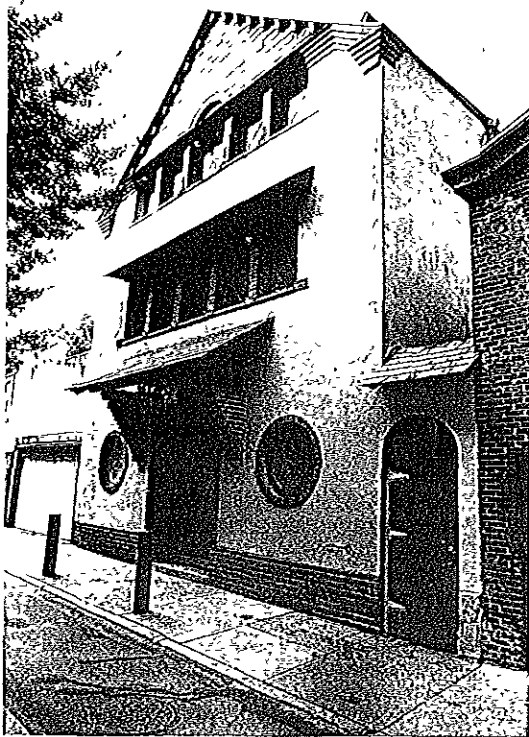


X. Cornerstone of St. Paul's, Philadelphia



XI. The Mask and Wig Club, 1996  
(formerly St. Paul's, Philadelphia)

*Jehu Jones (1786–1852)*  
*The First African American Lutheran Minister*

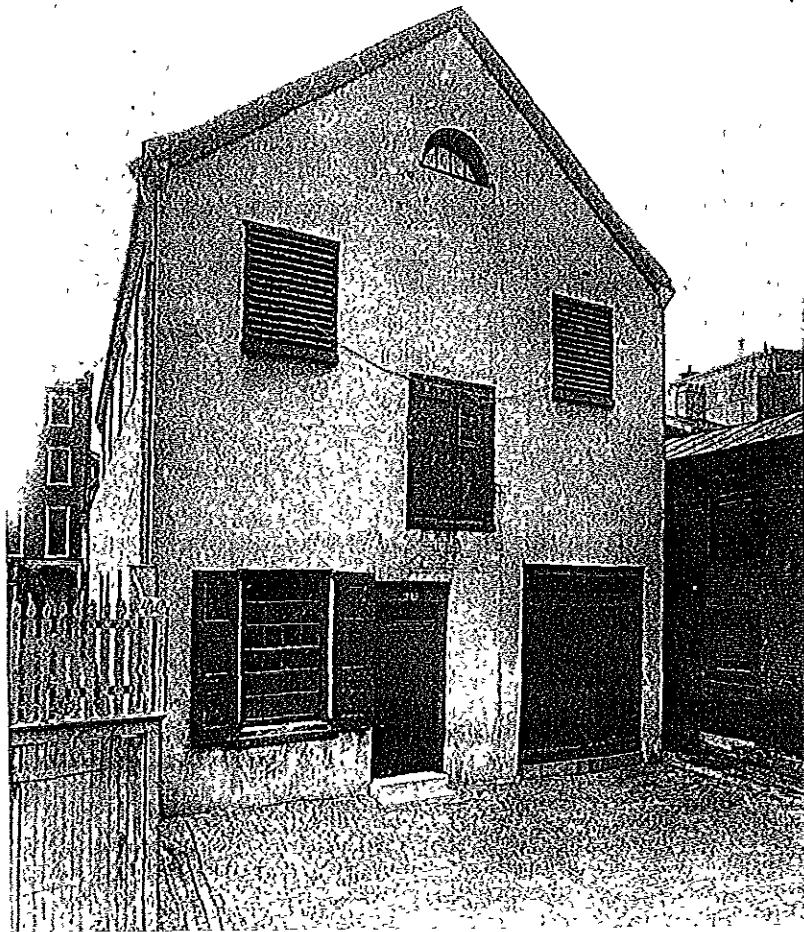
by KARL E. JOHNSON, JR. AND  
JOSEPH A. ROMEO

THE STORY OF REVEREND JEHU JONES, the Lutheran church's first African American minister, is little known to the general public, and indeed, even to many scholars, whether specialized in Philadelphia history, Lutheran history, or Black history. After his ordination in 1832, Jones devoted himself to missionary work among urban Blacks in the antebellum North. Philadelphia was his primary field of labor. In 1834 he erected St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, the home of the first independent African American Lutheran congregation, of which he was pastor. Failing to receive needed financial support from the Synod of Pennsylvania, Jones lost the church in 1839, but continued to engage in missionary activities until the end of his life.<sup>1</sup>

Jehu Jones was born in Charleston, South Carolina, about the year 1786. Virtually nothing is known of his formative years. His father, Jehu Jones, Sr., was a mulatto slave belonging to a white tailor named Christopher Rogers. Starting out in his master's trade, Jones, Sr. became, by dint of industry, part of the elite of Charleston's black community. In 1798 he purchased his freedom from Rogers, and later that same year he became a member of the exclusive Brown Fellowship Society (organized 1790), one of the earliest beneficial societies in the country organized by and for free blacks, as well as of St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church, where he purchased a pew in the east end of the north gallery. In 1813 he bought a house and lot across from the City Square, which he turned into one of the city's most fashionable hotels. Upon his death in 1833, he left an estate valued in excess of \$40,000.<sup>2</sup>

Jehu Jones, Jr. entered into his majority following in his father's footsteps. He was a tailor by occupation. In 1808 he became a member of the Brown Fellowship Society. In 1813 and again in

1815 he brought his children to St Philip's for baptism. But shortly after the Lutheran Church of German Protestants (now called St. John's Lutheran Church) opened its doors to blacks in 1816, Jones and his wife, Elizabeth, became members. From 1818, when the vestry allowed that the back pews in the southeast and northeast corners of the gallery could be rented out and occupied by blacks, until 1832, when he left Charleston, Jones rented the pew in the southeast corner. During these years he and his wife had their children baptized in the church by the pastor, John Bachman.<sup>3</sup>



XII. St. Paul's, Philadelphia, in the 1890s

In December 1831, several of the leaders of Charleston's African American community met to consider emigration to Liberia under the sponsorship of the American Colonization Society. (Founded in December 1816 with the aim of settling free blacks in Africa, the ACS had established the colony of Liberia on the west coast of Africa in 1822 and offered incentives to free blacks who were willing to emigrate.) "After careful inquiry and mature reflection, a number of them resolved, in the spirit of Christian fellowship, and firm reliance upon Divine Providence, to emigrate with their families to Liberia."<sup>4</sup> Jones himself authored an essay in favor of emigration to Liberia—"that country which holds out to us, and to our children, forever, protection, in life, liberty, and property."<sup>5</sup> By his own account, the ACS offered him \$600 per year for his services to assist in teaching in a school, and \$200 per year to be assistant editor of the *Liberia Herald*, in addition to the regular inducements, namely, one town lot each for himself, his wife, and each of his children, and a farm in the country.<sup>6</sup>

Many of the emigrants (about 145 from Charleston) were "exemplary and very active and useful christians."<sup>7</sup> A number of them were teachers of religion, and Jones himself had practice in giving lectures to his fellow black Lutherans. Hoping to build on this base, Jones sought an appointment as a missionary. Bachman sent Jones north to present himself before the ministers of the New York Synod as a candidate for ordination. Impressed with the strong testimonials from Bachman and other gentlemen of Charleston, the ministers examined Jones and found him a suitable candidate. Although ordinations were usually performed at the ministerial session of the annual synodical meeting, Jones' impending departure for Liberia demanded urgent action. On October 24, 1832, in St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, in the city of New York, Jehu Jones, Jr., was ordained as a minister and missionary of the Lutheran church. He was then about 46 years old.<sup>8</sup>

After his ordination, Jones returned to Charleston, but was soon arrested and jailed under a state law prohibiting free blacks from entering the state. Technically, the law only allowed for the jailing of black seamen while their ships were in port; all others were supposed to be given fifteen days to leave the state before

penalties applied. Nonetheless, the judge told Jones that he must spend one night in jail or leave Charleston immediately. Jones chose the latter. After stopping at his home to say good-bye to his wife and children (the youngest just three days old), he departed Charleston in haste.<sup>9</sup>

Exiled from his native city and unable to join the group of Charlestonians about to embark for Liberia, Jones sought some other way to reach the colony. He contacted Ralph R. Gurley, secretary of the American Colonization Society, in Washington, D.C., and through a series of referrals made his way once again to New York. One of his contacts wrote on Jones' behalf to Benjamin B. Wisner of Boston, the newly appointed secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Wisner's response must have left Jones dejected: he wrote that "he did not want an old and ignorant negro; he wanted a young gentleman of education."<sup>10</sup> Jones returned to Washington and informed Gurley of the situation. Gurley reimbursed him fifteen dollars for expenses and told him that as funds were low, he could do nothing else for him, but would contact him if things improved.<sup>11</sup>

Since Jones could not return to Charleston, Gurley suggested that he choose Philadelphia or New York as his new residence. Jones went back to New York, where he sought the help of William D. Strobel, pastor of St. James' Church. Strobel, also from Charleston, had known Jones "from my infancy," and was one of the ministers present at his ordination. Jones considered him a friend. Strobel contacted Samuel S. Schmucker, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Strobel laid out the events that had transpired, gave his favorable opinion on the prospects of establishing a Lutheran church among the colonists in Liberia, and asked Schmucker what encouragement he might offer Jones to help him accomplish this goal. Schmucker forwarded the letter to John G. Morris, of Baltimore, editor of the *Lutheran Observer*, accompanied by a challenge grant for its readers: he pledged \$10 per year for four years to support Jones, provided twenty-five others would do the same. Morris published Strobel's letter and Schmucker's proposal, along with his own appeal for generosity, but the appeal fell on deaf ears. Schmucker then advised

that Jones be retained for missionary work in the United States. From this point on, Jones focused his attention solely on a domestic ministry.<sup>12</sup>

In January 1833, Jones was reunited with his family in New York. Upon some reflection, he decided to settle with them in Philadelphia. Arriving there in February 1833, Jones presented his letters of recommendation to Philip F. Mayer, pastor of St. John's English Lutheran Church. Years later, Jones recalled that first meeting: Mayer tried to talk Jones out of pursuing a ministry in the Lutheran church, arguing that Lutherans would hate him because of his color. He recommended that Jones join one of the other communions—like the Methodists, Presbyterians, or Baptists—that already had black clergy. But Jones was not to be deterred; he was Lutheran, he countered, and could be nothing but Lutheran. His nine children had been baptized in the Lutheran church in Charleston, and he and his wife had been members of the church for many years. Mayer must have realized that Jones would not be put off, and the two finally came to an understanding.<sup>13</sup>

In June 1833, the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania convened in Pottsgrove, Pennsylvania, and Jones attended. During the first session, Jones was introduced and admitted to a seat. Two days later, during the fifth session, the synod took up the question "shall Missionaries be employed this year and in what part?" in answer to which it was

*Resolved:* that Mr. Jehu Jones, be recognized by us as a regularly ordained Minister and that he be appointed to labour as a Missionary for four months among the coloured people in Philadelphia under the direction of our Ministers there.<sup>14</sup>

Jones returned to Philadelphia and set to work. Three months later he reported that his preaching was well attended, his efforts had been blessed, and that prospects were good that he would be able to collect a Lutheran congregation among the blacks of the city.<sup>15</sup>

By January 1834 he had succeeded in this enterprise. He then set his sights on establishing a permanent church building for his congregation. There were a number of "African" churches in Phil-

adelphia at that time, including Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist congregations. But black Lutherans did not yet have their own church. They were required—like blacks at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church—some forty years earlier—to worship in the segregated pews of the established white churches.<sup>16</sup> Jones wanted to change this: he wanted to erect a church for the African American Lutherans of Philadelphia, one they could call their own. On February 16, 1834, his congregation passed the following resolutions:

*Resolved*, That the congregation endeavor to build a suitable house to be dedicated to the worship of Almighty God.

*Resolved*, That our Pastor [sic], the Rev Jehu Jones, be requested to visit the benevolent and endeavor to obtain such assistance as may be necessary to carry the above resolution into effect<sup>17</sup>

The resolutions were published in the *Lutheran Observer*, along with an appeal by Jones for assistance and a statement by Philip F. Mayer and Charles R. Demme, in which they attested to Jones' character and intentions, recommended the project, and solicited support for it.<sup>18</sup>

In obedience to the resolution of his congregation, Jones departed on a fund-raising tour in the spring of 1834. Writing from Baltimore in April, after having visited churches in Gettysburg and Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and Hagerstown and Frederick, Maryland, he thanked those churches for allowing him to preach and to take up collections for his congregation's building program. But Jones did more than just solicit donations. While in Gettysburg he organized a small congregation of African American Lutherans who were to meet every Wednesday evening for prayer, Scripture, and hymns. In Chambersburg he did much the same. In May 1834 Jones sent a letter to the Synod of Pennsylvania, then meeting in Reading, Pennsylvania, in which he thanked them for having appointed him a missionary to his brethren. He reported that, since his appointment at their last meeting, he had visited 2,781 families, of which 163 were sick, and that he had founded three new congregations. The synod was gratified with these results.<sup>19</sup>

On June 7, 1834, Jones purchased two adjacent lots on the west side of Quince Street, below Spruce, on which to build the proposed church. The lots sold for \$375 each, which Jones paid for with a seven-year mortgage executed the same day for the full purchase price. On June 26 the cornerstone of the church was laid, Revs. Philip F. Mayer of Philadelphia and Benjamin Keller of Germantown officiating. The cornerstone, still visible today, [see the photograph, p. 424] was inscribed *St. Paul's E. L. Church 1834*. Work on the building progressed quickly during the summer, and by October a roof covered the two and a half story brick structure with basement. In June 1835 Jones sent a letter to the Synod of Pennsylvania, then meeting in Germantown, informing them that the church had been completed. He asked the synod for a loan to help defray expenses associated with the construction, but help was not forthcoming. Over the course of the ensuing year Jones made other fund-raising tours, travelling as far as Alexandria, Virginia, and Portland, Maine, in an effort to collect contributions. On May 1, 1836, the church was formally dedicated, Revs. Philip F. Mayer and Jacob Medtart officiating.<sup>20</sup>

Like several other African American congregations in Philadelphia, the congregation of St. Paul's was quite small, officially numbering only about ten members.<sup>21</sup> (Before the Civil War, in most Christian congregations in the United States, many more attended worship than were actual voting members.) Despite its size, the congregation sought active involvement with both the wider Lutheran community and Philadelphia's black community. On more than one occasion, the elders requested that congregational resolutions be forwarded to the *Lutheran Observer* for publication.<sup>22</sup> Several church members also attended the annual councils of the Philadelphia Association for the Moral and Mental Improvement of the People of Color, or served on this organization's Board of Education.<sup>23</sup>

Not only were the members of St. Paul's small in number, they were also small in financial resources. A comparison of the mean wealth of members of the several African-American churches reveals that as a denomination the Lutherans were financially the poorest: the mean wealth of the members of St. Paul's was less than

\$182.00.<sup>24</sup> This factor, along with the small size of the congregation, was the primary reason for St. Paul's chronic financial difficulties, and probably the primary burden borne by Jones during the years of its existence.

By the time the church was dedicated in May 1836, Jones had collected and paid \$1400 towards the building, an indication of the success he had had in soliciting funds for the project. But another \$2000 of debt still remained, and the creditors were starting to line up. A review of Philadelphia District Court dockets reveals that three claims had been filed against Jones or the church by this date. The earliest was the claim of William G. Lybrand, filed March 25, 1835, \$345.60 for bricks furnished; next was the claim of John and William Crean, filed May 9, 1835, \$1143.23 for lumber furnished; and most recent was the claim of Thomas Bellinger, filed March 2, 1836, \$189.13 for labor and materials furnished. The largest creditor, the Creans, brought suit against Jones in December 1835. In January 1836, the partners were awarded \$1195.80 in damages, and a writ was issued to seize the church to satisfy the judgment. Jones worked out an agreement with them, and the writ was stayed, but the congregation had reason to remain anxious.<sup>25</sup> Benjamin Kurtz, editor of the *Lutheran Observer*, appealed to readers for aid. "Their creditors, if they should feel so disposed, may hereafter interrupt their devotions and take away their sanctuary from them and their children, unless timely aid is extended to them."<sup>26</sup> At the end of May Jones wrote a letter to the Synod of Pennsylvania, about to meet in Easton, Pennsylvania, in which he asked for a loan. The committee to which the letter was referred believed it "impractical for the synod to accede to his wishes."<sup>27</sup> The synod accepted this report.

Between May 1836 and May 1837, the church's financial situation worsened dramatically. In August, Bellinger brought suit against Jones, and in September was awarded \$93.41 in damages; a writ was issued for the same in November, but was then stayed. In December the Creans pressed for payment of \$824.00, the balance due on the judgment in their favor. Only by securing a loan from Dr. Caspar W. Pennock and several of "the benevolent and philanthropic citizens of Philadelphia" did Jones meet the demand. In

March James Gibbons filed a mechanic's lien, \$107.50 for work and materials, and immediately brought suit to collect on it. In April, on a positive note, Jones was finally able to satisfy the judgment in favor of Bellinger.<sup>28</sup>

Throughout this difficult period, Jones enjoyed the support of his congregation. At a quarterly meeting of the congregation in January 1837, Jones reported on the loan which he had secured to repay the Creans. Afterwards,

The Chauinan having made some remarks on the zeal, vigilance and activity with which the affairs of the church have been conducted under the pastoral charge of Jehu Jones, it was

*Resolved*, That he deserves thanks, and that he should continue to act as agent; and should his appeal for assistance be unsuccessful in the U States, that he be requested forthwith to visit the Lutheran and other churches in Europe, and that our destitute condition and awkward situation as a part of the flock of Jesus Christ, be laid before them.<sup>29</sup>

In May 1837 Jones turned once again to the Synod of Pennsylvania, then meeting in Lancaster, this time making his appeal for aid in person. In the course of its deliberations, the synod learned that the title to the church was in Jones' name, and this became an issue of great concern. Jones proposed to convey the church to trustees, appointed by the different Lutheran churches of Philadelphia, for the use of the congregation. He explained that he had with him a document to this effect, drawn up in 1834, at the same time as the deeds, bond, and mortgage. According to Jones, Rev. Philip F. Mayer opposed this plan, and argued instead that Jones should convey the church to the synod unconditionally. A committee was appointed to confer with Jones on the matter, or rather to persuade him to agree to Mayer's plan. Jones agreed in principle, but refused to convey the property then and there, contending that he had no authority from his congregation to do so. After the committee made its report, the synod resolved that \$100.00 should be paid over to the congregation "as soon as said right and title shall be transferred, to the satisfaction of the officers of the Synod."<sup>30</sup>

Returning to Philadelphia, Jones was pleased to find that his

former pastor, John Bachman, was in the city on a visit. Bachman appears to have helped resolve the issue of title to the church. Whereas at the synod meeting Mayer had opposed the conveyance of the church to trustees, he soon supported the proposal, and told Bachman that if Jones would do this, he would secure him a missionary appointment for the balance of his life. Jones had no objection to conveying the property on these terms, and proceeded to execute a deed conveying the property to Messrs. Christian Schrack, Martin Buehler, and Joseph Diver, in trust for the congregation. In a letter to the Synod of Pennsylvania dated June 6, 1837, less than two weeks after the close of the synod meeting, Revs. John Bachman, Jacob Medtart, Philip F. Mayer, and Charles R. Demme indicated that Jones had transferred the title; that the church was in due time to be incorporated as a Lutheran church in connection with the synod; that Jones was designated the pastor of St. Paul's; and that the trustees had promised to use their best efforts to liquidate the debt of the church as soon as possible. They went on to note that Jones had been successful in raising funds and attracting members, but that the congregation could not pay the remaining debt of \$1300.00 by itself. They hoped and believed, however, that the Lutheran public would contribute generously to this charitable cause.<sup>31</sup>

Unfortunately, Jones' financial burdens were not lifted by the transfer of the church to the trustees. Instead, "Those gentlemen paid nothing, and the creditors continued to press me."<sup>32</sup> In June 1837, Gibbons was awarded \$94.53 in damages in his suit against Jones; in September a writ was issued for the same, but was temporarily stayed. In December, Lybrand, whose claim dated back nearly three years, finally brought suit to collect on it, and in January 1838 was awarded \$310.44 in damages. In March 1838, a new writ was issued to collect on the judgment which Gibbons was awarded, and again it was stayed.<sup>33</sup> In April, Jones dispatched a plaintive letter to the *Lutheran Observer*:

The debts of the church are still due, and I have no body as yet to second my humble efforts to obtain aid. Notwithstanding I struggle hard and cry aloud, we have up hill work of it. I have been cast down

for nearly a year, but am not discomfited. I believe God is on our side.<sup>34</sup>

He went on to state that some friends were working to hold a fair about the middle of May for the benefit the church, under the superintendence of Mrs. Mary Rex, a member of St. Matthew's Church. He invited the public to send donations to her store.

In May 1838 bad luck and bad timing converged to force the cancellation of the fair that was planned. On May 17, a lawless crowd stormed Pennsylvania Hall, the newly opened meeting place for abolitionists built by the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, and set it ablaze. On the two nights following, the riotous mob directed their attention to the city's African American homes and institutions. During this time, Mrs. Rex was encouraged to sell the goods that were intended for the fair at private sale instead. The sale brought in \$30.00, but Jones felt that the items would have fetched more if the fair had been rescheduled. Jones turned to Rev. Mayer, who promised to see that the debts would be paid if Jones would remove the organ from St. Paul's and have it returned to the builder. Jones complied, but again he was disappointed. Not long after, at the urging of the trustees, he also agreed to give up half of his \$100 annual salary as missionary to meet one of the church's pressing debts. Although he was told that "it would cause Lutherans to respect me very highly, and I might continue my efforts, and succeed with my church," Jones found instead that "Soon after that last act was done the Trustees cut loose from us."<sup>35</sup>

In June 1838 the Synod of Pennsylvania met in Philadelphia. A committee was assigned to review the documents relating to St. Paul's Church, including the letter of support from Rev. Bachman and others, the transfer of title to the trustees, and a complete list of the congregation's debts. By this time, the debt was considerable: the total current unpaid expenses through May 12 amounted to \$1524.28, not including the \$750.00 principal balance on the mortgage.<sup>36</sup> The synod accepted the committee's report, and it

*Resolved:* that the measure relating to this congregation devised at the last annual session in Lancaster, be put into execution as soon as pos-

sible, and that this congregation be recommended to the whole church for aid.<sup>37</sup>

But the synod did not pay the \$100 it had promised the year before, and the Lutheran public did not provide the assistance needed to keep the creditors at bay. In July, a writ was issued on the judgment that Lybrand had obtained, and in November, a new writ was issued on the judgment that the Creans had obtained—an indication that Jones had defaulted on the loan he had received from Dr. Pennock and others. On each writ the church property was officially levied upon. On December 26, the court ordered the sheriff to sell the church to satisfy the judgment for Lybrand.<sup>38</sup>

Having given up hope that the trustees would provide a solution to the church's financial problems, Jones turned to non-Lutheran organizations for assistance. He sent letters to the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society and even to the American Colonization Society. Jones' letter to the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society is not preserved, but there is no reason to believe that it was much different from the one which he wrote the ACS. In it Jones described the events of 1837-38 with respect to his dealings with the trustees of the church, and solicited aid to meet a current demand for \$350, even going so far as to ask if the ACS would purchase the church and give the congregation two or three years to repay. But neither the ACS nor the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society provided any kind of financial assistance to the troubled congregation.<sup>39</sup>

The sheriff, meanwhile, was unable to effect the sale of the church within the time frame allotted by the court. But on February 1, 1839, the court again ordered a sheriff's sale, this time to satisfy the judgment for the Creans, and on March 4 the church was sold to one George Witman for the sum of \$950.00, subject to the original mortgage.<sup>40</sup>

Though the building was gone, St. Paul's was still a congregation and Jones was still its pastor. In May 1839, still determined to find a permanent home for the congregation, Jones wrote a letter to the Synod of Pennsylvania, then meeting in Allentown, in which he informed them that the church had been sold "through the neglect of its Friends," and reminded them of the promise which

they had made in Lancaster in 1837. If the synod would redeem their promise to raise \$1300, he told them, he would "make arrangements as soon as possible to have another place of worship for our Congregation, who although cast down, under God is not destroyed."<sup>41</sup> The synod held itself bound to pay \$100 towards the outstanding debt, but only if others were found who were willing to make up the balance for the redemption of the church. Informed of this decision, Jones wrote a letter to the convention of the General Synod which met in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, the following month, but to no avail.<sup>42</sup> The sources are generally silent on Jones' efforts after this point in time.<sup>43</sup>

In 1839 Jones was about fifty-three years old. It had been only seven years since his ordination. He had lost his church and the support of the synod, but he remained Lutheran, as did his congregation. While some members of the congregation may have returned to the churches where they had formerly worshiped, there is evidence to suggest that Jones kept the congregation together, and that he remained involved in the ministry, albeit without synodical approval. As late as 1851 he could proudly assert, "I continue to preach to the colored congregation of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Seventh-street, below Lombard."<sup>44</sup>

In 1849 Jones wrote to the Synod of New York, asking aid to establish a Lutheran congregation among African Americans in New York City. Despite his years of faithful service as a missionary, the New York Synod denied his request and instead saw fit to pass censure on Jones. A synod committee prepared a report that called his entire ministry into question. First, it said, he was ordained with a view to his laboring as a missionary in Liberia, but he did not go. Second, he tried to establish a Lutheran congregation among the African Americans of Philadelphia, but "he utterly failed, and by his inefficiency and general deportment, forfeited whatever confidence the Church had reposed in his Christian character and integrity." Third, although never in connection with any Lutheran ministerium, he represented himself as a Lutheran missionary, and "imposed himself upon the Churches, making collections of money, and appropriating them to his own personal use." The committee ended its report, saying, "we deem it our duty to



warn the Christian public against his misrepresentations and impositions." The synod adopted the committee report.<sup>45</sup> In 1851, Jones requested to be heard by the synod at its annual meeting, to answer the charges against him, but the synod refused. In his own defense, Jones published a small pamphlet, *The New-York Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Rev. Jehu Jones*, in which he laid out the facts, from his ordination in 1832 until his abandonment by the trustees in 1838.<sup>46</sup>

The synod's assessment of Jones' character in 1849—more than ten years after the period that they considered—is in sharp contrast to the contemporaneous endorsements that Jones received almost from the start of his labors. For seven years the *Lutheran Observer* reported on Jones' activities. Year after year Jones reported in person or by letter to the Synod of Pennsylvania. The ministers who reviewed his congregation's financial situation in 1837 and again in 1838 never questioned his integrity. In August 1838, at the height of Jones' financial woes, the author of a letter to the *Lutheran Observer* described Jones' character in positive terms. He noted that Jones could have become a Methodist minister, like a majority of his race, but became instead the first Lutheran to preach the gospel among African Americans; that he collected a congregation and built a church; and that despite lack of funding, he remained true to his calling. Aware that Jones had used the columns of the *Observer* to request assistance in liquidating the debt on St. Paul's, the author expressed his disappointment that little, if any, money was forthcoming for that purpose, and made a new appeal for aid:

He has asked for our assistance—and will *we* refuse that assistance which it is in our power to bestow? Will *we* close the doors of our benevolent feelings against that appeal to our generosity? . . . And will we who profess to be Lutherans in deed and truth, suffer this congregation to be pressed down by debt which it is not in their power to pay? The idea is preposterous! . . . Cannot then every minister, layman, or pious female in our church, who is sensible of the claims of this appeal on our benevolence, take up a collection for his congregation, or among the circle of his or her friends who know the luxury of doing good? Let him state the case candidly before them, and if that debt is not liquidated, I have greatly mistaken the character of the Lutheran Church.<sup>47</sup>

There can be no doubt but that the synod was mistaken in its assessment of Jones' character, just as the author of the above appeal was mistaken in his assessment of "the character of the Lutheran Church."

In the summer of 1850 Jones was living in Philadelphia with his wife, Elizabeth, his youngest daughter, Mary Jane, and his son-in-law, John P. Williams. By 1852 they had moved across the river to Centreville, New Jersey (now a part of Camden). Rev. Jehu Jones died on September 28, 1852, at the age of 66, and the funeral proceeded from the residence of his son-in-law in Centreville two days later. Elizabeth Jones survived her husband by thirty-four years and died in Philadelphia on October 9, 1886, at the age of ninety-five.<sup>48</sup>

Jones should be remembered, above all, for his unflagging commitment to his missionary calling and his steadfast faith in the teachings of the Lutheran church. His zeal resulted in the formation of the first independent African-American Lutheran congregation, and in the erection of St. Paul's, the first African American Lutheran church. Ignored by the Synod of Pennsylvania after the unfortunate loss of St. Paul's Church in 1839, he demonstrated the strength of his convictions by his continued preaching and missionary activities in the city and suburbs of Philadelphia. It is encouraging to note that the church is finally beginning to acknowledge Jones' pioneering achievements. In September 1995, the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia commemorated his life and works at a service of Holy Communion, marking the first time that his contribution to the church was celebrated.<sup>49</sup> If his story is told loudly enough and often enough, perhaps we may one day see the Lutheran church sponsor a national celebration in honor of Jehu Jones, its first African American minister.

#### NOTES

1. The outline of Jones' public life is contained in an autobiographical statement which he published near the end of his life. Jehu Jones, *The New-York Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Rev. Jehu Jones* (Philadelphia, 1851), hereafter cited as Jones, *Rev. Jehu Jones*



Studies of Jones' activities include Douglas C. Strange [i.e. Stange], "The Trials and Tribulations of One Jehu Jones, Jr., the First Ordained Negro Lutheran Clergyman in America," *Una Sancta* 24/2 (Pentecost 1967): 52-55; Jeff G. Johnson, *Black Christians The Untold Lutheran Story* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 120, 130-37, and Karl E. Johnson, Jr., "Jehu Jones, Jr. and St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church: A Revisionist View," *The Periodical* (Lutheran Historical Society of Eastern Pennsylvania) 40/1 (April 1995): 1-6.

2. On Jones, Sr., see South Carolina Department of Archives and History, *Jehu Jones Free Black Entrepreneur*, Public Programs Document Packet, no. 1; Harriet P. and Albert Simons, "The William Burrows House of Charleston," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 70/3 (July 1969): 169-74; Robert L. Harris, Jr., "Charleston's Free Afro-American Elite The Brown Fellowship Society and the Humane Brotherhood," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 82/4 (Oct. 1981): 308-9, "List of Persons Admitted Members" in *Rules and Regulations of the Brown Fellowship Society, Established at Charleston, South Carolina, November 1, 1790* (Charleston: J. B. Nixon, 1844); and St. Philip's Episcopal Church, *Minute Book*, 14 June 1816, referring to prior minutes dated 25 March 1798 (microfilm, Genealogical Society of Utah).

3. "List of Persons Admitted Members" in *Rules and Regulations of the Brown Fellowship Society*; Elise Pinckney, ed., *Register of St. Philip's Church, Charleston, South Carolina, 1810 through 1822* (National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of South Carolina, 1973), 15, 32; Johnson, *Black Christians*, 115-16; St. John's Lutheran Church, *Minute Book*, 1818-1829, 10 Dec 1818, idem, *Pew Holders, 1818-1823, 1823-1826, 1826-1836* (microfilm, Genealogical Society of Utah); Jones, *Rev. Jehu Jones*, 3.

4. American Colonization Society, *The Sixteenth Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States; with an Appendix* (Washington: James C. Dunn, 1833), 13. See also *African Repository*, and *Colonial Journal* 8 (May 1832): 74-77.

5. *African Repository*, and *Colonial Journal* 8 (October 1832): 239-43.

6. South Carolina, General Assembly Petitions, 1840, No. 47, published in South Carolina Department of Archives and History, *Jones: Time of Crisis, Time of Change*, Public Programs Document Packet, no. 2, 15-16, 19-20.

7. *African Repository*, and *Colonial Journal* 8 (June 1832): 128.

8. American Colonization Society, *Sixteenth Annual Report*, 13-14, letter from William D. Strobel to Samuel S. Schmucker, published in *Lutheran Observer*, 1 February 1833; *Minutes of the Thirty-Eighth Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of the State of New-York, and Adjacent Parts; Convened in St. Matthew's Church, in the City of New-York, on the 7th, and Succeeding Days of September, A. D. 1833* (New York: Henry Ludwig, 1833), 6, 17; Jones, *Rev. Jehu Jones*, 1-2.

9. Jones, *Rev. Jehu Jones*, 2, *Lutheran Observer*, 1 December 1832.

10. Jones, *Rev. Jehu Jones*, 2.

11. Jones, *Rev. Jehu Jones*, 2. Jones would have faced an uncertain fate had he been able to emigrate to Liberia: a letter written from the colony in 1833 reported, "The Charleston people continue to die . . . The sight of Coffins and their tenants are so common & deaths so numerous . . . that one loses those impressions of awe & solemnity of feeling with which the sight of a corpse has inspired one in America." See Julie Winch, *Philadelphia's Black Elite: Activism, Accommodation, and the Struggle for Autonomy, 1787-1848* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 43.

12. Jones, *Rev. Jehu Jones*, 2, *Lutheran Observer*, 1 February 1833.

13. Jones, *Rev. Jehu Jones*, 3.

14. *Minutes of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania, Assembled at Pottsgrove, Montgomery County, from the 2nd to the 6th of June, A.D. 1833* (Sumnytown: Enos Benner, 1833), 6, 14-15.

15. *Lutheran Observer*, 7 September 1833.

16. *Lutheran Observer*, 4 January 1833 [i.e. 1834]; Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom. The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1988), 260. In 1844, the two outside pews in the northwest gallery of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church were set apart "exclusively for colored persons, attending the church"; see St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, *Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 1828-1846*, 30 December 1844, Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia.

17. *Lutheran Observer*, 1 March 1834.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Lutheran Observer*, 2 May 1834; *Minutes of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania, Convened at Reading, Berks County, from the 25th to the 28th of May, A.D. 1834* (Sumnytown: Enos Benner, 1834), 11.

20. RG 5, Recorder of Deeds, Deed Book A M 50 438-39, 439-40, Mortgage Book A M 19 555-57 (microfilm), City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, City Archives; *Lutheran Observer*, 18 July 1834; letter from Jehu Jones, 15 June 1835, Synodical Correspondence Files of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, 1835, Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia; *Minutes of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania, Convened at Germantown, from the 13th to the 18th of June, in the Year of Our Lord, 1835* (Sumnytown: Enos Benner, 1835), 16, 18, *Lutheran Observer*, 6, 13, 20 May 1836.

21. St. Paul's reported 10 communicants, annual expenses of \$120, property valued at \$3000, and encumbrances of \$1000, see Pennsylvania Abolition Society, *The Present State and Condition of the Free People of Color, of the City of Philadelphia and Adjoining Districts, as Exhibited by the Report of a Committee of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, etc., Read First Month (Jan) 5th, 1838* (Philadelphia: The Society, 1838), 32.

22. *Lutheran Observer*, 1 March 1834, 20 May 1836, 3 February 1837.

23. Philadelphia Association for the Moral and Mental Improvement of the People of Color, *Minutes of Proceedings at the Council of the Philadelphia Association for the Moral and Mental Improvement of the People of Color, June 5th-9th, 1837* (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Gunn, 1837), 5, 12; "Pencil Pusher Points," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 9 November 1912.

24. For social statistics on the members of St. Paul's, see *Census Facts Collected by Benjamin C. Bacon and Charles Gardner*, 4 vols. (manuscript), Box 6B, Papers of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 266 table 12, summarizes statistics from this source on the members of other denominations.

25. *Lutheran Observer*, 6, 13, 20 May 1836, RG 22, Prothonotary of the District Court [hereafter cited as District Court], D.S.B. Docket, M35 124, M35 410, D35.329, City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, City Archives, idem, *Appearance Docket*, D35.406; idem, *Execution Docket*, D35 430.

26. *Lutheran Observer*, 13 May 1836.

27. *Minutes of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania, Convened in Easton*

from May 29th to the Evening of June 2nd A.D. 1836 (Allentown, Pa.: A and W. Blumer, 1836), 6

28 District Court, Appearance Docket, S36 252; idem, Execution Docket, D36.112; idem, D.S.B Docket, M35.410 "This claim is marked to the use of Dr Casper W. Pennock, Dec. 15, 1836", *Lutheran Observer*, 3 February 1837; District Court, Mechanic (and Municipal) Lien Docket, M37.14; idem, Appearance Docket, M37.512, S36 252: "This judgment is satisfied, April 19, 1837"

29. *Lutheran Observer*, 3 February 1837.

30. *Minutes of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania, Met in Lancaster from the 21st to 25th of May, A.D. 1837* (Allentown, Pa. A & W. Blumer, 1837), 15-16; Jones, *Rev Jehu Jones*, 3

31. Jones, *Rev Jehu Jones*, 3; letter from Bachman, Medtart, Mayer, and Demme, Synodical Correspondence Files of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, 1838, Lutheran Archives Center of Philadelphia

32. Jones, *Rev Jehu Jones*, 3

33. District Court, Appearance Docket, M37 512, D37.594, idem, Execution Docket, S37.51, M38.327

34. *Lutheran Observer*, 4 May 1838.

35. Wunch, *Philadelphia's Black Elite*, 146-48, Jones, *Rev Jehu Jones*, 3-4; letter from John Jones [i.e., Jehu Jones] in Carter G Woodson, ed., *The Mind of the Negro as Reflected in Letters Written during the Crisis, 1800-1860* (Washington, DC. Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926; reprint ed. New York Negro Universities Press, 1969), 9-10.

36 Statement of the debts of St. Paul's Church, Synodical Correspondence Files of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, 1838, Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia.

37. *Minutes of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania, Held in Philadelphia in Trinity Week, in the Year of Our Lord 1838* (Philadelphia J. Boetticher, 1838), 8-9

38. District Court, Execution Docket, J38 490, D38 311, D38 465.

39. Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, Minute Book, 1838-1839, 17 January, 14 February 1839, Box 10B, Papers of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, letter from John Jones [i.e. Jehu Jones] in Woodson, *The Mind of the Negro*, 9-10

40 District Court, Execution Docket, M39.19; idem, Sheriff's Deeds, Book H:516-17. In a follow-up to the sale of the church, it is noted that the new owner, who bought the property subject to the existing mortgage, defaulted on payments, and consequently another suit was filed against Jehu Jones as the mortgagor in June 1842, see District Court, Appearance Docket, J42 1247; idem, Execution Docket, S42 60; idem, Sheriff's Deeds, Book M 283-85

41 Letter from Jehu Jones, May 1839, Synodical Correspondence Files of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, 1839, Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia

42. *Minutes of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania, Held in Allentown, in Trinity Week, in the Year of Our Lord 1839* (Easton, Pa.: Abr. H Senseman, n d), 22; *Proceedings of the Tenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in the United States, Convened at Chambersburg, Pa., June, 1839* (Gettysburg: H. C Nemstedt, 1839), 19.

43. Jones unsuccessfully sought an appointment as missionary in 1839, and again in 1843: *Proceedings of the Missionary Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania, 1839* (n p, n d), 4 (bound with *Minutes, 1839*); letter from Jehu Jones, 15 June 1843, Synodical Correspondence Files of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, 1843, Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania, Convened in Philadelphia During the Week of Trinity, from the 11th to the 15th of June, 1843* (Pittsburgh: R. G Berford, 1843), 17.

44 Jones, *Rev Jehu Jones*, 4 The location that Jones mentions, Seventh Street below Lombard, was not the site of a church, but of Benezet Hall, owned by the Benezet Philanthropic Society, a Black beneficial society; see "Pencil Pusher Points," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 2 November 1912. This suggests that the congregation was renting the hall to hold its religious services.

45 *Minutes of the Fifty-Fourth Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium, of the State of New York, and Adjacent States and Countries, Held at Valatie, Columbia Co, N.Y., September 1, 1849, and the Following Days* (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1849), 19, 21 The committee members were Henry N. Pohlman, Charles Martin, and George Neff.

46. Jones, *Rev Jehu Jones*, 1-4.

47 *Lutheran Observer*, 17 August 1838.

48. Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Co, Moyamensing Twp, Ward 3, Building 619, Family 825; death notice, *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia), Sept. 30, 1852, Registration of Deaths, 1886, 2.175 (microfilm), City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, City Archives.

In 1850, Mary Jane married John P. Williams and had two children, John Pallam Williams and Jehuanna Williams The son became a minister in his own right, serving as rector of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia from 1882 to 1892, and of St. Augustine's in Brooklyn, New York, from 1891 to 1899 The 1860 Census for Philadelphia lists John Williams living with his mother Mary Jane Williams and Jehu Jones' widow Elizabeth. John Pallam Williams was Jehu Jones' grandson. He died in Philadelphia on May 6, 1901.

49. "Historic Service Celebrates Jehu Jones," *PS* (The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia) 79/1 (Fall 1995): 8; Faith E Rohrbough, "Sermon Preached at Schaeffer-Ashmead Chapel, September 27, 1995, Commemorating the Rev. Jehu Jones, Jr" (unpublished)

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