

Special Thanks to:

President Mary Dana Hinton, for her work to create this day and openness to listening to our efforts

The Committee for Leading Equity, Diversity, and Justice Day, for helping to make today possible

The members of The Working Group on Slavery and its Contemporary Legacies, for their efforts on these projects

The Hollins community, for their openness to share their stories

For More Information:

[The Working Group on Slavery and its Contemporary Legacies](#)

[Wilson Museum Virtual Exhibit](#)

[From Whence Cometh My Help: The African American Community at Hollins College](#)



The Legacy of Slavery at Hollins

Working Group Information Session
Leading Equity, Diversity, and Justice Day
October 23, 2020, 11:00 AM

About the Working Group

Our Mission

The working group is charged by the university's President with continuing to research and educate the public about Hollins University's historical connections to enslavement and the contemporary legacies of slavery on campus, within the neighboring historic Hollins community, and throughout the Greater Roanoke Valley. The group's membership is comprised of interested faculty, alumnae, staff, students, and citizens from the historic Hollins community. The working group is an integral part of the university's commitment to an open and honest dialogue about race and diversity on our campus and in our region of Southwest Virginia. It represents an honest and transparent examination of who we are as an institution and what we hope to represent going forward. The group's research highlights and memorializes the many contributions made by people of color both before and after emancipation in building a sustainable and thriving university community.

Hollins History: Stories from the Archive

Charles Lewis Cocke (1820-1901) ~ Trustees of Hollins University hired Mr. Cocke when Hollins fell into financial trouble. Cocke then went on to become the first president of Hollins, and is celebrated for founding Hollins college, now Hollins University. He rented many enslaved people to work at Hollins throughout the years and owned some himself.

George Plater Tayloe (1804-1897) ~ George Tayloe was a Virginia businessman, soldier, and legislator who also served as one of the original trustees of Hollins University. He was president of the Hollins Board of Trustees and contributed significant funds to the school throughout his tenure, which started in the 1840s and continued to his death in 1897. While living in Roanoke, census records indicate Tayloe had 61 slaves on his plantation.

William Carvin ~ William Carvin was granted about 900 acres of land in 1746, which was later bought and is now Hollins University. He is known to be the first settler in the Hollins area. Carvin's log homestead was turned into what is now known as Carvin House. Records also note he was called "Indian Killer" which relates to his involvement in Native genocide when settling in the area.

Clement Read Bolden (1846-1929) ~ Clem Bolden was brought to David Read's plantation as a young boy. He and his family were rented from Read by Charles Lewis Cocke around 1857. Clem then went on to be enlisted in the Confederate Army around age 17, where he travelled throughout Virginia as a teamster until April 9, 1865 when General Lee Surrendered to General Grant. After Emancipation, Bolden returned to Hollins as Head Gardener. In 1908, he purchased 10 acres of land, presumed to be near West Parking Lot, from the Moore Family. In 1925, he asked for help from Joseph Turner to begin receiving a pension for his service and received \$25 a year until his death in 1929.

Caesar Morton (1848/50-1929) ~ While it is unclear when Mr. Morton arrived at Hollins University, earliest records show his first appearance as 1869. He recalled having been here since the day Lee surrendered. It is thought that Morton was paid to pump air for the reed organ that Hollins acquired after the Civil War, for which he received \$19 for 5 months of work. While there is no evidence that Morton received formal education, all accounts agree that he was one of the “wittiest and cleverest people ever at Hollins.” Morton served as head waiter for over 40 years, having served at Hollins for 67, until his death in 1929.

Lewis Hunt (1885-1954) ~ Lewis Hunt came to Hollins with his grandmother who was most likely enslaved by the Coker family. His first name came from Coker’s middle name, which indicates a strong bond between the families. After some time tending sheep, cleaning Coker’s boots, pumping the organ in the chapel, and running to the top of Main to ring the bell for classes, Hunt became head waiter and gave himself the title “Dean of Servants.” He was a leading member of the Baptist Church formerly known as Lovely Zion. He and his wife, Rosalie, had nine children. Hunt retired from Hollins in 1950 after working at Hollins for over 50 years. He passed away in 1954.

The Washer Women ~ These women were listed as “washer women” or “laundresses” in university ledgers. Each washer woman’s entry also included the people she presumably did laundry for. Even though we have the names of these women, no other records have been found. Black women did this work at Hollins from pre-emancipation up until the 1940s when their services were replaced by steam laundry.

Ms. Mary Emma Bruce (1910-2010) ~ Emma Bruce lived in the Hollins Community and was a lifelong member of the First Baptist Church of Hollins. After graduating high school, Ms. Bruce took a position as a chemistry lab assistant at Hollins. While she was not allowed to attend Hollins as a student due to segregation laws, she would often sit in on classes and made all A’s on tests. She served this position for 46 years until her retirement in 1976. In 1976, Bruce received The Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award, being the first African American and first staff member to receive this honor. In 2004, she received an honorary degree from Hollins at the age of 95. She passed away in 2010, a month after her 100th birthday.

Cecelia Long (1970) ~ The first Black student to graduate from Hollins in 1970, Cecelia Long served on Hollins’ Alumnae Association Board of Directors and Board of Trustees. She is a recipient of the Hollins Medal. Ms. Long received an M.A. in social work from the University of Michigan. She was executive director at Marcy Manor, Inc., in Dayton, Ohio, and before that was a member of the General Secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women for the United Methodist Church. She also served as a corporate executive for Southwestern Bell Telephone Company.

Cynthia Hale (1975) ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale graduated from Hollins in 1975 and served on the Hollins Alumnae Association Board of Directors and joined the Hollins Board of Trustees in 2006. She was elected chair of the Committee on Student Affairs in 2012. Ms. Hale received a Master of Divinity degree from Duke University and a Doctor of Ministry from the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. In January 2010, she authored her first book, *I’m a Piece of Work: Sisters Shaped by God*.

Pamela Meade (1984) ~ Pamela Meade graduated from Hollins with a degree in Sociology in 1985, becoming the first graduate from the Hollins Community. She is the great-grandchild of Caesar Morton, who was discussed earlier in this program.

Ethel Morgan Smith (1990) ~ Ms. Ethel Smith graduated from Hollins' Creative Writing program. She is the author of the books *From Whence Cometh My Help: The African American Community at Hollins College* and *Reflections of the Other: Being Black in Germany*; also of articles and essays for such publications as the *New York Times*, *Callaloo*, and *African American Review*. She is a Professor Emeritus from West Virginia University in Morgantown; she has also taught as a Fulbright Scholar-Germany, Rockefeller Fellowship-Bellagio Italy, Visiting Artist-The American Academy in Rome, DuPont Fellow-Randolph Macon Women's College, Visiting Scholar-Women's Studies Research Center-Brandies University, The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and Bread Loaf Fellowship.

Brittney Flowers (2017) ~ Brittney Flowers, formerly the Research Fellow for the Heritage Committee, is a 2017 Hollins graduate where she majored in English with a double concentration in creative writing and multicultural literature with a minor in social justice. As a student she discovered her passion for uncovering the history of slavery at Hollins and those descended from it. For the past few years she has been building a family tree of those descendants and piecing together their family histories. Currently, this family tree has over 1,200 people in it. She is presently teaching in Roanoke and plans to attend graduate school at a future date.

Ms. Esther H. Vassar ~ Esther Vassar was the first black administrator at Hollins. She was Assistant Dean of Students and a lecturer in English from 1972-1973. She received a BA from Howard University and a M. Ed. from the University of Virginia.

Ms. Judith Hunter ~ Judith Hunter was the first full time black faculty member at Hollins. She served as an Assistant professor of social work from 1973-1974. She is a graduate of Fisk University and received her Master's degree from New York University School of Social Work.

Dr. Thomas Jefferson Anderson ~ Dr. TJ Anderson is the first tenured black professor at Hollins university. He is a current Professor of English and has worked at Hollins since 1998. He received a B.A. from University of Massachusetts, a M.F.A. from the University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. from S.U.N.Y. Binghamton.



Members of the Hollins community