

THE HISTORY OF ST. PAUL A. M. E. CHURCH

St. Paul A. M. E. Church has been located in its present spot since 1848, yet this was not the beginning of Negro Methodism in the city of Raleigh. Prior to the acquisition of the present church site, Negro slaves and white masters worshipped together in the Edenton Street Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1832, there were 32 white and 44 Negro members enrolled in the latter church. By 1846 the membership of both races had increased to such an extent that the seating capacity of the church became taxed and the Negro members had to worship in the basement of the white church.

In the same year, it was brought to the attention of the Negro membership that the old Christ Episcopal Church could be purchased and forthwith these heroic men and women, still bound in slavery, began the task of securing this church house. By 1848 plans and funds were arranged and the building was ^{*}moved from the corner of New Bern Avenue and Wilmington Street to the present site, West Edenton and Harrington Streets.

After getting the church established, the Methodist Episcopal Conference then appointed Rev. W. E. Pell, a white man, and Handy Lockhart, a Negro, as local preachers. The first board of trustees was composed of four white men, thus the first organization of Negro Methodists was a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. This basis formed a nucleus for our present A. M. E. Church with the Rev. E. E. Pell as pastor of the local organization and the Rev. Herndon as Presiding Elder.

could not have been before 1853, when present Christ Church was completed.
E. Reid

Later, after the abolition of slavery, Bishop Daniel Payne held the first Annual A. M. E. Conference and appointed Rev. George Broadie, a transfer from the New York Conference, as the first Negro preacher for our group.

Under the leadership of Rev. R. H. W. Leak, who came from Morganton, North Carolina, it became necessary to consider building a church commensurate with its growth. Accordingly Rev. Leak, the officers and the members planned and worked toward this goal.

After years of struggles and sacrifices, there emerged in 1898 a most beautiful, commodious and modernly appointed church.

Into this grand building the members came with hearts aglow and worshipped the Lord in the beauty of Holiness. It was on July 5, 1909, that a fire-cracker, lodged on the shingled roof, soon caused their much loved church to be razed beyond use. Yet, Sphinx-like another structure rose from the ashes and in eleven months they were again worshipping in their beloved church. We of the present generation can rejoice that we have never experienced the hardships, heartaches and sacrifices felt by those who "endured the burden in the heat of day."

Methodism in the city of Raleigh, North Carolina, represents a continuity from 1832 to 1956, and this present hallowed site has been the seat of worship from 1848 to 1956, (108 years).

A roster of pastors numbers thirty-one, beginning with Rev. George Broadie and ending with our beloved pastor, the Rev. Nathaniel Gaylord.

*I have
references
to corner-
stone
laid in
1894, and
completion
date 1901.*

E. Reid