Salem Female Academy and the Transition from Slavery to Segregation during Reconstruction

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On February 1, 1866, the North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill that granted rights of incorporation to the Girls’ Boarding School in Salem, a congregation town established by the Moravian church in present-day Winston-Salem, North Carolina. This bill granted the educational institution the right to be legally recognized as the “Salem Female Academy,” as well as the ability to disseminate college diplomas to its students.[[1]](#footnote-0) Eight months earlier, a Union Chaplain entered the African Moravian Church, just down the street from the Academy, to read North Carolina’s General Order no. 32, stating that “all persons in this State heretofore held as slaves are now free.”[[2]](#footnote-1) These two legal recognitions both occurred within the shadow of the Civil War, and the Academy prided itself on never having closed its doors throughout the conflict. The declaration of freedom at the African Moravian Church in 1865 has an explicit connection to the practice of slavery in Salem and the legacies that lingered into the era known as Reconstruction. Similarly, the legacies of slavery and emancipation in this small community cannot be separated from its leading academic institution for women, now known as Salem Academy & College. Like many academic institutions in the Upper South, the Salem Female Academy relied on enslaved labor for its development and operations until 1865. The dissolution of slavery left institutions like the Salem Female Academy and the influential Moravian Church to establish how this declaration of freedom would impact their operations. During Reconstruction, the Salem Female Academy’s relationship to the newly-freed Black community continued to focus on acts of physical labor and domestic service, which were now being completed for wages. At the same time, much of the social, political, and economic momentum that the Black community began to build was often counteracted by those in positions of power who reinforced the systems of racism and discrimination that enabled their power in the first place, such as the development of Lost Cause ideology at the Salem Female Academy in the wake of the war. The town of Salem and the neighboring town of Winston were quick to recover from the economic downturn that affected many Southern cities throughout Reconstruction; however, this relative prosperity and the narrative of exceptionalism that has developed around it often discounts the reality of poor working conditions and the lack of opportunity that many Black workers faced during this time period. While some advancements took place within the broader Black community, such as the development of educational institutions and the rise of a Black middle class, racism and segregation were utilized by white individuals and institutions to retain the level of power and prestige they experienced during the antebellum period. Systemically denying opportunities to the Black community placed limits on the ability for those living and working in Salem to fully experience equality under the law. Through an examination of the Salem Female Academy’s financial history and employment practices, the attitudes and loyalties of its community members, and the development of its physical landscape from the beginning of Reconstruction to the turn of the twentieth century, it becomes clear that the esteemed academic institution operated in ways that furthered these patterns of racial subjugation and perpetuated a limited version freedom for the Black population in Salem after the Civil War.

In order to understand the Academy’s relationship with the Black community after the Civil War, it is critical to understand the institution’s reliance on enslaved labor and its role in encouraging the normalization of slavery in Salem throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. First established in 1772 as the Little Girls’ School, the single-sex academic institution began to grow as the demand for its services increased.[[3]](#footnote-2) By 1805, the school began to admit boarding students and it moved into its own structure on the Salem Square, south of the Gemeinhaus, or congregation house.[[4]](#footnote-3) This expansion, which included classrooms, offices, and sleeping quarters, was a physical manifestation of the town’s commitment to the school and the belief in its continued profitability, as the initial building costs were paid for by the Community Diacony, the general fund that residents paid into that was then distributed as needed among the community.[[5]](#footnote-4) This growth during the first decade of the nineteenth century coincided with a generational shift in the congregation town. The Moravians of Salem began to identify more with their American counterparts than with their German forefathers, opening the door for shifts in traditional values and practices. One of these developments was the expansion of slavery and the means by which enslaved people were owned. Traditionally, the theocracy of the town functioned through the use of its various governing boards: the Elders Conference governed the spiritual components of the town and the Aufseher Collegium regulated financial and material transactions. The Aufseher Collegium oversaw the hiring process for enslaved workers and tried to restrict members of the community from participating in individual ownership practices. The governing structures of Salem thought it ideal to consolidate the ownership of enslaved individuals under the command of the Unity Administration, or the church organization; however, by the first decade of the nineteenth century, the second generation of Moravians in Salem began to disregard these preferences.[[6]](#footnote-5) An entry in the Elders Conference diary from October 3, 1810 details the Inspector of the Girls’ Boarding School asking for advice on how to respond to a man’s offer to sell him a “Negro woman.”[[7]](#footnote-6) A week later, the diary confirms that Inspector Abraham Steiner decided to accept the offer and purchase this young girl to work in the laundry in an attempt to keep up with the growing number of boarders at the school. Elisabeth, also known as Betsey, had been purchased for $400, and yet the Aufseher Collegium still tried to discourage individual or institutional ownership. Like the town itself, the school functioned as an extension of the Moravian Church. Until the 1940s, every head of the school was a Moravian minister, which reinforced the close relationship between the two structures.[[8]](#footnote-7) There is no indication that the board had a moral issue with the school’s use of enslaved labor; instead, they desired for the Inspector to sell Betsey to Lewis von Schweinitz, the administrator of the Southern Moravian Province, who could then lease her back to the school, thereby eliminating Steiner’s role as an exception to the rule, even if Steiner felt he was being treated unfairly.[[9]](#footnote-8) Steiner never appears to have followed through on these prompts and the Aufseher Collegium accepted that her labor was a “necessity” for the operation of the school.[[10]](#footnote-9) Betsey continued to work at the Boarding School until 1817 when she married Sam, an enslaved laborer at the Single Sisters’ House next door.[[11]](#footnote-10) Betsey is the first known enslaved worker at the Girls’ Boarding School and her individual ownership and retention despite the competing advice of Salem’s governing structures exemplifies the shifting priorities of the academic institution and the development of a reliance on enslaved labor that would continue until the end of the Civil War.

Several factors led to a rise in the demand for enslaved labor in Salem during the nineteenth century, including the success and growth of the Salem Female Academy. In 1814, the Aufseher Collegium drafted a list of regulations to limit the spread of slavery; however, between the development of industrial manufacturing and an increasing adaptation of the paternalistic methods of white supremacy that permeated the antebellum South among the Moravians, it was difficult to enforce these rules. Both the Inspector of the school and the Aufseher Collegium expressed their belief in the “necessity” of employing an enslaved woman in the laundry and these views do not appear to waver throughout subsequent decades. After Betsey’s departure in 1817, the school rented Caty, a woman enslaved by the Unity Administration, to work in the laundry.[[12]](#footnote-11) Genealogical information compiled by Mel White, a researcher at Old Salem Museums & Gardens, reveals that Caty and Betsey were sisters. Bethania resident George Hauser sold the rest of Betsey’s family, including Caty, to the Unity Administration the day after Abraham Steiner petitioned the Board for guidance about acquiring Betsey to work in the Girls’ Boarding School in 1810.[[13]](#footnote-12) An inventory of the Unity Administration plantation in 1817 reveals that Caty and her parents, Phoebe and Bodney, were among ten enslaved workers living on the property south of town; when Caty was rented by the school after her sister Betsey was sold, she moved from the plantation into the town in order to satisfy the demand created by the school’s growing student population. This rental agreement allowed the Girls’ Boarding School to align more closely with the slaveholding regulations dictated by the Aufseher Collegium while still fulfilling its own desire to have black laborers undertake the difficult and demeaning work that white residents had the ability to chose not to complete.

The ledgers indicate that the Salem Female Academy continued to rent an enslaved laborer for its laundry until 1840, but the attitudes and physical landscapes exhibited and utilized by the school’s population suggests that its reliance on slavery for its daily operations did not cease with the last ledger entry. Segregation was being readily embedded into the framework of the town and this helped reinforce the need for the Academy to hire enslaved workers. By the 1820s, Reverend Benjamin Reichel was the Inspector of the school, which was continuously outgrowing its buildings. Many students boarded with individuals in Salem who had extra room to take them in. When Wilhelm Fries purchased an enslaved woman without alerting the Aufseher Collegium in 1823, Reichel declared that if Fries purchased her on account of the Boarding students residing in his home, he would rather have the students move than to have “more Negroes come into the Community on account of the Boarding School.”[[14]](#footnote-13) The Inspector’s aversion to slavery's growth in Salem is juxtaposed with the use of enslaved labor in the school and the Reichel family’s individual purchasing habits. Between 1822 and 1828, the Aufseher Collegium announced that Reichel had rented an enslaved woman on three separate occasions during his tenure as Inspector.[[15]](#footnote-14) Whether they were actively working in the school or within the Inspector’s House, where boarding students were also living, these enslaved women helped support the school’s operations and growth.

The argument over the use of enslaved labor was a constant in the lives of the community members but the school’s understanding of slavery as a necessity helped impede the effectiveness of attempts at enforcement. A special committee of five Brethren was convened in 1845 to reexamine the restrictions on individual ownership and the types of jobs enslaved laborers were allowed to complete. Francis Fries, one of Salem’s industrialists, remarked that the Aufseher Collegium’s regulations, which were intended to limit the expansion of slavery, “only exist on paper and are violated in every respect.”[[16]](#footnote-15) The rules were abolished soon after.[[17]](#footnote-16) It appears that remained a constant in the function of the Girls’ Boarding School. Ledgers from the 1860s show the academic institution regularly paying $500 to the Wachovia Administration for its “Kitchen Expenses.”[[18]](#footnote-17) Based on the preexisting relationship between the school and this centralized slaveholding organization, this could suggest a rental agreement for an enslaved worker between the two parties involved. Similarly, in 1859, the Salem Female Academy was in such need of space that the Inspector, now known as the Principal, proposed to the Provincial Aeltesten Conference that the Academy should rent the extra space in the Single Sisters’ House. As an alternate plan, Principal Robert de Schweinitz offered that “the Boarding School would lease [Adam Butner’s] plantation and his 2 negro men for its own use.”[[19]](#footnote-18) Adam Butner was a local businessman who held several enslaved persons over his lifetime. For reasons unknown, this agreement never came to fruition but it serves as an example of the Salem Female Academy’s expectation of using enslaved individuals to keep up with the growth of the institution as the Civil War approached. With each year, the Salem Female Academy exceeded its expectations and the constant influx of students meant there were more mouths to feed, more laundry to wash, and more profit for the institution. Since its purchase of Betsey in 1810, the Salem Female Academy was reliant upon enslaved Black workers to do the jobs no one else would willingly complete. This understanding of the necessity of enslavement remained with the academic institution throughout the Civil War and shaped its interactions with and attitudes toward the Black community at the dawn of Reconstruction.

The Salem Female Academy was considered a safe haven for young women in the South during the Civil War because of its location but the attitudes of these young women and the institution’s continuation of slavery beyond the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 made the school a less welcoming environment for Black residents. Augustus Fogle, the steward for the Salem Female Academy throughout the mid-nineteenth century, described Salem students as “daughters of senators and representatives in the Confederate Congress, in the number for whom it was thought that no place of refuge could be furnished as safe as Salem,”shedding light on the direct ties many students had with the Confederacy during their enrollment in the 1860s.[[20]](#footnote-19) This allegiance seemed to manifest itself most prominently during the Union army’s occupation of Salem in the early months of 1865. Emma Lehman, a prominent teacher at school from 1864-1917, hints at the general dispositions of Salem Female Academy students in their interactions with Union soldiers, writing that “some of the younger girls forgot Southern politeness, forgot what they might bring upon themselves, & insulted the sentinels who were guarding them.”[[21]](#footnote-20) Similarly, Lehman recounts the small acts of resistance and hostility that these women expressed in the face of Confederate defeat. Instead of walking under the “Stars and Stripes, which floated over the sidewalk,” they would intentionally walk around the flag to avoid its path, but they quickly learned that “at times circumstances are too hard for us & it is better to give in gracefully.”[[22]](#footnote-21) Lehman, at the beginning of her fifty-three year teaching career at the Academy, is utilizing a narrative of victimization common among Southerners after the War. Knowing the relationship that many students had to the Confederacy and those who fought for the South during the War, it is clear that the ideology of the Lost Cause began to develop within the academic institution and was fostered by prominent members of the faculty. Not only would this impact contemporary students, but the legacy of Confederate sympathy and the earlier belief in the necessity of enslaved labor propelled the academic institution to support this narrative through its publications, employment practices, and landscape over the course of the next several decades.

The Salem Female Academy’s employment practices do not appear to have changed significantly after the end of slavery in Salem, stemming from its ingrained belief in the segregation of domestic work and the subsequent treatment of newly freed Black residents during Reconstruction. The school administration continued to employ enslaved workers in their homes until the end of the Civil War. A newspaper article in Salem’s *The People’s Press* alerts the town to a “servant girl” attempting to poison then-Assistant Principal Maximilian Grunert’s wife in March of 1865.[[23]](#footnote-22) While the attempt was unsuccessful in killing its intended target, a young daughter consumed the poisoned soup and quickly died, leading the servant, Jane, to admit that this was her third attempt at “poisoning her mistress.” The newspaper article expresses that “the wretch has been committed to jail and richly deserves the fate which awaits her” and that “two negro men have been committed for trial as accessories and others may yet be implicated.”[[24]](#footnote-23) In addition to his duties as assistant principal, Grunert was also appointed by church officials to be the minister for the African Moravian Church in Salem. The words that describe the congregation’s reaction to being freed on May 21, 1865 are written from his perspective. Having lost a child through an act of enslaved rebellion only two months earlier, it is hard to know the minister’s attitude toward the Black population in Salem; at the very least, he may not have welcomed them into the community as equal citizens with open arms. Not only does this article reveal that enslaved labor was being utilized in Salem two years after the Emancipation Proclamation, but it also directly links the administration of the Academy to an act of rebellion by the Black community, which implies that the paternalistic narrative of fair treatment used to justify the system of slavery was not as convincing to everyone in town, especially those held in bondage.

Even though North Carolina’s General Order No. 32 declared all enslaved individuals as free, it also included the recommendation “that, when allowed to do so, they remain with their former masters, and labor faithfully so long as they shall be treated kindly and paid reasonable wages.”[[25]](#footnote-24) This addendum provides nuance to the practical meaning of freedom for formerly enslaved individuals; self-determination and economic independence were not guaranteed and the perpetuation of this paternalistic connection between Southern masters and slaves often limited the development of independent employment opportunities. In 1949, Adelaide Fries, the first Archivist of the Moravian Church Southern Province and a Salem Female Academy alumna, spends one sentence in her history of Forsyth County describing the Black population during Reconstruction: “Most of the former slaves continued to serve the families which had been kind to them before the war.”[[26]](#footnote-25) This sentiment implies that the treatment of enslaved workers in Salem was of such caliber that white families were able to retain the loyalty of their newly freed Black laborers; in reality, the Black population lacked the conditions in which to exert power within society due to the lack of opportunities available to them and the legacy of discrimination that defined the institution of slavery. Scholar Leland Ferguson points out that Adelaide Fries’ interpretation of these newly freed workers who cared “for their old masters faithfully and devotedly” is never based on the words of the Black individuals in question; in the case of Adelaide Fries, her written account of the enslaved couple Fanny and Adam being happily enslaved by her great-grandfather until his death in 1866 is an example of the paternalism of white families, which continued to live on through their descendents.[[27]](#footnote-26) When the 1870 federal census was conducted, many of the former slaveholders in Salem appear to house Black servants, laundresses, cooks, and other domestic workers who were presumably earning wages, but were completing the same jobs as they had done under the institution of slavery. Some scholars have offered that the choice to stay with white families and complete the work that no one else was willing to do should be recognized as an assertion of Black agency; in other words, choosing to stay in an employment system based on the model slavery set forth provided the most job security for newly freed individuals.[[28]](#footnote-27) Unfortunately, there are few sources remaining that provide first-hand accounts of the individual reasoning behind this shift from slavery to domestic work; however, it is clear that Black residents’ systemic lack of participation in societal institutions before the War, such as education and finance, carried over into Reconstruction, and equality under the law was not immediately granted to all individuals when the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified in December 1865.

The post-War employment practices of the Salem Female Academy align with the broader trends developing in Salem at the beginning of Reconstruction. The school had never closed its doors during the War but it was concerned about the possibility of financial hardship after its 1864-1865 session. On July 24, 1865, the Provincial Aeltesten Conference, the highest administrative body in Salem, reported that “in connection with the externals of the domestic establishment, all horses except 2 are to be given up and also all of the negroes who had been rented.”[[29]](#footnote-28) This decision was undertaken two months after the declaration of freedom at the African Moravian Church in Salem. Not only does this reveal that the Salem Female Academy continued to utilize enslaved labor until the very end of the Civil War, but it also shows that these Black workers were retained into the summer, only being released when school officials recognized that there was a “small prospect for any considerable enrollment” due to the “uncertain and poor” financial situation in the South.[[30]](#footnote-29) One of these formerly enslaved workers who continued at the Salem Female Academy was Dave Shober. Augustus Fogle, the Steward of the Salem Female Academy, recorded the following transaction in his account book on March 23, 1865: “This day: hired Mrs. Shober’s Black man Dave at one hundred seventy five Dollars in bank bills for this year ending Dec the 30. 1865, she having the risk of of [sic] government laws.”[[31]](#footnote-30) Anna Hanes Shober, a widowed Salem woman, had rented Dave, or David, to the academic institution for the year. The next mention of David is in September of 1865 when he is paid $4.00 “for eight days.” It is not clear whether David was one of the “negroes who had been rented” and dismissed at the end of July or if he stayed throughout the remainder of the year based Fogle’s preexisting agreement with Anna Shober. Either way, David continues to appear in the Steward account in 1865 and 1866, completing odd jobs for small wages, showing that the school’s dismissal of its Black workers at the beginning of Reconstruction was merely temporary. This is further exemplified by entries that reference payments to Black workers after the July entry, such as “various freedmen” and “Alford, a freedman” being paid for hay-making, an act of difficult physical labor.[[32]](#footnote-31) Based on these entries, it is clear that the Salem Female Academy continued to view its domestic labor through a segregated lense. In 1859, David Shober lost his first wife, Betsy Ann Waugh, when she died from complications after childbirth.[[33]](#footnote-32) He would eventually remarry to Ellen Light in 1864.[[34]](#footnote-33) In the 1860 Slave Schedule for Forsyth County, Anna Hanes Schober is listed as owning one thirty-seven-year-old Black male, as well as a fifteen year old girl, with one enumerated “Slave house.”[[35]](#footnote-34) This implies that David was living in Salem with Anna Shober instead of with his children, who resided in Waughtown. In addition to losing a child in 1862, two of Shober’s children also died during the time that he was working for the Salem Female Academy after the War in July and November of 1865, respectively.[[36]](#footnote-35) Dave Shober died on February 14, 1868 and is buried in the “Second Colored Cemetery” in Salem, another extension of a segregated society that carried over into Reconstruction.[[37]](#footnote-36) The same attitudes which perpetuated the paternalistic narrative of slavery made it easy for the Salem Female Academy to continue utilizing the labor of Black individuals who, historically, had been denied access to participate in educational institutions and familial living arrangements due to the systemic racial subjugation that benefited the white community, which possessed the majority of human and social capital before the war.

Winston and Salem were able to recover quickly from the economic downturn that plagued the South during Reconstruction due to Salem’s Moravian heritage as an antebellum industrial economy and development of new industries after the War; however, much of this success relied upon the new labor force created from the abolition of slavery. With the arrival of the railroad, Winston was connected to large cities like Richmond and Roanoke, which enabled them to develop a larger market for the various goods it was soon to be capable of producing.[[38]](#footnote-37) In the early 1870s, the first tobacco factory opened in Winston, setting the stage for R.J. Reynolds’ arrival in 1874. The success of the tobacco industry set Winston ahead of its rural surroundings and newly freed Black southerners began to migrate into town to fill the factories. This labor was difficult and only seasonal in its early stage; however, this did not stop the Black population in the Winston township from increasing to over 4,500 people by 1890, or about forty percent of the overall population.[[39]](#footnote-38) Much of the rhetoric surrounding this time period focuses on the seemingly equal opportunity for Black workers to achieve economic success as their white counterparts. Historian Robert Kenzer identifies several factors that allowed freedmen to achieve gains in North Carolina during Reconstruction. In many cases, businesses established by Black owners typically served the Black community, which was growing in most major cities. Similarly, many Black men who were looking for work found that many jobs were vacant due to the loss of life in armed conflict.[[40]](#footnote-39) While these examples help to explain the broader processes that were occurring across the state, former Winston-Salem journalist Frank Tursi helps contextualize the development of the Black community in Winston. He explains that “because of the tobacco industry’s phenomenal growth, Winston became the home of a prosperous and growing Black middle class.”[[41]](#footnote-40) Not only were there Black tobacco workers, but also “attorneys, doctors, druggists, ministers, barbers, insurance agents, teachers, funeral directors, woodworkers, and cafe owners” in the prominent neighborhoods of Columbia Heights and East 14th Street.[[42]](#footnote-41) While this development of a Black middle class cannot be denied, both writers acknowledge the setbacks and restrictions placed upon the economic growth and social ascendency of the Black community. Segregation and exclusion became hallmarks of Reconstruction and even if some Black workers were able to secure economic stability in the post-War town, racist attitudes and discriminatory practices kept the Black community from reaching its full potential.

More specifically in Salem, Reconstruction brought the hostile attitudes of many white community members to the forefront when they were trying to decide how to structure a town that could no longer rely on the use of enslaved labor and the Salem Female Academy joined the tobacco and textile industries in becoming a staple institution for Black post-War employment in Salem. In the days immediately after the declaration of freedom at the African Moravian Church, George Frederic Bahnson, a Moravian Bishop, wrote in the Salem Diary on May 14, 1865 that “the Negroes...were seen strutting about in their newborn freedom. Some, but not very many. Have left their former masters and set up for themselves. Whether they are fit to do so successfully time will show. There may be some doubts.”[[43]](#footnote-42) Bahnson’s excerpt exhibits the tension that immediately developed between formerly enslaved individuals and their masters. O.J. Lehman, the brother of Salem Female Academy’s most well-known teacher Emma Lehman, revealed his bias and disdain for freedpeople when he wrote that “The Negroes were the masters and we whites were underdogs” and that “the Anglo-Saxon race would not submit to it.”[[44]](#footnote-43) These attitudes of racial inferiority were not outliers, and they facilitated the the development of a separate neighborhood for Black residents of Salem in 1872. In the late 1860s, two Black men approached Salem’s governing boards to ask permission to purchase land within the town limits; however, there seemed to be “a decided unwillingness of a large majority of the citizens of the town to have [freedmen] settled permanently among us” and the Board of Trustees “resolved that for the present no town lots be sold to freedmen.”[[45]](#footnote-44) This postponed the decision to sell land to freedmen for several years. As mentioned earlier, many formerly enslaved residents were still living with their former owners and Salem’s Black population was experiencing small growth when compared with its neighboring town of Winston.[[46]](#footnote-45) With few Black residents leaving the town after emancipation, the congregational village was seemingly at standstill with its freedmen. Finally, in 1872, the Board of Trustees decided to sell off land from the former Schumann plantation, which later became Unity Administration’s farm across the Salem Creek, known as the “Negro Quarter.”[[47]](#footnote-46) These $10 lots were partitioned and sold to formerly enslaved residents. This first Black neighborhood in the vicinity of Salem was initially called Liberia but it soon became known by its current title of Happy Hill. Although the name may suggest otherwise, one scholar notes that many of the Black neighborhoods built during this time period were located in “the least desirable living areas.”[[48]](#footnote-47) Historian Jon Sensbach describes the race relations that developed during Reconstruction when he explains that Happy Hill “was a combination of wanting to help blacks, but only on white terms; at a social distance.”[[49]](#footnote-48) Many of Happy Hill’s residents worked in tobacco or textile factors or as laborers or laundresses.[[50]](#footnote-49) Another determinant of where freedmen could work was the limited system of transportation in the mid-nineteenth century, which confined residents to work within walking distance from their homes.[[51]](#footnote-50) Given the Salem Female Academy’s history of reliance on enslaved labor, its employment of Black workers during Reconstruction, and its physical location, it is reasonable to assume that many of those living in Happy Hill as it was developing over the course of the 1870s and 1880s were employed by the academic institution.

The physical and memorial landscape of the Salem Female Academy changed significantly during the second half of the nineteenth century, often influenced by the Lost Cause ideology that students and teachers alike adopted and promoted during this time period. While many of these developments occur after 1877, the traditional end of Federal Reconstruction, they took place during a transitional period between the establishment of post-War society and the solidification of Jim Crow laws in the South, showing how the attitudes of Reconstruction did not waver as the end of the century approached. For the small portion of Winston-Salem’s growing Black community that had been enslaved in Salem before the War and who remained in town afterward, 1877 did not serve as a bookend to the continuum of white superiority and oppression that they had experienced for their entire lives. Many people and their families were living in Happy Hill while others were listed on the census as living with the white families they served, but another, more central location for this population was much closer to the Salem Female Academy. Perhaps the biggest change to the built landscape was the development of “Negro tenements” along an eastern extension of Blum Street, south of the Single Sisters’ House.[[52]](#footnote-51) First seen on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of Salem in 1895, this grouping of tenement houses was owned by Francis Henry Fries, whose family had established the woolen mill in Salem where it is presumed that many of the tenement housings’ residents worked.[[53]](#footnote-52) A photo of the tenement housing describes the location of the housing to be “closed into college property,”[[54]](#footnote-53) on the extension of Blum Street, also marked as Mink or Coon Street on subsequent maps.[[55]](#footnote-54) According to city directories, many of the residents worked as “laborers” or “laundresses.” While their place of occupation is not listed, their proximity to the school and its pre-War reliance on enslaved labor suggests that some residents, as well as those living in Happy Hill, assisted in the daily operations of the academic institution. The majority of these buildings disappear on the 1917 Sanborn map and they are replaced by the construction of a heating plant for the College. In the 1917-1918 catalog, the institution boasts that its buildings are now “heated by the Warren and Webster Hylo Vacuum System...a most modern construction.”[[56]](#footnote-55) Presumably, the institution purchased this land from Francis H. Fries, who also happened to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees during the 1910s, for the purpose of constructing its new heating plant. The destruction of the tenement housing displaced its Black residents who, until that point, had both lived and worked in Salem. This apparent disregard for those who lived immediately next to the school reflected the broader understanding of the Black community as inherently inferior to the whims of the institution that housed young white women from every corner of the South. Not long after the construction of the heating plant, the Bahnson infirmary was built where tenement housing had stood a decade earlier. Erected in 1925, the Bahnson infirmary was named in honor of Dr. Henry T. Bahnson, a Confederate soldier who was captured at the Battle of Gettysburg and held prisoner in Baltimore for six months before returning home to Salem and embarking upon the attainment of his medical license.[[57]](#footnote-56) Bahnson served as the College physician for several years before his death in 1917. This heralded soldier was praised for his defense of the Confederacy during his lifetime as well as in death. The building is still in operation as the Bahnson residence hall for upperclassmen at Salem College. The disappearance of the tenement housing and the choice of what to construct in its place reinforces that the values of the institution reflect the sentiments of segregation and exclusion that defined Jim Crow as an extension of Reconstruction.

These attitudes and actions of white supremacy were ingrained in the institution’s landscape and fostered by the concurrent beliefs of teachers and administrators. Highly-praised professor Emma Lehman dedicated time at the end of her life in 1921 to recount the tale of her cousin’s “wartime wedding” to a Confederate soldier. The conclusion of her essay reveals her joy in knowing that the South was technically defeated during the Civil War, but the legacy of the conflict lives on in the oral tradition of local citizens who were alive for its duration. She states: “What must strike my delightful pen is that war which is now full of precious reminisces of older people, & eagerly listened to by the younger generation is the fact that while our troops were defeated, or killed out, & the cause is styled ‘a Lost Cause,’... every feature of it is remembered, & anniversary celebrated.”[[58]](#footnote-57) Recalling her brother O.J. Lehman’s belief in the superiority of the “Anglo-Saxon race” helps to understand Emma Lehman’s insistence that the war was not fought in vein. Similarly, John H. Clewell, who served as the President of the Salem Female Academy from 1888-1909, described Reconstruction as a time when “millions of slaves were freed and given the ballot; millions of white men who were able, and who were again loyal citizens of the land, were disenfranchised.”[[59]](#footnote-58) From the highest administrator to the most popular teacher, the Salem Female Academy served as a home to the narrative of Southern victimization and the strong adherence to the Lost Cause.

In the same vein, many Salem Female Academy students retained a sense of loyalty to the Confederacy, which they showed through their attempts at memorialization. In 1878, students began to publish an alumnae newsletter called *The Academy* in order to keep former students engaged with the institution and to provide an outlet for both current students and alumnae to publish short stories, histories, and general updates. One alumna writing into the publication in 1888 describes her time at the Academy with fondness as she recalls attempts to bolster what she calls “our much loved Confederacy.”[[60]](#footnote-59) This nostalgia for the Civil War also manifests in the decision-making process to memorialize the governor of North Carolina during its secession from the Union, Zebulon B. Vance, at the Academy after his death in 1894. Robert de Schweinitz, the principal of the Academy during the Civil War, referred to Vance as a “close personal friend” of the school due to his assistance in securing supplies and food to help keep the doors open throughout the conflict.[[61]](#footnote-60) The class of 1894 mobilized its alumnae to fundraise for a stained-glass window in the chapel. The window, dedicated to Vance, still shines in the History Wing of the College today. This revival of Civil War sentiments continued after the Vance Memorial window was completed. After the success of this fundraising campaign, students considered the possibility of creating another stained-glass window in the chapel, this time dedicated to Confederate General Stonewall Jackson.[[62]](#footnote-61) Students and alumnae had a special interest in Jackson due to the fact that his widow, Mary Anna Morrison Jackson, attended the Academy from 1847-1849 and was one of its most famous graduates She returned in 1914 to receive an honorary degree from Salem College. The students expressed the “consideration [they] felt for her late distinguished husband;” however, the idea of a memorial to Stonewall Jackson lost steam as time went by.[[63]](#footnote-62)

The Lost Cause ideology continued to shape the Academy and its prominent donors around the turn of the twentieth century and into the height of Jim Crow. As the dominant institution of higher education for women, the Salem Female Academy had connections to many well-known Winston-Salem residents through its alumnae network and its historic ties to the Moravian church and wealthy industrialist families from the town of Salem. At the turn of the century, race relations in Winston and Salem were entering a period of tension due to continued segregation and discrimination against members of the Black community. A riot erupted in 1895 when a young Black man was arrested for shooting a police officer who had confronted him for not stepping out of the way of a white person on the sidewalk.[[64]](#footnote-63) The Forsyth Rifles, a militia unit that had served during the Civil War, were convened and ordered by the sheriff to fire into the largely Black crowd that had gathered around the courthouse that evening. Another riot occurred a few decades later in 1918, when a Black man was accused of raping a white woman. The crowds erupted into violence and many were killed. He was later released when police acknowledged his innocence.[[65]](#footnote-64) In the midst of this growing racial tension, the James B. Gordon chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy was established in 1898 with twenty four charter members.[[66]](#footnote-65) Of these members one has a direct connection to the landscape of the Salem Female Academy. Louisa Wilson Bitting helped establish the chapter for Forsyth County and assisted with its first major act; in 1805, the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected a monument on the corner of Fourth and Liberty Streets in Winston, honoring “the heroes who served in that great conflict.”[[67]](#footnote-66) With the rise of Jim Crow laws and the racial tension that persisted in Winston-Salem, this statue served as a symbol of the power and authority of Confederate ideology and its preservation through new generations. In 1930, Kate Bitting Reynolds funded the construction of a dormitory on the campus of Salem College and named it after her mother, Louisa Wilson Bitting. Now known as the Bitting Residence Hall, the building contains a portrait of one of the earliest members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, a clear manifestation of the Lost Cause mentality on the campus of the institution.

Much like the antebellum growth of the Girls’ Boarding School that guided the first Inspector to purchase an enslaved woman in 1810, the Salem Female Academy continued to grow and expand during the last decades of the nineteenth century. This growth furthered the need for domestic labor and much like the tobacco industry, the Black community was perceived as a source of cheap labor for the difficult jobs that were necessary for the operation of the institution. In 1917, the school catalogue boasts that “Great care is exercised to maintain cleanliness. A force of sixty employees attends to the daily care of buildings, grounds, kitchen, laundry, etc.”[[68]](#footnote-67) While this entry does not detail the demographics of the sixty employees, census records and student accounts give insight into the segregation of domestic work at the Salem Female Academy. One entry in *The Academy* details the opening of Park Hall, a new residence for students in 1890. At the opening ceremony, “a company of 8 stalwart colored men formed a procession between Main and South Halls and the new building...They were transferring the beds, bedding, trunks, etc. of the Park Hall girls to their new homes.”[[69]](#footnote-68) In the Alumnae Record from 1891, writers inform previous students of the institution that Anderson Smith, “our colored man,” left the Academy after working for 7 years.[[70]](#footnote-69) Anderson Smith appears in the 1870 census living with Adam Butner as a “House servant.”[[71]](#footnote-70) He continued to live on Church street in Salem during his employment at the Academy, possibly living in the tenement housing that neighbored the school.[[72]](#footnote-71) Similarly, in 1893, an entry details the death of Matt Walker, a Black man who worked at the school for 13 years, was in “direct care of many of our large buildings” and was killed operating a new circular saw that had been recently installed in the woodshed.[[73]](#footnote-72) The students remarked that “all of the pupils knew Matt and the ‘wants’ which he filled would number tens of thousands.”[[74]](#footnote-73) In recounting his tragic death at the hands of the new machinery, the students mention that four or five other men were around but were not harmed. These excerpts further develop the understanding that Black laborers were both numerous and essential to the operations and maintenance of the College in the midst of ongoing racial tension in the town as a whole.

From the moment that a Union officer announced North Carolina’s General Order No. 32 to the African Moravian Church in 1865, the Black community began trying to establish what freedom would mean for them; at the same time, white community members were reckoning with the prospect of change in a society that had depended on enslaved labor. One of the largest and most influential institutions that experienced this transition was the Salem Female Academy, which educated white women from across the South while relying on the institution of slavery to provide domestic workers for its operation. Through a combination of census records, city directories, maps, oral histories, and twentieth century labor practices, a pattern of Black domestic servitude at Salem Female Academy emerges. These sources implicate the academic institution that is now Salem Academy & College as an active participant in the continued segregation of the Black community. Examining the evolution of the Salem Female Academy’s employment practices, its adherence to Lost Cause ideology, and the development of its physical landscape from the beginning of Reconstruction to the turn of the twentieth century, it is clear that these essential components of the institution are built upon the legacy of slavery. The academic institution actively continued to further this legacy of exclusion and racial subjugation past the traditional end of Reconstruction, adapting in order to maintain the power and prestige afforded to it as a white institution for young women of the South.

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