

CHAPTERS IN TRINITY'S HISTORY

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CHAPTER X - STRUGGLE AND SURVIVAL: 1865-1877

With the end of the war, fear and uncertainty gripped the city's population. Governor Andrew Magrath was arrested in May and Union troops were stationed in most of the state's larger towns, including Columbia.

The service for Morning Prayer, then as now, contained a prayer for the President of the United States. As he had since the creation of the Confederacy in 1861, Trinity's rector, the Rev. Peter Shand, prayed for Jefferson Davis. Then, with the occupation of the city, he omitted the prayer altogether. When this came to the attention of federal authorities, Mr. Shand received a letter from the aide-de-camp to Brigadier General Alfred Hartwell expressing "regret" and "surprise" about the missing prayer. Then ensued a series of heated exchanges between Shand and military authorities. The rector argued that he could not use the prayer without the authorization of his bishop. To this, Colonel Nathaniel Houghton, commander of the Columbia garrison, replied that Episcopal clergy all over the state had begun praying for Jefferson Davis without waiting for any word from the bishop. Sensing that the discussions had reached a stalemate, Shand announced his intentions to close Trinity rather than say the prayer without the bishop's permission. To this, the Union colonel replied: "I would advise you not to do so - that is all I can do."

Despite the veiled threat, the rector resolved to close the church. However, his resolve began to weaken as rumors flew through the city that the federal authorities intended to seize the church and turn it over to former slaves. Mr. Shand sought the advice of the leading members of the congregation who advised him to submit and use the prayer.

On June 18, 1865, Colonel Houghton appeared at Trinity. The service of morning prayer proceeded in an orderly, but strained fashion, until the rector began to pray for the President of the United States. Young Emma LeConte, vividly recorded the scene: "At the first words, the congregation rose from their knees. Mr. Shand hurried it as if the words choked him, and at the end, not one amen was heard throughout the Church, not even from the minister who was assisting at the altar."

Survival for the congregation - both collectively and individually - was of paramount concern. In 1866 Mr. Shand wrote a former parishioner who had moved to Georgia about the "sorely afflicted community" that had been "brought quite low as to worldly prosperity." The congregation was able to meet its 1866 and 1867 diocesan quotas but could not make any other contributions "because of the impoverished nature of the congregation."

Church finances were in complete disarray. The collapse of the Confederacy had rendered worthless the church's bank balance of \$130 and two \$1,000 Confederate bonds. The only source of income other than communion alms was pew rentals. During the 1870s, the monthly rental for a pew was \$4 [about \$67 in today's money]. Pew rentals, if and when received, were supposed to cover the salaries of the rector and a sexton, diocesan assessments, and operating expenses.

In 1867 the congregation became embroiled in a three year legal battle with a subcontractor who had supplied materials for the 1861-1862 enlargement of the sanctuary. It was an unpleasant affair which ended with Trinity losing the case. In order to meet the payments due and to pay for a new rectory, the congregation issued \$50 [\$841] bonds at ten percent interest for seven years. In the early 1870s, despite the strained circumstances of most members and the congregation's own onerous debt, Trinity pledged \$1,000 [\$17,750] in a demonstration of faith and hope for the future toward the funding of the University of the South at Sewanee.