

Dear members of the Salem community,

In the course of the last year, Salem Academy and College has been examining its connections to the institution of slavery. Understanding our history is critical to understanding our present and guiding us as we look to the future and seek healing. We commissioned Dr. Grant McAllister, an associate professor with Wake Forest University’s Department of German and Russian, to conduct research on Salem Academy and College’s history with the institution of slavery.

Dr. McAllister’s research verified that the school owned and leased enslaved people. Salem Academy and College apologizes with profound remorse for the use of enslaved labor at the school. We are committed to discovering as much as possible about the lives of the enslaved people at the school through further research so that we may honor their memory.

In 2006, the Moravian Church, [Southern](http://www.starnewsonline.com/article/NC/20060427/News/605130491/WM/) and [Northern](http://articles.mcall.com/2006-06-19/news/3663274_1_moravians-slavery-apology-bethlehem-community) Provinces, issued an apology for the church’s involvement with the institution of slavery.

The Committee on the History of Salem Academy and College has made recommendations for next steps. The committee included Board of Trustees, Board of Visitors, student, faculty, staff, and alumnae representation and was co-chaired by Michelle Hopkins Lawrence, Salem Academy History Teacher, and Katherine Knapp Watts, Vice President for Enrollment, Financial Aid, and Communications at the Academy and the College.

In our ongoing effort to further understand Salem’s relationship with slavery and its legacy, we have accepted and are taking action on the recommendations from the History Committee:

1. To release Dr. McAllister’s report and post it to the Academy website and to the College website:

            [Dr. McAllister’s report can be found here](https://www.salemacademyandcollege.org/sites/salemac/files/Salem%20History%20Report.pdf):

2. To hold community meetings:

            Dr. Alan Mueller, Assistant Dean of Students for Student Activities, Leadership, and Intercultural Education, and Dr. Shawn Ricks, Interim Assistant Vice President for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Compliance will facilitate a series of meetings to discuss Salem Academy and College’s history with slavery. The community will be advised of the dates and times of those meetings when the schedules have been confirmed.

3. To fund further research into the relationship of Salem Academy and College and the institution of slavery:

            Further research has been approved, and we are in the process of engaging two researchers who will continue this work. One of the researchers will be College senior Jessi Bowman. We invite any members of our community who have conducted their own research to share their findings with us if they have not already done so, in order for us to obtain the broadest possible understanding of Salem’s story. In addition, we are exploring programs with Old Salem, Inc. and Old Salem’s Hidden Town Project that extend beyond our current relationship.

4. To maintain membership and regular participation in the [Universities Studying Slavery (USS),](https://www.salemacademyandcollege.org/history-committee/salem-joins-universities-studying-slavery) a consortium of nearly forty institutions of higher education that are examining their own histories with slavery and the implications that those legacies hold for the present day:

            Salem Academy and College will continue its participation in the USS. Salem was recently represented by Michelle Hopkins Lawrence and College seniors Jessi Bowman and Alanna Natanson at the USS conference held at Hollins University. During the conference, they discussed the information that the member institutions have uncovered regarding their histories and effective ways to act on those findings. Jessi Bowman also shared her research from the Salem Academy and College Archives and her work with Old Salem's Hidden Town Project through her presentation, “Salem Female Academy and the Transition from Slavery to Segregation during Reconstruction.”

5. To appoint a permanent commission to continue this important work:

            We will form a new commission and charge its members with helping to create programming that is most helpful to our community as we learn more about this period of our institutional history.

We wish to thank the members of the History Committee and Dr. McAllister. Through their work, we have begun the important process of learning about Salem’s relationship with the institution of slavery. In partnership with you, the Salem community, we will continue to work to understand the critical lessons to be learned from the past and their implications for Salem Academy and College today and in the future.

Sincerely,

Sallie Craig Huber

Chair, Board of Trustees

D. E. Lorraine Sterritt

President