

Charlottesville's History of Religion, Education, Arts and Entertainment

1762-1887, As a Town

Religion

Cultural institutions of religion, education, art, and entertainment were established in the town over time, but religion was among the most influential aspects of culture in the town era. The courthouse was the meeting place for most cultural events including religion.

One of the earliest churches in the courthouse that can be documented was the Calvinistical Reformed Church. Six months after drafting the *Declaration of Independence* Thomas Jefferson drafted another document that started this new independent Christian congregation. It was formed in 1777 and Jefferson pledged the most voluntary financial support for its pastor, his friend and area political leader, Reverend Charles Clay. But this historically important church did not survive the extreme economic difficulties of the post-war period.

In the post-independence era the city suffered economically after the war and many people turned to faith for comfort. A religious awakening lasted in the area from 1784 to 1789, with Presbyterian James Waddell leading services in the courthouse. Religious leaders who organized meetings for the Baptists and Methodists were John Leland and Henry Fry, respectively. These revivalists also lobbied James Madison of nearby Orange County and the state legislature to finally pass Jefferson's *Statute for Religious Freedom* in 1786, along with Jefferson's *Statute to Punish Sabbath Breakers* at the same time.

A decade or so later during Jefferson's presidency, another religious revival swept through the Charlottesville area, sometimes known as the Second Great Awakening. More open-air religious "camp meetings" were held in the Charlottesville area than in any other part of the state between 1800 and 1806. The one held in Milton just east of Charlottesville in 1804 drew the largest crowd—about 4,000 people (10 times the city population!) who came to hear itinerant evangelist Lorenzo Dow. The dominant style of Christianity in town at the time opposed denominational names, creeds and organized clergy, and believed that the Bible and original doctrines were corrupted and needing "restoration."

The strength of this movement is evident in the fact that by 1817 a "union" (i.e. nondenominational) meetinghouse, a frame building where Christ Episcopal Church is today, was the first solely religious building in the original footprint of the city. It would be another decade before the main denominations began erecting their own houses of worship. In the meantime the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Baptists took turns using the courthouse, which Jefferson called "the common temple."

The Episcopal Church in town got its start around 1819 with the arrival of its first minister, Frederick Hatch. Jefferson's letters show him self-identifying as part of "his flock" and "a member of the Episcopalian Church" (although privately holding Unitarian theological views). It bought the union meetinghouse in 1822 and built its own new place of worship on the site by 1826.

The other main denominations followed suit. Between 1826 and 1837 all of the major Protestant denominations erected their own houses of worship in the city: Episcopalians, 1826, Presbyterians, 1828, Methodists, 1828, Baptists, 1831, and the non-creedal Church of Christ (First Christian), 1837. All were on Jefferson or Market Streets except for the Methodists, who located on Water Street. The black community had a vibrant religious life that will be featured with other African American history in tomorrow's paper.

Schools, Newspapers, sports and Other Cultural Institutions:

Other cultural institutions emerged in these early years. The first Masonic lodge in town opened in 1791 (Door to Virtue Lodge 44). The Albemarle Academy, a private school for boys, began in 1803. Rev. Hatch's home was on a lot adjacent to the present site of City Hall, and he started a school there as well in 1821.

The first newspapers emerged. Ebenezer Watts published the *Central Gazette*—the city's first newspaper (1820)—and the first collection of the writings of Jefferson. Another newspaper in the city began in 1827 called the *Virginia Advocate*. Yet another, the *Jeffersonian Republican*, began in 1835. The Albemarle Bible Society was organized in 1828, and Sunday-school societies, library societies, anti-slavery societies, and temperance (i.e. anti-liquor) societies emerged in this antebellum period.

Martin Dawson was one of the first major benefactors of the area, and gave a large amount of land to the new University of Virginia, as well as funds for establishing a number of free private schools for the poor. New schools opened for boys, but women also began to gain opportunity for education outside the home when Rev. William White, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, started the Charlottesville Female Seminary in 1836 at 422 2nd Street, NE. Baptists opened a couple women's schools in 1845 and 1846. Piedmont Female Institute opened in 1853, led by Episcopalians Anne and Jane Leaton at 7th and East Market streets. John Broadus, pastor of the town's Baptist Church and University chaplain, also led Baptists to start the Albemarle Female Academy at the corner of 10th and E. Jefferson Sts. He later became one of nation's most famous Baptist leaders.

Broadus also became a professor at the University in 1851. Religion and education went hand in hand and was becoming the dominant influence at the University in this period. William Holmes McGuffey arrived as the University's new professor of Moral Philosophy in 1845. This Presbyterian minister was already famous for his four *Eclectic Readers*, but produced a Fifth and Sixth Reader while living in Pavilion IX. His books were the most widely used in schools in America throughout the 19th century, and he became the most well-known resident of Charlottesville outside of the earlier U.S. presidents associated with the town.

William H. Ruffner, a UVa chaplain in the 1850s later became the father of the public school movement in Virginia and its first state superintendent (remembered now at U.Va. by Ruffner Hall). After the Civil War ended Virginia instituted its first state system of public education in 1870. The town's first local public grade schools began on September 4, 1871 (on Garrett Street) and in 1878 the school principal was James Lane. (Education for blacks is featured in tomorrow's paper.)

The University of Virginia turned 50 years old in 1869. That year saw the graduation of a student by the name of Walter Reed—who went on to fame as the conqueror of yellow fever 30 years later. Woodrow

Wilson began his studies in law in 1879 and resided in 31 West Range, long before becoming president of the United States. Other graduates became Supreme Court justices.

The first football game in the town took place in 1870 (the first at the University was in 1888). The Charlottesville Derby occurred on March 25, 1883 and became an annual equestrian event. Between 1884 and 1887, native son Charlie Ferguson was one of baseball's greatest professional pitchers, playing in Philadelphia. The university's Brooks Museum was erected in 1887.

Emergence of Religious Diversity

Students at the University numbered about 500 men when in 1857 a national religious awakening swept into town and gave rise to the formation of one of the nation's first college chapters of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in 1858, led by student J. William Jones.

But at this same moment, religion in town began to diversify beyond only Protestantism. The first Lutheran congregation formed in 1869, and soon thereafter the first Roman Catholic church (although a mass was first held in 1858 in Town Hall). In 1860 the first Jewish congregation was formed, called Temple Beth Israel. Moses Kaufman, a businessman and member of the town school board, led Sabbath services for the Jewish community for many years, until Mortimer Kaufman took over in 1899. Services were first held in the Oberdorfer Store and then in Temple Beth Israel, built in 1882 at the corner of 2nd and Market Sts. (It moved to its present location in 1904.)

The 1880s (and 1890s) was the new boom for building houses of worship. The Catholics built a church in 1880 (Holy Comforter Church, rebuilt in 1925). The two African American churches – First Baptist and Mt Zion Baptist - were erected in the 1880s and are the oldest churches still standing today (Episcopal, Presbyterian and First Christian Church rebuilt in the 1890s). Woolen Mills built a nondenominational chapel for its workers in 1887 and the gothic University chapel was erected in 1885. In this chapel and in the north annex of the Rotunda 8000 people gathered over two days in 1886 to see national evangelists Dwight L. Moody and Andrew Murray.

At the time of becoming a city, Charlottesville was overwhelming religious with over 80% of the population attending church. It was the highest church attendance rate of any city in the state of Virginia (and still so by the early 20th century with a rate of 75%).

1888-2012, As a City

Shortly after Charlottesville became an independent city in 1888 other aspects of culture appeared even as the geographical size of the city grew larger.

New churches of existing denominations were emerging away from the city center in new neighborhoods and especially near the University. Many new denominations emerged not previously present in the city such as the Greek Orthodox, Unitarian, Friends Meeting, Assembly of God and other Pentecostal churches, and other sects. The Salvation Army opened in 1912 on Vinegar Hill and an annual Chautauqua Week was held each September (where the Pavilion is today). The YMCA at the University dedicated Madison Hall as a Christian student center in 1905 (now housing the U.Va. president's office). Charlotte Diggs (Lottie) Moon, who had left for China in 1873 as one of the first female missionaries in American

history, starved to death in 1912 by giving away her food to those she was serving, making her perhaps the area's most famous religious figure. In 1939 the Jewish community welcomed its first rabbi, Albert Lewis. The University eventually discontinued official chapel services and more houses of worship and religious student ministries emerged on and around the grounds. U.Va. student body president Bob Finley graduated and began preaching at crusades with Billy Graham (and later started the Christian Aid Mission). A campus resurgence of evangelical faith was initiated by Daryl Richman in 1968. Charismatic and nondenominational churches emerged in recent decades and these were more inter-racial than previous times. In 1997 a gathering of over 20,000 people took place in University Hall, organized by area churches working with Franklin Graham, son of evangelist Billy Graham.

Another development most recently was the establishment of faith communities such as Islam and Buddhism. These non-Christian groups still represented less than one percent of the city's population today, but a more significant change was the decrease in the number of Christians regularly participating in church activity from 75% a century earlier to no more than a third of the population today.

Schools and the University

The Rotunda and its northern annex were destroyed by a fire in 1895 but soon restored, and Cabell Hall was built in 1899 and the first women were admitted to the University's graduate nursing school in 1901. Edwin Alderman became the University's first president in 1904. A student around that time named Richard Byrd went on to become the first person to fly over the South Pole in 1929.

In 1892 the city schools also became independent of the county and Midway became the city's public high school for white students, while Jefferson School was established for black students in 1894. Howe Cochran became the city's first Superintendent of Public Schools. McGuffey School opened in 1905 and James Lane became superintendent followed by James G. Johnson in 1909. The Charlottesville Education Association also began in 1906. Private schools continued to operate as well. The private Albemarle Female Institute became the Rawlings Institute in 1897, then St. Anne's School in 1909.

Public and private education continued to develop. The McGuffey School opened for white students in 1917 with Carrie Burnley as its first principal. Women were permitted admission to all U.Va. graduate and professional programs in 1920. Venable Elementary School opened in 1925, named in honor of former U.Va. mathematics professor Charles Scott Venable. Clark Elementary School opened in the Belmont neighborhood in 1931, honoring Revolutionary hero George Rogers Clark. Lane High School opened in 1940. Johnson and Burnley-Moran Elementary schools for white students opened in 1954, named in honor of early superintendents and principals James Johnson, Carrie Burnley, and Sarepta Moran. Greenbrier Elementary School opened in 1962, Buford and Walker Middle Schools in 1966, and Jackson-Via Elementary School in 1969. Charlottesville High School opened in 1974, replacing Lane High School, while the Jefferson School closed. Some new private schools began as well, but home-schooling was one of the newest innovations that emerged in the 1980s.

U.Va. graduates and professors continued to gain fame. Samuel J. Goldwyn graduated in 1947, to later become head of Samuel Goldwyn and MGM Studios in Hollywood. Alben Barkley and Robert Kennedy became prominent in politics. Nobel Prize winner for literature William Faulkner taught at U.Va. from 1957 to 1962. University president Edgar F. Shannon (beginning 1959) began to make the University a larger and more nationally prominent institution. Continued by subsequent leaders, the University has

quadrupled since 50 years ago to more than 20,000 students and become known as one of the top public research universities in the nation.

Emergence of Arts and Entertainment

The most significant development in the city era was the emergence of the arts and entertainment. Jefferson Levy, owner of Monticello, purchased the Town Hall and converted it into the Levy Opera House in 1888. *The Daily Progress* newspaper was first issued on September 14, 1892, by J. H. Lindsay. A statue to honor the memory of Confederate dead was erected at the University's cemetery on June 7, 1893.

Wonderland was where the first movies were shown in 1905, and other entertainment could be found such as horse shows, skating, and displays of exotic birds. In 1905 the University began to play basketball—the first school in the South to do so, started by Henry “Pop” Lannigan. Jefferson Theater began to be the place for silent movies when it opened that year. In 1913 Georgia O’Keeffe began studying and teaching art at U.Va. while living with her family at 1212 Wertland St.

The local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy raised funds for a Confederate soldier monument on Court Square that was dedicated in 1909. In 1918, native born son Paul Goodloe McIntire returned to the area from New York and used his wealth to beautify his native city with five parks and fine sculpture, to expand cultural experiences, and to broaden educational offerings by a public library, and aid for public schools and the University.

In 1922 the Municipal Band was organized. Fry’s Spring Beach Club, developed in 1921, added a swimming pool and pavilion for bands and dancing. The Paramount Theater opened on November 25, 1931, for talking movies. The first radio station (WCHV) started in 1932. Scott Stadium opened in 1931. The Bayly Art Museum opened at U.Va. in 1935. The city established a department of recreation in 1933 and Nan Crow became its director in 1937. The Albemarle County Historical Society was founded in 1940. In 1941 U.Va. football star Bill Dudley was an All-American, and played in the NFL between 1942 and 1953, and later became a member of both the college and professional football Halls of Fame. The Charlottesville Garden Club began led by Martha Rankin in 1948, and the Apple Harvest Festival in 1950, later renamed the Dogwood Festival in 1958.

Bob Dylan resided here for a short while in 1963, and many other artists visited the area. The city’s first television station opened in 1973. In the celebration of the nation’s Bicentennial in 1976, Queen Elizabeth II visited the city. Actress Elizabeth Taylor taught a seminar for drama students at the University of Virginia in 1977. Easters, a dance and party tradition at U.Va. since 1915, was shut down by the University in 1982 but Fridays After Five began in 1988 to offer free live musical entertainment on the new downtown Mall. New venues for the arts opened: Live Arts Theater in 1990, the restored Paramount Theater reopened in 2004 and the Charlottesville Pavilion in 2005.

Many new festivals emerged: First Night Virginia, the Virginia Festival of the Book, the Jeffersonian Thanksgiving Festival, the Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society’s Spirit Walk, the Grand Illumination and Holiday Heritage Parade, the Virginia Festival of American Film, the Charlottesville Chamber Music Festival, and the Festival of the Photograph. The bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition brought a series of events to the area in 2003 and 2004 and launched development of a new

Lewis and Clark Exploratory Center in Darden Towe Park.

The Dave Matthews Band, with fellow local players Boyd Tinsley, Carter Beauford, and the late LeRoy Moore, gave its first performance on May 11, 1991, and went on to become one of the world's most popular stadium touring bands. The city has begun to attract other top performers in the last decade, including bands that filled Scott Stadium such as the Rolling Stones (2005) and U2 (2009).

Movies were filmed in the area—recent examples are *Morgan Stewart's Coming Home* in 1987 and *Evan Almighty* in 2007 and several movie stars, entertainers, and media personalities have lived in the area or attended the University. Actor Rob Lowe was born here. Others moved here such as Sissy Spacek, Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, Sam Shepherd, Howie Long, and Jessica Lange. Others such as Tina Fey, Katie Couric, Laura Ingraham, and Brit Hume lived here while attending U.Va. Notable writers and professors associated with the city are significant. John Grisham is one of the top novelists in the world, having sold over 250 million copies of his legal thrillers. Ann Beattie is a highly-regarded short-story writer.

Scott Stadium was enlarged in the 1990s and John Paul Jones Arena at U.Va. opened in 2007 and big time sports became part of the city culture as well. Wally Walker led the University's basketball team to its first ACC championship and Ralph Sampson, Jr., led the University's basketball team to the Final Four in 1981. The U.Va. football team became a participant in several bowl games since the 1980s.