

# THE VARICK FAMILY

BY

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With Many Family Portraits.





JAMES VARICK  
FOUNDER OF THE A. M. E. ZION CHURCH



## **DEDICATION.**

**TO THE VETERAN FOLLOWERS, MINISTERIAL AND  
LAY, OF JAMES VARICK, WHO HAVE TOILED  
UNFLAGGINGLY TO MAKE THE AFRICAN  
METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH  
THE PROUD HERITAGE OF OVER  
HALF A MILLION MEMBERS,**

**AND**

**TO THE YOUNG SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF THE  
CHURCH UPON WHOM THE FUTURE CARE  
AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH  
MUST SOON DEVOLVE, THIS LITTLE  
VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED BY THE  
AUTHOR.**



## PREFACE

I have put myself to great pains to gather facts for this little book. I have made many trips to New York and Philadelphia looking up data. I have visited Camden, N. J., and Rossville, Staten Island, for the same purpose. I have gone over the grounds in the lower part of New York which were the scenes of Varick's endeavors. I have been at great pains to study the features and intellectual calibre of the Varick family, that our church might know something about the family of the man whose name means so much to our Zion Methodism. I have undertaken the work too, not because I felt that I could do it so well, but because I felt I was in position, living near New York city, to do it with less trouble than persons living far away from that city. Then I felt that if it were not attempted soon, the last link connecting the present generation with primitive Zion Methodism would be broken. Then, too, I felt that my close study of this work, years before I thought of putting the result of my labors on the subject in book form, put me in position to do the work with less trouble than some one who had not previously made a study of the matter. All my research after facts was more of a pleasure to me than a mere sense of duty. It may be plainly noticed that I have not tried to write a history of the A. M. E. Zion Church. That has been well done by eminent fathers of the church. It has been my aim merely to give a brief account of each member of the Varick family. In performing this task of love I am indebted to the following persons for valuable information:

1. Mrs. Jane Finch, of Camden, N. J., who was

a playmate of Varick's children. She died two or three years ago. Notwithstanding her extreme old age, her mind was clear to the last. She was a great lover of Zion Church, and had spent practically all her long life in the church.

2. Doctor William Howard Day, who was baptized by James Varick immediately after the church was erected at the corner of Church and Leonard streets, New York city. Young Day was but a young boy of six or seven summers at that time, but he distinctly remembered when his mother led him to the altar to have him baptized by this sainted James Varick.

3. Mrs. Aurelia Jones, great grandchild of James Varick. She lives in Philadelphia (now 1900), and has all the family history at her tongue's end.

4. Miss Evelyn Varick, of New York, who is also a great grand-daughter of James Varick.

5. Mr. Walter B. Warren, of Brooklyn, N. Y., also a grandchild of the great James Varick.

6. Mr. Oliver Cromwell, of Ithaca, N. Y., also a grandson of James Varick.

I have been helped also by Bishop Rush's "Rise and Progress of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church."

If now the Church and the world will be led to a better appreciation of the work of James Varick by the information contained in this little book, I shall be highly pleased and sufficiently rewarded for my labors.

B. F. WHEELER.

*September 13, 1906.*

*Mobile, Ala.*



## CHAPTER I.

THE GREAT NEGRO MOVEMENT TO ESTABLISH A  
NEW CHURCH.

James Varick, the founder and first Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, occupies a peculiar place in the history of the Negro race in America. He was destined by Providence to do more for the development of the Negro's religious life in America than any Negro who had lived before him. He was to lead a few devout men and women out of the John Street Methodist Episcopal Church, New York city, to establish an independent local church for members of his race, which local church soon leaped the bounds of localism to be formed into a denomination, which has grown to be one of the great religious bodies of the world. Beginning with these few members, not more than two or three dozen, it now numbers its members by the hundred thousands, and is an important factor in the prosecution of the work of the Christian religion among the inhabitants of the earth.

This step was taken calmly and dispassionately and after all efforts to secure the rights and privileges of free men and free women in the church from which they were about to withdraw, had been exhausted. The church to which he and his faithful followers belonged was made up principally of white people, but there was a goodly number of colored people among them. Among these colored people were some who felt that God had called them to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They

took the usual course in such matters and made their requests known to the authorities of the church. But license to preach was denied them, and this became their first grievance. They had other difficulties in the church such as being compelled to wait when the sacrament of the Lord's supper was served until the white members were first served. They found it impossible to be true to their manhood and remain in this church and submit to these indignities. They realized, however, that in starting out to purchase or erect a house of worship of their own, with their own poverty staring them in the face, and the prejudice of their white brethren against them, their pathway was beset with many discouragements and obstacles. But they had the spirit of true and determined men, and so took the step. And the marvellous success that has attended the movement—the ingathering into Christ's fold of hundreds of thousands of precious souls—is the best evidence of the wisdom of taking the step. But they had no bitter words for their brethren from whom they separated—for they loved them. They could not do otherwise, for it was through the efforts of these white Methodists in John Street Church that Varick and his followers were led to God. The Methodist Episcopal Church at the time that Varick and his followers withdrew from it was a victim of circumstances. African slavery had produced its sickening effects all over the country, in Church and State. And the Methodist Episcopal Church, like all other churches at the time, had been influenced by it. They did not persecute

their colored brethren, however—they simply denied them certain rightful privileges which were accorded to white brethren. But this the colored brethren did not think they could stand and at the same time work out for themselves that high destiny which God holds out to all men and women who serve Him aright. The Methodist Episcopal Church was more generous in its treatment of the black members of the church than was any other denomination at that time. After Varick and his followers withdrew, the Methodist Episcopal Church permitted Negro ministers to play an important part in the evangelistic work of that church. This was not the case in any other denomination in America during that period. The Methodist Episcopal Church not only did not try in any way to embarrass Varick and his followers, but in many ways actually helped them. So that the Zion Church (I use the short term Zion Church for the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church) and the Methodist Episcopal Church have been on the most friendly terms from the organization of the Zion Church up to the present day. Soon after the withdrawal of Varick and his followers, the Methodist Episcopal Church began her war on slavery and kept it up with ever-increasing determination until human slavery in America was a thing of the past, thus showing that she was not opposed to her brother in black, but one of his best friends. She literally carried out the scriptural injunction "If thy right hand offend thee cut it off," when she cut off a part of her very self that "offended" on the question of slavery. This was

done in less than fifty years after Varick and his followers withdrew from that church. And since the civil war this same Methodist Episcopal Church has done more to educate the Negro in America than any other denomination with the possible exception, according to numbers, of the Congregational Church.

## CHAPTER II.

### PARENTAGE AND EARLY LIFE OF JAMES VARICK.

Richard Varick, who was of Dutch descent, the father of James Varick, was born in Hackensack, New Jersey, but when a child moved with his parents to New York City. It is difficult to tell to what nationality James Varick belongs. At least three different nationalities enter into his composition. Through his veins flowed the blood of the Negro, the American Indian and the Dutchman. According to the American way of settling race identity, I suppose he would be called a Negro, for he had Negro blood flowing through his veins. In America a person with the least Negro blood flowing through his veins is considered a Negro. The exact date of Varick's birth is not clearly known, but putting all the facts in his eventful life together, it appears that 1750 is as near a date as can be given as the year of his birth. We give the 17th as the day of his birth, since it is as convenient as any other date. Thus born June 17th, 1750, exactly seventy-two years later, after his life work had been practically finished, he was elected Elder and then first Bishop of the denomination he had founded. He was born

in stirring times when the best brains and the best blood were all aflame with a desire for liberty, which was expressed twenty-six years after his birth in the Declaration of Independence of English rule. Varick caught the spirit of his age and in due time was ready to lead his little band of followers to religious liberty. Just *where* Varick was born is not clearly known. It is stated by the early fathers of the church that he was born in Newburg, N. Y., up the Hudson river from New York city. While Varick was born in Newburg it appears that his mother was a resident of New York and was in Newburg on a visit when Varick was born. At any rate, James Varick was reared in New York city. His mother was a colored woman of very bright complexion. Whether she had been a slave or was a free woman is not known. In the history of New York city the rich and distinguished Varick family has figured most conspicuously in its social, political and commercial life for the last two centuries. One of the members of this cultured Varick family was mayor of New York city. The Varick Bank of New York city is named in honor of, and controlled by this same strong and influential family. Varick street, on which I have walked many times, which runs from Clarkson street to Canal, is also named after this distinguished family. It is possible that Varick's mother at one time was a slave in the family.

As a young man Varick seemed to have enjoyed such school privileges as were given at that time to colored children in the state of New York.

There were some very good schools—at least two or three—for colored children in New York city at that time. Young Varick was a shoemaker by trade, having his house and shop in Orange street, now called Baxter street, running from Walker to Leonard street, where he lived most of his long life. Having lived in this house so long a time, it is possible that he owned the house, although we have no proof at hand to that effect. It would have been difficult for him to have had such controlling influence over the leading colored people in New York at that time without his being to some extent their equal from a financial standpoint as well as their superior intellectually. We know that many colored people owned their property in New York at that time.

“He was a man of firmness, patience, perseverance, forethought, caution and uprightness. He was plain but orthodox in his preaching.” \*

Upon these characteristics given by Bishop Moore, Bishop Hood remarks in his *One Hundred Years of the African Methodist Church*: “The man who has all these characteristics is a remarkably uncommon human being, and yet they are just the qualities needed for the ordeal through which the foremost religious leader of the oppressed race in America had to pass.” †

Varick was a man of robust constitution well calculated to endure the physical hardships and

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\* See Bishop Moore’s “History of the A. M. E. Zion Church.”

† See Bishop Hood’s “One Hundred Years of the A. M. E. Zion Church.”

bear the mental burdens which awaited him in the immediate future. He was a man of purest morals and he placed a high premium upon the bond of sacred wedlock.

Varick seems to have been converted when very young. He was a boy about sixteen years of age when Philip Embury and Captain Thomas Webb began their preaching in and around New York city in 1766. Varick was probably converted by the preaching of Philip Embury and Captain Webb and joined the John Street Methodist Episcopal Church. The church is still standing on the same spot, though it may have been remodeled many times since Varick was a member there. I have worshipped many times in the church at noon-day prayer meetings that are held there every day throughout the year. The church has two stories and seems to be about fifty feet wide and eighty feet long. This church is the cradle of American Methodism and the place where Varick got his first religious training.

### CHAPTER III.

#### SCHOOL PRIVILEGES FOR COLORED CHILDREN AT THE TIME OF VARICK AND HIS DESCENDANTS.

Often through this article reference is made to the good school facilities for colored children in the time of Varick as compared with the privileges they enjoyed in some other states. To verify this statement I give herewith an extract written by Mr. S. R. Scroton, of Brooklyn, N. Y., from The New York Age, July 1, 1905. Mr. Scroton is splendid authority on the subject, for he is not

only one of the leading colored men in the state of New York to-day, but has been prominently identified with every movement having for its object the betterment of the condition of the colored people in the state or city of New York for the last fifty years. He is at present the only member of the race on the Board of Education of the city of New York.

“So far as any record of the schools of the city of New York, i. e., the boroughs composing the present city, is concerned, we began here with mixed schools one hundred and fifty years and more ago. The first schools were those supported by the several churches, all of them absorbed in schooling the children of their several parishes. They were mixed schools, whites, free blacks and Indians all together. This was true of the old Dutch Reformed Church in Bushwick, of the Dutch Reformed Church in Flatbush, and like churches in their earliest history, followed by the old Sand Street Methodist and by those of other denominations for a very long period. The only schooling had by colored children was obtained in these church mixed schools. The first separate schools for ‘African Children’ hereabouts were attempted by the Quakers, who became what was known as the Mann Mission Society as early as 1794, immediately upon the passage of the forty year act for the gradual emancipation of slaves. These good people had been largely instrumental in freeing the ‘African slaves’ hereabouts, and they at once set about opening schools to be especially devoted to these newly free children. They imported an Englishman named Piesson to teach the first school at a salary of three hundred dollars per annum; but since the colored people avoided this separate school and stuck to the church parish schools, he was able to report an average attendance the first year of only twenty-six scholars, and the project very nearly came to an end; but by the employment of a colored man teacher, whose name occurs first on the roll of the African Relief Society, they succeeded in increasing the attendance and a number of



schools until at the time they were turned over to the care of the Public School Society, which had been established by John Jay, DeWitt Clinton and others, there were seven of them in a fairly flourishing condition. Nevertheless, there was ever complaint of the difficulty of keeping the seats filled, because so many colored children who were in the outlying districts were admitted to white schools. Prizes were given to the children who had induced the greatest number of their associates to follow them into the colored schools. Notwithstanding the popularity of 'Charlie' Andrews, a white man, particularly able as a teacher, had done so much for the education of the 'African' children in his school, the people were dissatisfied and broke into open rebellion in the shape of mass meetings, threatening to withdraw their children unless they were taught by colored teachers. Their determined stand resulted finally in a commission of prominent colored citizens being sent out, headed by Boston Crumwell, father of the late Rev. Alexander Crumwell, which commission succeeded in securing John Peterson and Ransom F. Wake. These satisfied the people and things became tranquil again. The fact is, the people knew that by the act granted by the Legislature to the Public School Society in 1805, they had a perfect right to demand entrance into any convenient public school. The memorial which the white citizens had presented agreed with the act, dated April 9, as follows: 'An act to incorporate the society instituted in the city of New York for the establishment of free schools for the education of poor children who do not belong to or are provided for by any religious society.' The colored people knew that they were entitled under the act to equal place in the public schools, and they were continually threatening. On the Brooklyn side of the river the schools remained many years longer in the charge of the churches. Among the earliest names recorded of colored male teachers, under city pay, we find that of James C. Morell and William J. Wilson. Morell came here from Philadelphia and was first employed by the white people, out in that district, which in his days was known as Weeksville, named after an old colored man familiarly known as 'Jimmy' Weeks, a powerful and

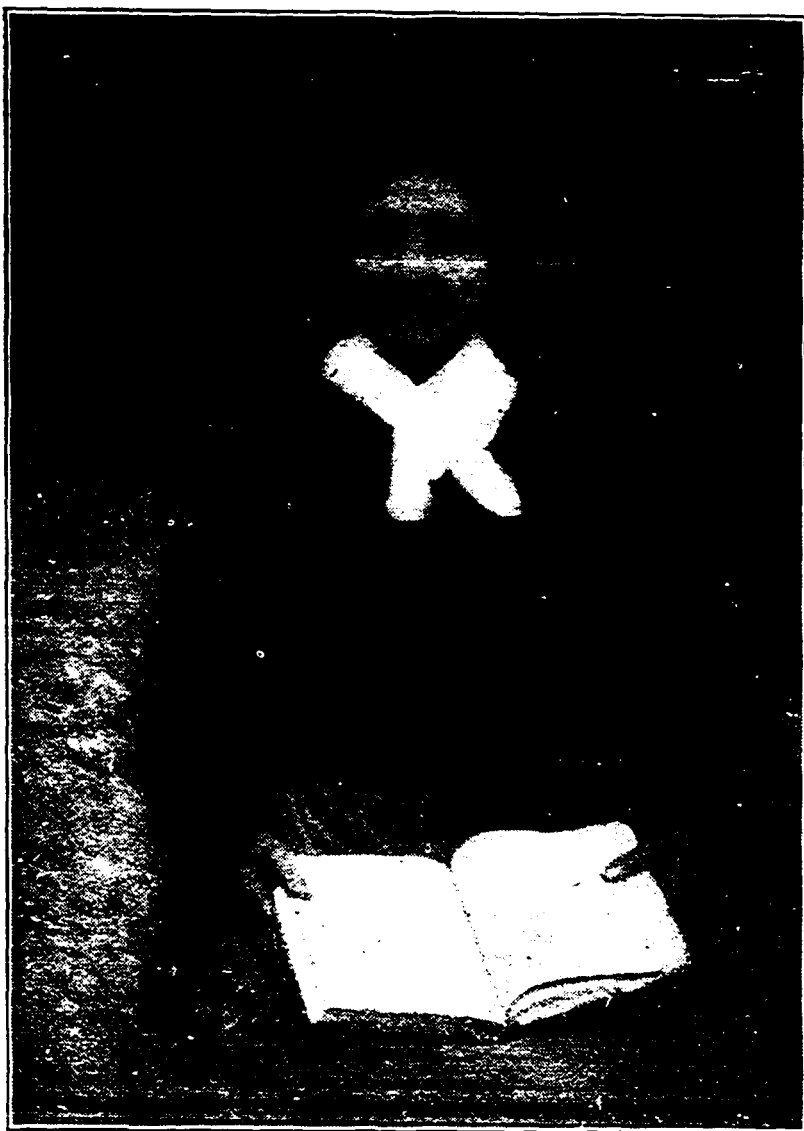
noted character. The white people first employed the very able Morell to teach white adults in night schools, and their children, together with colored children—a mixed school—during the day, but as time wore on his school became a distinctively colored school. William J. Wilson struggled hard to keep his school filled with colored children, as did John Q. Allen and Charles A. Dersey, successors of the first two named.”

In these schools, doubtless, Varick and his children received their literary training. As has been said, the school privileges for the colored children have always been superior to those in most other cities and states in the Union. And even to-day the schools are worthy of the great metropolis of our country.

## CHAPTER IV.

### WHERE COLORED PEOPLE LIVED IN THE TIME OF VARICK.

Mrs. Ednah Dow Chaney, of Boston, in her “Reminiscences of Boston and Boston people,” takes up a great deal of space in her excellent book telling where the colored people lived in Boston during the days of her childhood. This chapter of her book proves of special interest to all Afro-Americans. So that now Jamaica Plains has a new interest to Afro-Americans of the present day, because they know that a hundred years ago the Afro-American population of Boston lived in that section of the city. It is interesting to know just where the bulk of the colored population of New York lived during the life-time of James Varick, or from 1750 to 1825. Strange to say that the part of New York where most of the money in



MRS. JANE FINCH

A PLAYMATE OF JAMES VARICK'S CHILDREN



America is handled to-day was in the days of James Varick the place where the bulk of the colored people lived. The city of New York was built up around the battery, and Wall street was on the northern outskirts of the city—and this section was the place where most of the colored people lived. Cross street, a very short street, was where Varick's followers had their first meeting house. Mott street, only two blocks away, was where the Allenites, or followers of Bishop Allen, twenty years afterward had their first meeting house in New York city. Orange street, now called Baxter street, was where James Varick lived so many years. Here he had his shoe shop and here is where his preachers met to consult with him about the new church movement in which they were engaged. William Miller had his cabinet shop in Mulberry street, only a block or two away. William Brown, one of the trustees of the new church movement, had his home in Leonard street, a little further away than the rest. Peter Williams, also prominent in this new church movement, lived in Liberty street only three blocks away from Wall street. Thus it will be seen that all these residences of colored people were within ten or fifteen minutes' walk of Wall street. The corner of Church and Leonard streets, where Varick's followers built their first church, was within a few minutes' walk of Wall street. This, then, was the battle ground of Negro endeavor in the days of James Varick. If Varick were to re-

turn to the earth to-day he would find that his followers, so far as this section is concerned,

“Have folded their tents, like the Arab,  
And as silently moved away.”

## CHAPTER V.

### JAMES VARICK AND FAMILY.

It appears that James Varick did not marry until he was about forty-eight years of age. This we judge from the ages of several of the descendants of Varick with whom we have talked and from whose lips we secured most of the information contained in this article. The name of the lady whom he married was Aurelia Jones. Aurelia Jones, the great grand-daughter of James Varick, with whom I have talked, I judge to be (in 1900) about thirty-five years of age. Her cousin, Evelyn Varick, I judge to be about the same age. If Aurelia Washington in 1900 was thirty-five years of age she would have been born in 1865. Now, allowing her mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Varick-Washington, to have been thirty years old when Aurelia was born, would make the date of her (Mrs. Washington's) birth to be 1835. Then let us assume that Mrs. Washington's father, Daniel Varick, was thirty-five years old when Elizabeth Varick-Washington, his oldest child, was born. This would put Daniel Varick's birth in the year 1800. As Daniel was James Varick's oldest child, let us assume that James Varick was married two years before his first child was born. This would place James Varick's marriage in 1798, when he was forty-eight years of age. This is two years after he led

his people out of John Street Methodist Episcopal Church to form a new denomination where colored people could enjoy the worship of God under their own vine and fig tree.

The only photograph we have of James Varick is the picture of a man at least seventy years of age. It was probably taken in 1822 at the time he was elected Bishop, or as the office was then called in our church, District President, when he was seventy-two years old, or seven years before he died. This photograph of Varick shows a strong face with massive high forehead, studious mein, and all the bearings of a deep and thoughtful theologian. His face is a most pleasant study. A peculiarity about Varick's hair decoration is that while the hair of his head is nearly straight, his whiskers are woolly. He was of bright complexion—about the color of our American Indian.

Varick married Aurelia Jones, who was of a brighter complexion than he, as the color of his children and grandchildren shows. There were four children\* born to James Varick and his wife, namely: Daniel, Andrew, Emeline and Mary. Mrs. Jane Finch, of Camden, N. J., who was a playmate

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\* Oliver Crumwell, grandson to James Varick, gives the following account of James Varick and children: "My knowledge comes from my aunt, Emeline, which is as follows: James Varick married Aurelia Jones, of New York city. I think it was either at the close of the eighteenth century or the beginning of the nineteenth century—about 1798 or 1800. From what I could glean from my aunt, her home life must have been congenial and happy. He was both a disciplinarian and kind of heart. So I judge his home was a happy one."

of Varick's children and who gave me much information which I have used in the preparation of this article, claims that there was a fifth child by name of Frank. But as neither Aurelia Washington, who has the family history at her tongue's end, nor Evelyn Varick, knows anything about the fifth child, we drop that question without further discussion. Varick's wife seems to have been a most estimable woman, and did her full share toward shaping the lives of these children so that they would become useful men and women. She was probably much younger than her husband, and upon her devolved, it is to be supposed, the care of raising the children properly. The success which each child afterward achieved in the world, from a financial standpoint at least, is good proof that her efforts were not in vain. Varick was so much taken up with his church work that he doubtless was unable to give the oversight to his children which he otherwise might have given. They were no doubt given such school advantages as the city of New York at that time afforded its colored children. And New York, at this time when Varick's children were of school age, had better school facilities for colored children than any city in the Union. (And I think that state has better schools to-day than most of the other states.)

Let us now give an account, as near as possible, of Varick's posterity.

I. Daniel was the eldest child of James Varick. He lived in the lower part of New York when a boy with his father, in Orange street, now called Baxter street. This section of the city—around Holy





AURELIA WASHINGTON-JONES  
GREAT GRAND-DAUGHTER OF JAMES VARICK



Trinity Church and Wall street—is the centre of business life of New York to-day. But in Varick's day it was in the outskirts or upper limits of the city. Daniel Varick enjoyed, doubtless, such school privileges as were in reach of the colored children in New York at that time. When about thirty-six years of age he was married to a most excellent young woman by name of Mary Clark. She was a quadroon, and later in life fought in court the rich Riddley estate for her share in the property. She was connected with the rich family of the Riddleys by the ties of consanguinity, but her people on her mother's side were not only colored but poor. Her fight, therefore, was an unequal one and she lost the suit. Of this union of Daniel Varick and Mary Clark seven children were born.

1. The first child was Elizabeth. As a child she seems to have had the best literary training obtainable in New York at that time. She grew to womanhood and married a man from Washington, D. C., by name of Robert Washington. Robert Washington was a barber on a palace ship running on the Hudson river between New York city and Albany. Mrs. Washington was an exceptionally fine looking woman. I have studied her photograph very carefully. I tried very hard to get her photograph for this book, but her daughter said her mother was always opposed, while she lived, to having her picture leave the house of her nearest relatives, and so this daughter refused to let me have the picture. From her photograph Mrs. Washington looks very much like a well bred English woman. She is of heavy build, with very

intelligent face and high forehead. She has a calm and pleasant expression. and one does not tire studying the picture. There were born to this marriage of Robert Washington and Elizabeth Varick three children:

(1). The eldest was a boy by name of Daniel, so named after his grandfather, Daniel Varick. He grew to be a man and started out bravely to make his mark in the world. He was a first-class caterer. At the time of his death he was steward of a club house on Broadway, made up exclusively of rich men. The picture which I give of him here was taken when he was quite young and very slender. A picture which I saw of him, in possession of his sister, which I tried very hard to get for this book but could not, shows him to be a very polished gentleman with high forehead, side whiskers quite long, and immaculate in his dress. In the picture he is in standing posture, very erect and having all the bearings of good raising. He died of small-pox in New York city about thirty years of age. He was not identified with any church.

(2). The second child of Robert Washington and Elizabeth Varick was named Amelia. She died in infancy.

(3). The third child of Robert Washington and Elizabeth Varick was a girl named Aurelia. She lived in a different age from that of her grandparents and had splendid school facilities within her reach. She was, therefore, well educated. She grew to womanhood and is one of the most beautiful women it has ever fallen my lot to see.



DANIEL WASHINGTON  
GREAT GRANDSON OF JAMES VARICK, AND BROTHER  
TO AURELIA WASHINGTON-JONES



The picture which I give is an early one and does not represent her as I saw her in 1902. This picture represents her as slender, which is not characteristic of her now. As I saw her she was of medium height, slightly heavy set, always neatly dressed, very stylish in her general bearing, a pleasant smile playing over her face most of the time while in conversation, displaying a set of beautiful white teeth, an open countenance, sparkling black eyes, a small nose, black wavy hair, a symmetrical form, bright and affable in conversation, but withal very frank. All these qualities combine to make her an unusually attractive woman. I tried to secure her picture as she looked when I saw her but could not. I only secured the one I have without her knowledge from her relative. She married a man by name of Jones, who died a few years after their marriage. One child, a boy, was the result of this marriage. This Aurelia Washington-Jones, great grandchild of James Varick, I was permitted to talk with personally. I found her to be exceedingly interesting in conversation. I was also permitted to talk personally with her cousin, Evelyn Varick, of New York city.

## CHAPTER VI.

### JAMES VARICK AND FAMILY—CONTINUED.

2. The second child of Daniel Varick and Mary Clark was Aurelia. On reaching womanhood she married Thomas Hoffman, who was a member of the Philomethian Lodge and Grand Director of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows in 1844, the

second year after that order was organized in America. They lived happily in New York only a few years. Death soon robbed them of their happiness. One child was born to them, which brought added joy to their home. But soon father and child died and the heart-broken widow and mother, with her double grief, was left to tread life's dreary pathway alone. She was blest, however, with many relatives and friends who deeply sympathized with her in her grief. Her home being broken up, she made her home with relatives and friends until she finally went to the land beyond to be with her husband and babe.

3. The third child of Daniel and Mary Varick was Daniel, named in honor of his father. He grew to be a splendidly developed man, as he appears in his photograph which I have had the pleasure of seeing. He was tall, rather slender, stylish looking and not as bright in complexion as most of the other relatives whose photographs I have seen. He was a first-class barber by trade. He has the distinction of marrying the widow of George Collins. All will remember that George Collins was the amanuensis to Bishop Rush most of the busiest part of the Bishop's life, especially when he wrote his book, "The Rise and Progress of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church." Collins' widow was named Martha. Her picture looks like that of a white woman. She was a remarkable woman, being perfectly conversant with the whole history of the A. M. E. Zion Church from its beginning up to the time of her death. Her first husband, George Collins, who was much



older than she, began with the history of the church as far back as 1800. He took a prominent part in the church from first to last. For fifty years he was one of the most prominent men in the church. Martha Collins, his wife, learned the early history of the church from his lips, and being a very observant and intelligent woman, knew the later history of the church by personal experience. She was really one of the most talented women connected with the early history of the A. M. E. Zion Church. Her first husband, George Collins, was one of the most liberally educated men in the church, and she enjoyed the close relation of wife to this excellent man for many years, and after his death she married into the Varick family, to Daniel Varick, as we have said above. To Daniel Varick and Martha Collins three children were born.

(1). Daniel. The eldest child was Daniel, named in honor of his father and grandfather. He grew to be a man and for many years was porter on a Pullman sleeping car. He finally took sick and died in New York city. He was married, and his widow, I understand, lives on the Hudson river between New York city and Albany.

(2). Evelyn. Evelyn was the second child born to Daniel Varick and Martha Collins. I have talked with her personally, and find her to be a very intelligent woman. She is not so pretty as her cousin Aurelia Washington-Jones, in Philadelphia, but is quite as intelligent. In fact, all of Varick's descendants are very intelligent. Miss Evelyn is a dressmaker by trade and works daily

at it. She has all the bearing of the New York business woman. She is frank in conversation and independent in her manners. She is single and is prominently identified with the church. She is a member of St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal Church, New York city. She is light in complexion and below the averaged sized woman, and is a fluent conversationalist.

(3). James was the third child of Daniel Varick and Martha Collins. He was named in honor of James Varick, the great nestor of the family, and founder of the A. M. E. Zion Church. He died when a child in short clothes.

The next children of Daniel Varick and Mary Clark were twins. The first of these was a boy, but was never named. He died in infancy.

(5). The other twin lived and was named John Edward Varick. He grew to be a man and was very industrious. He married a woman in New York by name of Emily Attigh, also called Emily Louisa Brassene, March 30th, 1848, Rev. Benjamin Evans officiating. Three children were born to them.

(1). The first was named John Edward, born September 6th, 1849. He grew to manhood and became a machinist by trade, but never married. He was named in honor of his father.

(2). Mary Adelle, the only daughter born to John Edward Varick and Emily Attigh, was born March 6th, 1851. She grew to be a young woman, had many accomplishments but was of frail constitution.



CLARA BASTEEN-WARREN  
GRAND DAUGHTER OF JAMES VARICK



(3). The third and last child was Peter James. He died in infancy July, 1854.

John Edward Varick did not live long to care for his family. He died of consumption December, 1854, at his residence 219 Church street, New York city. The son, John Edward, and daughter, Mary Adelle, both of frail constitutions, were devoted to their mother and made home comfortable and pleasant for her as long as they lived.

Mary Adelle married Prof. John Q. Allen, a teacher in the Brooklyn public schools. No children were born to this union. On October 15th, 1890, John Edward Varick died in New York city aged 41 years. His sister, Mrs. Mary Adelle Allen, did not long survive him. She died January 3d, 1894. Both sister and brother were victims of the same disease which carried away their father.

John Edward Varick's widow married later George P. W. Ray. From this union one child was born, a daughter, Emily Ray, who grew to womanhood and married Mr. Frank S. Downing.

(6 and 7). The sixth and seventh children of Daniel Varick and Mary Clark were also twins. They both died in infancy. This completes the posterity of Daniel Varick, James Varick's first child.

II. James Varick's second child was a boy named Andrew. As a boy and young man he enjoyed the school privileges that were obtainable in his day by colored children. He was a man of quiet habits and a business cast of mind. He ran an oyster saloon in the lower part of New York City. He was a typical New York business man, and

pushed his business with energy. He did not take any active part, so far as I can learn, in religious matters. He lived to be sixty years of age and died in New York City.

## CHAPTER VII.

### JAMES VARICK AND FAMILY—CONTINUED.

We have spoken so far of James Varick's two sons. We come now to speak of his daughters.

III. The third child of James Varick and Aurelia Jones was Emeline. Her father gave her the best school advantages it was possible for her to obtain at that time in New York. She married, after growing to be a young woman, John Basteen. She seems to have been very fortunate in her marriage, for John Basteen proved to be a very worthy husband. He was a native of Hayti and lived to an extreme old age, and died in New York in 1885, at the age of seventy-nine. Both John Basteen and his wife, Emeline Varick, were prominent characters in New York society during their long lives. His wife, Emeline, was a public spirited woman, and seems to have inherited a great deal of her distinguished father's spirit for making the world better. She was directress of the board of the Colored Orphan Asylum, and an active member of St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal Church, New York City. In all these movements of charity and reform, she was associated with Mrs. Charles Reason, Miss Fannie Tompkins, Miss Eliza D. Richards, and others. These intelligent and influential ladies, in addition to

their work of charity and reform among people of New York, often held fairs and in other ways raised money to aid the colored soldiers during the civil war. Mrs. Basteen, like her husband, lived to a ripe age to prosecute her benevolent work of helping others. The union of Emeline Varick and John Basteen was blessed with two children, both girls.

1. The oldest girl was Clara. She married Walter B. Warren, of New York. He was a steward on a steamer plying between New York and Liverpool. He held this position for many years. He was a man of intelligence and industry, and provided well for his family. This business of travel between New York and Liverpool, for so many years, not only served as a means of providing for his family, but a source of education as well. His wife, Mrs. Clara Basteen-Warren, died in New York in 1876 at the age of forty-one years. She left three children, Charlotte, Walter B., and Theodore M.

(1) The oldest was Charlotte C. Like her two brothers she had the advantages of the public schools of New York. She was married twice. First to Albert Wilson, who did not live long. Charlotte then remained a widow for some time, after which she married Steward Siedle, of Reading, Pa. She died in the year 1898 at the age of forty-one years, leaving no children.

(2) Walter B. Warren, the second child of Walter B. Warren and Clara Basteen, on reaching manhood, married Corenah B. D'Artois, of South

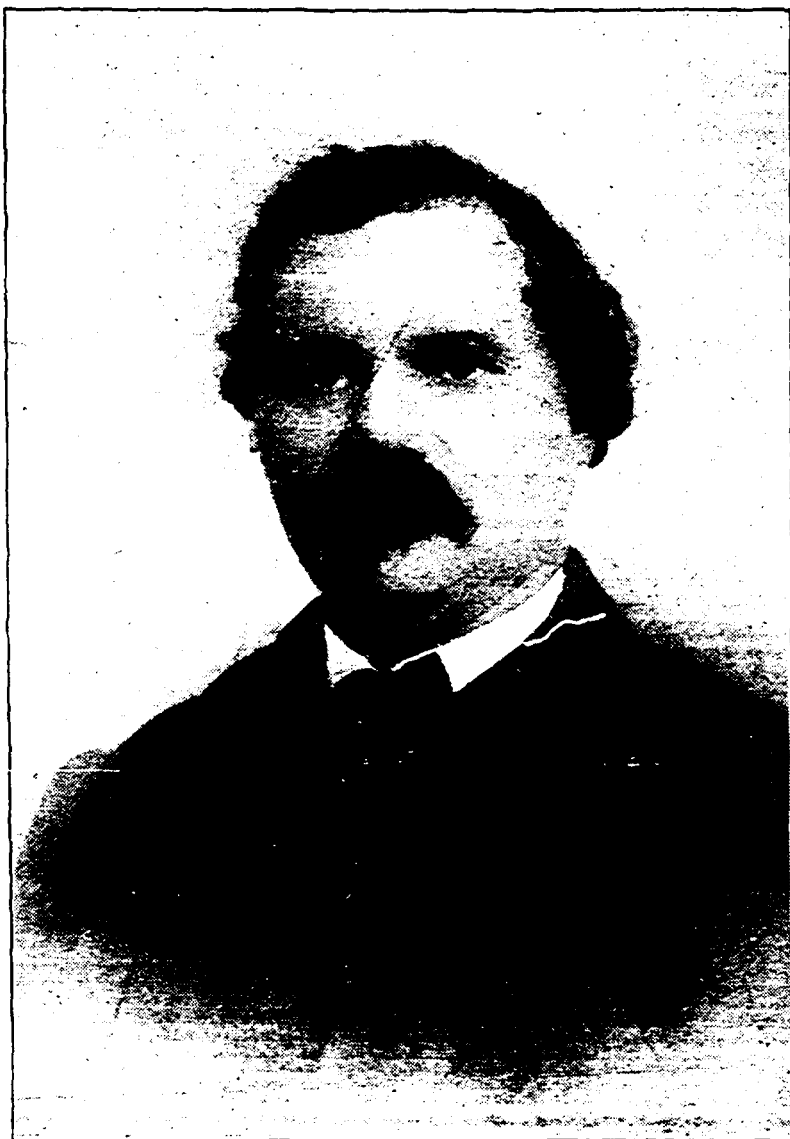
Norwalk, Conn. Mr. Walter B. Warren is a successful citizen of Brooklyn, N. Y. He is a man of steady habits, unquestioned integrity and large business capacity. He has been connected for over thirty years with a large financial firm in Wall street, New York, occupying in this firm a position of trust and responsibility. As an evidence of his business capacity he owns a fine residence in one of the most fashionable parts of the city of Brooklyn. He is the treasurer of the New York African Society for Mutual Relief. He is also a prominent member of St. Phillip's Protestant Episcopal Church, New York. This union of Walter B. Warren and Corenah B. D'Artois is blessed with one child, Howard C.

(a) Howard C. Warren, only child of Walter B. Warren and Corenah B. D'Artois, is a young man of rare intelligence. His father has given him splendid school advantages, and the young man, following the natural inclination of his mind, has become an accomplished musician. Like his father, he is connected with one of the banking houses in Wall street, New York.

(3) Theodore M. Warren on arriving at manhood, married Ella Barton. He is a New Yorker to the manor born. He is still living in New York. This union of Theodore M. Warren and Ella Barton is blessed with one child, a daughter by name of Edith.

(a) Edith Warren, the only child of Theodore M. Warren and Ella Barton, is a young lady of intelligence, having been favored in every way





WILLIAM GARRISON.  
WHO MARRIED MARY BASTEEN. GRAND DAUGHTER  
OF JAMES VARICK



possible by her parents. She is married to Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, and has two children. She lives in New York.

2. Mary Basteen, the second child of John Basteen and Emeline Varick, was probably named in honor of her aunt, Mary Varick, the last and youngest child of the great James Varick, or after her uncle Daniel Varick's wife, whose maiden name was Mary Clark. Mary Basteen married a man of excellent disposition, by name of William H. Garrison. He was a steward on a ship running between New York City and Aspinwall. This couple was very happy in their married life, but it did not last long, for both died young, leaving no children.

Leaving now the posterity of Emeline Varick, James Varick's third child, we now take up the life of James Varick's youngest child, Mary Varick, and her descendants.

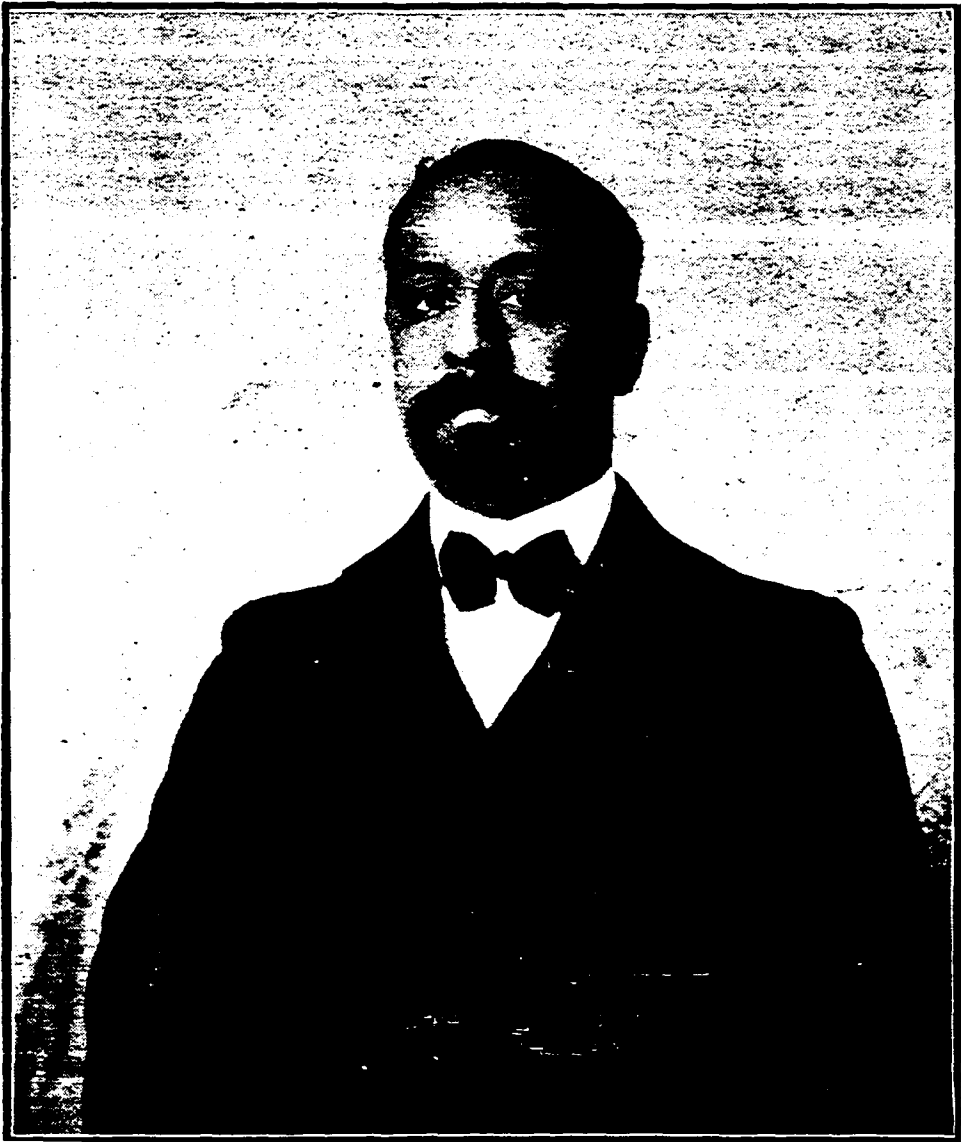
## CHAPTER VIII.

### JAMES VARICK AND FAMILY—CONCLUDED.

Thus far we have considered the lives of three of James Varick's children, namely: Daniel, Andrew and Emeline. We now come to consider the youngest or fourth child.

IV. Mary Varick. Mary Varick was the youngest child of James Varick and Aurelia Jones. She, like her aunt, Emeline, was highly cultured, being one of the intellectual women of New York City in her day. She was secretary of most of the organizations among Negroes in the

city of New York in her day. At the time of her death she was secretary of the North Star Association, an organization which had for its purpose the booming of Frederick Douglass, the rising young orator of the Negro race at that time. She married Robert Cromwell. Robert Cromwell was a distinguished colored man, and well deserved to become the husband of one of the daughters of Bishop Varick. First of all, he was well educated. In the second place, he owned considerable property. His property holdings for the most part were in New Haven, Conn. He was a most exemplary man in many other respects. He never tasted a drop of liquor, nor used tobacco in any form. He was upright in all of his business dealings with his fellow men. His word was his bond. He was authority on Masonic matters. And in the lodge he is said to have been a strict disciplinarian. He was devoted to his wife, and their married life was congenial and happy. Seven children were born to them: William, James V., Robert B., Oliver, Esther M., Theodore and George. William died in infancy. James was born April 17th, 1837, and died October 30th, 1873. Robert was born August 2nd, 1839, and died October 12th, 1892. Oliver was born December 31st, 1841. He is still living and furnished me much valuable information concerning his family. Esther was born January 1st, 1844. She died July 13th, 1868. Theodore was born March 4th, 1846. He died September 16th, 1886. George, the



W. B. WARREN  
GREAT GRANDSON OF JAMES VARICK



youngest child, was born June 20th, 1848, and died September 4th, 1863. Only two of this large family of children ever married. Robert married, but left no children when he died. Oliver married, had one child born to him, Esther M. by name, who grew to womanhood. She was born January 26th, 1872. She married a man by name of Taylor. September 15th, 1890, a son was born to them, whose name is Robert. Robert Cromwell was a public spirited man and instilled the same spirit into most of his children. Robert Cromwell put his children in school as soon as they reached school age, and kept them there until they had secured a fair education. But this loving wife, while the children were still young, died, May 1st, 1850. This was a terrible blow to both the father and these young children. But these children were fortunate in having some one to care for them in the person of their good aunt, Mrs. Emeline Basteen. This excellent woman took these six children to her home and cared for them, as if they were her own. Robert Cromwell, the father of these children, later in life, married a second time, and still lived in New Haven. Robert Cromwell had several avocations by which he earned an honest living. He was barber, steward, cook and baker. He was steward on steamships, especially on the old Pacific Mail Line plying between New York City and San Francisco. When at length Robert Cromwell himself died most of the property in New Haven went to the

second wife. I want to notice more particularly the lives of each of these children.

1. William, I have said, died in infancy. He was the first child of Robert Cromwell and Mary Varick.

2. James, the second child, was named in honor of his distinguished grandfather. He never married. He was a barber by trade. For several years he travelled in different parts of the world and died October 30th, 1873.

3. The next child was Robert. He was born August 2nd, 1839. He was named in honor of his cultured father. When he grew to manhood he married. No children were born to him. For many years he was steward on a ship. He died October 12th, 1892.

4. Oliver was the fourth child, born December 31st, 1831. He is still living, having spent a great deal of his life in New Haven, Conn. He married early in life and has cared for his family well ever since. He is a man of rare intelligence and is quite familiar with the family history of his illustrious ancestors. I owe him much for the interest he has taken in furnishing me information about the family. He has one child, Esther M. by name. He is now living in Ithaca, N. Y.

(1) Esther M., the only child of Oliver Cromwell, is a well educated young woman. She was converted in Ithaca, N. Y., in 1905, under the pastorate of Rev. T. A. Auten. She is now one of the most active members in the A. M. E. Zion





HOWARD WARREN  
GREAT GREAT GRANDSON OF JAMES VARICK



Church at Ithaca, N. Y. A most remarkable thing about her is that she is the first descendant of Bishop James Varick, so far as I have been able to discover, who is an active member of the church founded by James Varick more than a hundred years ago. She was born January 26th, 1872. Her married name is Esther M. Taylor. She has one child.

(a) Robert, the only child of Esther M. Cromwell-Taylor, was born September 15th, 1890. He is named in honor of his distinguished grandfather.

5. Esther. The fifth child of Robert Cromwell and Mary Varick was Esther. She was the only girl born to her parents. She was a very brilliant young woman, inheriting much of her illustrious parents' intellectual stamina. She went South to teach school after the war. She did excellent service there as a teacher. She had inherited on her mother's side from the great James Varick a consuming desire to help the condition of her race. And from her father she had inherited that rare intelligence which enabled her to carry out this desire. But the climate did not agree with her frail constitution. She was attacked with fever from which all the best physicians could not rid her. She held to her work as long as it was possible for her to do so. Finally she became so weak that she could no longer remain at her post. She came to New York with shattered health, where after a short lingering she died

July 13th, 1868, in the twenty-fifth year of her age. She was tenderly cared for in her last illness by relatives of the Varick family, who were then living in New York. She was buried in New York City. She was a woman of sweet disposition and consecrated her talents to the betterment of her race. Her niece, Esther Cromwell-Taylor, now living in Ithaca, New York, is named in honor of her.

6. Theodore was the sixth child of Robert Cromwell and Mary Varick. He was born March 4th, 1846. He was a very intelligent young man, as might be expected from his intelligent parentage. He went South to teach school. He did not remain long, as the climate did not agree with him. He came North to New Haven, the old family home. He regained his health and lived until September 15th, 1866, when he died. He was never married.

7. The seventh and last child of Robert Cromwell and Mary Varick was George. He was born June 20th, 1848, two years before his mother died. When quite young he went to California with some relatives where, December 4th, 1863, he died.

Thus we have traced the life of James Varick, his four children, his sixteen grandchildren, thirteen great grandchildren, five great great grandchildren and one great great great grandchild—forty in all. I give their names as follows:

James Varick .....	1
His children: Daniel, Andrew, Emeline	



MARY VARICK-CROMWELL  
YOUNGEST CHILD OF JAMES VARICK



and Mary .....		4
His grandchildren: Daniel Varick's children: Elizabeth, Aurelia, Daniel, John and twin, and twins.....	7	
Emeline's children: Clara Basteen- Warren, Mary Basteen-Garrison ....	2	
Mary's children: William Cromwell, James Cromwell, Robert Cromwell, Oliver Cromwell, Esther Cromwell Theodore Cromwell and George Cromwell .....	7	
In all .....		16
His great grandchildren: Elizabeth Washington's children: Daniel Washington, Amelia Washington, Aurelia Washington .....	3	
Aurelia Hoffman's child: one child ....	1	
Daniel Varick's children: Daniel Var- ick, Evelyn Varick, James Varick...	3	
John Edward Varick's children: John Edward Varick, Adele Varick, Peter James Varick.....	3	
Clara Basteen-Warren's children: Char- lotte Warren, Walter Warren, Theo- dore Warren .....	3	
Oliver Cromwell's child: Esther M. Taylor .....	1	
In all .....		14
His great great grandchildren: Aure- lia Washington-Jones' child: James Jones .....	1	
Evelyn Varick's child: Evelyn Varick.	1	

Walter Warren's child: Howard .....	1	
Theodore Warren's child: Edith .....	1	
Esther M. Cromwell-Taylor's child:		
Robert .....	1	
In all .....		5
His great great great grandchild:		
Edith Warren's child: Edith.....	1	
In all .....		41
Thus, with Varick himself, there are forty-one of the family.		

## CHAPTER IX.

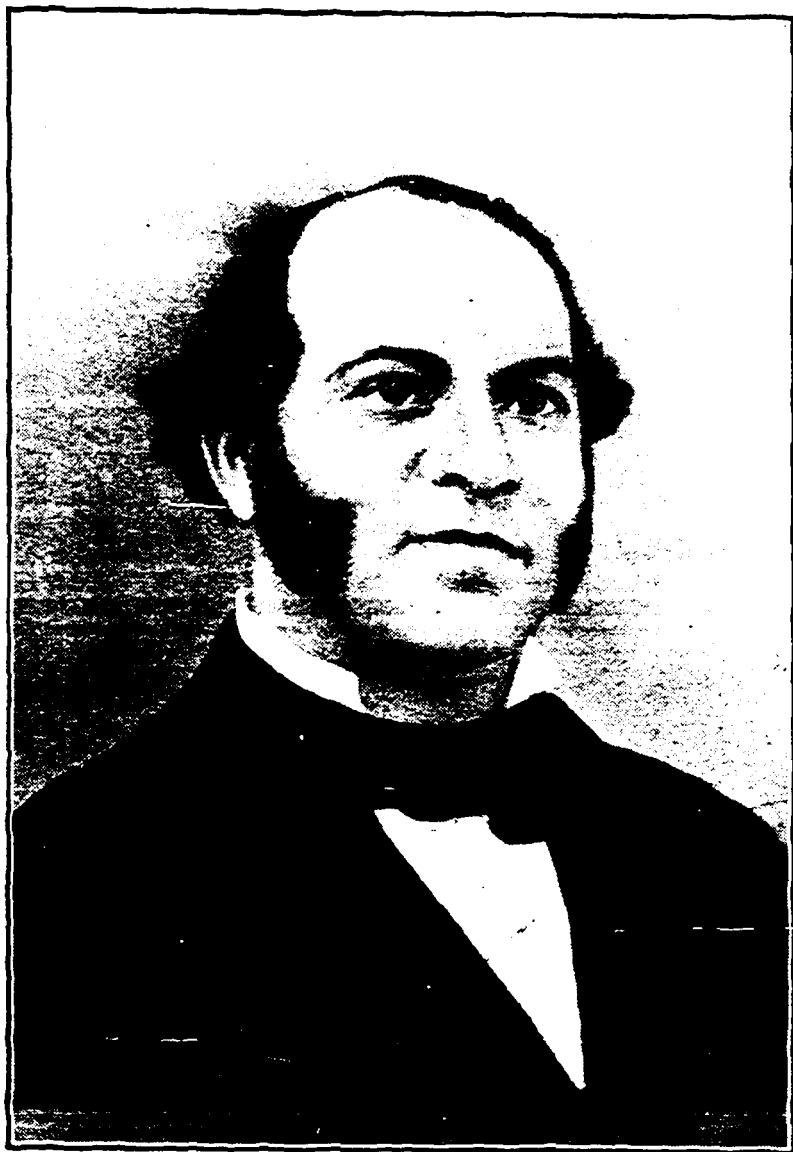
### FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS.

Having given briefly the lives of the various members of the Varick family, it may not be out of place to notice some of the family characteristics as I have gleaned them from correspondence and personal contact with several members of the family.

1. Family Complexion.—The whole family, with but few exceptions, is very light in complexion. In fact, some members of the family actually pass for white. I do not state this as a thing to be set to their credit, but simply an historical fact.

2. Firmness, or Decision of Character.—Another family trait which I noticed about them is firmness, or decision of character. When once they take a stand, they are not easily moved from that position. This trait of character was prominent in James Varick himself, and all of his descendants seemed to have inherited a large share of it.





ROBERT CROMWELL  
HUSBAND OF MARY VARICK-CROMWELL



3. Intelligence.—Still another family characteristic is rare intelligence. There is not a dull member of the family, so far as I have been able to discover. They all have bright and clear minds, and have had splendid school advantages.

4. Frankness.—One of the things which impressed me most forcibly in conversing with different members of the family is their frankness. One is surprised all the time he is conversing with them at this trait of character, as it manifests itself in all they say.

5. Lack of Religious Fervor—A most disappointing fact in connection with most of the younger members of the family is that none seem to have the religious fervor and zeal which was so characteristic of the great nestor of the family, Bishop James Varick. With but three or four exceptions none are active members of the church. But these three or four are very earnest and devout Christians. Most of these three or four are members of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and are doing splendid service in that great church. Only one, so far as I have been able to discover, is a member of the great African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. But we should not despair. The great Methodist Episcopal Church has often regretted that John Wesley had no children or close relatives who became prominent in the Methodist Episcopal Church after John Wesley died. In fact, history will show that only few men who distinguish themselves along any given line have

had any successors, in their immediate family, along that line.

6. Family Names.—At a glance at the great Varick family tree, one can pick out the favorite names that have come down through the family for over one hundred and fifty years. There are at least four Jameses, four Daniels, three Aurelias, two Marys, two Theodores, two Walters, two Johns, two Roberts, two Esthers. These we style family names.

This in brief constitutes some of the leading characteristics of the great James Varick family. In the veins of James Varick flowed the blood of a mixed ancestry. There was the blood of the firm and tenacious Dutchman, the blood of the alert and unconquerable Indian, and the blood of the religious Negro. Such a man was well calculated to found a great religious denomination whose field of usefulness is as wide as the world.

This great Varick family means to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church what the Wesley family means to the great Methodist Episcopal Church.

Let us, as members of the great church founded by Varick, lift our eyes to heaven in thankfulness that there was ever a man sent from God whose name was James.

## CHAPTER X.

### SKETCH OF JAMES VARICK'S WORK.

According to the date we give for Varick's birth, 1750, he was about forty-six years of age



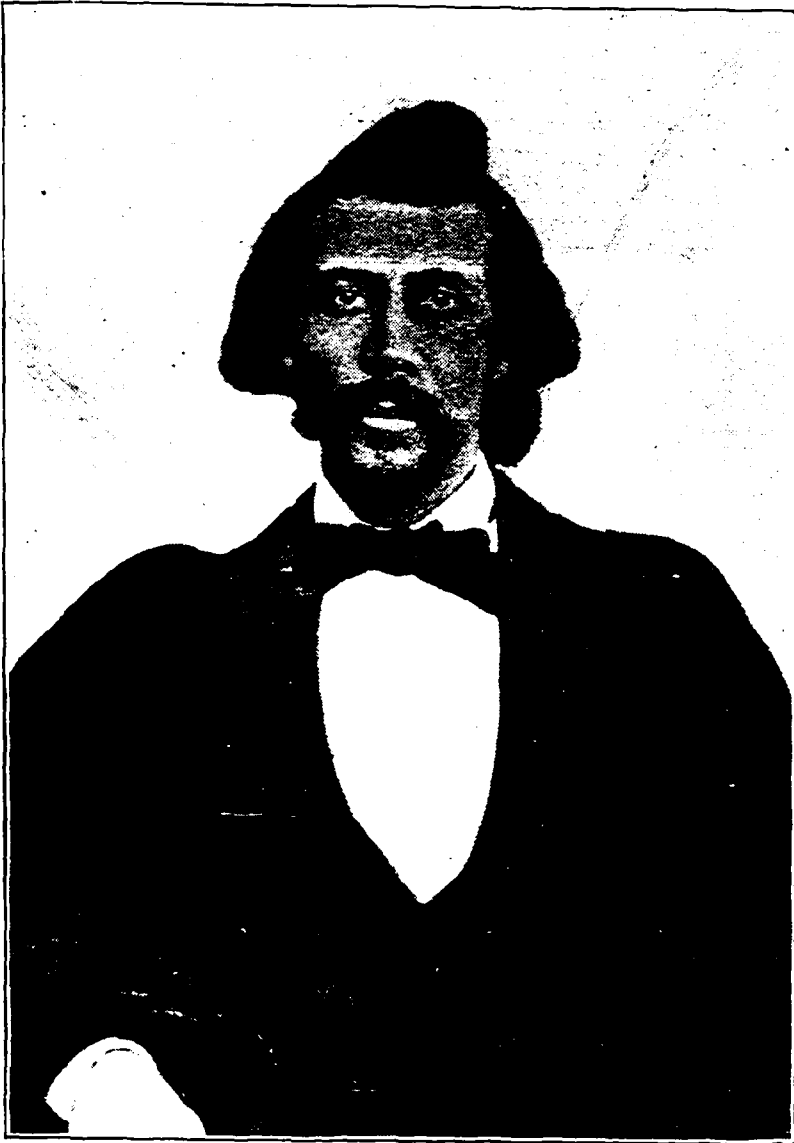
ESTHER M. CROMWELL-TAYLOR  
GREAT GRAND CHILD OF JAMES VARICK



when in 1796, his desire to establish a Negro Church took regular and permanent form in New York City. Associated with him were a great many Negroes, but we have the names of only a few, the full records of the movement are not at hand. But enough of the record is at hand to give authenticity to all we have to say about it. Our main guide is the early history of the church by Bishop Rush, who was an eye-witness to and participant in all the stirring events in the early history of the church. Francis Jacobs, William Brown, Peter Williams, Abraham Thompson, June Scott, Samuel Pontier, Thomas Miller, William Hamilton and others were associated with James Varick in this great movement. There were four men who immediately joined them after they had left John Street Methodist Episcopal Church, who played so important a part in the early history of the church, that their names should be directly connected with the names mentioned above. These names were: Levin Smith, William Miller, Christopher Rush and George Collins. Of these noble men who founded the A. M. E. Zion Church, James Varick was not the oldest or youngest. He was not as old as Abraham Thompson nor as young as Levin Smith. While Varick had attended the schools such as were afforded colored children in his day, he never wrote anything in book or pamphlet form. That he was a man far above the average man of color of his day in intelligence, no one has ever questioned. He succeeded to the

leadership of this new movement because he possessed elements of leadership which none of his associates enjoyed. He was a natural born leader of men. Otherwise he could not have pushed his way to the head of a movement so vast in its scope and so far-reaching in its influence. He was calm and calculative in his methods. The one dominant characteristic of his being was positiveness, or what Bishop Moore calls "firmness." He was tactful and persevering. It is interesting to note how Varick gradually took the lead of the men who were associated with him in establishing this new religious denomination. When the movement began he did not seem to be more prominent than some others. He kept himself ever in the background and used the other strong men about him, and by force of his superior executive abilities he eventually established the new religious denomination, Methodist Episcopal in form, and was elected its first Bishop. He was not given to much talk. He was a thinker and organizer. In 1796, when Varick led his movement to form a new church, he was not at that time a preacher himself. Just when James Varick was licensed to preach is not clearly known. He probably secured license between 1796 and 1800. In 1797, there was a great increase in colored members of John Street Methodist Episcopal Church, and it is not improbable that Varick, who was still on good terms with that church might have had something to do with this great ingathering of colored people in the church, and this might have led to his being





WILLIAM HOWARD DAY  
BAPTIZED BY JAMES VARICK



licensed to preach, so that he might assist in caring for them. This is mere conjecture, as we have no data to which we can refer to settle the matter. Another matter about which there is equally as much doubt is the exact date as to when Varick was ordained Deacon. It is clear that he was a preacher and possibly a Deacon for many years prior to 1820. When Bishop Allen came on from Philadelphia to New York, July 23, 1820, and held services on that date, which was Sabbath, his unfriendliness toward Zion Church had been such that the Zion ministers in New York determined not to exchange pulpit courtesies with him on that occasion. That is to say, the Zion preachers determined not to invite Bishop Allen to their pulpits, nor to accept an invitation from him to enter his pulpit. But on the date given above, Sunday, July 23, 1820, several of the Zion preachers attended the meeting conducted by Bishop Allen and sat in the altar. Varick himself opened one of the meetings on that Sabbath. This shows, of course, that Varick was a preacher of long standing, and the recognized head of the A. M. E. Zion Church. Too much cannot be said, in this connection, in favor of Rev. William Stilwell, the Elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who, before and after his withdrawal from that church, was the very best friend Varick and his followers had at this time, and he did more to prove his friendship than any one else of that period. He offered to ordain Varick an Elder and all others whom he might select. But Varick hesitated and

acted exactly like Wesley in the early days of Methodism, when Wesley was constant in his endeavors to establish the Methodist Church, but tenaciously held on to the Church of England. If Varick had accepted ordination of Elder's Orders at the hand of Elder Stilwell and his associates as soon as the offer was made he would have been in position to establish a church of Episcopal form and launch his new church without further embarrassment. As it was, Varick and his followers put off this vital matter until Wednesday night, September 13, 1820, when at a meeting, over which Rev. William M. Stilwell presided, Abraham Thompson and James Varick were nominated for Elder's Orders. On Sunday afternoon, October 1st, 1820, the time appointed for the election of these brethren, the meeting was presided over by the ever faithful Rev. William M. Stilwell. James Varick and Abraham Thompson were offered for Elder's Orders and upon the majority vote of those present, in a most solemn service these two men were elected to Elder's Orders.

## CHAPTER XI.

### SKETCH OF VARICK'S WORK—CONTINUED.—JAMES VARICK ELECTED ELDER AND FIRST BISHOP OF THE CHURCH.

Notwithstanding these men had been elected to Elder's Orders, they still wavered. And instead of having the ordination at once they waited until Monday night, June 17th, 1822. On this last date the whole society in large numbers were out

to witness the ordination services. Dr. James Covell preached an able and appropriate sermon, then he and Rev. Sylvester Hutchinson and Rev. William M. Stilwell solemnly ordained Abraham Thompson, James Varick and Levin Smith, to the Order of Elders. Thus, after many disappointments and many discouragements for over a quarter of a century they had these three Elders ordained. And as might be expected, everything assumed a brighter aspect from that very hour. These men were elected Elders and ordained in the order given above, making Abraham Thompson the senior Elder and Levin Smith the junior. Varick cared nothing for this technical point in which Thompson was elected Elder before him. He had pursued this policy of holding himself in the background from the beginning of the movement. But when it came to the election of Bishop, Varick took his proper place and was elected the first Bishop of his denomination.

Varick and his followers had their first meeting place in Cross street, which was fitted up with pulpit and seats, also a gallery. This first house of worship had formerly been a stable, and later a cabinet-maker's shop. This new movement, headed as it was by James Varick, drew to it the best element of Negroes in New York. From the very beginning it was styled "The Church of Rich Negroes." This congregation, which is the mother church of the great denomination founded by Varick, has always been since its foundation the most influential church among Negroes in the

city of New York. It is the only Negro church in New York City that has really built churches in New York. The first church built by this congregation was a frame church on the corner of Church and Leonard street. This soon gave place to a beautiful stone church on the same ground. As the city of New York began to grow so rapidly this congregation was offered a good price for its property, and the congregation decided to sell for \$93,000. They next bought a church corner of West Tenth and Bleecker streets for \$43,000, clearing fifty thousand dollars by the sale. After beautifying the new church and making it the most beautiful church in the city of New York they invested the rest of their money in real estate. As the business part of the city moved northward this congregation again found itself in a business settlement. They sold their church for \$96,000 a few years ago and bought lots in Eighty-ninth street for \$30,000, on which they have built the most beautiful and substantial church owned by colored people in the city of New York. The church cost them a good deal over a hundred thousand dollars. As we have said before, this church has been from its beginning the church of wealthy Negroes. As an illustration of this statement Samuel J. Howard, for many years a prominent official in the church, died, leaving an estate of two hundred thousand dollars.

I have spoken of this church in New York City at some length, because it is the mother

church of the entire denomination. Thus Varick began his work in New York City. But it was not all smooth sailing; there were dissensions now and then in his own ranks, and difficulties from without. A man by name of William Lambert, a layman in Zion Church, had been refused license to preach because it was thought he was not qualified for the office.

But he went to William Miller, who at this time had also left Zion Church and was at the head of a church called Asbury, which he had formed from certain dissatisfied members from Zion Church. Miller did not care to have Lambert with him, so he recommended him to Bishop Allen of Philadelphia. Lambert went to Philadelphia and joined Bethel Church there, and was licensed to preach. He was then sent back to New York in July, 1820, and with the assistance of George White, who had been a Deacon in Zion Church, he began the work of establishing a church under the supervision of Bishop Allen. They began work in Mott street, two blocks from Cross street, where Varick had his first meeting house. This society which had its beginning in Mott street, eventually went to East Side, and from East Side to Sullivan street, and from Sullivan street to Twenty-fifth street, where they now worship. We have no criticism to offer Bishop Allen for insisting upon establishing a church in New York when there were already two colored churches there—Zion and Asbury. Zion did nearly the same thing the latter part of the year 1820, when she received

a church into our connection in Philadelphia which had formerly been under the supervision of Bishop Allen, but had had a misunderstanding with him. Varick was slow to act, however, in this matter, and would not receive the church until he had been earnestly solicited to do so by the members of this church, both ministerial and lay. So that our Bethel Church in New York, now so prominent in that denomination, was made up largely at its organization of persons who had formerly been members of Zion church. And our Big Wesley church in Philadelphia, so influential in our denomination today, had its beginning under Bishop Allen.

Varick was worried a good deal about this time with Abraham Thompson, who tried to split Zion Church because he saw Varick's star constantly ascending and his own constantly descending.

## CHAPTER XII.

### SKETCH OF VARICK'S WORK—CONCLUDED.—ELECTED BISHOP.—HIS DEATH.

Although Varick was much younger than the now aged Abraham Thompson, he had always been recognized as the real head of the new religious society which was now beginning to take regular form as a distinct denomination among the religious bodies of the world. Five days after Varick's ordination as Elder, the first annual, which was also the first General Conference, met in Zion Church, New York City, June 22, 1821.



Varick was then duly elected head of his church and took his place as first Bishop of the A. M. E. Zion Church. Twenty-two preachers were on the roll and six churches were represented. The churches represented, with the members each had, were as follows:

	Members.
Zion Church, New York City .....	763
Asbury Church, New York City (which was then in Zion connection) .....	150
New Haven Church .....	24
Long Island (all churches on the Island) ...	155
Weslyan Church, Philadelphia .....	300
Eastern Pennsylvania .....	18
Total .....	<hr/> 1,426

Eighty-five years later, 1907, the membership had leaped to 569,305, and for the general church alone for six months was raised \$100,000.00.

Thus the church continued to grow each year, showing a great increase in membership. It is interesting to note the course the church took when it began to spread. Levin Smith was appointed a missionary to go as far as Boston. Rush was assigned to Newark, N. J. Edward Johnson was sent to Wesley Church, Philadelphia. From Philadelphia the church began to move South and West, so that it soon reached Baltimore and Washington, D. C., going South, and Harrisburg, Pittsburg and Alleghany in the West. Abraham Thompson was, of course, sent to New York.

Varick showed himself a man of superior executive ability in the appointments made this year. He sent his older men to the strong stations, but sent his younger men to the missionary points. The results show how wise he was in thus distributing his men over the territory then occupied. Varick, like every other man who has attained a prominent position among his fellows, especially when the road to success was questioned by and competed for by other strong men, who were associated with him in the movement, had his difficulties to overcome from the very beginning of the movement, and had to show the best of diplomacy to the closing days of his life. But a real leader proves his ability to lead by doing just these things. To have failed to harmonize these conflicting interests would have proven his unfitness to lead. In the first place he had Abraham Thompson to deal with. Abraham Thompson was an older man than Varick, and often showed both by word and deed that he felt that he ought to be head of the new denomination. Varick needed him, and so he often put Thompson in prominent places to satisfy his ambition. Then there was William Miller, who was a man of some prominence, but very unreliable, being in and out of the church all the while. He proved to be a thorn in Varick's side. Then there were those who criticised Varick for keeping in such close touch with the Methodist Episcopal Church. They wanted him to have an open rupture with that church. But Varick had too much good sense



AMELIA GERTRUDE WHEELER



for that, for all that he was he owed to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Then there were those in his own rank who criticised Varick severely for his considerate treatment of Bishop Allen at the time when Bishop Allen came to New York to establish a church, the nucleus of which was George White, William Lambert and others who had been formerly identified with Zion Church. It was a trying ordeal, especially with a disaffection that then prevailed in Zion Church. But Varick was calm and collected and was eloquent in his behavior. He not only attended one of Bishop Allen's meetings, but actually opened one of the meetings. Christopher Rush, who was the strongest man in Zion Church after Varick, and afterward became Bishop, never forgave Varick for this act. He claimed that Bishop Varick was untrue to Zion in treating Bishop Allen with so much consideration, who was there organizing a church composed so largely of dissatisfied members of Zion Church. But the fact that Varick was able to rise superior to all these obstacles and exhibit such a noble spirit under such trying conditions is another evidence of the greatness of the man. The fact that he succeeded so well, shows that he was not only well qualified for his difficult task, but was sustained by God through it all. Varick's toil and sacrifice for the race and the glorious success which crowned his labors will make his name to be loved and revered by all lovers of the race. But Varick was now ripe in years and had accomplished wonderful things in

life and well earned the reward that was now near at hand. The Conference which convened in New York City May 17, 1827, was the last Conference presided over by James Varick. Varick had toiled hard and with great patience to establish a denomination for his race where they could worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. He lived to see this long cherished desire realized. This church had become a fixity among the religious bodies of the world. In his home on Orange street while his sons Daniel and Andrew and his two daughters, Emeline and Mary, were still living and in good circumstances, and no doubt were with him to the last, James Varick breathed his last. He had presided over every session of the Conference, annual and general, of his church from its organization up to the time of his death, and the gavel which he wielded so well for many years, even before he was elected Bishop, he laid down in death. The gavel thus laid down by Varick was taken up by Christopher Rush. Varick had made for himself a name among the great men of earth. That name has now become a household word to hundreds of thousands of souls who have been brought to God through the instrumentality of the church which he founded. Again, let us thank God that there was ever a man sent from God whose name was James.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## BRIEF SKETCH OF AUTHOR'S LIFE.

Benjamin Franklin Wheeler was born February 6th, 1854, in Charlotte, N. C. The early part of his life was clouded with experiences of hardships, incident to human slavery. At six or seven years of age he was hired out by his owners as a child's nurse. The wages paid was "victuals and clothes." He was later hired out to Rev. Pritchard, pastor of Tryon Street Methodist Church, South, Charlotte, N. C., "as house boy." The wages paid his owners was the same as before. At the close of the war he was living with his owner, Mr. Charles Spratt, at Morrow's Turn-out, now called Piney Grove. He was then eleven years old. He went from Morrow's Turn-out into town and saw the "Ankies" for the first time. He attended the schools established in Charlotte by the Freedmen's Friends Association. When he was not at school he was working in cotton fields or working on the brick yard. He next ran away from home, though but a boy, and hired to a man to go to Ten-Mile Point (ten miles from Charleston, S. C.), to labor in the phosphate works. Though all the rest were men but himself, he intended to get rich at this, and return home and lord it over the rest of the boys. But all the workmen were cheated out of their money and those who got home at all had to walk, he among the rest. He walked from Charleston, S. C., to Charlotte, N. C., two hundred and thirty miles, in

company with three others who were grown young men. They had to beg for bread along the way home. Because he was small the other three made him do the begging, while they waited at the roadside or under the trees. Many of the houses sat far back into the yard and he was dreadfully afraid of dogs, as most people through that section of country kept very bad dogs. He says of these begging trips, "The most the people gave me was corn bread. Now and then a family would give me some wheat bread with the corn bread. In such cases I generally ate the wheat bread by the time I reached the other boys, and had only the corn bread to give them." He now worked in hotels in Columbia, S. C., in Charlotte, N. C., and in Raleigh, N. C., for two or three years, and then he and his friend Preston Hall made their way to New York City. All through his life up to this time he had lived in abject poverty. A widowed mother with five children had done the best she could to keep clothes on their backs and food enough in their stomachs to keep them living, and give them a little schooling. In New York he struck a wild set of boys who had preceded him from the South. But he was soon converted in Mother Zion Church, corner of West Tenth and Bleecker streets. He felt called to preach at once, but determined to attend school as a preparation for the ministry. He went to Oberlin, Ohio, and entered the preparatory department of Oberlin College, where he spent five years. In 1882 he entered the Sophomore Class of Lincoln University





REV. B. F. WHEELER, D. D. (LATEST PICTURE)

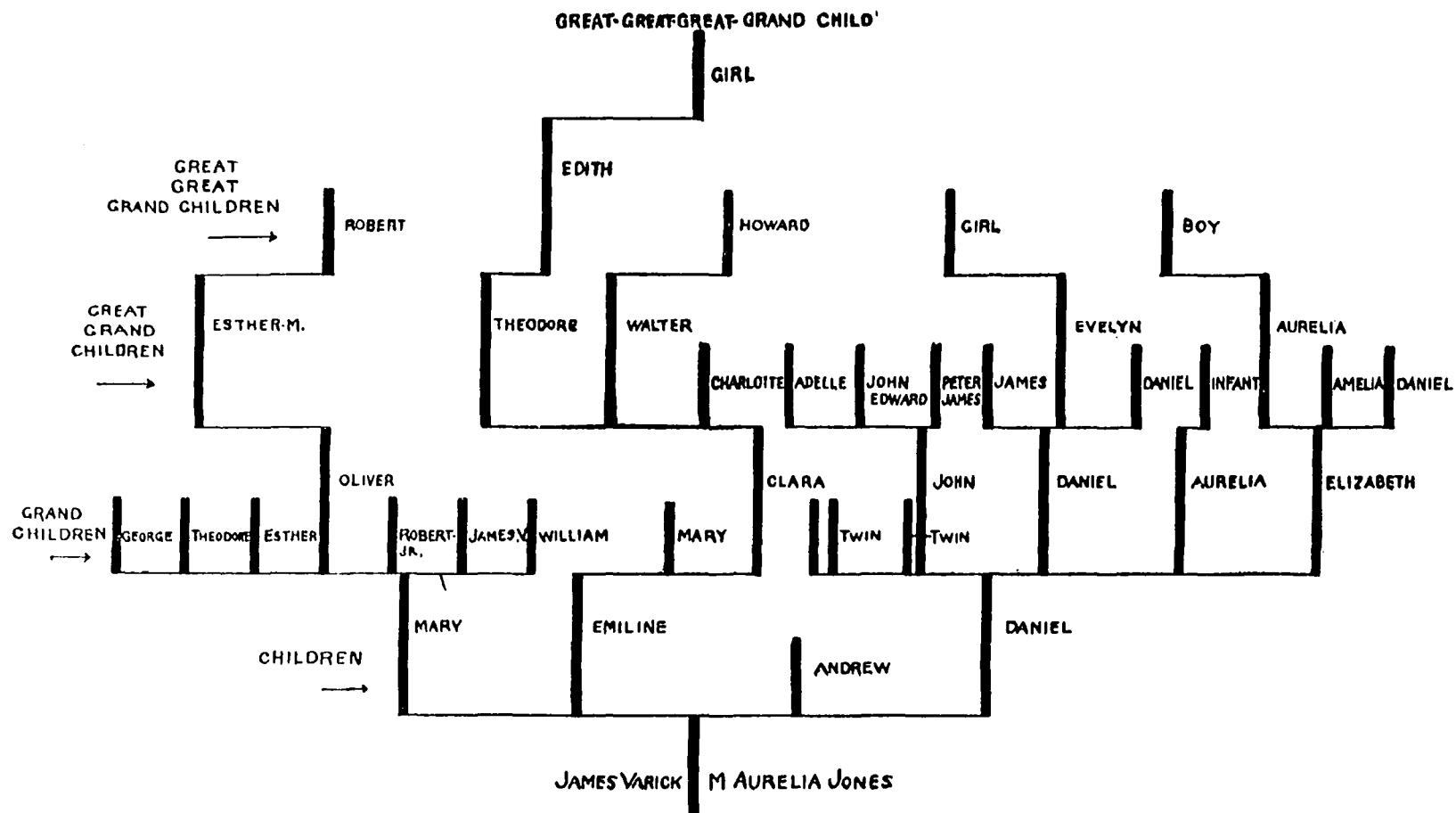


and graduated in 1885. As his scant savings gave out at Oberlin he used to do all kinds of work to pay his way in school. He says of these times, "I used to saw wood from four o'clock in the morning by lantern light standing in snow knee deep, while the wind blew like a hurricane. When I had sawed all the wood and could get nothing else to do, I boarded myself a while. I bought a tin tea pot for ten cents and a frying pan. All my cooking was done in these two vessels. A little tea and a great deal of water and a little brown sugar constituted my beverage for breakfast. I would make one egg and a little bread with a good deal of weak tea constitute my meal, and thus I would live until I could get another job." After graduating from Lincoln University with the degree of A. B., he entered the Theological Department of the same school, from which he graduated in 1888 with the degree of Bachelor of Sacred Theology. While pursuing this course in Theology he was employed as instructor in Greek in the preparatory department. So, for this extra literary work he had conferred on him by his Alma Mater the honorary degree of A. M. He next went to Drew Theological Seminary and repeated his senior year in Theology with special reference to Methodist Church polity. In addition to the regular Seminary course he took extra studies in Belles Lettres. On graduating in 1899 the degree of B. D. was conferred on him by Drew Theological Seminary. On joining the New Jersey Conference he wanted the smallest charge in the Conference, and was sent to

Somerville Circuit, which consisted of Somerville and Flemington. At Somerville there were a good many colored people, 450, but no place of worship. At Flemington there was a little church (greatly in debt), but no people. He had no money and the people seemed to have none, and after preaching at Flemington in the morning on Sundays he walked sixteen miles to Somerville to preach at night. Somerville was without a regular organization. There was no house of worship and no land on which to build one, and the minister who had been there last had left because, as he said, he could get nothing upon which to live. All they could promise the new pastor was his board and lodging. He agreed to the arrangement and went to work. But it was found that the board of the pastor was costing sixty cents a day, twenty cents a meal. He had told them at the beginning that there must be no debts. But the pastor's board at the rate of sixty cents a day was causing a debt, hence a meeting of the church was called to adjust the matter. After discussing the matter thoroughly and no adjustment was in sight, the minister suggested a way out, and that was that the minister should only eat two meals a day. All agreed to this, and all hands went to work again. Soon a revival was held in which many souls were converted and the church more than doubled its membership. A beautiful lot was bought on one of the best streets in the town, on which to erect a church. Soon a new church was erected, and great prosperity at-

tended the work, and after four and a half years' labor this church had grown to be the largest and best in the Conference, paying its pastor more salary than any other church in the Conference, and the entire church property, costing over five thousand dollars, being entirely free of debt except five hundred and fifty dollars. This was the church that was without organization four years and a half before, and could only give its pastor board and lodging, and only two meals at that, as a salary. But no church he has had since has ever given him more pleasure to serve than this. He next went to Jersey City, where in one year many of the floating debts were paid and a large congregation gathered. Then the Bishop appointed him Presiding Elder of the District. But so strong was the protest made by the people against his leaving that the Bishop had to come on and reconcile them. After two years in the Presiding Eldership of the Conference he was transferred to the Western New York Conference and placed in charge of the church at Ithaca, N. Y. Here phenomenal success attended his labors and the heavy debt on the church paid in its entirety, except four hundred and fifty dollars, and a deed secured for the property. He was then placed in the Presiding Eldership of one of the Presiding Elder's District of the Conference. At the end of the first year the two districts were united and he was placed at the head of it. Signal success followed his labors until the end of four years, when he asked to be released. He also asked to take one

of the smallest places in the Conference, and asked that the minister having charge of this small place should be given his place as Presiding Elder. This he did especially, so as not to have any of the men in the larger stations removed to make a place for him. The Bishop did not want to give him so small a place, coming down as he had come, from the Presiding Eldership. But he insisted, and the Bishop finally agreed, and he was placed at Oneida, N. Y., which church had eight members. This is a beautiful little church and a nice set of people. A house for a parsonage was bought and the church property generally improved. The parsonage had seven rooms and was splendidly located. At the end of the year this little church with eight members, with the hearty co-operation of pastor and people, had raised over twelve hundred dollars, paying the pastor six hundred dollars and parsonage, and leaving only four hundred dollars due on the splendid seven room parsonage. It is but fair to state that the good white friends of the town generously helped in the work. His next charge was Auburn, N. Y. Here in connection with the church work he secured to the denomination the Harriett Tubman Home, beautiful property situated on South street, valued at at least ten thousand dollars. The Auburn Church was beautified in the interior and raised more in Conference claims during his pastorate than at any time of its history. From Auburn he was sent to Mobile, Ala., one of the largest and most beautiful churches owned by the race. It has a splendid



THE JAMES VARICK TREE

THE JAMES VARICK FAMILY TREE

(READ FROM RIGHT TO LEFT)





membership, made up of some of the most intelligent, wealthy and influential people of color in the city. Here at this historic church, the oldest of any Negro church in the city, his labors have been abundantly blessed. Between four and five hundred have been added to the church, and the Conference claims of the church almost doubled to what they were before.

The first General Conference he attended was in Newbern, N. C., 1888, and has attended all the General Conferences since then. He received forty-three votes for the Bishopric in Mobile, Ala., in 1896. At the same General Conference he was elected General Secretary of Education of his church, and served four years, when he asked to be relieved.

In 1896 the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on him by Livingstone College after the delivery of the baccalaureate sermon. The same degree was conferred on him later by Lincoln University.

Among his literary works may be mentioned A Translation of Cicero's First Invective Against Catiline, Delivered in the Senate Nov. 8, B. C. 63; History of the Somerville Church; Cullings From Zion's Poets, now ready for publication. Besides many articles for magazines and newspapers.

## AMELIA GERTRUDE WHEELER.

Dr. Wheeler was married June 16th, 1896, to Miss Amelia Gertrude Craig, of Somerville, N. J., Rev. M. M. Edmonson performing the ceremony. They were married at the beautiful residence of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Craig, 95 Hamilton street. She had attended the public schools of the city, and had special training in instrumental music. She and her older sister had for years conducted a hair dressing establishment on Main street in Somerville, where they had the leading people of the city as their patrons. At the time of her marriage she was the organist of the A. M. E. Zion Church at Somerville, of which church she was a member. After marrying she entered heartily in sympathy with her husband's work. Having become proficient as a typewriter, she serves as typewriter in all of his correspondence. She is greatly liked by all the people whom her husband has served as pastor since their marriage. But she is quiet of manner and never pushes herself to the front, but always prefers to remain in the background, where she watches every interest pertaining to her husband's welfare. She was born in Somerville, N. J., in the same house in which she was married.

B. F. WHEELER

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JAMES VARICK  
FOUNDER OF THE A. M. E. ZION CHURCH

