

FitzGerald, Frederick ^[1]

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1825–31 Aug. 1866

Frederick FitzGerald, Episcopal ^[2]clergyman and Confederate chaplain, was born in London but came to North Carolina at an early age and was reared in the family of Josiah Collins ^[3] at Scuppernong. FitzGerald became a candidate for holy orders in 1847 during the episcopate of the Right Reverend Levi S. Ives ^[4], bishop of North Carolina. He attended Berkeley Divinity School, then studied in Middletown, Conn. After further preparation for the ministry at Valle Crucis, N.C., he was ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Ives at St. Paul's Church, Edenton ^[5], on 29 Apr. 1851. Immediately, he was sent to Northampton County ^[6] to take charge of the Church of the Saviour at Jackson. While there he lived with the planter Henry K. Burgwyn ^[7] at his estate, Thornbury, and tutored the Burgwyn children. When Bishop Ives defected to the Roman Catholic church ^[8] in 1852, there was no bishop in the diocese to ordain FitzGerald to the priesthood. Consequently, at the request of the standing committee, the Right Reverend John Williams, assistant bishop of Connecticut, ordained him in Christ Church, Philadelphia, on 4 Sept. 1853. During this period, the young clergyman served congregations at Jackson, Halifax, and Occoneechee Neck. The latter group consisted of some of the enslaved people of Burgwyn who met in a chapel at Thornbury. FitzGerald also held services periodically at Murfreesboro and Woodville. It seems to have been his practice to write a history of his parish, and in some cases these survive in manuscript in the front of the parish register.

In 1855 FitzGerald was called to become rector of the Episcopal congregation at Goldsboro, where he was largely responsible for the construction of St. Stephen's Church ^[9]. Two years later he was recalled to the Church of the Saviour. He felt, however, that he could not leave St. Stephen's and remained in Goldsboro although he gave the Jackson congregation two Sundays a month for about a year. At the same time he also served St. Mary's Church, Kinston. In 1859 FitzGerald was awarded the master of arts degree *honoria causa* by Trinity College, Hartford, Conn., in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the growth of the Episcopal church in North Carolina.

In 1860 FitzGerald removed to Raleigh. The census of that year lists his household as consisting of his wife Mary, age twenty-four, a native of Connecticut, daughters Elizabeth and Mary, three and one, respectively, and mulatto domestic Louise Steward, twenty-eight, together with Edward and Lady, four and two, apparently her children. In Raleigh he served in the dual capacity of assistant to Dr. Aldert Smedes ^[10] at St. Mary's School and editor of the newly established *Church Intelligencer*, one of the three church papers published in the Confederacy at the opening of the Civil War. The first issue appeared on 14 Mar. 1860 under the editorship of FitzGerald. On 6 June he resigned both positions to become a chaplain in the Confederate Army. With the rank of major, he served with the Twelfth North Carolina Regiment and at hospitals in and near Raleigh. A chaplain from Maine, captured during the war and imprisoned in Richmond, was once charged with violating his parole; he cited FitzGerald as a reference on his behalf.

After the war FitzGerald observed that he had "neither occupation or revenue." Consequently, he accepted a call to become rector of Trinity Church, Hoboken, N.J., in November 1865. Less than a year later he was called to the Church of the Advent in Nashville, Tenn. While preparing to accept the post, he was stricken with a fatal heart attack in late August. His funeral was held at Trinity Church, Hoboken, and he was buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Hartford, Conn. He was survived by his widow, the former Mary Louisa Jarvis, daughter of the Reverend William J. Jarvis of Hartford. A son, Frederick, was born after his father's death.

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Additional Resources:

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[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[25]

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