their abolitionist allies, the black orphan symbolized the potential stretching before them, free from but still carrying the weight of their traumatic past. African American children, however, were more than just a symbol to freed black people who were all too familiar with losing their own parents or children. The Friends’ Asylum in Richmond exemplifies how African American leaders had opportunities to pursue their goals during Reconstruction, but were required to operate under white guardianship.

² Justin Mattingly, “Richmond’s J.E.B. Stuart Elementary School — honoring a Confederate — will be renamed for Barack Obama,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 18, 2018.

By the 1890s, a different South had long since begun pushing back against the Reconstruction-era opportunities African Americans had briefly gained, a South based on a vision of white control. This was a time of race riots, increased lynching, and in some instances political wrangling for control of state governments. For these white Southerners, the black orphan symbolized a society gone horribly wrong. The Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum demonstrates how white progressives and Virginia Democrats attempted to shape African Americans more to their liking by raising a generation to be submissive and dependent.

Foreign missionaries traveling to the American South had their own visions of what the South was and what it could or should be. White Catholics, in particular, were eager to take advantage of the opportunities presented by a newly freed population who might be searching for a spiritual tradition separate from their generally Protestant former owners. They were not searching, for the most part, but for Catholics in the South in the 1890s—including the English Catholics behind the St. Francis and Holy Innocents' Asylums in Richmond—the African American orphan represented the fertile soil of a new mission field.

By the early twentieth century, Jim Crow laws and the vision of a segregated society appeared to have won out as the controlling ideology of the New South. And yet the earlier possibilities of Reconstruction had not been forgotten, especially in predominantly black areas like Hampton where a generation of African American children had been raised with no experience of slavery. For both W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, and for the disciples of both men, black children were the reason to keep

fighting for rights denied. Black orphans, moreover, presented an opportunity to demonstrate ideals of collective responsibility and strong community that would undergird the Civil Rights movement. While their intent was not necessarily to make a political statement, the Weavers through their Home nevertheless implicitly promoted a Washingtonian approach to the fight for civil rights by operating within the bounds of their segregated society and emphasizing hard work and education.

Approaches to the care of African American orphans reflected contemporary ideas about childhood, race, and community. As these ideas shifted in the years following the Civil War, black orphans became a symbol by which Southerners could gauge their society; looking back, they are a lens through which to view Southern visions of their New South. Previous treatments of the development of the New South did not consider the ways institutions for African American orphans could reflect and affect the societal values around them—in large part because these institutions were either forgotten or their records inaccessible. Orphanage historiography, on the other hand, has tended to focus not only on Northern institutions but also on their effect on the orphans themselves—admirable, but impossible with the records available in Virginia.

Lucy Brooks's legacy lives on most directly in the FRIENDS Association for Children, but the Weavers were early proponents of a family-based model of care that has become dominant in United States child welfare. Commonwealth Catholic Charities, begun in 1923 just as Holy Innocents' Asylum was closing, continues to provide adoption and foster care services to Virginia children, as well as other social services. The care of African American children in Virginia still reflects contemporaneous ideas about child-

hood, race, and community, as well as state involvement in childcare. With over 2000 black or multiracial children in foster care in the commonwealth, this is not a topic that can be ignored.³

³ Virginia Department of Social Services, “Foster Care Children Demographic Report for April 2018,” Foster Care Related Reports, accessed June 25, 2018, <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/children/fc.cgi>

Bibliography

List of Abbreviations

LVA - Library of Virginia

SSFA - Archives of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi

SSJ - Archives of the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart

ABAC - Office of Archives and Black/Asian Catholics, Diocese of Richmond

Primary Sources

Friends' Asylum for Colored Orphans

Friends' Association for Children (Richmond, Va.) *Charter and by-laws of the Friends'*

Asylum for Colored Orphans, in the city of Richmond, Va. [Richmond] : R.L.

Hewlett & Bro., printers, 1883.

Richmond Friends Meeting Records, 1849–2004. Accession 40877. Church records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Society of Friends. Richmond Monthly Meeting. Monthly meeting record book, 1834–1868. Accession 23607, Church records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Society of Friends. Richmond Monthly Meeting. Monthly meeting record book, 1868–1893. Accession 23608, Church records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Society of Friends. Richmond Monthly Meeting. Monthly meeting record book, 1893–1935. Accession 21529, Church records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Lynchburg Colored Orphan Asylum and Industrial School

“Charges Against a Preacher.” *Alexandria Gazette*. June 29, 1898.

Colored Orphan Asylum & Industrial School Records, 1890–1898. Local government records collection, Lynchburg (City) Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

“Dr. Jaeger Found Guilty.” *Baltimore Sun*. September 14, 1898.

“Dr. Jaeger’s Trial.” *Baltimore Sun*. August 12, 1898.

“Dr. Jaeger’s Trial.” *Baltimore Sun*. August 13, 1898.

“A Good Work.” *Christian Union*. Nov. 19, 1892.

Jaeger, Abraham. *Mind and Heart in Religion: Or, Judaism and Christianity. A Heart’s Experience and a Popular Research into the True Religion of the Bible*. New York, 1873.

Kirkus, William. “The Protestant Episcopal Church and the Colored People.” *The Independent* 41 (June 1889): 4–5.

Langhorne, Orra. “Southern Sketches.” *The Southern Workman and Hampton School Record* 22, no. 9 (September 1893): 140.

Lynchburg Chancery case 1899-097, C. B. Wilmer, Creditor, vs. Colored Orphan Asylum & Industrial School, etc. Local government records collection, Lynchburg (City) Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

“The Negro and the Episcopalians of Virginia.” *The Independent* 41 (June 1889): 10.

Prospectus of the Orphan Asylum and Industrial School for Colored People, to be established near Lynchburg, Virginia. Richmond, Va., 1888.

“Trial of Dr. Jaeger.” *Evening Star*. Washington, D.C. August 12, 1898.

“A Valuable Property.” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. May 12, 1902.

Wilmer, C. B. “A Race Problem.” *Cambridge [Mass.] Tribune*. June 2, 1894.

“A Worthy Charity.” *Cambridge [Mass.] Tribune*. June 2, 1894.

St. Francis Colored Foundling and Orphan Asylum/Holy Innocents’ Asylum

Act Creating and By-Laws and Rules Governing the State Board of Charities and Corrections, Virginia. Richmond, Va., 1908.

Holy Innocents Foundling Asylum (Richmond, Va.). Volumes I and II: St Francis Colored Foundling and Orphan Asylum records, 1888–1906. Accession 33477. Church records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Holy Innocents Foundling Asylum (Richmond, Va.). Volume III: Holy Innocents Foundling Asylum records, 1906–1912. Accession 33478. Church records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

Josephite Fathers. Miscellaneous records. Archives of the Society of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart, Inc., Washington, D.C. 20017.

Sisters of St. Francis. Miscellaneous records. Archives of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, Baltimore, Md. 21218.

St. Joseph’s Parish. Miscellaneous records. Office of Archives and Black/Asian Catholics, Catholic Diocese of Richmond, Richmond, Va. 23294.

Weaver Orphan Home

“77-Year-Old Negro Woman, Born In Slavery, Is Founder And Director Of Orphanage.”

Times-Herald. Newport News, Va. May 7, 1936.

Caldwell, Moselle. “Crippled Negro Artist Visits The President.” *The Washington In-*

former. December 28, 1968.

“Crippled Youth Learns Art Of Painting, Weaving While Recovering From Affliction.”

Daily Press. Newport News, Va. September 19, 1937.

“Jay-Cees Sponsor Hair Cuts For Weaver Orphan Home Boys.” *Journal and Guide*. Nor-

folk, Va. January 24, 1953.

King, Nancy. “Neglected Children Find Orphanage Is Real Home.” *Daily Press*. Newport

News, Va. Sept. 10, 1950.

“We Aim To Make The Orphanage Just Like A Home.” *Journal and Guide*. Norfolk, Va.

September 16, 1961.

Weaver Orphan Home (Hampton, Va.) Records, 1847–1976. Accession 51625. Organiza-

tion records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. 23219.

“Weaver Orphan Home Has Notable 35-Year Record.” *Journal and Guide*. Norfolk, Va.

November 1, 1947.

“Weaver Orphanage Provides Home Life.” *Times-Herald*. Newport News, Va. Sept. 17,

1953

Weaver, William B. *Brief statement of facts relative to the Weaver Orphan Home for Col-*

ored Children, under the auspices of the Tidewater Orphan Association, Hamp-

ton, Virginia / by W. B. Weaver. [s.l. : s.n., 1918?]

“Will Ask For Charter.” *Daily Press*. Newport News, Va. August 24, 1901.

Secondary Sources

Ariès, Philippe. *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*. Translated by Robert Baldick. New York, 1962.

Ayers, Edward L. *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction*. New York, 1992.

Billingsley, Andrew, and Jeanne M. Giovannoni. *Children of the Storm: Black Children and American Child Welfare*. New York, 1972.

Blassingame, John. *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*. New York, 1972.

Bragg, George F. *History of the Afro-American Group of the Episcopal Church*. Baltimore, 1922.

Carlton-LaNey, Iris B. *African American Leadership: An Empowerment Tradition in Social Welfare History*. Washington, D.C., 2001.

Clement, Priscilla Ferguson. *Growing Pains: Children in the Industrial Age, 1850–1890*. New York, 1997.

Crenson, Matthew A. *Building the Invisible Orphanage: A Prehistory of the American Welfare System*. Cambridge, Mass., 1998.

Critchlow, Donald T., and Charles H. Parker, eds. *With Us Always: A History of Private Charity and Public Welfare*. Lanham, Md., 1998.

Dailey, Jane. *Before Jim Crow: The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2000).

- Davis, Cyprian. *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*. New York, 1990.
- deMause, Lloyd, ed. *The History of Childhood*. Lanham, Md., 1974.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880*. New York, 1935.
- Engs, Robert Francis. *Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861–1890*. Philadelphia, 1979.
- Ewbank, Douglas C. "History of Black Mortality and Health before 1940." *The Milbank Quarterly* 65, Supplement 1 (1987): 100–128.
- Feimster, Crystal N. *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching*. Cambridge, Mass., 2009.
- Fildes, Valerie. *Wet Nursing: A History from Antiquity to the Present*. Oxford, 1988.
- Fogarty, Gerald P. *Commonwealth Catholicism: A History of the Catholic Church in Virginia*. Notre Dame, Ind., 2001.
- Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution: 1863–1877*. New York, 1988.
- Frazier, E. Franklin. *The Negro Family in the United States*. Chicago, 1940.
- Fredrickson, George M. *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914*. Middletown, Conn., 1987.
- Gillard, John T. *The Catholic Church and the American Negro*. Baltimore, 1929.
- Golden, Janet. *A Social History of Wet Nursing in America: From Breast to Bottle*. Cambridge, 1996.

- Gordon, Linda. *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*. Cambridge, Mass., 2001.
- Grantham, Dewey W. *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition*. Knoxville, 1983.
- Green, Elna C. *This Business of Relief: Confronting Poverty in a Southern City, 1740–1940*. Athens, Ga., 2003.
- Gunderson, Joan R. “The Non-Institutional Church: The Religious Role of Women in Eighteenth-Century Virginia.” *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 51, no. 4 (December 1982): 347–357.
- Gutman, Herbert G. *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925*. New York, 1976.
- Hacsi, Tim. “From Indenture to Family Foster Care: A Brief History of Child Placing.” *Child Welfare* 74 (January/February 1995): 162–180.
- Hacsi, Timothy A. *Second Home: Orphan Asylums and Poor Families in America*. Cambridge, Mass., 1997.
- Hahn, Steven. *A Nation under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration*. Cambridge, Mass., 2003.
- Hindman, Hugh D. *Child Labor: An American History*. New York, 2002.
- Illick, Joseph E. *American Childhoods*. Philadelphia, 2002.
- Jones, Catherine A. *Intimate Reconstructions: Children in Postemancipation Virginia*. Charlottesville, Va., 2015.

- Jones-Rogers, Stephanie. “[S]he could spare one ample breast for the profit of her owner’: White Mothers and Enslaved Wet Nurses’ Invisible Labor in American Slave Markets.” *Slavery & Abolition* 38, no. 2 (April 2017): 337–355.
- Jordan, Winthrop. *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812*. Chapel Hill, N.C., 1968.
- Kantrowitz, Stephen. *Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy*. Chapel Hill, N.C., 2000.
- Kantrowitz, Stephen. *More than Freedom: Fighting for Black Citizenship in a White Republic, 1829–1889*. New York, 2012.
- King, Wilma. *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America*. Bloomington, Ind., 1995.
- Ladd-Taylor, Molly. *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890–1930*. Urbana, Ill., 1994.
- Levine, Lawrence W. *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History*. New York, 1993.
- Lindenmeyer, Kriste. *A Right to Childhood: The U. S. Children’s Bureau and Child Welfare, 1912–46*. Urbana, Ill., 1997.
- Litwack, Leon F. *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*. New York, 1998.
- Lott, Eric. *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*. New York, 1993.

- Mann, Isabel. "Benedictine Missionaries and the Intersection of Race and Religion on Skidaway Island, Georgia." Master's thesis. University of Georgia, 2018.
- Marten, James, ed. *Children and Youth during the Civil War Era*. New York, 2012.
- Martin, Elmer P., and Joanne Mitchell Martin. *The Black Extended Family*. Chicago, 1978.
- Murray, John E. *The Charleston Orphan House: Children's Lives in the First Public Orphanage in America*. Chicago, 2013.
- Mintz, Steven. *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*. Cambridge, Mass., 2004.
- Mitchell, Mary Niall. *Raising Freedom's Child: Black Children and Visions of the Future after Slavery*. New York, 2008.
- Nelson, Scott Reynolds. *Iron Confederacies: Southern Railways, Klan Violence, and Reconstruction*. Chapel Hill, N.C., 1999.
- Ochs, Stephen J. *Desegregating the Altar: The Josephites and the Struggle for Black Priests, 1871–1960*. Baton Rouge, 1990.
- Pearson, Susan J. *The Rights of the Defenseless: Protecting Animals and Children in Gilded Age America*. Chicago, 2011.
- Linda A. Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent–Child Relations from 1500 to 1900*. Cambridge, 1983.
- Prelinger, Catherine M. *Episcopal Women*. New York, 1992.
- Preston, Samuel H., and Michael R. Haines. *Fatal Years: Child Mortality in Late Nineteenth-Century America*. Princeton, N.J., 1991.

- Ramey, Jessie. *Child Care in Black and White: Working Parents and the History of Orphanages*. Urbana, Ill., 2012.
- Roediger, David R. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. New York, 1991.
- Rosen, Hannah. "The Rhetoric of Miscegenation and the Reconstruction of Race: Debating Marriage, Sex, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Arkansas." In Pamela Scully and Diana Paton, eds. *Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World*. Durham, N.C., 2005. 289–309.
- Rosen, Hannah. *Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the Postemancipation South*. Chapel Hill, N.C., 2009.
- Seraile, William. *Angels of Mercy: White Women and the History of New York's Colored Orphan Asylum*. New York, 2011.
- Sibbel, Megan Stout. "Reaping the 'Colored Harvest': The Catholic Mission in the American South." PhD diss. Loyola University, 2013.
- Sobel, Mechal. *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith*. Princeton, N.J., 1979.
- Sweet, Leonard I. "The Reaction of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia to the Secession Crisis: October 1859 to May, 1861." *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 41, no. 2 (June 1972): 137–151.
- Tuttle, William M., Jr. "W. E. B. DuBois' Confrontation with White Liberalism during the Progressive Era: A Phylon Document." *Phylon* 35, no. 3 (1974): 241–258.

- Woods, James M. *A History of the Catholic Church in the American South, 1513–1900*. Gainesville, Fla., 2011.
- Woodward, C. Vann. *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913*. Baton Rouge, 1951.
- Woodward, C. Vann. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. New York, 1955.
- Wolf, Jacqueline H. “‘Mercenary Hirelings’ or ‘A Great Blessing’?: Doctors’ and Mothers’ Conflicted Perceptions of Wet Nurses and the Ramifications for Infant Feeding in Chicago, 1871–1961.” *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 1 (Autumn 1999): 97–120.
- Youcha, Geraldine. *Minding the Children: Child Care in America from Colonial Times to the Present*. New York, 1995.
- Zelizer, Viviana A. *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*. Princeton, N.J., 1985.
- Zmora, Nurith. *Orphanages Reconsidered: Child Care Institutions in Progressive Era Baltimore*. Philadelphia, 1994.