

IV - SEPARATION AND STEAMBOATS

The communities on the "Eastern Shore" of the Chesapeake Bay were separate from the growing urban centers of Baltimore and Washington. Dependent on agriculture, the area had been largely "Southern" in its sympathies and at odds with the Bishop of Maryland who insisted on prayers for the Union. After the war, the bishop offered to divide the diocesan endowment, and three dioceses were created: Maryland, Washington, and "Easton" for the Eastern Shore. Bishop Lay (see box) became the first diocesan in 1869. During his first two months in office, he visited 23 congregations and confirmed 214 persons. He asked that the offerings at his visitations be given to sustain diocesan missions, including African-American churches. Old Trinity had at least one "colored" communicant, but laws were passed to ensure racial segregation and it seemed natural even to many well-meaning people that "those people are just happier in their own churches."

In the 1870's, the antique charm of the "Eastern Shore" was being "rediscovered" as railroads connected it to Philadelphia and New York. In Harper's magazine, an author wrote that the area had "the oldest atmosphere of life which can now be breathed anywhere in the republic." A Rector of Christ Church in Easton noted the persistence of old customs among "natives," remarking, "Many who have never read a line of Shakespeare or heard of Ash Wednesday believe that the corn crop will fail if they do not eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday or Tansy pudding at Easter." Yet he also noted the coming of "outsiders," saying that in twenty-two months some fifty-five area farms had been sold to "men from the North and West."

Railroads also helped the westward expansion of the church and nation. (The old joke was at least partially true: Baptist preachers went West on foot; Methodist Circuit Riders came on horseback; Episcopalians waited for the train.) The Episcopal Church grew westward with new congregations and numerically in the growing cities of the North and East. The steamboat connected Old Trinity to the larger world. A map produced for the American centennial of 1876 shows a steamboat wharf on Church Creek opposite Old Trinity. That visibility proved useful over the next several decades as wealthy patrons from Baltimore came to the financial rescue of the ancient rural church along the water. It may be noted that the waterways were navigable because significant silting did not begin until the introduction of mechanized plows, but steamboat service to Church Creek continued until 1924.

House of Bishops meeting in Chicago expressed its strong desire to enter into conversation with other churches, stated its belief that only four elements of the church were essential. These principles were adopted in 1888 by the worldwide gathering of Anglican Bishops meeting every ten years at Lambeth.

These principles of the “Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral” still stand as Anglican basics of Church union:

- (a) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as “containing all things necessary to salvation,” and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
- (b) The Apostles’ Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.
- (c) The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself — Baptism and the Supper of the Lord — ministered with unflinching use of Christ’s words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.
- (d) The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church.



Bishop Henry C. Lay, DD, LL.D. First Bishop of Easton and former missionary bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America.

Henry C Lay rode thousands of miles on horseback through the territories of Arkansas, Texas, and Indian Territories beyond Arizona as a missionary bishop in the Confederate States of America. He was one of two Confederate bishops to attend the first house of bishop’s meeting after the war and be reunited with his northern colleagues. Lay was a prolific writer, and was given an honorary LL. D. by Cambridge University when he traveled to England to attend the first world-wide gathering of Anglican Bishops called at Lambeth Palace in London in 1867. While in England, Lay was impressed with the English Cathedral system and when elected bishop of Easton dreamt of a stone cathedral complex with schools and library. However, he was content to initiate the dream as a mission among workers houses in a frame pro-cathedral so simple it was called “the bishop’s shack.” He and his wife initiated a “Home for Friendless Children” which continues as the Children’s Home Foundation, a significant outreach to disadvantaged young people today. He consecrated Grace Church on Taylors Island in 1873. It was Bishop Lay who concluded “after research,” that Old Trinity was standing by 1690.