Short Sketches of Historically Black Episcopal Churches in North Carolina

A Bicentennial Project Compiled by Lynn Hoke, Archivist, Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, Raleigh, 2015; Updated 2021

St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church (1866 – Present)
604 Johnson Street, New Bern, Diocese of East Carolina
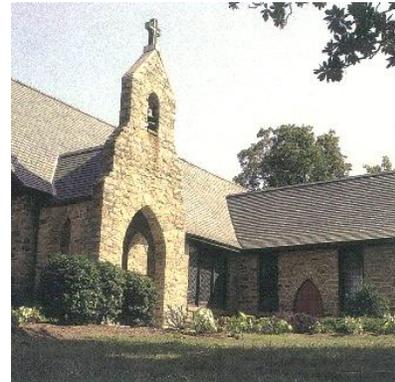*Photo: present 1912 building*

Christ Church, New Bern, was engaged in outreach to the black community as early as 1825. In 1866 New Bern was home to the first Freedman's School sponsored by the Episcopal Church and on June 1 the mission to Negroes was organized as St. Cyprian's Church, making it the first officially-recognized black congregation in the Diocese. Peter W. Cassey, the first black Deacon-in-charge, led the effort to build a new frame church, completed in 1883 at the corner of Johnson and Metcalf. First used for worship in January 1912, the present church served as an emergency hospital in 1922, after a disastrous fire destroyed much of the black community.

St. Ambrose Episcopal Church (1868 – Present)
813 Darby Street, Raleigh, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: 1869 building at 2nd location on Wilmington Street

St. Ambrose's Church in Raleigh was organized February 11, 1868, under the name St. Augustine's. The congregation met first at St. Augustine's School, then in a building at Dawson and Lane Streets, on a lot granted by the 1868-69 North Carolina Legislature. The first ten members were transferred from Christ Church, Raleigh, making it the sponsoring parish. Other early members were St. Augustine's students and teachers, who walked a mile each way for services. To eliminate confusion, Bishop Cheshire agreed to a request to rename the church St. Ambrose, following the completion of St. Augustine's Chapel in late 1895. St. Ambrose's moved the original building to 509 S. Wilmington Street in 1901. This property – now a parking lot – has remained in church hands since the congregation built the present church on Darby Street in 1965.

National Register listing, 2019: https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/WA8136.pdf

Historic Saint Augustine's Chapel (1895 – Present)
Saint Augustine's University, Raleigh, Diocese of North Carolina
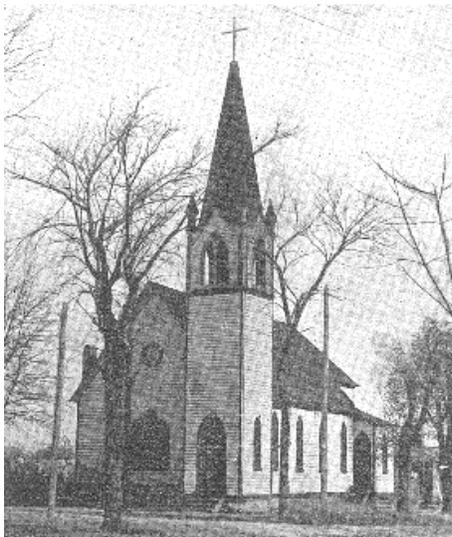*Photo: present 1895 chapel*

In December 1895, masonry students, directed by future Suffragan Bishop Henry Beard Delany, finished building the Saint Augustine's School chapel from stone quarried on the campus. Two months later Bishop Cheshire organized the "Mission of St. Augustine's Chapel." Since its construction, the chapel has served a dual role as both a spiritual and academic gathering place. For many decades students attended weekday chapel services. The Mission congregation met on Sundays and carried on regular church activities, such as Sunday School, Woman's Auxiliary work, and representation at Diocesan Convention. Until the 1950s, the chaplains at St. Augustine's were drawn from the ordained academic or administrative ranks of the school. Since then, chaplains have been recruited to oversee both chapel and mission activities, along with teaching one or more classes.

National Register listing for the Saint Augustine's College Campus, 1980: http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/WA0138.pdf

St. Mark's Episcopal Church (1869 – Present)
601 Grace Street, Wilmington, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: present 1871 building

In 1857 Bishop Atkinson began officiating at an integrated Mission Chapel in Wilmington. Organized as St. Paul's in 1858, this congregation worshipped in a building at Orange and Fourth Streets, purchased from the Protestant Methodists. Closed in 1863, the building became home in 1866 to the new Colored Congregation Worshipping at St. Paul's, led by Deacon Richard Jones and made up of former members of St. James's, St. John's and St. Paul's. In 1869 Charles Brady, a black Deacon, led this congregation to form the present St. Mark's Church, whose building at South and Mulberry (Grace) Streets dates from 1871.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church (1870 – Present)
301 Panola Street, Tarboro, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: early view of present 1893 building

Organized by the black members of Calvary Church in 1870, St. Luke's Chapel was admitted into union with the Diocese in 1872. The first separate worship space was a chapel on loan from Calvary. During its first decade St. Luke's had layreaders and a series of visiting priests. After his 1882 ordination as a Deacon, John W. Perry took charge, and, with his wife, immediately began a successful school that served the wider community for 70 years. When Calvary eventually reclaimed its chapel, St. Luke's used the school building for a time, then built the present church building in 1893.

St. Matthias's Episcopal Church (1872 – Present)
1 Dundee Street, Asheville, Diocese of Western North Carolina
Photo: present 1894 building

As early as 1867 several ladies of Trinity Church, Asheville, began a Sunday School for the parish's black children. In late 1871 or early 1872, a separate Mission Chapel for Colored People was constructed. Generally known as Trinity Chapel, it housed Asheville's first parochial school for African Americans. In 1872, the Rev. Samuel Berry, a black priest recruited by Bishop Atkinson from New York, was appointed as the priest in charge. After Trinity Chapel was deemed unsafe in 1893, the present church building was begun in 1894. At the laying of its cornerstone, Bishop Cheshire renamed it St. Matthias's Church.
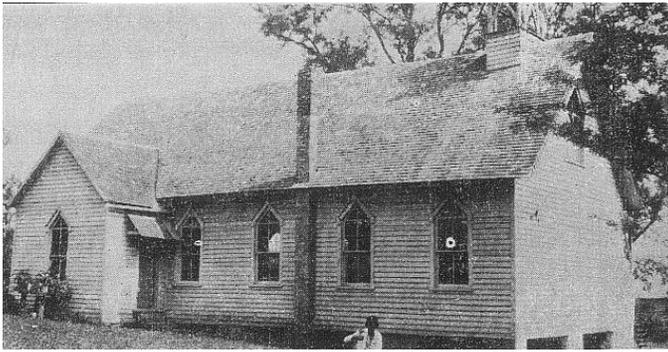
National Register listing, 1979: http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/BN0015.pdf

St. Joseph's Episcopal Church (1873 – Present)
509 Ramsey Street, Fayetteville, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: present 1897 building

Bishop Ives praised St. John's, Fayetteville, in 1833 for "benevolent and efficient exertions in behalf of the colored population." In 1867 St. John's had both a Sunday School and a Day School operated by the Episcopal Church Freedman's Commission. St. Joseph's was organized in 1873 as the new church for Fayetteville's black population. Its first building was a refitted Protestant Methodist property. The present building was the gift of New York heiress Eva Cochran in 1897. This historic architectural gem survived the 1917 fire that destroyed the Parish House and Rectory, and also a more recent fire in 2015.
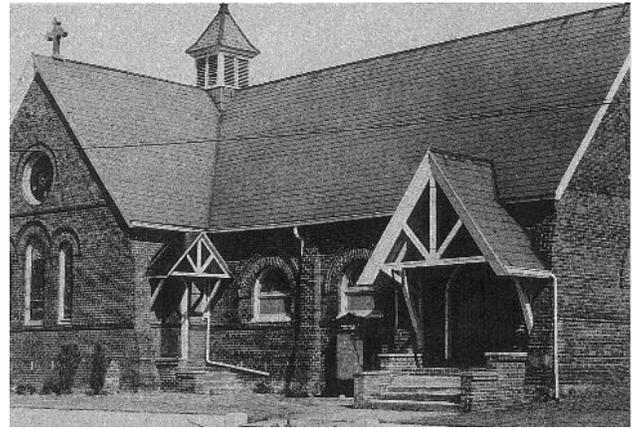
National Register listing, 1982: http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/CD0017.pdf

St. James's Episcopal Mission (1879 – 1967)
Formerly in downtown Pittsboro, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: 1889 building

In 1879 the Vestry of St. Bartholomew's established a Mission for the blacks in Pittsboro that became known as St. James's. A national church-wide appeal garnered funds to pay the parochial school teacher. After fire destroyed the mission in 1886, a school was built and a new chapel consecrated in 1889. St. James was without a resident priest for most of its history. Membership dwindled greatly in the 1960s, and in 1967 the chapel was de-consecrated and sold to the Methodist Church for use as a parking lot. In 1968 it was burned during a Pittsboro Fire Department training exercise.

St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church (1881 – 2011)
212 East Church Street, Edenton, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: 1885 building, now leased

St. Paul's, Edenton, reported in 1856 that "a subscription is on foot to build a Chapel in this place for the colored people," but construction didn't begin until 1879. Black members bought the lot, Herbert H. Page of St. Paul's funded the building, and Bishop Lyman both organized and consecrated the Chapel of St. John the Evangelist on April 6, 1881. Violent wind destroyed this building in 1884. A new church was begun the next year, but not consecrated until 1897. St. John the Evangelist closed in 2011, and the Diocese currently leases the building to Good Works Community Church.

St. Michael and All Angels' Episcopal Church (1882 – Present)
Photo: 1883 building

The clergy of St. Peter's, Charlotte, established St. Michael and All Angels' Mission in 1882 and helped purchase the first property at South Mint and West Hill streets. The new church was begun in 1883, but lack of funds delayed completion and consecration until 1899. This mission supported the Parochial and Industrial School (1885) and helped sponsor Good Samaritan Hospital (1899). When the *Charlotte Observer* bought the St. Michael's property in 1968, the congregation worshipped at the diocesan-sponsored Christ the King Center for community outreach, housed in the old Chapel of Hope, a former mill church at 17th and Caldwell.

Chapel of Hope/Chapel of Christ the King (1902/1984 – Present)
17th & Caldwell Streets, Charlotte, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: 1922 building, 2nd for original Chapel of Hope

In 1983 a majority group of members voted to leave the Chapel and move to an available church building on Hovis Road. Within a year the smaller group remaining at the Chapel received permission from Bishop Estill to re-establish the Chapel of Hope Mission. In 1990 Diocesan Convention approved the creation of The Chapel of Christ the King, which joined the Chapel and the Center into a unique urban mission in this formerly prestigious Optimist Park section of inner-city Charlotte. After selling the Hovis Road property, the St. Michael and All Angels congregation has been renting worship space and working on plans to build a new church in a different area.
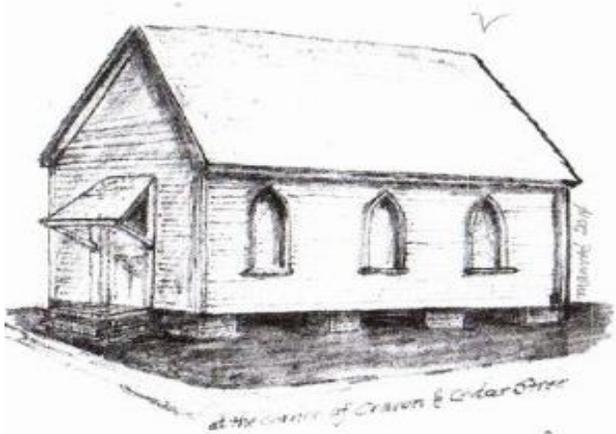
St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church (1882 – Present)
216 Roller Mill Road, Franklin, Diocese of Western North Carolina
Photo: present building

St. Cyprian's Mission and School for blacks near Franklin opened around 1882. After visiting in 1888, Bishop Lyman reported that "a kind friend of the Church in Philadelphia" had provided funds for the newly-completed church. Additional funds from the North supported the school's first director, James T. Kennedy, a black educator and deacon, and financed the addition of an industrial department in 1890. The sale of well-crafted student-made furniture later provided some revenue. St. Cyprian's became an integrated congregation in 1979. In November 2014 it merged with St Agnes's, Franklin, to become the new parish of All Saints' Episcopal Church.

Good Shepherd Episcopal Church (1886 – Present)
814 Markham Road, Tryon, Diocese of Western North Carolina
Photo: old chapel relocated to Tryon 1955

The Deacon reported for Tryon City Mission in 1886: "A log church for the colored people has been built near Tryon." By 1891 Mrs. Plaisted of Maine was running a school that eventually became a day and boarding industrial school. Located by 1905 on Markham Road, the Good Shepherd Mission was officially organized in 1908. The school closed in 1936 when black children were permitted to attend local segregated public schools. Good Shepherd needed a new church by the 1950s, and the empty 1906 chapel from Green River Plantation was moved to Markham Road where it serves Good Shepherd today.

St. Clement's Episcopal Church (1882 – 1967)
Formerly at Cedar & Craven Streets, Beaufort, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: sketch of 1886 building provided by Mamré Marsh Wilson

Parish register entries for St. Paul's, Beaufort, indicate that blacks were baptized, confirmed, married, and buried from the church before the Civil War. Following the war, the black members began meeting in the small chapel behind St. Paul's. In July 1882 Bishop Lyman approved the Petition to Organize St. Clement's Colored Congregation in Beaufort. By 1886 the new church was up at the corner of Cedar and Craven. In 1888 Bishop Watson consecrated the church, which operated in this location until it was closed and deconsecrated by Bishop Wright in 1967. The parishioners were invited to join St. Paul's Parish.
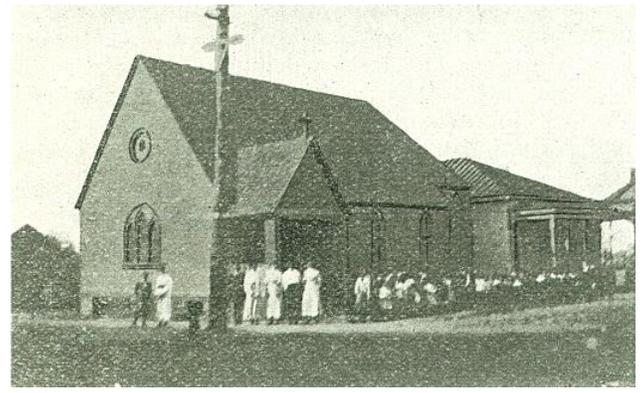

St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church (1886 – 1970)
Lincolnton, Diocese of Western North Carolina
Photo: Lincoln Times-News, June 10, 2005

St. Luke's, Lincolnton, included black members from its beginnings in the late 1830s. When a separate black mission was formed in 1886, a lot and house for a chapel were secured from various sources: $46.28 from the members; $100 from Dr. Sauls of Philadelphia, and a $50.00 appropriation from the Church Building Committee. Organized as St. Cyprian's, the congregation reported separately in 1887. St. Cyprian's fared well into the 1960s, but dwindling numbers led to its closing and merger with Church of Our Saviour, Woodside, the former plantation chapel built by a St. Luke's family. Most members declined to merge.

St. Luke's Episcopal Mission (1887 – 1948)
Formerly in northwest Warren County, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo by Archdeacon Henry B. Delany c. 1912
Delany Papers, Saint Augustine's University

In 1887 Noble Russell deeded a lot to the Diocese, "for use by a congregation of colored people worshiping in St. Luke's Church, near Ridgeway, Warren County." Many early members came from the African Zion Union Church. Lack of funds left the simple chapel uncompleted throughout the 1890s. Russell family members were active until St. Luke's closed in 1948. The Ven. Odell Greenleaf Harris, a family member, purchased the property from the Diocese in 1964. Today, the concrete front step remains in place and PVC pipe markers delineate the church's footprint.
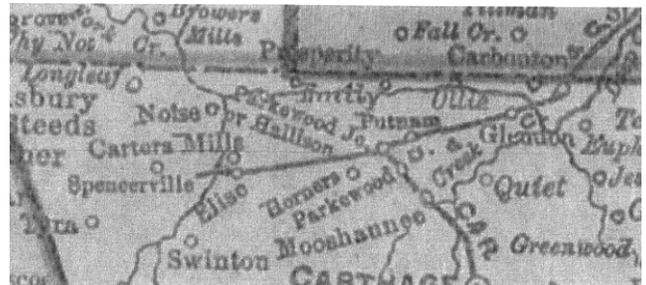

St. Mark's Episcopal Church (1887 – Present)
706 East Nash Street, Wilson, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: 1897 building

In 1886 Bishop Lyman held a service in St. Timothy's Church "for the colored people" of Wilson. The next year he appointed a Deacon to serve this congregation. By 1889 John W. Perry, a black priest serving Tarboro and Wilson, had built a "very neat" chapel for Grace Mission, officially re-named St. Mark's in 1891. After fire from a nearby tobacco storage facility destroyed the original church building at South and Lodge Streets in 1897, insurance made re-building there possible. In 1935 St. Mark's bought the Free Will Baptist building at E. Nash & Reid Streets, its present location.

St. Titus's Episcopal Church (1887 – Present)
400 Moline Street, Durham, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: 1929-1967 church building

The rector called it "something of an experiment," when St. Philip's began mission work in 1887 among Durham's blacks in the Hayti district. Annual reports for this "Durham Mission" disappeared between 1904 and 1909. But Henry B. Delany, appointed Archdeacon for Colored Work in 1909, soon helped revive the former mission by sending a Priest-in-Charge and giving the church a new name – St. Titus's. Using various rented and converted spaces, St. Titus finally bought a lot and completed a new church in 1929. After fire gutted it in 1967, another property was purchased and today's building was consecrated in 1972.

St. Philip's Episcopal Chapel (1889 – 1911)
Formerly in Noise, Moore County, Diocese of North Carolina
1901 map of northwest Moore County

Disaffected African Methodist Episcopal Zion members began St. Philip's, Noise, in 1889. The new congregation "furnished almost all the lumber necessary and had it sawed. . . . nine thousand shingles and nails enough to roof and enclose it." Soon more space was needed for the school and for sheltering homeless children. In 1894 they started St. Monica's Chapel nearby, on a gift of 30 acres. The remote location and annual movement of the people led to eventual closure. In 1913 the Trustees sold the St. Philip's properties and authorized the Bishop to devote the proceeds to similar work elsewhere.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (1889 – 2013)
318 Bouchelle St., Morganton, Diocese of Western North Carolina
Photo: 1949 building, no longer in use

St. Stephen's was established in 1889, with services upstairs in Philo Harbison's building on West Union Street. Henry S. McDuffey, the black priest from Asheville, became Minister-in-Charge with monthly services. By 1893 the first church, a "new and tasteful" wooden building, was debt-free and ready for consecration, thanks to Mr. McDuffey's friends in the North. The church opened what became the only school in town for black children. The new church on Bouchelle Street was consecrated in 1949. In December 2013, a merger created the new St. Mary's and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, now housed in the 1909 St. Mary's building.
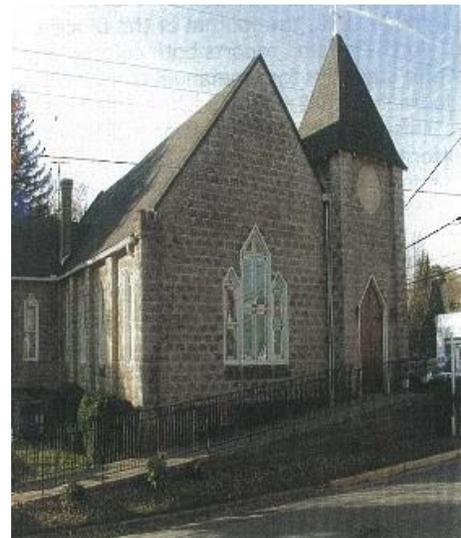

St. Philip's Episcopal Chapel (1891 – 1966; re-consecrated 2003)
200 S. McMorrine St., Elizabeth City, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: Chapel now located directly across from Christ Church

At Christ Church, Elizabeth City, in October 1887, Bishop Watson "met the colored members of the Church with reference to a Church building of their own." By 1891 a "Colored Mission" was officially listed. The church was built in 1893 as St. John's, then became St. Philip's in 1897. Consecrated in 1898, the building served until 1966. After St. Philip's was "dissolved" in 1971, the building was sold, deconsecrated and used as a soup kitchen/food bank. When the food bank relocated, Christ Church members worked to purchase, move, renovate and re-consecrate the building as a chapel and activity center.
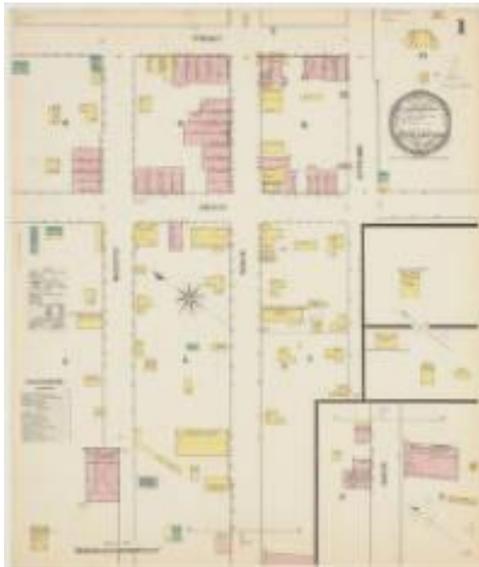

St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1891 – 2012)
Formerly at 409 W. 7th St., Washington, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: Diocesan Archives, courtesy of Mamre Marsh Wilson

Parochial reports for 1891 included "Colored Missions" at Elizabeth City and Washington, both served by the Rev. William J. Herritage. The Washington Mission listed 10 communicants, 14 Sunday services and $71.00 in hand for a church lot. With a non-resident deacon and no building of its own, this mission disappeared after 1894. In June 1906 Bishop Strange sent a newly ordained deacon, William Wood, to Washington "to open a Mission among the colored people there." This update came in 1908: "To the generous contributions of noble laymen of the Church, we are indebted for the new attractive Church of St. Paul's."

All Saints' Episcopal Church (1892 – 2015)
201 Front & Franklin Sts., Warrenton, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: 1918 building, currently under restoration

In 1892 the black congregation of All Saints Chapel, Warrenton, was organized and bought a building used for both chapel and Sunday School. A parochial day school also opened under the direction of two white ladies from New England. Soon after the Rev. Thomas W. Cain, a black priest and Warrenton native, died in the 1900 Galveston flood, plans began for a new memorial church in his honor. Construction commenced on Ascension Day 1914, but despite annual pleas for help, the lack of funds delayed completion. Both church and school used the basement until the doors opened in December 1918. All Saints was closed in June 2015. A diocesan committee of long-time members and local residents is working to preserve the historic All Saints property for ongoing mission work.

St. Mary's Mission for Colored People (1893-94)
Various meeting sites, Burlington, Diocese of North Carolina
Image: 1893 Sanborn Map, with A. M. E. church in inset

The 1893 Parochial Report for St. Athanasius's, Burlington, announced that St. Mary's Mission for Colored People had been organized the previous March. The Archdeacon for Colored Work had visited one Sunday and held a service in the A. M. E. Church. Burlington was deemed a "good field for this work." At this time the list of blacks associated with the mission included five families, twelve individuals, three school teachers and fifteen students. These numbers all increased slightly in 1894, but by 1895 no blacks appeared in any category, and St. Mary's disappeared from future church lists and parochial reports.

St. Matthias's Episcopal Church (1893 – Present)
245 Laurel Mill Road, Louisburg, Diocese of North Carolina
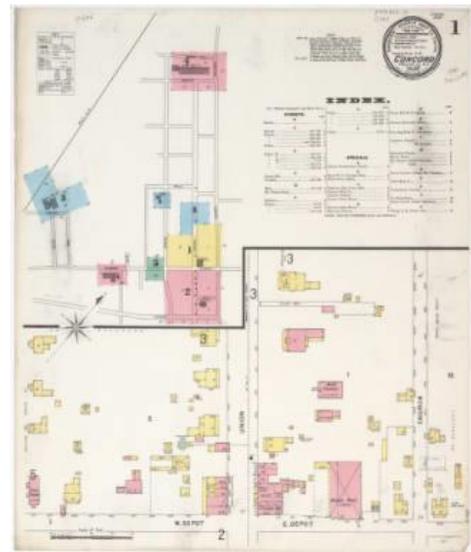*Photo: 1894 building; bell tower now gone*

In 1892 the Rev. Henry B. Delany began holding regular monthly services for the blacks of Louisburg, first in St. Paul's Church, then in the Franklin County courthouse and in a rented meat house which had been converted into a chapel. After his visitation in May 1893, Bishop Lyman "urged the immediate erection of a capacious church" for this new congregation, and delegated a "zealous and intelligent member" to solicit funds in the North for the building. Following completion of the church in the spring of 1894, St. Matthias's also built a new parish school building and a rectory. George Pollard maintained the parochial school until his death in 1947.

St. Anna's Episcopal Church, Littleton (1894 – 2007)
SR 1404 (Bacon Road), Littleton, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: 1904 building and addition

Begun in 1893, Littleton's "Colored Mission" under lay reader Virgil Bond was featured in the February 1894 *Spirit of Missions* as worthy of national church-wide support. The Archdeacon for Colored Work described Littleton as "located in the midst of the densest population of blacks in the Diocese . . . excellently adapted for a center for industrial training." A school, chapel, and boarding facilities were built. Farming activities on the surrounding property provided sustenance as well as practical training. Known as St. Anna's since 1903, the mission was forced to close in 2007. Hope and Serenity Church now leases the building.

Note: St. Anna's is now a Preserved Historic Church under the auspices of the Historic Properties Commission of the Diocese of North Carolina.

Holy Comforter Episcopal Mission (1895 – 1900)
Formerly in Concord, Diocese of North Carolina
Image: 1897 Sanborn Map, All Saints at bottom right

The rector of All Saints Church in Concord formed a congregation of blacks in 1895, suggesting it had the "promise of prosperity." But inadequate funds and lack of a suitable worship space remained obstacles throughout the short life of Holy Comforter Mission. For two years Oliver Stencil, a black Candidate for Holy Orders, and his wife ran a school for more than 100 students, with only $10 per month from the St. Augustine's League in New York. After the Stancills moved to Satterwhite in 1898, membership dropped each year until the mission was no longer listed in 1901.
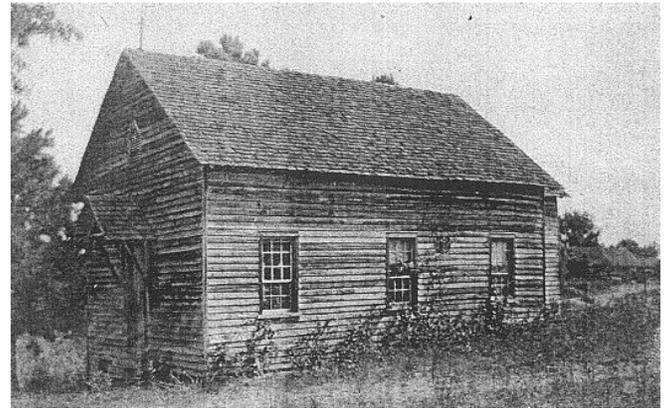
St. Augustine's Episcopal Church (1896 – present)
707 East Lenoir Ave., Kinston, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: present 1957 building

The 1882 Parochial Report for St. Mary's, Kinston, noted that two mission services for blacks were "kept up outside the Parish proper," one in town on the first Sunday in each month, the other three miles out on the third Sunday in each month. Interest among a group of people led in 1896 to the organization of St. Augustine's Mission in the town. They purchased a lot and built the church that was used until it was condemned in 1950. Between 1951 and 1957 services were held at a community center. The current church was completed and dedicated in 1957.

St. Simeon's Episcopal Church (1896 – 1968)
Formerly in rural Granville County, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: courtesy of St. Cyprian's, Oxford

Monthly services and a Sunday School began at Satterwhite in 1896. Benjamin Thorp in neighboring Goshen deeded land for St. Simeon's in 1903, supplied lumber for the chapel, and later donated the cemetery that is still in use. First as Lay Reader, then as Minister-in-Charge, Charles Henry Male served from 1903 until his death in 1920. He described it as a country mission, twelve miles from any railroad, with poor farmers, mostly renters, "whose idea of the Church is right, and they love it and our beloved Bishop." St. Simeon's was deconsecrated in July 1969. The building no longer stands.
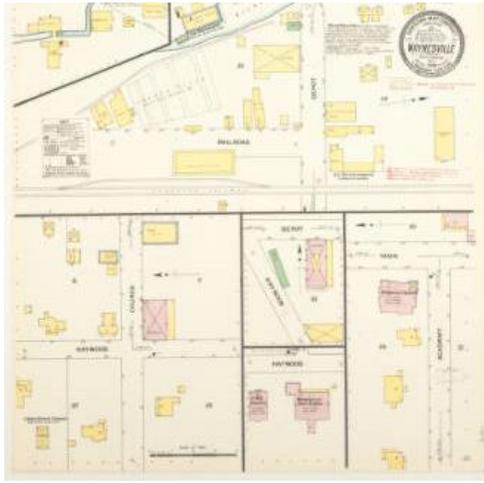

Grace Episcopal Mission (1897 – 1901)
Formerly in Moncure, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: September 28, 1911, by Archdeacon Henry B. Delany

The Archdeacon for Colored Work reported in 1896 that Mr. Albert J. Council had begun missionary work at Moncure, with a school serving a large number of children. By the next year, the kindness of "some friends from Massachusetts" had allowed building plans for a school and chapel to go forward. Grace Mission became the name for this work in 1899. At this time, after some years of bad management, the indications were hopeful with a new Deacon-in-charge. However, within a year this deacon was deposed from the ministry, and within five years Grace Mission disappeared from the diocesan rolls.

Episcopal Chapel of the Holy Cross (1899 – 1968)
Formerly in Statesville, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: 1902 chapel

Trinity Church, Statesville, started a "colored work" in January 1898, and within a year the Mission of the Holy Cross had been organized. A part-time deacon organized the Sunday School and provided services twice a month. In 1900 a school house was built, followed in 1902 by the chapel, valued at $400, with 200 "chapel sittings." The chapel received its first coat of paint in 1912, and in 1917 the members borrowed $500 to make repairs and improvements. With only fifteen members remaining, Holy Cross merged with Trinity Church when the latter's new church was ready for blessing in 1968.

St. Michael's Episcopal Church (1902 – 1922)
Located in downtown Waynesville (within walking distance of Grace
Church, seen in bottom left corner of this 1908 Sanborn map)

In May 1901 Bishop Horner conducted a special evening service "for colored people in Waynesville at their request." More than 30 people had signed a petition to establish the mission that became known as St. Michael's in 1902. During the 1903 District Convention at Grace Church in Waynesville, a recess was taken for the consecration of the new St. Michael's Church. Until 1915 St. Michael's, along with four small white churches, made up the Waynesville Associate Mission, overseen by the Grace Church rector and another priest. Confirmed members never exceeded 25, and St. Michael's disappeared from the journal after 1922.

St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church (1903 – Present)
408 Granville St., Oxford, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: 1927 building

In 1903 the mission for blacks in Oxford started as an outgrowth of services held during the previous Diocesan Convention. St. Cyprian's Chapel was completed in 1906, with help from the American Church Building Fund, Saint Augustine's School, and various church friends. By 1912 a new church in a better neighborhood was needed, but not until 1927 did a generous gift allow work to begin. The current church dates from 1959. Between 1970 and 2009, St. Cyprian's was yoked with St. Stephen's, under the latter's clergy leadership. Since August 2009 the part-time Vicar has been a retired Lutheran pastor.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Chapel (1906 – 1955)
Originally at Green River Plantation, Polk County,
Diocese of Western North Carolina
Photo: chapel after 1955 relocation in Tryon

In 1906 Mary Mills Coxe built a chapel at her Green River Plantation, reportedly for her "colored servants and others." After Mary died in 1914, daughter Maude Coxe oversaw the chapel until her own death in 1939. During the 1940s, Maude's sister, Daisy Coxe Wright, challenged the diocese for control over St. Andrew's – ostensibly because the bishop sent a black priest there. Daisy transferred the chapel's trust fund to the local Rutherfordton church, and after that St. Andrew's did not remain open long. In 1955 it was moved in four sections to become the new home of Good Shepherd, Tryon.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (1907 – Present)
810 N. Highland Ave., Winston-Salem, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: 1927 building

St. Paul's reported minimal mission work among the blacks of Winston-Salem: a Sunday School in the late 1880s and occasional services at Slater Industrial Academy in the late 1890s. In 1907 the diocese helped establish the mission to be called St. Stephen's Chapel, and located at Bruce and Wallace Streets. St. Stephen's completed a new building on North Highland Avenue and 11th Street in time for Palm Sunday services in 1927. When Winston-Salem's redevelopment program bought and demolished that building in 1968, St. Stephen's received in exchange a cleared, much larger lot two blocks south, where the current church stands.
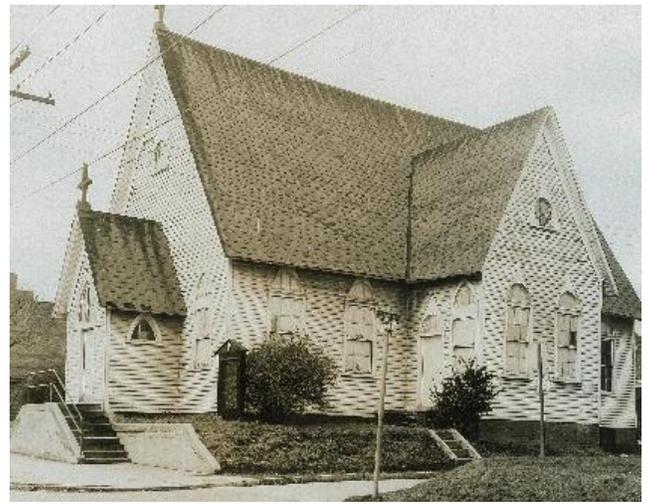
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church (1908 – present)
901 Harris St., Goldsboro, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: present 2002 building on St. Andrew's website

Archdeacon Avant opened the Colored Mission in Goldsboro in 1907, then the Rev. John Walter Herritage served for six years to keep it "holding its own." Herritage and other early clergy also served St. Augustine's, Kinston, and maintained their residence there. St. Andrew's became the official name of the Goldsboro mission in 1915. After a new church building was completed on Spruce Street in 1923, Bishop Darst noted that "the work in that community has taken on new life." In 2002 St. Andrew's moved to its present location on Harris Street and is currently served by the Rev. Mary Reese, Priest-in-Charge.
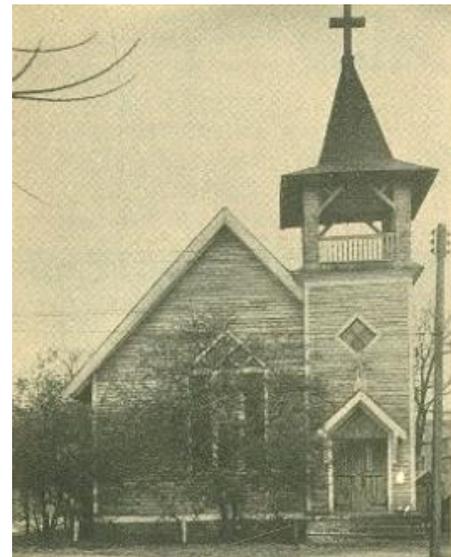

St. Mary's Episcopal Church (1909 – 2013)
Washington & Patego Streets, Belhaven, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: 1909 building remains on original site

In 1909 the newly-appointed Archdeacon for Colored Work built a congregation and church in Belhaven, named St. Mary's in 1910. A combined parish house and rectory went up in 1916. Along with others, St. Mary's suffered periodic "removals," with the 1919 journal reporting a loss of "nearly half her membership." Beginning in 1975 St. Mary's was part of the Coalition 16 effort to support small churches by sharing resources and clergy. In 2009 St. Mary's and nine other congregations were identified as either inactive or struggling to stay open. St. Mary's was closed in 2013.

Episcopal Church of the Redeemer (1909 – Present)
901 East Friendly Avenue, Greensboro, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: 1916-1954 church building

Organized in 1909, the Mission of the Redeemer first met in a public hall. With a lot paid for by 1912, a suitable place of worship was "the crying need" for four years. When the old St. Cuthbert's Chapel at Proximity Mills was taken down in 1916, the materials were used to build a new building for Redeemer. In his report of the opening on October 29, 1916, Archdeacon Henry B. Delany described it as "one of the most substantial and beautiful churches of the [Colored] Convocation." This building was used until 1954, when construction began on the current brick parish hall and church.

Holy Hope/Epiphany Episcopal Church (1909 – 2016)
500 Fairview Rd., Rocky Mount, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: original St. Jude's, Spring Hope, moved in 1940

Holy Hope Mission began in Rocky Mount in 1909, first with services upstairs over Rowlan's Store, then upstairs in the Douglas Building. After meeting in two buildings on Goldleaf Street, the mission acquired the old St. Jude's Church building in Spring Hope, then moved and reassembled it on Ivey Street. By 1956 the need for a new building was evident, but it took until 1962 to complete it. With this new building came a new name – Church of the Epiphany. In 1999 Christ Church, Rocky Mount, closed its doors, but transferred both its building and its cash reserves to Epiphany. In 2016 Epiphany was closed, with the facilities remaining available for rent or for future Diocesan mission ventures.

St. Anne's Episcopal Church (1910 – 1988)
St. Luke's & St. Anne's Episcopal Church (1988 – Present)
206 Boush St., Roper, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: current location is original St. Luke's building

In 1910 Bishop Watson praised the Archdeacon of Colored Work for the "new and promising work in Roper," which had 33 confirmations in one night. Under the Archdeacon's supervision, the Rev. William J. Herritage took charge of the Mission at Roper. Named St. Ann's in 1911, it became the more general "St. Anne's" in 1952. After the church roof collapsed in 1975, the congregation of nearby St. Luke's offered worship space to St. Anne's. In 1988 the Parishes and Missions Committee recommended the merging of St. Luke's and St. Anne's as a new parish in full communion with the diocese.

Episcopal Church of the Resurrection (1910 – 1962)
Formerly in Henderson, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: 1923 building in 1945

Holy Innocents, Henderson, was conducting a "colored Sunday school" in 1891, and services were also held for blacks in the old church building. Work toward a mission began in 1910, when the Archdeacon for Colored Work received a small missionary fund. By 1921 the mission had a name – Church of the Resurrection – and a church lot. Finished in 1923, the first building had to be replaced in 1951. The congregation gradually declined and no longer used the building by 1962. In November 1964 the Standing Committee approved the sale of the church to the United Church of Christ for $7,000.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church (1909 – 1970)
Formerly on Bonners Lane in Greenville, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: courtesy Joyner Library, East Carolina University

Bishop Strange noted in 1909 that the Rev. W. T. Wood was opening a new mission in Greenville. After Wood left for Florida the next year, St. Andrew's Mission had a series of black clergy who served two or three other churches, lived elsewhere, and stayed only a few years. In between these, various rectors of St. Paul's, Greenville, would be listed for this "unorganized" mission, and in 1970 the two churches merged. The former St. Andrew's building was used for a number of years for the Bonner's Lane Day Care Center, a project serving disadvantaged children in west Greenville.

St. Jude's Episcopal Church (1909 – 1971)
Formerly in Aurora, Diocese of East Carolina
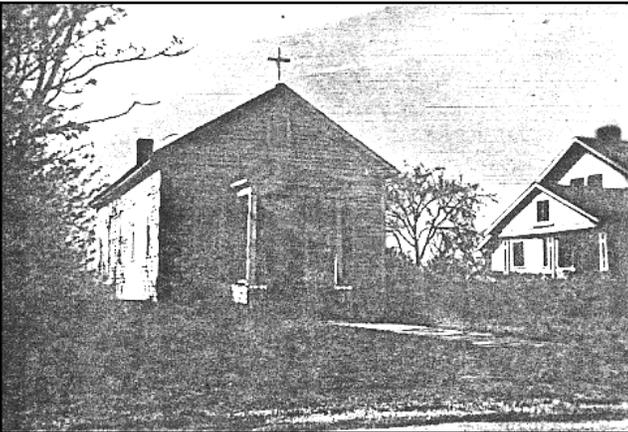*Photo: courtesy of Mamré Wilson, Historiographer*

The new Archdeacon for Colored Work, the Rev. George W. Avant, earned praise from Bishop Strange in 1909 for purchasing a Baptist church building in Aurora for a new Episcopal mission, soon known as St. Jude's. Priest-in-Charge John Brown described one of the continuing hardships: "Great struggle to keep going in 1925. Crops were poor; members along with others left for other places and have not returned." St. Jude's numbers remained small; in 1971 the Diocese closed the mission. The property was sold originally in 1979, then or subsequently, to the Deliverance Temple of the Church of God in Christ.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church (1911 – 1948)
Formerly in Roosevelt/Edneyville, Diocese of Western North Carolina
Photo: Group in 1916 (from A Man of Vision by Elizabeth Willcox Thomson)

While rector of St. James's, Hendersonville, the Rev. Reginald Willcox also fostered missions around Henderson County, including St. Peter's, Roosevelt (Edneyville in 1918). Local black residents Martin and Ellen Freeman watched St. Paul's develop into a thriving mission parish and school, and wanted a similar opportunity for the children in their wider family. The Freemans donated land and Willcox helped raise $1500 to build the combination church and schoolhouse for what became St. Peter's Mission. During the 1930s and 40s members moved away and services became intermittent. By 1945 St. Peter's was listed, but vacant, then finally dropped in 1949.

St. Thomas Episcopal Church (1915 – 1922)
Formerly in Hertford, Diocese of East Carolina
1916 Sanborn Map of Hertford; no church building

Bishop Thomas Darst's first address to Convention following his January 1915 consecration included this brief report: "April 7th. Preached and Confirmed six persons in the colored School House in Hertford. The beginning of this new Mission is the result of the unselfish work of the Rev. W. J. Herritage of Edenton. The prospect for usefulness seems bright." Although not resident in Hertford, the Rev. John B. Brown provided a measure of stability as Priest-in-Charge for six years, but by 1921 Bishop Darst had determined that, "unfortunately, this Mission has not prospered, owing to our inability to secure a suitable building."

Holy Trinity Episcopal Mission (1916 – 1963)
Formerly in Monroe, Diocese of North Carolina
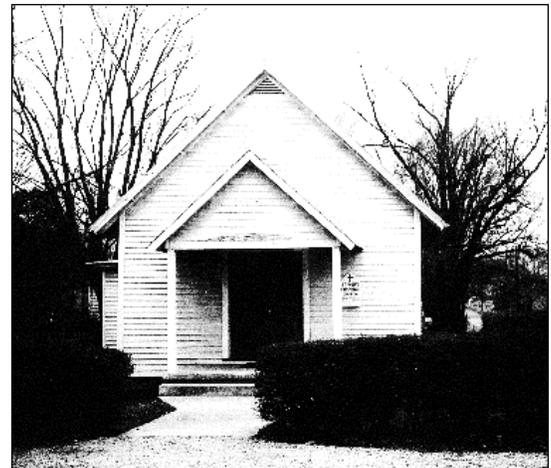*Photo: Mission building in 1930s*

The mission in Monroe first appeared on the Colored Convocation list in the 1916 convention journal. Even with only four communicants, the outlook was reported to be "very encouraging." Known as Holy Trinity, this mission made do with dedicated lay readers and scheduled visits by priests from St. Paul's, Monroe, and St. Michael and All Angels', Charlotte. In 1962 the St. Paul's vestry determined that Holy Trinity's weak communicant strength and poor physical condition made further expenditures unwise. The vote to close was unanimous. In April 1963 Bishop Fraser issued a Declaration of Secularization and the property was sold.

St. Philip's Episcopal Church (1916 – 1970)
Marsh & Caldwell Streets, Salisbury, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: white mission church used by St. Philip's

The Rev. Francis J. Murdoch and his wife planted the seed for St. Philip's Mission in 1901, when they deeded a lot to the diocese "in trust for a congregation of colored people." In late December 1916, the storm-damaged frame building previously used by St. Peter's Mission was placed on this lot near Livingstone College, where Bishop Cheshire consecrated it St. Philip's Chapel in February 1917. As with many black missions in the 1960s, St. Philip's experienced declining membership and was closed by the Diocese and deconsecrated in 1970. The building is currently used by the Blessed Assurance International Church.
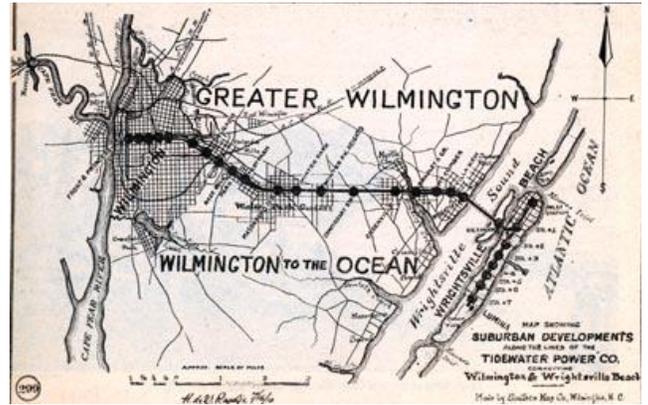
St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church (1915 – present)
330 N. Ridgecrest Ave., Rutherfordton, Diocese of Western North Carolina
Photo: St. Gabriel's website

In 19th century Rutherfordton, blacks had separate services at St. John's Church until it was deconsecrated after the new St. Francis building was completed in 1899. The blacks then met in homes around their New Hope community until 1915, when a new church opened for "St. Gabriel's Mission for Colored, under St. Francis' Parish." An early white Priest-in-Charge was Hibbert H. P. Roche, whose sister, Cecilia Millicent (Mrs. Francis) Hincks, was an active member and served many years as Treasurer. The first black Priest-in-Charge was Eugene Lenoir Avery, 1935-1942. Today St. Gabriel's enters a new century at its present location.
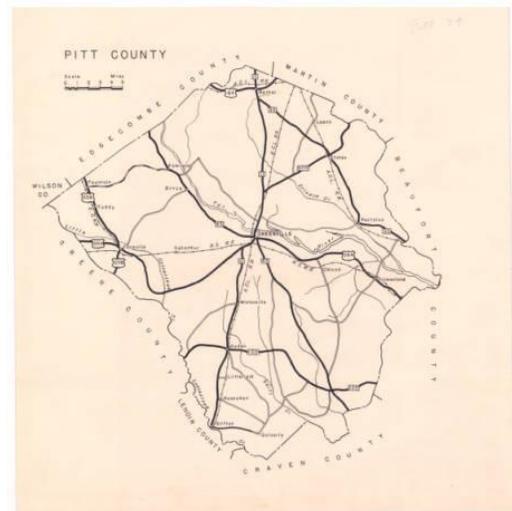

Brooklyn Episcopal Mission (1922 – 1952)
Formerly in Brooklyn Section of Wilmington, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: Students and teachers in front of Mission School, 719 Harnett St.
courtesy New Hanover County Public Library

In 1922 Bishop Darst announced, "The outstanding new work of the year was that established in the thickly settled Negro section of Wilmington." Brooklyn Mission originated in the school founded by Ethel Bernard and became a mission of St. Mark's Church, described as "strictly a Community Work along Gospel lines." In the late 1920s, a social service worker named Mary Geyer helped the 60 students and their families with home visits, clothing and money for the sick, community meetings, clinics for babies and a summer playground. The mission continued through the 1940s, but was dropped from journal listings in 1953.
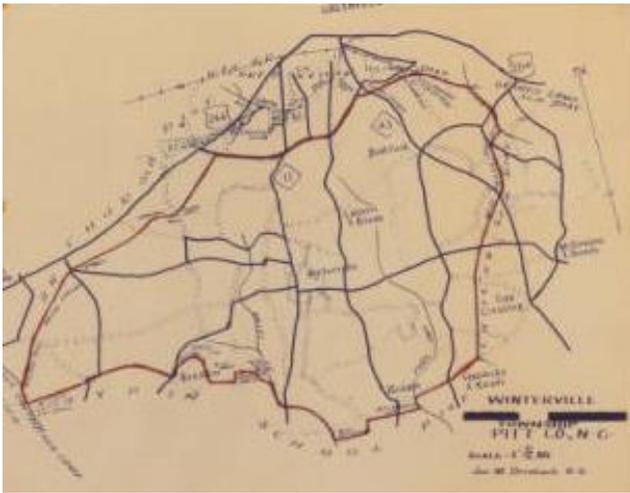

McCumber's Station/St. Augustine's Mission (1921 – 1949)
Formerly in Wilmington, Diocese of East Carolina
Detail of early streetcar line from Wilmington to Wrightsville Beach

Similar to Brooklyn Mission, Ethel Bernard started this work in 1921 in her parlor as "an effort at community betterment in the real Gospel way." McCumber Station was a historically black fishing community on Wrightsville Sound at the end of a streetcar line from downtown Wilmington. The mission was "a preaching station with a Sunday School and a Young People's Guild, but no other organizations." It had no suitable place for anything other than Evening Prayer and an occasional sermon. A mission of St. Mark's Parish, it experienced sporadic support, but after 1949 no longer appears in the journals.
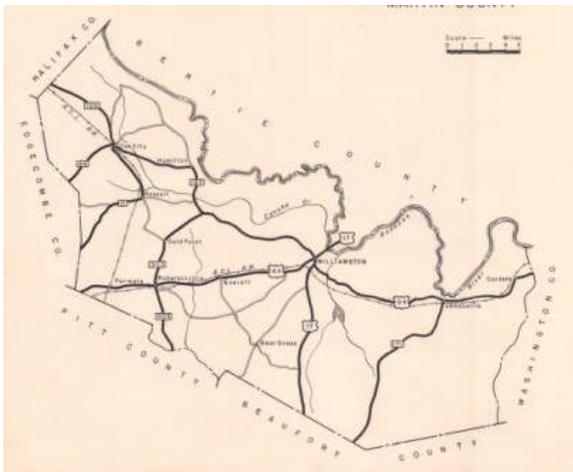

St. Thomas's Episcopal Church (1923 – 1927)
Formerly in Ayden, Diocese of East Carolina
Map of Pitt County, Federal Writers Project c. 1940

The "Negro Work" section of Bishop Darst's 1923 convention address notes the organization of the new St. Thomas's mission in Ayden. All three priests who served St. Thomas's also lived and served elsewhere. The Rev. E. S. Willett, the newly-appointed Field Secretary for Colored Work, was listed in charge for 1925, but he died before the end of that year. The annual "Statistics" reports show a building with 100 "sittings" by 1925, but a loss of confirmed members from twelve to six between 1924 and 1926. While not alone in member losses, this Mission was no longer listed in 1927.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (1925 – 1978)
Haddocks Crossroads, Pitt County, Diocese of East Carolina
Map of Winterville Township, Pitt County, 1953

In August 1924 C. R. Mills and his brother attended a service conducted by the Rev. John Belton Brown in Ayden. Afterwards they asked Brown to hold an Episcopal service at Haddocks Cross Roads. From this service St. Stephen's Mission had its start, with C. R. Mills listed as an early Warden. During 1925 a building that seated 180 and cost $1,000 was completed. The number of confirmed members remained steady around 40 during the 1930s and 1940s, then membership declined. On July 5, 1978, a deed was signed, conditional on the St. Stephen's property being used for religious purposes.
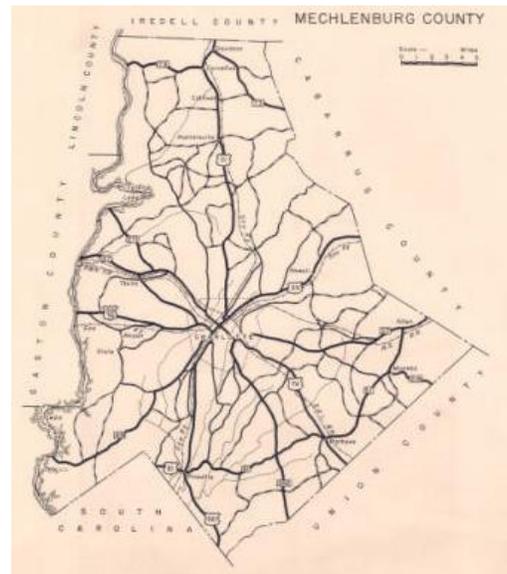

St. Ignatius Episcopal Church (1925 – 1938)
Formerly in Williamston, Diocese of East Carolina
Map of Martin County, Federal Writer's Project c. 1940

St. Ignatius began in 1925 as a preaching station with services by the local white rector, visiting black priests and the Field Secretary for Colored Work. The Rev. Augustus Hawkins served from 1926 to 1932. He reported in 1927, "We hope to be able to start on a building in the near future. I am still paying house rent. Our Woman's Auxiliary defray all of the Church's bills." The next year he said "our only hold back is a building. Our present place is not a desirable one." After Hawkins retired, St. Ignatius remained listed, but was dropped after 1938.
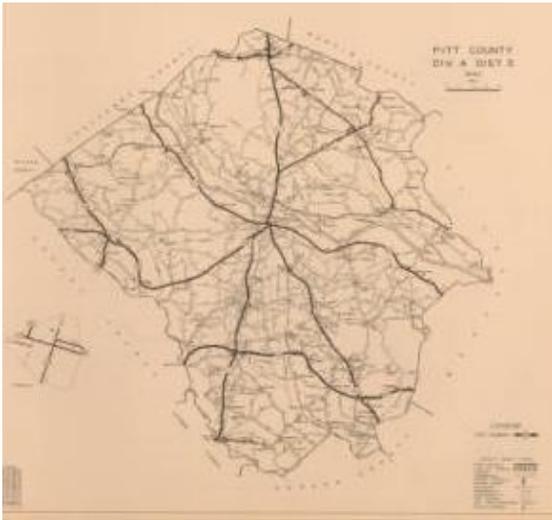

St. Saviour's Episcopal Church (1931-1944)
Formerly in Macclesfield, Diocese of North Carolina
Photo: Property Survey Records, Diocese of North Carolina c. 1938

In 1931 the Committee on the State of the Church praised the rector of St. Timothy's, Wilson, for "exceptional work" in reviving the work in Macclesfield, Edgecombe County: St. John's (white) and St. Saviour's (black). Assisting in this work were area laymen and Captain Mallette of the Church Army, who retired in 1932. The frame building was being used for Sunday School in 1934. A diocesan property survey in the late 1930s noted that St. Saviour's, two miles from Macclesfield, was "badly in need of repairs." St. Saviour's was an "Unorganized Mission" until 1937, then "Inactive" until disappearing after 1944.
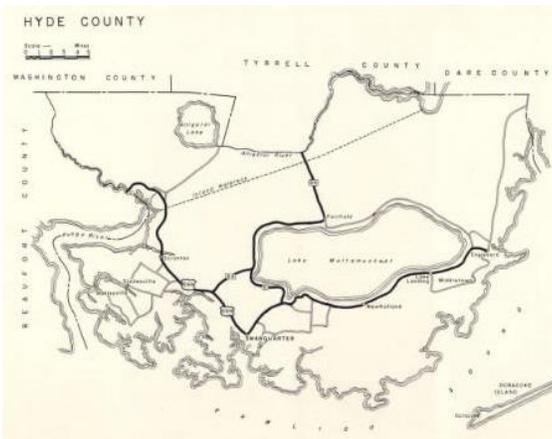

Good Hope Episcopal Mission (1931 –1948)
Formerly in Mecklenburg County, Diocese of North Carolina
Map of Mecklenburg County, Federal Writers' Project c. 1940

In 1930 the Rev. John Edwards added Good Hope Mission to his other work at Charlotte, Monroe and Statesville. Bishop Penick described this "country mission among the Negroes" as meeting in a private house, eight miles east of Charlotte, near Matthews. Under the leadership of Mrs. Ernest Ellison, a neighborhood resident and member of St. Peter's, Charlotte, the prospect of this new mission was encouraging. In his 1935 and 1940 reports Bishop Penick called it "Mt. Carmel Mission." In 1948 the last mention of Good Hope indicated that it "no longer exists and should be marked out of the Journal."

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church (1936 – 1959)
Formerly in Farmville, Diocese of East Carolina
Survey Map of Pitt County, 1940

St. Timothy's began with the Sunday School started by Vernon Earl Artis in 1936. The white rector of St. Paul's, Greenville, helped initially by offering Evensong and a sermon every Friday night. Without a suitable building to rent, Artis saw the continual moving about from dance hall to Masonic Hall to the "storefront" as the greatest handicap for growth. While church construction finally began in 1941, it took until Christmas Day 1948 for the first services to be held in the new building. Listed in its last decade as a mission of St. Augustine's, Kinston, St. Timothy's disappeared after 1959.

St. Thomas Episcopal Church (1938 – 1966)
Formerly in Sladesville, Diocese of East Carolina
Map of Hyde County, Federal Writers' Project c. 1940

Bishop Darst reported in 1939: "Since our last Convention, a new and promising Mission has been established in Sladesville, Hyde County." He had recently confirmed thirteen, and admitted this new mission "under the name of St. Thomas." Construction of a new church was underway between 1941 and 1945. Funding for the building projects at both Farmville and Sladesville was made possible "through the cooperation of the Diocese, the National Council and the people." Membership and activities declined in the 1950s. In 1966 the Standing Committee reported having given the Trustees approval to sell three parcels of property, including St. Thomas.

St. Barnabas's Episcopal Mission (1952 – 1968)
Formerly in Murphy, Diocese of Western North Carolina
Photo: Courtesy of Tom Bennett, Church of the Messiah, Murphy

The 1899 report for Murphy's Church of the Messiah noted that Mrs. Alfred Morgan "has carried on a mission among the colored people with gratifying results." Bishop Horner preached at this "Colored Mission" in 1903; he addressed the "Colored Sunday School" in 1905. Then nothing further appears. In 1952 a half-acre parcel on Peachtree Street was purchased for St. Barnabas', the last separate black mission to be established in the Diocese. Membership failed to grow and it closed in 1968. Proceeds from the 1974 property sale to the Department of Transportation were used to help fund Messiah's new parish hall.

Wade H. Chestnut Memorial Chapel (Summer, 1957 – present)
2649 Island Drive, North Topsail Beach, Diocese of East Carolina
Photo: Courtesy of Wade H. Chestnut III

Beginning in 1952 the vacationing Edwin Kirton, rector of St. Mark's, Wilmington, began holding cottage services at the Ocean City Beach home of his hosts, Caronell and Wade Chestnut, who helped develop this new "black beach." Services were so well attended that Bishop Wright approved the erection of a chapel. Originally called St. Mark's, the chapel's first service was June 30, 1957, during the Oceanside Episcopal Camp. Kirton was in charge until 1975, assisted by visiting priests who conducted services while enjoying a vacation. This arrangement continues today. Following Wade Chestnut's death in 1961, the chapel was named for him.