“Negotiating Sovereignty : Resistance and Meaning Making at the Bear Mountain Mission in Early-Twentieth Century Virginia”

Erica Nicole Blake

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Jessica Taylor, Chair

Samuel R. Cook

Christina K. Hey

Edward A. Polanco

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ABSTRACT

In 1907, the Episcopal Church established a mission in the heart of the Native Monacan community on Bear Mountain in Amherst County, Virginia. The Bear Mountain Mission operated a church, day-school, and clothing bureau until 1965, when the day-school closed after the integration of Amherst County Public Schools. This thesis investigates how Native Monacan congregants negotiated sovereignty, enacted resistance against the assimilating efforts of the Episcopal Church, and maintained group identity and safety at the Mission during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Monacan congregants utilized the inherently colonial nature of the Mission's structure in ways that allowed them access to influential white Protestant networks, as well as validation by the mission workers who lived in and around the Bear Mountain community. I argue that Monacan people used strategies such as the refashioning of Mission teachings, anonymous and signed letter-writing to the Bishop, and communal protests to ensure that the Mission remained a safe space that worked for their Native community during a time of immense racial animosity.

Using the personal correspondence between women mission workers, church leadership, and Monacan congregants, I examine the inner workings of the Bear Mountain Mission, and the beliefs and actions of mission workers and Monacan people alike. This thesis challenges the history of Bear Mountain Mission, and Native missions within the United States more broadly, to consider the unique and numerous ways that Native peoples enacted resistance strategies in order to ensure that Protestant Missions worked in ways that benefited their communities.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

In 1907, the Episcopal Church established a mission in the heart of the Native Monacan community on Bear Mountain in Amherst County, Virginia. The Bear Mountain Mission operated a church, day-school, and clothing bureau until 1965, when the day-school closed after the integration of Amherst County Public Schools. This thesis investigates how Native Monacan congregants negotiated sovereignty, enacted resistance against the assimilating efforts of the Episcopal Church, and maintained group identity and safety at the Mission during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Monacan congregants utilized the inherently colonial nature of the Mission’s structure in ways that allowed them access to influential white Protestant networks, as well as validation by the mission workers who lived in and around the Bear Mountain community. I argue that Monacan people used strategies such as the refashioning of Mission teachings, anonymous and signed letter-writing to the Bishop, and communal protests to ensure that the Mission remained a safe space that worked for their Native community during a time of immense racial animosity.

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I was fortunate enough to converse with a number of individuals who held knowledge related to the Episcopal side of this story, as well as the Monacan. Thank you to Reverend Scott West at Christ Church Blacksburg for helping me parse out the historical structure of the Mission, and explaining to me Episcopal lingo. Thank you as well to Victoria (Vicky) Ferguson, for your wisdom related to which Monacans in my story might be left out of the sources, and the complexities of how the Mission is remembered today. Lastly, I want to thank Melissa Faircloth

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INTRODUCTION

"Shut out and hidden in the little coves of Bear mountain, where hunting and fishing, gambling and drinking amongst the 'bucks' was the Sabbath amusement, without schools and a gospel, and where 'no Sabbath's heavenly light' ever came for 25 years, could anything else have been expected but heathenism? Strange as it may seem it was not the case, but a new era was about to dawn on them. . ." -Captain Edgar Whitehead, 1896[1]

In the spring of 1922, in an effort to recruit students for the Virginia Episcopal School's summer session, Bishop Robert Carter Jett asked a romantic question: "Did you ever drift in a canoe and watch the setting sun reflect its changing glory on the surface of the James before losing itself behind the western mountains?"[2] By the time Bishop Jett penned his inquiry, the James River and the western mountains that lay beyond had seen thousands of years of history characterized by the rise and evolution of Native chiefdoms, and the development of a distinct Monacan culture in the very Piedmont region where Bishop Jett sat almost a thousand years later.[3] A variety of cultural changes took place in the region around A.D. 1000 including a switch to floodplain agriculture and the construction of distinct burial mounds that continue to serve as an important space for Monacans today, further emphasizing their ancient ties to the land of the piedmont.[4] Though probably not physically present in the Chesapeake region during the time of English arrival and settlement at Jamestown in 1607, the Monacans are mentioned and

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[1] Captain Edgar Whitehead, "Amherst County Indians," *Richmond Times*, April 19, 1896. https://www.virginiaindianarchive.org/items/show/54 (accessed May 14, 2022).

[2] Bishop Robert Carter Jett, recruitment letter for the Virginia Episcopal School, Spring 1922, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1905-1990, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg.

[3] Jeffrey L. Hantman, *Monacan Millennium: A Collaborative Archaeology and History of a Virginia Indian People*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018), 7.

[4] There are thirteen distinct burial mounds throughout Virginia today that are ascribed to the Monacans. These mounds are extremely unique because they do not match any other burial patterns of Eastern Woodland tribes and instead suggest the "long-term stability" of the Monacan people in the Virginia interior. Hantman keenly points out the importance of the modern-day repatriation to the Monacan Indian Nation of human remains taken from these mounds, stating, "The sanctioned return of remains from the mounds to the Monacans in Amherst County extends the historical connection from the earliest mound construction (ca. A.D. 1000) to the present day and acknowledges the geographic scale of the ancestral Monacan world. The mounds are the homes of the ancestors and they embody Monacan history." Hantman, *Monacan Millennium*, 7 and 67-68.

recognized in colonists' writings this same year three separate times.[5] These early mentions are important because most of the information the English received about tribes west of the James River fall line came from the Powhatans, a large and powerful chiefdom in the Chesapeake.[6] The English made contact with the Monacan people along the James River, after hundreds of years of Monacan history had already passed.

In August of the following year, John Smith and a small group of colonists encountered and recorded the words of a man named Amorolek, the only Monacan voice to show up in the colonial record. As pointed out by archaeologist Jeffrey Hantman, Amorlorek survives in the record through the "double filter" of a Powhatan guide named Mosco, and John Smith himself.[7] Still, Amorlorek's account provides great insight into the political relationships of Native Americans in Virginia during the time of English colonization. One particular quote of Amorlorek's stood out amongst the rest, and has been used by scholars to suggest that the Native Americans of the Virginia interior were well aware of the arrival of the English and the potential consequences of their arrival. Smith asked his Powhatan guide, Mosco, why Amorlorek's people attacked the colonists, to which Mosco replied: "They heard we were a people -come from under the world, to take their world from them."[8] Whether or not these words actually came from Amorlorek's mouth might be in question, but the prophetic nature of this statement cannot be denied.

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[5] Hantman, *Monacan Millennium*, 7.
[6] Hantman, *Monacan Millennium*, 7.
[7] Hantman, *Monacan Millennium*, 41.
[8] John Smith, *The generall historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles*, (London: Printed by I. D. and I. H. for E. Blackmore, 1632).

As the forces of settler colonialism took hold throughout Virginia in the seventeenth century, Monacans employed methods of physical distancing, moving further into the Blue Ridge Mountains, something that continued for the next three hundred years.[9] Already existing Native roads cut through the land and were used by traders all the way into the Tobacco Row Mountains and what is today Amherst County. It was in this same area that the first permanent European settlements in the Amherst-Lynchburg area were established.[10] The early eighteenth century saw the increased presence of religious groups in the Virginia interior including Huguenots and other Protestants. These people, along with all settlers in the colony, were allowed deeds to any land they came across. These encroachments proved to be disruptive to Monacan people, and there is evidence that some white settlements had to be abandoned due to Monacan pressure.[11] While the Monacans were on the move during this period, Hantman notes that, "a series of names from seventeenth- and eighteenth- century maps, deeds, and other records reveals a history of Indian presence in the interior. . . These names appear with the first deeds and plats of large plantations in the Virginia Piedmont circa 1730."[12] "Indian Fields," " Indian Camp," and other "Indian" place-names show up over and over in the record, indicating that land maintained proof of Native presence, still visible when settlers came to claim this land as their own.[13]

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[9] It is important to note that the term "Monacan" has a few different associations. At the time of English arrival, the Monacans were a chiefdom consisting of five major groups including the Mannahoacs (Mahocks), Monacans, Tutelos (Toteros), Saponis, and Occaneechis. So along with referring to a confederation of tribes, "Monacan" also refers to a specific group of people. It is useful to recognize that "Monacan" is also a fluid identity that has changed meaning over time. Karenne Wood and Diane Shields, *The Monacan Indians: Our Story*, (Madison Heights: Office of Historical Research, Monacan Indian Nation, 1999), 1-2; Hantman, *Monacan Millennium*, 21.

[10] Peter Houck and Mintcy Maxham, *Indian Island in Amherst County*, (Lynchburg: Warwick House Publishing, 1993), 39.

[11] Wood and Shields, *The Monacan Indians: Our Story*, 19.

[12] Hantman, *Monacan Millennium*, 141.

[13] Hantman, *Monacan Millennium*, 141.

Along with pushing Monacans further into the mountains, these forces, warfare, and political instability in the Southeast region also led Monacan people to move out of Virginia entirely. In the mid-eighteenth century some Saponi and Tutelo groups moved north, eventually joining the Cayuga nation in Canada.[14] Others left Virginia to join other Siouan-speaking groups, in particular the Catawba of South Carolina.[15] This physical retreat away from encroaching settlers also rendered their name, "Monacan," virtually absent from the historical record.[16] This challenge, coupled with colonists' language of erasure and false notions of Indigenous peoples' lack of history led to little recognition of the Monacan people on the part of the colonists. Scholar Samuel Cook notes that, "The fluid construction and readjustment of group boundaries and identity over the years probably contributed significantly to the Amherst County Indians' failure to be recognized by colonial forces as a distinct tribal (and hence political) entity."[17] Many myths surrounding the nature of Monacan identity in Amherst pervaded popular belief over the years, including the notion that they were Cherokee or Seminole. Of course, the designation of "Cherokee" or "Seminole" only entered the lexicon of those who believed the Monacans to be Indians, which, as this story shows, became a site of contestation. By the twentieth century, many people in Amherst believed that since the Monacan community had intermarried with white and Black people, they were no longer Indian. Despite all of these forces, Monacan oral histories and written records confirm that Bear Mountain in the Tobacco Row mountains became a center for the people.

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[14] Monacans continued to move out of Virginia into the twentieth century to escape the intense racial scrutiny and miscegenation laws. Wood and Shields, *The Monacan Indians: Our Story*, 17

[15] Hantman, *Monacan Millennium*, 151

[16] Hantman, *Monacan Millennium*, 8.

[17] Samuel R. Cook, *Monacans and Miners: Native American and Coal Mining Communities in Appalachia*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 64.

The Monacan community further claimed Bear Mountain as an important center with the establishment of the Johns Settlement. Avocational historian Peter Houck's research suggests that the settlement was founded in 1833, though a newspaper from 1895 records it as 1823.[18] Purchased by William Johns for four hundred dollars, the land on Bear Mountain was initially intended to be a place of refuge for William Johns, Molly Evans, their five children, and their children's families.[19] Just ten years earlier, the General Assembly of Virginia passed a law stating that children of Indian-white marriages should be considered "mulattos," a mixed-race identity that limited legal rights and social status for people so labeled.[20] Records suggest that William Johns' mother, Mary, was Monacan, and that his father, Robert Johns, was white. Likewise, Molly Evans' mother was most likely Monacan, though there is no record of her name. Sources again disagree about the heritage of Molly's husband, William Evans, with some stating he was an Englishman and others insisting he was a "Cherokee Indian."[21] While also providing a refuge for these families to live outside of the gaze of judging onlookers, Houck notes that the Johns Settlement also, "became a target for the sting of growing racial unrest."[22] The surnames associated with the settlement, including Redcross, Penn, Evans, Branham, and Johns came to be synonymous with "mulatto" and thus bore the brunt of decades of discrimination.[23] By the 1890's, the notion that the people of Bear Mountain were "a separate and distinct race and colony" permeated local discourse.[24] Even though the community on Bear Mountain continued

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[18] Whitehead, "Amherst County Indians."
[19] A newspaper article from the time says that William Johns and his family, "built a humble dwelling in a little cove making out from the east side of Bear Mountain." Whitehead, "Amherst County Indians"; Houck and Maxham, *Indian Island in Amherst County*, 55.
[20] Houck and Maxham, *Indian Island in Amherst County*, 58.
[21] Houck and Maxham, *Indian Island in Amherst County*, 55-57; Whitehead, "Amherst County Indians."
[22] Houck and Maxham, *Indian Island in Amherst County*, 59.
[23] Houck and Maxham, *Indian Island in Amherst County*, 59.
[24] Whitehead, "Amherst County Indians."

to profess their Indian identity, there were still those, mostly from the white community, who insisted on calling them "free negroes."[25] While drawing the attention of people concerned with racial integrity, Johns Settlement also became a target for the Episcopal Church, a hierarchical Protestant sect with roots in Virginia's earliest colonial government, then as the Anglican church.

The turn of the twentieth century saw the establishment of an Episcopal Mission in the heart of the Monacan community on Bear Mountain. This thesis attempts to navigate the complex history of this Mission during the first three decades of its inception, in order to parse out how power and leadership was negotiated between the Episcopal Church and the Monacan people. The main focus of this thesis is the interactions between the white Episcopal leadership involved with the Mission, and the Monacan Mission community. These interactions were influenced by the hostile white neighbors who lived in close proximity to the Mission, and resulted in an increased desire on behalf of the Monacan people to ensure the Mission existed as a safe space for their community.

The history of the Mission has been examined from a few different angles, starting with contemporary histories written by Deaconesses Isabel Wagner and later Florence Cowan in the 1940's and 1950's, and then retrospectively by Peter Houck in 1984. Houck was a pediatrician and amateur historian in Amherst at the time, and wrote a book titled *Indian Island in Amherst County*. This book effectively traces the history of a distinct group of Monacan individuals occupying Bear Mountain starting with William Johns in 1833 all the way through the establishment and development of the Mission. *Indian Island* provides useful insight into the lives of the "founding fathers" of the Mission, including Arthur Gray, Arthur Gray Jr., Captain Edgar Whitehead, and Jacquelin J. Ambler III. Houck's work, like many others of the time,

[25] Whitehead, "Amherst County Indians."

should be read with the recognition that his characterization of Monacan people as the "mysterious Indians of Amherst" was harmful and misleading.

More recent works on Monacan history have utilized ethnohistorical approaches, forwarding interdisciplinary research and Indigenous perspectives. Dr. Samuel R. Cook's 2000 publication, *Monacans and Miners*, provides ample contextual material for this thesis, including remarkable insight into the settler colonial structure under which the Monacan people lived in Amherst, and grapples with the question of whether or not the Episcopal Mission acted as a "safe space" for the Monacan people. Similarly, Cook's article, "The Monacan Indian Nation: Asserting Tribal Sovereignty in the Absence of Federal Recognition," utilizes ethnohistory to understand the ways in which the Monacan Nation has organized and asserted their rights of sovereignty despite a lack of legal recognitions. Part of this article address the history of how Native communities in Virginia came to be classified as "Negro" on their birth certificates and the ways in which this impacted their legal status, specifically how this status impacted the Monacan community in Amherst. Cook argues that decades of miscegenation laws in Virginia, coupled with the especially egregious actions of Walter A. Plecker and his attacks on Native peoples in Amherst specifically, created an environment which emboldened protestant white people in the County to, "ensure that Indians remained at the bottom of a flourishing semifeudal economy."[26] The research in this thesis backs up this claim, as it presents numerous instances of white hostility on behalf of the neighbors of the Bear Mountain Mission.

One of the most in-depth views into the Mission comes from Melanie Haimes-Bartolf's 2004 dissertation project from Virginia Commonwealth University titled, "Policies and Attitudes: Public Education and the Monacan Indian Community in Amherst County, Virginia

[26] Samuel R. Cook, "The Monacan Indian Nation: Asserting Tribal Sovereignty in the Absence of Federal Recognition," Wicazo Sa Review 17, no. 2 (2002): 98.

from 1908 to 1965." This work analyzes the educational history of the Bear Mountain Mission School, including the types of curriculum taught, and the teaching methods employed by the women teachers. This work argues that the, "highly nuanced social construction of race. . .developed in Amherst County. . . affected the lives of the Monacans in many ways, particularly the education of their children."[27] This thesis builds upon Haimes-Bartolf's conclusion that the broader community in Amherst played a role in the development of the Mission. Haimes-Bartolf contends that the unique racial category imposed on Monacan people at the Mission by the surrounding white community impacted how this community viewed the Mission School and its purpose. My work extends this determination by showcasing how the white community attempted to impact Mission politics as a whole, policing the language used by church leadership and forming relationships with the mission workers who interacted with Monacan people on a daily basis. Haimes-Bartolf's work also provided me with essential primary sources, including term reports from the teachers and mission workers at the Mission School that I was not able to gain access to on my own.

This thesis responds to a large number of historiographical threads, the main one being that of Monacan history specifically as discussed above. However, the other conversations that I engage with warrant mention. Broadly speaking, this project intersects with the history of Native-settler interactions in racialized southeastern U.S. contexts, the history of the Episcopal Church in Virginia and southwestern Virginia specifically, and the history of the Christian missionary efforts in Native communities. This thesis extends the work done by multiple scholars to broaden our understanding of Southeastern Native history by adding a multitude of

[27] Melanie Dorothea Haimes-Bartolf, "Policies and Attitudes: Public Education and the Monacan Indian Community in Amherst County, Virginia, from 1908 to 1965," (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Commonwealth University: 2004), 1.

sources, stories, and conclusions about an episode in the history of the Monacan Indian Nation of Virginia. I consulted histories that grapple with Native-settler interactions in ways that foreground Native interpretations of these events, and used this as a way to understand these interactions in my own work.[28]

The main settler community that my work engages with is the Episcopal Church, and I am indebted to the work of historians who did important research in documenting the many different people and places that the Episcopal Church interacted with in southwestern Virginia.[29] Along with this, the history of Protestant missionary activity amongst Native communities throughout the United States proved useful in contextualizing the history of Bear Mountain Mission.[30] While the cultural landscape of Bear Mountain Mission was indeed unique in its own right, there were similarities to other Native Protestant missions throughout the United States. I found this most notable in the ways that the Western education of Native peoples was prioritized

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[28] Works consulted include: Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014); Juliana Barr and Edward Countryman, *Contested Spaces of Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Michelle LeMaster, *Brother's Born of One Mother: British-Native American Relations in the Colonial Southeast* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012); Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Charles M. Hudson, Thomas J. Pluckhahn, Robbie Franklyn Ethridge, *Light on the Path: Anthropology and History of the Southeastern Indians* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006); Peter H. Wood, Gregory A. Waselkov, M. Thomas Hatley, *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); Joseph M. Hall, *Zamumo's Gifts: Indian-European Exchange in the Colonial Southeast* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

[29] These works include: Katharine L. Brown, *Hills of the Lord: Background of the Episcopal Church in Southwestern Virginia* (Roanoke: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, 1979); Mary Vivian Fish, *History of the Missions of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia* (Roanoke: Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, 1949).

[30] Keith R. Widder, *Battle for the Soul: Metis Children Encounter Evangelical Protestant at Mackinaw Mission, 1823-1837* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999); Edward S. Duncombe, "The Church and the Northern Arapahoes Part III: 'An Indian Tuskegee': The Founding of St. Michael's Mission," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 666, no. 4 (1997); Valerie Sherer Mathes, *Divinely Guided: The California Work of the Women's National Indian Association* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2012); Jan Hare and Jean Barman, *Good Intentions Gone Awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission on the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006); Elizabeth Furniss, *Victims of Benevolence : Surviving the Indian Residential School* (New York: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2010); L. Gordon McLester III, Laurence M. Hauptman, Judy Cornelius-Hark, Kenneth Hoyan House, *The Wisconsin Oneidas and the Episcopal Church: A Chain Linking Two Traditions* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019). Delores J. Huff, *To Live Heroically: Institutional Racism and American Indian Education* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997); Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

alongside their conversion into the Protestant faith, as well as the central role that women missionaries played in these processes. The Mission on Bear Mountain was a space in which these assimilating processes played out according to design, but they accompanied concerted efforts by the Monacan community to foster identity-making. The distinct racial animosity that existed in Amherst County at the Mission's founding, gave more reason for Monacan people to engage with strategies that helped them characterize the Mission as a uniquely Native space.

Lastly, the history of eugenics, and the specific iteration of eugenic thought that targeted Native communities in Virginia, plays heavily into my work.[31] John David Smith's *The Eugenic Assault on America: Scenes in Red, White, and Black* considers the ways that Virginia's State Board of Health, under the leadership of Walter Ashby Plecker, targeted the Native Monacan community in Amherst and Rockbridge Counties specifically. His work informed mine by highlighting how anthropological and "historical" inquiries written about the Bear Mountain Mission in the 1920's, specifically Estabrook and McDougle's *Mongrel Virginians* and Bertha Wailes's "Backward Virginians: A Further Study of the WIN Tribe," fed right into the eugenics movement sweeping through Virginia at the time. This insight also informed my decision to refrain from using *Mongrel Virginians* at all in my work, and only using "Backward Virginians" for a contextual piece of information. Smith's work, along with many others, influenced my framing of the Virginia State Board of Health from the 1910's through the 1930's, and its numerous supporters living near the Bear Mountain Mission, as working directly against Monacan Native identity formation.

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[31] Arica L. Coleman, *That the Blood Stay Pure: African Americans, Native Americans, and the Predicament of Race and Identity in Virginia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); G. M. Dorr, "Segregation's Science: The American Eugenics Movement and Virginia, 1900-1980 (Unpublished doctoral dissertation: University of Virginia, 2000), https://doi.org/10.18130/V32634; John David Smith, *The Eugenic Assault on America: Scenes in Red, White, and Black* (George Mason University Press, 1993).

This project will utilize both ethnohistorical and decolonial methodologies to construct a cultural history of Monacan-Episcopal interactions at the Bear Mountain Mission. Ethnohistory is the practice of using certain anthropological methods to understand the history of non-Western Indigenous communities whose primary source base is limited. This strategy is often used by historians interested in Native history in the Southeast, precisely because sources and interpretations of these communities were clouded by the colonial gaze.[32] Along with ethnohistorical approaches, I chose to use decolonizing methodologies in tandem. For me, this meant an acute awareness of the colonial, biased nature of my source base, and a conscious effort to structure my thesis around Monacan perspectives and responses, even when there were no actual Monacan voices from the record to include. Indigenous voices are often marginalized in the historical record of settler colonial societies. This silencing of the past, as put by Michel Rolph-Trouillot, is another method of control, but in this case it is the control of narrative, something that has consequences so far reaching they could never be sufficiently measured.[33] Colonial violence is felt for generations, and for the Monacans, the archival silencing of their stories played directly into their struggles with gaining State and Federal recognition, and recognition as an Indian tribe in Amherst County for decades prior. The lack of Monacan perspectives in the historical record does not mean that individuals lacked opinions on matters concerning the mission. However, many scholars and historical commentators ignored the experiences of Monacan people in the past, either concluding that they were not present, or simply refusing to put forth the effort required to read against the grain and locate their stories. Many of the experiences of Monacan families who attended St. Paul's, and the children who

[32] Patricia Galloway, *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 11.
[33] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

attended the Mission School, might not ever be known. Nevertheless, an exploration of the cultural politics of the Bear Mountain Mission would be wholly incomplete without the story of how Monacan people resisted full-scale conversion and advocated for their voices to be heard. These are stories worth telling because they are themselves the story of the Mission.

All of these methods are essential in crafting a cultural history - something that takes into account the collective characteristics of the Bear Mountain Mission. Utilizing a cultural history approach will allow me to examine questions of self-expression as well as how white Episcopalians and Monacans, respectively, perceived themselves as performing mutually exclusive identities. It is important to remember however, that difficulties arise when approaching settler-created sources. One of the challenges with utilizing these sources (such as Episcopal publications) to gain understanding into Native experiences is the obvious skewed viewpoints of the authors as well as the larger understanding that these sources already wield too much power. In these cases, utilizing textual criticism and discursive analysis is imperative to uncovering those underlying intents and animating forces. This calls for a "close read" of sources and an understanding of how Euro-Americans used language to classify and characterize Native peoples. Linda Tuhiwai Smith offers a deeper way of analyzing colonial sources and conceptualizing Indigenous research in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*.[34] Smith calls for new ways of "knowing and discovering" the history of Indigenous peoples, as well as for a radical recognition of the ways that Western research itself has harmed, and continued to harm, Indigenous peoples. Patricia Galloway provides a number of other useful strategies in her 2006 work, *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony,*

[34] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999).

Constructing Narrative.[35] Galloway emphasizes looking at "language, rhetoric, and etiquette (displayed in formal settings) as symbolic actions."[36] I utilized this strategy when analyzing certain conversations that took place during formal Confirmation services at the Mission Church. Galloway's work is also in conversation with other theorists who examine resistance strategies of marginalized communities, such as James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak*.[37] These pieces helped complicate the many stories of Monacan's conformity to Episcopal practices in the record by suggesting that conformity in and of itself could have been a strategy.

I chose to organize this project into three chapters, each chapter representing roughly a decade of the Mission's history. This structure should not be viewed as a comprehensive examination of each decade, but rather a loose arrangement that sheds light on how race, identity, and sovereignty were contested and created at the Mission. These factors changed and developed over time, as Monacans responded to various outside forces happening within the Mission, and at the county and state levels. Each chapter highlights a significant event where the Monacan Mission community utilized strategies in order to advocate for their racial and cultural identity, exert control over Mission space, and enact control and influence over Mission politics. The chosen events are indicative of how power dynamics at the Mission evolved over time, and how they impacted Mission politics in the following years. There are a few consistent threads that are present throughout the entirety of this project, including the importance of Monacan group identity at the Mission, Monacan expressions of sovereignty and control over who was allowed to enter and remain in the Mission space, and continued debate over racial and cultural

[35] Galloway, *Practicing Ethnohistory*.
[36] Galloway, *Practicing Ethnohistory*, 15-17.
[37] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak : Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

affirming language. These factors were very much interrelated as, for example, increased racialized debates informed Monacan decisions about whether or not certain individuals should be confirmed into the Mission community. Monacan people responded to these continued debates and attacks on their identity by also increasing the frequency and pointedness of their responses, developing from public assertions of their Native identity within Mission spaces in the 1910's, to direct communication with the Bishop in the 1920's, all the way to communal protests against Confirmation services in the 1930's.

Chapter I identifies the establishment of the Mission and consecration of nearby St. Paul's Chapel as a decisive moment in Monacan and Episcopal history. The choices made and actions taken during the Mission's establishment reflected the racial reality within which Monacan people were living in early twentieth-century Amherst, and set the stage for a unique relationship between the Monacans and the Episcopal Church. When the Mission was established in 1907, the Monacan community had already been dubbed by white Protestant leaders in Amherst a distinct community in need of reform, and this was reflected in the direct, personal approach the Episcopal Church took when it planted the Mission in the spiritual center of ancestral Monacan land, and immediately encouraged mission workers to practice home visits in the community. Likewise, the Monacan people responded to these actions in ways that reflected their lengthy history with the settler population in Virginia. While some Monacan people welcomed and aided the Mission in its early years, this chapter argues that the Monacan people used resistance strategies to ensure that the Mission worked for them in a way that granted them access to certain resources, such as Western schooling and white political and social networks in Amherst and beyond, but did not result in a complete affront to their Native cultural identity.

The Monacan community at Bear Mountain learned over a decade to navigate the structures instilled by the Episcopal Church in ways that benefited their community. By advocating for their Native group identity and interpreting Episcopal practices on their own terms throughout the first few years of the Mission's establishment, the Monacan community ensured that they had the support of church leadership, an influential white community in Amherst County, during a time of increasing racial attacks. Chapter II explores the Mission during the 1920's, a time of increased attacks on Native identity coming from the state level and trickling down into the Monacan community in Amherst. The increased offensive from the state government resulted in justified defensiveness on behalf of the Monacan Mission community, and encouraged them to ensure that the Mission remained a safe enclave. Part of this meant the continued vetting of the white women missionaries who lived at the Mission and worked closely with the community. These women acted as go-betweens for the Monacan people and the surrounding white community in Amherst, and Monacans understood that the way that representatives of the church characterized the Monacan people to outsiders had consequences for their safety. The summer of 1922 was a pivotal moment for the Mission, and the Monacan congregation took pen to paper to voice their complete disapproval of mission worker Isabel Wagner's offensive publication in the *Southwestern Episcopalian* newspaper, in which she described the Monacan mission community in degrading terms. The community wrote directly to the Bishop, and as a result Wagner resigned a few months later. After this event, Monacan people remained outspoken regarding their expectations for mission workers. These reactions by the Monacan people demonstrate how important they felt it was for the Mission to support their Native cultural and racial identity. By ensuring they were respected by Church leadership, they

consequently increased their standing in the minds of other Protestant white people in the county and state.

Chapter III shows how the Monacan actions in the 1920's instilled a confidence in the Monacan congregation, carrying them through the immense hardships that the 1930's brought to Bear Mountain. This chapter focuses on two key events to showcase how Monacan people voiced their concerns over the safety of their community to the Bishop, as well as usurped his authority by engaging in group protests. In January of 1930, the Mission home and chapel burned down, providing an opportunity for the Monacan congregation to voice their distrust of the new missionary, Brightsie Savage, and her close relationship with hostile neighbors of the Mission. A second event in which a Black woman was prevented by the Monacan congregation from being confirmed, indicates how the Monacan people, by the mid-1930's, were bypassing other mission workers and going directly to the Bishop- a clear indication of the increased power that the Monacan congregation had over the Church. This chapter argues that the fallout from the implementation of the Racial Integrity Law, and the Episcopal Church's refusal to recognize the Monacan community as Native in official publications during this time, forced the Monacan people to be more proactive in their efforts to maintain the Mission as a Native-only space.

The *Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records 1905-1990*, housed in Virginia Tech's Special Collections and University Archives, served as the primary source base for this project. To the best of my knowledge, the primary sources related to the Bear Mountain Mission held within this collection had not yet been examined, and my research represented the first attempt to make sense of the plethora of stories contained within these records. There are dozens of boxes within the collection, but each box holds a folder with records from the Bishop's office related to the Mission. This included newspaper clippings, photographs, sermon materials,

personal correspondence between the Bishop, church clergy, missionaries, and sometimes, letters from Monacan members of the Mission. Many of these sources represent the larger church's perspectives on conditions and the guiding principles of the Mission, but by close strategic reading, I was able to gain insight into the motivations and actions of the Monacan community close to the church. The other main source base that contributed to contemporary understandings of the Mission include newspaper articles from *The Southwestern Episcopalian, The Diocesan Journal, The Richmond Times,* and others. These sources were helpful in understanding how the Mission was presented to the public, and how many in the white Protestant community in Amherst spoke about the Mission and the people whom it sought to serve.

As with any project seeking to tell a story related to Native peoples whose voices have been silenced in the record, this work suffers from a quantifiably small number of Monacan voices from the 1910's, 20's, and 30's. However, Monacan people have done tremendous work in the past few decades to capture memories of the Mission within the community, some of which do date back to the 20's and 30's. Rosemary Clark Whitlock's book, *The Monacan Indian Nation of Virginia: The Drums of Life,* is a collection of oral history interviews that provided ample testimony backing up many of the Monacan sentiments that showed up in the Episcopal records.[38] I utilize Whitlock's interviews mostly in Chapter II to illustrate how the Monacan community continued to build community and use their own resources, such as personal homes for gathering spaces and well respected midwives for healthcare needs, alongside using the Mission's resources, towards asserting Native identity.

[38] Rosemary Clark Whitlock, *The Monacan Indian Nation of Virginia: The Drums of Life* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008).

The nature of my source base is the first of four considerations that are important in understanding what this thesis sought out to accomplish, and what it did not. The second consideration comes from the fact that I am an outsider to both the Episcopalian and Monacan communities. My upbringing naturally tethers me closer to the white, Protestant worldview, but before starting this project, I was uneducated in Episcopalian practices and theology. Furthermore, I claim no Native ancestry or personal ties to Native American culture, making this history a true outsider's account. I have done my best to let the sources speak for themselves, providing historical context where needed to aid in the interpretation of various voices. Thirdly, this thesis does not tell the story or speak on the experiences of all Monacan people who were in Virginia during the early twentieth century. Rather, it follows the narrative of those living in and around Bear Mountain in Amherst County, specifically those who were involved with the Mission, during a time period in which many Native people left Virginia for less politically hostile places or more economic opportunity. The last idea that must be considered in this work is that many of the topics discussed in this work are sensitive and traumatic for members of the Monacan community. Many of the interviews in Rosemary Whitlock's work attest to the generational trauma that resulted from the racism and denial of Native identity which ran rampant throughout Virginia in the 1920's and 30's. I tried my best to use care and caution when discussing these topics, as they showed up frequently in my primary source base.

CHAPTER I: The Mission on the Mountain (1907-1919)

"The Consecration services took place on Thursday, October 15th– a day long to be remembered by the Indians, and by all the friends of this interesting and successful mission. The Indians had been speculating for days about the weather, and had been hoping and praying for a beautiful day on which to witness the services so long and eagerly anticipated. Fortunately, the weather was ideal."[39]

The Beginnings

At its core, settler colonialism is an ongoing process of dispossession and control for profit by settler populations over Native communities and the land they care for. The forces of settler colonialism are harmful in their ability to lurk in invisible corners of society, reinventing themselves to fit within ever-changing conditions. As a structure designed to maintain control over political communities, settler colonialism is also a mindset for the settlers themselves, and comes out in their choices. People internalize messages from the world that they inhabit, and members of settler communities conceptualized their world as a space that needed protection and order, because, in order for them to survive in lands that were not their own, it did.[40] For hundreds of years, Native peoples have engaged in acts of resistance towards settler attacks on their culture and livelihoods. By the 1910's, Monacan families such as the Branhams, Evans, Johns, and Penns had for generations engaged in strategies of seclusion, remaining on and protecting their homeland through generational land-transfers.[41] From around the turn of the nineteenth century onwards, Monacans living in Amherst County had leveraged their position within the larger white population by marrying into white families and engaging with the local tobacco economy. This chapter argues that while the Episcopal Church was busy establishing

[39] Reverend Rollins, "The Consecration of the Indian Chapel, Amherst County," *The Diocesan Journal*, Fall/Winter 1908, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.
[40] Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 12.
[41] Woods and Shields, *The Monacan Indians : Our Story*, 20.

structures within the Bear Mountain Mission for the maintenance of control, Monacan responses reflected their own long-established strategies for maintaining sovereignty in the area surrounding the mission. These responses included reinforcement of these long-established practices and Native identity, acceptance of the Episcopal presence, and the remodeling of Protestant practices into something fashioned on their own terms. The events that characterized the first decade of the mission set the stage for a decades-long negotiation between the Episcopal Church and the Monacan community.

The establishment of the Episcopal Mission on Bear Mountain represented an explicit affront to Monacan sovereignty over a traditionally sacred space. However, it did not represent to them an attack on their race or identity. In fact, the Diocese of Southern Virginia at the time recognized the Monacan people as Native, and presented the Mission as a space that belonged to their unique community. Some Monacan people welcomed the Mission because they knew they could gain access to white networks and resources that would otherwise be outside of their reach. As this chapter will show, the Episcopal Church did in fact have motives related to assimilation along Western, Protestant lines that threatened certain aspects of Monacan culture. However, because of the useful resources that came with the Mission, such as the day school, healthcare services, and community gathering spaces, the Monacan people took opportunities to engage with the Mission in strategic ways. While the Monacan community started identifying the Mission as “their” space, they also continued to frame intra-community relations using their own spiritual leaders, their own community medical knowledge, and their own houses as gathering spaces in order to maintain their Native identity.

The Bear Mountain Mission was born on the heels of a great effort on the part of the United States government and Protestant churches to assimilate and acculturate Native peoples

through conversion into the Christian faith and adherence to Christian values. American federal and state policy towards Native peoples in the latter half of the nineteenth century went hand-in-hand with the goals of Protestant humanitarian reformers.[42] These reformers pushed their own agendas through a Congress made up of sympathetic men who also believed in the superiority of a Christian nation and civilization.[43] President Grant's "peace policy," which took effect in 1868, created the Board of Indian Commissioners, a civilian watchdog group made up of Protestant men tasked with overseeing allocation of the funds given out by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.[44] During the 1870's, many Protestant mission schools were contracted out by the federal government, who provided money for each child enrolled. The Office of Indian Affairs issued rules for these contract schools in the 1890's, requiring that all students attend Sunday church services.[45] Many of these schools were located in the Western United States, built for Native peoples in Western territories. For the United States government, the existence of Indians as tribal entities threatened post-Civil War efforts to reconstruct a stable society unified under a shared vision of America. The goal of the government in schooling Indian children became the erasure of a distinct Indian identity, the breakdown of bonds between family members and across generations, and the strengthening of settler claims to the land.[46]

While the Bear Mountain Mission was not a recipient of government funding, the goals of the Episcopal missionaries were very much in line with larger national efforts of assimilation. These pushes for assimilation also coincided with a push for mission establishment among the

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[42] Francis Paul Prucha, *The Churches and the Indian Schools, 1888-1912* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), ix.
[43] Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father : The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 198.
[44] Prucha, *The Churches and the Indian Schools,* 1.
[45] Prucha, *The Churches and the Indian Schools,* 3; *161-162*
[46] Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, xxxi-xxxii.

foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia, the result of Episcopal interest in the eighteenth century. In 1735, the Bishop of London sent Reverend Anthony Gavin to Virginia in order to establish Church of England influence in the mountains of the colony. Gavin's writings show an early interest in outreach to the various communities living in the area that is today Albemarle, Amherst, and Nelson counties.[47] In 1738 Gavin stated that, ". . .hearing that a frontier parish was vacant and that the people of the mountains had never seen a clergyman. . . I desired the Governor's consent to leave an easy parish for this I do now serve. . . I have seven places of service up in the mountains-- I go twice a year to preach in twelve places."[48] Later in the 1700's, a chapel was constructed in Clifford, close to Bear Mountain, and sources indicate that private homes were used for worship throughout the Tobacco Row Mountains, including the home of a "Mrs. Gaines" on Harris Creek, which runs right through Bear Mountain.[49]

The Anglican Church of Virginia was disestablished after the Revolution in 1784, and subsequently incorporated as the Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia. However, the Episcopal Church still underwent a revival during the Second Great Awakening, and founded several new national organizations including the "Protestant Episcopal Missionary Society in the United States for Foreign and Domestic Missions."[50] Between the 1830's and 1860's, the Episcopal Church also contributed to a number of interdenominational volunteer societies, including most notably the American Colonization Society, created to colonize Liberia with former enslaved people who were freed with this purpose in mind.[51] The American Colonization Society acted in favor of those in Virginia who wanted to rid the state of freed persons of color,

[47] Brown, *Hills of the Lord*, 5.
[48] Anthony Gavin in Brown, *Hills of the Lord*, 5.
[49] Brown, *Hills of the Lord*, 21.
[50] Brown, *Hills of the Lord*, 35-38.
[51] Brown, *Hills of the Lord*, 56.

which, during Reconstruction, would have included the Monacan community of Amherst County. [52]

By the turn of the twentieth century, a "mountain mission movement," led by Episcopal Reverend Frederick W. Neve took hold throughout the Blue Ridge Mountains, with the goal of reaching more isolated communities living throughout the Appalachian region. This movement was motivated by the fact that, though public education became mandatory in Virginia in 1870, many children in rural areas did not have the physical access to these schools.[53] Furthermore, Neve was concerned about families that also lacked access to churches and medical care. His rationale stemmed from a settler colonial view under which Western medicine and education were seen as the normative standard. In this context, medical care went along with education because they were both methods through which the state could further expand its influence into families living in rural areas, including Native land. Around 1900, Neve planned the expansion of missions from strictly evangelical efforts to include schooling for the communities in the mountains as well, and successfully incorporated education into seventeen other missions over the years.[54] However, the ultimate goal for these missions continued to be the assimilation of the "mountain people" into a more Protestant, middle-class sphere that aligned with Episcopal practices.

Envisioning Episcopal mission spaces for Native people, Neve strategized that the Church and the school should work together to promote Western schooling in order to gain control over the children, through which the Episcopal Church could then convert the rest of the

[52] Brown, *Hills of the Lord*, 50.
[53] Dexter Ralph Davison, Jr., "Frederick W. Neve: Mountain Mission Education in Virginia, 1888-1948," (University of Virginia ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1982), iii.
[54] Davison, Jr., "Frederick W. Neve," 79.

community.[55] In 1914, leadership at Bear Mountain Mission expressed that the Church desired to pull the Monacan children out of their farming lifestyles and into the realm of "Christian industrialism" with the eventual establishment of gender-specific industrial training schools.[56] The goal of this training was to, ". . . open to many of them the door of opportunity which is now fast closed, because the isolation of their life for generations has left them little opportunities for learning the trades from others."[57] The opportunity to provide class mobility for lower-income minoritized people throughout the Blue Ridge influenced and encouraged the missionary activities of many Episcopalians by reinforcing their own settler values of order and control.

Neve was only one of many Protestant Virginians who believed that the desire to set up missions in mountain communities was divinely guided. The Bear Mountain Mission was founded primarily by a group of Episcopalians and prominent landowners in the Amherst County region, some of whom had connections to the Monacan community. At the turn of the century, many Monacan people lived in poverty, but some had married white landowners before it became illegal to do so and maintained an elevated socioeconomic status in the county. While the main players in the mission's establishment were a group of white men, it is possible that some of the monetary contributions for the mission came from prominent members of the Monacan community who had connections to white landowners in the area. One of these landowners was Captain Edgar Whitehead. He had diverse involvements in Virginia, representing often-conflicting interests. For instance, he was the president of the Virginia Tin Mining and Manufacturing Company in the James River Valley, exploiting the ancestral lands of

[55] Davison, Jr., "Frederick W. Neve," 205.
[56] Thomas Deane Lewis, "Some Virginia Indians," May 1914, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.
[57] Lewis, "Some Virginia Indians."

the very people he came to care about.[58] Whitehead developed a vested interest in the Bear Mountain Monacans, and though he was one of the first people to falsely designate them as Cherokee, a marker that would come to haunt the community as they fought for their rights as Monacan citizens, he was also one of the first who took the time and effort to attempt to connect with the community.[59] Whitehead knew Will Johns and John Redcross, two of the founders of Johns Settlement, and had interactions with a Native community, most likely Cherokee and/or Monacan who lived at Irish Creek in Rockbridge County.[60] Around 1860, Whitehead succeeded in procuring various Methodist and Baptist preachers to travel to "the Indian reserve," likely Johns Settlement on Bear Mountain. Over time, the Colemans, a prominent family in Amherst, donated land**.** Then, a log structure was built by Amherst County which served as a meeting place, an occasional school, and prayer room until the Epsicopal Mission was established in 1908.[61]

While some Monacan people likely did contribute their financial and physical resources, the extent to which they truly desired an Episcopal mission in their space is up for debate. Arthur Gray Jr., one of the founders of the Mission, was under the opinion that, "the greatest need of the mission" was the construction of "a churchly little chapel," which was accomplished the summer of 1908, the work being done "partly by subscriptions and work from the 'Issues' themselves. They have given about $150 in cash. . . besides over $100 in labor and hauling."[62] The term

[58] Houck and Maxham, *Indian Island*, 90.
[59] Houck and Maxham, *Indian Island*, 92.
[60] Houck and Maxham, *Indian Island*, 90.
[61] Amherst County provided a part-time teacher for the school in the 1890's named S. H. Walkupp- though the use of the building as a school was sporadic due to difficulties finding and keeping teachers, as well as a lack of transportation. Florence Cowan, "St. Paul's Mission, Bear Mountain," *The Southwestern Episcopalian*, November 1956; Haimes-Bartolf, "Policies and Attitudes," 111; Houck and Maxham, *Indian Island*, 104.
[62] Arthur P. Gray, Jr., "Mission Work Among Some Cherokee Remnants in Virginia," *The Diocesan Journal*, September 1908, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.

"Issue" was used as a way to denote a perceived racial distinctness characterizing the Monacan people living near Bear Mountain, and was widely understood to be a derogatory term. The origins and specific meanings of this term are discussed further in the following pages. *The Diocesan Journal* stated proudly that, "The Indians themselves contributed in money and labor nearly $300—a generous sum, considering their resources. This is sufficient to show their interest in the church which they love to claim as their own, and in which they show great pride."[63] It is possible that some of the Monacan families who had white ancestry were more sympathetic to the establishment of the mission and the Protestant message and donated their resources, but the exact names of those who donated their money and labor has not yet been uncovered.

A handful of newspaper articles from this time speak to the fact that the Monacan people had experience with Christianity, and it seems that some in the community came to embrace it early on. Accounts of Monacan desire for exposure to Christianity served missionaries seeking justification for their efforts, pushing to the fringes Native experiences with generations of denigrating racial dynamics inside of Episcopal church spaces. The first article to mention Monacan interest and involvement in the establishment of a church on Bear Mountain was an 1895 piece written by Captain Whitehead. Whitehead claimed to receive a message from an old woman, sometime around 1860, who lived in Johns Settlement, also on Bear Mountain, stating that she "felt a great desire to hear the gospel preached once more, and begged that singing and prayers be held at her house."[64] The term "begged" might very well be an embellishment on the side of Whitehead, but he did state that this woman had been a member of a local Methodist

[63] Reverend Rollins, "The Consecration of the Indian Chapel, Amherst County," *The Diocesan Journal*, Fall/Winter 1908, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.
[64] Unknown Author, "Amherst County Indians," *Richmond Times*, April 19, 1896, Newspaper Archive.

church from 1820 to 1835, leaving the church with other Indians who vowed, "they would never enter a church again."[65] This was due to the fact that starting around the 1830's, Indians were required to sit with enslaved individuals whenever attending church services.[66] While relations with their white neighbors were often poor, relations with Black neighbors were strained as well, as neither wanted to be associated with the other. After the request was made by this woman, Whitehead claims that her son helped construct an arbor to be used by preachers "in the Indian reserve."[67] Whitehead's choice of terminology is notable because it indicates that, at least within some circles who were familiar with the Monacan people on Bear Mountain, Monacan Native identity was recognized as authentic at the turn of the century.

In order to better understand the significance of the establishment of Bear Mountain Mission in 1907, it is useful to briefly explore the social and racial realities under which Monacan people were living at the time. The isolation faced by many rural communities in the first few decades of the twentieth century caused many to turn inward, adopting, as historian William Link puts it, "insular attitudes and [suspicions] of any intrusions by outsiders."[68] This was true for both the Monacan community, which had long practiced strategies of seclusion, as well as for their white neighbors. The racial classification of Monacans as "free issues," sometimes shortened to "issues" or "free issue n******," was widely agreed upon by the larger white community in Amherst County.[69] The proliferation of this label had deep roots, with most people believing that the mixture of Native blood with that of white and Black happened "soon

[65] Unknown, "Amherst County Indians."
[66] Unknown, "Amherst County Indians."
[67] Unknown, "Amherst County Indians."
[68] William A. Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place: Schooling, Society, and Reform in Rural Virginia, 1870-1920,* 13.
[69] Unknown Author, "A Virginia Tribe of Indians," *Southern Churchman*, January 4, 1908, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.

after their arrival" to the area.[70] The consistent labeling of Monacans as "cross breeds" or "half breeds" by their white neighbors obviously created sharp tensions, causing a distrust to form on either side.[71] An article from 1908 plainly states that, "The white people have usually judged the whole tribe from the lowest element among them. . . They have many stories of injustices and hardships in their past dealings with their white neighbors."[72] Miscegenation laws also impacted the ways in which Monacans interacted with their Black neighbors, creating tensions as Monacans did not want to be labeled as Black, and Black people did not want to be categorized as "tri racial."[73] These widely held beliefs would come to play a huge role in the cultural politics of the Bear Mountain Mission, from its earliest days through the remaining decades.

Structures of Authority

The first decade of the Bear Mountain Mission established the organizational structure and expectations for how the Episcopalians and Monacans were to interact and engage with leadership of and physical space of the Mission. Diocese leadership set up the Mission to strategically reinforce the power of the Church within the Monacan community, and limit Monacan involvement in decision-making and administration. Bishop Alfred M. Randolph and his Coadjutor, Bishop Beverly Dandridge Tucker, served as heads of the Diocese of Southern Virginia, and consequently heads of the Bear Mountain Mission, until the Diocese split in two and formed the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia in 1919.[74] The Bishops' main duties were to

[70] Unknown, "A Virginia Tribe of Indians."
[71] Unknown, "A Virginia Tribe of Indians."; Unknown Author, "Ceremony at Mission is Mountains of Amherst County, Va," *Baltimore Sun*, October 17, 1915, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.
[72] Unknown, "A Virginia Tribe of Indians."
[73] Cook, *Monacans and Miners*, 86.
[74] The Randolph and Tucker families both held immense financial and political capital built from slavery and white supremacy. Both families traced their lineage back to the "First Families of Virginia," wealthy, socially prominent English men who settled along the James River. The Randolph dynasty owned thousands of acres of land throughout Virginia, which was used as plantations and worked by enslaved Africans. Alfred M. Randolph, born in 1836, attended William and Mary College and the Virginia Seminary, graduating from the latter in 1858, and served as a

provide support to the Mission, and make occasional visits in order to hold Confirmation services. These Confirmation services were important because they provided the Church community with a tangible number of Indian souls that they could claim belonged to the Episcopal persuasion. Sometimes news of the Confirmations reached the newspapers, like in 1915 when the *Baltimore Sun* found it important to report that Bishop Randolph confirmed eleven people at the "Indian Mission in the mountains of Amherst County."[75]

Together, these spaces provided the Monacan community with meeting places and resources that they might not have had otherwise, complicating their relationship with this quintessential settler colonial structure whose initial goal was to preside over their, "future physical, intellectual, and spiritual development."[76] The Bishops worked closely with the various rectors of Ascension Episcopal Church, which was located about five miles from the Mission. The rectors changed over the years, but they were expected to provide Sunday services once a month at St. Paul's Chapel at the Mission.[77] These men also performed baptisms in the community, presumably during their monthly visits to the Mission. The same *Baltimore Sun* article reported that Reverend George E. Zechary baptized eighteen people by October of 1915.[78] While the organization of this Mission reflects similar methods of structure amongst other Episcopalian missions during the time, the unique situation of the Monacan people as an Indian community in Virginia with limited access to public services necessitated their reliance on

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chaplain for the Confederate Army during the Civil War. U.S. Federal Slave Schedule records suggest that he personally owned one female slave, aged twelve, in 1860. The Tucker family also owned plantations and enslaved Africans throughout the state. Beverly D. Tucker was educated in Europe and Canada, and served in the Confederate Army before graduating from the Virginia Seminary. *1860 U.S. Federal Census- Slave Schedules*, Spotsylvania County, Virginia, Town of Fredericksburg, p. 10, line 35, accessed through Ancestry.com; Brown, *Hills of the Lord*, 86-87; 100-101; Lyon Gardiner Tyler, *Men of Mark in Virginia: Ideals of American Life; a Collection of Biographies of the Leading Men in the State*, (Washington: Men of Mark Pub, 1906), 324-325.

[75] Unknown, "Ceremony at Mission in Mountains."

[76] Gray, "Mission Work Among Some Cherokee Remnants in Virginia."

[77] Florence Cowen, "St. Paul's Mission, Bear Mountain," *The Southwestern Episcopalian*, November, 1956, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.

[78] Unknown, "Ceremony at Mission in Mountains."

Mission resources. The Mission maintained St. Paul's Chapel as a space for Episcopal services, a day-school for Monacan children, and a clothing bureau.[79] Over the following decades, the various Episcopal men and women who passed through the Mission used the services provided in this space to report evidence of these same concerns about Monacan health, intelligence, and religiosity.

The consecration of St. Paul's Chapel on the site represented a success on behalf of Protestants towards addressing these concerns about the Monacans; the Episcopalians were finally engaging in a "hitherto neglected work."[80] The chapel, named after "the first great missionary to the Gentiles," was constructed on the other side of Falling Rock Creek from the old log schoolhouse, right at the base of Bear Mountain.[81] The site was chosen explicitly because it was, "about the center of the territory occupied by the tribe."[82] This acknowledgement of tribal land occupation was penned by someone in a 1908 Episcopal newspaper and suggests that at least some people in the Amherst community viewed Bear Mountain as belonging to an Indian tribe at a time when the "Indianness" of the Monacan community was contested. While it had been common practice for colonists, and white settlers after the American Revolution, to denote places as "empty" on maps in order to justify expansion, this recognition suggests that by the early twentieth century, this practice of Native erasure was not necessary for white encroachment.[83] In fact, Gray believed that nature itself provided the "beautiful site" on Bear

[79] Clothing bureaus were common throughout Episcopal missions in the Blue Ridge, popularized by Frederick Neve in the early twentieth century. At first, clothing bureaus often provided clothing to people for free, but over time issues began to arise with accusations of favoritism and uneven distribution. This prompted Neve and others to instill a fee-based system, the justification being that it enabled the people to feel that, "transactions were carried out honestly." Davison, "Frederick W. Neve: Mountain Mission Education in Virginia," 109.
[80] Rollins, "The Consecration of the Indian Chapel."
[81] Arthur Gray, Jr., "The Indian Mission, Amherst County," 1911, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.
[82] Unknown, "A Virginia Tribe of Indians."
[83] Barr and Countryman, *Contested Spaces of Early America*, 20.

Mountain for the sole purpose of supporting a church.[84] The Mission went straight to work spreading their message to the community, and on October 15, 1908 a consecration service for the chapel took place. This consecration service was important for the Episcopal Church as it solidified and formalized their intention to remain firmly in the community through an Episcopal-controlled space. The Church hoped that this date would be, "a day long to be remembered by the Indians," and nature seemed to be on their side, providing them with beautiful weather which "made it possible for more of those interested to come out to the services."[85] Of those in attendance, most were Monacan families, though non-Natives from farther distances came as well.

The consecration service introduced for Monacans the key Episcopal players at the Mission and established the centrality of religious rites as performed by regional Episcopal leaders. Reverend W. E. Rollins, chaplain of nearby Sweet Briar College, preached a sermon titled, "Characteristics of True Worship." We might infer from the title that this sermon preached against what Protestant evangelists had observed related to the Monacan community's own religious practices. In the eyes of the Episcopalians, the Monacan reception to the consecration service was one of "earnestness" and "reverence."[86] The day consisted of an afternoon lunch on the lawn, followed by Holy Communion and Confirmation services. The Confirmation of Monacan children when they turned eleven or twelve became a common practice at the Mission in the following years. This service was also crucial in introducing Bishop Tucker to the community, who preached a sermon and presided over the Confirmation class.[87] Though the

[84] Gray, "Mission Work Among Some Cherokee Remnants in Virginia."
[85] Rollins, "The Consecration of the Indian Chapel."
[86] Rollins, "The Consecration of the Indian Chapel, Amherst County."
[87] Brown, *Hills of the Lord*, 100 and Rollins, "The Consecration of the Indian Chapel."

various Bishops who were in charge of the Mission only visited Bear Mountain a few times every year, their visits were viewed as important occasions in which people were strongly encouraged to attend. Furthermore, the Bishop acted as the point of contact for the Reverend of St. Paul's Chapel and the various Deaconesses when it came to issues at the Mission and the hiring and replacement of workers.

By and large, the most consequential, and perhaps the most important structure for the larger goals of the Church, was the Mission School. The Mission School was one of the first facets of the Mission to begin operation, with J. J. Ambler III, the man whose family donated land for the Mission, teaching some of the first classes in the School before a mission worker could be procured. The Mission school was the place where the assimilation policies of the United States government, and the evangelical goals of the Church came together. As established at other mission schools across the country, the Episcopalian leadership intended to reach the larger Monacan community through the education of their children. Arthur Gray waxed poetic: "There is sometimes one child in a family who reads the Bible daily to the less fortunate older people."[88] Even before the Mission was established, the value of a literate child to the goals of the Protestant project did not go unnoticed. In 1896 Captain Whitehead recognized that within the Monacan community there were opportunities for the education of children, "who would in a few years return home to lift their people to a higher plane of moral and religious life."[89] The school became the pride of the Mission, and they regularly noted that without the school, the Native Monacan children would have no place to go to receive an education.

[88] Gray, "Mission Work Among Some Cherokee Remnants."
[89] Unknown Author, "Amherst County Indians,"

Monacans interacted primarily with Episcopal women, who took on a maternalistic role within the Mission and became increasingly important in asserting the power structure of the Episcopal Church over the Monacans. Along with caring for and teaching children at the Mission School, the Deaconesses were also charged with executing regular home visits to the families' of students, and maintaining that children receive what the Church deemed to be adequate medical care. The early twentieth century saw the rise in this phenomenon of white women acting as caregivers and authorities over Native bodies and homes within Christian missions across the world.[90] Some scholars argue that this was another phase of colonialism in which white women were the ones doing the supplementary work for various governmental and Church aims of conversion and assimilation. The personal writings of the many women who passed through the doors of the Bear Mountain Mission revealed maternalistic attitudes. Many of these women viewed themselves as being better than their Native neighbors, and were under the assumption that, in terms of childcare and behavioral development, they knew better than the children's families.

Monacan people responded to the maternalistic behaviors of the mission workers by either ignoring their suggestions, or, for those they deemed more tolerable, allowing them into their homes. Monacan homes on Bear Mountain were usually small one or two room log cabins that housed multiple generations. By entering these spaces, mission workers were inserting themselves into very intimate spaces. Deaconess Cornelia Packard first began conducting home visits to Monacan families in January of 1908. She traveled throughout the Tobacco Row Mountains, going from house to house "reading and praying and teaching them the simple truths

[90] Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*."

of the Gospel. . .”[91] During Packard’s five years at the Mission, she continued this practice of going in and out of homes to teach the Gospel, enabling her to reach families who might not have otherwise had access to come to the site on Bear Mountain. Many Monacan families lived scattered around the “hollows and foothills” of the mountains, and the roads to the Mission were often unkempt and vulnerable to changing weather conditions.[92] When Packard’s health failed in October of 1912, Deaconess Lucy Bloxton took her place and continued the practice of home visits. One commentator in 1914 said she, “visits diligently among the people, always watchful of opportunities to serve them.”[93] Even with these home visits, the Rector of Ascension Church at the base of Bear Mountain, Reverend Thomas D. Lewis, recognized that they were unable to reach “all the Indians.” To remedy this, the Church set out to construct a house for the mission workers, as well as hire a second Deaconess to aid Miss Bloxton.[94] By constructing a house next to the church, mission workers were able to permanently live in the structure and more easily establish roots in the Monacan community. The location of the Mission, at Falling Creek, provided the mission workers with access to the various families that lived on the mountain.

Medical care was another service offered by the Mission and carried out by the mission workers. The continued concern with providing medical care for Monacan congregants reflected not only the maternalistic attitudes of missionaries, but also larger concerns related to eugenic control. Operating under the belief that the Monacan people were deficient in their understanding of health, and incapable of understanding newer medical discoveries, the Church saw an opportunity to act as the bearers of this information. Though this interest in the health of

[91] Gray, “Mission Work Among Some Cherokee Remnants in Virginia.”
[92] Unknown Author, “A Virginia Tribe of Indians.”
[93] Lewis, “Some Virginia Indians.”
[94] Lewis, “Some Virginia Indians.”

Monacan children grew after the 1910's, both Packard and Bloxton are reported to have worked with the ill and aging to some degree. During the summer of 1908, Miss Packard took a practical course in nursing in Richmond and organized some kind of "health club" to discuss related matters. Additionally, the Church was involved in arranging for several cases of disease and injury to be treated at the University of Virginia hospital in Charlottesville.[95] The concern for Monacan health came from authorities higher up in the Mission as well. One account reported in 1908 that Arthur Gray, Jr. was ". . . gradually interesting the members in questions concerning their health."[96] This same year he called on the Virginia State Health Commissioner, Dr. Ennion G. Williams, and asked him to visit the Mission and speak on issues concerning public health measures, specifically the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis. Gray wanted him to physically come to the Mission, but due to Dr. Williams' schedule, he instead recorded a lecture on a phonograph for the use of the Mission at their convenience. Dr. Williams intentionally used "simple" language per the direct request of Gray who stated that the Indians would only understand the lecture if it was put to them "in the simplest form."[97]

Early Monacan Responses

Glimpses of Monacan involvement and acts of resistance at the Mission during its early years are present within the written archival record, and what is revealed are individuals who sometimes accepted the Protestant cause, but often refashioned Mission teachings to best suit their own needs. Along with this, Monacans continued to voice their beliefs related to their cultural identity - that of Native. Monacans' earlier interactions with non-Episcopalian

[95] Gray, "Mission Work Among Some Cherokee Remnants in Virginia."
[96] Unknown Author, "Heart-to-Health Talk With Virginia Red Men," *Dispatch*, August 25, 1908, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.
[97] Unknown, "Heart-to-Health Talk With Virginia Red Men."

missionaries demonstrated Monacans' selective desire to adopt Protestant practices; reports of these interactions only buttressed Episcopalians' racist and regional justifications for missionary involvement. Monacans had come face-to-face with various Protestant groups intent on changing the ways that they were living. For example, during the 1880's, a Methodist preacher was active on Bear Mountain; his legacy, according to Arthur Gray, was that he brought to the settlement the practice of a Christian marriage ceremony, "a hitherto almost unknown rite."[98] The fact that Gray recognized the marriage ceremony in the community almost thirty years later suggests that some Monacan couples engaged in the Christian ceremony. Later in the century, a Baptist religious bookdealer, or "colporteur," reportedly baptized forty to fifty Monacans, a large number which indicates that this bookdealer was afforded a lot of sway within the community.[99] The Episcopal church continued to publish stories of Monacan curiosity and involvement in the Protestant cause, since much of the funding for the Mission came in the form of donations from churches across the country.[100] An article in the *Southern Churchman,* published in January 1908, alludes to "one very devout old 'Indian Man," who had conducted Sunday-school and prayer meetings in the community for the number of years.[101] This article published part of a letter claimed to be sent by him which states:

> "My sunday School is getting along very well. There have been sum drop off in the number of puples owing to the fact that we have always closed on the last Sunday in September heretofore although we are having a farely good turnout yet and have very large congregations at the prayer meetings which we have been carrying on every Sunday night. And the day School is getting on all right. There is from 12 to 21 Schollars and everything seems to be working well. I would be glad if it was possible that you could be with us sooner than Christmas but the Lord will be with you."[102]

[98] Gray, "Mission Work Among Some Cherokee Remnants."
[99] Gray, "Mission Work Among Some Cherokee Remnants."
[100] Rollins, "The Consecration of the Indian Chapel, Amherst County."
[101] Unknown, "A Virginia Tribe of Indians."
[102] Unknown, "A Virginia Tribe of Indians."

This account indicates that some people in the Monacan community were well versed in Christian traditions, and goes on to state that the people insisted on playing some of their favorite "familiar hymns" on a phonograph.[103] As pointed out by the Episcopal author of the *Southern Churchman* article, these meetings also acted as social gatherings for the Monacan community where they shared "impromptu concerts" and "intensely dramatic" readings of various Bible verses.[104] It is significant that these gatherings were led and organized by the Monacan people specifically, as they reinforce the fact that Monacans desired autonomy over their religious expressions. A few months later, Arthur Gray Jr., published a similar story in the *Diocesan Journal*, but instead of one "old Indian man," he claimed there were "two old 'Indian Men'" involved in these services.[105] Gray goes on to notes disappointedly that, "These meetings were more in the nature of social gatherings and fighting grounds, or at best of reading lessons and musical concerts, than religious gatherings. They had a cheap, primitive little phonograph to lead them in their singing,"[106] While Gray and the previous commentator noted some similarities between these gatherings and Protestant practices, they both continued to emphasize the fact that they were less-than, "primitive," and in need of reform.

Episcopalians' reports about Monacan services underemphasized the established roles of lay leaders in community and church spiritual matters, and in emphasizing Native identity, roles which continued in the Mission space. It is quite possible that at least one of these "Indian Men," particularly the one whose letter was published in the *Southern Churchman*, was named James Bowman Knuckles. Monacan historians acknowledge that Knuckles was, "a spiritual leader who interpreted scriptures, encouraged children to stay in school, conducted Sunday School classes,

[103] Unknown, "A Virginia Tribe of Indians."
[104] Unknown, "A Virginia Tribe of Indians."
[105] Gray, "Mission Work Among Some Cherokee Remnants."
[106] Gray, "Mission Work Among Some Cherokee Remnants."

and served as an informal lay reader in the church, performing services when the minister was not available."[107] Though some sources indicated Knuckles was active later in the decade, he very may well have been active at the time of the Mission establishment. James Bowman Knuckles was born in Amherst on December 11, 1890, making him eighteen years old when the Mission opened its doors. James' parents, Obidiah and Susan Ann Knuckles, lived for a time on land deeded to them by Richard Johns, who before that was deeded the parcel from William Johns in 1857. Both of his parents and many of his siblings were unable to read or write, but by the time James turned twenty in 1910 he was identified in census records as literate and working as a gardener at Sweet Briar Institute. Though Knuckles was identified by census officials as "mulatto," when given the chance to identify himself on his own terms on his World War I draft registration card, Knuckles stated he was an "Indian." By 1920, Knuckles was married to Daisy Johns and lived in a rented home with her and his three children, all of whom are listed as "Indian" in census records of the time.[108] Knuckles' ties to the Johns Settlement, and his ability to read and write elevated his status within the community. His legacy became that of a respected leader, whom people were able to go for guidance on a number of matters. He acted as one of the first advocates for the Monacan community within the Bear Mountain Mission structure, interpreting scripture and conducting religious gatherings as he saw fit. Knuckles asserted his Native identity by refusing to accept the Protestant practices being espoused by the Church, instead insisting that further action be taken in order for them to make sense to the Monacan people and their worldview. The fact that the Episcopal Church never stopped him from

[107] Wood and Shields, "The Monacan Indians."
[108] By 1940, James Bowman Knuckles owned a home worth $1,000. He lived with his three children, his daughter-in-law, and his grandson. At first, the census recorder listed his family as "Neg" for the "Color and Race" section, but the records indicate that someone came in and crossed out the designation beside James and Daisy and put "W" for white. James B. Knuckles, Year: *1940*; Census Place: *Court House, Amherst, Virginia*; Roll: *m-t0627-04244*; Page: *11A*; Enumeration District: *5-5*.

conducting his own ministries is notable, as oftentimes one had to be ordained a "lay eucharistic minister" in order to perform these activities.

The Episcopal Church circulated other stories of Monacans' "responsive and receptive spirit" towards Protestant practices.[109] Gray emphasized that the people showed interest in the church services, prayer books, and hymnals, even helping one another to read the material. He also noted that those who were sick in the community showed gratitude towards having prayers read by their bedside, though this gratitude was "not shown in ordinary ways."[110] For the Episcopalians, gratitude came in the form of Monacan admittance that they were eager to learn the ways of the Church that they did not yet understand. Although many Monacans during this time came to accept and adopt Episcopal practices, individuals like Knuckles also continued to assert their Indian identity over any other label, and started to claim the Mission space as something belonging to them. In 1908, Reverend Rollins stated that the Monacans "loved to claim [the church] as their own. . . in which they show great pride."[111] Crucially, Monacans were making their intentions to have some control over the space known to Church leaders.

The first decade of the Mission was marked by the establishment of Episcopal structures that came to dominate the activities of mission workers for the next several decades. Monacans saw the role of the Bishop became that of symbolic figurehead, while they connected more frequently with the Deaconesses, though these relationships were colored by maternalistic tendencies. The Mission School and Church spaces, and the Deaconesses who worked there, continued to prove their importance for the Church, as the services they carried out and offered to the community provided inroads for the agenda of assimilation. Meanwhile, Monacan people

[109] Gray, "Mission Work Among Some Cherokee Remnants in Virginia."
[110] Gray, "Mission Work Among Some Cherokee Remnants in Virginia."
[111] Rollins, "The Consecration of the Indian Chapel, Amherst County."

began participating in Episcopal services at St. Paul's and sending their children to the Mission School. In 1908, about thirty of the over one hundred and fifty children in the Monacan community were enrolled at the Mission school.[112] Since records are scant throughout the rest of the decade, there is no clear indication as to how many children or families were involved with the Mission throughout the following years, but by the 1920's, attendance at both the church and the school had increased. While Monacan participation was lower during the first decade of the Mission, there was still substantial interest shown on behalf of some community members when it came to interpreting Episcopal scriptures. The people sought Monacan leaders like James Bowman Knuckles for guidance when it came to reconciling Episcopal religious teachings with their own spiritual beliefs, and the community as a whole made it clear that they saw the Bear Mountain Mission as a space that very much belonged to them.

As they had in previous interactions with missionaries, the Monacan people strategically used the Mission to their own advantage during the first few years of its inception. This was an important precedent, as it ensured the survival of Monacan traditions amidst the assimilating practices of the Church in ensuing years. Monacans used the Mission resources for their own good, as a place for Monacan children to gain a Western education without having to forgo their Native identity by attending the Black schools in Amherst County. Conversely, ongoing resources and guidance of spiritual leaders who interpreted Episcopal scriptures outside of the Church space, meant that the Monacans avoided a complete reliance on the Episcopal Church while also strengthening their established community values and leadership.

[112] Haimes-Bartolf, "Policies and Attitudes," 124.

CHAPTER II: Fighting for Selfhood and Safety (1920-1929)

"Miss Wagner should be a little more careful about how she speaks about our mission people."
-Elsie Branham (Monacan) to Bishop Jett, July 11, 1922[113]

Changes at the Turn of the Decade

As the October air crisped and the leaves of the forests started changing, Deaconesses Isabel Wagner and Jane Boyd Neely worked hard to prepare warm soup and crackers for over fifty Monacan children sitting in the day-school at Bear Mountain Mission. Wagner was in high spirits coming off the heels of a successful visit by Bishop Jett and Confirmation of eleven persons who Wagner herself had prepped in the months and years prior. Almost three hundred Monacan people attended this special ceremony, traveling from miles around to commune together and listen to the Bishop speak. The Mission was in full swing, but it was not long before Wagner realized the daunting scope of the work in front of her. She was concerned about feeding so many children (there were about fifty children enrolled in the Mission School in 1921) and wrote to the Bishop stating, "I don't know how long our strength will hold out; it's much more work than I thought it would be."[114] Still, like many of the women mission workers before and after her, she held onto hope, holding tightly in particular to instances where she believed the Monacan people showed gratitude for her and the Church's work.

Wagner and Neely managed to get through the school year, continually providing warm meals for the children who attended. As winter closed in on Bear Mountain and the day school shut down as it often did due to foul weather, Wagner took a trip to Bristol, West Virginia. While she was away, some Monacan men in the community gathered a winter's supply of firewood for

[113] Elsie Branham to Bishop Jett, July 11, 1922, Box 3, Folder 25, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[114] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, Oct 1921, Box 3, Folder 22, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Wagner's mission house. When she returned, she included this detail in a letter to Bishop Jett. It was seemingly one of the only things maintaining her morale.[115] The friendly gesture shown by the group of men towards Wagner, while notable at the time, was not indicative of how all of the Monacan people felt towards Wagner or the other mission workers during the 1920's. The wood was brought to Wagner in November of 1921, but in just a few short months, Wagner would be asking for an immediate transfer away from Bear Mountain.

Wagner remarked in her letters that she felt she had not accomplished what she set out to do when she started working at the Mission in 1917. She was always discontented when she had to close the school for a month every winter because of the rough and dangerous mountain conditions, and frequently worried about Monacan members' abilities to physically reach the Mission. Despite this, she tried her hardest to seek opportunities "for the Church" in her work with the children and with attending to the community's healthcare needs.[116] Both the first and second decades of the Mission saw Episcopal church members strategically weave themselves into the Monacan community with the ultimate goal of assimilation and conversion. During the Mission's implementation in the 1910's, Monacan people pushed back against this by interpreting Christian scripture on their own terms, and continuing community gatherings outside of the Mission space. However, the 1920's saw far more explicit Monacan resistance to mistreatment by and reliance on the leaders of the Mission.

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[115] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, November 30, 1921, Box 3, Folder 22, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[116] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, November 30, 1921, Box 3, Folder 22, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

In 1920, the Diocese of Southern Virginia split in two, and the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia became the administrative body over Bear Mountain Mission. With the advent of a new Diocese, came the arrival of new faces to Bear Mountain Mission, something that stirred up contention and highlighted the way that the Monacan people vetted those who came into their vicinity on Bear Mountain. The work of eugenicists like Walter Plecker inside of government bodies like the State Board of Health posed a threat to Native people and identity throughout the state of Virginia– and these rising racial tensions increased the stakes at the Bear Mountain Mission. It was more important now than ever for the Mission workers to be on the Monacan people's side, because the white neighbors who lived near the Mission were emboldened by Jim Crow and the passage of the Racial Integrity Law in 1924 to question Monacans' Native identity and sovereignty over Bear Mountain.

The increased racial tensions encouraged some missionaries, like Isabel Wagner, to share their distasteful opinions on Monacan identity with a wider Episcopal audience. When the Monacan people responded to this publication, it marked the first of many instances where Monacan people asserted their right to report to the Bishop in the same way that the mission workers and rectors did. This chapter argues that the summer of 1922, when the Monacan community responded to Wagner's publication, was a pivotal moment for Mission politics, and resulted in a strong campaign by the Monacan people to ensure the Church represented them to outsider white communities in a dignified, affirming way. This moment also maintained the community that was already in place in the 1910's, strengthening it by way of a public assertion of communal interest. The politics at the Mission were never the same after this event, and Bishop Jett's writings indicate that he never forgot the negative impact his missionary's words had on the people. Direct communication with the Bishop developed into a powerful tool that the

Monacan people used to enact tangible change at the Mission, enabling the Bishop to hear from Monacan congregants firsthand as it related to the behavior of mission workers or Mission conditions in general. The changes that took place around and in the Mission during the 1920's ensured that personal relations between the Church and the Monacan community were in flux. The friendly gesture shown by the group of men towards Wagner, while notable at the time, was not indicative of how all of the Monacan people felt towards Wagner or the other mission workers during the 1920's. The wood was brought to Wagner in November of 1921, but in just a few short months, Wagner would be asking for an immediate transfer away from Bear Mountain. Whether or not a certain mission worker was accepted by the members of the Monacan community depended on their ability to foster a safe space during a time of abhorrent racism. Complicating this were the personal dispositions, motivations, and actions of the different mission workers, some of whom were tolerated by the Monacans more than others.

The explicit racism institutionalized in the Commonwealth of Virginia and Amherst County, and upheld by the white communities surrounding Bear Mountain pushed the Monacan people closer towards the Episcopal Mission, which acted as a shield from the outside world. This strategy was an extension of the strategies employed by the people who created and sought refuge in the Johns Settlement during the 1860's. Monacan people had, for decades, recognized the benefits of partnering with sympathetic whites in order to gain validation by the county and state. However, racism, coupled with white-saviorism and a legacy of colonialism, meant that reliance on the Mission for anything other than basic services like healthcare and education would mean the forfeiture of some cultural heritage. In order to preserve this heritage and Native identity, and because of the way that race and identity were being interpreted within the Mission, the Monacan people continued to identify themselves as a distinct group but did so in

new ways. This included imparting their own meanings and traditions wherever they could within the Mission, becoming more outspoken within the Mission space, and writing directly to the Bishop of Diocese of Southwestern Virginia to voice complaints and recommendations which would protect their community and influence external conversations about their Indian identity.

Rising Racial Tensions

Since the original founders of the Mission chose to center their establishment on the very place regarded as a sacred home to the Monacan people, offering up enticing services such as education and healthcare that the community had, for decades, been denied, it is no wonder that many Monacans chose to engage. The concept of choice in this story is tricky because personal agency is diminished in settler colonial spaces. Furthermore, systemic discrimination rendered the Monacan community, and many other communities throughout the Blue Ridge, unable to access basic services through the State. Walter Plecker's impact on the Monacan Nation is a part of a painful history that has been told, lived through, and analyzed by a number of people. While a full study on Plecker is beyond the scope and purpose of this thesis, it is important to understand how his actions created a dangerous ripple with consequences for daily experience within the Mission in the 1920's.

Plecker was the first director of the State Bureau of Vital Statistics, a body that operated within Virginia's State Board of Health, and he worked in this capacity from 1916 until 1940.[117] His career-defining piece of legislation, which some sources argue he "single-handedly marshaled through a willing state legislature," was the Virginia Racial Integrity Law of 1924.[118]

[117] Houck, *Indian Island*, 1984, 72-74.
[118] Houck, *Indian Island*, 1984, 73.

This law prohibited the intermarriage of "pure" white people with people of non-white groups, including Native people. Plecker did *not* however believe that there were any racially "pure" Native peoples left in the State, and he utilized his new law to classify all Native peoples in Virginia as "colored."[119] Plecker spent much of his life in Amherst and Rockbridge counties targeting Monacan people specifically, creating his infamous "Plecker hit list," and copying down the surnames of Monacan families who, through his own research, he determined to have more than one-sixteenth "mulatto" blood.[120] He sent this list to local doctors, school officials, and registrars in order to ensure that they would never be allowed to enter white facilities.[121] Though there were numerous Monacan families who had substantial Native ancestry, Plecker found it easy to hone in on the families that had been associated with the Johns Settlement on Bear Mountain, and subsequently the Episcopal Mission. Plecker's reign of terror created immeasurable damage within the Monacan community by convincing many it was better to abandon their cultural heritage and identity.[122]

Many people blame Walter Plecker for the passage of the *Racial Integrity Act* and all of the horrors that came after, but it is pertinent to recognize that Plecker was supported by an entire settler colonial state and country that saw Native Americans as a group that had successfully been assimilated, or eradicated. The "science" of eugenics had also been on the rise since the beginning of the twentieth century in the United States, influencing a growing number of miscegenation laws by the 1920's.[123] As Plecker became more confident in his ability to isolate and foster fear within the Monacan community, so did the people who lived on the perimeters of

[119] Cook, *Monacans and Miners,*106.
[120] Houck, *Indian Island*, 1984, 73.
[121] Houck, *Indian Island*, 1984, 73.
[122] Cook, *Monacans and Miners,* 111.
[123] Cook, *Monacans and Miners*, 104

the Mission. The prejudice of the white community living in and around Bear Mountain amplified in the 1920's. This caused Monacans to lean closer to the Mission both for safety and validation within the white settler society during the beginning of the 1920's, while the constant scrutiny of the Mission's work upset the Mission workers and prompted a defensive response.

The racial and cultural identity of the Monacans had been a point of contention for white people in the area for decades. Bertha Wailes, influenced after reading Estabrook and McDougle's 1926 book *Mongrel Virginians*, itself a eugenicist "study" that negatively impacted Monacan families for decades after, visited the Mission in 1926 and spent time interviewing both the mission workers and Monacan members. One man recounted to Wailes in the 1920's that his grandfather recalled disputes over the Monacans' origin as early as the turn of the nineteenth century. His grandfather remembered that the "white laboring class hated them and called them "nig***s,' and the educated whites on the other hand, generally admitted Indian blood."[124] By the 1920's, this distinction between laboring class hatred and educated class acceptance went by the wayside, but this phenomenon was captured by one of a handful of researchers who conducted interviews amongst Monacan people during the decade. After talking with white neighbors of the Mission, Wailes concluded that "real hatred" for the Monacans often came from "whites not sure of their own position" and threatened by Monacan landowners.[125] While many Monacans were tenant farmers living on the land of others, some did own their own farms, and it was these families in particular that upset one man interviewed by Wailes.[126] She concluded that,

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[124] Bertha Wailes, "Backwards Virginians: A Further Study of the WIN Tribe," (Masters Thesis, University of Virginia, 1928), 10.
[125] Wailes, "Backwards Virginians," 77.
[126] By the turn of the twentieth century, and into the 1920's, many Monacans lived as tenant farmers on the land of their white neighbors, commonly in one-room log cabins. To avoid being homeless, many Monacans had no choice but to work as tenant farmers, working the land as family units, both to pool incomes and as a way to strengthen community bonds and express solidarity. Unknown, "Some Cherokee Remnants in Virginia;" Unknown, "A Virginia Tribe of Indians;" Cook, "The Monacan Indian Nation: Asserting Tribal Sovereignty in the Absence of Federal Recognition," 97; Cook, *Monacans and Miners*, 98-99.

"He views them as competitors, perhaps, for some of their few farms owned are in his neighborhood. As members of a servile class they might not arouse his ire, but as holders of land they are out of their place and too near his own."[127] Thus, it was not only laboring whites, but those in more privileged positions who found reason to dislike the Monacans. In Wailes' interviews, she found that some viewed the activities of the Mission with "suspicion," arguing that it was "ruining the Issues."[128] Others spoke out against the clothing bureau, which provided used clothing to members of the Mission at a price, calling it "unnecessary."[129] White people not involved with the Mission viewed many of the Episcopal Church's actions towards the Monacan community with confusion and disbelief. They viewed the Episcopal Church as providing services to Monacan people that they could have accessed elsewhere, such as the segregated school system for Blacks and whites.

Both Monacan and Episcopalian commentators in the 1920's lumped the "unfriendly white neighbors" together as a group, and seemed to agree that they disliked the Mission. This identification of the white neighbors as a group indicates an "us and them" mentality, where even the white missionaries viewed themselves as distinct and separate. The white community was very attuned to the goings-on at the Mission, and they expressed their opinions openly to the mission workers. When Deaconess Ella Pier reflected on her first year as head mission worker at Bear Mountain towards the end of 1923, and the troubles she faced doing "the hardest kind of work," she attributed many of her struggles to the "prejudiced white neighbors."[130] Pier wrote that, "they say that they have never seen any good come out of this Mission."[131] Clearly these

[127] Wailes, "Backwards Virginians," 77.
[128] Wailes, "Backwards Virginians," 33.
[129] Wailes, "Backwards Virginians," 40.
[130] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, Fall 1923, Box 6, Folder 22, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[131] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, Fall 1923, Box 6, Folder 22, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

white neighbors saw things differently than the white mission workers, who were typically proud of what they accomplished with the church services and the school.

In response to what she considered a challenge from these neighbors, Pier noted that she decided to live "in" their community, "as to make the critics eventually, if not at once, respect us and our methods."[132] During the school year, Pier lived on-site at the Mission, but during the winters, when she was there alone, she boarded with or lived near some white people "some distance from the Mission."[133] This suggests that at least one mission worker, and perhaps others, were consciously making the decision to continue a dialogue with those opposed to their missionary efforts amongst the Monacans. The previous year however, Reverend Lewis accused some neighbors of actively trying to turn Monacan people against the mission workers, something that must have hampered reconciliation attempts.

The rising racial tensions in Amherst during the start of the 1920's expressed itself not only in the growing vitriol between the Mission and the white neighbors, but also in the increasingly authoritative stance that Episcopal leadership took on Monacan healthcare. The author of a 1923 article in *The Southwestern Episcopalian*, potentially one of the mission workers, suggested that the ability of Monacan people to care for themselves was sorely inadequate, thus driving them to rely on whatever the Mission could provide. While it is true that the Monacan community faced barriers to receiving health services from the County, people like Lucian Branham, who was ten years old in 1920, remembered that, "Our medical needs were taken care of by our own people."[134] While some Monacans certainly utilized the Mission for

[132] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, Fall 1923, Box 6, Folder 22, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[133] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, Fall 1923, Box 6, Folder 22, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[134] Interview with Lucian Branham in Whitlock, *Drums of Life* 39.

healthcare needs, many continued to take advantage of available medical care within their own community. This community-sourced knowledge was important in that it fostered independence from the Mission. Numerous sources attest to the fact that the Monacan people had a rich body of medical knowledge held by elders in the community, especially women, and that this knowledge was actively being passed down to the younger generation in the 1920's. There were a number of Monacan women who acted as midwives and nurses for the community during this decade, including Kate Johns, also known as "Midwife Kate," and Abigail Brown.[135] Kate Johns delivered around five hundred babies, and continued to silently remind her people of their Native identity for her entire life, slyly registering many as "Indian," some of which slipped through the cracks of the State Board of Health.[136] Abigail Brown was also a midwife and nurse, and frequently attended lectures on midwifery given by the County.[137]

These women intimately knew Bear Mountain and the natural landscape surrounding the Mission, and by familiarizing the children with the mountain, they inadvertently taught them that there were other safe, sacred spaces besides the Mission. In 1920, when Lucian Branham was ten years old, he remembered Johns and Brown taking him and the other children who were ten and older into the woods to teach them about herbal remedies. Both of these women were often present when doctors from the nearby towns made a visit to the Mission. Branham remembered that:

> "Whenever one of those doctors did come to minister to one of us, they always called one of the midwives to act as nurse and to carry on treatment during the days to follow until the person was back on their feet. Those two women would watch what the doctors did and make notes, and they could do it themselves the next time around. The women also knew a lot about herbs the doctor's didn't know."[138]

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[135] Whitlock, *Drums of Life*, 67; Wailes, "Backwards Virginians," 21.
[136] Various interviews in Whitlock, *Drums of Life*.
[137] Wailes, "Backwards Virginians," 21.
[138] Interview with Lucian Branham in Whitlock, *Drums of Life*, 39.

Beyond the work of these specific individuals, many other women in the community acted as health providers for their own family units. Dena Branham, a young child in the 1920's, recalled that her mother was well versed in herbal medicine: "She was our doctor and our drugstore. She made her own medicines from nature's supplies."[139] By 1928, when Bertha Wailes visited the Mission and conducted interviews, a "local physician" recognized that there were three Monacan women who performed midwifery and nursing duties for the community.[140] This illustrates that even towards the end of the decade, when many Monacan families had moved out of State, and others renounced everything having to do with their Native heritage, the drive to maintain sovereignty over health and body continued. Further, the education and healthcare provided by these women promoted family and community bonds and Native identity autonomous from the Mission space.

While the Monacan people leveraged the Episcopalians' status and resources when it came to providing a safe haven from prejudiced neighbors, the costs of leveraging the Mission for healthcare services backfired. It reinforced rising concerns over Monacan peoples' health and physical bodies at the expense of their established healthcare systems and control over outsider perceptions of their Native identity. These concerns came most explicitly from the Episcopal Church in the form of official publications, as well as in the personal correspondence between mission workers and the Bishop. The impetus for these commentaries, and for the Mission to extend their health services came from more than just a desire to extend access to healthcare to an underserved community, but more so from the belief that Monacan people were inherently deficient in health because of their Native American identity, or, in the minds of many in Amherst County and Virginia during the time, their "mixed" blood. Monitoring and trying to

[139] Interview with Dena Branham in Whitlock, *Drums of Life*, 55.
[140] Wailes, "Backwards Virginians," 21.

control the healthcare practices of the Monacans was another angle through which the Episcopal Church tried to acculturate the community, and another way that the goals of the Church provided justifications for the goals of eugenicists working for the State.

The language in public dialogue and private correspondence used by Episcopalians showed that they thought about Monacan healthcare–that provided by Monacan women–as deficient in both practical and spiritual care. During June of 1922, a worker from the State Board of Health visited the Mission in order to assess the types of health services provided to the children at the Mission School. Reverend Lewis sent a summary of the worker's opinions to the Bishop, stating that she "was much interested in the people," and suggested she might be able to provide an appropriation from the State Board of Health if the Mission was able to procure a nurse.[141] Rev. Lewis said the Mission would only provide a nurse if they were able to find one "actuated by the Christian and missionary motive," suggesting that the procurement of a nurse for the children was conditional.[142] The Church was willing to provide healthcare, but even the healthcare workers were to be complicit with the evangelizing mission.

The following year, an unknown author published a piece in *The Southwestern Episcopalian* related to the Mission and health services, titled, "To Heal the Body; To Save the Soul."[143] This essay represents the underlying assumptions about Native healthcare in the United States and the Christian belief that in order to best spread the Christian mission to Native peoples, they had to make sure they were in good health first. The article stated this plainly:

> "On the teaching, along with the beside instruction, lies the point of contact which should prove invaluable to the main purpose of the Mission. To heal the body: To save the soul. Is not this the goal of a Christian mission?"[144]

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[141] Reverend Lewis to Executive Secretary, June 27, 1922, Box 3, Folder 2, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[142] Reverend Lewis to Executive Secretary, June 27, 1922, Box 3, Folder 2, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[143] Unknown Author, "To Heal the Body; To Save the Soul," *The Southwestern Episcopalian*, 1923.
[144] Unknown, "To Heal the Body; To Save the Soul."

By providing healthcare to the Monacan people, the Church's deaconesses attempted to replicate the roles of Monacan women healers, and increased their face-to-face contact, providing more opportunities for ministry and conversion. The author of this article specifically lays out all of the measures being taken to promote health at the Mission. During the 1920's the Mission had some sort of "loan closet" with medical supplies freely available, and was actively teaching preventative healthcare to the children in the day school.[145] Other classes were offered for adults at the Mission including "Home Nursing" for women, and first aid for all adults.[146] Reverend Lewis and the various Deaconesses, who frequently provided updates on Mission activities to the Bishop, seldom mentioned these classes during the first few years of the 1920's. This does not necessarily mean that they were not happening, but they might not have been as frequent or utilized by the Monacan community as the author of this article might suggest. Concerningly, the article also states that the Mission engaged in, "an active campaign for better babies," a reference to competitions in which babies were judged on their health and intellect - indicating that mission workers engaged with the language of the eugenics movement sweeping Virginia during the 1920's.[147]

We have no way to measure the number of people who utilized these services provided by the Mission, but the author downplayed the ongoing services provided by Monacan women and families, "With no doctor nearer than five miles, with rough, steep roads, and because our people have little money to pay for medical attention many of the sick have to depend entirely upon the scanty knowledge of their own uninstructed families or upon the conflicting advice of

[145] Unknown, "To Heal the Body; To Save the Soul."
[146] Unknown, "To Heal the Body; To Save the Soul."
[147] Campaigns for "better babies" were popular at State fairs throughout the United States in the early twentieth century. These competitions operated under the guise that non-white people were genetically inferior to whites, a sentiment that was espoused by Walter Plecker and the State Board of Health in the 1920s. Gregory Dorr, *Segregation's Science: Eugenics and Society in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 50.

neighbors and friends."[148] During the twenties, there were three white doctors in the area, but most Monacan people did not have the transportation needed to visit them.[149] While it was common for doctors to make home visits in rural Virginia, there is little evidence that doctors were visiting the Bear Mountain area prior to the establishment of the Mission. Monacan women healers, such as Kate Johns and Abigail Brown, continued to fill healthcare needs on a local level.

The Mission seemed able to locate the funds and donations needed to occasionally transport children from the Mission School to Charlottesville and Lynchburg for various procedures. In the fall of 1921, Deaconess Wagner noted that Mr. Reifsnyder sent in money, allowing the Mission to provide railroad fare into the city. J. J. Ambler's wife, Theresa Ambler, worked with Wagner during this time to personally accompany the children, and sometimes adults, on these trips. On November 30th, 1921, there were a few Monacan people actually Charlottesville being treated including: "a woman who is recovering from a serious operation," and "two boys one with a useless right hand and the other with club feet."[150] The following week, five more children were to be transported to Charlottesville by Theresa Ambler. When Deaconess Ella Pier came on board in 1922, she utilized her skills as a trained nurse to care for the health of the children directly, though she still sent children to Lynchburg for "tonsil and adenoid operations."[151] Also at the request of Deaconess Pier, an annual chest clinic was held at the Mission in 1924, 1925, 1926, and 1927.[152]

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[148] Unknown, "To Heal the Body; To Save the Soul."
[149] Interview with Lucian Branham, in Whitlock, *Drums of Life*, 39.
[150] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, November 30, 1921, Box 3, Folder 25, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[151] Wailes, "Backwards Virginians," 39.
[152] Wailes, "Backwards Virginians," 19.

These stories of Monacan individuals utilizing Mission resources are important, because they reveal that Monacan peoples' interactions with the Mission were not an all or nothing venture. As is true throughout the entirety of the history of the Mission, both the Episcopal Church and the Monacan people gained and lost in respect to their various goals. While the Episcopal Church gained more access to the Monacan community through offering its various services, they lost out on garnering complete support of the larger white community in Amherst County by continuing to refer to the Monacan community as Native- something that they disagreed with. Similarly, the Monacan people retained important cultural knowledge by maintaining their own healthcare systems and networks at a time when the Episcopal Church tried to overtake them, but their usage of certain health services meant accepting the perception that their traditional healthcare system was somehow inadequate.

Monacan Native Identity at the Mission

From its inception, up until the early part of the 1920's, the Mission was considered by the Church to belong, in some part, to the "Indians" of Bear Mountain. The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, under Bishop Jett, frequently used the terms, "The Indian Mission" or "Christ Indian Mission" as descriptors. Identity affirming language was used by the Church to foster feelings of ownership over the Mission amongst the Monacan people. This had the effect of further tying the Monacan community to the Episcopal cause of assimilation and conversion. Over the decades, the Monacan people took this invitation for ownership seriously, increasingly advocating for sovereignty and representation within the Church as the years went on. During the summer of 1922, while writing to a man who served as a mission worker for a short period, Bishop Jett explicitly recognized that St. Paul's Church belonged to the Monacan people. Jett wrote, "Give my love to the people as you move among them and say that I am looking forward

to my next trip for a visit to their church."[153] Bishop Jett most likely had other reasons for using this language besides an authentic belief that the Monacan people held sovereignty over the Mission. He could have, for instance, recognized the power in cultivating a sense of Monacan ownership over the space as this would have encouraged voluntary participation. The leadership of the Mission itself, however, was entirely white and demonstrated no inclination to share governance with Monacan parishioners.

Episcopal leadership and Monacan people both understood that funding and support for the Mission rested in part on influencing the public debate about Monacan Indian identity and the future of nonwhite people in Virginia. J. J. Ambler III, one of the founders of the Mission, wrote a passionate response to an article published on November 26, 1922 which erroneously claimed that the Monacan people were Pamunkey Indians. His response had an air of superiority to it, suggesting that he knew more about the racial makeup of the Monacan people than the Monacans themselves:

> ". . .I protest against these articles for inaccuracies. . .Should there be any interested in the truth and betterment of these people, your subscriber will give to the proper forum, facts as have existed for one hundred years. It does seem that the least anyone knows of these misguided folk, the more there is claimed for them."[154]

Though Ambler never went so far as to state that they still identified themselves as Native people, he nevertheless stated that the newspaper should welcome and publish any responses from people in the community who did in fact know and could attest to the Native origins of the people. There seemed to be an agreement amongst Mission leadership, albeit not loudly expressed, that the people they ministered to were of Native descent. Many of the personal letters

[153] Bishop Jett to Lynne Mead, April 8, 1922, Box 3, Folder 25, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[154] John Jacquelin Ambler III, "Amherst Indian Mission," December 5, 1922, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.

between the Bishop and the mission workers during these first few years of the decade use the word “Indian” when describing the community.

Publications in official Episcopal papers often expressed more racist sentiments, and more explicit invalidation of Monacan Native identity than in personal correspondence between people at the Mission. Racist sentiments that were often supported by the broader white public, were challenged in the day to day interactions between Monacans and mission workers. This suggests that during the beginning of the decade, workers at the Mission, who engaged with Monacan people daily, were more validating of Native identity when they spoke to each other. It was when missionaries were asked to write a piece for a larger paper that they expressed views more in line with their white Protestant peers. The publications also represent the opinions of people other than the Bishop, people whose image was not on the line as much as his. Furthermore, mission workers and other church leadership most likely did not expect these publications to ever get in the hands of the Monacan people, many of whom (besides some of their children) were illiterate.

Isabel Wagner, head Deaconess at the Mission from 1917 until 1922 (and then again from 1938 until 1946), penned an opinion piece in *The Southwestern Episcopalian* in the fall of 1921. Like many of her peers, Wagner made sense of the world by categorizing people who were other than white into different categories. She also fell victim to the “tri-racial” narrative surrounding the Monacan community that continued to trend throughout the decade. Wagner wrote:

> “You have doubtless heard about the ‘Mountaineers,’ know a great deal about the ‘Indians,’ and are acquainted with the ‘Negro Problem of the South.’ Let me tell you something of a work that is different in that it deals with a people that are a combination

> of all three races, and the same because we have their traits and prejudices good and bad to build up on one hand and try to break through on the other."[155]

Wagner's personal opinion that the Monacan people were not Native came out in her writing, and she never used the term "Indian" in any of her many letters to the Bishop. Along with her letters, this piece also reveals that her work was influenced by the idea that race correlated with a moral hierarchy. She saw her role at the Mission as having more to do with changing the behavior of the people to whom she ministered by disentangling their racial inheritances.

In the same issue of *The Southwestern Episcopalian,* Martin J. Bram wrote an article about Monacan "Conversational Limitations."[156] Bram's article revealed the maternal mindset present within the Episcopal community in the twenties, as he explained that, "Nearly all conversations with white people bear resemblance to a child meeting a stranger." He refused to talk about Monacan origin stories because they all came from oral histories, of which he believed there to be no credence. Bram's descriptions of the community also reinforce the desire within the Episcopal Church to assimilate Native people into the dominant economy of the day through industrial training:

> "These people are outcasts. . . Probably the only solution is to construct and maintain an industrial school where men and boys can learn to farm intelligently and make themselves capable of earning a living. A department for the women and girls to learn to make the home comfortable and the simple method of cooking plain food. The aim should be to inspire a sort of pride in themselves and to make them useful to *themselves*."[157]

The personal letters between the Bishop and the various mission workers throughout the decade came to echo these exact sentiments, and the push to add an industrialized curriculum was

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[155] Isabel Wagner, "Bear Mountain or Indian Mission: Unique Work Near Amherst," *The Southwestern Episcopalian*, Fall 1921, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.
[156] Martin J. Bram, "Conversational Limitations," *The Southwestern Episcopalian*, Fall 1921, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.
[157] Bram, "Conversational Limitations."

successful. Wagner's publication in particular was characteristic of many other white Protestants in Amherst who viewed Native people as, firstly, not real Natives, and secondly, in dire need of cultural reform. Thus, Episcopal leadership successfully deployed white-fueled rumors about the Monacans and the national dialogues about the "problem" of Black and Native people. They justified their work to other white Protestants, but their play would not work with Monacan leaders.

The Tumultuous Summer of 1922

In response to the increasing racial tensions at the Mission and the commentary on their identity, the Monacan people continued to assert their group identity and control over how the Episcopalians operated in their space. The disparate experiences of missionaries they chose to accept into their community, and those they did not, are proof that the Mission's growth and success relied on the Monacans. To further illustrate that the Monacan people were beginning to have more of a say over who they accepted into their space, we can analyze the story of Lynne Mead, a summer worker who was at the Mission during Wagner's incident. Mead was chosen by Bishop Jett to live, minister, and conduct home visits on Bear Mountain during the summer months.[158] Bishop Jett found his work and role physically visiting Monacan spaces preaching the gospel highly important. By briefly looking at Mead's summer spent amongst the Monacan community, we get a sense of how Mead's experience as a man was quite different from Wagner's. Mead had a much easier time being accepted by the Monacan people, and by Diocesan leadership, partly because of the temporary nature of his assignment (Mead might not

[158] Bishop Jett to Lynne Mead, April 8, 1922, Box 3, Folder 25, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

have had time to disrupt or anger the Monacan community), and partly because his status as a white man lent itself to less resistance.

Despite Bishop Jett's confidence in Mead's ability to successfully conduct home visits, the ongoing struggle between the Monacan community and Deaconess Wagner convinced Jett to warn Mead at the outset of his work, stating: "Keep your eyes wide open, be careful to avoid criticism of the people in speaking to others, and be prepared at the close of the summer to give me the benefit of your impressions."[159] By watching the conflict surrounding Wagner's publication unfold, Bishop Jett got a sense of how negative comments impacted the Monacan people. This increase in Monacan vocalization impacted the Bishop, causing him to extend more guidelines and recommendations to the workers under his supervision.

At some point during the summer, Mead sent a letter to Bishop Jett with an update on his work, stating:

> "The services have gone smoothly, and the people are very attentive but whether or not they comprehend the simple things I have to tell them is beyond my knowledge. I believe they do. There has been a great deal of wet weather since I arrived here, so this condition with my lack of knowledge of the mountain trails have handicapped me a little in my visiting. However, I have called on seven families. The conditions of the homes in which I have been are very similar to poor white mountain class of Southwest Virginia, and in general are not so clean as the country darky of Virginia."[160]

Mead interestingly chose to report on the conditions of the homes he visited, an indication of social or racial status. Mead did not go into detail about what exactly he did when he "called on " these Monacan families, but we can infer that activities related to preaching and evangelizing took place. It was a big deal to allow someone to enter into your home– your sacred, familial

[159] Bishop Jett to Lynne Mead, April 8, 1922, Box 3, Folder 25, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[160] Lynne Mead to Bishop Jett, Undated, Box 3, Folder 25, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

space. Episcopalians utilized this as a way to assert their power, but the Monacans also expressed control over the situation by allowing them to conduct these home visits. Since Mead was uncontroversial, and did not come across as patronizing to the Monacans in the way that Wagner did, they were more accepting of his practices. Nevertheless, his gender also most likely played a role in his acceptance, as did the fact that he was only in the community for one summer.

Shortly after Mead's arrival, Isabel Wagner wrote a letter to the Bishop stating that the "mission people" had gotten hold of a copy of her publication in *The Southwestern Episcopalian* the previous autumn. Wagner immediately distanced herself from the words she wrote claiming that, "I did it much against my will and tried not to hurt the peoples feelings."[161] It is clear that Wagner understood the gravity of the people finding the publication, but she also possibly knew that Bishop Jett would not agree with her words. Many of Bishop Jett's letters from this time were fairly formal, but he often expressed sympathy towards them, and in letters to them he reminded them multiple times that he was on their side. Nevertheless, Wagner did not skip over the fact that the Monacan people were preventing her from doing her work. She stated, "At best the work is hard but with things as they are now I am so disheartened and discouraged I can't see my way through."[162] She then promptly announced her notice of resignation. In this instance, the Monacan people utilized their power in numbers to prevent Wagner from performing her work. The effect was so great that she found it best if she left. While her relationship with her co-worker at the time, Jane Boyd Neely, might have also factored into her decision to resign, the pressure from the people seemed to be the element that sent her over the edge.

[161] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, June 5, 1922, Box 3, Folder 25, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[162] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, June 5, 1922, Box 3, Folder 25, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

With missionaries who they tolerated, like Mead, in their corner, some Monacans could take action against those they did not feel belonged in their homes and Mission or represented them well. On July 11th, 1922, a Monacan woman named Elsie Branham sent a letter to Bishop Jett concerning Deaconess Wagner's publication the previous autumn.[163] Taking a more reserved tone than Wagner, Elsie claimed to be writing on behalf of some of her upset peers at the Mission, though she expressed reservations about her ability to express herself as she was asked to do. This suggests that the people she was writing for were extremely upset, and Elsie did not feel comfortable speaking to the Bishop in such a hostile tone. Elsie also could have simply not shared the same opinion as her peers. Either way, it is clear that Elsie felt the need to apologize for the letter, stating "Pardon me if I seem to be speaking to freely," as well as offer the benefit of the doubt to Miss Wagner herself: "But of course the best of us are not perfect and make mistakes sometimes."[164] Another element to this could have been the fact that at this time, Elsie was living with Reverend Lewis, the Rector of Ascension Amherst and the person in charge of

[163] Elsie Branham was born in 1904 to Abarham Branham and Willie Ann Branham. Her father worked as a tenant farmer and was illiterate, but her mother could read and write. The 1920 U.S. Federal Census records show that she lived with Reverend Thomas D. Lewis (53), his wife Annie Lewis (43), and his children, as a servant on Depot Road (now Depoe St.) right next to Ascension Episcopal Church. Her name is listed as "Elsie Brown" in this record, which could be because of an error on behalf of the census taker, or because by 1920, Elsie was trying to distance herself from the Branham name. Elsie married a white man named Edwin Rucker in 1922 when she was eighteen and he was forty-four. Rucker's father was Paul B. Rucker who applied for Confederate Pension in May of 1908 due to the ill health effects of working in a mill for thirty years. Paul B. Rucker fought for the Confederacy for about four years and left the service "at the surrender." Captain Edgar Whitehead, one of the white men heavily involved in the founding of Bear Mountain Mission, was under his command. By 1930, Elsie and Edwin had moved to Illinois for Edwin's work as a Staff Sargent at the Savanna Army Proving Grounds. She started identifying as "white" in the census records at this time. Ten years later, it was recorded that the highest grade Elsie ever completed was 6th grade, meaning that her education at the Bear Mountain Mission School was the only education she ever received. Elsie lived to be ninety-six years old and passed away as "Elsie Loving Branham Rucker" in Finksburg, Maryland. Sources consulted: Elsie Branham, Year: *1910*; Census Place: *Court House, Amherst, Virginia*; Roll: *T624_1621*; Page: *10B*; Enumeration District: *0010*; FHL microfilm: *1375634;* Elsie Branham, Year: *1920*; Census Place: *Court House, Amherst, Virginia*; Roll: *T625_1879*; Page: *2A*; Enumeration District: *11;* Elsie Rucker, Year: *1930*; Census Place: *Washington, Carroll, Illinois*; Page: *6A*; Enumeration District: *0021*; FHL microfilm: *2340143*; Ancestry.com. *U.S., Find a Grave Index, 1600s-Current* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.

[164] Elsie Branham to Bishop Jett, July 11, 1922, Box 3, Folder 25, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

the Church connected to the Mission. Rev. Lewis was in constant communication with the Bishop. In describing the scope of those concerned, Elsie stated, "…the greater part of the people dislike Miss Wagner." Elsie used this phrase, "the greater part of the people" four separate times throughout the letter, suggesting that it was a large percentage of the Mission population who expressed disdain with the Wagner article. A larger excerpt of the letter reads:

> ". . .a great many of the people have read the letter in the paper and I must say my self [sic] that Miss Wagner should have left out a great many things she had in it probably. They had been told her but a number of things we know were not true and a great many of the people dislike her for that. Whole others say Miss Neely is deceitful and also tells false hoods [sic] about our people. I can simply say what others tell me about Miss Neely or Miss Wagner to dislike them for except as I said Miss Wagner should be a little more carefull [sic] about how she speaks about our mission people."[165]

Besides stating their grievances with Wagner, the people also took this opportunity to express disdain with Jane Boyd Neely as well. This is a pattern that comes up again in the 1930's, where the Monacan people appealed to the Bishop in response to those who entered Monacan spaces and then used that privilege to spread "falsehoods" about the state of Bear Mountain or Monacans' Indian identity .

The same day that Elsie sent her letter to the Bishop, Rev. Lewis sent his own letter stating that things were not going smoothly at the Mission, and that Wagner announced to him her intentions to seek an immediate transfer to the Diocese of Southeastern Virginia on September 1. Lewis's letter mentions the "unfriendly white neighbors" as having a hand in repeating and "exaggerating" statements made by both Wagner and Neely about the people. Lewis deflects blame away from the women and onto the anonymous "unfriendly whites." Along

[165] Elsie Branham to Bishop Jett, July 11, 1922, Box 3, Folder 25, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

with this, Lewis believed that part of Wagner's reasoning for wanting to leave stemmed from disagreements between herself and Neely, though the other part of it was because Wagner ". . .seemed to lose interest in the people and with it of course her influence."[166] All of this combined makes the case for an unstable situation in which Monacan anger and discontent was tangibly affecting Mission operations.

Two days later, Bishop Jett responded to Elsie Branham and told her that he, "shall endeavor to straighten out the tangles as soon as I can."[167] He also revealed that he had received an additional, anonymous letter from a person claiming to be a member of the Mission who echoed feelings of distrust towards Wagner. This indicates that multiple people in the Mission community had the same idea that sending a letter to the Bishop was a surefire way to actually enact change. By sending these letters to the Bishop, the Monacan people went above Wagner's authority, effectively making the statement that as Mission members they were on the same level as the deaconess since they reported to the same authority. In this instance, Bishop Jett played fairly neutral, telling Elsie that he wants everyone to trust him and to, "stand by the workers and especially give support to Mr. Mead."[168]

The events during the summer of 1922 indicate that the Monacan churchgoers responded to disparagement of their community by pushing a shift in politics at the Mission, effectively preventing Wagner from performing her duties, and ultimately influencing her to resign. As Wagner, and eventually Neely, left, Bishop Jett and Reverend Lewis were in a tough position of

[166] Reverend Lewis to Bishop Jett, July 11, 1922, Box 3, Folder 25. Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[167] Bishop Jett to Elsie Branham, July 13, 1922, Box 3, Folder 25. Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

[168] Bishop Jett to Elsie Branham, July 13, 1922, Box 3, Folder 25. Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

trying to decide new people to hire. They very much had an issue with hiring women, since Rev. Lewis did not believe that women could handle the work Lewis wrote:

> "If it were possible to find a clergyman and his wife. . . Or if we could get a consecrated layman and his wife it would be better than putting two women there. There are some problems there which cannot be handled by the women such as those of order and when there is drinking in the winter among the people…the people are in great need of someone who will go into their homes and can teach them sanitary and hygienic methods of living and proper preparation of food."[169]

This racialized view on Monacan health echoes the concerns being raised by other members of the Church. By the 1920's, it became clear to Monacan people that they could not trust Church leadership entirely to publicly advocate for their dignity as a group. They thus inserted themselves into the Church's hierarchy and obfuscated normal operations until better advocates arrived. The coming years were some of the most difficult for the Monacan community, as the institutionalized racism in Virginia reached a height that made it impossible for some families and individuals to remain in the area. While many Monacan people remained in Amherst, and continued to fight for their space at the Bear Mountain Mission, many others left altogether.

Resistance in the Era of Racial Integrity

After the passage of the Virginia Racial Integrity Law, Monacan families started leaving Amherst in larger numbers, impacting Monacan participation at the Mission. Ella Pier explained the impact of Plecker and his law in a letter in May of 1926:

> "This question of origin and race– the color problem, their color; Dr. Plecker's point of view– regarding them; the look about them which they have heard of– all these things are disturbing the congregation and the school children as well. Two of our families have gone to another state and others are planning to leave Virginia."[170]

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[169] Reverend Lewis to Executive Secretary, June 27, 1922, Box 3, Folder 25. Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

[170] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, May 12, 1926, Box 15, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Some Monacan families left Amherst during this time, many settling in Maryland and others in various places.[171] Those Monacan families who still owned land on and around Bear Mountain struggled to pay property taxes, many because Monacan breadwinners did not have the education to get better-paying jobs. George Branham Whitewolf recalled that his father, George Albert Branham, was forced to forfeit his land on Bear Mountain in the 1920's. He, along with many others, moved up to Glen Burnie, Maryland, which became a refuge for many during this time.[172] Consequently, the Mission School faced declining numbers in enrollment, from sixty-one enrolled in 1922, to only thirty-six enrolled in 1928.[173]

Despite decreased Monacan participation, those who remained continued the fight to remain sovereign over certain sacred spaces and cultural practices where the Church *could* have gotten more involved, like holiday and confirmation services, school days, and funeral rites. In 1926, the community held funerals for two Monacan members of the Mission, Reeves Hamilton and Rena Branham. Ella Pier wrote about these two deaths specifically in her letters to the Bishop. Reeves Hamilton passed away in July of 1926.[174] She described Hamilton's funeral as "poor" and "pitiful," exposing her opinion on how the family and community chose to bury him.[175] Her description might indicate that the family did not have the funds to prepare an

[171] Whitlock, *Drums of Life*, 19.
[172] Whitlock, *Drums of Life*, 18-19.
[173] First number from copy of term reports in Whitlock, *Drums of Life*, 166-167 ; second number from Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, July 20, 1928, Box 22, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[174] Reeves Hamilton was born around 1884 in Amherst, Virginia. He was married to Alice (Branham) Hamilton. At the time of his death, he had at least four children, Leathe (7), Ollie (5), Dudley (3), and Earnest (1). In 1920, none of his children were attending school at the Mission, but it is possible that by 1926 they were more heavily involved. Reeves Hamilton, Year: *1920*; Census Place: *Court House, Amherst, Virginia*; Roll: *T625_1879*; Page: *9A*; Enumeration District: *11;* Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, November 16, 1926, Box 15, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[175] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, November 16, 1926, Box 15, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

appropriate funeral, or it might have simply been foreign to what Pier was used to. Rena Branham passed a few months later, in November.[176]

In Lucian Branham's recollection of Monacan burial practices when he was a young boy in the 1920's, he indicated that while people did not have a lot of money, they took the time to build a casket out of poplar wood, and wrap the body in strips of cotton cloth. They also took two days to gather in the family's home, singing together and sharing prepared food before the funeral ceremony. Branham remembered the minister (in this case Reverend Lewis) often rode horseback behind the hearse to the place of burial. If we take this description to be indicative of what Rena Branham's and Reeve Hamilton's funerals might have been like, then Ella Pier and Rev. Lewis would have had minor roles to play. Consequently, funeral practices were still very much under the realm of Monacan control.

The Monacan people who remained connected with the Mission also started utilizing the Church space and Confirmation services as a way to grasp onto an identity in a landscape that denied them of any. Monacan people started showing an increased interest in the Confirmation services, but Pier did not believe that they understood the gravity of what Confirmation meant in the Episcopal context. By the middle of the decade, education was not on the forefront of many Monacan people's minds. Their community was being attacked by eugenic politics, their neighbors were moving out of state, and daily life meant finding a way to survive through seasonal crop failures and financial precarity. By the summer of 1926, twenty-one Monacan families were financially indebted to the Mission because they were unable to pay the clothing-

[176] Rena Branham was born on May 6th, 1891. Her husband's name was "Pige" Branham, and in 1920 they had six children together: Lindie (12), Wesley (9), Zora (8), Junior (4), Jacob (2), and Ray. Her children attended the Mission School. She was thirty-five when she died of tuberculosis on November 2nd, 1926. Rena Branham, Year: *1920*; Census Place: *Elon, Amherst, Virginia*; Roll: *T625_1879*; Page: *2A*; Enumeration District: *14;* Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, November 16, 1926, Box 15, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

bureau fee. Monacans had to pay in order to utilize the clothing bureau, but finances were so tight that Pier started letting clothing go out on promises "to pay with this year's crop."[177] Many of the people only wanted to come to the Mission if the Bishop was going to be there to perform a Confirmation service. As in the previous decade, the Bishop's visits continued to hold a special significance to the Monacan members. Some people only ever entered the church when they knew the Bishop was going to be there.

Despite being confirmed by Bishop Jett in 1923, Minnie Adcox Johns, continued to show a vested interest in Confirmation services three years later.[178] Pier, who classified Minnie as, "a very dull woman," wrote that she had to keep reminding Minnie that she was confirmed and that she could not continue going up to the altar-rail. Pier continued, "She likes to 'be blessed' by a Bishop and I presume she will go forward every time you come though I have explained to her about Confirmation."[179] Minnie either did not comprehend the proper protocol one was expected to follow during the service, or she chose to ignore Pier's protests in order to experience the service in the way that she wanted to. Perhaps Minnie wanted to feel special in a society that did not want her to feel like a human at all.

The Monacan people not only expressed sovereignty over their personal interactions with the Church space, but also over who was and was not allowed in. In 1926, the Monacan congregation took a stand against three "colored ones" who "did not bear good names" attending a service at St. Paul's. Once the people heard that Pier and her assistant were trying to get these women to come down for a service, Pier stated that a man called on her to say that: "When the

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[177] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, August 4, 1926, Box 15, Folder 7, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

[178] Minnie Adcox Johns was born on August 10, 1888 in Amherst. Minnie got married when she was fifteen years old to John Johns, who was about thirty. She passed away on September 20, 1968. Minnie Johns, Year: *1920*; Census Place: *Court House, Amherst, Virginia*; Roll: *T625_1879*; Page: *7B*; Enumeration District: *11*.

[179] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, May 12, 1926, Box 15, Folder 7, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

colored ones are confirmed, they will protest at the Service and then leave the Church. (I understand they plan to get up and go out as a body, from this special service.)"[180] This is yet another example of the impact of Virginia's racial politics on Monacan identity. The Church was one space where Pier, and the Deaconesses before her, were unable to control Monacan behavior. The Monacan people imparted their own religious and spiritual meaning onto the services, effectively co-opting them to serve whatever purposes they needed at the time.

In the words of Deaconess Ella Pier, the Mission concluded 1926 with a Christmas season "crowded with happy 'doings' – full of joy." Bishop Jett delivered "a word of greeting" that was "greatly appreciated" by the congregation. The Bishop's words and visits to the Mission continued to interest the Monacan people, who viewed him with a sort of reverence.[181] As a general rule, there was more Monacan participation anyways during Christmastime when the Mission held extra services and dinners, and Pier noted that the 1926 Christmas season was "crowded." As January and February arrived though, the wet weather and muddy conditions of the roads on Bear Mountain prevented many Monacan members from attending services. Despite the wintry conditions on the mountain, Monacan families were still devoted to sending their children to the Mission School, and Pier remarked that attendance was large.[182] In her study of the Mission School, Haimes-Bartolf cites Bertha Wailes' 1928 conclusion that students were

[180] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, May 12, 1926, Box 15, Folder 7, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[181] During this time, Bishop Jett provided the Mission with forty copies of his new "Simplified Prayer and Service Book," prompting a "renewed interest in the Service" on behalf of the Monacan congregation. The next summer, Deaconess Pier requested forty additional copies for the Mission since interest was so high and summer congregations so large. Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, February 7, 1927, Box 17, Folder 43, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[182] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, February 7, 1927, Box 17, Folder 43, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

unmotivated because of environmental factors such as isolation and undernourishment.[183] Haimes-Bartolf contests this, concluding instead that,

> ". . . many demonstrated persistence despite the challenges they faced. This suggests that many of these children came from supportive families with parents that appreciated at least some degree of education. In addition, it seems that the Monacan school and staff provided certain incentives for the children to attend under difficult circumstances."[184]

Families took advantage of the safe space provided by the Deaconesses whenever they were able to sacrifice their children's helping hands on the farm or in the home. Pier ended up remarking that "Enthusiasm for study begins to wane with most of the children when they reach 6th grade work. . ." While this might have been true to some extent, interviews from students who attended the Mission School until the 7th grade suggest a great interest in wanting to learn, and a deep sadness when they realized their classroom education was over. Annie Johns Branham, "midwife Kate" Johns' granddaughter, attended the Mission School in the 1930's, and chose to repeat the seventh grade in order to extend her stay. She remembered years later that she "nearly cried my eyes out for weeks after my second year in the seventh grade. All of my hopes for a higher education were over because of Old Plecker." The Mission School represented not only a place to receive a Western education, but also a space of resistance against Plecker and others who would rather Native peoples not receive an education at all.[185]

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[183] Haimes-Bartolf, "Policies and Attitudes," 150.
[184] Haimes-Bartolf, "Policies and Attitudes," 150.
[185] While student attendance was relatively stable, albeit low at times, recruiting teachers to work in the isolated environment of Bear Mountain with incredibly low pay was another issue entirely. The Mission School was in a precarious position as the fall of 1927 approached and they had not yet procured an assistant for mission worker Ella Pier. After the difficulties between Deaconesses Isabel Wagner and Jane Boyd Neely, Reverend Lewis and Bishop Jett were hesitant to continue having two women at a time living together at the Mission. They stated multiple times that their preference was for "a man and his wife" to do the work, revealing their gendered assumptions that a man would be more capable than two women. Both men realized that the possibility of finding a married couple was low, so they continued accepting applications from women who had connections to the Diocese, or to Ella Pier personally. It was the job of the Church to locate and appoint a teacher for the school, not the County, further strengthening the influence of the Episcopal Church over the Monacan people. Relevant letters: Reverend Lewis to Bishop Jett, August 25, 1927, Box 17, Folder 43, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA; Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, September 3, 1927, Box 17, Folder 43, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA; Bishop Jett to Reverend Lewis,

For Bishop Jett and the others, reading, writing, and arithmetic were of lesser importance than the spiritual education of the children. Monacan families sent their children to school in order to gain access to the education that they were denied because of their racial classification, and while they certainly gained skills in academic subjects, ulterior motives related to evangelism and assimilation played out in the classroom as well. Ella Pier penned an article for the *Journal of the Diocese* in 1929 in which she compared the school to a "plant-bed" from which "we have a right to expect wholesome plants and a return on our money and work in the Kingdom and Heaven."[186] Pier viewed the school as an important part of the mission-field since it catered to impressionable children. It is likely that Monacan families understood that sending their children to the Bear Mountain Mission School was a package deal- one in which daily prayers and biblical lessons went right along with mathematics.

The Mission was only able to procure a teacher, "Miss Edwards," for part of the 1927-28 school year. By June of 1928, they had procured another teacher, "Miss Charlotte E. Merrell," but she only stayed for two months. At this point, Reverend Lewis alerted the diminishing situation at the Mission to Bishop Jett in a letter:

> "We are confronted with a serious situation at the Mission in regard to the assistant. The school authorities have always allowed us the privilege of naming the teacher and of course have gotten some one who is interested in the religious side of the work and who has lived at the Mission, helped with the Sunday services, and has been paid by us to continue the rest of the year. Because of our frequent changes and difficulty in securing anybody last year until so. . . Mr. Cox, the Co. School Supt. begins to feel the Co. should secure the teacher. This would mean we might get someone not at all interested in the Religious work, who would most probably not live at the Mission and would not assist in the service Sat. or Sunday."[187]

August 30, 1927, Box 17, Folder 43, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

[186] Ella Pier, "Report of Christ Mission (Bear Mountain)," *Journal of the Diocese*, 1929, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.

[187] Reverend Lewis to Bishop Jett, July 20, 1928, Box 22, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Rev. Lewis understood the impact that the teachers had on the children at the Mission School, and was genuinely concerned to have someone not affiliated with the Episcopal Church, or any Protestant denomination, at the helm. Rev. Lewis continued to hold tight to this position, believing that the Church needed to maintain control over the Mission School space.

As July came and went, Ella Pier passed her sixtieth birthday and expressed her interest in retiring, but ultimately stayed because of the dire condition with finding new hires. Pier cared about the Mission and its members enough to stay despite her exhaustion, but her hard work was plagued with assumptions regarding the capabilities of low-income families. She stated explicitly that, "'Book learnin' does not mean so much to this group you know."[188] Pier expanded the Mission School to include "industrial work" classes for both boys and girls. The girls utilized equipment donated by Sweet Briar College during the summer for cooking and sewing, while the boys worked with "one of the Mission men" for basic wood-working activities. This is a compelling instance of a Monacan adult helping the Deaconess with her work, something that does not show up often in the sources.

The summer of 1928 passed without much fanfare; attendance (and donations) stayed relatively high despite the hot weather, according to Pier. Still, the question of who was going to help Pier with the upcoming school year remained on the table. The Superintendent of the Amherst County School Board, Mr. Cox, started conversing with Rev. Lewis and Ella Pier, stating explicitly that the Board was starting to believe it best if they stepped in and appointed their own teacher. One of the main concerns from the Board's perspective was that many of the teachers appointed by the Diocese did not have the proper qualifications to teach the first-through-fourth grades, which had the most enrollment at the Mission School. On one hand, the

[188] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, July 25, 1928, Box 22, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

County cared about what was happening at the Mission School, but on the other, they very literally stood by as it started to crumble. Pier wrote to the Bishop stating that the School Board turned down a request to repair a leaking roof and crumbling chimney; the Mission footed the bill for these and many other "necessary repairs."[189] All of this was starting to weigh heavy on Mission leadership, though Rev. Lewis and Ella Pier disagreed on how best to move forward. Pier believed that the County should take over the appointment of teachers, but she wrote to the Bishop that, "Dr. Lewis thinks it would be a disaster; personally, I believe it would relieve the Mission of a great responsibility and leave us free to do better with our religious and practical education."[190] Bishop Jett agreed with Pier, stating that it would be best to confine the efforts of the Diocese purely to "general Church work" among the community.[191] Surprisingly, the Diocese found a candidate that fit both Mr. Cox's and the Church's requirements. Winifred Sitgreaves took charge of the school on September 25th, 1928. Ella Pier remarked to the Bishop, "She gives promise of being the one we have been waiting for. . ."[192]

While Sitgreaves' tenure as teacher worked out for the most part, Mr. Cox and the County School Board continued to express concern about the status of the Mission School. Mr. Cox went so far as to tell Pier that he saw no future for the school except for it to be a private school run by the Episcopal Church. The other option, according to him, was for the school to be classified as a "Negro" school. This greatly disturbed Bishop Jett and Deaconess Pier, who both

[189] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, July 20, 1928, Box 22, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[190] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, July 20, 1928, Box 22, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[191] Bishop Jett to Ella Pier, August 2, 1928, Box 22, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[192] Ella Pier to Mr Scott, October 1, 1928, Box 22, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

stated that, "The work of the church will surely be lost if the school is called 'Negro.'"[193] For the Bishop, the logical conclusion was for the county and state to take over the education of the community, and it was not in the means of the Diocese to conduct a private school. However, the labeling of the school as "Negro" by the County was a symbolic slap in the face to both the original purpose of the Mission and the Monacan community itself, which had previously sought to exclude Black people from Episcopal spaces intended for Monacans. Bishop Jett expressed these concerns in a letter to Ella Pier in August of 1929:

> "The Mission was put there for the purpose of meeting the needs of the particular group to whom we have been ministering. It will be confined to this purpose, whatever the county may do with regard to its responsibility. . .The people, however, may feel assured of my sympathy, of my good will, and of my cooperation. . ."[194]

Though Bishop Jett never called the Monacan people "Indian" in this letter, he implied that their identity was *not* that of "Negro." In this way, Bishop Jett stood up for the Monacan people, who held firm to the fact that they should not be classified as anything other than "Indian" or "Native." During this time, the Monacan members started holding private meetings amongst themselves to discuss "the school situation."[195] Pier stated blatantly that: "It's hard for them to understand why their status should be changed after three quarters of a century. Do you not think it's a kind of tyranny, which shames the States' motto [sic semper tyrannis] and should not be tolerated?"[196] Pier seemed to agree and side with the Monacan people on this front.

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[193] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, August 14, 1929, Box 26, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA; Bishop Jett to Ella Pier, August 16, 1929, Box 26, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[194] Bishop Jett to Ella Pier, August 16, 1929, Box 26, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[195] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, November 8, 1929, Box 26, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[196] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, November 8, 1929, Box 26, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

These questions of who should be in charge of the Mission School, and what racial category the school should fall into, brings to light the complicated relationship between the Church and the Monacan people, and the colonial nature of this project. Mission leadership simultaneously sided with the Monacans and their struggle to maintain their Native identity, while at the same time continued to insist that their spiritual and religious beliefs were inherently lacking because they belonged to a racially inferior people. All of this back and forth indicates that by the end of the decade, Monacans navigated fluctuating power relations within the Mission in tandem with racism towards Native communities coming from the State and local levels.

Throughout her tenure, Ella Pier seemed to be a generally non-controversial figure at the Mission. The Monacan people never spoke ill of her to the Bishop, and they seemed to allow her to carry on her tasks with little hindrance. This is most likely due to the fact that Pier genuinely cared about the community, and did not fraternize with the "unfriendly white neighbors" as much as Isabel Wagner had. Monacan parents, though Pier, communicated their financial concerns and the burden of the Mission to Episcopal leadership. Since Pier asked Monacan people for donations and worked so closely with the community, Monacan people communicated to her the financial strain facing most families. Pier frequently shared this with the Bishop, perhaps unable to meet the pressure to accrue donations from Monacan families. Monacan people had other essential needs besides the Church donation that had to be met. Pier reminded the Bishop that he might, "appreciate the venture of faith" with the small donation in December of 1928 since, "many of these people cannot count on their daily bread during the coming year. . .".[197]

[197] Ella Pier to Executive Secretary, December 10, 1929, Box 22, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Monacan families also used requests for funds to their advantage, as Pier still showed favoritism towards children who convinced their families to bring in more money for the Mission. In the autumn of 1928, Pier included a photograph in her letter to the Bishop and stated: "The Playground picture will interest you, I think. Middy Branham, the big girl on the see-saw, is the child who always earns a dollar for her Lenten-box."[198] Especially during times of immense financial hardships, Monacan people were still praised and exalted in their ability to donate. Accordingly, Ella Pier's final wish before she left was for the Monacan people to "develop into good Christian citizens," a sentiment that was shared with all of the women who came before and after her.[199] After a long winter with "very many sick people" and "heavy work," Ella Pier finally submitted her resignation on August 14th, 1929 at the age of sixty-one.[200]

The Monacan reaction to the Wagner publication was an important moment in which the Church realized the limits of their freedom to speak about the Monacan people without consequence. After the Wagner publication, the Monacan community made it nearly impossible for her to continue carrying out her duties in an effective manner, resulting in her departure. While the next mission worker, Ella Pier, also spoke ill of the Monacan people, she did this in private letters to the Bishop, never allowing any of her opinions to reach Monacan ears specifically. As this chapter shows, the Monacan people allowed Ella Pier to engage in her work without much protest, while they continued to assert Native identity in Episcopal spaces and through Episcopal rites. Further, many Monacans benefited from her programs and direct

[198] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, November 30, 1929, Box 22, Folder 13, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[199] Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, August 14, 1929, Box 26, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[200] Her resignation was to take effect in early October of 1929, but she ended up staying for a few months after that to help train the new deaconess. Ella Pier to Bishop Jett, August 14, 1929, Box 26, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

communication with the bishop, an indication that they generally accepted her as a nonthreatening individual. The 1920's were extremely difficult for the Monacan community, and the fallout from the miscegenation laws during this decade only continued into the next.

CHAPTER III: Flames and Ashes (1930-1939)

"And she said she was not sorry it burned." - Anonymous to Bishop Jett[201]

The Fire of 1930

Sometime during the morning hours of Sunday, January 19th, 1930 a fire started in either the church or the Mission house at Bear Mountain Mission. Deaconess Brightsie Savage was there alone when the fire began, and by 10am, both buildings had been destroyed.[202] Three different accounts of the events were sent to the Bishop in the immediate aftermath, each representing a different perspective on the causes of the blaze, and the actions taken by Savage and the Monacan community. The fire destroyed the Mission buildings at a key time in the Mission's history just as Ella Pier, a woman who was generally tolerated by the Monacan people, left and was replaced by Brightsie Savage. In the preceding few years, the hostilities from the white community surrounding the Mission had reached a historical high with the empowerment granted them by the State's support of the Racial Integrity Law. The air on Bear Mountain was ripe for speculation and rumors, both of which fueled the flames on that Sunday morning.

Reverend Thomas Lewis claimed that Savage was alone at the mission home when the fire started, and was unable to control the flames on account of how quickly they flared. When Lewis and his wife arrived on the scene, they found that Savage had already been taken in by "some neighbors" and was in bed distraught over what happened. According to Lewis, nothing was saved from the church, and only a few papers were saved from the Mission house; Savage lost all of her own possessions. He claimed the fire began in a clothing closet, sparked by a

[201] Anonymous to Bishop Jett, July 20, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[202] Thomas Lewis to Bishop Jett; Jan 21, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

defective flue which caused heat to seep in through a crack in the wall. The flue had previously been repaired by Ella Pier, but seemingly insufficiently. Savage also had a personal fire going for warmth at the time, and told Lewis that "she blames herself," though Lewis believed that, "Of course the fault isn't hers."[203] It is unclear how Lewis was able to discern that the fire came from the defective flue; there was never any indication that a fire station was called in to help; but he seemed confident that Savage did everything in her power to fight the fire, even injuring herself in the process.

Savage's own account described how the flames quickly got out of her control, and how she tried to fight the fire for as long as she "could see any hope."[204] She claimed she was able to save "all of the church books and all papers of importance that had collected since I came Nov. 2. I also saved all left by Miss Pier that are important- I believe."[205] Savage's view on what constituted a commendable amount of records saved was different from Lewis's, and she continued to produce and provide scanty records in the coming years, a contributing factor to her ultimate dismissal in 1937. Neither Savage nor Lewis made any indication as to whether or not the Monacan community was present during or after the fire, or what sort of impact the burning of the church, especially, had on them. Luckily, Monacan people themselves wrote to the Bishop in the days and weeks after the fire, lending perspectives that represent the distrust of Savage and the white people with whom she associated.

The Monacan response to the fire was informed by their relationship with Savage, by two decades of relations with the Episcopal Church, and by the growing animosity from white

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[203] Thomas Lewis to Bishop Jett, Jan 21, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[204] Brightsie Savage to Bishop Jett, Jan 22, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[205] Brightsie Savage to Bishop Jett, Jan 22, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

neighbors. Lewis made sure to reiterate that Savage had, "really done heroic work there alone this winter and has endeared herself to the Mission people and to the whites."[206] This is in contrast to Ella Pier's lack of engagement with the surrounding white community. Savage's friendliness with the white neighbors would come back to bite her and the Monacan people viewed this as a betrayal of trust.

Because of the initial claims to ownership over the Mission at its establishment, and the increased racial tensions with white neighbors because of the implementation of the Racial Integrity Law, the Monacan people responded to threats against the Mission with significant vigor and intensity during the 1930's. This chapter focuses on two specific events, the fire of 1930 and the Confirmation scandal of 1936, in order to argue that the Monacan people utilized direct communication with the Bishop, and the community networks established in the 1910's, to continue to fight for their safety and security as a Native group. The chapter begins with an analysis of the fire from a variety of different perspectives, in order to showcase just how dire a threat the white neighbors posed to Monacan identity and safety as a community. In the aftermath of the fire and the Racial Integrity Law, debates about the use of the word "Indian" to define the Mission forced Episcopal leadership to ultimately capitulate to white Amherst County residents who denied the Native identity of their "colored" neighbors. Monacans doubled down by separating themselves from people in the "colored" caste of Jim Crow Virginia. Along with this, the chapter showcases the influence that the Monacan people had over the Bishop by outlining an incident in which the Bishop considered closing the entire Mission due to a communal protest by the Monacan congregation over the acceptance of a Black woman into their

[206] Thomas Lewis to Bishop Jett, Jan 21, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

space. Both of these events represent how Monacans maintained control over the Mission despite the intrinsically settler colonial nature of the entire establishment.

About a week after the fire, Bishop Jett received a letter from a Monacan woman signed, "Member of the Mission."[207] The letter explained the fire from her perspective, as one of the first Monacan people to reach the Mission the morning of the disaster. Her letter represented the culmination of decades of distrust towards the white neighbors living near the Mission and many of the mission workers. She insinuated that it was Savage and neighbors whom she classified as "Methodists," who had a role to play in the events of January twenty-first.[208] In her account, Savage stayed with a group of people who hated the Mission and the Church "and the good people that goes there," the evening before the fire.[209] As Savage and the anonymous woman watched the Church and Mission house burn, she warned Savage that the people she stayed with, "would be glad to see the church in ashes."[210] Despite this, Savage returned to stay with the group of people again that very night, confirming Lewis's report that Savage stayed with neighbors the evening of the disaster. The writer of this letter knew that sympathies from the Bishop might be more easily achieved by pandering to Episcopalians' (of which she herself is one) tensions with members of other Protestant denominations, rather than greater issues surrounding racism and discrimination in Amherst County.

It is likely that the author of this letter disliked the "Methodists" not because of their denomination, but because they were racist towards the Monacan people. The Monacans had

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[207] Anonymous to Bishop Jett, Jan 29, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[208] Anonymous to Bishop Jett, Jan 29, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[209] Anonymous to Bishop Jett, Jan 29, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[210] Anonymous to Bishop Jett, Jan 29, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

worked for years to foster a relatively safe space at the Mission by ensuring that the mission workers respected their racial and cultural identity, and stood up for them *against* threatening white neighbors. Savage's close relationship with this group of white people threatened to undo all that the Monacans created. From the point of view of this Monacan woman, Savage was now a threat to the safety of her community, and the only way to translate this concern to the Bishop was to accuse Savage of fraternizing with the enemy. She accused Savage of frequently going to church with the "Methodists," giving them clothing meant for the Mission's Clothing Bureau, and purchasing barrels of fruit from them instead of supporting the produce sales of the Monacan members. She continued her attack on Savage by relaying another incident from the morning of the fire, in which Savage supposedly lied to another Monacan woman who wanted to ring the bell in the schoolhouse in order to alert the Monacan men living in the area that there was trouble. Savage told this woman that the previous Deaconess, Ella Pier, had removed the bell and placed it on the "sleeping porch," which had already burnt down by this point. However, when the women looked for the bell the next day they found it in the same place it had always been. This vignette implied that Savage knowingly prevented the Monacan community from gathering together to fight the fire, a grave offense to the Bishop and Monacans who shared responsibility for and control of the space.[211]

The author of the letter went to extreme lengths to convince the Bishop that Savage was a danger to the community. There were inherent risks in writing an accusatory letter against a white woman, especially one who held an important position in the Episcopal Church gained by a reputation for good works. If the letter were to be intercepted, or if the Bishop were to defend Savage, the Monacan community could have faced repercussions. The veil of anonymity was a

[211] Anonymous to Bishop Jett, Jan 29, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

tactful strategy used in this instance to protect against individual backlash. The author also chose language that implied the opinions stated in the letter were hers, and not necessarily representative of the entire community, another strategy that protected her peers. Her concluding remarks were perhaps the most telling of all when she said of Savage: "She ought-not to be in this community at all. I am afraid of her."[212] The author chose to use the word "community," rather than "mission" or "church," to describe the body associated with Bear Mountain Mission. This choice is telling and represents the fact that the Mission was imposed on an already existing Native community with close ties to each other and the land. When the author said, "She ought not to be in this community at all," she was not necessarily talking solely about the Mission, but rather about the larger network of Native individuals and families who lived around Bear Mountain.

The second anonymous letter arrived to Bishop Jett in July, and echoed many of the same sentiments expressed by the first. This letter, however, took a more collective tone, claiming like earlier letters complaining about mission workers to represent the opinion of the majority of the Monacan people living on Bear Mountain. The author, who addressed the letter as "Your friend," wrote, "Nearly everybody thinks that Miss Savage burnt the Mission house and got pay for it-from our enemy's for she don't stay with no people but them that 'hate' the mission. . ."[213] The author calls out explicitly the very white people who Savage stayed with the evening after the fire, and apparently stayed with in the months following the fire. After years of racist comments and threats from the white community in the area, it was not a stretch for Monacan people to assume that they had a hand in the fire. The fact that Savage was a relatively new figure at the

[212] Anonymous to Bishop Jett, Jan 29, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[213] Anonymous to Bishop Jett, July 20, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Mission also played into the distrust of her on behalf of the Mission members. As was the case with Isabel Wagner and Ella Pier, it took time for the missionaries to earn the trust and approval of the Monacan community. Savage had not yet been in the community long enough, nor had she performed her duties or developed alliances in a satisfactory way that would have granted her acceptance.

To further the case for Savage's removal, the letter-writers also reflected Episcopal leadership's rhetoric about impropriety and immorality that had often been used against the Monacans. According to the author of the second letter, when Savage became angry with people, she did not allow them to come to the church.[214] They accused her of not doing anything for the mission, instead hiring people to do work, but failing to pay them. The letter goes on to attack Savage's personal ethics as well, another strategy that might result in more action from the Bishop since the accusations represented behavior that went against generally accepted Protestant values:

> ". . . she has a young man that goes with her around and goes in the shop with her while the school is going on. . . and some of the children go under the house to see what is going on. . . everybody far and wide is talking about her, and she goes driving in the car with this man 2 or three times a day. . . until nine or ten oclock and some times 12 before she gets to her room and there is not nothing likes them goes on in our whole community. . . I think you are paying her to ride about – have a good time with this young boyfriend for she is old enough for his grandmother."[215]

The author pointed out that the community as a whole had better values than Savage, someone who the Bishop intended to be a model of Christian morality. The Monacan people knew that "everyone far and wide…talking about her" was something that might upset the Bishop, so they

[214] Anonymous to Bishop Jett, July 20, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[215] Anonymous to Bishop Jett, July 20, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

included these details in the letter as a way to bolster their argument that Savage should be removed.[216]

Whether or not the fire was started by Savage, the white neighbors, or by the faulty flue remains unsettled to this day, but the entire event sheds light onto the way that fear of white retaliation against Bear Mountain Mission had encroached into the Monacan peoples' psyche. That their first assumption was that Savage and her friends had something to do with it reveals mutual mistrust and the struggle for control over the Mission. Furthermore, the letters to the Bishop signify that they had a strong sense of ownership over the Mission space, which they now viewed as playing a part in developing a strong community. While they might have disliked Savage because of her harsh tactics and association with people whom they deemed enemies of the Mission, their main concern was to protect the space which they considered their own and had become important for their identity as a Native group.

The Aftermath

There is no indication that Savage was ever relieved of her duties, even temporarily, in the first few years after the fire. If anything, the Monacan position on the matter and fear of the white community was ignored by the Bishop, underscoring how accusations of immorality were effective against marginalized people and in the service of acculturation rather than institutional change. The fire did push the Episcopal leadership at Bear Mountain to yet again face the question of what to officially call the Mission, and the opinions and feedback received from different parties highlighted the concerted effort in Amherst County to strip the Monacan people of any association with their Native identity. On January 25, 1930, Mr. Scott, the executive

[216] Anonymous to Bishop Jett, July 20, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

secretary for the Diocese, made the decision to use the phrase "Indian Mission" in an article announcing the fire in the *Southern Churchman.* Scott was clearly comfortable with this phrase, as it had been used to describe the Mission from the very beginning.[217] This would have likely passed as a non-event, had white neighbors not gotten ahold of the publication. John Jacquelin Ambler, the same J. J. Ambler, whose family donated land for the Mission and who acted as a teacher and lay reader during the first few years of the Mission's establishment, became extremely vocal in his disapproval of the use of the word "Indian" to describe the Mission. Though he was present when Bishop Tucker consecrated the Mission explicitly for the "Indians," he either never agreed with the term's usage, or had since come under the influence of Virginia's eugenics movement or other white people in the area who denied the Native identity of the Monacan people on Bear Mountain.

Like the Monacans had in the case of the fire, Ambler appealed to community consensus and complained of the threat of discord among his white neighbors. Ambler sent a letter steeped in warning to Scott in April, stating that, "I have defended the position that they are not 'Indians,' nor ever have been."[218] He warned that if Mission leadership continued to insinuate that the congregation was Native, they would lose the support of the "neighborhood," causing, ". . .even members of other denominations to be indifferent to missions."[219] He claimed that even members of his own family in the Bear Mountain area were refusing to attend services at any church because of the matter. He believed that the Mission was on the verge of repeating "the Bloxton affair," in which a mission worker might be emboldened, like Lucy Bloxton was in

[217] John Jacqueline Ambler to the Executive Secretary, April 4, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[218] John Jacqueline Ambler to Mr. Scott, Executive Secretary, April 4, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[219] John Jacqueline Ambler to Mr. Scott, Executive Secretary, April 4, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

1914, to support the congregation in their Native identity and marry into one of their families. He blamed both Bloxton and the founder of the Mission, Arthur Gray Jr., for encouraging the younger generation at the time of the Mission's founding to call themselves "Indians," and called out Church authority members for continuing to propagate what he considered false information.[220] In order to further drive home his belief, Ambler went so far as to ask the Census Bureau to mail the Bishop's office a copy of the list of "free negroes" in Amherst and Rockbridge Counties from a century before, created in 1830, in order to "prove" that the families who in 1930 were calling themselves "Indian" were once classified as "negro." Of course, this did not prove anything other than the fact that the Monacan peoples' Native identity had been the target of attack as early as 1830 in Virginia.

Scott's response to Ambler showcases the power that the white community in Amherst had over the politics at the Mission, essentially forcing the leadership to continue to deny the authentic Native identity of the Monacan people. Scott told Ambler that he took great care to "not cause discomfort" to people in the neighborhood, but that he sometimes strategically chose the phrase, "Indian Mission," in order to not isolate people across the United States who had come over the years to know the Mission by that exact name.[221] If this was truly Scott's reasoning, then it suggests he used the term "Indian" in order to bolster potential donations and other forms of support to the Mission, which seemed to work for people all across the country, but had the opposite effect in garnering support from wealthy white families in the direct vicinity of Bear Mountain.

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[220] John Jacqueline Ambler to Mr. Scott, Executive Secretary, April 4, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[221] Executive Secretary to John Jacquelin Ambler, April 5, 1930, Box 30, Folder 6, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

J. J. Ambler gives a face to the many vague references of "the unfriendly white neighbors" that showed up in letters from the mission workers throughout the 1920's and 30's. Ambler was a part of the multi-generational, land-owning class in Amherst, with ties to various Protestant denominations, and thus a stake in what types of people those denominations served in the County. Despite Ambler's best efforts, Mission leadership did not fully refrain from using "Indian" when describing the Monacan people. In fact, when Bishop Jett wrote a piece for the nationwide Episcopal publication, *Spirit of Missions*, he stated that, while the status and history of the people had been debated for years, "This group is composed of very needy people of mixed Indian blood."[222] This statement was in direct defiance of the will of the white people in the area, like Ambler, and shows a continued effort on behalf of the Bishop to advocate for the Monacan peoples' Native identity.

By the autumn of 1930, the Mission house and church had been rebuilt, and the question of what name to call the new chapel came into focus. For years, the church had been called "Christ Church" or "Christ Mission," along with other, though less frequently used names such as: "Indian Mission," "Falling Rock Mission," and "Bear Mountain Mission."[223] Bishop Jett wanted to make sure that he was consecrating the new church of 1930 with the original intended name, so he and Scott set out on a quest to locate the original name that had somehow become lost throughout the decades.

The answer seemed to be found in the ashes of the fire that took the original church on January 19th. When the cornerstone of the church was removed, several items were found

[222] Bishop Jett, Article for the Spirit of Missions, September 8, 1931, Box 34, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[223] Executive Secretary to Rev. Arthur P. Gray, Jr.; Rev. Frank Mesick; Rev. Edwin R. Carter, D. D., November 12, 1931, Box 34, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

including a copy of the deed from the Nicholas family conveying the ground to trustees of the Episcopal Church, "for the erection and maintenance of a place of divine worship for the use and benefit of that race or class of people known as Indian people. . ."[224] A paper containing the names of contributors from the congregation towards the building of the church was also found and was prefaced, "Contributed for St. Paul's Chapel for Indian people."[225] The final item that was found was a four page leaflet outlining a service specifically for the cornerstone, with the first page reading:

"SERVICE FOR
LAYING THE CORNER-STONE
OF
ST. PAUL'S CHAPEL
FALLING ROCK
MONDAY, APRIL 14, 1908"[226]

These materials were sufficient enough to convince Bishop Jett to move forward with consecrating the chapel as St. Paul's during the consecration service on October 18, 1930.[227] Similar to the first consecration service twenty-two years earlier, this service was attended by about two hundred people including both Monacan congregants, as well as other senior leaders of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Bishop Jett read scripture, collected offerings, and provided a sentence of consecration; however, unlike the service in 1908, there was no reference whatsoever to the "Indian" identity of the people, perhaps because white people from the

[224] Unknown Author, "Consecration of Chapel," *Southwestern Episcopalian*, Dec 1931, Box 34, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[225] Unknown, "Consecration of Chapel," Box 34, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[226] Interestingly, Scott's report noted that there was no indication in the Diocesan records (as they existed in 1930) that this service ever took place. Scott was never able to figure out who officiated this service, which apparently took place in April of 1908. He also never found reference to this service in the *Journal of Southern Virginia* for either 1908 or 1909. Of course, this does not mean that the service did not take place, just that it was not a well-documented event. Executive Secretary to Rev. Arthur P. Gray, Jr.; Rev. Frank Mesick; Rev. Edwin R. Carter, D. D., November 12, 1931, Box 34, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[227] Unknown, "Consecration of Chapel," Box 34, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

community were in attendance.[228] A month after the service, the Bishop's executive secretary again reiterated the control this group had over the language of the Mission, stating:

> "In recent years several of the white people in the neighborhood have seriously objected to having the word 'Indian' used in connection with the Mission, and have taken the position that these people are not Indians at all. The local objection to the use of the word 'Indian' has been so determined that I have been careful not to use it in my records or written articles when referring to the place."[229]

While the issue of language might seem trivial, these debates highlight just how closely the actions of Mission leadership were policed by the surrounding white community. If it were not for people like J. J. Ambler keeping tabs on the Mission's language, it is possible that the Monacan people might have been more successful in advocating for the public validation of their identity.

Monacan Protest

Due to a combination of poor record-keeping on behalf of Savage and a fairly uneventful few years, there are not many records from 1932 to 1935.[230] A shift in the power structure of the Mission, during the summer of 1936, effectively increased the paper trail at a pivotal point in the

[228] Unknown Author, "Order of Consecration Service", 1931, Box 34, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[229] Executive Secretary to Rev. Arthur P. Gray, Jr.; Rev. Frank Mesick; Rev. Edwin R. Carter, D. D., November 12, 1931, Box 34, Folder 3, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[230] In 1932, Savage took notice of the Monacan people's ability to remember many of the "old songs" that the Episcopal Church had historically used during services. In 1933, she recorded a decrease in people's interest in being confirmed, and warned the Bishop that his October Confirmation service would be poorly attended, with a small Confirmation class. At the same time however, a record two hundred forty-one Monacan people attended a series of services put on by a visiting Reverend from Roanoke, and the Mission School's enrollment was also satisfactory in Savage's eyes. The reason for the decline in potential Confirmations is uncertain, but the following year saw a candidate class of six. On October 30, 1934, Rev. Lewis sent a list of potential candidates for Confirmation to the Bishop, including "Arronica Johns, Mollie Johns, Ola Johns, Millie Johns, Cora Hamilton, and Sutton Nuchols." Relevant letters: Brightsie Savage to Bishop Jett, July 16, 1932, Box 42, Folder 9, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA; Brightsie Savage to Bishop Jett, October 12, 1933, Box 42, Folder 9, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA; Lewis to Jett, Oct 30, 1934, Box 52, Folder 29, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Mission's history. In order to protect their distinct identity in the church and beyond it, the Monacan congregation expressed concern and hesitation over the proposed Confirmation of a Black woman in the area named Millie. The conference, which came to fruition on August 19, 1936, indicated a victory for the Monacan congregation at Bear Mountain Mission. The people employed a number of strategies that indicated they had a say over who could, and could not, enter into their exclusively Indian space at the Mission. Though the records indicating the specifics of this conflict are scant, it is possible that the Monacan people started boycotting Confirmations as a whole during this time, since the Bishop expressed concerns about the community members' opinions on them. The first time the conference comes up in the record is in July of 1936, when Bishop Jett was finalizing the details with Deaconess Savage. He made it clear that he only wanted members of the Mission who had been confirmed to attend the meeting; he stated he wanted "no one else." Jett might have believed that by only including confirmed members of the congregation, he would have an audience more sympathetic to his supplications. Jett's exact opinion on the matter is difficult to parse, but he clearly was in favor of continuing the Confirmation services at Bear Mountain, and Millie's Confirmation in particular.

Bishop Jett's wish for communicants only to attend the conference was not observed by the Monacan people, who filled the church pews almost completely. After a few hymns were sung and bible passages read, Bishop Jett made, "an understanding, sympathetic, very frank but cautiously firm statement" covering the difficulties faced by the Monacan resistance to the new communicant.[231] Jett asked everyone in attendance to vote with a verbal "yes" or "no" as to whether or not people agreed with his opinion, but no one in attendance responded either way.

[231] Bishop Jett to Rev. Lewis, August 20, 1936, Box 52, Folder 29, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Bishop Jett's request for a formal, public pronouncement of one's opinion might have frightened the congregation into silence, because after the conference was over, Jett interacted privately with individuals who were more willing to share their opinions on the matter. He separated the opinions he heard that night into two categories, those who believed, "the situation had been improved," meaning they believed they could accept Millie into their congregation, and others who held a contrary view.[232]

The most unambiguous example of a Monacan viewpoint on the matter came from the secondhand account of a man, "whose first or last name. . .was Willis."[233] Jett drove this man, along with some other individuals and two infants, to and from the conference at the Mission. "Willis" was the final person in the car with the Bishop that night and explained his opinion:

> "He said that he strongly felt that we had made a very distinct gain as a result of the conference, and urged me to put into effect my suggestion that I would return before long for a service, even if I felt that it might be better to again defer the confirmation service. He felt, however, that there were many who would yield on this point, and now welcome the confirmation service, including the girl to whom they had objected"[234]

The Bishop did not visit Bear Mountain Mission except on special occasions, but his visits and services were always well attended and enjoyed by the congregation. Furthermore, the Bishop's visits provided the congregation with the chance to speak to the person "in charge" of the Mission. They were able to communicate their thoughts, opinions, and worries to the same person whom the mission workers spoke with frequently. Illiteracy and a lack of knowledge regarding how to reach the Bishop prevented many Monacan people from writing to him, so in-person visits afforded them an opportunity to access white networks and influence white

[232] Bishop Jett to Rev. Lewis, August 20, 1936, Box 52, Folder 29, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[233] Bishop Jett to Rev. Lewis, August 20, 1936, Box 52, Folder 29, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[234] Bishop Jett to Rev. Lewis, August 20, 1936, Box 52, Folder 29, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

leadership not otherwise attainable. It is not surprising that Willis suggested he make more frequent visits, and Jett set his next visit date for November 11th, though he admitted that he did not feel it wise to even attempt a Confirmation service.[235]

Jett seemed to have a vested interest in hearing the authentic, unfiltered opinions of the people in the days following the conference. He wrote to Savage asking her to listen intently for any statements related to the Confirmation service as a whole, and the Confirmation of Millie specifically. Jett emphasized that he wanted, ". . .a definite and true statement of facts, even if this statement should appear to reflect upon any mistakes I may have made."[236] He intended to use these statements to shape his response and further plans. Jett knew that if he moved carelessly, in a way that upset the Monacan community, he would lose the support of the people and would be unsuccessful. The entire incident reflects both the internalized racism present within Amherst County in 1936, and serves as definite evidence that the Monacan people saw Bear Mountain Mission as belonging to Native people only. For them, the Mission was not just an Episcopal church space, it was an Episcopal church that belonged to and for the Monacan people exclusively.

In the weeks following the conference, there were a multitude of Monacan perspectives that emerged. A few people wholeheartedly agreed with the Bishop's stance, even going so far as to say they "had never enjoyed anything as much."[237] Other Monacan people met with Savage privately after a service one Sunday and, "gave their consent for Millie to be Confirmed in her

[235] Bishop Jett to Brightsie Savage, August 20, 1936, Box 52, Folder 29, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[236] Bishop Jett to Brightsie Savage, August 20, 1936, Box 52, Folder 29, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[237] Brightsie Savage to Bishop Jett, Aug 27, 1936, Box 52, Folder 29, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

house."[238] They were fine with her being confirmed into the Episcopal Church, as long as it was not in "their" space. No one in this particular group wished to commune with her or her family however, and still others said they would never give their consent publicly. After Jett caught wind that the Monacan people would be fine for Millie to be confirmed, in her own home, the Bishop became more emboldened. He wrote to Savage telling her, "I cannot accept the position taken by the mission people."[239] Jett eventually took the matter to the Executive Board, seemingly because he felt he had no other option. In perhaps his most desperate letter in all of years presiding over the Mission, Bishop Jett wrote:

> "Frankly, it now appears to me that it will probably become necessary for us to close the mission. I am perfectly certain that unless the people are willing to follow my leadership that the United Thank Offering authorities, upon learning that I can no longer have confirmations, will withdraw the support of the mission. . .The people are in my jugement standing very much in their own way. We have through the years tried to help them. They should now try to help us to solve a problem that can be solved only by themselves. They need to rethink and to pray, and so do we."[240]

The records about this event interestingly end here, but the Mission obviously did not close, and the situation was resolved. However, the Monacan people succeeded in expressing their sovereignty over the Mission space by collectively dictating who was and was not allowed to be confirmed into the congregation–understanding that the Bishop needed confirmation candidates to justify the church's work.

Threats to Stability

Much of the story about the Mission during its first three decades is one of a continual push and pull between the Church authorities and the Monacan community over the interlocking

[238] Brightsie Savage to Bishop Jett, Oct 7, 1936, Box 52, Folder 29, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[239] Bishop Jett to Brightsie Savage, Oct. 20, 1936, Box 52, Folder 12, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[240] Bishop Jett to Brightsie Savage, Oct 20, 1936, Box 52, Folder 12, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

issues of education and Protestant assimilation. In 1937, the official stance of the Church was still one in which the Monacan people were only called "Indians" out of appeasement and necessity, were deemed inherently poor and unable to adequately donate their financial resources to the Church, and that the utmost goal of the Mission was still tied to the Protestant assimilation of the Monacan people.[241] The Church continued to boast about their industrial training programs, where boys were taught cabinet making, and girls were taught how to weave and sell their baskets. Bishop Jett continued to boast that the Episcopal Church represented the only Protestant denomination that made any effort on behalf of the "religious welfare" of the Monacan people. During the summer of 1937, he made explicit reference to the physical proximity of the church and the public school, something he deemed highly important.[242] During this time, Jett also reached out to the Southern Teachers Agency, asking for a list of available teachers who were specifically Episcopalian. He wanted to make sure that whatever teacher was employed at the Mission was also able to assist "in the religious training of the people out of school hours."[243] There is no doubt that the most important service provided by the Mission continued to be that of religious assimilation.

The women mission workers, who lived on Bear Mountain in the community, were the most important tool for the Bishop in this work. They also ensured that the Diocese received any and all donations from both the Monacan congregation, and Episcopalians throughout the State and Country who provided financial aid. Unfortunately for the Bishop, mission worker Brightsie Savage started falling down on these responsibilities. The issues with Brightsie Savage began

[241] Unknown Author, Jan 10, 1937, Box 56, Folder 12, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[242] Bishop Jett to The Southern Teachers Agency, July 16, 1937, Box 56, Folder 12, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[243] Bishop Jett to The Southern Teachers Agency, July 16, 1937, Box 56, Folder 12, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

appearing in December of 1936 when she started allowing her ill brother to live with her at the Mission house, without procuring permission from the Bishop, or anyone in the congregation, first. This one event put the Mission in "jeopardy," according to Jett, and he promptly asked her to find other arrangements for her brother at once.[244] Jett understood that the Monacan congregants vetted and maintained a close eye on who was living and working in their community, and an unidentified man would have caused concern. Jett actually suggested to Savage that it might be time for her retirement, but this was rapidly put on hold with the death of her mother shortly after.[245] The issues with Savage continued to pile up throughout the following year, and she was accused of asking volunteer workers from Sweet Briar to come and help at the Mission without talking to the Bishop first. Savage brought people into the community without permission, and Jett consistently condemned this practice. Her actions challenged his authority as Bishop over the boundaries of the Mission, but they also threatened the stability of the Monacan congregation, something that Jett was aware of. The final straw came in July 1937, when Jett learned that Savage had failed to acknowledge "gifts of various kinds" sent by people from different parts of the country.[246] Bishop Jett ended up having to write to the Assistant Postmaster General in Washington, D.C. in order to apologize for the actions of Savage, which had been falsely blamed on the postmaster in Amherst. The next day, Jett went to the Virginian Hotel in Lynchburg to meet with none other than former mission worker, Isabel Wagner. After this, Bishop Jett sent Savage a forced letter of resignation.[247]

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[244] Bishop Jett to Brightsie Savage, December 9, 1936, Box 52, Folder 12, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[245] Bishop Jett to Brightsie Savage, December 9, 1936, Box 52, Folder 12, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[246] Bishop Jett to the Assistant Postmaster General, July 20, 1937, Box 56 Folder 12, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[247] Bishop Jett to Brightsie Savage, July 23, 1937, Box 56, Folder 12, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Savage's exit from the Mission was neither easy nor swift, underscoring the sloppiness of her stewardship of community relations which required delicacy, a trait Monacans had long understood. Savage defended her character and actions at the Mission, stating that she had incurred personal debts in order to buy food and medicine for the people, who had experienced "whooping cough and colitis epidemics" during the summer of 1937.[248] Reverend Wellford, who had recently come in to replace Reverend Lewis, stated he believed Savage had developed a martyr complex over the situation.[249] Savage did state that she had made a "doormat" of herself for other people.[250] In a position inherently service-oriented, Savage was under the impression she had been taken advantage of. Filled with anger, uncertainty, and disbelief, Savage played clueless when Isabel Wagner arrived in January of 1938, even though Savage had been given clear instructions to vacate the premises.

Monacan residents acted quickly to smooth the transition to Wagner's residence as Deaconess, no doubt hopeful that as before she would keep a distance from their hostile white neighbors. Isabel Wagner wrote to Bishop Jett in early January 1938 that many of her old "friends" had welcomed her back, and she felt as if she had come home.[251] Wagner did develop genuine relationships with some Monacan people during her first stint at the Mission from 1917 to 1922, and she wrote on numerous occasions that the community brought her welcoming gifts of eggs, canned fruits, and ham- an expression on behalf of the Monacan people that Savage

[248] Brightsie Savage to Bishop Jett, Nov 1, 1937, Box 56, Folder 12, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[249] Rev. Wellford to Bishop Jett, Dec 16, 1937, Box 56, Folder 12, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[250] Brightsie Savage to Bishop Jett, Nov 1, 1937, Box 56, Folder 12, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[251] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, January 5, 1938, Box 57, Folder 54, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

never made any mention of.[252] Winters always seemed to be the harshest periods at the Mission, but Wagner wrote that the Monacan people were cooperating with her in every way, and that she, and the majority of the community at the Mission, was perfectly comfortable in the cold weather.[253] Wagner, emboldened by her seniority and experience, expressed faith in her ability to enact change within the community, concordant with the Protestant assimilating charge. After her first few weeks at the Mission she wrote, "On the whole I see great improvement among the people everywhere and am much encouraged."[254] Though she perceived "improvement," she made sure to alert the Bishop that the community was still "not articulate," and complained that she had to carry the conversation whenever she made house visits.[255]

The only element hindering Wagner's experience seemed to be the looming reality of Savage's refusal to leave the neighborhood. As was indicated in Savage's actions during the fire of 1930, Savage was extremely close to some of the white people in the area, and had only become closer to them over the years. She ended up staying with them when she left the Mission house the day that Wagner arrived, and plainly told Wagner that she had no intention of leaving. Wagner wrote to the Bishop, worried:

> "She is still around. Packages go to her. She is living up the road. . . Could you please put a notice in the *Southwestern Episcopalian* suggesting the change of workers at the Mission? Miss Savage still has her hand on everything with the people. . . She doesn't talk of leaving the neighborhood. . . I am afraid the School teacher is going to be disagreeable if Miss Savage continues to interrupt the school sessions!"[256]

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[252] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, Jan 27, 1938, Box 57, Folder 54, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[253] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, Jan 27, 1938, Box 57, Folder 54, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[254] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, Jan 19, 1938, Box 57, Folder 54, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[255] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, January 5, 1938, Box 57, Folder 54, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[256] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, Jan 19, 1938, Box 57, Folder 54, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

These actions showcase a stubbornness on behalf of Savage to withdraw her influence at the Mission, which might be seen as an extension of the influence of white people in the area. Eventually, Savage did leave town, but on her way out, she told Wagner that she would return.[257] Bishop Jett agreed with Wagner when it came to the topic of Savage, stating that, "I do hope, circumstances being what they are, that she will not make her home near the Mission. If she does return, please let me know."[258]

The Monacan congregation continued their strategy of community vetting of mission workers, ultimately accepting Isabel Wagner back into their sphere. When Bishop Jett eventually left his post as head of the Mission and Diocese, and was replaced by Bishop Phillips, Monacan people made sure that everyone knew they were watching and taking notes on this transition as well. As with all new faces that arrived at Mission, the Monacan people made sure that everyone knew they were watching and taking notes. Bishop Phillip's first visit to the Mission was on November 20, 1938, and Isabel Wagner was relieved when there did not end up being any "fireworks" like she had anticipated.[259] There did not seem to be any real conflict with the arrival of Phillips, and everyone seemed pleased, including J. J. Ambler. Ambler, who had not reached out to the Bishop of the Diocese in seven years, took the opportunity to express his sentiments related to the eradication of the term "Indian" from the Mission with the newly appointed Bishop. Ambler reiterated his belief that prior to 1920, the Church did not refer to the Monacan people as "Indians," but rather as "free negroes" who showed up in Amherst County after they were sent there by their enslavers in the 1820's. This was of course completely false, but

[257] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Jett, Jan 27, 1938, Box 57, Folder 54, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[258] Bishop Jett to Isabel Wagner, February 9, 1938, Box 57, Folder 54, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[259] Isabel Wagner to Executive Secretary, Nov 1, 1938, Box 57, Folder 54, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Ambler, and many other white people in Amherst, believed it to be true. Ambler went so far as to ask Bishop Phillips if he could attend the next Laymen Council meeting in Salem, Virginia in May in order to clear up confusion about the identity of the Monacan people.[260] Phillips responded to Ambler's request with the claim that the schedule for the council meeting in May was already filled, but did show interest in speaking with Ambler about the "people around Bear Mountain Mission."[261] A few weeks later, Ambler sent a final letter accusing the Bishop of underestimating the gravity of the situation. In a harsh rebuke filled with racist dogma, he stated,

> ". . .one would conclude that you have heard only one side of the Bear Mt. folk. The assumption is that you have listened to the few clergy, that these folk are 'Indians. . .To me it seems incredible that white people of our church claiming decency of birth are willing to foster amalgamation with these negroes. (It is rapidly coming.) We should be taught that race patriotism and patriotism of country is synonymous, and to betray either is act of a traitor and should be dealt with accordingly."[262]

Phillips responded with a curt statement that expressed both his agreement with Ambler, as well as his and the Mission's continued commitment to "render such assistance as will enable them to lead useful and happy lives."[263] As had been customary from the very beginning of the Mission, until the end, the Episcopal Church took a moderate, fairly neutral stance when it came to the Native identity of the Monacan people.

As the decade came to a close, Isabel Wagner enjoyed a warm, neighborhood quality on Bear Mountain, with the people in the community viewing Wagner as a friendly neighbor, something quite different than how the other white people in the community were viewed. The backlash that Wagner faced in 1922 had been forgotten, and her strategy of being friendly was

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[260] John Jacequelin Ambler to Bishop Phillips, April 19, 1939, Box 58, Folder 62, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[261] Bishop Phillips to John Jacequelin Ambler, April 19, 1939, Box 58, Folder 62, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[262] John Jacequelin Ambler to Bishop Philips, May 7, 1939, Box 58, Folder 62, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[263] Bishop Jett to John Jacequelin Ambler, May 12, 1939, Box 58, Folder 62, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

working. The Mission School was fairly well attended at this time, with the average students attendance being thirty-five. Women from Sweet Briar College came over at times for recreational activities with the children.[264] Despite all of the change and turmoil that the 1930's brought, the Mission was still utilized by the Monacan people for community growth, and people continued to travel from all over Amherst on the weekends in order to gather and commune.[265] Isabel Wagner ended up remaining in the community until her retirement in 1949, when she was replaced by Deaconesses Edith A. Booth and Amelia Brereton.[266] Wagner wrote a survey of the Mission before she left, including a daily diary of her responsibilities during her final month, and a detailed map indicating where Monacan families lived in relation to the Mission. She also provided further validation that the white community with whom the Mission often ran into conflict, was connected to a Methodist Church which was about a quarter of a mile away.[267] Her account also indicated that by the end of the 1940's, the racial stigmas which prevented the Monacan congregation from accepting Millie into their confirmed class had solidified further. Having absorbed the same mindset that discriminated against people with darker skin at the state and county levels, the Monacan people cast their "darker families" as being lesser-than, and by 1946, these families were no longer attending the Mission.[268] So often, "community building" is seen as a positive enterprise, especially for Native American communities who have been historically denied their identities. However, as seen in the case of Bear Mountain Mission, a

[264] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Phillips, October 18, 1938, Box 58, Folder 61, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[265] Isabel Wagner to Bishop Phillips, October 18, 1938, Box 58, Folder 61, Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records, 1906-1990, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[266] Unknown Author, "History of Saint Paul's Episcopal Indian Mission: Celebrating 90 Years of Continued Fellowship: 1908-1998," Unprocessed Records of Reverend Robert Baldwin Lloyd, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[267] Isabel Wagner, "Survey- St. Paul's Mission, Amherst, Va.," February 1946, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.
[268] Isabel Wagner, "Survey- St. Paul's Mission, Amherst, Va.," February 1946, Monacan Ancestral Museum Archives, Amherst, VA.

community can fall into the trap of ousting members of their own based on the powerful forces of colorism, racism and discrimination in order to maintain identity.[269]

In conclusion, Monacan people advocated for their Native identity and communal safety at the Mission by refusing to stand behind racist mission workers, and protesting the acceptance of people into their congregation that they did not view as sharing their likeness. Unfortunately, the Monacan people assumed that any association with the Black community in Amherst meant the further lumping of their identity with that of African Americans, so they took every step to disassociate with Black people, even if that meant ousting members of their own cultural community who simply had a darker skin tone. The story of the community's difficulty with ousting Brightsie Savage illustrated how strongly some white people wanted to maintain oversight on Mission operations. When she finally left, the Monacan community welcomed back Isabel Wagner, demonstrating that mission workers could get along fine at the Mission, as long as they were backed by the support of the Monacan congregation. This chapter sought to indicate how contentious conditions at the Mission had become in the 1930's, and the drastic measures Monacan people took to counteract these affronts. The strategies they undertook in this decade were successful in ensuring they maintained their cultural identity amidst a multitude of efforts from the state to erase their Native identity from the records.

[269] Cook, *Monacans and Miners*, 84-97.

CONCLUSION

". . .but you can't cut the heart out of something and expect it to live. No, the tribe exists solely because of the church. The church exists now because of the tribal members." -*Buddy Johns*[270]

This project sought to accomplish two things. Firstly, it strove to build off of the work of many scholars who emphasized that the Monacan people were able to utilize the Bear Mountain Mission as a space to foster community amidst a hostile environment in Amherst County.[271] This thesis added new depth to the history of the Bear Mountain Mission by examining the papers related to the Mission within the *Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia* records, a collection of primary source material that had not yet been analyzed. By utilizing sources from the mission workers who interacted daily with the Monacan people, a clearer picture of *how* Monacans fostered community and engaged in resistance strategies emerged. The sources also indicated how they used the space to serve alternate ends such as individual validation through Confirmation rites, and collective community advancement through access to Western education for young people. Various correspondence attests to the racial animosity of the Mission's white neighbors, and further demonstrates the stakes involved in Monacan people asserting their Native identity in a space that was in such close proximity to these individuals.

Most of the sources consulted for this project were written by, and for, white Episcopalians, making it more difficult to ascertain how Monacans specifically felt and acted. However, thanks to a number of sources written by and for the Monacan community related to their feelings towards the Bear Mountain Mission, I was able to more easily pull out Monacan perspectives from the biased source base. At the very least, this thesis acts as a jumping off point for researchers, both academic and otherwise, seeking to locate information related to daily

[270] Buddy Johns to Reverend B. Lloyd, Undated, Unprocessed Records of Reverend Robert Baldwin Lloyd, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[271] Cook, *Monacans and Miners*, 84-134.

activities, and turning points, at the Bear Mountain Mission during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

Secondly, this project is intended to complicate the story of how the various invested parties at Bear Mountain Mission interacted with one another and negotiated sovereignty. For the purposes of this thesis, sovereignty meant the ability of these parties to control how the Mission operated. My research determined that no one party ever had complete control, or sovereignty, over the Bear Mountain Mission, something that is itself a notable conclusion. The Episcopal Church and its leadership might have claimed sovereignty at times, but from the Mission's inception, Monacan people viewed the space as theirs as well. Monacans worked together to voice their opinions on Mission operations, including but not limited to the hiring and maintaining of certain mission workers, and the execution of various church services. From the outset of this research, it became clear to me that the story of the Mission was not one that could be easily explained in a typical, "Group A versus Group B" storyline. At times throughout the Mission's history, church leadership and Monacan congregants worked together for certain means, including the validation of the Mission to outsiders, and the assurance of a quality education for Monacan children through the Mission's day school. In this way, both parties shared sovereignty over aspects of the Mission that worked for their respective goals, even if they differed from each other. However, the strategies taken by Monacan congregants through the Mission's first three decades were effective in preventing the Episcopal Church from gaining complete control of the Mission, and actually ended up encouraging this shared sovereignty and cooperation between the Monacan people and church leadership. Monacan congregants used strategies of resistance in order to maintain the Mission as a space that worked for their specific needs, as well as a way to ensure that Bear Mountain, and Amherst as a whole remained an

affirming and welcoming landscape for Native peoples. Many of the sources in this thesis attest to the volatile, racist white community that lived near the Mission and hostility from the state government, so Monacan people utilized the Mission as a way to assert their group power and identity within Amherst County and Virginia.

The strategies Monacan people engaged with were as diverse as the individuals who called Bear Mountain home, but several patterns in the development of expressions and articulation of sovereignty emerged over the first three decades of the Mission's history. Chapter I showed how the Monacan community identified the newly formed Mission as a space uniquely theirs, by asserting their Native identity to church leadership, and using possessive language when talking about the Mission. At the same time that the Monacan people engaged with the Mission, they also continued to utilize and strengthen pre existing resources related to spiritual learning, healthcare, and physical gathering spaces, ensuring that the Mission was *not* the only place that the community could access these resources.

The second chapter highlighted how Monacans introduced direct communication with the Bishop as a way to air grievances with mission workers and desires for what they wanted the Mission to be. At a time when the larger white community in Amherst County was working to devalue Monacan people's claims to Native culture and heritage, Monacan people explicitly let church leadership know that the Mission needed to remain a safe and affirming space. Chapter III showed that in the 1930's, Monacan congregants amped up their strategies to ensure their preferences for the Mission were taken into account by engaging in group protests, essentially halting Mission operations until the Bishop listened to their entreaties. Monacan strategies changed over time, adjusting as needed to various factors such as increased racial animosity within Amherst County, and different assimilating practices by the Church. A general trend

towards group protest and communal action developed over the three decades included in this study, something that represents both the tense climate at the Mission, and the confidence gained through years of similar efforts.

Most of the Monacan strategies undertaken in these three chapters revolved around similar goals related to group safety and community building around Native identity. Monacans worked towards the safety of their community by discouraging and preventing mission workers from becoming friendly with the white neighbors that lived near the Mission. This was a useful strategy because it ensured that these outwardly racist individuals did not exert additional influence on Mission politics and decisions. By preventing these white neighbors from gaining access to the Mission, the Monacan people were able to continue using the Mission as a space to build their group identity as a Native community. However, community building activities themselves could not escape the entrenched racism that had grown deep roots around the Mission. In order to maintain their Native identity amidst the *Racial Integrity* era, Monacan congregants utilized the Mission as a carefully curated place for Native individuals only. I recorded two instances in which the Monacan congregation prevented two individuals, whom they identified as Black, from being confirmed into the Church and into the Mission community. By the 1930's, to be a part of the Mission was to be not only a part of the Episcopal Church, but arguably more-so a part of the Native Monacan community. As time went on, the lines between "Episcopalian" and "Monacan" became even more blurred, something that illustrated the complicated and interrelated nature of Mission politics. Overall, Monacan expressions of identity became more about who was *not* accepted into the community, rather than who was, something that is reflected in scholarship on Native people in Virginia.[272] By convening together to prevent

[272] Coleman, *That the Blood Stay Pure.*

a Black individual from being Confirmed into the Church, Monacans essentially stated that their group identity would be threatened by the admittance of a Black person. Along the same vein, sovereignty for Monacan congregants came to mean the ability to judge and decide for themselves whether or not individuals would be allowed into the Mission space. Rather than controlling the content of services, they sought to control who would be allowed into these services and how the space was used beyond service.

As the challenges of racism and state-sponsored erasure of Native identity continued into the 1940's, 1950's, and 1960's, the Mission's meaning and utility continued to be contested over the remaining three decades of its existence. . However, the Monacan people maintained a sense of community and Native identity despite these challenges, working alongside the mission workers who came after Isabel Wagner's final tenure to increase Monacan sovereignty over Bear Mountain and political status in Amherst County and Virginia. For instance, Florence Cowan, a missionary at the Mission from 1952 until 1965, fought for the integration of the Monacan children at the Mission School into the Amherst County school system. As one commentator wrote of her, "She was a woman with ethical commitments who had only minimal support at the time. . . She was a fighter for the children of the mission."[273] On June 25, 1963, twenty-four Monacan children were accepted into the white schools in Amherst County, and the Mission closed its doors the next year.[274] With the closure of the Mission in 1965, came the cessation of the women missionaries as well. Instead, various Reverends were stationed to St. Paul's Chapel, including Captain Robert Hicks (was he from 1965 to 1968, Captain John E. Haraughty from 1968-1992, and Reverend Baldwin Lloyd ("B") from 1992 until his passing in 2019. Lloyd

[273] Unknown Author, "History of Saint Paul's Episcopal Indian Mission: Celebrating 90 Years of Continued Fellowship: 1908-1998," Unprocessed Records of Reverend Robert Baldwin Lloyd, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[274] Unknown Author, "History of Saint Paul's Episcopal Indian Mission: Celebrating 90 Years of Continued Fellowship: 1908-1998," Unprocessed Records of Reverend Robert Baldwin Lloyd, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

became an honorary member of the Monacan Indian Nation in 1994, and wrote extensively about Monacan spirituality.[275] The 1990's and 2000's saw the Church and Monacan Nation work together on a number of different fronts. In both a symbolically significant and strategically important move, the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia turned over all Church held land on Bear Mountain, except the St. Paul's Church building, to the Monacan Indian Nation on October 7, 1995. An Episcopal commentator, most likely Reverend B. Lloyd, said of this event:

> "How wonderful, that land once lost to their people was now given back. And how appropriate that the Church be the ones to set what hopefully someday will be a precedence for others to follow for the return of Bear mountain, recognized the spiritual home of the Monacan people. And it was right that this service – this ceremony– began and ended with prayers offered to our Creator– in Lakota, a Siouan language for a Siouan people, by Ceremonial Chief, George Whitewolf; and in the best of Anglican tradition, by Bishop Light."[276]

This quote represents a romanticized way of remembering the Bear Mountain Mission in which the Church and Monacan Nation were ultimately able to set aside their differences and exist in tandem, able to practice their respective spiritualities harmoniously. The author insinuated that, in spite of the Episcopal Church's past wrongdoings, they redeemed themselves in the end by returning ancestral land to the Monacan Nation. While the inner workings of the Church and the Monacan Nation over the past few decades are far outside of my expertise, sources from the personal papers of Reverend B. Lloyd highlight a multitude of dissenting voices, cautioning the Church from drawing conclusions that dismiss the historical and present realities of Episcopal assertions of control. It was against the Protestant structures imposed on them that the Monacan people developed and enacted their many methods of resistance.

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[275] Unknown Author, "Reverend Robert Baldwin "B" Lloyd," October 18, 2019, *Radford News Journal*, https://radfordnewsjournal.com/reverend-robert-baldwin-b-lloyd/.
[276] Reverend B. Lloyd, "St. Paul's- Bear Mountain: Spiritual Timeline," Unprocessed Records of Reverend Robert Baldwin Lloyd, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Due to the continued relationship between the Monacan Indian Nation and the Episcopal Church, my hope is that this research will help to inform how the Mission is remembered by these communities. This work argued that Monacan people were extremely active in advocating for their Native identity within the Mission, a space that ultimately began and operated under the guise of religiously-motivated settler colonialism. In order to better comprehend how the colonial roots of the Episcopal Church in Virginia might still contribute to the erasure of Monacan cultural practices, I encourage researchers to consider the numerous Monacan voices presented in this thesis in tandem with more contemporary Monacan voices. Monacan people remember the Mission in a multitude of ways, positive, negative, and neutral. Many who remember the Mission point out its role in providing an education to the Monacan community during a time when they were not afforded that opportunity without first surrendering their Native identity.

However, people like Sharon Rebecca Bryant, Chief of the Monacan Indian Nation from 2011 until her passing in 2015, wrote about the particular type of Western education and accompanying erasure imposed on Monacan children. Chief Bryant was also the Lay Minister at St. Paul's Church, and seemed to understand the deep-rooted connections that the Episcopal Church had to the white settler cause that brought people to Monacan territory hundreds of years ago. In 1991, she penned a poem related to these issues, writing:

> "We have always wanted to be left alone,
> and your ways we did not want to learn.
> But to beat you at your game of 'all I own'
> to your schools we finally had to turn.
> And now you think you have educated the savages
> but we forgot more than you'll ever know.
> Yes, it's true that the 'white' disease ravages

we pray for cleansing with the winter snow."[277]

In poetic language, Chief Bryant harkens back to the difficulties the Monacan people historically faced when it came to educating their children in Western schools. She implicates the very education that the Bear Mountain Mission provided not just the children in the Mission School, but the adults who attended the various talks, sermons, classes, and services at the Mission Church, and sometimes in their own homes during home-visits.

Similar to how the Monacan congregation in the 1920's and 1930's wrote directly to church leadership to voice their complaints, Monacan people at the turn of the twentieth century continued to do the same. In an undated letter to Reverend B. Lloyd, signed "Congregation at St. Paul's," parishioners voiced their opinions on the contemporary relationship between the Church and the Monacan Indian Nation. The letter made reference to the very beginnings of the Mission in 1907, stating that the reasons why the rituals of the Episcopal Church were so appealing to their ancestors at that time was because, " [they are] a people of ancient ritual."[278] Many of the ritualistic elements of the Episcopal Church were comfortable to those earliest Monacan practitioners, the letter-writers argued, encouraging them to find common ground between the two traditions. It was this element of ritual familiarity that made the Church's entrance into the community tolerable. However, in language that recognizes the very same complicated nature of the relationship with the Church that was discussed at length throughout this thesis, the authors of this letter noted the colonial, assimilating essence of the Mission's ultimate goals:

> "From the beginning of our services at St. Paul's, we were instructed to leave behind and deny the spiritual traditions of our native culture. The first requirement of our acceptance into this faith community was to stop painting our faces and come to church. No dancing; no drumming; no smudging. . .so we, in effect, became good Episcopalians. Nothing was

[277] Chief Sharon Bryant, Untitled Poem, 1991, Unprocessed Records of Reverend Robert Baldwin Lloyd, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
[278] Congregation at St. Paul's to Reverend B. Lloyd, Early 2000s, Unprocessed Records of Reverend Robert Baldwin Lloyd, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

> ever celebrated about our race or culture. No effort, to this day, was ever made to truly understand our history and culture. We remember racist priests saying the holy words of the Eucharistic prayer and baptism. We accepted it because that was the way we were treated at every turn outside our own Monacan community and we didn't know how to expect anything different."[279]

Despite numerous and successful efforts to maintain partial sovereignty at the Bear Mountain Mission, and continue to cultivate a safe community for Native peoples, the Monacan congregation in the twenty-first century acknowledged that their decades-long encounter with the Episcopal Church was not without harmful consequences. By becoming "good Episcopalians," a strategy in and of itself that ensured greater access to white networks and validation, Monacans accepted a degree of continued disregard for Monacan spiritual traditions on behalf of the Episcopal Church.

Much of this thesis explored crucial stories of dialogue between Monacan congregants and Episcopal church leadership. Some of these dialogues happened on paper, but many of them went unrecorded amongst the infinite daily interactions between mission workers and Monacan people. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, Monacan people risked punishment and dismissal from the Mission in order to start conversations with white people who held power within the Church and community. They continued to do this, remaining open to conferences and conversations with the Bishop whenever and if-ever he agreed to them, because they understood that it was a successful strategy towards ensuring tangible changes within the Mission. In many ways, the Monacan people who wrote to Reverend B. Lloyd in the early 2000's voiced many of the same sentiments that their ancestors held decades prior: a desire to have their voices heard, and their Native identity not only recognized, but exalted and included

[279] Congregation at St. Paul's to Reverend B. Lloyd, Early 2000s, Unprocessed Records of Reverend Robert Baldwin Lloyd, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

within, and transformative of, the Episcopal space. The congregants ended their letter to Reverend Lloyd, stating:

> "We stand ready to share the lessons and wisdom we've learned through our history as a small Native American church surrounded by an exclusionary society. . . It is time for us to be invited to share our knowledge and culture with the diocese to bring out a better understanding of who we all are."[280]

As demonstrated in the pages of this thesis, this call to action on behalf of the Episcopal church leadership was nothing new in the twenty-first century, and had in fact been preceded by people such as Elsie Branham in 1922. This thesis only touched the surface of the numerous stories contained within the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Records. My hope is that future work will be done to recover the many other Monacan voices, actions, and strategies undertaken at the Bear Mountain Mission housed in this archive, in order to ensure that the Episcopal Church and Monacan Indian Nation today better acknowledges their complicated history and grants appropriate recognition to the specific ways that Native identity was performed at the Mission.

[280] Congregation at St. Paul's to Reverend B. Lloyd, Early 2000s, Unprocessed Records of Reverend Robert Baldwin Lloyd, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

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