
The Reverend Harry Croswell and Black Episcopalians in New Haven, 1820-1860

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During the first half of the nineteenth century, African Americans seeking to form independent black congregations within predominately white denominations needed to secure the support of sympathetic whites who could assist in manipulating the levers of denominational and local political power. In the Protestant Episcopal Church there were a handful of bishops, clergy, and laymen who played this important intermediary role. Supportive bishops included William White in Pennsylvania, Thomas C. Brownell in Connecticut, Alonzo Potter in Pennsylvania, and William R. Whittingham in Maryland. Supportive laity included Benjamin Rush and that rarity among antebellum Episcopalians -- the abolitionists -- William Jay and John Jay, II. Among diocesan clergy, none had more extensive or intimate acquaintance either with his own black parishioners or with a larger number of the twenty-two antebellum African-American Episcopal clergy than did the Reverend Harry Croswell, rector from 1815 until his death in 1858 of Trinity Church, New Haven.

Croswell was born in West Hartford, Connecticut, in 1778. Several liabilities of his youth helped shape the distinctiveness, if not the genius, of his ministerial career. Unburdened by a Yale education due to his family's impoverishment, he was privately tutored, first by Nathan Perkins, Congregational minister of Fourth Church, West Hartford; and then by Noah Webster, the West Hartford-born lexicographer whom Croswell served as assistant during the year 1798.¹ His education continued in Catskill, New York, where he joined the printer's trade and began

co-editing, with his older brother Mackay Croswell, a weekly newspaper, *The Catskill Packet*.²

In 1801 Croswell moved to Hudson, New York, to join the retired Congregational minister, Ezra Sampson, and a bookseller, George Chittenden, in publication of an independent newspaper called *The Balance and Columbian Repository*. Croswell's forte on the paper was his acerbic -- one could even say venomous -- political commentary.³ Indeed, his intemperate columns in this paper and another, *The Wasp* (which he published briefly in 1802 to counter the pro-Democratic paper *The Bee*), foreshadowed the end of his journalistic career.⁴ Croswell printed such scurrilous attacks on Thomas Jefferson that Jefferson authorized his New York supporters to bring charges against Croswell as "a malicious and seditious man ... of a depraved mind and wicked and diabolical disposition," who had contrived to "scandalize, traduce and vilify" the President of the United States.⁵ Even Alexander Hamilton's eloquence on appeal could not overturn Croswell's guilty verdict, in a celebrated case that would establish limits to the freedom of the press.

Croswell completed his political education a few years later when induced by Federalist friends in Albany to begin another newspaper. When promised financial support failed to materialize and a supporter sued for a small debt, Croswell was incarcerated for several months in 1811. The embittered Croswell resolved to close the newspaper and leave publishing, the Federalist Party, and all partisan political activity

for the remainder of his life.⁶ Coincident with his repulsion from political journalism came a conversion to the Protestant Episcopal Church. Privately tutored by the Rev. Timothy Clowes, Croswell was ordained deacon at the age of 36 and immediately called to the rectorship of Christ Church, Hudson, New York. A few months thereafter he accepted a call from Trinity Church, New Haven, which had just completed a new building on the southwest side of the New Haven Green.⁷ Here Croswell spent the remainder of his days, abjuring political life and devoting himself wholly to his pastoral and denominational duties.

The Rev. Harry Croswell was an unusual, even brilliant, parish priest. Fortunately for the historical record, this incisive and acute observer of contemporary people and events was unable to quell his pen, even though he rarely again appeared publicly in print. The diaries of Harry Croswell, which start in 1821, can be used to study various aspects of social, cultural, and religious life of one small, if not insignificant, New England town. The virtual absence of reference to current political events is more than compensated for in its richly textured descriptions of parish life. One of the fascinating issues on which the diaries shed light is the relationship between African-American parishioners and white priest in a racially tense northern urban setting.⁸

Among the first African Americans whose names appear in Croswell's diary is that of Jacob Oson, a man with whom Croswell was to have the most intimate and cordial relations up to the time of Oson's death in 1828.⁹ One of the early diary entries illustrates both Croswell's engaging prose style and the esteem with which he held Oson. Having learned in the afternoon of August 22, 1821, "that Sarah Quay, the aged black woman in Neck-Lane, was dying, and wished to see me," Croswell writes:

She was of Indian extract, with a mixture of African, and her colour partook of both -- her jaw was fallen, and her large, black, glaring eyes, rolling in the sockets -- and added to all this, the most horrid groans, at

short intervals. -- But amidst all, she took care to make me promise to attend her funeral! -- This was done, to avoid the indignity of being buried by Jacob Oson, a very worthy black man, who, having a license for the purpose, had been sometimes called upon to attend to services of this kind. -- The blacks have a great dislike to him, because he is considered more respectable in society -- and more especially because he sometimes acts as their teacher.¹⁰

Biographical information on Oson prior to 1821 is scarce, and it is difficult to tell when he arrived in New Haven or where he was born. A letter of recommendation written by a New Haven minister in 1822, documents that he was living in the city by the year 1805.¹¹ An 1827 letter noted that Oson did not fear the tropical climate, since he "has spent the hot season in some of the most unhealthy of the West Indies islands,"¹² suggesting that he was from the West Indies. In 1817 Oson had delivered, first in New Haven and then in New York City, a lecture entitled "A Search for Truth; or an Inquiry for the Origin of the African Nation." This thoughtful essay was published in New York "for and by the request of Christopher Rush," one of the founders and later a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.¹³ In it, Oson queries whether "my people and nation" are "such a vile ignorant race of beings, as we, their descendants, are considered to be." He concluded that "it is a false representation ... not founded upon truth":

Was there ever a land more fertile than that of our ancestors? History informs us that the arts and sciences sprang from there, and that they were a very mighty and powerful nation. And yet, in the annals of history, there never was a nation so subjected, made so vile, so trodden under foot, and used with such cruelty as my nation. All this God hath permitted, but he hath said that he would heal us.¹⁴

Oson's identification with Africa was certainly clear,

regardless of his place of birth.

It is unclear where Oson acquired the education necessary to produce this address, but he early began imparting his knowledge to fellow African Americans in New Haven. For a number of years he taught a school for black children. While some, such as Sarah Quay, may have resented his manner or his learning, Harry Croswell was deeply impressed with Oson's abilities. On January 16, 1823, he wrote,

In the evening, Jacob Oson called to read to me a piece which he is preparing on the subject of Africa -- and I was astonished to find how much he had laboured to make out the proper origin of that nation, and with how much ingenuity and success he had managed the few materials of which he had possessed himself for the purpose. -- He is truly a remarkable man -- with a very limited education -- struggling with poverty -- without leisure, or books, or any other convenience, to undertake such a work, is sufficient to put to shame -- the highly endowed persons of leisure who suffer this subject to remain unexplored.¹⁵

Impressed with Oson's piety as well as his intellect, Croswell worked assiduously throughout the 1820s to help Oson secure his own congregation. In September 1821 he recommended Oson for a position as lay reader in St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, the first black Episcopal parish formed in the United States. St. Thomas' had been without a rector since the death of its founder, Absalom Jones, in 1818. Oson went to Philadelphia to interview for the position, and on October 23, 1821, the "male part of the congregation of St. Thomas' Church" met "for the purpose of considering the propriety of calling Mr. Jacob Oson to the ministry of the said Church." Having read letters from Peter Williams, Jr., rector of St. Philip's Church, New York, and from Bishops White and Brownell, the vestry "On motion Resolved that Mr. Jacob Oson be taken for a candidate for the holy orders and handed over to the ordaining

committee for ordination and to allow him a salary (sic) of four hundred Dollars per-annum. On amendment it was agreed by a large majority to give him three hundred Dollars per annum."¹⁶

The matter was not so easily resolved, however, for on December 24, the congregation of St. Thomas' met at the house of Tobias Barclay and appointed a committee to visit the Rev. Jackson Kemper (then assistant to the bishop in Christ Church, Philadelphia) to inquire why it was that Oson's name had not been placed before the Standing Committee for ordination. Five days later the assembly was informed that "it was for the want of one more Signer to his credentials and no other Reason."¹⁷ They immediately voted to request additional letters from Oson. On January 23, 1821, Croswell wrote to Bishop White on his behalf:

I do not hesitate to express my opinion that Jacob Oson, a man of colour, "possesses extraordinary strength of natural understanding, a peculiar aptitude to teach, and a large share of prudence. " -- And I feel great pleasure, in being enabled to add, that this opinion is founded on an acquaintance of seven years, during which, I have been particularly attentive to his conduct, and have had frequent opportunities to witness his manner of reading the prayers of the Church, and of instructing youth, both as a school-master, and as a Sunday-school teacher.¹⁸

Three days after writing that letter, Croswell prepared a petition which stated, "We the undersigned hereby certify, that we have been acquainted with Jacob Oson, for many years, and that he has uniformly maintained the character of an honest, sober, industrious, and pious man -- and that we have never known or heard any thing derogatory to his reputation, as a man or a Christian." This letter was signed by some of New Haven's most influential citizens.¹⁹

In late January the members of St. Thomas' Church also petitioned Bishop White and the clergy of the Episcopal Church of Philadelphia. They observed that the church had suffered a decline since Absalom

Jones' death, and "there is much reason to apprehend that unless some Minister be established in this Congregation the Members will become scattered even more widely than at present." While recognizing the right and responsibility of the bishop and clergy to determine who was qualified to be ordained, they nevertheless urged a reconsideration of Oson:

The only thing that has been urged in objection to Jacob Oson within the knowledge of the Subscribers is his want of a Classical or sufficient education. With all diffidence and humility they would suggest that being themselves generally illiterate it is their Opinion with unwearied zeal and steadfast Faith and Piety his knowledge of the world's learning will be equal to expound to the Congregation the plain truths of the Gospel and the words of eternal life.²⁰

A sheet containing the signatures of eighty-eight male members of St. Thomas' Church accompanied the petition. Like Croswell's efforts, however, this petition failed. When Croswell received the news from Jackson Kemper that Oson was not selected for the position, he went promptly to Oson's house to give him the bad news.²¹

Failing to secure for Oson the rectorship of the only available black Episcopal parish, Croswell next sought to have him appointed as minister to the African United Ecclesiastical Society of New Haven. The Society had been formally organized October 21, 1824, and efforts to establish an African Union Church had been fostered by Congregationalist Simeon S. Jocelyn as early as 1820.²² Croswell was furious when informed in March 1825 by the Ecclesiastical Society representative, William Lanson, that this plan would not work. The very day he learned the news, Croswell went to Oson's house, "having in the morning drawn up articles of agreement for an African Congregation, which I wished to submit to him. -- As the Union Society will not receive him as their minister, on account of his episcopacy, -- my plan is, to encourage him to raise an Episcopal Congregation for himself."²³ This was the first in a series of actions Croswell took to help

organize a black Episcopal congregation in New Haven. As we shall see, St. Luke's Church would not be established for nearly twenty years.

In January 1826 Oson called on Croswell to report that "the coloured church people, despairing of any union with the other denominations, had ... resolved to try to raise a congregation of their own -- and would accordingly commence service in the lecture-room on Sunday next. -- He read me an address, which he had prepared for the occasion, which, excepting some bad grammar, and one or two moderate negroisms, was not only well adapted to the purpose, but was very creditable to his talents and judgment."²⁴ On Sunday, January 29, 1826, according to a diary entry, "Jacob Oson began to-day to minister to a little flock of blacks at the lecture-room -- but I have not yet learned with what success."

Throughout the next year Oson struggled without success to build up an African congregation within the confines of the Protestant Episcopal Church. His failure at home coincided with the denomination's growing interest in African missions. As early as 1820 the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society had asserted the duty to send missionaries to Africa, and their interest was intensified by a letter from the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society in England, requesting help from the American Church to locate African Americans for their missionary efforts in Sierra Leone.²⁵ Oson's long-standing interest in Africa, evident in his 1817 essay, *A Search for Truth; Or, An Inquiry for the Origin of the African Nation*, led him to ask Croswell's support to seek work in Africa. On April 7, 1827, Croswell wrote to the secretary of the American Board, informing him of Oson's decision.

Oson] would prefer a situation at Sierra Leone, under the Church Missionary Society; but I think would not object to our own missionary station [in Liberia]. He is best qualified for the former, -- though he does not entirely come up to their engagements. He is deficient in his English

education; but can write intelligibly, and in a decent hand. He is a good reader, & performs the services of the church with much solemnity & propriety. He is a sound churchman, well informed in the principles of the church, & is withal truly pious, & full of zeal for the African cause. He is well acquainted with the scriptures, is a man of discretion & judgment, and is modest in his pretensions, & humble in his walk & conversation. He has taught a school of black children for many years, sometimes as a district school master, & sometimes on his private account; and, I believe, always acceptably He was admitted as a candidate, with the understanding that he should not receive orders, until he could find a congregation to employ him. In this he has but partially succeeded.²⁶

Oson threw himself into the enterprise of preparing for the foreign mission field, and Croswell eagerly supported him. By the fall Oson had decided on Liberia rather than Sierra Leone as his chosen field. In mid-November Croswell received from the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society a packet of pamphlets concerning Africa, all of which he carefully read before delivery to Oson. The following day he wrote informing the Society of Oson's decision to accept the call to Liberia.²⁷

In December Croswell submitted a testimonial letter on Oson's behalf to the Standing Committee of the Connecticut diocese, signed by the rector, wardens and vestry of Trinity Church.²⁸ In January 1828 Oson was examined by the Reverends John M. Garfield and William T. Patten, who concluded that "the talents and attainments of the said Oson are sufficient to qualify him for usefulness as a Missionary to Liberia, or to exercise the ministry among the people of colour in the United States of America."²⁹ One month later, on Saturday, February 16, Oson was ordained deacon by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Thomas C. Brownell in Christ Church, Hartford, and the following day he was ordained priest. Brownell's ordination sermon made explicit an important but sometimes overlooked

motivating factor with respect to African missions, namely, the sense of guilt that some Americans felt for permitting slavery to exist in the New World.

You go to a country which has received the deepest of injuries, from men bearing the Christian name. You go to a race for whose wrongs our own country has a fearful account to render. -- Ah! happy for us, if by sending to injured Africa the light and the blessings of the Gospel, we can make some reparation for the wrongs she has received at our hands, and some atonement for our national guilt!³⁰

Episcopalians evinced considerable interest in Oson's ordination, the first person ordained for the African mission field and only the fifth African American ordained in the Episcopal Church.³¹ No one in the denomination, however, had greater personal interest than did Harry Croswell. When he had written his earliest letter of recommendation on Oson's behalf, Croswell had noted "one material drawback," namely, that Oson was already more than fifty years of age. Oson himself had seen no problem in this fact, arguing that "this will leave him so many the less years in the hands of the Society; and that by the time he is worn out, younger ones may be trained for the field."³² Alas, this liability proved to be more important than either he or Croswell anticipated, and Oson was destined never to reach Africa as a missionary after all.

In late May a diary entry noted that Oson had called to make arrangements for a trip eastward, and during the visit had complained about suffering what Croswell characterized as "the clerical distemper, dyspepsia!" In mid-July Croswell still sought to make light of Oson's distress, noting that he "is complaining a good deal, and seems inclining to consumption -- but he has taken a ride in the country." By July 25, however, it was plain that matters were serious: "One of the very hottest of days ... P.M. towards evening, called to see Jacob Oson, who is quite ill." In mid-August, having just visited the mortally ill Jehudi

Ashman, Governor of the Colony of Liberia (who had arrived in New Haven from Liberia after an arduous voyage, hoping to recover his broken health), Croswell went again to Oson's home. The diary entries were discouraging and increasingly terse:

13 August 1828: [F]ound him a little more comfortable, but still in a low state. -- He seemed anxious to have the communion -- and as there were three or four to unite with him, complied with his desire to receive it.

27 August 1828: Walked down to Jacob Oson's -- found him very low -- conversed and prayed with him.

2 September 1828: Wrote to Mr. Weller an acct. of J. Oson.

4 September 1828: Visited and prayed with Jacob Oson, who seems to be approaching his end.

8 September 1828: Visited and prayed with Jacob Oson, who seemed in a dying state ... recd a message from Oson's family, that he was dying, and they wished to see me. The message had been left in my absence -- and before I arrived at the house, he was dead. -- I was completely jaded before I got home -- and was in much pain withal.

9 September 1828: P.M. attended the funeral of Oson. -- The body was brought to the African Meeting House, where the burial service was performed -- and we then proceeded to the grave, where the remainder of the service was added -- The whole fell upon me....

16 September 1828: Prepared a short obituary article on Jacob Oson for the *Watchman*.³³

attended Trinity Church. Croswell buried Oson's first wife, who died in 1820 at the age of 49, and he performed Oson's second marriage to "Saray Way, a very respectable coloured woman," in November 1821.³⁴ He attended closely to the spiritual needs of Jacob's son, Abraham, who died a lingering death of consumption in the summer of 1822, arriving on one of his frequent visits to find "him dying -- and, his father having stepped out for a moment, there was nobody but his wife, his father's wife, and another black woman in the house. -- I assisted their in closing his eyes, etc." He performed the wedding of Oson's daughter, Amelia, to William Butler, on the 4th of July, 1824. He attended the funeral of Oson's grandsons in 1823 and 1826. And so the record goes, demonstrating an intimate involvement by Croswell with the tribulations, the aspirations and the joys of the extensive Oson family. That Croswell's own family shared his regard for Jacob Oson is evident from the text of a memorial sonnet which his son, William, published in the pages of the *Episcopal Watchman* a few weeks after Oson's death:

Not on the voyage which our hopes had planned
Shalt thou go forth, poor exile, o'er the main;
The savage glories of thy fatherland

Shall never bless thy aged sight again;
Nor shalt thou toil to loose a heavier chain
Than e'er was fastened by the spoiler's hand.
And yet the work for which thy bosom yearned
Shall never rest, though sin and death detain
Messiah from his many-peopled reign,
Till all thy captive brethren have returned.
But thou hast gained, (O, blest exchange!) instead,
A better country, and a heavenly home,
Where all the ransomed of the Lord shall come,
With everlasting joy upon their head.³⁵

* * * * *

Croswell's diaries document a decade-long, intimate involvement with the Oson family, nearly all of whom

Croswell would not again have so close and sustained a relationship with any single African American, and over the next decade there are fewer diary entries

referring to New Haven blacks. In early August 1828, just a few weeks prior to Oson's demise, Croswell had been made a director of the newly-founded African Mission School Society, Hartford, organized at the urging of Bishop Brownell.³⁶ The first (and, as it turned out, the only) graduates of this school were Edward Jones, Gustavus V. Caesar, and William Johnson. Jones and Caesar had been trained as missionaries, and Johnson was a teacher. On August 4, 1830, Croswell noted that he went, while in Hartford for the annual diocesan convention, "to examine the black candidates for orders, who have been in the African Mission School. -- They appeared extremely well, and will probably receive orders on Friday."³⁷ The two were ordained as deacons on August 6 and as priests on September 6, 1830, thus becoming the sixth and seventh men of African descent to be ordained in the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Croswell continued to visit his black parishioners during the 1830s, but such visits are less and less frequently noted. In May 1832 he commented on having attended the funeral of a black man, Timothy Merriman.

He had been brought up in the Clarke family, and they were chiefly there, besides a large funeral of white people, the bearers being white men of the best standing. Capt. S.J. Clarke rode over with me In the evening, was called to see a black woman at A.P. Sanford's, (Clarissa Bridge) whose mind was in much distress, having been frightened but not instructed at the Presbyterian meeting. -- Conversed and prayed with her.³⁸

The following day, Croswell went to Sanford's house "to see Clarissa, and lent her a book." The opportunity to correct the misapprehensions created by a Presbyterian clergyman was sufficient to re-motivate Croswell to his pastoral duty.

Two diary entries in 1840 are as intriguing for what they leave unsaid as for their content. On June 13,

Croswell noted "Had several interruptions -- Alexander Crummell, black, among others." Ten days later he noted "A call from Crummell, a black man who is a candidate in the church, and is pursuing his studies in the Yale Theo. Sem.:"³⁹ Crummell was notorious the Episcopal Church for having been denied admission to General Theological Seminary because of his race and making a public issue of that denial. Beginning in mid-August 1839, the New York-based Episcopal newspaper *The Churchman* had carried weekly accounts of Crummell's attempt to enroll in the seminary. An old friend of Croswell's, Bishop George W. Doane, had been named to chair a Seminary Trustees Committee to investigate the case. A minority of one on the question, Doane resigned from the committee, which then proceeded unanimously to refuse Crummell's admission. Doane was subsequently denied permission even to speak to the full board to protest this decision.⁴⁰ Croswell makes no diary comment on the Crummell affair, though he did keep in contact with Crummell during the latter's stay in New England. Crummell resided briefly in New Haven, but moved to Providence in March 1841, while studying for the priesthood. He was invited there by Thomas Howland and other prominent Providence citizens to help organize Christ Church, a short-lived congregation of black Episcopalians.⁴¹ Two years later, when black members of Trinity Church were organizing St. Luke's Church, Crummell would be the first person to whom they turned for a rector.

It seems clear that the white members of Trinity Church did not welcome their rector's frequent pastoral visits to the predominately black sections of New Haven, nor did they extend to blacks the welcome that Croswell's visits implied. The diaries are equally silent on parishioners' attitudes and on the vestry's momentous decision to restrict blacks to certain pews, a central factor that impelled the formation of St. Luke's. William E. B. DuBois, writing about his grandfather Alexander, observed that "when the white Episcopalians of Trinity Parish, New Haven, showed plainly that they no longer wanted black folk as fellow Christians, he led the revolt which resulted in St. Luke's Parish."⁴² Trinity

Church historian Edward Getlein identifies the specific event that caused the rift, noting that in 1842 the vestry voted to "rent four slips in Trinity church, Nos. 143, 144, 146, and 184, to colored people."⁴³ These pews were in the rear of the gallery, and the vestry action -- a marked departure from previous practice -- outraged the black members and impelled them to seek their own house of worship.

Croswell's silence about that episode does not belie his continuing concern for his black parishioners. On March 12, 1844, he received a call from Edward Hawley, seeking to create a separate congregation. Two weeks later Amos G. Beman, pastor of the African Congregational Church, called, "very much concerned about the attempt on the part of the Episcopalians of the colored people to build a church."⁴⁴ In late April Croswell went to Hawley's home to discuss plans for the parish and then stopped at the home of Alexander DuBois for the same purpose. Plans were made for the congregation to occupy the basement of the Trinity Church until their own place of worship could be secured. On June 7, Croswell described the formal organization of the church:

In the evening, went over on the Hill, to attend a meeting of the blacks at Wm. Merriman's, to organise the new parish of St. Luke's, all of coloured people. Found [Rev.] Mr. [Wm. E.] Vibbert engaged with them in a religious service -- and when this was over, proceeded to the business of the meeting, which was soon finished, and we came home, in the midst of a smart shower.⁴⁵

Four days later St. Luke's was formally admitted as a parish in the Diocese of Connecticut at the annual convention held in Hartford. Croswell noted in the parish report printed in the annual diocesan journal that the congregation "now consists of about thirty families." Original officers were Peter Vogelsang, Clerk; Alexander DuBois, Treasurer; Henry S. Merriman, Warden; and Richard Green, Vestryman.⁴⁶

Both the parishioners of St. Luke's and Croswell were eager to secure an African American as rector. The existing options were severely restricted, however, as there were only four blacks then ordained in the Episcopal Church and two of these were living outside the United States. In May, a young New Yorker, Samuel Vreeland Berry, had served as Lay Reader for the congregation, and Croswell wrote to Bishop Benjamin T. Onderdonk about the advisability of his being ordained for the position.⁴⁷ Nothing came of this, however, and in late October Croswell met with the members of St. Luke's to discuss the matter. The following day he wrote to Alexander Crummell on their behalf, inviting him to consider a call from St. Luke's. On December 23, 1844, Crummell replied that he would officiate for the Christmas services, and the following day he arrived in New Haven and talked with Croswell about settling there.⁴⁸ Crummell did not go to New Haven, accepting instead an invitation to become rector of the Church of the Messiah, Manhattan. St. Luke's was thus without a settled minister by the end of its first year.

In early July 1845 Croswell wrote that "A colored clergyman from Maryland, called with some of the members of St. Luke's. -- He is to preach for them, tomorrow evening, and next Sunday." This man was Elie Worthington Stokes, Maryland-born and educated, who had grown up in Baltimore and had been befriended by the Rev. John P.K. Henshaw, then rector of St. Peter's Church, Baltimore. In October 1843, Stokes had been ordained deacon by Bishop William R. Whittingham in St. James' African Episcopal Church, Baltimore, and he originally planned to go immediately to Africa as a missionary. When this proved impossible, he was appointed as assistant to the (white) minister of St. James', the Rev. J.T. Mcjilton. In November 1844 Stokes travelled to Port of Spain, Trinidad, in the hopes of raising a congregation somewhere in the islands. Six months later he returned to Maryland, having failed to secure a church in either Trinidad or Barbados, and he was immediately apprised of the position available in New Haven.⁴⁹

In mid-July the members of St. Luke's met to decide whom to call as their rector. Minutes of the St. Luke's Parish Record indicate the action taken:

The Rev. Mr. Stoke, [sic] late from the West India [sic] having preached for St Luke parish on Friday evening, July 11th and also on the following Sunday a Meeting of parish was subsequently called to take into consideration the propriety of calling him to officiate for them in his ministerial character one year -- it was stated at that Meeting by one of the vestry that their [sic] were two candidates for that office viz Mr. Berry and Mr. Stoke but the people being unanimous the choice fell on Mr. Stokes, and the vestry were authorized to give him a call.⁵⁰

It is evident from the tone of his diary that Croswell disliked Stokes. Indeed, it is only with reference to Stokes that one finds overt race prejudice in Croswell's diaries. Since Stokes had been ordained deacon by the Maryland Diocese, it was logical for that diocese to confer on him the priesthood, prior to his assuming the rectorship of St. Luke's. Croswell wrote,

Many interruptions. -- Stokes among others. -- Gave him \$20 to be on his expenses to Baltimore -- and an old cloak, which may last him half his life. The money from the Missionary fund. -- The cloak from my wardrobe.⁵¹

Less than one month later Stokes returned to New Haven, for some reason not having received priest's orders in Baltimore, and Croswell proceeded to arrange for the ordination to take place in Connecticut. Thus, on January 19, 1846, Elie Stokes was the first person of African descent to be ordained in Trinity Church, New Haven, Bishop Brownell presiding and Croswell assisting in the service.⁵²

Just four months later Croswell wrote to Bishop

Brownell for letters dimissory for Stokes, who had decided to join his old friend, James P.K. Henshaw, recently named Bishop of the newly-formed Diocese of Rhode Island. Stokes took up the efforts Crummell had begun in Providence and became the first rector of Christ Church, Providence. He made several much-heralded trips in England to raise funds for his church in Providence, and evidently had substantial success. Croswell was not impressed, however, remarking on one occasion,

Among other calls, Rev. Mr. Stokes, who, having been to England, collecting money for his Church in Providence, preaching in chapels, and dining with Bishops and Arch-Bishops, would, I suppose, have condescended to dine with me, had I invited him. But it was not convenient.⁵³

When Stokes left Providence for the mission field in Liberia, Croswell again heard from Stokes, and again he was not impressed: "This latter a very characteristic affair, showing that Mr. Stokes will be a negro, wherever he may be."⁵⁴ A final reference to Stokes came in a diary entry dated 18 September 1857. Stokes had created so much dissension among the churches and clergy in Liberia that the Missionary Bishop John Payne insisted on a trial in Stokes' home diocese of Rhode Island. Croswell observed,

Had a call from Stokes, the colored preacher who has obtained a bad notoriety in connection with Africa. -- He wanted a chance to preach, etc. in behalf of his object. -- Could not consent to this, but gave him a trifle, rather grudgingly, I confess.⁵⁵

Given the scarcity of black Episcopal clergy in the 1840s, by far the best means for St. Luke's to secure a rector was to ordain one of its own members. A likely candidate for this position was Richard Green, a long-time resident of New Haven who had been one of the organizers of St. Luke's. Green had for a number of years been prominent in public affairs in New Haven,

...serving, for example, on the Executive Committee of the Connecticut State Temperance Society of Colored Americans.⁵⁶ On October 2, 1846, Croswell went to Green's home to discuss the possibility of his studying for the ministry. Green decided to do so, and on October 27, 1846, he was approved by the Standing Committee as a candidate for the order of Deacons. Croswell took great interest in Green's personal life, spending many hours, for example, counselling Green prior to an impending marriage in 1848. Croswell had buried Green's first wife in 1846 and performed his second marriage to Ester Jane Hendrickson on April 29, 1848.⁵⁷ As late as 1850 Green was still listed as a candidate for orders in the Diocese of Connecticut. He was never ordained, though he remained an officer of St. Luke's Church more than two decades after Croswell's death.

The last African-American clergyman with whom Croswell was associated at St. Luke's Church was the brilliant religious nationalist, James Theodore Holly. Raised a Roman Catholic in Washington, D.C., Holly became an ardent emigrationist after moving with his brother to Burlington, Vermont, in 1850. By 1852 he was living in Windsor, Canada, where he joined Henry Bibb and the Rev. William C. Munroe in a variety of emigration schemes. He renounced his Catholicism and was confirmed in the Episcopal Church by Munroe, who had founded St. Matthew's Church, Detroit, in 1846. Holly was accepted as a candidate for orders in 1853 and was ordained deacon by Samuel A. McCrosky in Munroe's church on 17 June 1855.⁵⁸

Holly was ordained with the explicit understanding that he would be sent to work in the Haitian mission field.⁵⁹ Less than a month after his ordination, Holly visited Haiti to investigate the possibility of establishing a mission there. Although he returned to the United States with glowing reports about bright prospects for the Episcopal Church there, he could not convince the directors of the Episcopal foreign mission board to open a new mission field and had to search elsewhere for employment. A few weeks later, the Literary Society of Colored Young Men in New Haven, invited Holly to give a lecture on Haiti.

Members of St. Luke's Church may have helped arrange the lecture, since several parishioners, including John P. Anthony and Thomas Prime, were staunch emigrationists.⁶⁰

Soon thereafter Harry Croswell noted the following in his diary for October 15, 1855:

Had a call from Mr. Prime, with a young colored clergyman, by the name of Holly, who is inclined to take charge of St. Luke's Church In the evening, Mr. Green came to get some papers drawn for Mr. Holly, to present to Bp. McCrosky, which I gave him with my own certificate.⁶¹

In early November Holly returned to New Haven to make arrangements for ordination to the priesthood. Letters testimonial were received from Samuel V. Berry, himself now ordained and serving as rector of St. James Church, Brooklyn, and William C. Munroe of St. Matthew's Church, Detroit. Wardens Richard Green and Frederick H. Benjamin, and vestrymen Bennet Merriman and Henry S. Merriman of St. Luke's Church, also wrote on his behalf.⁶² The ordination took place on January 2, 1856, one day after the forty-first anniversary of Harry Croswell's coming to Trinity Church.

There is only one subsequent reference to Holly in Croswell's diaries, so it is not possible to say what the elderly eminence at Trinity Church thought of the twenty-seven year old Holly. It is difficult to imagine that Croswell was personally attracted to Holly's aggressive black nationalism, but he records no personal reactions, either to the man or to his ideas. Active in public affairs in New Haven, Holly took a leading role in demanding better education for black children and served as principal of an elementary school between 1857 and 1859. In 1858 he opened the New Haven Select School for Young Colored Ladies and Gentlemen, whose four-year curriculum included "daily Episcopal devotionals and a strong emphasis on race pride."⁶³

Certainly, Croswell sympathized with Holly's pro-emigration policy, and indeed, in mid-July of 1856, Holly was invited to lecture at Trinity Church on Haitian emigration and on Haiti as a prospective field for Episcopal missions. That same month Holly organized, with his fellow black priests, the short-lived "Convocation of the Protestant Episcopal Society for Promoting the Extension of the Church Among Colored People." This organization reflected Holly's twin goals of promoting the Episcopal Church among the race and creating a strong black nationality in Haiti, as the instrument through which all of Africa would be redeemed.⁶⁴ While Croswell did not live to see those ideas come to fruition, Holly persisted in his plans with the support of Connecticut's Assistant Bishop, John Williams. In May 1861 Holly led a small group of emigrants, including John P. Anthony and thirty-six other recruits from Connecticut, in founding a colony in Drouillard, on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The following year he would submit his first report to the Diocese of Connecticut as missionary in charge of Trinity Mission of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.⁶⁵

* * * * *

The Rev. Harry Croswell was held in high esteem by the African-American members of St Luke's Church throughout his lifetime. Evidence for this is found in an 1850 resolution, written at a critical moment in the parish's early history, when it had become necessary to suspend temporarily public services. The resolution declared:

The Wardens and Vestry of St Luke Church do hereby for themselves and in behalf of the congregation tender Rev Harry Croswell Rector of Trinity Church New Haven, their most cordial and hearty thanks for the interest he has ever manifested in their behalf, from the organization of the parish until now in securing for their a place of worship free of charge, in occasional ministrations and by representing this body at the annual Convention of the diocese, and by his present Solitude for their future

prosperity. Whilst they regret, the obliquy which may have been heaped upon him in consequence of his friendly feeling and acts towards St. Luke they are free to confess they have nothing to offer him but greteful [sic] hearts for his kindness and benevolence, which they beg he will thus accept.⁶⁶

As we have seen, Croswell devoted a significant portion of his time and energy ministering to the black members his parish. He supported the efforts of talented individuals in their quest for education, he privately tutored them, wrote letters of recommendation, counselled and ministered to them and to their families. He lectured weekly to blacks in evening school in New Haven. This pastoral activity is remarkable in its scope among white clergy in the early nineteenth century. One can have no doubt that his actions brought down on him the "obliquy" of his white parishioners. But Croswell had a clear sense of right and of duty in virtually all matters, and he would not be easily swayed by the wishes of others.

To be sure, his sense of right by no means extended to the support of abolitionism. Two diary entries indicate his strong opposition to the anti-slavery cause. In April 1836, he "Had a visit from an abolitionist emissary, who wanted me to sign a petition to congress to refuse the admission of Arkansas to the Union. Made short work with him."⁶⁷ And eighteen years later, he had not changed his opinion, noting a call from "a black man seeking aid to buy his family out of slavery, into poverty and misery. -- Treated him kindly, and sent him to the abolitionists."⁶⁸

On the other hand, his support for the American Colonization Society is well documented. On at least one Fourth of July (1831), he followed the practice of many New England clergymen in preaching a sermon on behalf of the Colonization Society. Another time he agreed to take the chair at a meeting of the Connecticut Colonization Society, when Wesleyan University president Wilbur Fisk delivered "a long and powerful address, to the assemblage." On still another occasion, he permitted his assistant minister

Francis Lister Hawks to preach on colonization.⁶⁹

Leonard L. Richards, in his valuable study of anti-abolition mobs in Jacksonian America, points out that Connecticut was the most inhospitable of all the New England states for anti-slavery activity, having the largest number of anti-abolition and anti-Negro mobs during the 1830s and the smallest number anti-slavery auxiliaries for its population. Although the rector of Trinity Church was in this sense in the "mainstream" of Connecticut opinion on this important issue, he was certainly not representative of the "gentlemen of property and standing" whom Richards describes as the center of mob activity directed against abolitionists and against blacks.⁷⁰ He was, rather, one of the few clergymen of his denomination who regarded African Americans as a natural portion of the constituency to whom he was called to minister. The affection and esteem of these men and women for Crosswell is evident in the resolutions adopted by St. Luke's Church on his death, and they testify to his distinctive place in the denomination's history:

Whereas it has pleased almighty god in the afflictive dispensation of his providence to call the Soul of the Rev Harry Crosswell, D D from his scenes of labor and usefulness on earth to the enjoyment of that heavenly and glorious rest which remains for the people of god therefore be it

Resolved by the Wardens and Vestry of St Luke's parish that in his mournful bereavement we mingle our weepings with the faithful of the church of christ throughout this country and the world for the loss of one of the most devoted stewards of our divine master and one of the ablest counsellors of his church on earth

Resolved that in our grief we do not sorrow for the dead as those who have no hope but rather with an assured confidence and a reasonable and holy hope that our temporal (sic) loss is his everlasting and eternal gain

Resolved that we feel ourselves to be under increased obligations to bear this testimony to the illustrious virtues of the deceased because we recognize in him under god the first spiritual guide and founder of our struggling parish of the church of christ

Resolved that as a further testimony [of] profound respect for the deceased that this vestry will attend his funeral obsequies in a body at the appointed time and place.⁷¹

©2003 Randall K. Burkett. Any archiving, redistribution, or republication of this text in any medium requires the consent of the author.

1. William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. 5, "Episcopalians," (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1859) , p. 697; and Edward J. Getlein, *A History of Trinity Church On-The-Green, New Haven, Connecticut, 1752-1976* (New Haven: Trinity Church on the Green, 1976) , p. 76. The venerable Perkins, for more than sixty-six years pastor of Fourth Church, was well-known as an educator, having prepared more than 150 men for college, among whom Noah Webster himself was among the first. See the biographical sketch of Nathan Perkins in Robert A. Harrison, *Princetonians, 1769-1775; A Biographical Dictionary* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980) , p. 101.
2. Mackay Crosswell (1769-1847) is identified in the Printer's File, located at the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts. I am grateful to the Antiquarian Society staff for their generous assistance in facilitating research for this paper.
3. The paper announced its polemic intent in the following statement that appeared in the first issue: "With respect to politics, the editors, whenever or wherever they shall think they espy real danger, will faithfully blow the trumpet of alarm, and, with independence and frankness, will publish their sentiments upon public measures, tho' it still may (as it already has done) expose them to the bitter censure of some, who wish to establish 'a political intolerance, as despotic as wicked.'" Vol. I, no. 1 (5 January 1802), p. 1.
4. Franklin B. Dexter, "The Rev. Harry Crosswell, D.D., and His Diary," *Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society* 9 (1918), 46-69 at pp. 47-48.
5. Getlein, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-79, citing *People vs. Crosswell* 3 Johnson's (NY) Cases; 336, 339 (1904).
6. Dexter, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
7. Getlein, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
8. Antebellum New Haven is well known for its generous response to and support of the *Amistad* victims, that shipload of slaves whose 1839 mutiny trial aroused international attention and a United States Supreme Court defense by former President John Quincy Adams. It is also known, however, as the town whose citizens eight years earlier, by a margin of 700 to 4, had voted "to resist ... by every lawful means" the establishment there of a college for the education of men and women of African descent. In fact, the citizens determined to resist the college by unlawful means as well: abolitionist Arthur Tappan's house in New Haven was nearly destroyed by angry citizens, and mobs attacked homes and businesses of its black residents. This response was typical of statewide attitudes towards African Americans. Two years after the "College for Colored Youth" was repulsed in New Haven, Prudence Crandall was denied the right to admit "colored ladies and little misses" to her Canterbury, Connecticut, school. A bill was rushed through the state legislature specifically to prohibit Crandall's school from operating. See the account by Samuel J. May, *Some Recollections of our Antislavery Conflict* (Boston, 1869, reprinted by Mnemosyne Publishing Co., Miami, 1969), pp. 39-72. Slavery itself was not abolished in Connecticut until 1848, and as late as 1865, the citizens voted overwhelmingly to deny Negroes the right to vote. As William Chauncey Fowler drolly remarked, in his review of the *Historical Status of the Negro in Connecticut*, "The People of Connecticut were practical and believed that our two-fold Government was created by and for white men." Fowler's essay is published in *Local Law in Massachusetts and Connecticut, Historically Considered* (Albany: Joel Mansell, 1872), quoting at p. 144. For details on the *Amistad* case, the College for Colored Youth, and Prudence Crandall's school, as well as for a general review of race relations in New Haven, see Robert Austin Warner, *New Haven Negroes; A Social History* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), *passim*.

9. Oson's name heads a list of seven "Blacks, confirmed," in an entry dated Sunday, April 15, 1821, Volume I, p. 5, [henceforth cited Diaries, I:5 (15 April 1821)]. The diaries are located in the Manuscripts and Archives Division, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

10. Diaries, I:65 (22 August 1821).

11. A.L.S. Samuel Merwin, Pastor of the church in the "United Society," 28 Jan 1822, writing to William White, stated that he had known Oson for the past seventeen years since his own arrival in New Haven. Episcopal Church Archives, Austin, Texas, RG 50-5 Executive Committee Correspondence Received, Papers of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.

12. A.L.S. George Weller to the Revd. Edward Bickersteth, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, London (4 June 1827), in the C.M.S. Archives, G/AC 20, Misc. Letters.

13. *A Search For Truth; Or, An Inquiry For The Origin Of The African Nation: An Address, Delivered At New Haven In March, And At New York In April, 1817.* By Jacob Oson, A Descendant of Africa. Published for, and by the request of, Christopher Rush, a descendant of Africa. (New York: For the Proprietor, 1817). p. 12.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 7, and 11.

15. Diaries, I:199 (16 January 1823). No text of this speech survives. I have been unable to locate contemporary accounts in New Haven newspapers of Oson's 1817 address.

16. Diaries, I:75 (17 September 1821). At this date there was only one living black Episcopal clergyman, the Rev. Peter Williams, Jr., who had been ordained by Bishop Hobart in New York, 20 October 1820, and who was immediately placed in charge of the newly-founded St. Philip's church, New York City. The action of the male members of St. Thomas' Church is found in a memorandum, dated 23 October 1821, in the Episcopal Church Archives, RG 50-5.

17. Extracts of the Minutes of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, James Johnson, Secretary, dated Philadelphia, 24 December 1821 and 29 December 1821, in Episcopal Church Archives, RG50-5.

18. Testimonials for Jacob Oson, dated 23 January 1822, signed by Crosswell and Joseph Perry, Rector of Christ Church, East Haven and Trinity Church, West Haven, in Episcopal Church Archives, RG50-5.

19. Testimonials for Jacob Oson, dated 26 January 1822, *ibid.* Samuel Merwin also wrote a separate letter on Oson's behalf, cited above, note 10.

20. Testimonials from members of St. Thomas' African Church, Philadelphia, Episcopal Church Archives, RG50-5. The petition appears to have been dated Philadelphia, January 21, 1822, though this date was crossed out in heavy ink and Dec. 29, 1821, written over it.

21. Diaries, I:102 (12 December 1821), Diaries, I:117 (14 February 1822). Oson's fate had probably been sealed nearly a year earlier by a single sentence from Connecticut Bishop Thomas C. Brownell. In a letter to Jackson Kemper, dated 30 March 1821, Brownell had written, "On enquiry concerning the coloured man in this place, I am led to believe he does not possess sufficient talents and information for the Society in Philadelphia." Jackson Kemper

Papers, 6G15, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison. A notable omission from the list of eighty-eight signers of the petition from St. Thomas' Church was that of James Forten, a prominent member of the vestry. This suggests that there may have been opposition to Oson from some parish members as well.

22. Warner, *op cit.*, pp. 46-47. Interdenominational African community churches were organized in the North as early as the 1780s, and they flourished in the 1820s in Newport, Providence, Cincinnati, Rochester, New Haven, and elsewhere. They quickly succumbed, however, to the denominational factionalism which was characteristic of American churches in the early nineteenth century. See Will B. Gravely, "The Rise of African Churches in the America, (1786-1822): Re-examining the Contexts," *Journal of Religious Thought* 41:1 (1984), 58-73 at 64, 65.

23. Diaries, II:19 (13 March 1825). A somewhat vindictive note crept into the diaries in an entry Crosswell made three days later. "[A]ttended prayers at the funeral of a little infant of a black man, named Sandy Simpson. - Declined going to the burying ground - and as the man was one of the Union Society, talked to him a little on the inconvenience of their plan, &c." Diaries, II:20 (16 March 1825).

24. Diaries, II:112-13 (24 January 1826).

25. *Proceedings of the Board of Directors of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society*, First Triennial Meeting, 20 May 1823, pp. 46-53.

26. Crosswell's recommendation is summarized in a letter of George Weller to Edward Bickersteth, *op. cit.* Bickersteth's original letter to the American bishops requesting men of African descent for the Sierra Leone mission field was published in the *African Repository* II (January 1827), p. 348.

27. Diaries, II:315 (9 November 1827); II:318 (19 November 1827); and II:318 (20 November 1827).

28. A.L.S., Harry Crosswell, et al., Letter Testimonial for Jacob Oson, 4 December 1827, in Standing Committee Papers, Library and Archives, Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

29. A.L.S., John M. Garfield and William T. Patten to the Rt. Rev. Bishop Thomas C. Brownell, 15 January 1828, in Standing Committee Papers, Library and Archives, Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

30. *Episcopal Watchman* (Hartford), I:49 (25 February 1828), 386 and 391. William R. Hutchison, in his essay, "New England's Further Errand: Millennial Belief and the Beginnings of Foreign Missions," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 44(1982), 49-64, views the early 19th-century missionary enterprise, especially in its New England version, as being a restatement of the optimistic 17th century "errand into the wilderness" turned eastward. "The predominant tone," he writes, "is best represented in a God of yearning compassion and in an elect people who, already blessed, act out of gratitude more than out of need for repentance or expiation" (p. 57). Among some Episcopal clergy committed to African missions, there was a different impulse, viz., recognition of the need for national repentance and expiation which impelled the denomination to action. Jonathan M. Wainwright, Rector of Christ Church, New York, restated this theme in his *Discourse on the Occasion of Forming the African Mission School Society*, Delivered ... Aug. 10, 1828 (Hartford: H. & F. J. Huntington, 1828): "Africa I regard as a region of peculiar interest to us, and one which presents to us peculiar obligations to care for its moral and religious improvement. We are indeed separated from it by an immense ocean, but we have taken its children from their homes, we have held them in bondage, we have obtained large portions of our temporal comforts and luxuries from

the labour of their hands. We are all, to a certain degree, involved in the guilt of injustice towards this much suffering people. I say we, for I cannot on this point make a line of distinction. I would indeed on every point forever forget the terms north and south, as terms of national distinction, but most assuredly upon this. For here we are under a like condemnation. Slavery once polluted the now free and untrammelled states of New England Let us not then boast of our exemption from responsibility, and from whatever may be the criminality of possessing a slave population If we can send [the Africans] back with the Gospel of Christ, and thus give them as a reward for their extorted labours and long continued sufferings, the pearl of great price, our guilt will be lessened, and our condemnation will be taken away" (pp. 17,18 and 24). To be sure, this line of reasoning led Wainwright and the majority of Episcopal clergy to support colonization rather than emancipation, as the immediate solution to the national calamity of slavery.

31. Oson's selection for the mission field in Liberia was reported in the *African Repository* III:9 (November 1827), 270-71. His predecessors were Absalom Jones (1746-1818); Peter Williams, Jr., (1786-1840); William Levington (1793-1836); and James C. Ward (-1834).

32. Weller to Bickersteth (quoting Croswell), *op. cit.*

33. The obituary notice was published in the *Episcopal Watchman* II:27 (20 September 1828), p. 214, and reprinted in the *African Repository* IV:9 (November 1828), 283-84. From it, we learn that Oson had expressed an interest as early as 1810 to enter the ministry and that from the moment Liberia was established, he had hoped to be able to go there as a missionary. His one regret as death approached, according to Croswell, was "that he was never to be permitted to see Africa." *Idem*. An obituary in the *Connecticut Journal* (16 September 1828) states that Oson was 65 years of age at his death. In the New Haven Vital Records, however, he is listed as having died at age 62, which would place his birth around the year 1766. The cause of death was listed as Scirrhus Pylorus or stomach cancer.

34. "The wife of Jacob Oson, aged 49" is listed as having died 11 December 1820, in *Families of Ancient New Haven*, v. VII, comp. by Donald Lines Jacobus (New Haven, 1931), pp. 2056, 2057. Also listed as deceased that year were "An infant of Mr. Oson, April 18," and "A son of Mr. Oson, aged 17, May 17." Sarah Way was probably the daughter of John and Nancy Way, Connecticut "mulattoes" who were ordered out of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts prior to 10 October 1788. The law had been passed to prevent free Negroes from the South from settling in Massachusetts. See George Washington Williams, *History of the Negro Race in America* II (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1883), p. 130. The wedding is reported in *Diaries* I:96 (15 November 1821).

35. The poem, along with another which William Croswell wrote about Oson soon after his ordination, may be found in Harry Croswell's book, *A Memoir of the Late Rev. William Croswell, D.D., Rector of the Church of the Advent, Boston, Massachusetts. By His Father*. (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1853), pp. 44-45. Croswell's visits with Abraham Oson are described in *Diaries*, I:156 (23 July 1822); I:157 (27 July 1822); I:163 (12 August 1822); and I:163 (13 August 1822). The marriage of Amelia Oson to William Butler is reported in *Diaries*, I:308 (4 July 1824). The deaths of Oson's grandsons, the children of George Benjamin, are reported in I:215 (4 April 1823); II:117 (9 February 1826); II:118 (13 February 1826); and II:121-22 (26 February 1826).

36. Brownell (1779-1865), like many prominent New England clergymen and educational leaders, was a vigorous advocate of colonization, and he took an active role in founding the Connecticut Colonization Society, organized in May 1827. Having been the prime mover in the creation of Washington College (now Trinity College), Hartford, Brownell energetically supported the idea of "a school for the education of free persons of colour, with reference to their becoming Missionaries, Catechists, and School-masters, in Africa," as an extension of the College. Details on organization of the African Mission School Society are found in the *Episcopal Watchman* II:22 (16 August 1828),

174-175.

37. Diaries, III:207 (4 August 1830). An excellent brief sketch of Jones (1808?-1865) is Hugh Hawkins' essay, "Edward Jones, Marginal Man," in David W. Wills and Richard Newman, eds., *Black Apostles at Home and Abroad; Afro-Americans and the Christian Mission from the Revolution to Reconstruction* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1982), pp. 243-253. Croswell's judgment, at least about the abilities of Caesar, was not shared by the Executive Committee of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society. They interviewed both Caesar and William Johnson in New York in September 1830 and concluded "that Mr. Caesar does not appear sufficiently well prepared for the profitable exercise of his ministry; and that Mr. Johnson is utterly destitute of those qualifications, which a teacher in the humblest elementary department ought to possess." Episcopal Church Archives, RG 41-28, 27 September 1830. The Committee refused to send either Caesar or Johnson to Africa under their auspices.

38. Diaries, IV:24 (1 May 1832).

39. Diaries, VI:300 (13 June 1840); and VI:303 (23 June 1840). William J. Moses, author of the superb biography *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), could find no evidence that Crummell ever formally matriculated at Yale Divinity School.

40. The presiding bishop in New York, Benjamin T. Onderdonk, provided a tendentious account of the episode in a long letter to *The Churchman* in late October 1839, but the paper refused to print Crummell's reply to the bishop, which was carried in the *Colored American*. See *The Churchman* IX:22 (10 August 1839), 87; IX:23 (17 August 1839), 91; IX:25 (31 August 1839), 99; IX:26 (7 September 1839), 102-103; IX:27 (14 September 1839), 107; and IX:34 (2 November 1839), 133. Crummell's reply, with texts of correspondence between Crummell and Onderdonk, was published in the *Colored American* in a communication dated 2 December 1839. Croswell's son, William (also an Episcopal priest), had been an intimate friend of Doane's ever since the two had co-edited the *Episcopal Watchman* in Hartford in the late 1820s, and there is no doubt that the senior Croswell was familiar with the details of Crummell's case.

41. For details of the stormy relationship between Crummell and the vestry of Christ Church, Providence, see the Christ Church Records, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence. Crummell at one point threatened to resign from Christ Church because of the "base treachery and want of principle" of some members of the vestry. Matters were temporarily patched up, but three months later, the vestry locked the doors against Crummell and he left the employ of the church. See A.L.S. Alexander Crummell "To the Vestry of Christ Church," 13 June 1842; and Minutes of the Vestry of Christ Church, entry for 27 October 1842.

42. William E.B. DuBois, *Darkwater; Voices from Within the Veil* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920), p. 8.

43. Getlein, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

44. Diaries, VII:399 (12 March 1844); VII:407 (28 March 1844); VII:427 (29 April 1844); and VII:428 (30 April 1844).

45. Diaries, VII:447 (7 June 1844). Vibbert was Croswell's assistant at Trinity Church.

46. Warner, *op. cit.*, 87.

47. Diaries, VII:441 (27 May 1844). Berry (1813-1887) was ordained in 1847 and eventually came to St. Luke's Church in 1860, after Crowell's death. William Douglass (1805-1862) was rector of St. Thomas' Church, Philadelphia; Augustus W. Hanson (1814?-1863) was in Gold Coast; Elie W. Stokes (d.1867) was on his way to Trinidad; Alexander Crummell was the fourth ordained clergyman.

48. Diaries, VIII:27 (24 October 1844); VIII:28 (25 October 1844); and VIII:53 (23 and 24 December 1844).

49. The earliest references to Stokes are found in Diaries VIII:157 (10 July 1845); VIII:165 (24 July 1845); and VIII:167 (28 July 1845). Details of Stokes' early activities in Maryland and the West Indies are found in Elie Worthington Stokes to Bp. W.R. Whittingham, A.L.S. 24 October 1843; Stokes, Annual Report to Bishop William R. Whittingham, 1843; Stokes to Whittingham, A.L.S. 19 March 1845 (dated Port of Spain, Trinidad); and The Rev. G.W. Chamberlain to William Rollinson Whittingham, A.L.S. 10 June 1845, all in the Maryland Diocesan Archives, Baltimore. Stokes, whose first name is often spelled without the last "e", is credited by George F. Bragg, Jr., as being the founder of St. Luke's, New Haven. He was, in fact, its first settled rector. Bragg, *History of the Afro-American Group* (Baltimore, Church Advocate Press, 1922), p. 106.

50. Entry for 14 July 1845, St. Luke's parish Record, Minute Books, 1844-1896, housed in St. Luke's Church, New Haven, Connecticut.

51. Diaries, VIII:195-196 (18 September 1845).

52. Diaries, VIII:207 (14 October 1845); VIII:246 (17 January 1846); and VIII:246-247 (19 January 1846).

53. Diaries, IX:141 (31 January 1849).

54. Diaries, X:25 (6 June 1850).

55. Diaries, XIV:77 (18 September 1857). Crowell's negative opinion of Stokes was shared by many others, including Alexander Crummell. Writing to the Secretary of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society from Liberia in 1856, where he was himself a missionary, Crummell said "The Revd. Mr. Stokes is here again, and is mischievously at work among our members. With some few, whose cupidity he can gratify, he will have a measure of success. He comes out, as he declares, under the patronage of the Bp of Glasgow and other Scottish Ecclesiastics; and he evidently has large means at his command." A.L.S. Alexander Crummell to P.P. Irving, 10 January 1856, in Liberia Papers, RG 72-2, Episcopal Church Archives, Austin, Texas. Despite a stormy relationship with the Episcopal Church and with his Liberian colleagues, Stokes died as an Episcopal missionary in Crozerville, Liberia, on February 26, 1867. See the obituary notice by A.F. Russell in *The Spirit of Missions* 22 (1867), pp. 542-43.

56. Warner, *op.cit.*, p. 90, and letter to the *Colored American* dated 25 September 1838 in Amos G. Beman Papers, Scrapbooks II:126, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Another clipping in scrapbook lists Green as vice president of an Emancipation Demonstration committee commemorating the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia (Beman Scrapbooks II:139-140).

57. Green is mentioned frequently in Crowell's diaries, e.g., VIII:352-353 (11 September 1846); VIII:361 (2 October 1846); IX:43 (27 April 1848); and IX:43 (29 April 1848). A boot maker by trade, Green is listed as an officer of St. Luke's Church in the New Haven City Directories each year from 1844 until 1865. See also Standing

Committee Papers, Personnel Files, Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

58. See David M. Dean's excellent biography, *Defender of the Race: James Theodore Holly Black Nationalist Bishop* (Boston: Lambeth Press, 1979). Also valuable is Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Colonization and Emigration 1787-1863* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), esp. pp. 107-115 and 161-169.

59. A.L.S. James Theodore Holly to George F. Bragg, Jr., 1 June 1889 in George F. Bragg, Jr., Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

60. Dean, *op. cit.*, p. 23 and Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-168.

61. Diaries, XIII:11(15 October 1855).

62. The letters testimonial for Holly are located in Archives of the Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

63. Dean, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

66. Entry dated 24 April 1850, "St. Luke's Parish Record, Minute Books, 1844-1896," in St. Luke's Church Archives, New Haven, Connecticut.

67. Diaries, V:196 (19 April 1836).

68. Diaries, XII:32(22 June 1854).

69. Diaries, III:288 (4 July 1831); V:511 (28 May 1838); and III:117 (5 July 1829). A sample of Fisk's opinion on colonization may be found in his *Substance of an Address Delivered Before the Middletown Colonization Society, and Their Annual Meeting, July 4, 1835* (Middletown: G.F. Olmsted, 1835). Hawks' sermon, "Croswell decided," was "declamatory and spirited, but much less calculated for a sermon, than for an oration. -- His extreme anxiety to elevate the pretensions and objects of the Society, carried him a little too far for cool heads and calculating minds -- but it was exactly in the right style for the populace." The North Carolina-born Francis Hawks (1798-1866) was sufficiently pro-Southern that in 1862, shortly after the Civil War began, he resigned his parish church in New York City and moved to Baltimore.

70. Leonard L. Richards, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing," *Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 5, 40, and 138-140. Richards' thesis was anticipated nearly 125 years earlier by the Episcopalian abolitionist, William Jay. Speaking of actions of the Diocese of Pennsylvania in denying Alexander Crummell or any other African American a right to representation in that body, Jay wrote "Ruffian mobs had on several occasions, within the past few years, assailed the unoffending blacks in Philadelphia, sacked their dwellings, and torn down their houses of worship, and all on account of the complexion their Maker had given them. And how was this wicked, cruel prejudice against color, rebuked by the Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania?...[They] were...driven...from the enclosure of the Church, as they had been, by abandoned wretches, from the sanctuary of their own homes. The bishop, clergy, and lay deputies of the Pennsylvania Church, make common cause with the

rioters in the streets, in a general crusade against negroes and mulattoes!" William Jay, *Miscellaneous Writings on Slavery* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1968), pp. 446-7. Elsewhere, Jay fulminated against "our pro-slavery clergy, our negro-hating clergy, our slave-catching clergy, [who] are the most successful apostles of infidelity in the country." Cited in Bayard Tuckerman, *William Jay and the Constitutional Movement for the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1893), p 146.

71. Entry dated 14 March 1858, "St. Luke's Parish Record, Minute Books, 1844-1896, in St. Luke's Church Archives, New Haven, Connecticut. I am grateful to the rector of St. Luke's Church, Victor A. Rogers, for making these valuable records available to me for research.