

WORKSHOP  
APALACHICOLA CITY COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2023, 2:00-3:00PM  
BATTERY PARK COMMUNITY CENTER  
1 BAY AVE., APALACHICOLA, FLORIDA 32320

**Agenda**

You are welcome to comment on any matter under consideration by the Apalachicola City Commission when recognized to do so by the Mayor. Once recognized please rise to the podium, state your name for the record and adhere to the three minute time limit for public comment. Comments may also be sent by email to the City Manager or to Commissioners.

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Agenda Adoption**
- III. Black History Trail Discussion**
- IV. Public Comment**
- V. Adjournment**

Any person who desires to appeal any decision at this meeting will need a record of the proceeding and for this purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceeding is made which includes testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based. Persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Clerk's Office 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

# City of Apalachicola Proposed Black History Displays and Locations



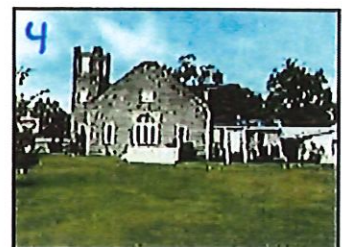
1  
Apalachicola  
Northern Railroad  
Water Street or  
Avenue G. *Business on the Hill*



2  
Scipio Creek  
*Minnie Barefield's  
Mansion*



3  
Odd Fellow Lodge



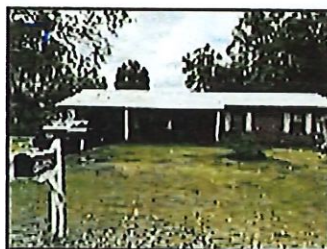
4  
Mount Zion Baptist  
Church



5  
Holy Family



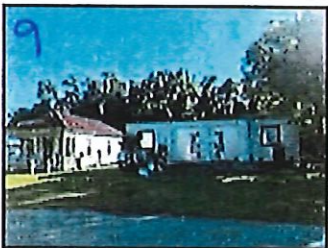
6  
Friendship Baptist  
Church



7  
Paul Lawrence  
Dunbar High School



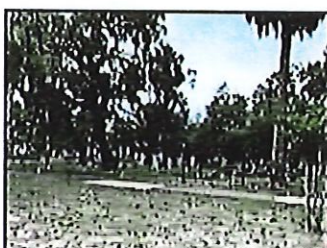
8  
Washington Square  
(Courthouse Square)  
*Masonic Hall - 6th St*



9  
First Born Church of  
the Living God



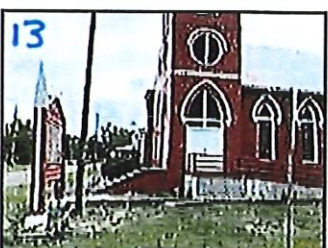
10  
Wallace Quinn High  
School



11  
Magnolia Cemetery



12  
Snow Hill Cemetery



13  
St. Paul African  
Methodist Episcopal  
Church

## **BUSINESSES ON THE HILL**

There were only a few paved roads on The Hill in its early days. One of those paved roads was Avenue J (now MLK Avenue) which ran through the commercial heart of Black Apalachicola. In its heyday, The Hill community had many business establishments.

### **Dr. Humphries Street & Martin Luther King Avenue**

At Dr. Humphries Street and MLK was the Snack Bar, Barbershop and Pool Hall owned and operated by the Oakland Rhodes family.

Traveling south toward Avenue I, was the Hill Grocery Store & Gas Station owned by Mr. Will Ziegler. James Baker was the butcher.

Traveling north on Dr. Humphries Street, on Avenue M, between Humphries and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets was Rhodes Grocery & Butcher owned and operated by Mr. Tom Rhodes and family.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Street & MLK**

At 8<sup>th</sup> Street and MLK was Simpson's Dry Cleaners & Laundering owned and operated by James Simpson. Mr. Simpson also operated a funeral home located on the north side of MLK between Dr. Humphries and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets.

Around the corner, heading north on 8<sup>th</sup> Street toward Avenue K on the east side of the Street was The Club Ramona owned by the Kinlaw family, and the Kinlaw oyster house.

Heading south on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, between Avenue I and H, on the north side of the street, was Sam's Place, owned and operated by Sam Stephens and Gladys Ford. In the early 1940s, Sam's Place was home to four establishments: an Ice Cream Parlor; a package

liquor store with a VIP room in the back for White city and county officials who didn't care to be seen drinking alcohol beverages downtown; a drug store; and a dentist office for Dr. Hall, an African American from Port St. Joe Florida.

Heading south on 8<sup>th</sup> Street over to 8<sup>th</sup> and Avenue E was Smith's General Store, owned and operated by Charlie Smith.

### **9<sup>th</sup> Street & MLK**

At 9<sup>th</sup> Street and MLK on the south west corner was Sister Fluellen's Café and across the street was one of John Henry Joseph's juke joints.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Street & MLK**

Continuing south on Avenue MLK at 10<sup>th</sup> Street, heading south toward Avenue I, between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> on the north side of the Avenue was West End Grocery owned and operated George and Mary Clark.

From MLK heading west toward Avenue K was The Sunset juke joint and at the corner of Avenue K and 10<sup>th</sup> Street on the south west corner was the Blue Goose, a juke joint owned and operated by Queen Cooper.

At Avenue L and 10<sup>th</sup> Street on the north east corner was The Flat Top owned and operated by Edith Mae Mills.

Between Avenue L and M on the north side of 10<sup>th</sup> Street was John Henry Joseph's The Seven Seas.

### **Charles Watson Clark Street and MLK**

At Charles Watson Clark Street and MLK, head north to Avenue K. On Avenue K, between 10<sup>th</sup> and Charles Watson Clark Street on

the south side of the Avenue, at the alley is a small building - this was Mrs. Janie Shins Beauty Parlor.

Continue on Charles Watson Street to Avenue M, between M and the Public Housing complex, on the east side of the street was Mr. Andrew Salter's Shop where he sold candy, cookies and novelties.

### **12<sup>th</sup> Street & MLK**

At 12<sup>th</sup> Street and MLK, head north on 12<sup>th</sup> Street and on the west side of the Street is a white cinder block building that was home to a food and novelties store operated by the Speed family. The building was also an oyster house at one point.

Heading north on 12<sup>th</sup> Street out past Avenue M on the west side of the street across from the Public Housing complex was Sugar Hill – a store that sold soft drinks, cold beers, and an assortment of snacks.

### **Cafés & Recreational Establishments**

Fry's Café and Pool Hall

Green Lantern

Royal Café

The Oaks

Sugar Hill

The Hill was a pulsating, vibrant community with multiple commercial establishments where community residents purchased groceries, seafood, and home cooked prepared meals. There were places for dancing, drinking, eating, visiting, and ostentatious joy making.

Today, The Hill is home to people from across the United States and the new residents are not all African American. The community needs gathering spaces, designed to welcome long time Hill

residents and new residents into conversations that create a solid community of 21<sup>st</sup> Century residents on The Hill.

## **Minnie Barefield's Mansion**

The Minnie Barefield mansion was located at this location in Apalachicola. The house was built in 1907 by lumberman Charles Dobson for his mistress, Minnie Barefield, an African descended woman of mixed-race, who owned a brothel in town. The two-story 14-room mansion, constructed of heart pine and cypress, featured high ceilings, eight fireplaces, carved mantels, imported tiles, stained glass windows, and sunny porches overlooking the surrounding area of the Hill. There were leaded, beveled glass windows around the front entrance and there were Tiffany glass windows at the top of the elegant staircase in the main entry hallway of the mansion. The home is nearly identical to the Coombs House (1905) built just two years earlier and believed to have also been the work of one of the Marshall brothers.

Minnie Barefield was the daughter of John and Mary J. Barefield. She was born in Alabama, December 22, 1866. Her brother, Ruben Barefield was the father of Mary Jane Barefield Simpson Tolliver who taught for 46 years in Dunbar, Quinn, and Chapman schools. Mary Jane Tolliver lived in a house across the street from the mansion her entire life. The home Mary Jane and her family lived in was once owned by Minnie Barefield.

Minnie Barefield owned many properties on the Hill. In the 1900 Census, Minnie is the head of her household and living with her at the time of the Census was her brother,

Ruben, age 23, and Charles Dobson listed as a boarder and of the White race.

Minnie Barefield died on December 26, 1917. The cause of death on her death certificate is heart failure. Her remains are interred in the Colored Section of Magnolia Cemetery. Family members report that prior to her death Minnie purchased her coffin and kept it in the enormous attic in the mansion. She also purchased marble sculptures of angels and other figures to adorn her gravesite. These sculptures were removed from the grave by her nephew-in-law, Edward Tolliver, for safe keeping. Unfortunately, the ornamental figurines were stolen after Edward Tolliver's death in 2001.

The mansion was purchased in 1919 by Bishop Allen of Mobile to be used as a convent for Sisters of The Holy Family from New Orleans, one of three Black orders of Catholic nuns in the U.S. The nuns arrived in Apalachicola on February 5, 1920. For the next 47 years, Minnie Barefield's mansion was home to the Sisters assigned to serve the Hill's Black community of Apalachicola. For a time, some of the mansion's rooms were used by the nuns as classrooms until The Holy Family School building opened in 1929.

In 1974, Father Hugh Dolan sold the mansion to Ruth and Eldon Schoelles, and they moved the building to an Eleven Mile tract of land located off of State Road 30A between Port St. Joe and Apalachicola. It took 3-days to move the estimated 165-ton house to its current location.



## Odd Fellows Hall

The Grand Order of Odd Fellows was essentially a mutual aid society. Mutual aid societies were created by Black people throughout the United States starting in the early days of the presence of Black people in the English colonies and climaxing in the late 19th century. Most often, the groups provided benefits related to illness, death, and other family matters as insurance does today. The practical benefits of membership assisted in defraying expenses of burial, sickness, disability, and widowhood. While no exact amounts were ensured to members, the success of the Order suggests its ability to provide a reasonable level of support to those in need. While churches were often charitable within their community regarding these matters, those who attended, either enslaved or free Black people, faced discrimination by those who gave out aid.

One of the key players in the development of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows in the United States was Peter Ogden, a man of African descent who traveled between New York and Liverpool, England through his service as a steward on a ship. While in England, he became an Odd Fellow and was a member long before the idea of an American lodge for non-whites was considered. Peter Ogden was born in the West Indies and served on the S.S. Patrick Henry as a steward. He was the founder of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows in America. He reportedly swayed Black people in the United States interested in the Odd Fellows to focus their attention on gaining affiliation with an English lodge rather than lodges in the United States.

By the 1880's, the Odd Fellows underwent a remarkable expansion period and went far beyond the local pockets of membership in the north. The Odd Fellows Hall in Apalachicola FL at 143 Sixth Street was built between 1881 and 1883 as a meeting hall for the local Black fraternal Order.

The period from the end of the Civil War to the First World War has been called the golden age of social fraternities. Emancipation, and jobs in factories, lumber, and other industries brought people together off the farms and gave them more time for leisure activities. Before radio and television fraternal orders provided spaces and places for socialization, sharing and learning about events in the news, and a sense of community. Freemasons, Odd Fellows and Knights of Pythias all had chapters in Apalachicola comprised of Black people. The golden age of social fraternities was a good fit for the communal care approach embraced by Black people to build communities after Emancipation.

The two-story wooden structure originally had a two-story porch just across the southwestern façade facing Sixth Street. The distinctive clipped gables are known as a jerkin head roof. The downstairs space was rented out to businesses. At one point a skating rink was located in the building. The second floor housed the meeting room for the lodge. Besides lodge meetings the space was also used by other organizations and community groups as a meeting space. In 1890 the Odd Fellows Hall hosted a meeting of the black sawmill workers when they decided to go on strike for higher wages. During the construction of the John Gorrie Bridge in the 1930 the hall hosted regular dances.

When Dunbar School for Black students burned down in 1944, the Odd Fellow Hall was school for a portion of the students until a new school was built. The Odd Fellow Hall was used by teachers and students from Dunbar until April 1945 when Wallace M. Quinn High School opened

Eventually the local Odd Fellows disbanded, and the building fell into disuse. After sitting vacant for several years, it was purchased by the City of Apalachicola in 1987 and the structure was renovated into several apartments. The porches stretching down each side of the building were added at this time. The city sold the property in 1998. It is in private ownership today.

**ADDRESS: 143 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Apalachicola FL**

## Mount Zion Baptist Church

Mt. Zion Baptist Church, once known as First Baptist Church, was established in Apalachicola in 1848 as a Baptist Church for White people. In addition to the white congregants, the church was attended by enslaved people owned by the enslavers who were members of the church. The first clergyman was J. C. Lacy, a White man. After the Civil War, many white people left the city, and the church was given to the colored people who had attended the church with the people who owned them.

Originally the congregation was housed in a wooden sanctuary on the same property where it is located today at the intersection of Avenue E and 8th Street. A second building was erected in 1889 on the site of the first church but it faced 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Both the 1848 and the 1889 buildings were wooden structures. The first Black clergyman at Mt. Zion church was Pastor Benjamin Lopierce who served the congregation during the period after the Civil War until 1880.

In 1917, George H. Marshall, a prominent local Euro American builder, completed the structure that is the church today. Built of cast concrete block with a rusticated surface, the Mount Zion Church is a unique structure in Apalachicola. Stepped parapet gable walls face Avenue E and 8th Street, while a crenelated bell tower nestles in the western intersection of the t-shaped structure. The bell was donated by Mrs. Ruge, wife of a local seafood cannery businessman. Unlike the other churches built in Apalachicola during the first two decades of the twentieth century, the main windows in the Mt. Zion Church are Roman arched, not Gothic.

In 1939, the pastor at Mt. Zion Baptist Church was T. J. Hayes. He received his formal education from Selma University in Selma AL. At this time the church held Sunday School, BYPU, and there was a Women's Missionary Society. There was also an organization for young girls called the Red Circle. Officers of the church included Sarah Philipps, Secretary Board of Trustees, and Horace Nelson, Deacon and Church Clerk.

The structure was rehabilitated in 1988 and 2001 with financial assistance from the Florida Department of State. In the early days of its existence, the church was called by two names, First Baptist Church and Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

**Holy Family School & Church**  
Apalachicola FL

Mercy Paige, a Black resident of Apalachicola, wrote a letter to Bishop Patrick Allen in Mobile AL requesting that he establish a mission in Apalachicola for Black people because the "the field of souls in the area was ripe for the harvest". The year was 1919.

In 1920, Bishop Allen purchased this city block of property for \$3,500. At the time, on the property, there were several small houses and a large fourteen-room mansion. A small house was renovated and used for a chapel, and one of the small houses was used for a rectory. Francis de Sales, a Franciscan Missioner, on sick leave living in the Diocese of Mobile, was appointed pastor at Holy Family.

On February 5, 1920, a group of nuns from the missionary Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family (one of three orders of African American nuns in the U.S.) arrived from New Orleans to serve the new mission in Apalachicola. Twenty years before the Civil War of the United States, and before it was legal for such a Congregation to exist, the Sisters of the Holy Family were founded in New Orleans, Louisiana by Henriette Delille, a free woman of color. Co-foundresses of this religious community of African-American women were Juliette Gaudin and Josephine Charles.

Sister Sacred Heart, Mother Superior in New Orleans, selected the name for the Apalachicola parish – Holy Family. She appointed Sister M. Sebastian, Superior of the nuns in Apalachicola. Sister Sebastian, Sister M. Josephine, and Sister M. Barbara arrived in Apalachicola on February 5, 1920. Ten non-Catholics greeted the Sisters when they arrived. The nuns used the fourteen-room, two story mansion as a convent-school.

In 1922, the Sisters were commissioned to open a school, and seventy-seven students enrolled. The majority of the students were non-Catholic. In 1925, there were eighty-five students enrolled in the school. Reverend Thomas H. Massey became pastor at Holy Family in 1926. The increasing enrollments of students supported the need for a school dedicated to this work. The Sisters and Father Massey made it possible for a school to be built. Bishop Toolen dedicated the new school building on August 28, 1928.

The building housed four large classrooms, and an auditorium which was used as a parish church. In 1943 when Holy Family Mission celebrated its Silver Jubilee, there were 125 pupils enrolled in the school with four teachers. There were two grades in each of the four classrooms.

Sister Mary Barbara served the children and residents of The Hill for 32 years and she was the Superior for the nuns during most of her time in Apalachicola. She was deeply loved and respected. Sister Mary Barbara left the Holy Family Mission in 1951.

Father Massey served the people of Apalachicola for 25 years. During his time at Holy Family, he baptized 212 people. When he left in 1951, the parish was served by the Congregation of the Resurrection Fathers with Rev. Stephen Juda replacing Fr. Massey as pastor. On January 2, 1959, the Society of St. Edmund was assigned to serve Holy Family Mission. Rev. Edward Stapleton was pastor for a short time when he was replaced by Father Lawrence Boucher, who remained at the parish until 1968.

The Sisters of the Holy Family served the people of Apalachicola from 1920 until the closing of the mission in 1968. Hundreds of children were taught by the Sisters and the corridors of the building contain many black & white photos of the children, the nuns, and the spaces they used for prayer, teaching/learning, and recreation.

In June 1968, the Sisters of the Holy Family withdrew from the Apalachicola Parish, as did the Edmundite Fathers, and the school closed. On July 1, 1968, Northwest Florida was transferred from the Diocese of Mobile-Birmingham to the Diocese of St. Augustine. Rev. John C. Carroll Bender was then pastor at the Holy Family Church and, St. Patrick, the Catholic Church for White people.

Black parishioners continued to attend mass at the Holy Family Catholic Church which persisted until 1987. In spite of great financial odds, the Church was self-sustaining until its last days.

In 1974, Father Hugh E. Dolan, sold the Holy Family convent to Mr. and Mrs. Schoelles, a white couple, for \$6,000. They paid \$16,000 to have it moved to a site on the Bay between Apalachicola and Port St. Joe. FL.

In 2004, the City of Apalachicola obtained the building from the Diocese. With a variety of funds, including \$50,000 from the Franklin County Tourist Development Council and \$1.5 million from the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, the building was renovated to serve the people of Apalachicola as a Senior Citizen Center. The revitalized building opened in 2012.

**ADDRESS: 203 Dr. Frederick Humphries Street  
Apalachicola Fl**

## FRIENDSHIP MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Though the year 1906 is recognized as the official founding of the Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, events, which started two years prior, set in motion the beginnings of the second Missionary Baptist church in Apalachicola. In 1904, those that eventually became the ancestry of the Friendship Family, were initially a part of the Primitive Baptist Church, which was located on 11<sup>th</sup> Street in the Hill Community of Apalachicola. Because of a disagreement that centered on church attendance and finances, several members became displeased with this church and left, aligning themselves with Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church, the lone Missionary Baptist church in Apalachicola, in its current location on the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Avenue E. Those members were: Minister Byrd, Sis. Clara Byrd, Dea. Anderson, Sis. Anderson, Dea. Lee, Sis. Gerture Lee, Bro. Iraseal Abraham and Sis. Mary Anderson.

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Despite the change in location to their new church home, disputes continued, resulting in those same eight members disassociating themselves from Mount Zion and making the decision to establish a new church elsewhere. In looking on and around the Hill for a suitable location, an empty house at the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Avenue L, was deemed appropriate for their needs. Those eight determined men and women rented this structure and began a new church, under the spiritual leadership of Minister Byrd and there they worshipped together, with the membership growing from the initial eight members to thirteen (13) dedicated souls.

Minister Byrd led this band of Christians for two years, from 1904-1906, providing spiritual guidance; however, the group decided since they were firmly established as a new church, it was time to call an official pastor to continue on as their spiritual leader. Thus, in 1906, they decided to call Pastor J. C. Sapp to lead their fledging group of parishioners. Pastor Sapp came to Apalachicola from the Tallahassee Association; however, due to dislike from the older preachers in his association, he was refused ordination. Because of this, the members of the still unnamed Apalachicola church, continued in their quest for a pastor and this time, looked towards the west, to the Bethlehem Association (*which later became the New Gulf Coast Missionary Baptist Association.*) There they found Rev. N. A. Tillman.

Pastor Tillman was favorably received by all--the parishioners here in Apalachicola and the association's leaders--and was ordained by the association in 1906. As the first official pastor, Rev. Tillman guided the members into deciding on an official name, with that selection being '*Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.*' As the leader of the now named church, Pastor Tillman is recognized as the founding pastor and with the year being 1906, that year is observed as the official founding year of the Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

The year 1906 continued to be a year of tremendous change for this group. Not only did they finally get an official pastor and finally decide on an official name, they also recognized the need to have an official residence. Therefore, during this year, the members began working towards this goal. Initially, they purchased a lot from Bert Hills, and later on in the same year, purchased additional land adjacent to the previously-purchased lot. With these two parcels of land on the north side of 9<sup>th</sup> Street between Avenues L and M, they began the process of building their first church structure and fulfilling the goal of having an official residence.

**B**efore the year ended, the hard-working laborers had laid the flooring for their new sanctuary and as they were preparing to build the sides of the structure, Minister Byrd, their first spiritual leader, died. His funeral was the first to be held at the building site, on the newly-finished floor, with those attending the Homegoing service sitting on chairs and stools brought from home.

**B**uilding the church took six years, with the completion occurring in 1911. During that time, the membership grew and there were two pastoral changes, each continuing to lead the Friendship Family with their spiritual guidance.

**I**n 1932, as the result of a fire, two-thirds of the church building was destroyed, with the remaining sections being severely damaged, causing the structure to become weak and develop a serious lean. Upon assessing the situation before them, members were faced with difficult decisions, and determined that with repairs to the still standing, but leaning structure, they could safely secure it so that worship service could still be held on site. Salvaging whatever materials that were still usable, the men of the church, along with assistance from men in the community, were able to prop up the leaning portions of the building with wooden beams and make the sanctuary safe for the congregation's continued, but temporary use. The very next year, in 1933, the members began working on a permanent structure at the same site and this rebuilding project continued for approximately ten (10) years, with the members working diligently to re-create their house of worship.

**U**nder the pastorate of Rev. Christopher Brown in 1965, the members began discussing the building of a brick structure as their church home. For a couple of years, Pastor Brown, who was from Panama City, deliberated with the congregation on this matter, sometimes being embroiled in very intense discussions. Finally, in 1967, he was granted permission to begin building a new brick structure. The wooden church, that had been their second house of worship, had been severely damaged by fire, yet temporarily and eventually permanently rebuilt, was completely torn down, making way for a new and larger brick building.

**D**uring this time of demolishing and building, the congregation continued to fellowship and worship with services being held at the church's parsonage, located at the end of 11<sup>th</sup> Street in the Hill community. Under the direction of Pastor Brown, a builder himself, the members used the parsonage for five years as the new structure was being constructed. Finally, in 1970, the building was completed, and the congregation entered into its new structure, the same one that is used today.

**T**he Friendship Missionary Baptist Church has been an important contributor to the Hill Community, the City of Apalachicola, and the County of Franklin since its inception, and continues its legacy of service to our God and service to His children. During these years of service, three buildings have housed the congregation: the initial rented structure on the corner of 8th Street and Avenue L where the fledgling band met after leaving Mount Zion, their first structure which was built, damaged, and rebuilt on the site of the current location on 9th Street between Avenue L and Avenue M, and finally the current brick structure, built following the destruction of the fire-ravaged and repaired wooden structure.

During the mid-90s, the Friendship Family adopted its motto: *"You always have a friend at Friendship!"* This phrase was created by member, Sis. Keeva Gatlin, and continues to be the signature statement for the church, boldly proclaimed throughout the community, just as the members boldly proclaim that we have a friend in Jesus.

From the days of its humble beginning in 1904, a small assemblage of believers, to the present, a strong congregation of servants, the Friendship pulpit has been home to twelve (12) spiritual leaders. These twelve men of the Gospel, listed below, were each charged with a calling to fulfill, that of teaching and guiding, preaching and healing, saving and serving, as they continued their work on the battlefield, doing their Master's Will, sharing the mighty Word with their parishioners and winning souls for the Lord. Page | 3

- 1904--1906: Minister Byrd (not an official church)
- 1906--1906: Pastor J. C. Sapp
- 1906--1916: Pastor N. A. Tillman
- 1916--1918: Pastor Webb
- 1918--1923: Pastor Hopkins
- 1923--1930: Pastor Maine
- 1930--1965: Pastor D. E. Battles
- 1965--1971: Pastor Christopher Brown
- 1971--1974: Pastor John R. Bowers
- 1974--1994: Pastor George Waddell
- 1994--1999: Pastor Johnny Curry
- 1999--present: Pastor James Williams

In reflecting on the rich and distinct heritage of the Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, we are reminded of the goodness of our Heavenly Father and give thanks to Him for His many blessings, down through these years. As we reminisce on our illustrious past in our preparations for embarking on future journeys, we shall continuously seek out and listen to the wisdom imparted from our elders, following the words of Moses who advised us in Deuteronomy 32:7 to always *"Remember the days of old"*. We must also make efforts to nurture our union as a church family, for *"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body,"* words from a letter written by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:12.

Just as those original eight Christians united together in 1904 and through their faith in God, established a bond that has now withstood more than a centennial of moments, the Friendship Family, under the leadership of our anointed spiritual leader, Pastor James Williams, continues to dedicate our hearts, our souls and our labors to maintaining and growing our church's ministry, doing such as one Body united in love; love for our Heavenly Father, for each other and for each of you, holding true to our motto . . .

***"You always have a friend . . . at Friendship!"***

~This history was written by Sis. Elinor Mount-Simmons, Church Secretary/Clerk,



*in collaboration with Deacon Noah Lockley, Sr., Church Historian (deceased 2020).  
Additional historical references were contributed by members: Mother Katie Bell (deceased 2011),  
Deacon Clarence Williams (deceased November 2015) and Mother Willie Williams, with further  
assistance from Sis. Sarah Mount of First Mount Moriah Baptist Church (Panama City).  
Scriptural references were supplied by Pastor James Williams and Sis. Mount-Simmons.*

## Paul Laurence Dunbar School

At the end of the Civil War, Emanuel Smith, a formerly enslaved man who became a member of the local school board in Apalachicola during Reconstruction, wrote to the American Missionary Association for help in establishing a school in Apalachicola for people of African descent.

Ezekial W. Walton, a minister of St. Paul AME Church and great-grandfather of Rose McCoy-Thomas, signed a contract on July 11, 1892 for \$123 to build the first school for African Americans in Apalachicola. The school was located on the north end of Eighth Street and Avenue M. Before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, instruction at the school accommodated grades one through five.<sup>1</sup> In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, three more grades were added. The addition of the three grades advanced the educational programs and made it possible for students to complete grammar school. Upon obtaining grammar school status, the school's name was changed from "The Colored School of Apalachicola", to "Paul Laurence Dunbar School", for the African American poet.

One of **Dunbar's first principals was Gaddis C. Hall**. The school's seven teachers taught grades one through eight. Black families who could afford to do so, sent their children away to Tallahassee, Jacksonville, St. Augustine, New Orleans, and other places to stay with relatives or friends in cities where there were high schools for Black people.

Beginning in the 1928-29 school year, the ninth grade was added. In 1929-30, the tenth grade was added. At that point no additional grades were added which resulted in families again having to make great sacrifices to send their children away to school. Mr. Charles Watson-Clark, renowned educator in Franklin County wrote, "I graduated three times before finishing high school."

The school board provided six months of school for Black students. White students received eight months of school. One White resident thought this arrangement unfair and agreed to pay the salaries of Black teachers for one month to extend the school year to seven months for Black Students. Black parents raised money to pay teachers for one additional month of instruction bringing the total months of in-school instruction for Black students to eight months.

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<sup>1</sup> Before 1928, there were four schools for Black children in Franklin County – one was located in Creels; and, one in Green Point – both were one-room schoolhouses with one teacher. The teacher offered instruction for children in grades one through six. The school in Carrabelle had two teachers, and the teachers taught all subjects for grades one to eight. Dunbar was the fourth school for Black people in Franklin County.

There were no free books for Black students. Parents pooled money to buy books that were shared. Most of the drinking water at Dunbar High School came from "Cool Spring", a natural freshwater spring located near the school. Teachers would send boys with buckets and dippers to get water for the school. On cold days, students would go out to gather pinecones for the wood burning stoves that provided heat in the school.

In 1933, the school board made Dunbar a high school. The board permitted one grade per year to be added, culminating in the first Dunbar graduating class in 1936. The names of the graduates are as follows: **Farris Lee Rhodes, Senetta Capers, Willie Hazel Glenn, Rita A. Speed, Emma Lee Johnson, Mattie Lee Speed, Eddie Byrd, Clifford Jackson, Charles Kilby, Hayward Glenn, Robert Sutton, Frances Russ, and Fredrick Jenkins.** Only two of the thirteen graduates remained in Apalachicola. The other graduates joined the Great Migration out of Apalachicola in search of brighter futures.

In the 1942/43 school year, Dunbar burned down. Classes were held in the **Masonic and Odd Fellows Halls on 6<sup>th</sup> Street.** Wallace M. Quinn, the owner of a local menhaden (pogie) plant, donated twenty-one acres of land as the site for a new school for Black people. Wallace M. Quinn High School opened in April 1945. In 1945, Quinn High School was the most modern school for Black people in North West Florida.

The African American teachers with the longest service to Dunbar and Wallace M. Quinn High Schools are: Louise Carter Baker (46 years), Mary Jane Barefield Tolliver (46 years), Mary Thomas Edwards (42 years), Ruby Tampa (41 years), Maude Thomas Wynn (36 years), Gladys Ford (36 years), and Maude Collins (22 years). Maude Thomas Wynn and Mary Thomas Edwards were sisters. Mary Edwards graduated from Florida State Normal & Industrial School, now Florida A&M University, in 1908.

Dunbar photo courtesy of Dreamal Worthen

Quinn High School graduation photos courtesy of Franklin County School Board

**FIRST BORN CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD  
APALACHICOLA FL**

*"Follow peace with all people, and holiness without which no one shall see the Lord."*  
Hebrews 12:14

During the year of 1914/1915, a group of Elders and Missionaries came to this city preaching and teaching Holiness. Quite a few people received the gift of the Holy Ghost along with speaking in other tongues. The names of some who came recruiting souls to be saved were: Bishop J. O. Croom, Elder S. P. Croom, Mother Goosbie<sup>1</sup>, Missionary Weeks<sup>2</sup>, Missionary Frances Goodson, and a few more from the early church.

Elder James "Jim" Baker, a citizen of the city, worked out of town during the week, and it was during his time away that he received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. After his conversion, services were held in his home with his family in Apalachicola on 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Avenue M. His wife and most of his children were saved during that time, as were, Missionary Mamye Hines (mother of Mrs. Catharine Walton) Sister Arstene Young Posser, Sister Mozell Allen Staley, Sister Carrie Tilman, and Sister Mamie Davis (Sister Freddie May Bailey's mother).

In 1918, my mother, Missionary Ella Mitchell Breedlove, Sister Lena Tilman, and not long after, Mother Mary Thomas Edwards received this beautiful gift.

As membership began to grow, the first place of worship was the Seventh Star Lodge on 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Avenue I. The second place was the Open Top Hall between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Avenue K, where the Church of God in Christ stands today. The third place was where Mr. Alex Simpson taught at his private school. During that time land (where the Temple now stands) was purchased from a white lady, Mrs. Ruge.

A Presbyterian Church that was dedicated in 1912 by white Presbyterians on Highway 98 and Avenue E across from Chapman School was purchased after the church members of that church disbanded. It was moved to the site where the First Born Church is today and was dedicated for the First Born Church in 1918. I feel like we were in the Apalachicola District because of the membership and the beautiful Temple with high ceilings, oak flooring, knotted pine walls, the beautiful pulpit, and altar with swinging vestibule doors. As children we were proud to say, let us go to the House of The Lord.

The first pastor was Elder Bass, and Bishop J. O. Croom was the first Bishop. In the year 1921, the Bishop appointed Elder A. J. Johnson, who arrived in Apalachicola with his family. They traveled by land to Carrabelle FL, and a boat brought them to Apalachicola. At that time there was no bridge to Apalachicola from Eastpoint.

Deacon Shorty Williams of Carrabelle, along with Sister Ella Breedlove, Sister Della Ray, and Sister Austine Pooser Burns met the family at the dock in Apalachicola and brought them to the parsonage. Elder Jackson was Presiding Elder at that time. The Church paid off its mortgage under the pastorate of Elder A. J. Johnson. Sister Eula C. Johnson Sutton said she had never seen another building like the First Born Church of Apalachicola.

Pastors who served at First Born were: Elder Brown from Indian Pass FL (Mother Langston's father), and Elder G. G. Green. We had a Presiding Elder named McMillian. Elder Croom was a Presiding Elder. In 1932, the year that President Roosevelt was elected, Presiding Elder, A. J. Johnson passed away. It was a sad day to lose a friend during the great depression, but God didn't leave us alone, He brought us out victorious.

<sup>1</sup> I have a photograph of Mother Goosble. She lived in Thomasville GA  
<sup>2</sup> There is a photograph of Missionary Weeks as well. She was from Waycross GA

Elder W. B. Bennett was a great Evangelist during the 1930s who ran revivals in Apalachicola. I received the Gift of the Holy Ghost June 1936. Many others received the Gift: Deacon Shins, Deaconess Shins, Deacon Davis, Deacon Wynn, and Brother David Miller among others. Elder G. G. Green of Panama City pastored the Church for 12 years. Then a misunderstanding came about in the First Born Church. Bishop Croom left the Church and some of the members followed.

I remember, in April 1945, I was awakened during the night or before day, and told the Church was on fire. When we arrived, the Church had burned to the ground. There were sad hearts in the City. The Church that I was born into had gone up in smoke.

The First Born members worshiped in a Lodge Hall. The pastor's name at this time was Elder Crean. While he served as pastor here, he and his wife stayed with Sister Matilda Longwood.

As a child, I remembered my sisters, brother, and I going to Sunday School, morning Service, Home Mission in the evening, and then night Service. In morning and in night service, the church would be filled with members and visitors.

Elder Shepard was the next Pastor. He started to build a block building. After the building was a few feet high, something went wrong. In the meantime, Deacon Richard Davis and Brother Faison of Wewahitchka (Deaconess Charissa Bass Williams' uncle) laid the blocks for this church we now worship in. (only a shell of this building stands on the site today.)

We will never forget Deacon McKinley Shins, the husband of Deaconess Janie L. Shins. He was a faithful deacon and a good leader of the church. I was told he was the first person that had a vision to celebrate the pastor's anniversary.

I shall end this history of the church with the names of the pastors of the First Born Church, mostly in the early 1940s. When reading the names let us all remember to serve and obey the Words of the Lord, because tomorrow isn't promised to us.

Pastors after Bishop Croom:

Elder Crean  
Elder Shepard  
Elder Peterson  
Elder Willis  
Elder Johnson  
Elder Williams

*"The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. In the Name of the Father, and the Holy Ghost, Amen."*

*Researcher: Sister Altonia Breedlove Dawson*

Thanks to Missionary Nancy Davis, Sister Eula C. Johnson Sutton, Sister Maude Thomas Green, and Sister Helen Howe for their assistance in my research.

*Researcher: Sister Altonia Breedlove Dawson*

*This history was announced to the public at the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the First Born Church of the living God held in Apalachicola FL at 3:00pm on February 10, 2009, Elder Clifford Williams, Pastor.*

## Wallace M. Quinn High School

Wallace M. Quinn High School, grades 1 to 12, was the premier educational institution for Franklin County's Black communities during the years of federal policy that permitted state governments to enforce the separation of Black children into underfunded public schools. Notwithstanding the political intent of the federal policy and state actions, this particular underfunded school for Black people was transformed into a center of excellence by the Black residents and teachers of Franklin County.

The story of providing educational opportunities to Black people in Apalachicola begins immediately after Emancipation spearheaded by Emanuel Smith, formerly enslaved, who was instrumental in organizing church schools, and "The Colored School of Apalachicola". When Dunbar was destroyed by fire in 1943, a new school for Black children was needed.

The possibility of a new school became a reality when Wallace M. Quinn, a Euro-American Maryland businessman who built Menhaden/pogie plants to process oil from fish, purchased and donated to the county 21 acres of land at this site for the construction of a school for Black children. Quinn made this gift to strengthen efforts on behalf of his business to recruit potential Black employees to Apalachicola .

Construction of Quinn High School was completed in April 1945. An Industrial Arts Building was added to the campus in the area where the water park for children now stands, and in 1959, a gymnasium was added complete with locker rooms, storage rooms, and public restrooms. Prior to the construction of the gymnasium, Quinn's girls' and boys' basketball teams competed on an outside court made of asphalt. Lights from cars and trucks parked around the court illuminated the basketball court for night games. On cold nights, heat was provided by fires in burn barrels placed strategically around the asphalt court. Travel to and from away games along the highways of North Florida was often fraught with anxiety, and coaches cautioned students to be quiet as they passed through towns noted for racial bigotry.

*A Dedication of Gymnasium* ceremony was held on Sunday, September 20, 1959, at 4:00 pm for the new gymnasium. The dedicatory address was delivered by Alonzo "Jake" Gaither, legendary football coach and head of the Physical Education Department at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University.

The grandeur of the ceremony for the dedication of the gymnasium is an indicator of the serious attention brought to every detail of the educational experience at Quinn. In early 1950s, when Charles Watson-Clark was hired to teach mathematics and science at Quinn High, the local school board passed a

rule that no Black student at Quinn was to be taught Algebra 1 & 2, geometry, chemistry, or physics. Only general mathematics and biology were to be taught. Mr. Watson-Clark noted that he knew that this rule was meant to prevent Black students from being competitive. Charles Watson-Clark, with the agreement of Principal Willie L. Speed, prepared two curricula – one was used whenever he was observed by people from the all-white local school board, and the other he taught in classes that were unobserved. He also taught students at his home on the weekends. His quiet activism ensured that graduates of Quinn High School were prepared to pursue degrees in mathematics, and all of the sciences.

When Quinn High administration and faculty requested that Black students be provided instruction in the use of typewriters, the school board gave permission to hire a teacher for the course. However, the board approved the purchase of one typewriter.

Graduates of Wallace M. Quinn High School excelled. A 1953 graduate, Dr. Frederick S. Humphries became the president of two HBCUs, Tennessee A&I University (Nashville TN) and Florida A&M University (Tallahassee FL). Graduates distinguished themselves as college administrators and professors, superintendents of schools, school district administrators, and schoolteachers. One graduate became a postmaster in midtown Manhattan. Others were jurists, physicians, a director of pharmacy at Hubbard/Meharry Medical College, builders, clergy, and many other career paths including all branches of the US military.

In the twenty-two years of its existence, Quinn High was a community school and the center of the African American communities in Franklin County. Students (ages 6 to 18) were bused daily, 48 miles roundtrip, to the school from Carrabelle FL. Black teachers taught generations of children from the same families and for 14 years of its existence, Quinn High had the same principal, Willie L. Speed. Wallace M. Quinn High School was closed in 1967 when schools in Franklin County finally integrated.

This commemorative marker brings into the public square redemptive stories of the sheer will and determination of African American people from all walks of life to acquire an education. These stalwarts were undeterred by the policies of dehumanization enacted by their governments. They created a community school that affirmed and validated their humanity and ensured that they and their progeny had a future filled with respect for self, and love for the humanity and dignity of all people.

## **Magnolia Cemetery "Colored Sections"**

After the Civil War and Emancipation, burial societies (benevolent associations) were established in African American communities throughout the country, and especially in the south. African American people paid small weekly/monthly dues to ensure that their "Homegoing Celebration" (funeral) was carried out in a way that was respectful and honorable. Apalachicola's Hill community had a Pallbearers organization to ensure that this essential part of the burial pageantry was impeccable. Funeral homes and their owners were respected members of the community.

Often, the entire community turned out for a funeral service to honor the deceased. Children were permitted to participate in the mourning rituals and local people provided succor for the bereaved family. The Usher Board members were present for services adorned in white nurses' uniforms. Their solemn duty of attending to the family of the deceased was taken seriously.

Flowers, and plants lined funeral homes and churches. Choirs rehearsed, musicians came together, and pastors as well as community orators prepared eulogies to honor the deceased while simultaneously encouraging the living.

Some historians opine that African Americans placed great emphasis on the Homegoing Service for two reasons: one was prohibitions against the gathering of the enslaved for burials for fear that the enslaved would plot rebellions to free themselves from their condition of servitude. A second reason was to accord to Black people the respect in death that they were denied in life.

In 1913, the City of Apalachicola Florida adopted an ordinance regarding burials in Magnolia Cemetery, located in the north of town. Section 123 of the ordinance read as follows: "The north half of the south quarter of Magnolia Cemetery shall be used as a burial ground for white paupers, and the south half of the south quarter of said cemetery is and shall be used as a burial ground for colored paupers."

"The west quarter of said cemetery shall be used as a burial ground for colored people who desire to buy lots therein, and all that portion of said cemetery on the river side of Central Avenue is and shall be used as a burial ground for white people."



The "Colored Section of Magnolia Cemetery" is the final resting place for the remains of those listed below as well as so many more deserving of our remembrance:

Isaiah Abram

Minnie Barefield

Breedloves

George & Mary Clark

Mary Thomas Edwards

Humphries

McCaskills

Addie Riser

"Bud" Simpson

Speeds

Sam Stephen – Businessman

Evangeline Zeigler White Tolliver

Spence & Sadie Washington

Willie Zeigler White

George & Maud Wynn

William Zeigler

## Snow Hill Colored Cemetery Apalachicola FLA.

"The particularities of a city are what makes it real, living, and shimmering." Honoring the burial places of the remains of the disinherited is an acknowledgement in death of the lives and the contributions of people legally segregated in rest. This "peculiarity" of Apalachicola makes for a fuller presentation of what makes the city real, living, and shimmering.

According to law of the era, the remains of African descended people were interred in segregated burial grounds. This cemetery was established by a 1929 resolution of the City Commission of Apalachicola.

At the time of its dedication, the road that Snow Hill Cemetery was located on was Old Women's Bluff Road. Today it is Bluff Road.

The land for the Cemetery was given to the City by Joseph and Elizabeth Messina. What prompted the Messinas to make this gift is not known.

At the time that Snow Hill Cemetery came into existence, there was a Snow Hill African Methodist Episcopal Church nearby. A list of members found in the 1939 Journal of Proceedings and Yearbook of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session of the West Florida Conference of the African Methodist Church is evidence of the size of the Black population in Apalachicola at the time. There were two AME churches in Apalachicola.

Snow Hill AME Church members listed in the 1939 Yearbook are: A. Dock, Ruby Dawkins, Ella Wilson, Undean Hawkins, Naomi Joseph, Lula Hollinger, Mary Gallon, Elizabeth Simmons, Charlie Dorsey, Cleveland Crumbie, Colman James, Richard Fields, L. B. Peters, Joseph Shaw, Minnie Kirk, Jeanett Foster, John Kirk, W. M. Sapp, John Murphy, Benjamin Morning, Mary Anderson, Willie Murphy, Rosa Mainer, Lillian Bryant, Daisy B. Fields, Lottie Lenett, Elizabeth Harrison, John Brown, Eddie Edwards, Uriah Glenn, Lottie Banks, John H. Joseph, Mary Manuel, Eddie Joseph, Alphonsa Foster, Emma Jackson, Bishop Jackson, D. P. Peters, E. D. Lawrence, Jessie Jordan, Cora Lawrence, Susie Weston, Archie Weston, Bettie Robinson, Henry Robinson, Alice Smith, Estella Harrison, Susie Beaux, Martha Brooks, Raymon Dvesback, H. S. Fulmore, Sarah Johnson, Willie Tillman, Geogiann Mincy, A. F. Glynn, William Arnold, Winnie Morning, and Gillie Kirk McNear.

**St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Apalachicola Florida  
Established 1866**

African American churches have stood on this spot for more than 150 years, playing a vital role in the spiritual, educational, and economic growth of the community.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church purchased lots 1 & 2 on block 178 from the City of Apalachicola on April 16, 1866. At that time the Steward Board consisted of: Emanuel Smith, Chairman, John Webster, James Roberts, and Thomas Davis.

Newspaper reports suggest a local church for African Americans in Apalachicola existed as far back as 1858. The first services were held in a nearby blacksmith's shop. A small wooden church was soon built, which was also used as a schoolroom.

An excerpt from the Quadrennial Address of the Bishop of the A.M.E. Church to the General Conference of 1864 underscores the high premium the church placed on education: "We assure you...this is no time to encourage ignorance and mental sloth; to enter the ranks of the ministry, for the education and elevation of millions now issuing out of the house of bondage, require men, not only talented, but well educated; not only well educated, but thoroughly sanctified unto God."

The name of the Church was changed to the St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church around 1870, and a Parsonage was built next door in 1882. On December 4, 1892 the congregation took out a \$890 loan from Cypress Lumber Company to construct a larger wooden building. This agreement was signed by the building committee chairman, Rev. T. S. Kirby and Secretary, Rev. E. Walton. The trustees of the Church at the time were: Marvin Roberts, W. G. B. Kinlaw, Prince Venerable, Sam Lane, Sr., Rev. Ellis Ray, George Lot, Ben Baxter, and Charlie Smith (brother of Emanuel Smith).

Under the leadership of Rev. J. M. Wise, the members started to acquire funds for the construction of the current Gothic Revival brick church, which began in 1913 and was completed in 1921. The stained-glass windows were made in Germany. The present church has been in service to its member and community for over a hundred years. A thriving African American community surrounded the church at that time, including a Masonic Lodge on 6th Street and numerous grocery stores and oyster houses.

In 1937, the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session of the West Florida Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was held in River Junction, Florida with the Right Reverend R. A. Grant, LL.D., Presiding Bishop. Reverend J. H. Tunsell was Pastor of St. Paul A.M.E. at the time. The conference records indicate that the following members of St. Paul A.M.E. contributed financially to the conference: T. E. Gaines, H. D. Lane, Jessie Lane, J. I. Logan, Mary Roberts, Nancy McGee, W. L. Calloway, Lucy Gavins, George Johnson, Prof. Hall, Hood Lee, Mat Rayford, H. L. Howe, Elizabeth Goodson, Sallie Tallie, Ella Johnson, Charlie

Mitchell, Rosa T. Williams, W. T. Allen, Wash Mitchell, N. V. Green, Johnnie Crooms, Norah Rainey, Louise Felton, Hattie Abram, Ruby Tampa, Frank Taylor, J. H. Glynn, George H. Wynn, Sarah Mitchell, Sid Hawkins, P. H. Foster, Willie M. Sweet, A. M. Gavins, Rochell Crooms, Hood Lee, Seth Walton, Minnie Simmons, W. M. Richard, Isaiah Abram, Augusta Capers, Lessie Foster, Mary Lemons, Carrie Lewis, Josephine Simpson, Mary Grace, Manervina Williams, Mandy Allen, James Edwards, M. E. Calvary, Viola Gaines, Ella Butler, Hagger Pope, Minnie Humphries, Rosa L. Rodgers, Bettie Tunsell, E. R. Robertson, Willie Herd, Odeal Speed, Jacy Clay, Retta Speed, Chester Rhodes, Lottie Rhodes, H. D. Lane, W. W. Campbell, J. I. Hogan, S. W. Johnson, Chancy Woods, Gertrude Green, Maude Collins, Amos Lemons, Ruffin Rhodes, Mary J. Barfield, Dora Druce, Nettie Cooper, Geardine Edwards, Giles Smith, Dave Johnson, Eva O'Neal, Rita Perkins, Ellen Jackson, Sadie Feed, Patience Jackson, J. H. Ekles, W. L. Calvary, Herman Gray, T. Louise Simmons, M. J. Eckles, Addie Riser, Frances Riser, Lee Perkins, Mamie James, Albert James, Julia Safore, Julia Love, Annie Murphy, Rebecca Thorton, Rebecca Martin, Mamie Davis, P. A. Collins, Pearl Feed, Julius Buchanan, Sallie Walton, Jennie Cook, Anna Ingram, Emma L. Rhodes, S. Jenkins, Carrie Clark, Olivia Blakley, Rubin Safore, Navin Roberts, James Freeman, Eva Smith, M. J. Walton, Evins Rhodes, Elijah Hawkins, Ella Louise Williams, W. M. Ziegler, Lizzie Elliott, Willie Tampa, Ben Tamps, Charlie Britt, Julia Cobb, N. B. Holmes, Reginald Clark, and R. C. Fortune.

The list of contributors to the 1937 West Florida Conference is evidence of a substantial congregation, which indicates a sizeable Black population in Apalachicola. In addition the members listed were also significant contributors to the economic, social, and educational pursuits of Black people on the Hill.

The St. Paul AME Church suffered serious damage from 1951 and 1986 fires, but the community always came together to fund repairs.