

# RECONSIDERING OUR HISTORY WITH RACE

THE PARISH HISTORY OF RACE AND RACISM TEAM AT GRACE CHURCH, SILVER SPRING

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# AGENDA

## Who We Are

- EDOW and Reparations
- Parish History of Race and Racism Team

## What We've Learned

- Our First Stories: Origins of Grace, Myths and Truths – Civil War Era, Montgomery Blair
- Today: James Battle Avirett



# BECOMING BELOVED COMMUNITY IN THE DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON



A Long-term  
Commitment to Racial  
Healing, Reconciliation,  
and Justice

# BECOMING BELOVED COMMUNITY: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

<b>Telling the Truth</b>	<b>Focus:</b> What is the truth about the role of EDOW in slavery?	<b>Phase 1:</b> Researching Our History
<b>Proclaiming the Dream</b>	<b>Focus:</b> How can EDOW publicly acknowledge things done and left undone?	<b>Phase 2:</b> Sharing the Findings and Recommendations
<b>Practicing the Way of Love</b>	<b>Focus:</b> What practices and learning would transform EDOW in our growth as reconcilers, healers, and justice-bearers?	<b>Phase 3:</b> Embracing Spiritual Practices of Reconciliation and Repentance
<b>Repairing the Breach</b>	<b>Focus:</b> What will EDOW do to bring about repair, restoration, and healing in our Diocese?	<b>Phase 4:</b> Developing the Policy and Implementing the Plan



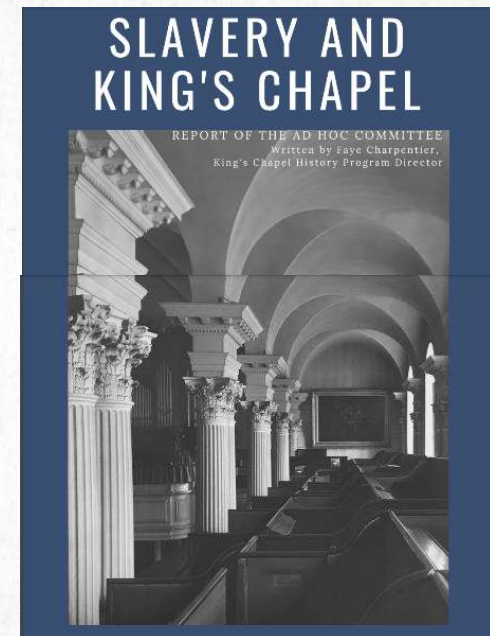
## MISSION STATEMENT

- To reconsider the history of Grace Church by **identifying and centering the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans** in the story we tell ourselves about who we are as a parish.



## OUR FOCUS FOR 2022-23: FIRST YEARS

- Inspired by the Slavery and King's Chapel report from King's Chapel, Boston
- Start with the Origins of Grace
- Ending with the Last Confederate Chaplain Tells All
- Focus: Identify African-Americans associated with Grace during this time and Grace's entanglements with slavery



## ***OUR THIRD STORY: OUR THIRD RECTOR, THE REV. JAMES BATTLE AVIRETT***

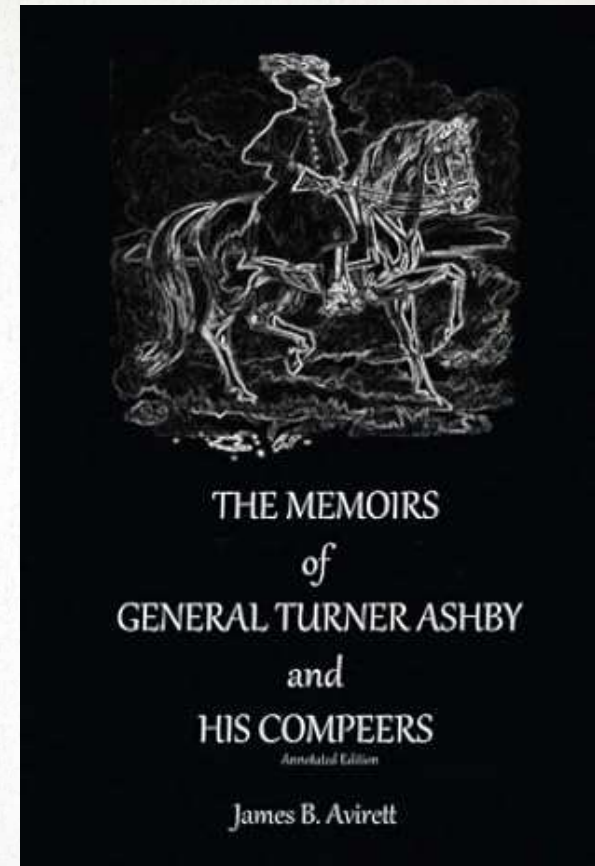


- Before Grace...
- In our parish...
  - Grace
  - Mission churches
- After Grace...
  - Promoted the “Lost Cause”
  - Published *The Old Plantation*

**Where are African Americans in our parish history?**

## BEFORE GRACE

- Born in 1835 at the Rich Lands plantation in Eastern NC
- Studied law at UNC-Chapel Hill (1850-52) and tweaked his name
- Commissioned as the first Confederate chaplain in 1861 (ordained deacon)
- Served under Turner Ashby during the war (memoirs published 1867)
- Directed Dunbar Female Seminary in Winchester, VA (1865-71)



# THE OLD PLANTATION



## FIRST BOOK

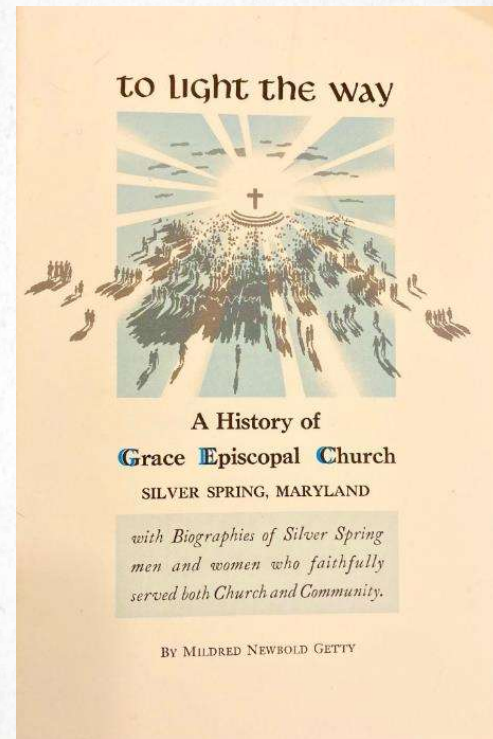
Acknowledged as the foremost biographer of Turner Ashby, Rev. James B. Avirett (1835-1912) was on the move with the 7th Virginia Cavalry brandishing the sword of the Spirit and the sword of corporeal defender of the Valley of Virginia. He was also the custodian of the documents of the unit, and thoroughly qualified to write this intimate memoir of Ashby and those gallant men who rode with him. Originally published in 1867, this book is a “must-read” for every student of Southern history, having been written by a participant of the action and serving as the intimate spiritual advisor to these chivalrous warriors.

## AVIRETT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY: 1872

The Rev. James B. Avirett, Deacon, has relinquished the mission in Catoctin Parish, Frederick County, and is officiating in charge of Labyrinth and Prince George's Parishes, Montgomery County.

## AVIRETT IN OUR CHURCH HISTORY

“[Bishop Whittingham] resigned January 1, 1862 and in that same year, the Rev. James Battle Avirett was called. He accepted and served for fourteen years.”



## AVIRETT IN OUR CHURCH HISTORY

“Mr. Avirett was paid a salary of \$500.00 a year plus the use of the rectory.”

Notable for what is **not** mentioned:

- Confederate chaplain
- Role in reinterring Confederate soldiers



## 1872: FREE SEAT CONGREGATION

This Church is now a free seat one, and the congregations are large. My salary is promptly paid every Sunday, by the weekly offertory. The Church's growth in this Parish, is largely the result of frequent cottage services in the week, which bring the people to Church on Sunday, while in its future, we look hopefully to our Parish School, with 20 paying pupils, now in successful operation, with morning and evening Prayers among them. The Hon. Mont-

## 1872: SERVING TWO PARISHES

gomery Blair has been very kind in riding from his winter home, in Washington city, on alternate Sundays, to discharge the duties of Lay-reader to my people, during the months of January, February, and March, when I was with the Congregation in Rockville. The Congregation has added a comfortable horse and carriage-shed, which has done much in the way of increasing our winter attendance at Church.

*Sligo.*

JAMES B. AVIRETT, *Asst. Minister.*

*Note.*—Pending my Diaconate, in obedience to the Canon, the Rev. John H. Chew, of St. Alban's, by invitation of the Vestry, stands as Rector to this Parish.

## 1873: ESTABLISHES TWO MISSIONS

- St. John's, Norwood
- St. Mary's Chapel of Ease (now St. Mary Magdalene, Wheaton)



## 1874: LEAVES ONE PARISH, ESTABLISHES A THIRD MISSION

- Resigns from Christ Church
- Revives St. Mark's (Fairland) as the third mission of Labyrinth Parish

“...they have been more than gathered in by the intense activity and magnetism of my young brother, the Rev. Mr. Avirett of Silver Spring Parish. He has not only reclaimed the waste places, but made important discoveries of wants that ought to be supplied, which had escaped the notice of others.”

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## ABOUT BISHOP PINKNEY



- Rector, Ascension DC
- Southern sympathizer
- Enslaver
- Refused to offer prayers for Lincoln
- Assistant Bishop to Whittingham (1870)
- Bishop (1879-83)

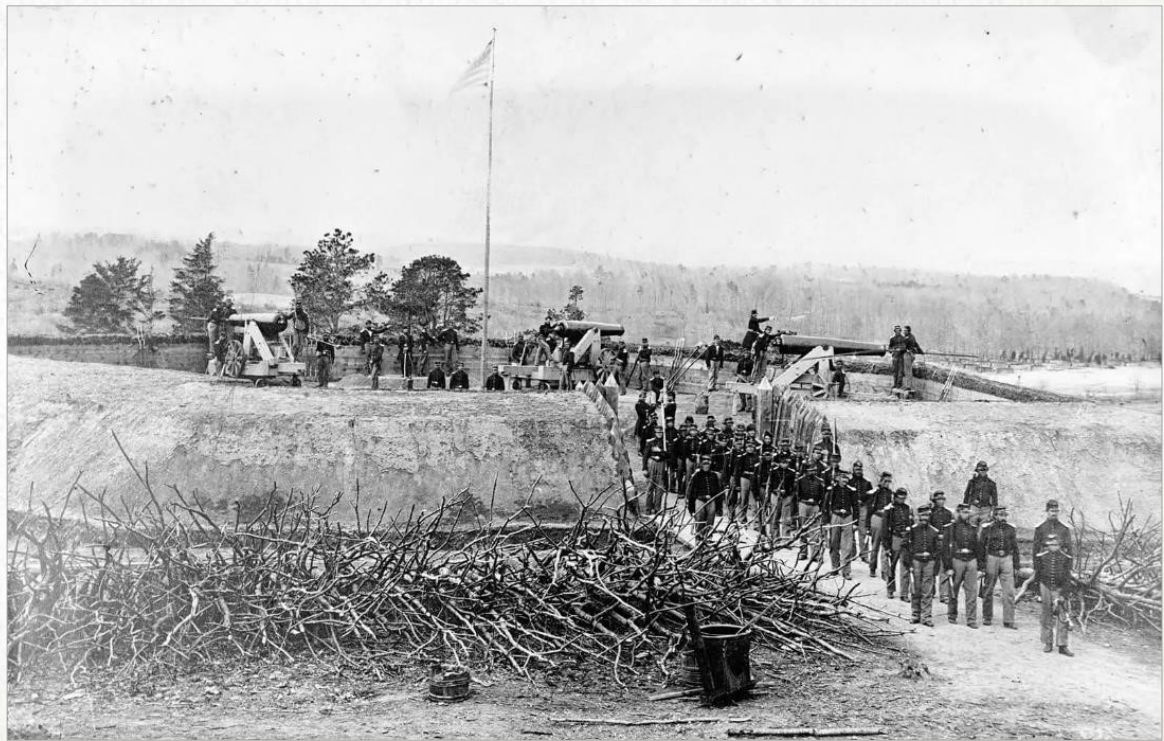
## PINKNEY'S PRAISE FOR GRACE: 1874



“Visited Silver Spring Parish, Grace Church , Montgomery County,.... The hospitality displayed carried us back to the **golden era of Maryland refinement**. It reflected honor upon this noble and enterprising Parish.”

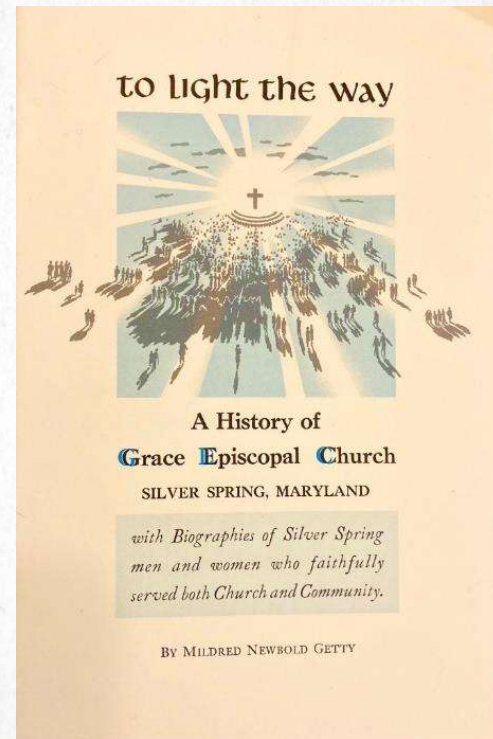
## 1864: BATTLE OF FORT STEVENS

“Jubal Early should have attacked earlier in the morning, but Early was late.”



## MYTH: CONFEDERATES BURIED AT GRACE IN 1864

“After that engagement, **17 rebel dead** were buried in front of Grace Church... Those who **viewed the bodies**, before burial, told that they were impressed by the **extreme youth of the poor lads.**”



## FACT: AVIRETT ARRANGED THE BURIAL IN 1874

### CONFEDERATE DEAD.

Removal of Remains To-day.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES NEAR SILVER SPRING.

on a farm near the fort where they fell. A few weeks ago, friends of the "lost cause" headed by Rev. J. B. Averitt, pastor of Grace (P. E.) Church, situated about two miles above Silver Springs on 7th street road, resolved to gather up the remains and remove them to the above named church yard for interment, and steps were immediately taken to carry the plan into effect and progressed so satisfactorily as to be executed to-day.

## GUESS WHO ELSE WAS THERE?

dued spirits. He alluded to the causes of the war, and justified the south for their action. He once alluded to the willingness of the south to take up arms to defend their homes from invasion, when a voice in the crowd said, "And we are still willing to do it, Dr." He alluded to the south as "our people," and Jeff Davis as "our President." The address occupied about half an hour in the delivery.

After the oration, Bishop Pinckney read a short poem full of tender allusions to the dead, which was well received. A vote of thanks was

## 1875: PETITION TO RENAME PARISH

# Resolution passed to change the parish name from Labyrinth to Silver Spring



## WHERE ARE AFRICAN AMERICANS IN OUR HISTORY?

### *Labyrinth Parish.*

Baptisms, Infant 9 ; Adult 1=10 ; (of which 5 were colored ; ) Confirmed 8 ; Communicants admitted 7 ; lost by removal, death and otherwise 5 ; present number 36 ; Marriages 3 ; Burials 6.

## “LOST CAUSE” OF THE CONFEDERACY

### ~~Myths~~ Lies:

- The Civil War: Fought over states' rights, not slavery.
- The South lost because the devious North had more resources.
- The South was more adherent to Christian values than the greedy North.
- Slavery was more benevolent than cruel.
- The South is a land of “grace and gentility.”



## LOST CAUSE FIRST ESTABLISHED BY...



### Jubal Early

- “I cannot live under the same Government with the Yankee.”
- First president of the Southern Historical Society
- Prime architect of the “highly influential” Lost Cause view of the war and the South.

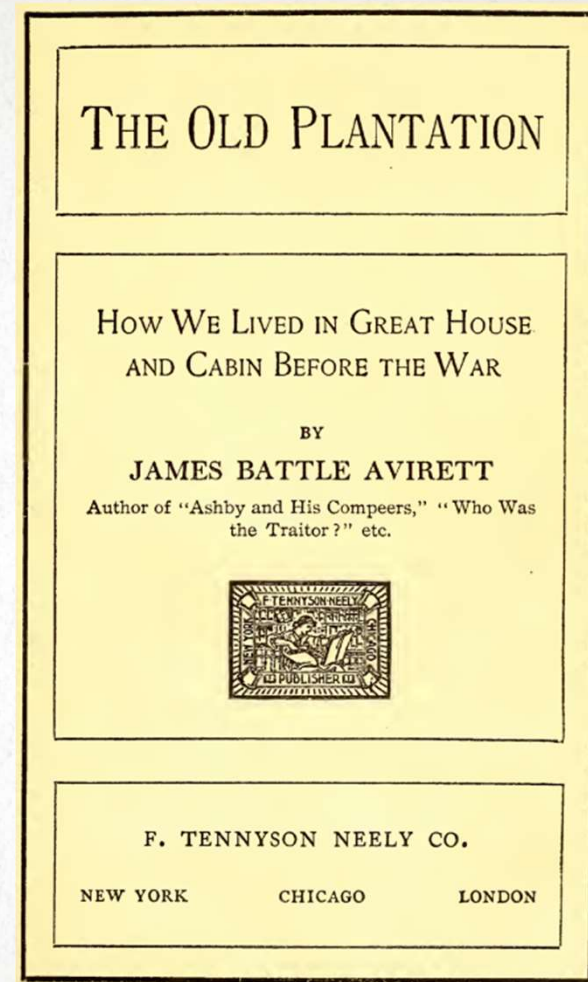
## NO CONNECTION TO GRACE, BUT...



Triptych stained glass window in Grace's balcony, installed in 1968(?), updated in 2017.

## AVIRETT'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE LOST CAUSE (1901)

- Belated response to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)
- Idyllic view of plantation life
- Romanticizes relationships between the family living in "the Great House" and the enslaved people on the plantation
- "The Old Plantation became part of a new southern gospel."



# **“THE ONLY REAL SLAVES”**

THIS VOLUME IS GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED  
TO THE MEMORY OF THE OLD PLANTER AND HIS WIFE—  
THE ONLY REAL SLAVES ON THE OLD PLANTATION  
OF MANY OVERGROWN CHILDREN, SERVANTS  
ON THE ESTATE, FROM 1817 TO 1865—  
THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF  
THE AUTHOR.

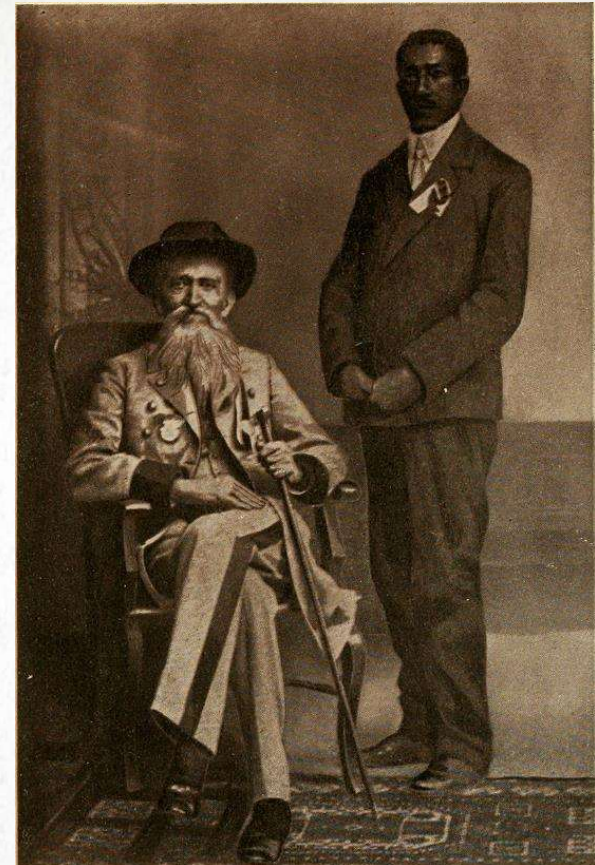
## OLDEST LIVING CONFEDERATE CHAPLAIN TELLS ALL? (1997)

“A story of nostalgia and deceit that goes to the heart of plantation slavery's impact on the southern landscape and how we remember the Old South today.”

- “An ecological donnybrook—the destruction of the long-leaf forest—brought down both the Rich Lands and the Avirett family in 1857, **three years before the Civil War.**”
  - “In reality, the Civil War had nothing to do with the Rich Lands' ruin.... Avirett had to blame some greater power than a dwindling forest.”
  - “James Avirett, it turned out, had **deceived his memoir's readers** just as surely as if he had chiseled another man's name onto his own gravestone.”
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## OLDEST LIVING CONFEDERATE CHAPLAIN AND SLAVERY

- **Irony:** “Avirett’s own depiction of the slave workforce at the Rich Lands undermines any attempt to defend either the Old South or the white supremacy revolt of 1898.”
- “... describing Rich Lands life in careful detail betrayed **his own racist portrayals** of the black families with which he grew up and, as always, end up revealing far more about the master than the slave.”



## MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN ENSLAVED BY FOUNDERS OF GRACE CHURCH

- Daniel Bechet
- Harriet Bechet
- Lloyd Beckett
- Alice Brown
- Bazil Brown
- Charles Brown
- Eliza Brown
- Frank Brown
- Margaret Brown
- Maria Brown
- Mary Brown
- James Brown
- Joseph Brown
- Robert Brown
- Samuel Brown
- William Brown
- Daniel Butler
- Elijah Butler
- Hanson Butler
- Israel Butler
- Teresa Butler
- Lucy Clark
- Eliza Coquire
- Henry Coquire
- David Diggs
- Adolphus Doy
- Basil Doy
- Emma Jan Doy
- John Doy
- Mahlon Doy
- William Doy
- Priscilla Foreman
- Reuben Foreman
- James Gantt
- Phillip Key
- Eliza Moore
- Jasper Poole (Detton)
- Richard Proctor
- James Simms
- Maria Simms
- Sarah Simms
- Hanson Smith
- Henson Smith
- Erasmus Smith
- Jane Toogood
- Jennie Toogood
- Lucy Whitacre
- Moses Whitacre (Whitecan)
- Samuel Williams

## MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN ENSLAVED BY FOUNDERS OF GRACE CHURCH

- Unnamed man, age 63
- Unnamed man, age 60
- Unnamed woman, age 33
- Unnamed woman, age 33
- Unnamed man, age 31
- Unnamed man, age 26
- Unnamed man, age 25
- Unnamed woman, age 24
- Unnamed woman, age 18
- Unnamed woman, age unknown
- Unnamed boy, age 17
- Unnamed girl, age 6
- Unnamed boy, age 6
- Unnamed boy, age 3 and a half
- Unnamed girl, age 2 and a half

## WHAT'S NEXT?

### Next Year

- Stations of Our History
- Oral Histories
- Jump Ahead 100 Years: 1950s-1970s
- Collaborations with Other Parishes and Organizations
- Honoring the Enslaved



## JOIN US IN OUR JOURNEY

**What are your interests?**

- Oral history interviews
- Historical research
- Graphic design

**Do you know of others who might have interest and skills?**

**Do you have materials at home to share?**

**Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase.**

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



**QUESTIONS?**

- *Carol Ubosi*
- *Charlie Bogino*
- *Gabby Whitehurst*
- *June Moore*
- *Karen Johnson*
- *Kevin VanLowe*
- *Laura Donnelly-Smith*
- *Lesley Rogers*
- *Michelle Kalas*
- *Susan Schulken*  
*susan.schulken@gmail.com*

## **PARISH HISTORY OF RACE AND RACISM AT GRACE**