

History of the Anna Maria Samuel Project: Race, Remembrance, and Reconciliation

The Committee on the History of Salem Academy and College, which included faculty, staff, student, alumnae, and trustee representation, was formed in the spring of 2017 to review College orientation traditions and to make recommendations about possible discoveries resulting from the research commissioned by the administration into the relationship between the institution and slavery. The committee completed its charge in the spring of 2018. Its final recommendations resulted in Salem issuing a formal apology for the use of enslaved labor at the school, joining the Universities Studying Slavery, and creating an ongoing institutional task force, the Commission on Slavery and Its Legacy at Salem Academy and College.

On November 22, 2019, the Commission was renamed the Anna Maria Samuel Project: Race, Remembrance, and Reconciliation.

The name change better reflects the scope of the work of the Commission and also honors an enslaved African American student at the Girls School in Salem (1793 to 1795). Anna Maria's father, Johann Samuel, was the first person baptized in Salem's Moravian congregation. Her brothers were well-known musicians in St. Philips Moravian Church, located south of Salem's campus on Church Street. Anyone wishing to know more about Anna Maria Samuel may visit the Academy and College museum in the Single Sisters House.

This historic walking tour was created for Salem Academy and College's 250th anniversary.



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Slavery and its Legacies at Salem

Walking Tour by the
The Anna Maria Samuel Project:
RACE, REMEMBRANCE, AND RECONCILIATION





Stop 1 - Single Sisters House

Museum panels describe the experiences of enslaved and free Black men and women who worked for the academic institution, as well as Anna Maria Samuel, an enslaved student in the 18th century.

Location: Single Sisters House Museum, S. Church Street

Stop 2 - Boarding School

This historic marker describes the role of enslaved workers, such as Betsey, Caty, and Nat, in the school laundry and other daily operations. Ledgers indicate that enslaved labor was used in the school's laundry from 1810 until at least 1840.

Location: South Residence Hall, S. Church Street

Stop 3 - The Inspector's House

This historic marker explains that many of Salem's early Inspectors enslaved people in this building to assist with household and institutional labor during the antebellum period.

Location: The Inspector's House, Academy Street

Stop 4 - Black Employees after the Civil War

After the Civil War, labor remained largely segregated at the school. The work was difficult and sometimes dangerous. This is exemplified by the death of Matt Walker, a Black man who worked for Salem for 13 years. In 1893, Walker died in a circular saw accident in the school woodshed, near the modern-day Lily Pond.

Location: Lily Pond, in front of the Student Center

Stop 5 - Lost Cause on Campus

Alumna Louisa Wilson Bitting married Joseph Bitting in 1858. Bitting enslaved 75 people on his tobacco plantation. In 1898, Louisa helped found the Forsyth County United Daughters of the Confederacy and helped erect Winston's Confederate monument in 1905. Louisa's daughter, Kate Bitting Reynolds, later financed and named the residence hall after her.

Location: Bitting Residence Hall

Stop 6 - Tenement Housing

This historic marker describes African American tenement housing that bordered campus during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Residents may have worked for the school as laundresses, gardeners, kitchen staff, and laborers.

Location: Bahnsen Residence Hall, S. Church Street

Stop 7 - St. Philips Moravian Church

St. Philips Moravian Church was originally formed in 1822. It is the only historic African American Moravian congregation in the country. Several of the people enslaved by Salem Academy and College attended St. Philips in the 19th century.

Location: S. Church Street