

Saint Thomas' Protestant Episcopal Church

Near junction of U.S. Route 601 and South Carolina Route 263

Eastover

St. Thomas' Protestant Episcopal Church was founded at the urging of Bishop William Bell White Howe, who sought to address what he saw as a lack of mission work by the Episcopal Church among the black population. The Reverend Thomas Boston Clarkson, son of a prominent Richland County planter, was appointed by Bishop Howe to minister to the black residents of lower Richland County. A chapel was erected on Middleburg, the Clarkson family plantation. The Clarksons eventually sold Middleburg and made their permanent home in their former summer residence in the Sandhills. Here Clarkson's wife, Septima, established a Sunday school for the black children in the community. In 1885 the Reverend James Saul of Philadelphia donated funds for the erection of a church. The new church, named Saul Chapel, was built in the Sandhills with Clarkson as minister. The Saul Chapel burned to the ground in 1891 and was replaced by the present building and renamed St. Thomas' Protestant Episcopal Church. Completed in 1893, the church was served by both black and white priests. Septima Clarkson carried out missionary work at St. Thomas' until her death, at which time her daughter assumed her teaching position. Today the church continues to have an active congregation. [Lower Richland County MRA, CA 3/27/86, 86000539]