

unedited

Final Report for Research on African Methodist Episcopal and
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Churches of Connecticut

Katherine J. Harris, Ph.D.

Acknowledgements

Mr. Spencer Lancaster

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Mr. And Mrs. Leo Clarke

Mrs. Gail Williams-Johnson

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The guidelines for this project are very specific. They are to identify, provide brief histories and prepare a timeline from the 1800s to 1952 of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) and African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) churches and sites connected to them in Connecticut. Local communities of African Americans inspired the founding of the Connecticut churches. They represented, however, part of a national movement with origins rooted deeply in the contours of early United States history and the African American experience.

In 1787, the year that debates on a new federal Constitution gripped the thoughts of many in the new nation, particularly with regard to political and economic power, slavery, personal and civil liberties, African American Methodists in Philadelphia left the Methodist congregation of St. George Church to protest the racial discrimination they encountered in this most sacred sphere. African Americans in Philadelphia had already organized the Free African Society, a self - help voluntary society devoted to mutual aid and the abolition of slavery.¹ Using the group as a springboard, some of the members contemplated establishing their own parish.

¹Grievances were that they were segregated and forced to sit in 'negro pews.' Richard Allen gained a reputation as a Methodist preacher, but Methodist clerical officials prevented him from preaching. The humiliation heightened. One Sunday, while Richard Allen and Absalom Jones were praying, members of the Church pulled Jones from his knees. Jones asked if he could finish his prayers and "I shall trouble you no more." Jones, Allen and other African American parishioners left the church. The

By 1794, Richard Allen and some of his friends purchased a blacksmith shop and converted it into a sanctuary for African American Methodists. They named it 'Bethel' adapted from the Hebrew term 'Beth-el' which means house of God. Parishioners used the anvil as their symbol. Over the opposition of the Methodist church officials, Allen and some of the members of the Free African Society laid the foundation for the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.² In 1816, the denomination incorporated formally as the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

In New York in 1796, African American parishioners left the John Street Episcopal Church to protest ill treatment and racial prejudice. Under the leadership of James Van Varck (the original Dutch spelling of Varick's name), Abraham Thompson, June Scott, William Miller, Peter Williams and other African American supporters formed a New York based independent African Methodist Episcopal church called Zion or Mother Zion, built in 1800. Church elders added 'Zion' officially to the name of the New York based African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1848.³

walkout sparked the independent church movement although Jones and Allen formed separate churches. Jones founded the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was independent of the Methodist and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Carter Godwin Woodson, *The Story of the Negro Church*, (Washington, D.C., The Associated Publishers, 1921, 1945), p. pp. 62-63. Bishop Frank C. Cummings, *The First Episcopal District's Historical Review of 200 Years of Methodism*, (Philadelphia, The First Episcopal District, 1987),p. 6.

² Rev. Winton Hill, Pastor of Bethel A. M.E. Church in Stamford provided the translation for 'Bethel.'

³African American parishioners at the John Street Church were not permitted a role in decisions although they were required to contribute financially. Individuals interested in the ministry were denied licenses to preach and when licenses were granted, the individuals requesting positions as pastors were denied opportunities. African parishioners were also segregated and sat in the gallery or in 'negro pews' designated for them. Background on the AME and AMEZ Churches, and the theological perspectives

Decades elapsed before the African Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches adopted some of the familiar emblems and colors while evolving into their contemporary organizational structure of districts and conferences. In the African Diaspora of the United States, both of these churches occupy a significant position. Their origins lay in the struggle for freedom, civil rights, social justice, and educational opportunity along with the ministry to the soul. This vision has remained constant for over two centuries.

In Connecticut, the AME and AMEZ Churches have continued this tradition stressing dignity and self-determination by providing for the theological, social and educational needs of the African American community. Churches for the denominations are located throughout the state in Ansonia, Bridgeport, Danbury, New London, Norwich, Willimantic, Hartford, Bloomfield, Danbury, Branford, New Haven, Middletown, Plainville, New Britain, Greenwich, Stamford, Torrington, Waterbury and Windsor. There are over twenty African Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches and smaller mission churches in Connecticut. Connecticut's

of AME founders Richard Allen and Absalom Jones and AMEZ founder James Varick, see *Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church Struggle, Jubilee, Vision (2001)*, p. 4. William J. Walls, *The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Reality of the Black Church*, (Charlotte, N C, A. M. E. Zion Publishing House, 1974), pp. 36, 39, 43, 47, 54-55, 69.

African Methodist Episcopal Churches are a part of the First Episcopal District Boston - Hartford. The North Eastern Episcopal District of the American Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is located in Farmington, Connecticut.

This report is divided into several sections: an overview of African Methodist Episcopal Church with brief histories of the Connecticut Churches alphabetized by towns; an overview of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church with brief histories of the Connecticut Churches alphabetized by towns, and chronological lists denoting the organization date of each of the churches. A conclusion, a list of Illustrations, suggested sites for nomination on National Registry of Historic places, photos, complete bibliography and revised summaries of the histories of all the churches will accompany the revised final report.

Timeline of African Methodist Episcopal Churches

Church		Date
Bethel	Bridgeport	1826
Bethel	New Haven	1837
St. James*	Danbury	1860/1953
Bethel	Norwalk	1874
Bethel	Stamford, CT	1895/1896
Bethel	Greenwich	1882
Bethel	Hartford now in Bloomfield	1912/1916
Allen Chapel	Hartford	1936

*Historiographers of the New England Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church recorded the founding date as 1860.

Timeline of African Methodist Episcopal Zion Churches in Connecticut

Church		Date
Varick	New Haven	1818
Cross Street	Middletown	1823/1828
Metropolitan	Hartford	1833 (1835/1836?)
Walters Memorial	Bridgeport	1835
Evans	Norwich	1874
Clinton	Ansonia	1875
Parker Memorial	Meriden	1877
Mount Olive	Waterbury	1879
Mount Pleasant	Danbury	1889
Stanley Chapel	Willimantic	1894
Walls Temple	New London	1903
Workman	Torrington	1903
Spottswood	New Britain	1903
Archer Memorial	Windsor	1914 (check)
St. Stephens	Branford	1923
Shaw Memorial	New Haven	1978
St. Stephen	Branford	1923
McCall Memorial	Waterbury	1963
Blackwell Memorial	Hartford	1975

II

The Origins of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

The origins of the African Methodist Episcopal Church represent the African diaspora. The church, established by African descended people outside of Africa embraced the African identity. But they merged this identity with the Methodist tradition of the Protestant sect John Wesley founded in Europe. Africans in the British colonies embraced the religion because some Methodist followers opposed slavery. African Methodists also pointed to the biblical references to Africa, for example the flight of the first family (Mary, Joseph and the Christ child to Egypt) and Africans such as Simon the Ethiopian who carried the cross for Christ. When Richard Allen, Absalom Jones and other African American members of the St. George Methodist Church in Philadelphia faced segregation and humiliation, their decision to build an independent religious base opened a new chapter in the record of the experience of Africans in the Americas. The decision gave supporters of abolition another platform to champion social justice and human dignity – concepts enshrined in the African Methodist Episcopal Catechism. African Methodist Episcopal Church founders spread their message throughout the original thirteen states and beyond the Mississippi.⁴

Such personalities as Peter Quinn (who was actually from Calcutta, India according to church records), Daniel Coker, Jarena Lee, Bishop Daniel Payne, James

Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*. Black Baptists in Savannah, Georgia organized their church in 1779 several years before the A.M.E, but it was not independent. Cummings, pp. 6, 7 on Bishop Henry McNeal Turner; Bishop Payne

⁴Cummings pp. 6, 7 on Bishop Henry McNeal Turner; Bishop Payne

Lynch, Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, elected to the Georgia State legislature in the 1870s, and Republican member of the U.S. Congress Richard Cain in the 1870s are among those whose activities frame the history of the church. During the era of slavery, the African Methodist Episcopal Church built an independent black church embracing the goals to abolish slavery and save souls.

Sarah Allen, spouse of Bishop Allen, assisted fugitive slaves by collecting clothing for them and providing shelter as they made their perilous escapes. The churches were the centers of celebrations of the 1807 British Abolition of Slave Trade and the 1808 US Constitutional provision prohibiting the slave trade. Absalom Jones, one of the original group of African American parishioners who left the St. George Street church, gave a powerful speech commemorating the events.⁵ Abolition of slavery and the slave trade were constant issues on the agenda of church leaders, but another matter took equal importance. It was colonization. The issues of abolition slavery, the slave trade and colonization came together in an intriguing way by 1819.

Despite the US prohibition of the slave trade, slave traders continued to kidnap and smuggle captured Africans into the Caribbean and the United States throughout the 1800's. An 1819 United States Act of Congress to suppress the slave trade empowered

Cummings, pp. 6, 7 on Bishop Henry McNeal Turner; p. on Bishop Payne

⁵Archives of the churches. AME Repository of Archives in New Bedford, then Boston, then Providence, then New Haven. Information on Sarah Allen provided by Rev Winton Hill, pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church in Stamford. Frank C. Cummings, *The First Episcopal District's Historical Review of 200 Years of African Methodism*, (1987)., p. 16.

the president to use a \$100,000 congressional appropriation to establish a settlement on the West Coast of Africa to receive Africans captured from slave ships. In 1821, President James Monroe eventually sent US naval officer Robert Fieldhouse Stockton to acquire land for a settlement. Colonizationists appealed to Monroe and asked that congressional proceeds be used to send African Americans to Africa. The movement to colonize African Americans overlapped the goal to suppress the slave trade by establishing an African base of operations. Stockton wrote that he obtained the land by pointing a gun at the head of one of the political sovereigns of Ducoh. Colonizationists renamed the site Monrovia and by 1824 christened the settlement Liberia.⁶

As the colonization movement gained support in high places, African Methodist Episcopal leaders denounced colonization as a means of separating them from their enslaved kin who needed their support. Many of the members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and African Americans in general viewed colonization as a way of denying them their rights as citizens for which many had fought in the War of Independence. But the Church lost its first Bishop, Daniel Coker, to West Africa. Coker resigned, not over the colonization issue. His resignation led to the appointment of Richard Allen as Bishop. Soon after Coker, however, left the United States for Sierra Leone and Liberia. Throughout the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, the African Methodist Episcopal tradition would flower in West Africa.⁷

6

7

Closer to home, however, the AME ministry continued for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade and the struggle for full citizenship. Defying the odds of success, William Paul Quinn went to the upper south in Kentucky and west of the Mississippi to Missouri to preach, encourage converts and build churches.⁸

The Church found adherents in southern states as well. In 1822, events moved to a dramatic level. Denmark Vesey in Charleston, SC met with others to plan an insurrection in Emmanuel Church. This was the same church where members of the African Methodist Episcopal church met. Vesey's plans betrayed. News of a planned albeit abortive anti-slavery revolt set off an alarm among white South Carolinians. were enraged and their wrath was vented Vesey, the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Daniel A. Payne, future bishop. Payne fled South Carolina to save his life. The church did not disappear in the south, but went underground (according to Mr. Mintz, historian for Bethel A.M.E. in Stamford.)⁹

Despite passage of gradual emancipation laws, the African American community in the United States continued to confront peril. A wave of anti-black rioting reached fever pitch and the burning of black churches in the 1830s was widely reported. The

Louis Mehlinger, "The Attitude of the Free Negro Toward Colonization," *Journal of Negro History*, v. I, (July, 1916), pp. 45-47; Emma Lapsansky "Since They Got Them Separate Churches, Afro Americans and Racism in Jacksonian Philadelphia," *American Quarterly*, v. 32 (Spring, 1980), [pp. 54-77], pp. 54, 75;

Jehudi Ashmun, "Ashmun Plan for Civil Government," [in Liberia] Article I, *African Repository*, v. XI, No., (January, 1835), p. 22. on King Peter of Bushrod Island, Archibald Alexander, *History of African Colonization*, p. 355; *Annals of Congress*, v. I, 1819-1820, p. 31; .
Daniel Coker, *Journal of Daniel Coker*, (Maryland, 1820), pp. 43-44; Correspondence of the Secretary of the Navy Relating to African Colonization 1819-1844, (M205) Microfilm Roll #1. Samuel John Bayard, (ed.), *A Sketch of the Life of Commander Robert F. Stockton with an Appendix...* (New York, 1856), p. 42

violence reached high levels during the Jacksonian era, the term used to describe the presidency and ideology of the Democratic Republican supporters of Andrew Jackson elected in 1828.

New York African American abolitionist Hezekiah Grice traveled to Philadelphia and proposed to a gathering of the local African American community and members of the African Methodist Episcopal church that African Americans meet in a national convention. There were several objectives: to organize on a national level, oppose forced colonization, promote greater self-determination and political action. Richard Allen agreed to convene what history has recorded as the first National Colored Convention in Philadelphia in 1830. Members of the African Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches and the community at large attended.

. Howard Bell (ed.), *Proceedings of the National Negro Convention 1830-1864*, (New York, 1969), pp. 33-36. Emma Lapsansky, "Since They Got Them Separate Churches, Afro Americans and Racism in Jacksonian Philadelphia," *American Quarterly*, v. 32 (Spring, 1980), [pp.54-77], pp. 54, 75;

An educational agenda was important to the broader objectives of the African Methodist Episcopal Church officials. Elementary schools often met within the church facilities. The church embraced higher education, however, as a goal.

“In March 1863 the Board of Trustees of the Cincinnati Conference of the Methodist Church sold Wilberforce University to Bishop Daniel A. Payne and James A. Shorter both representatives of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.”*

Other educational institutions Edward Waters College in Jacksonville, Florida,

founded in 1866, Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina founded in 1870 (p. 121) educational institutions supported by the African Methodist Episcopal Church (p. 115), Cummings, p. 119, Paul Quinn College in Waco, Texas founded in 1872, (p. 123), Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia founded in 1881 ((p. 125), Shorter College North Little Rock, Arkansas founded in 1886 (p. 127), Payne Theological Seminary founded in 1844 in Wilberforce, Ohio (p.129) Turner Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia founded in 1844 (p. 131) Bishop Payne was the founder of Wilberforce College in 1863 (p. 129)

*Felton O. Best, *Crossing the Color Line A Biography of Paul Laurence Dunbar 1872-1906*. (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 1996), pp. 18-20. The African Methodist Episcopal Church, whose members included such prominent nineteenth and early twentieth century leaders as Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, John Mercer Langston, Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells Barnett, Daniel Payne and Paul Laurence Dunbar, served to develop the leadership and social skills of blacks as well as to elevate the overall social and political importance of African-Americans. The black church became a power base which assisted African-Americans in becoming self reliant and politically strong, at least to the extent that they could agitate for the removal of laws that promoted a color [bar].” Douglass more associated with the AMEZ

educational institutions supported by the African Methodist Episcopal Church (p. 115), Cummings, p. 119, Paul Quinn College in Waco, Texas founded in 1872, (p. 123), Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia founded in 1881 ((p. 125), Shorter College North Little Rock, Arkansas founded in 1886 (p. 127), Payne Theological Seminary founded in 1844 in Wilberforce, Ohio (p.129) Turner Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia founded in 1844 (p. 131) Bishop Payne was the founder of Wilberforce College in 1863 (p. 129)

When Civil war erupted in 1861, members of the AME church joined. Rev. Turner, was a chaplain in the federal military. Following the war, AME missionaries journeyed south. One of the first goals in S.C. to rebuild Emmanuel Church.

Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, chaplain in War.AM.E. members who served. Political activism Turner elected to Georgia State Legislature. Political and social equality at risk. Withdrawal of Federal military by 1877. Church and its educational mission continued. But serious challenges. Continued peril.

Insults to Bishop Payne in 1890s.
4/29/1882 MDR

The colored people of New Haven are to hold a mass meeting to protest against the indignities put upon Bishop [Daniel] B A. Payne of the African Methodist church, on a railroad train, near Jacksonville, Fl

Turner served in the Georgia Constitutional Convention and was elected to the Georgia State Legislature, but was expelled by white southerners, Cummings, p. 8.

Tuner, p. 71; Payne, p. 70; William Paul Quinn, p. 69; Allen, p. 68

YPD Young People's Department

Issues late 19th and early 20th emigration vs. US. Turner idea of African refuge from segregation.

AME and other denominations notably the Baptist cooperation on racial progress. Turner address Black Baptist at their convention.

Women and the AME role. Sarah Allen's signature affixed to church documents along side of the signature of her husband Bishop Allen. When Jarena Lee approached him saying that she had been called to preach, Allen stated that he had never heard of a woman being called to preached. However, after attending one of the services where Jarena Lee preached, Allen left with the conviction that Lee had indeed been called to the ministry. Bishop Allen became her mentor. He and his wife, took care of Lee's son while she moved around the circuit preaching. In 1986, the New England Conference officially accepted the Nashua, New Hampshire A.M.E. mission into the denomination. The mission took the name Jarena Lee Chapel in honor of Jarena Lee.

Rev. Jarena Lee's contribution to the AME Church encouraged discussion several decades later on the licensing of women ministers. But in 1852, at the Annual Conference, delegates defeated the motion to license women ministers. This did not stop Bishop Turner. Without the consulting the church leadership, Bishop Turner announced that he had ordained a woman bishop. If the church leadership opposed this in the late 19th century, matters came full circle in the 21st century in a seeming vindication of Turner. Vasti McKenzie appointed AME Bishop. Several Connecticut AME churches have women pastors (Bridgeport and Greenwich).

Cummings on Jarena Lee and Richard Allen, p. 431

By 1861 status of the Church representation west, New England, Middle Atlantic. Civil War. AME. Involvement in war. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, chaplain in War. AM.E. members who served. Political activism Turner elected to Georgia State Legislature. Political and social equality at risk. Withdrawal of Federal military by 1877. Continued peril. Insults to Bishop Payne in 1890s.

The African Methodist Episcopal Churches

Bloomfield

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

Around the year 1912, African Americans from Americus, Georgia who had moved to Hartford provided the inspiration for the founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Hartford. The desire to worship in the African Methodist tradition and forge a sense of solidarity motivated efforts to organize a church 1916. Cummings, p. 425 “The earliest documentable proof of the existence of Bethel AME Church is an obituary clipping of the late Leonard Weston Martin (the Uncle of Mrs. Fannie Davis) taken from the *Hartford Times*, July 29, 1940. The article stated that Bethel Church was organized in his home at 42 Liberty Street in 1916. [This date appears in an article printed in the *Hartford Courant* May 22, 1945. The article reported news of mortgage burning.

Activities presided over by Bishop Sims. Available church documents record that Rev. J. S. Myric assisted with the organization of the small congregation. Rev. Myric was a transfer minister from the Southwest Georgia Annual Conference.

Members of what was to become Bethel AME Church met in various locations in the Hartford area. Some services took place in houses of various members. The first meeting

hall was a storefront on North Main Street near the Isle of Safety. (The Isle of Safety location is now occupied by the Morton's Steak House in the Old State House Pavillions). The church held services at another location near the *Hartford Times* newspaper building.

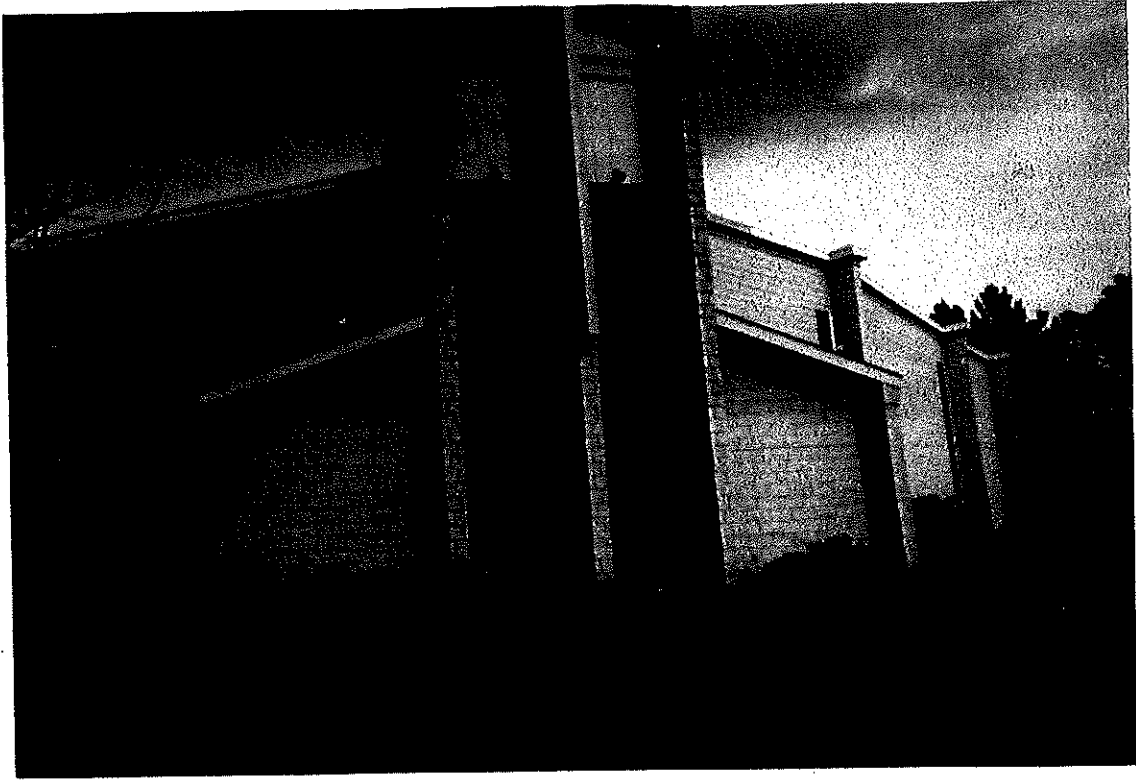
Rev. William Byrd was the church's first appointed pastor. He had been president of Shorter College. Parishioners purchased property on Clarke Street. In 1922, the church moved to 22 Winthrop Street. (According to Mrs. Alleyne, this building is behind Bernard Brown elementary school.) Church members changed the name of their congregation to Bethel although no formal incorporation took place. This building on Winthrop burned in 1937 and between 1937 and 1940, church members met in church basements and searched for a location to rebuild. Two pieces of property were available and a site on 210 Bellevue Street was selected. The church stayed at Bellevue street until 1950 and purchased the 2003 Main Street property where church remained until 1992.

Between the 1940s and 1950s, Bethel survived the absence of a pastor and the departure of members. Disputes arose among the members regarding the autonomy of the church and its relationship to the national organization. Through the intervention of the courts in Hartford, Bethel formalized its incorporation and resolved questions regarding ownership of the church property. The property is currently held in trust by local trustees and the conference.¹

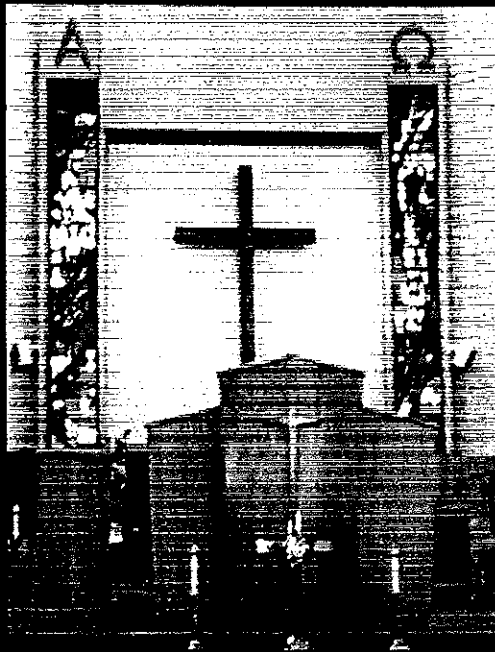
Bethel has been at its Bloomfield location since 1992.² (The 2003 Main Street is now the Gospel Apostolic Lighthouse. In March 2002, Bethel hosted the 152nd annual conference of African Methodist Episcopal Churches.

Mr. Herbert Knight, Church Historian supplied the information on Bethel's early years during discussions in March 2003.

On the web site "Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church of Bloomfield, CT is a divinely inspired Christian community that is dedicated to the establishment and preservation of God-intended, spirit filled relationships. Our church will work tirelessly to intensify the bond between God and humanity and to strengthen the ties among all human beings."www.bethelbloomfieldct.com/Our%20Mission.htm



The 152nd Session
of the
New England Annual Conference
of the
African Methodist Episcopal Church



March 20th - 23rd, 2003

Hosted by

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
1174 Blue Hills Avenue ~ Bloomfield, Connecticut 06002

THEME:

"Serving, Sacrificing and Serving for Christ"

Bishop Zedekiah Lazett Grady ~ Presiding Prelate

Mother Carrie R. Grady ~ Episcopal Advisor

The Reverend Herbert L. Eddy ~ Presiding Elder

The Reverend Alvan M. Johnson, Jr. ~ Host Pastor

Bridgeport

Bethel AME
108-110 Grove Street
203-384-9200

Historians for the New England Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church record the founding of an African Methodist Episcopal Mission in 1826. A group of former slaves and freed men met under an old Elm tree that stood where the present Burroughs Public Library stands on Broad Street. The Colored Ebenezer Methodist Society bought the property. In 1835, a parcel of land was purchased by the church's trustees, Joel Freeman, Grant Hawley, and Peter Hawley."

The Colored Ebenezer Methodist Society and the open air worship meetings were the seeds of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Some of the same names, particularly that of Joel Freeman, appears on the property deeds for both Bethel AME and Walters AME Zion.

The first official church meeting for the AME congregation was held in the home of John Johnson on February 23, 1843. The earliest recorded pastor was the Rev. George Blacknall.[Blackwell?] In 1850, the Bridgeport congregation joined the New York Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and renamed itself Bethel." Bethel transferred its membership and joined the New England Conference when it was organized in 1852.

In 1895, the original building was enlarged by Rev. J.H. Gaylor" to accommodate an enlarged congregation. Rev. A.Q. Norton added a new vestry in 1904. Among the families involved in the church has been the Jacobs family. "The father became a Presiding Elder. He returned to the pastorate in 1905. Rev. L.S. Jacobs, the youngest son, served the church from 1914 to 1918. Rev. Burcheli G. Jacobs pastored Bethel from 1921 to 1926.

"During the March 1928 anniversary celebration, Rev. Abraham Lincoln Thomas, a chaplain in W.W.I stated in his address that: "The history connected with the church is one of which few can boast. The spot on which it stands (Broad and Whiting Streets was purchased by slaves who escaped from their southern master[s] through northern aid before Lincoln emancipated the Negroes."

"For over a hundred years this congregation was headquartered at 395 Broad Street in the South End." In the mid 1950s it moved to 49 High Street.⁴ (Historic Resources Inventory Form #143, (1986) Cummings, 409

In 1974, because of an urban renewal project, the [49] 43 High Street church building was demolished by the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Bridgeport. The church was in transition when Rev. Louis Strickland became pastor. Under his pastorate, the congregation moved to temporary quarters on 1350 Main Street.

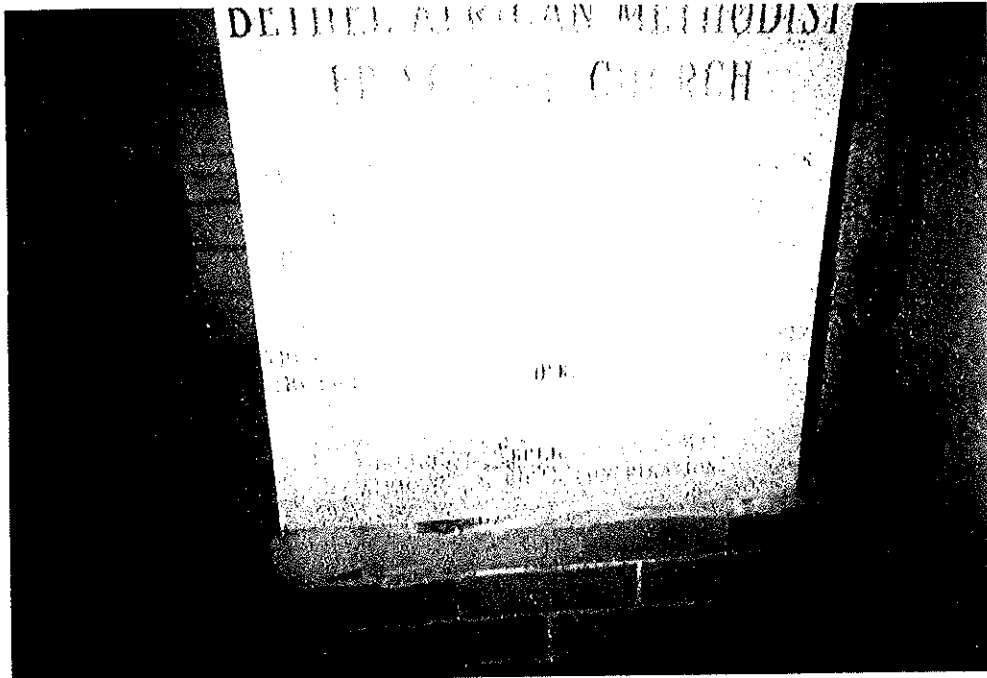
On December 7, 1975, Bishop Ernest Lawrence Hickman appointed Rev. Ellis Loudon pastor. He was pastor in 1987.

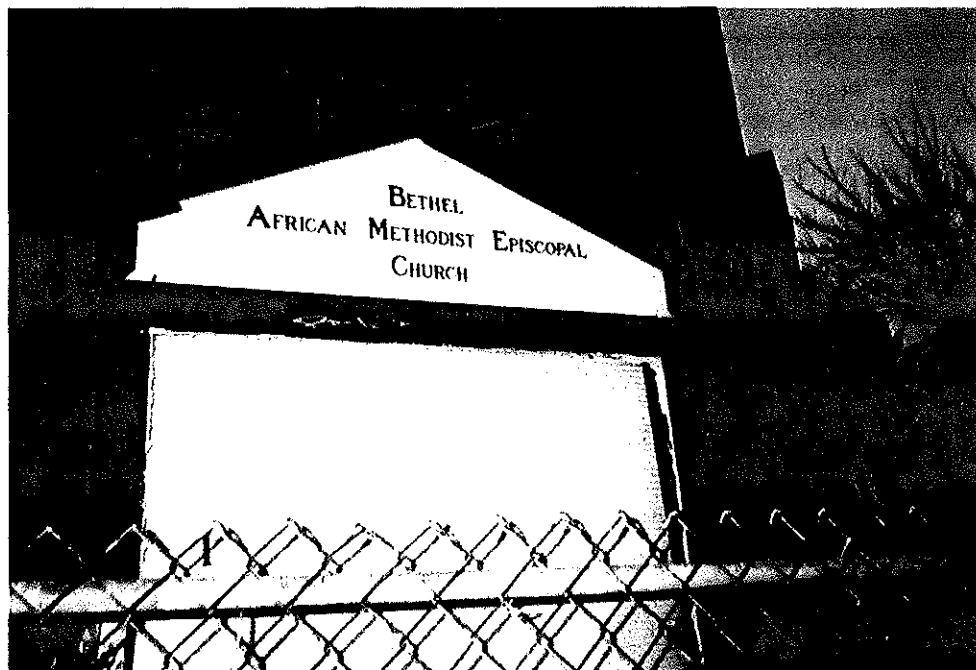
Church changed location again moving away from little Liberia where it had been headquartered for over one hundred years. In the 1980s, Bethel purchased property from the Covenant Congregational Church formerly the Swedish Congregational Church. This is the current site of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Current pastor is woman in 2003

“For over a hundred years this congregation was headquartered at 395 Broad Street in the South End.” In the mid 1950s it moved to 49 High Street.⁴ (Historic Resources Inventory Form #143, (1986) Church occupies building described as Neo-Gothic. It is constructed of wood on a stuccoed masonry base with irregular massing and a gable roof. The Swedish community built the structure in 1914 and named it the Swedish Congregational Church. In 1950, the name was changed to the Covenant Congregational Church. The Church remained at the Grove street location until the 1980s when the property was sold to Bethel AME Church. Bethel is the oldest black congregation in Bridgeport, founded in 1826.

Preliminary Draft Report for AME and AMEZ Churches 1993.





Danbury

St. James A.M.E. Church
Danbury, Connecticut

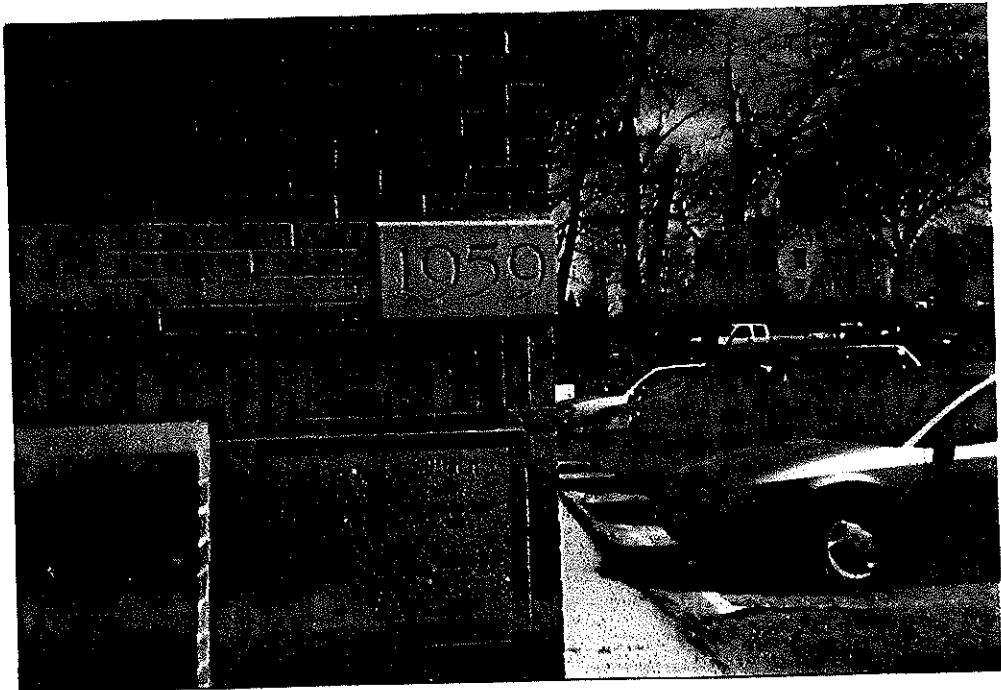
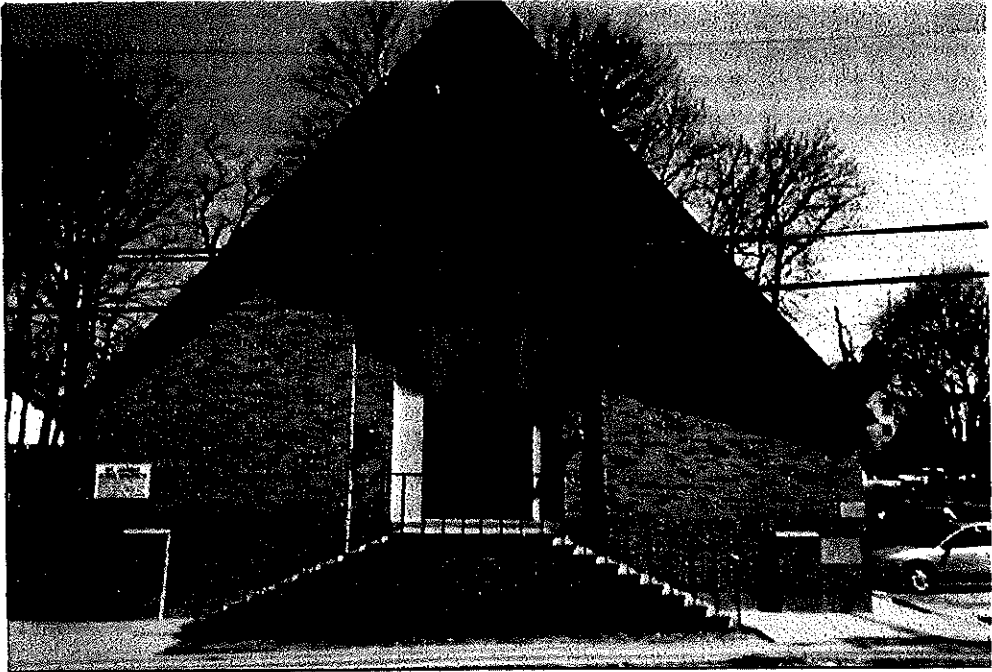
Historical evidence confirms the African Methodist Church's existence in Danbury in the 1860s.(Cummings, p. 415 Prior to the formal organization of a church and the building of a sanctuary, African Methodists in Danbury "traveled to Norwalk, Connecticut for spiritual guidance."

"In 1953, Rev. James Eade, Associate Minister of Bethel A.M.E. Church in Norwalk, realized the need for a church in the city of Danbury and moved to organize and establish what is currently known as St. James A.M.E. Church. Mrs. Evelyn V. Townsend, St. James' first missionary was joined by other lay members including: Mrs. Evelyn Thompson, Mr. Noah Mourning, Sr., Mrs. Barbara P. Moffett, Miss Maggie Mayo, Mrs. Mae P. Taylor, Re. Queen P. Shields and Mr. Theodore Calland who labored with Rev. Eade to make St. James a reality in Danbury.

About 1971 under the leadership of Rev. Samuel T. Smith, St James incorporated and status changed from a mission to a station Pastors: Rev. Paul Ritter, Rev. K.C. Jones, Rev. E. L. Strickland, Rev. Clarence Williams, Rev. Clyde Walker, Rev. Reynold Smith, and Rev. Joseph Edwards. In 1986 Bishop Cummings appointed Rev. Novel Goff, Sr., Pastor. "Under the leadership of Rev. Goff, St. James has recaptured the vision of Allen [Richard Allen, founder of AME] and members have rededicated themselves to the mission of the church. New Edifice to seat 250. Revitalization of teaching and training agencies, particularly Church School, Young .People's .Department. and Lay Organization

Rev. Clifford Hill is the current pastor

Cummings, p. 415 founded 1860



Greenwich

Bethel A.M.E. Church
44 Lake Avenue
203-661-3099

Bethel AME is the oldest Black Church in Greenwich (Letter from Rev. E. Carleton Brown, Jr., Pastor Bethel A.M.E.Church to Ms. Cora Murray, April 3, 1993)

Founded in 1882 and the church still occupies original wooden building which has extensions. Parsonage next to parish.

Founding members – African American southerners who migrated to work in service sector as maids and personal service and seasonal work.

Members of the white community became the local trustees who hold the property. Last of white trustees gone. This situation is unlike the case of most African Methodist Churches. (Info from Mr. Knight)

Cummings, p. 417 June 15, 1882 Rev. T. M. Stewart of Bethel AME Church NYC was called to Greenwich Ct to organize “Little Bethel AME Church” as a society which would adhere to the discipline of the AME Church (Bethel Connection). Chronology

1883, first frame church built, Rev. W.H. Shields, pastor

1896 parsonage constructed, Rev. Shields, pastor

1921 old structure removed and present church built by Rev. E. J. Odum

1937 Drake, John G. Rev pastor Bethel AME ch

Greenwich Directory Fairfield County Conn, 1937-38 917.462 G. 85 mo
RL Polk & Co Pub –
NY, NY 1937

p. 483 pop. 12 – 33112 (1930 US census) east at present
37500 Am born 71%

p 482 Bethel AME zion Church 44 Lake Ave Greenwich, ct (not a zion church despite directory address)

p 483 Drake, John G. (AME) 42 Lake Ave

p 86 Drake, John G. Rev pastor Bethel AME ch

h 42 Lake Avenue

Cummings, p. 417 June 15, 1882 Rev. T. M. Stewart of Bethel AME Church NYC was called to Greenwich Ct to organize “Little Bethel AME Church” as a society which would adhere to the discipline of the AME Church (Bethel Connection). Chronology

1883, first frame church built, Rev. W.H. Shields, pastor

1896 parsonage constructed, Rev. Shields, pastor

1921 old structure removed and present church built by Rev. E. J. Odum

Greenwich

1964 church office built. Rev. Leon Burnham pastor
1977 Remodeling and renovation of kitchen, stain glass windows installed,
renovations and extensive work on parsonage.
pastor Rev. Carlton Brown Jr. and wife Joanna (1987)
Rev. Harvey Sparkman
Rev Alvan Johnson
pastor Carlton Woodard as of 2003
Rev. Margaret Tyson, daughter of Rev. A. Tyson in Norwalk

Cummings, p. 417

Hartford

Allen Chapel
2233 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut

Allen Chapel's current minister is Reverend Greer. He had been at Allen Chapel for two months as of March 2003. He referred me Reverend Betty Elizabeth Alsagaf. Her grandfather helped to establish the church.

According to Cummings, p. 429. On Wednesday evening May 20, 1936, Evangelist Thennie Baten Weston Martin, Anderson Franklin, Edgar Dozier, Willie Jackson, William I. Spivey, Clifford Wimbish and John Lumpkin met in Weston Martin's home. "They met to keep the people together and to prevent further erosion of African Methodism in Hartford." Meetings continued regularly. Then August 5, 1939, Reverend Chalres Richardson was invited to work with the group. He invited the participants to meet in his home on 137 Mather Street. A committee Anderson Franklin, John Lumpkin, Evangelist Thennie Baten was selected to consult the Bishop W.H. Heard about starting the second AME Church in Hartford. (Bethel AME was still in Hartford) Presiding Bishop Heard and Associate Bishop David Simmons gave the committee permission and the informal gathering organized themselves into the Second AME Church.

At the May 27, 1937 annual conference (held at St. Paul AME church in Cambridge, MA), Presiding Elder accepted the church into the New England Conference. Reverend Charles Richardson was formally appointed pastor and the church took a new name – Allen Chapel AME. He stayed until 1947. Rev. H.S. Tyson appointed and pastored until 1949. Presiding Elder S.P. Perry guided Allen Chapel until the appointment of Rev. W.H. Muldrow. He served until 1950. Rev. C.P. Cole came to Allen Chapel and remained for a decade from 1952 to 1962. It was he who guided the construction of the current sanctuary for worship on Main Street. Other pastors:

Rev. J. Wesley Parker 1962-1963
Rev. K.C. Jones 1963-1966
Rev. T.C. Walker 1966-1970
Rev. S. J. Echols 1970-1981
Rev. T. Hudson 1981-1982
Rev. Everett Chandler 1987

Pastor in 1993 Nicholas Genevieve-Tweed

A committee of Allen Chapel negotiated with the city of Hartford redevelopment agency to construct a day care facility on an adjoining lot. Allen Chapel participate in the Bicentennial Celebration of the AME Church

Cummings, p. 429



New Haven

Bethel

New Haven's connection to African Method Episcopal Church took hold when Bishop Allen's representative helped organized Bethel between 1836/1837. Although Allen preached as a minister for the Methodist church on the Hartford Circuit, which was in Pennsylvania despite the name Hartford, Allen lived the rugged life of an itinerant preacher before organizing the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. Allen did not organize the AME church in New Haven. Aging and ill, he sent his representative to help organize Bethel in 1836/1837.* Bethel in New Haven is the oldest African Methodist Episcopal Church in the state based on this research. The church has moved several times. Bethel New Haven became a charter member of the New England Conference. (check perhaps this is incorrect date). Bethel hosted the New England Annual Conference with Bishop Daniel Payne, the presiding prelate.

First location of the church 31 Sperry Street. In 1929, a new edifice was completed also on Sperry Street. Bethel hosted the Annual Conference again. In 1975, church moved to its present site on 255 Goffe. In 1983, property acquired for Christian Education Building. Facility, dining area. Space leased to the city of New Haven for senior lunch.

Currently Mr. and Mrs. Leo Clarke are among Bethel's elder members. Mr. Clarke is a trustee and he has been a member of the church for over 50 years. Through his

matrilineal relatives, Mr. Clarke is also a descendant of the Deep River historic African American community of the 19th century. Members of this community migrated to New Haven. Mrs. Clarke's father was an African Methodist Episcopal Minister. He was assigned to a parish in Connecticut. They have joined others in the New Haven area in sustaining the tradition of economic self-help, civic duty and religious piety.

Two of Bethel's pastors have become Bishops: Thomas H.D. Ward elected 10th Bishop in 1868; William Dickerson elected 13th Bishop in 1880. Rev. J. Stanley Justice appointed to Bethel in 1983

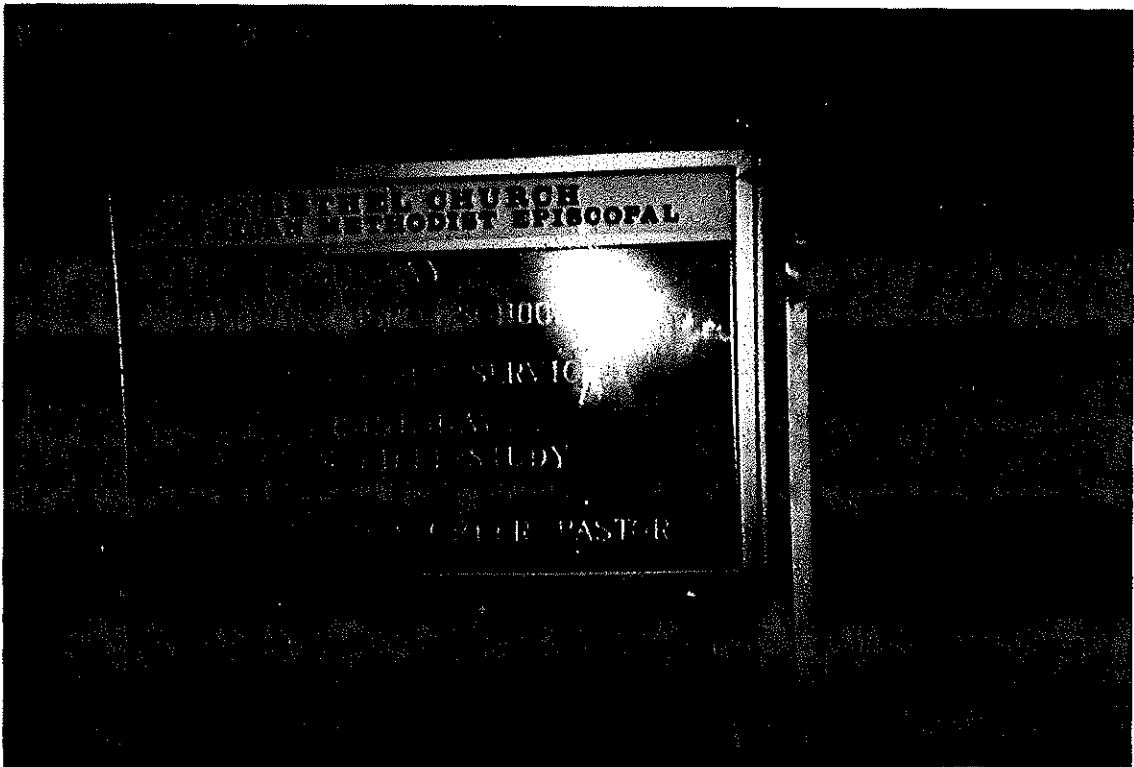
*Mr. Leo Clarke of New Haven and Mr. Herbert Knight of Bloomfield supplied the information on Bethel's founding.
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
New Haven

Cummings, p. 411 – Founded 1837

Bethel New Haven a charter member of the New England Conference in 1805 (check perhaps this is incorrect date). Bethel hosted the New England Annual Conference with Bishop Daniel Payne, the presiding prelate. First location of the church 31 Sperry Street. In 1929, a new edifice was completed also on Sperry Street. Bethel hosted the Annual Conference again. In 1975, church moved to its present site on 255 Goffe. In 1983, property acquired for Christian Education Building.

Two of Bethel's pastors have become Bishops: Thomas H.D. Ward elected 10th Bishop in 1868; William Dickerson elected 13th Bishop in 1880. Rev. J. Stanley Justice appointed to Bethel in 1983.

Contacts in 2003 Sister Diane Tyler and current pastor Rev. Dayland K. Greer.



Norwalk

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

Originally organized as a small religious society, African American parishioners began by meeting in homes of devoted members. In 1874, they held services in the home of Augusta Ann Price. After a prayer and song, they organized themselves into the Union Mission Society. This small group met regularly in private homes, but found that the growing numbers made it necessary for them to find larger quarters. In 1875, they secured the use of the Old Town House on Mill Hill. The Congregational church gave African American parishioners a building that was originally located close to the Congregational Church. It moved to 9th street. The church did not become African Methodist Episcopal until 1925. The church remained at that site until 1954.

Under Rev. Felix Bagby, the current sanctuary was constructed and completed in 1959. The parsonage is located next to the church. Rev. Tyson has been pastor of Bethel for 5 years.*

Bishop Cummings observed , p. 416 "...blacks sought to practice their faith in the white churches, but often they faced both subtle and overt instances of prejudice and bias. There was an effort on the part of some white churches to give varying degrees of acceptance to the tenets of Christian faith, but the prejudices and biases of the community became so much a part of the social psychology that they were carried over into the life of the church. Those blacks attending the white churches were sensitive to these actions and could not reconcile such actions to the teachings of the Bible.

Such was the frustration of the group of "colored people" who had been worshipping in the white churches of Norwalk.

On May 11, 1886, the First Congregational Church “took cognizance of the growing group of Colored Christians and voted to give their lecture room to the Colored Mission Church for worship purposes and to move it to a site selected by the Union Mission Society.” The parcel of land at 24 Knight Street was purchased by the Union Mission Society; and on June 12, 1886, the Lecture Room was moved from Lewis Street to Knight Street. [Cummings, 416]

In 1919, Rev. William LaMar pastored the mission and recognized the importance of being part of a denominational organization. In 1922, he discussed this with the congregation and proposed joining the African Methodist Episcopal Conference. The church petitioned for membership and in 1923, the Union Mission Society was accepted into the AME church – benefits identification with an international denomination, assignment of pastors under the Episcopal structure of the AME Church. Pastors Rev. William LaMar, Rev. Felix Bagby, Rev. Richard Stenhouse, Rev. Alfred Tyson.

Rev. Alfred Tyson provided the information on the church’s history during discussions March 24, 2003. He has been an AME minister for 54 years.

Stamford

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

Bethel's early years can be traced to 1895 and 1896. In 1895, African Americans in Stamford who desired to worship in the Methodist tradition met on South Pacific Street in south Stamford. The congregation began with approximately seven people.

As the congregation grew, the need for larger quarters became apparent and the congregants acquired a small property on west Main Street which was the center of the African American community and moved later to another property on Greenwood Hill.

Prior to its introduction into the New England Conference, Methodist ministers from the United Methodist organization led services with the African American congregation. Bethel entered the annual conference in 1904 under the leadership of Reverend C.P. Cole D.D. Rev. Cole was from Greenwich, the pastor of the Bethel AME Church on Lake Avenue.

Cummings, p. 423 In 1904, Bishop Abraham Grant assigned Reverend A. O. Norton as first appointed pastor to Bethel. "People met in a little church at 98 Richmond Hill Avenue paying rent for the use of the building." Pastors Reverends Norton, W.H. Jones, John E. Hagam, A. Lynch, C.N. Gibbons, G. A. Lanzo, E. H. Collins in 1917, Rev. E. C. Newby sent in 1919.

Mr. George Mintz, Columbia University administrator , and member of Bethel, church Historian 7/24/03 interview.

Bethel AME in Stamford has moved several times since its formal organization. On Richmond Hill, the church acquired property and moved into what was a small Baptist Church. That building was expanded and still stands at 98 or 94 Richmond Hill.

The current church was built in 1967. Stain glass windows adorn the church. The art depicts the apostles, Christ and individuals who laid the pillars for the African Methodist Episcopal Church – Bishop Allen, Peter Quinn and Daniel Coker and historic African American personalities.

At Bethel in Stamford, some of the oldest parishioners are Mrs. Anna Edmonds who will be 102 years in August, 2003; Mr. Charles Darrow who is in his 90s and arrived in Stamford when he was thirteen years old via steamship. He came to Stamford from Society Hill, South Carolina to join his mother. Mr. Darrow described Stamford as being six blocks. Another senior member at Bethel in Stamford Mr. William Kirby ‘Uncle Bob.’ Mr. Jeremiah McClellan, one of the original trustees, is still active in the church.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the Stamford South Carolina connection grew with four or five families from Orangeburg County joining members of the Stamford African Methodist Episcopalians and other new arrivals to the community. Some of the families were the Green family, the Mintz family and the Amaker family. Some of the Mintz family members served as steward and trustee for thirty years at Bethel. Active congregation and activist pastors. Rev. C.P. Cole was the first African American member of the Board of Education. During the 1960s, when frustrations over racial inequalities boiled in Stamford, Bethel’s Rev. C. C. Blake calmed those involved in the disturbances urging them to organize for positive action. The meeting was held at Bethel. (Mintz)

Current church membership is approximately 500. Loosing some of the elders who are retiring and moving away. Church has active youth department. Parish very conscious of its heritage. In the entrance, pictures of Richard Allen, William Paul Quinn adorn the walls. Displays depict milestones in the African American experience which is still unfolding.

*Information supplied by Rev. Winton Hill, pastor of Bethel AME Church in Stamford, Connecticut during a visit and discussion to the church March 24, 2003
Pastor Hill began his ministry 35 years ago, approximately 1968 at St. James AME Church in Alligator, Mississippi, which was a plantation church.

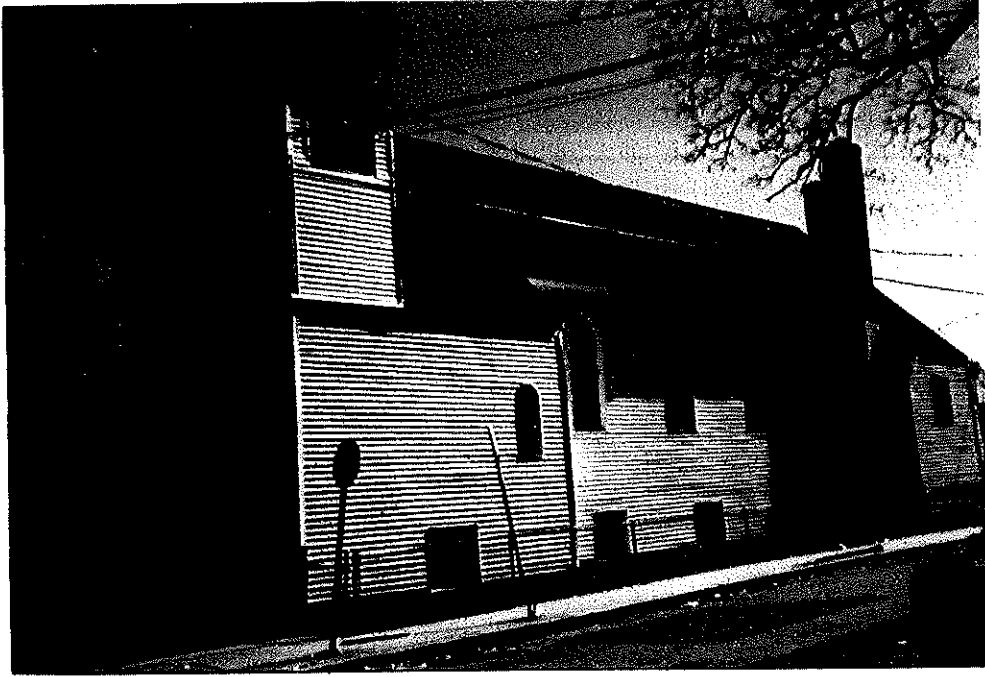
Bethel-Stamford

Cummings, p. 423 In 1904, Bishop Abraham Grant assigned Reverend A. O. Norton as first appointed pastor to Bethel. "People met in a little church at 98 Richmond Hill Avenue paying rent for the use of the building." Pastors Reverends Norton, W.H. Jones, John E. Hagam, A. Lynch, C.N. Gibbons, G. A. Lanzo, E. H. Collins in 1917, Rev. E. C. Newby sent in 1919.

Add more from Cummings, p. 423

Reverend Hill described African Methodist Episcopal members as Black Christians and nationalists. They have an activist tradition. A current issue facing the African American community is affordable housing. Pastors should be leading the charge commented Reverend Hill.

*Information supplied by Rev. Winton Hill, pastor of Bethel AME Church in Stamford, Connecticut during a visit and discussion to the church March 24, 2003
Pastor Hill began his ministry 35 years ago, approximately 1968 at St. James AME Church in Alligator, Mississippi, which was a plantation church.



III African Methodist Episcopal Zion

Two centers of African Methodism had emerged by the close of the 18th century. The African Methodist Episcopal Church built around Mother Bethel in Philadelphia and African Episcopal Church in New York, the Zion Connection. Although separate in their administration, they shared a common reverence for their African heritage, the Methodist religious tradition, abolition of slavery and the goal of full citizenship for African Americans. Advocacy for abolition unequivocal. "Zion was a foremost anti-slavery church" Walls, p. 149

Walls, p. 89 In 1807 the British Parliament act of March 25 officially abolished the slave trade. „,the people of African descent in some large cities of the North planned thanksgiving celebrations for the momentous occasion.

Walls, 89 In New York City, the celebration was held at Zion Church, the city's only black church at that time, and it was indeed an effective occasion. Coker was proud of those few men who had achieved for the race, and recorded these "descendants of the African Race who have given proofs of talents," among whom James Varick who preached the "Sermon of Thanksgiving on the Occasion of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade," in the afternoon of January 1, 1808, and closed service. [Coker, A Dialogue, p. 42]. It was the first recorded sermon in history preached by an African on behalf of African people, Absalom Jones being the other known African to perform this same task in Philadelphia. In the [90} New York City services, William Hamilton composed the hymns for the day, and Peter Williams, Jr. gave the oration in the morning This became an annual celebration for a period among the people of African descent, with Abraham Thompson having the honor in 1809, and William Miller in 1810.

The AMEZ attracted individuals who would become prominent abolitionists. Rev. Serrington, who pastored Walters AM.E. Zion Church in Bridgeport, met Frederick Douglass shortly after he escaped slavery. Serrington encouraged Douglass to speak publicly and Douglass fine tuned his skills in the AME Zion church. Anti-slavery Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, (Isabella Baumfree)

On Allen, Varick and the New York Church, Walls, pp. 51-53; When the Lord shall build up Zion", p. 51; Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass *The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Reality of the Black Church*, p. 52 (1799), location of the Black population in NY, p. 53; Charter of the African Church, p. 58, "Zion was a foremost anti-slavery church" Walls, p. 149
The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, *Reality of the Black Church*, p. 52 (1799), location of the Black population in NY, p. 53; Charter of the African Church, p. 58,

Also full rights of citizenship. Varick the right to vote.

The underground r r

Prominent persons Frederick Douglass, Isabella Bumfree, Harriet Tubman, Walls, p. 149, Eliza Ann Gardner, Jermain Loguen, William Howard Day, Catherine Harris, "Zion was a foremost anti-slavery church" Walls, p. 149, underground rr. Walls, p. 164 Samuel May, Walls, p. 164

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Walls, p. 89 William Hamilton led a movement – the New York African Society for Mutual Relief which received a state charter March 23, 1810 with Hamilton as its first president. Its object to raise money for widows and orphans of deceased members. Its

members were businessmen, many members of the A.M.E. Zion Church and several preachers. James Varick elected its first chaplain. First meeting building of the organization was 42 Orange now Baxter Street.

AMEZ

The ministers who served early in the history of Walters Memorial where all abolitionist. From the pulpit they rallied for Jesus while fighting racism and oppression. Through their strong orations and defiant acts, the abolitionist movement took on Importance. The ministers actions originated the strategies that further developed the abolitionist movement and the underground railroad. Strategies included developing a speakers bureau of ex slaves to talk about their slave experiences to sympathetic whites.

Walters Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Published 2002

Alice G. Farrar, a member of Walters

November 28, 1893 – April 18 2002

Abolitionist Ministers of Walters Memorial AME Zion

Education

Walls, pp. 319, 321 Clinton Junior College in Rock Hill, S.C.

p. 316 Hood Theological Seminary of Livingstone College

p. 187 Hood Theological Seminary named after Bishop William James Hood who pastored Bridgeport African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1863

p. 320 Lomax-Hannon Junior College in Greenville, Alabama founded In 1893

Women, missionaries, teachers, conductors, station masters on the underground

Woman's role p. 111

1876 general conference strike out the word male in the Discipline. This permitted woman the right to vote.

Excerpts from the *Meriden Daily Republican*. April 9, 1880 Friday

A.M.E. Zion Bishop Moore's annual address- Plainville, Windsor, Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Middletown, M.E. Zion church in Foote street, New Haven. It was reported that the membership of the eighteen organizations was about 900 with 22 clergymen and missionaries. In the Sunday schools connected with these organizations there are 700 scholars. . In the evening there was a pleasant occasion, it being a formal reception to Bishop Moore. He succeeded in collecting about \$5000 Bishop Moore's annual address, which followed the election of officers, was a strong vindication of the church and the rights of the colored man. He spoke at length upon the establishment of the book concern and expressed a strong desire that a full delegation be sent to the general conference. It is expected that at the next session of the general conference the question of the southern exodus of colored men will be discussed.....

Put this in appendix

Excerpts from the *Meriden Daily Republican*. April 9, 1880 Friday

The New England conference of the A.M.E. Zion connection; opened its thirty-third annual session at the M.E. Zion church in Foote street, New Haven on Wednesday. There were nine churches and nine missions represented, including those from the cities of Boston, Providence, Worcester, New Bedford, Hartford, New Haven, Middletown and Bridgeport, and from the towns of Plainville, Windsor, Attleborough, Great Barrington, Nantucket, Derby and Cambridgeport, Mass. Right rev. J.J. Moore, D.D., presided, and opened the session by reading a portion of the scriptures: prayer was offered by Rev. S.B. Hunter of Boston. The one feature of the business of the first morning was the election of officers for the ensuing year. Those elected were as follows: Secretary, Rev. R.R Morris; assistant secretary, Rev. T.A. Davis; reporter, Rev. J.C. Lodge; marshals, J.E. Lloyd and D.F. Bradley. Bishop Moore's annual address, which followed the election of officers, was a strong vindication of the church and the rights of the colored man. He spoke at length upon the establishment of the book concern and expressed a strong desire that a full delegation be sent to the general conference. It is expected that at the next session of the general conference the question of the southern exodus of colored men will be discussed, and some action taken regarding it. It was reported that the membership of the eighteen organizations was about 900 with 22 clergymen and missionaries. In the Sunday schools connected with these organizations there are 700 scholars. Thursday was an interesting day with the conference; the vital topics of Sunday schools, temperance and education were discussed. The ground taken was a high one upon all these questions and they were argued in the affirmative with vigor and force by a large by a large proportion of the delegates. In the evening there was a pleasant occasion, it being a formal reception to Bishop Moore. This was tendered on account of his recent return from an extensive European tour, where he had been sent to solicit funds for the churches. After a very cordial address of welcome, the bishop gave an interesting sketch of his trip and its results. He succeeded in collecting about \$5000. Other addresses, interspersed with singing by the congregation, followed. The conference will be in session several days longer.

African Methodist Episcopal Zion
4/3/1880

The AME Zion's mission of this city, having voted to petition the conference not to send them a resident pastor for the coming year, the Rev. Alex. Du Bois will preach his farewell sermon in the lecture room of the Y.M.C.A. building, at 7:30 o'clock, to-morrow evening. All the friends of the mission are invited. The conference meets in New Haven, Wednesday, April 7.

"Brevities"

The colored Methodists held their thirty-second annual conference in American M. E. Zion church, New Haven, Wednesday. The session will last over Sunday. Bishop Moore is present as president. Nine churches and nine missions are represented, among them Meriden, 4/9/1880 MDR

Check reality of Black Church – was this 32nd annual conference? Couldn't find MDR – Meriden Daily Republican

A.M.E. Zion Conference

Hartford, R.R. Morris; New Haven, J.W. Brown; Middletown, J.C. Lodge; Bridgeport, J.B. Small; Norwich; including New London, A.J. Gilbert; Waterbury, including Derby and Ansonia Meriden, including Plainville, Windsor, and Wallingford, J. F. Lloyd

The principal business of interest before the New England conference of A.M.E. Zion churches at the Foote street church in New Haven, Monday, was the ordination in the afternoon of deacons, and the announcements of the appointments for the coming year. The ordination services took place at three o'clock, Rev. J.B. Small of Bridgeport preaching the sermon. Those ordained were A.J. Talbot of Norwich, T.S. Taylor of

Hartford and W.B. Bowen of Worcester, Mass. Mr. Small spoke from 1 Corinthians, ix, 12. The sermon was an able ones and contained much good advice to the candidates. In the evening a missionary meeting was held in which most of the clergymen of the conference took part. At the close of the evening session Bishop Moore made the following appointments for the year: For the church in Boston R.H.G. Dyson; Providence, First church, J.H. Anderson; Providence, Second church, J.H. Anderson; Providence, Second church, P. Ross; New Bedford, S.H. Washington; Hartford, R.R. Morris; New Haven, J.W. Brown; Middletown, J.C. Lodge; Bridgeport, J.B. Small; Cambridge, S.H.S. Bill; Missions – Attleboro, C.C. Ringold; Norwich; including New London, A.J. Gilbert; Waterbury, including Derby and Ansonia, Wm: B. Brown; New Milford, including Great Barrington, Lee and Norfolk, S.A. Mitchell; Meriden, including Plainville, Windsor, Springfield, and Wallingford, J. F. Lloyd; Supernumeraries, A. Meeker, S. Peakes, Daniel Davis. Delegates were appointed to attend the several annual conferences of the country and also committees upon education, book concern, temperance, and Sunday School. The conference closed about half past nine o'clock, the session being considered one of the most interesting ever held by the churches.

14/13/1880 MDR

9/9/1879 MDR refused accommodations

Norwich

The members of Calvary African M.E., Zion church, Norwich, went to Shelter island on a barge Saturday. They were met by the several land owners, who told them that they could not land. The excursionists offered to pay double the usual sum for the privilege of landing, but were again refused, the land owners saying that they would be objectionable to the guests of the hotels. When this became known among the excursionists they were indignant, and it required great effort on the part of the influential members of the church to restrain the brethren who proposed to go ashore and throw the land owners from the dock. Fearing trouble the captain of the tug steamed away. The church members talk of a suit against the land owners and hotel proprietors for damages.

Civil Rights issues

8/21/1883 MDR

The decision in the civil rights case of the Rev. George A. Smith, colored, formerly of Norwich, was announced on Saturday – the Washington restaurant keeper who refused him admission into this place was found guilty of a misdemeanor. The court holds that under the common law an innkeeper is bound to take in and receive all travelers and wayfarers, and that by the act of March 1st, 1875, it is made a misdemeanor to discriminate against a traveler on account of race and color, regardless of any previous constitution of servitude.

NOTE – I don't know if this was an AME Zion minister or not.

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Churches in Connecticut

Ansonia

Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church came to the Naugatuck Valley during the Reconstruction era of United States History. In the town of Derby in 1875, members of the small but dynamic African American community organized the Zion mission. Chauncey Coggsell, Mary Agnes Curtis, Ada Jones, Ann M. Lee, Giles Lennon, Charles Marlowe, Louise Simmons, Isabelle Starks and Sandy Washington were among the founding members.

Membership grew. In 1888, during the ministry of Rev. J.W. Smith and with the support of Bishop J.J. Moore, members initiated the construction of a new parish on Derby Avenue. To honor the first pastor of the church Rev. J.J. Clinton, the parishioners named the new edifice, Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

Clinton was a dynamic church personality. Jailed for freedom in the words of Bishop Walls, in his history of the AME Zion Church. He preached for the humanity and freedom of all. White Methodists preached Servants obey your masters. Clinton jailed in Virginia by the authorities because of their fear that his ministry would cause slave revolt. Jailed for freedom in the words of Bishop Walls, in his history of the AME Zion Church.

Walls, *African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*, p. 194 on Bishop J.J. Clinton Discussion with Rev. Linder, pastor of the Clinton, A.M.E. Zion Church. February, 2003.

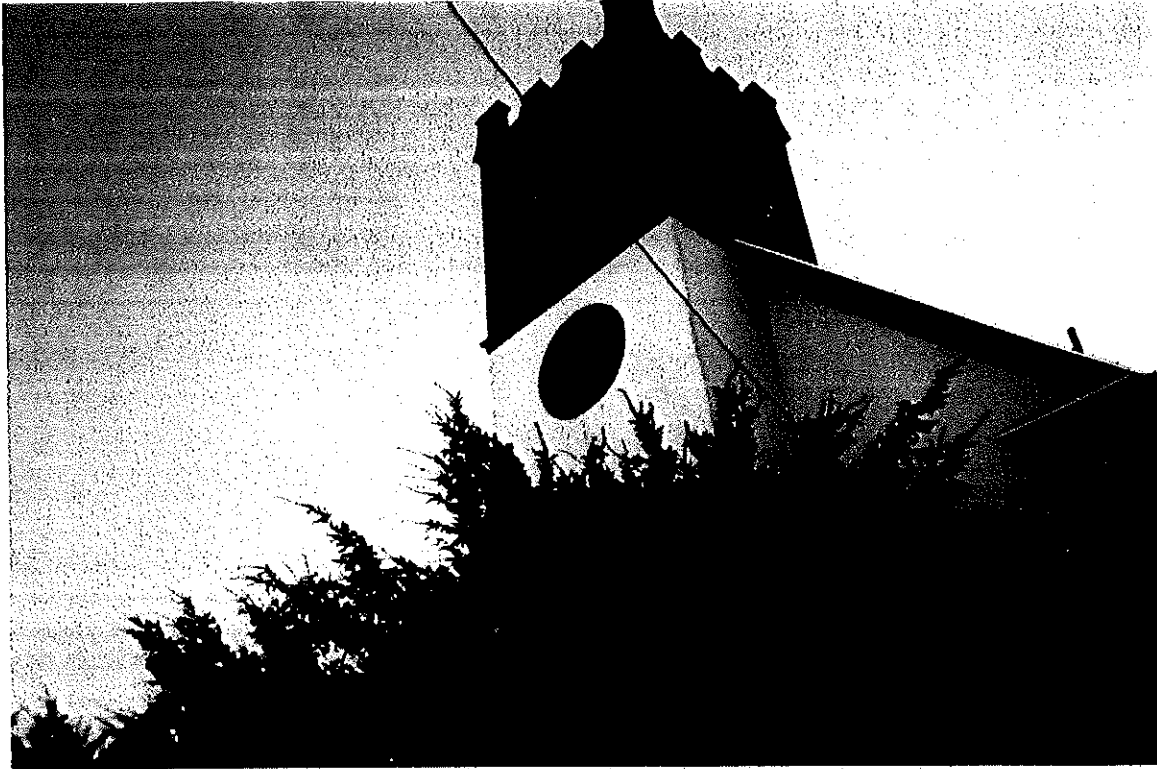
The Church currently occupies a facility constructed in 1921. It's stain glass windows and bell tower add a unique vintage quality to the building.

Clinton's facility have housed a daycare, and has hosted events with sister African Methodist Episcopal Churches. Three of Clinton's pastors have become Bishops – Rev. J.J. Clinton, Rev. Arthur Marshall and Rev. Nathaniel Jarrett.

Currently, Rev. Linder carries on tradition of civic involvement. He is the director of community action center.

Walls, *African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*, p. 194 on Bishop J.J. Clinton
Discussion with Rev. Linder, pastor of the Clinton, A.M.E. Zion Church. February, 2003.

Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church



Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Ansonia, Connecticut

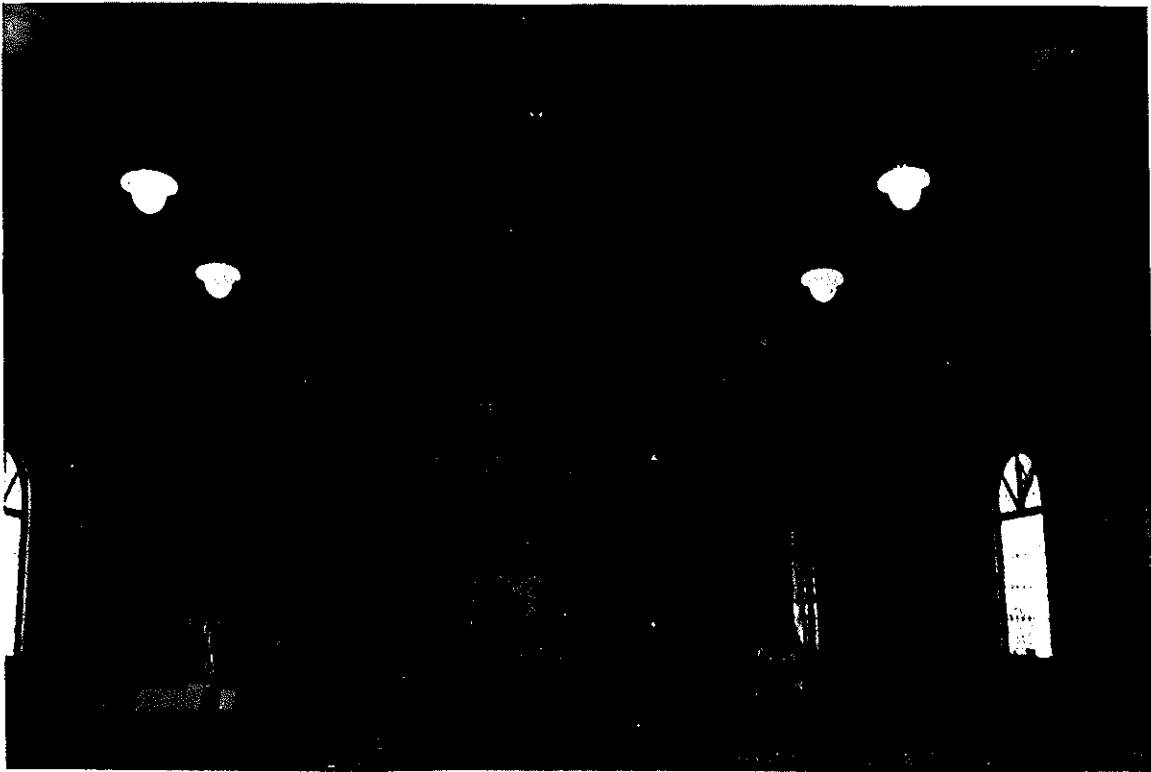


Photo courtesy of Ms. C. Murray
Connecticut Historical Commission

Clinton African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

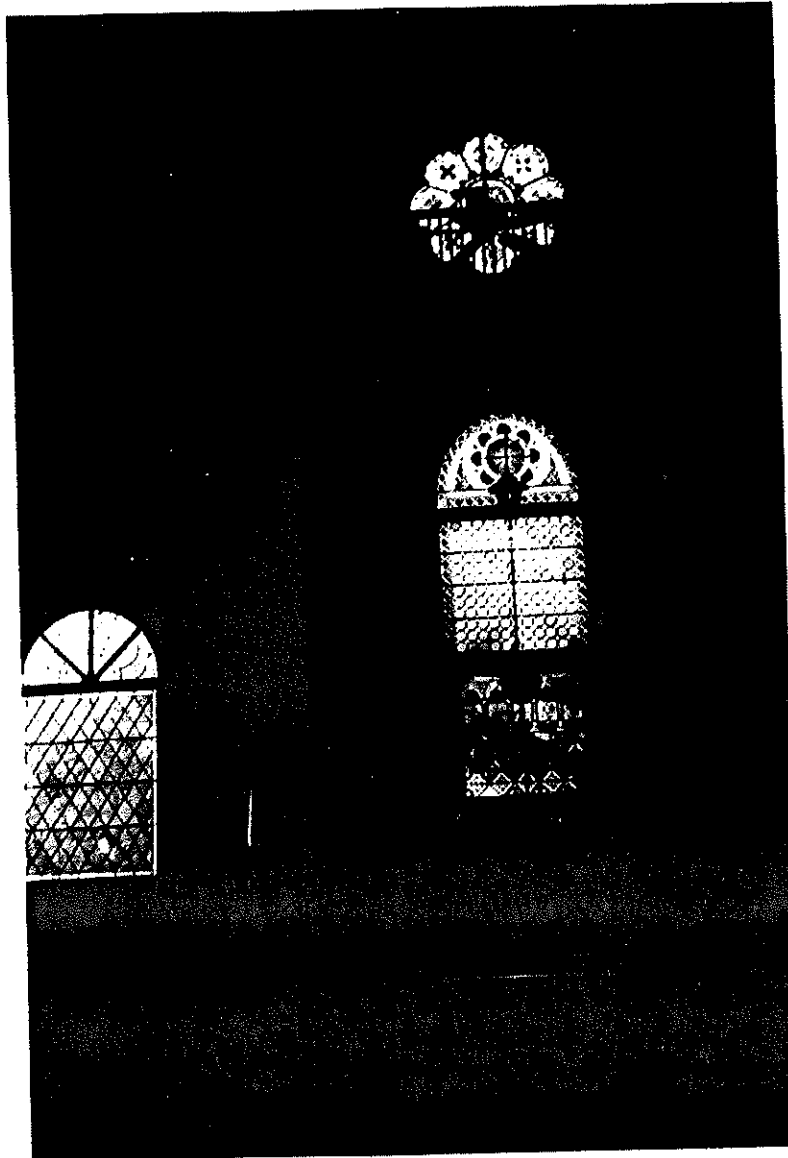


Photo courtesy of Ms. C. Murray
Connecticut Historical Commission

Bridgeport

Walters African Methodist Episcopal Zion
445 Broad Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

In 1831, abolitionist Samuel Whiting owned the area, where Walters AME Zion Church now sits. He sold lots to African Americans who used the land to build the North African Episcopal Church and the South African Episcopal Church. Today these congregations have evolved into the Bethel AME Church and Walters Memorial AME Zion Church (Millenium Booklet, p. 3) The Colored Methodist Episcopal Ebenezer Society and Church was the stabilizing factor for many who sought to find homes in 'Little Liberia'. The evolution of two churches from the one, allowed options of worship while the community continued to grow. (Millenium Booklet,

Walters AME Zion was located in the section of Bridgeport called 'Little Liberia' where it remains today. The original building is no longer standing, but present edifice sits on the land the church has occupied since 1835. "Little Liberia" situated on Long Island Sound in the south end of Bridgeport was a a stop African American runaway slaves and for African Americans who were already free. Abolitionists ministers.

They built a community. In 1845, Rev. Leonard Collins, a minister of AME Zion Church and owner of a grocery store located on Main Street started a library. Under the leadership of Rev. Collins and members of the church a notice was put in the Bridgeport Standard Newspaper to solicit donations of books from the greater community-for the purpose of a library. Before the city of Bridgeport developed a school district 'Little Liberia' under the leadership of the church developed an African Free School.

Reverend Gable Rice in 1858 purchased twin houses on Liberty Street and later moved them to Gregory and Broad Streets. One of the houses served as a place of worship and the other as a parsonage. The present structure for worship was constructed in 1882 under Rev. Haines. The church was rededicated in 1882 and named Walters Memorial after Bishop Alexander Walters a former pastor of the church. In 1900, a parsonage was built under Rev. J.J. Smyer. The mortgage was burned in 1918 under Reverend William H. Eley. Congregation grew and Rev. James W. Watson launched a new building fund campaign in May 1941. Rebuilding process began in 1949 and church edifice rededicated in 1951 under Reverend Robert Brown Hurt.. Mortgage burned to retire debt associated with renovations, June 29, 1952. Congregation raised forty eight thousand dollars in cash between 1949 and June 1952.

Under Reverend Charles Gordon, the church purchased a new parsonage at 10 Wendy Road in Trumbull. The Old parsonage is used now as offices and meeting rooms. Other property acquired. Church bought lot on Broad Street. In 1972 under Reverend Frederick W. Barnes, the church bought the home of Mrs. Sarah Brown Ross located next to the church. In 1978, the church celebrated the burning of the mortgage for these acquisitions under Reverend George C. Sanders. While pastor, Rev. and the congregation purchased a building and a lot for sixty thousand dollars in 1980. The church began a building project constructing a large auditorium, commercial size kitchen, classrooms and restrooms. In September 1987, the building was dedicated and named Walters Center. Since 1989 under Reverend Timothy Howard, the church purchased a new van and in 1992 organized a Feasibility and Proposal Committee to renovate the church. The first phase of the project began in February 1995 and was completed in May 1995. (p. 3) The Church History was dedicated to Alice G. Farrar, November 28, 1893 – April 18 2002. She was the oldest member of Walters.

The formation of Bridgeport's A.M.E.Zion church was recounted in an April 1, 1928

article of the *Bridgeport Post*. on April 1, 1928, recounts the story of the organization of the A.M.E. Zion Church: "A band of Negroes inhabiting the farms and woods around the embryo town of Bridgeport met one summer evening under the shadow of a great elm tree that stood where the public library is now situated. This huge tree constituted a sort of open air forum for the Negroes who were wont to meet under its spreading branches, hold divine service, and discuss the general situation."

Joel Freeman must have been a man of influence in this community, as the church purchased land close by his house lot on June 17, 1835, and his name is listed first among three trustees of the organization (Ibid. Volume 5, 99, 100, 101). The church cornerstone was laid July 5, 1835. That Joel was trusted by members of his peer group is evidenced by the number of times in the remainder of his life he was called upon to serve in positions of import, such as executor of the estates of deceased church members.

Early pastor William Serrington. In 1838 Rev. William Serrington an early minister of Walters Memorial
Connection with abolitionist movement

Bridgeport

Excerpts from church history

Walters Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (2002). The Church History was dedicated to Alice G. Farrar, November 28, 1893 – April 18 2002. She was the oldest member of Walters.

Abolitionist Ministers of Walters Memorial AME Zion

The ministers who served early in the history of Walters Memorial were all abolitionist. From the pulpit they rallied for Jesus while fighting racism and oppression. Through their strong orations and defiant acts, the abolitionist movement took on Importance. The ministers actions originated the strategies that further developed the abolitionist movement and the underground railroad. Strategies included developing a speakers bureau of ex slaves to talk about their slave experiences to sympathetic whites.

In 1838 Rev. William Serrington an early minister of Walters Memorial, while serving as pastor in New Bedford, Massachusetts at the Second Street AME Zion Church, met Frederick Douglas-fresh out of slavery. It was he that encouraged the spirit of Douglas and offered him brotherly advice. Douglas became very active in the Second Street Church under the tutelage of Rev. Serrington. Douglas became exhorter and later an ordained minister Rev. Peter Ross, another abolitionist minister of Walters Memorial, also served at the Massachusetts church and worked with Douglas while strengthening the abolitionist cause. Rev. John P. Thompson an abolitionist who was an early minister at Walters worked in Massachusetts with Douglas promoting and developing the abolitionist movement. Rev. D. Vanderere, Rev. J.W. Hood, Rev. John Taylor, Rev. J.W. Spywood and Rev. Leonard Collins served in the Bridgeport church and worked throughout the Pennsylvania, New York and New England Conferences promoting the eradication of slavery. Through the strong support of the ministers, the movement grew. The northern churches, along with spreading the gospel, were beset with the challenge of an abolitionist movement. The “tactic” which intensified and captured world wide attention.

Relationship between Douglass and Serrington in Walls, *African Methodist Episcopal Church*, pp. 149 and 150.

The abolitionist movement in New England meant that runaway slaves before 1850 stopped in "Little Liberia". By 1848 slavery was abolished in Connecticut and up until 1850 runaway slaves were protected by law to some degree if they ran to Connecticut and made it their home.

"Little Liberia" located on Long Island Sound in the south end of Bridgeport was a natural drop off point for runaways and for free Blacks looking for a place to settle.

The Colored Methodist Episcopal Ebenezer Society and Church was the stabilizing factor for many who sought to find homes in 'Little Liberia'. The evolution of two churches from the one, allowed options of worship while the community continued to grow.

In 1845, Rev. Leonard Collins, a minister of AME Zion Church and owner of a grocery store located on Main Street started a library. Under the leadership of Rev. Collins and members of the church a notice was put in the Bridgeport Standard Newspaper to solicit donations of books from the greater community-for the purpose of a library.

Before the city of Bridgeport developed a school district 'Little Liberia' under the leadership of the church developed an African Free School.

An article in the *Bridgeport Post* on April 1, 1928, recounts the story of the organization of the A.M.E. Zion Church: "A band of Negroes inhabiting the farms and woods around the embryo town of Bridgeport met one summer evening under the shadow of a great elm tree that stood there the public library is now situated. This huge tree constituted a sort of open air forum for the Negroes who were wont to meet under its spreading branches, hold divine service, and discuss the general situation." Joel Freeman must have been a man of influence in this community, as the church purchased land close by his house on June 17, 1835, and his name is listed first among three trustees of the organization (Ibid. Volume 5, 99, 100, 101). The church cornerstone was laid July 5, 1835. That Joel was trusted by members of his peer group is evidenced by the number of times in the remainder of his life he was called upon to serve in positions of import, such as executor of the estates of deceased church members. Walters Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (2002)

African Methodist Episcopal Zion
Church
Millennium Booklet



Danbury

Mount Pleasant African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Notes from the interview with Reverend Roderick 3/25/03 in Danbury, CT. Reverend Roderick was in Ansonia from 1986-1993. Prior to that, he was in Torrington for 9 years. His term ended in 1986.

[Blackwell started as a mission church.] In 1971, he was assigned by Bishop Spottswood to go to Blue Hill Avenue. No specific aim. Pastor not ordained yet. Three members and \$30.00 in the account. Mostly family members.

Current edifice built in 1965.

Mount Pleasant post- Reconstruction Church. Maintain connection with heritage. Programs during Black History Month. Tribute to Harriet Tubman.

Mount Pleasant hosted the annual conference thirty five years ago. Hosted the district conference. Hosted Christian Education Convention. Mount Pleasant was the lead church for the State meetings of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Annual State Assembly held twice ? was Mount Pleasant the lead church

Other programs- senior lunch program for those 62 years and older for a modest fee. (\$2.00 to \$2.75

Highest number of parishioners 400. Current membership around 190. long time members, some over 30 years Mrs. Ruby McCarley. Members from Mississippi, upstate New York who moved to Danbury and

Danbury
Mount Pleasant African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church History (2003)

Mt. Pleasant A.M.E. Zion Church was organized in 1889 under the leadership of Rev. Munzingo, a missionary preacher sent to Danbury by the New England Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The black population was surveyed and worship services for Sunday evenings were organized and held in a home on Cherry Street. Services were moved to various homes until the congregation became large and strong enough to rent a place of worship on Liberty Street which was later purchased as church property. After a while, this property was lost due to a lack of interest and diminishing financial support. Worship services did pick up again and were held in the loft of Barnum's Grain Store on Main Street. Later, property was purchased on South Street but met with resistance. Transactions were then made for a site on Rowan Street in exchange for the South Street property.

The congregation succeeded in building a church edifice on Rowan Street in 1908. The records show that the church was dedicated in September 1909. Rev. A.S. Tolbert was pastor, Bishop Walters was the Presiding Prelate and the Rev. Walls was the Presiding elder of the Hartford District.

On October, 1964, under the pastorate of the Rev. Leslie Lawson, the ground was broken for a new edifice. The old building was raised to make way for a new sanctuary. Rev. Lawson, one of the outstanding pastors of Mt. Pleasant, led the congregation into a new edifice for the first service on December 16, 1965. The Rt. Rev. Stephen Gill Spottswood was Bishop and Rev. Dr. James Charles Brown was Presiding Elder. The official opening was May 8, 1966 and the cornerstone laid on October 30, 1966.

Rev. A.J. Parker was sent to pastor Mt. Pleasant in 1969 and initiated the first of our annual Church Anniversary Celebrations. This was done during the week of April 5-12, 1970. The dining hall was renovated this year by the Action Day Care Center in order to accommodate the food service program adopted by the church. Mr. Bill Oliver and Mr. Sam Neville accomplished the construction.

The Rev. Leroy Blair came to Mt. Pleasant as pastor in 1971. he began to work with the youth of the church and started several educational and recreational programs during his tenure. The Junior Choir was also organized for them. The front structure of the church was renovated under Rev. Blair's administration. As our pastor, he was active in civic and political affairs of the city.

Danbury

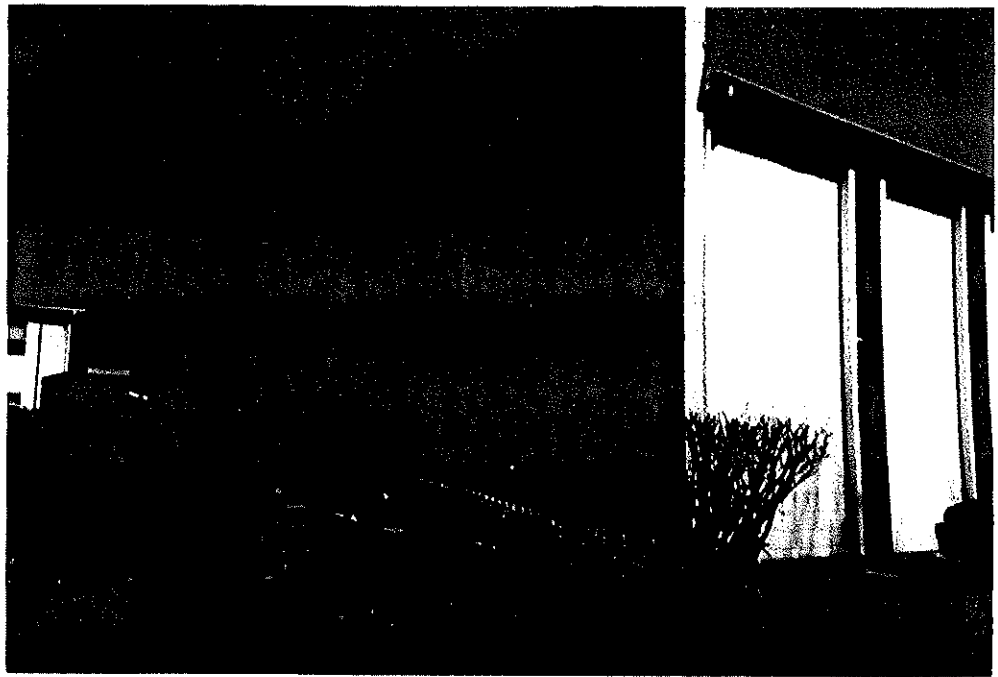
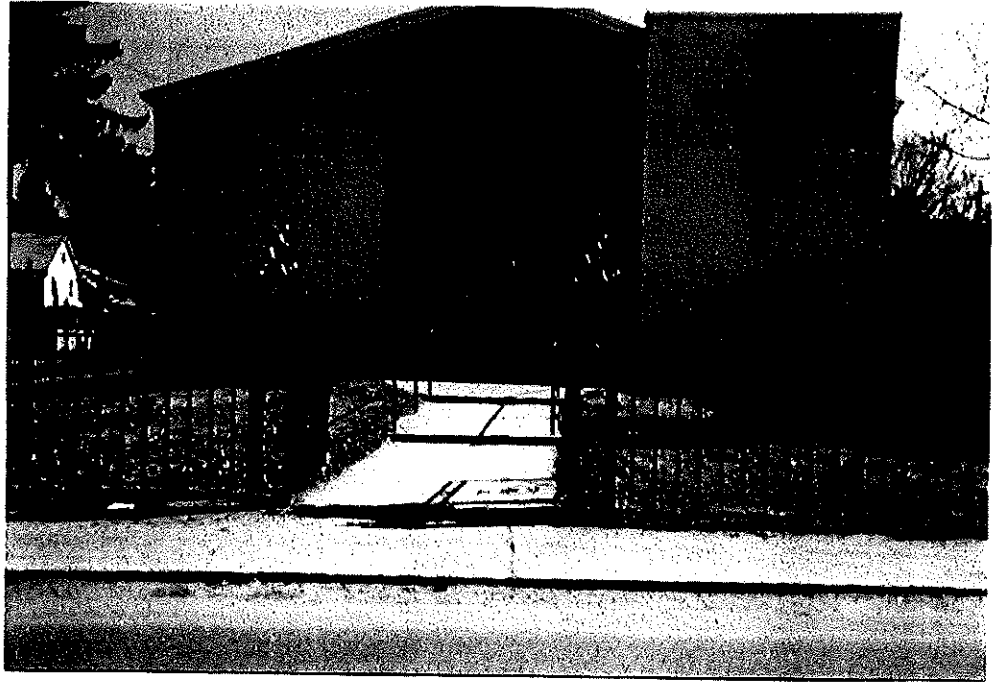
Bishop Herbert Bell Shaw, our then Presiding Prelate, considered the needs of the church and appointed the Rev. Leounidas Reed Dumas. The new pastor, his wife Lillye and daughter Beverly arrived on August 17, 1973. Under his leadership, the following groups were organized: Deaconess Board, Men's Chorus and the Lay Council. Other departments such as the Junior Choir. Buds of Promise and Young Women's Department of the WH&OM were revitalized. Under the leadership of Rev. Dumas, the several changes made brought new zeal to the church and community.

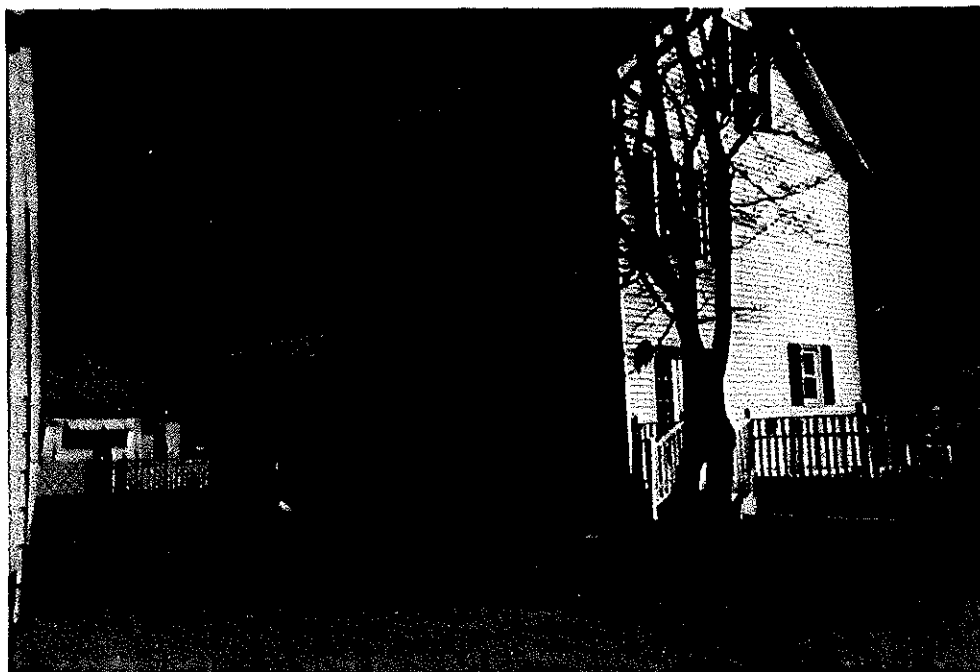
The role of pastor was assumed by the Rev. William James Hooker in 1978. Rev. Hooker steered Mt. Pleasant on a steady Christ centered course. Progressive growth of the congregation, numerous physical improvements were made to the church, parsonage, including vinyl siding, a new roof for the church, the purchase of a 15 passenger van were the hallmarks of his administration. During this time, the First Lady, Mrs. Doris Hooker, spearheaded a project of fencing the church property. In 1986, Mt. Pleasant acquired additional property in a three family unit adjacent to the church. The parking lot of the church was expanded as well. A ramp for the handicapped was also added. In 1987, we worked diligently to secure the ministries of the church and community. The efforts came to fruition in our outreach program. The program started with senior citizens transportation and personal care. It was extended to include a food pantry, health information and a screening located in one of the city's housing complexes. Our church was greatly blessed under Rev. Hooker's guidance. He was the pastor for 15 years. Rev. Hooker was retired by the New England Conference in May 1993. We thank him for the years of service and for being faithful, caring shepherd.

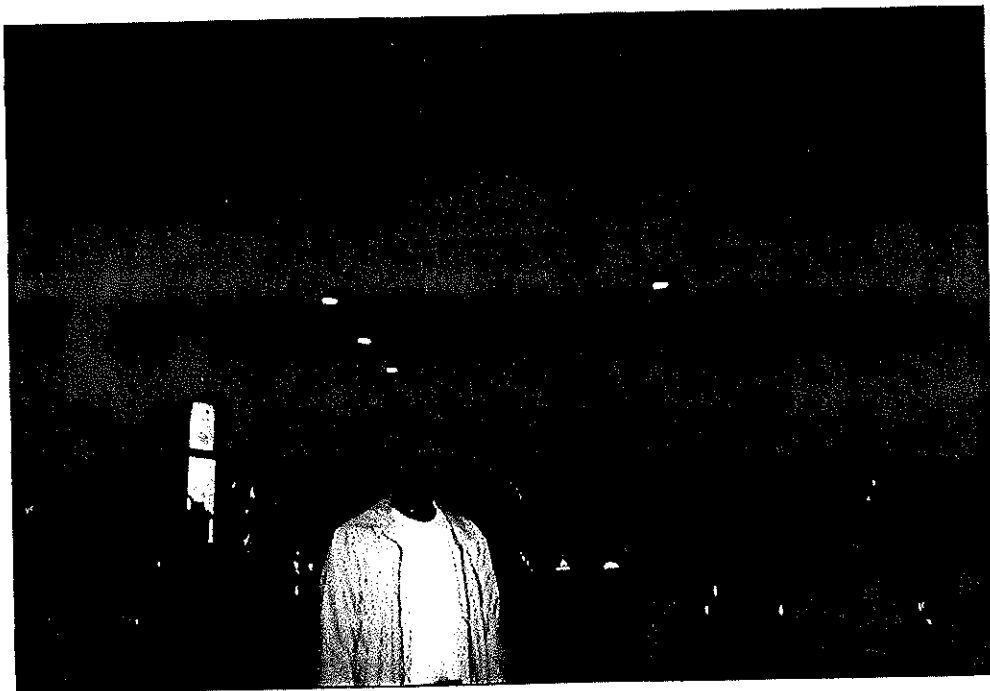
The Rev. March John Roderick, Sr. was appointed pastor of Mt. Pleasant at the 1993 Annual conference by Bishop George Washington Carver Walker, Sr. He came to Danbury with his wife, Betty Lou and their son, the Rev. Mark J. Roderick, Jr., then ordained Deacon. The Rodericks have brought new spirit to the church with their ministerial style.

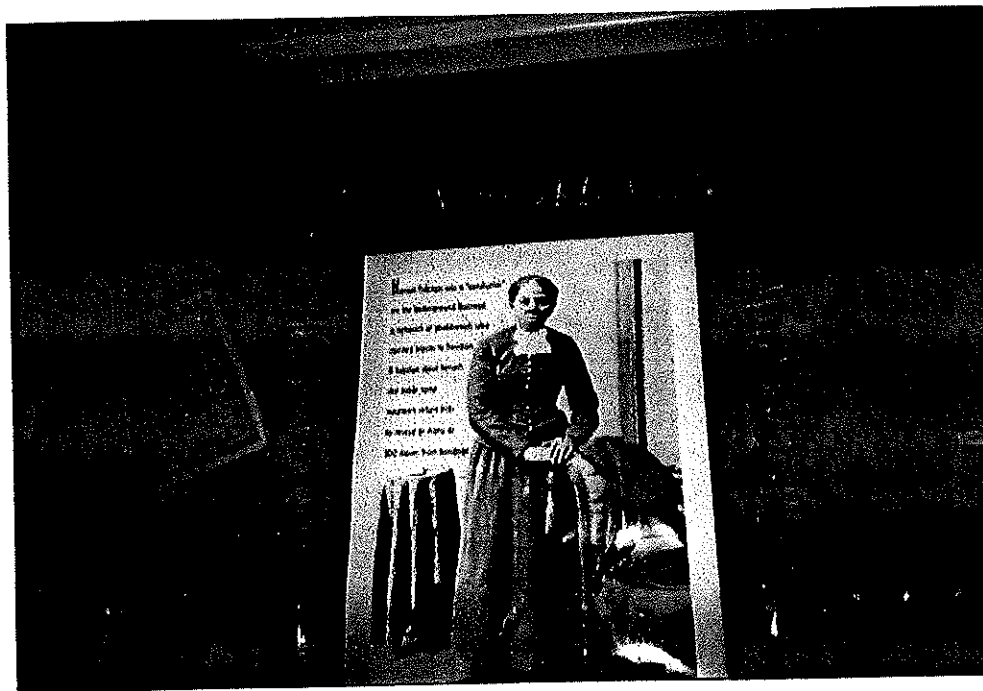
Mount Pleasant Rev. Roderick's tenure has now spanned ten years. The improvements and enhancements of the church have been benefited tremendously by his hard work and excellent administration. Physically the church, parsonage and grounds have never looked better; financially the church has grown; Spiritually the church has never been as blessed; and for the future, the church has been as prepared. Since last year, we have purchased another apartment house (twofamily) and we will soon add fifty percent more parking spaces on the landed acquired with the house, along with a donated piece of property. The parsonage has been completely renovated from cellar to the roof with a new section built to add more living space. The cost of the parsonage renovation has been paid in full, cutting a twenty year mortgage down to just nine years.

Excerpts from brief history by Rev. Roderick, pastor of Mount Pleasant.









Hartford

Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

The Church banner reads, church founded in 1833.

Excerpts of History of the Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church

History of the Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church "Sometime prior to 1827, the exact date is unknown, the African Religion Society came into existence, and owned a building on Talcott Street which they used as a place of worship About 1833, there was a split in the organization which resulted in the formation of two churches, one of the Congregational faith and one of the Methodist Faith."... A.M.E. Zion Society purchased land on Pearl Street. "Sometime between 1842-1856 they took the name of the A.M.E. Zion Society. Rev. George Spywood, to whom the Colored M.E. Society conveyed its Elm Street property in trust in 1844, took an active part in the split of the A.M.E. Zion Church in 1852 which was not healed until 1860, during that time the eastern part of the church was called "Zion" and the western part called "Wesley.", p. 1

History of the Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church, p. 2 "The first New England Annual Conference of the Church was held in Hartford in 1845. Members of Metropolitan involved in annual conferences since then. The Pearl Street location used in 1856 became the home of the Hartford's AME Zion church for forty-two years. Under the pastorate of Rev. J. Sulla Cooper (1897-1902), the congregation built a new church in 1898, also on Pearl Street. Another milestone was celebrated during the pastoral appointment of Rev. B. W. Swain. In November 1908, the mortgage and all financial obligations were paid. Bishop Alexander Walters, the presiding Bishop of the Conference celebrated with parishioners during the festivities featuring the mortgage burning. The

church on Pearl Street in downtown Hartford was used until 1924 when the church moved. Parishioners had moved to the northern end of the city and perhaps to accommodate to the new residential pattern of its members, the church sold the property on Pearl Street to the city of Hartford for \$120,000. The transaction occurred during the pastorate of Rev. Amos J. Gorham (1925-1929). The proceeds enabled the congregation to purchase the church property on 2051 Main Street, several houses and lots across the street from the church.(p. 2)

“Aside from organizing the first black Methodist Church in Hartford (Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion), out of the African Religious Society in 1836, [Hosea] Easton had a distinguished career in religious and race activities.” Easton was from Boston, a member of the Massachusetts General Colored Association and a major member of the antislavery movement. While pastoring in Hartford, he published in 1837 a document on the claims of black Americans and their rights and privileges of citizenship. The document was entitled “A Treatise on the intellectual Character and Civil and political Condition of the Colored People of the United States, and the Prejudice Exercised Towards Them.” Walls, pp.146, 147

Between 1835 and 1836, African Americans in Hartford begin their meetings that led eventually to the organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Mission. In 1836, the church met in a building on Pearl and Ann Streets. In 1924, parishioners relocated to a new home, a 19th century building that had been used in the 19th century by a Methodist Church and thereafter used as a Jewish Synagogue. This site is currently the parsonage.

The sanctuary is located across the street

The church shared the abolitionist tradition of its sister Zion churches. After the abolition of slavery, the church continued to be a center of activity and a source of solidarity for an African American community which found itself fighting new battles for political participation and employment opportunities despite passage of landmark federal civil rights legislation.

From 1936 to the present, seven pastors have ministered to the congregation. They have continued to work with the church membership to maintain the physical structure of the church, inspire “spiritual vitality, educational growth, and cultural enlightenment that extended beyond the walls of the church to the wider community.” Rev. Kenneth Monroe has served as pastor since 1994. (Complete list in the appendix, *History of The Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church*, p. 4)

membership lists for the early period of Metropolitan’s history have not been located. Oral histories, however, identify a most interesting and enterprising member, George Griffin, who worked in the household of Mark Twain.

The information above is condensed from discussions (2002 and 2003) with Rev. Monroe, current pastor of Metropolitan AM.E. Zion Church, educator Mrs. Barbara Ayllene, long time citizen of Hartford and a preliminary report on the AM.E. and A. M.E.Z. churches for the Connecticut Historical Commission conducted in 1993.

Margaret Moore brought to my attention several files on George Griffin which are housed in the Twain archives.

More on Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion
Beeching, p. 64 Colored Free Masons

Beeching, p. 128 Perry Davis, a Maryland native owned \$2500 worth of Hartford real estate in 1860 when he was 40. Employed as a porter, he was Clerk and Deacon at the Zion Methodist Church

Beeching, p. 128 self help among the African American community. The [Holdridge and Mehitable] Primus family assisted in placing young women from the Hartford area and [newly freed slaves] southern states with local employers. Rebecca Primus assisted further by boarding newly arrived southern young women at her address 20 Wadsworth Street.

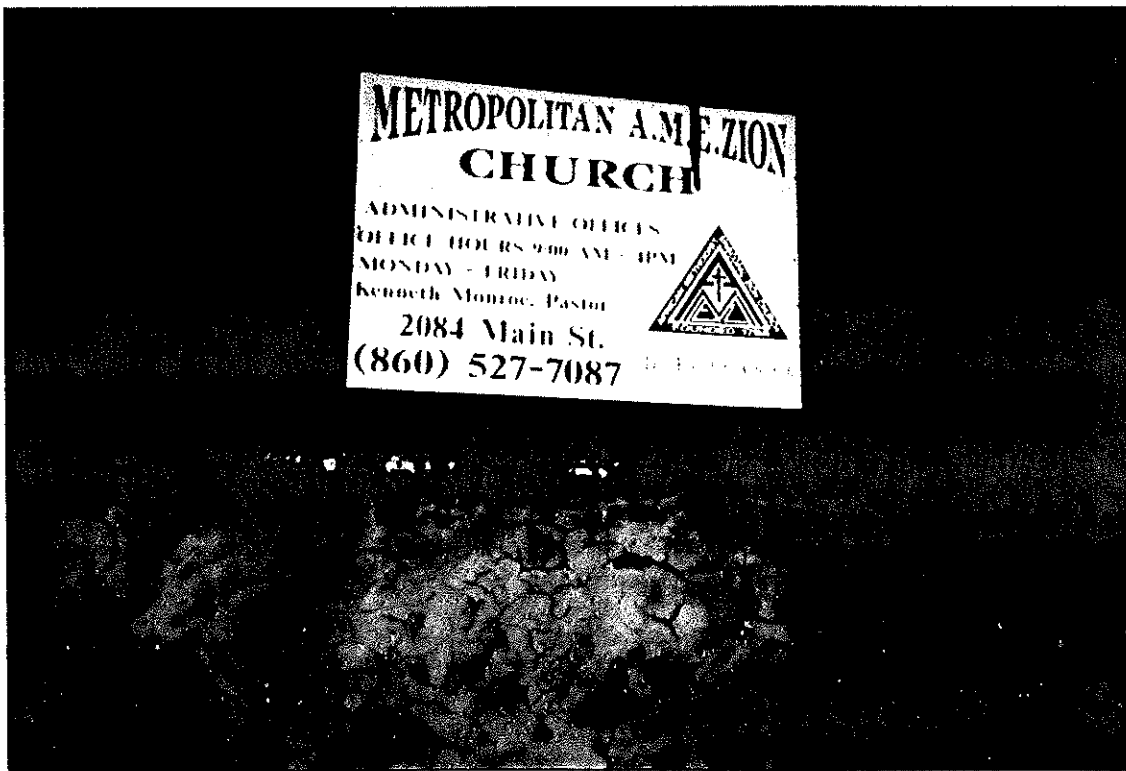
Beeching, p. 128 Freedmen's Society in Hartford.

Mention the problems- employment and education. Rebecca had her own school in Maryland.

But when Hartford schools integrated pupils, the authorities refused to hire black teachers. Beeching, p. 169

The aftermath of Reconstruction and the era of Jim Crow Segregation into the 1950s, continued need for activism

Rebecca member of the Talcott Street Congregational Church



Meriden

Parker A.M.E. Zion 1877

The organization of Meriden's African Methodist Episcopal Zion mission coincided with the end of the period in United States history called Reconstruction.

Parker named in memory of Charles Parker, a Meriden industrialist who donated money to the church. The monies contributed to the purchase of land on Court Street where Parker AME Zion was located until 1964. The Court Street location is now occupied by Carabetta Apts.

Mrs. Colleen Cyr Parker AMEZ

In 1880, Richard Alonzo Jeffrey, nicknamed "Lon," was elected President of Meriden's A.M.E. Zion Mission and also as Superintendent of the Sabbath School that year. In 1895 and 1896 he was elected Vice-president of the Board of Trustees for what had become the A.M.E. Zion Church.

There was a close connection between the Beman and Jeffrey families. Rev. Jehiel C. Beman was a "vigorous anti-slavery preacher" of the A.M.E. Zion Church and the first minister of Middletown's A.M.E. Zion Church in 1830. He had at least seven children with his first wife Fanny, including Leverett C. and Rev. Amos G. Beman. Leverett's wife Clarissa "founded the Colored Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1834" in Middletown. In 1855, L. Carter Beman was secretary of a State Suffrage convention in Hartford, Ct. The Rev. Amos G. Beman chaired the same convention. He was minister of the Temple Street Church in New Haven and "did such important work for the antislavery cause." Rev. Amos Beman was Richard A. Jeffrey's uncle, as he had married Eunice Jeffrey, George W. Jeffrey's sister.

(Biography of Richard A. Jeffrey from the Manuscript – The Early Years of the Parker Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church – 1877-1910) unpublished manuscript.

Members of Parker AME Zion - George S. Jeffrey was corresponding secretary of the Meriden Greenly Club in 1879 and vice president of the same organization in 1880., pp. 2-3

He debated in the YMCA Lyceum programs. In one of the debates he argued in favor of "Negro exodus from the South. He was a dramatist and played the role of Otello. Member I.C. ? Sons of Temperance, spoke on women in the temperance movement. In 1880, represented the African American population at the Republican Presidential Convention in Chicago and voted against Grant's nomination. [John Garfield nominated for presidential candidate]

R.A. Jeffrey, George Jeffrey and other African Americans spoke in support of a bill to prevent discrimination against people of color by Connecticut Life insurance companies. The brothers worked closely with the Lincoln Club.

Members of the church former veterans

Richard ran a barbershop in Meriden from 1874-1878, p. 4

Church members and tradition of religious piety and activism continues. Pastor White NAACP president. Celebration of Black History month featuring biographical sketches of early founders of Parker. Parker host church for district conferences.

Members – youth, adults, seniors

Black History Month celebration featured biographies of Church founders.

Audience multiracial and cross section of community, people from other parts of the state too.

1930 Meriden Directory Citizens, business Directory, street directory, churches, societies, etc, map, officers of city gov & no population #

Price & Lee co NH, Conn 1930

P 630 Parker African Methodist Episcopal Zion 629

75 Court Pastor Rev Frank C Gibson

110 W Main

p 216 Gibson C. Rev pastor Parker AME Zion Church r 110 W Main Street

Meriden 1901 Price & Lee Co Pub NH Conn 1901

P 361 Parker AME Zion Church Org Aug 6, 1890 court street

Pastor rev JA Evans; treasurer, Robert Marshall; Sec. Miss Grace

Freeman; Supt of Sunday School Miss Cora Freeman; Organist Miss Grace Freeman

Middletown

Cross Street AME Zion

Cross Street AME Zion Church took organizational form between 1823 and 1828. Initial meetings held in the Cross Street home of Asa Jeffrey and his son George W. Jeffrey. Founding members were Joseph Gilbert, Ebenezer DeForest, Asa Jeffrey, John Hamilton and George W. Jeffrey. In 1828 Jehiel Beman was assigned to the parish, but Rev. James Anderson from New York was the first minister at Cross Street. The original church building sat where the Wesleyan University Science Center is located.

In the 1820s, this area was wooded and considered the frontier of Middletown.

For African Americans and less affluent members of Middletown, Cross and Vine Streets were home albeit a precarious one because the area was prone to floods.

Middletown – antislavery, pro-slavery views. Jehiel Beman and his family in the vanguard of the antislavery movement. He was a founding member of the Middletown Anti-Slavery Society in 1834. He became one of the society's five managers. In 1833, during a tour of Connecticut, William Lloyd Garrison spoke at Cross Street A.M.E.Zion Church.

In 1835, Cross Street was the scene of a violent anti-black anti-abolitionist riot (Struggle, Jubilee, Vision, p. 8) Procolonizationists views, Wesleyan President Wilbur Fisk(8). Fisk member of the Middletown Colonization Society. In 1831, African Americans met at Cross Street Church to oppose colonization(Ibid. p. 9). [Connecticut State Colonization Society, Fourth Annual Report, p. 12

Cross Street called the "Freedom Church"(Ibid.,p. 8) Clarissa Beman, wife of Leverett Beman, helped organize Middletown's Colored Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1834 (p. 8)).

“Cross Street Church was very likely a way station on the railroad.” In 1854, Jehiel and his wife Nancy, served as conductors on the underground railroad. Beman wrote to Frederick Douglass on September 7, 1854 “The Underground Railroad , by the way is in good repair, and our office is open for business...at all hours, either day or night.” (8)

Economics: Jehiel Beman operated a shop on William Street with his son Leverett. Beman built a house across the street from the church.

In 1847, Leverett Beman bought several lots in the neighborhood of Cross Street, Park (currently Vine Street), and Knowles Avenue. He resold these properties to other African American families.

By the 1840s when Leverett Beman made a concerted effort to spearhead the organization of the area into an African American community, the Cross Street AMEZ church had already gained its reputation as the freedom church. It was a gathering place for African American abolitionists and prominent voices for civil and political rights.

The church was a hub for abolition. Beman also encouraged “colored citizens of Middletown” to cooperate and work together on other issues, in particular the right to vote. Beman was a prominent voice in the temperance movement as well. (7) The Zion connection appointed him to lead Boston’s A.M.E. Zion Church in 1838. He moved back to Middletown in 1854, died in 1858. (7) Beman was the church’s pastor from 1831-1838 (1)

Bishop Walls wrote that Jehiel C. Beman among the earliest anti-slavery preachers. Beman joined the New York Conference in 1830, and was appointed head of the charges of Conn.

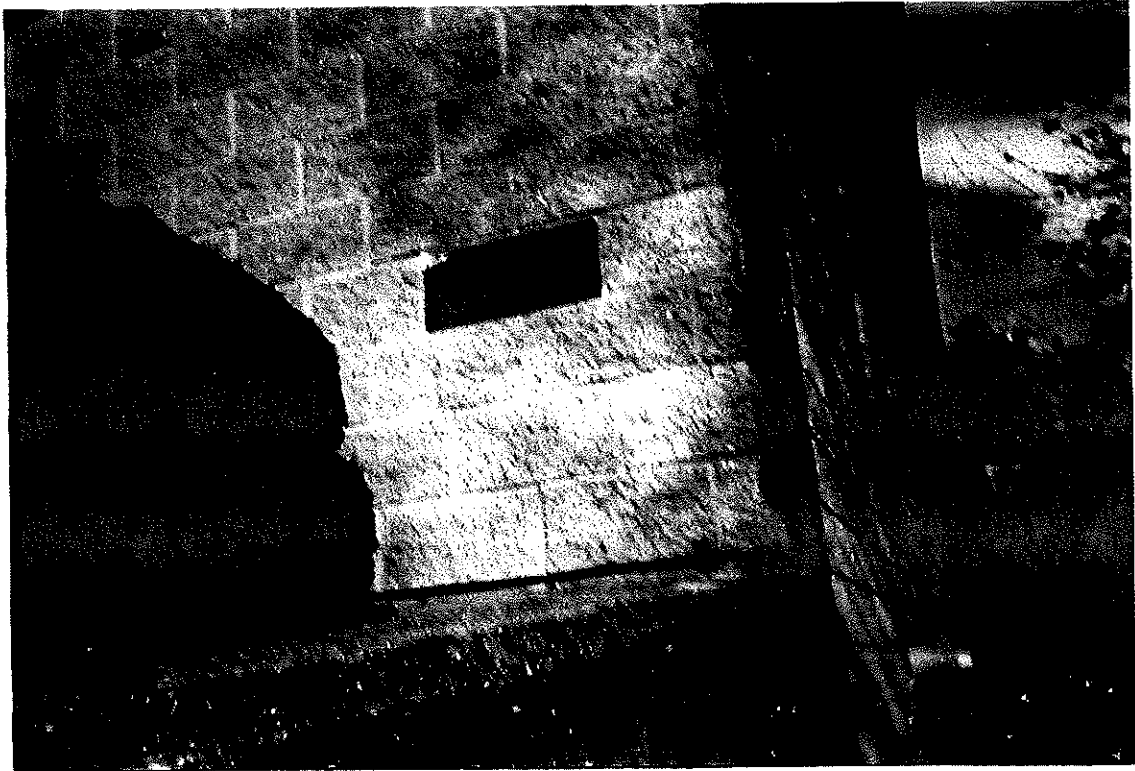
Cross Street AME Zion Church, Struggle, Jubilee, Vision, pp. 7, 1
Walls, 148

Other ministers at Cross Street, Rev. George Battle (wife Addie), Rev. William
Davage (wife Sallye) (1)

Numbers 1700s, Middletown had over 200 slaves. At least two slave dealers had
offices in Middletown. 1790 census documented 167 African Americans: 110 slaves, 57
free. Varying degrees of gradual emancipation. No slaves in Middletown in 1830. (5)

church building. Cross Street's original church building completed in May 1830
on property purchased from Henry Paddock in 1829. The church was located on the south
side of Cross Street facing the head of what was Mt. Vernon Street, on the site now
occupied by Wesleyan University's Science Center. By 1867, the congregation had
outgrown the original building . A larger church built on the same site. A parsonage
erected next door to the church in 1889. Wesleyan University expanded.(5-6) Church was
moved farther west on Cross Street. In 1981, the church was torn down. A new church
constructed on the current site. The parsonage was torn down. (6)

New Building planned



Janice P. Cunningham, and Elizabeth A. Warner, *Experiment in Community, An African American Neighborhood Middletown, Connecticut* 1847-1930*, (Hartford, Connecticut, Connecticut Historical Society, 2002), pp. 4,6, 11. *Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church, Struggle, Jubilee, Vision*, p. 5.

New Britain

Spottswood AME Zion Church

March 21, 1922 "There will be a meeting of the New Britain-Plainville branch of the Nation[al] Association for the Advancement of colored people at the A.M.E. Zion Church on 315 Church Street New Britain tomorrow evening at 7:30 o'clock A tribute of respect will be paid to the memory of the late Colonel Charles Young, who died in Liberia where he was doing service for the government." Weldon, p. 3

p. 32 (1929 P&C) P. 72 1971 – Union AME – Rev Tyson Price & Lee NB Directory NB 1970 p. 74 Union AME rev Clarence C. Tyson

1980 Spottswood

AME Zion per Shaw P. 72 1971 Spottswood 25 Crestwood Lane AME Zion Rev Tyson 20 Crestwood Lane

(1943) 1943 – 44 P. 10 colored 359 white male 34,294 female 33,834

p. 96 Union African Methodist Zion

317 Church Pastor Rev Wm T. Henderson 315 church

p. 397 Henderson Wm T. Rev pastor Union

African Methodist Church h. 315 church

HB – p. 32 (1980 Directory) McCullough Temple CME Church Spottswood AMEZ Ch

25 Crestwood La Pastor Rev John 55 Chapman 225-9369 H Shaw h 20% 223-8554

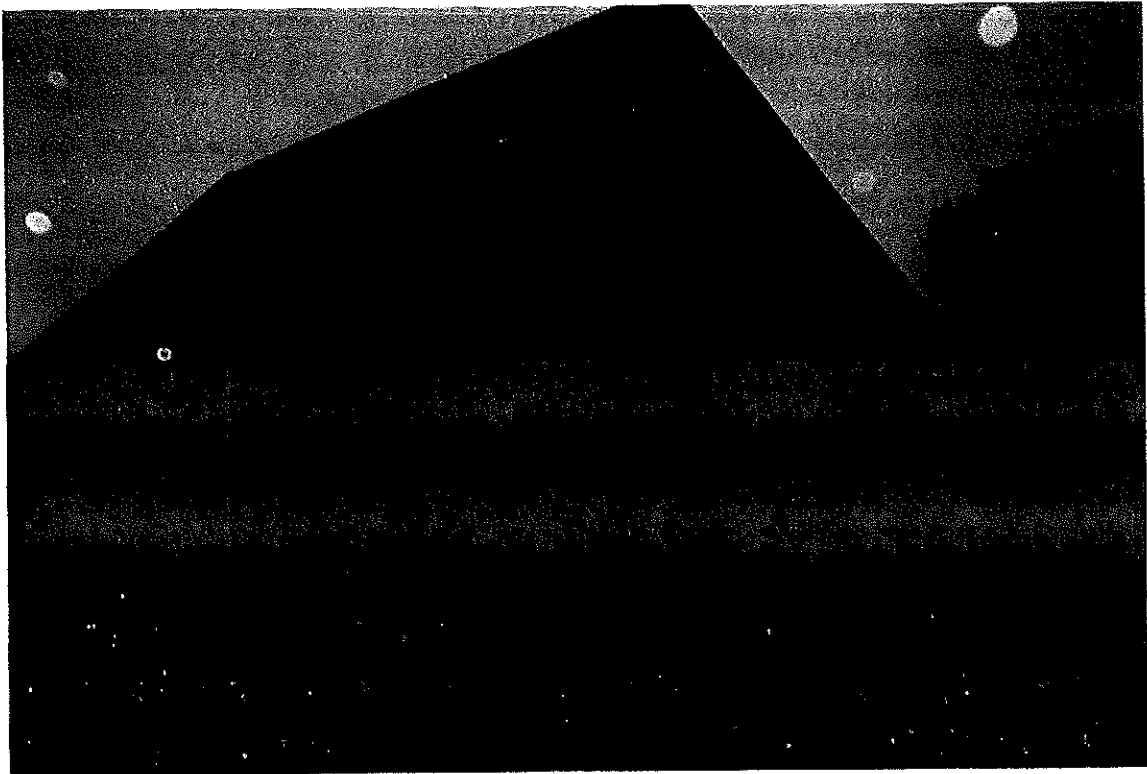
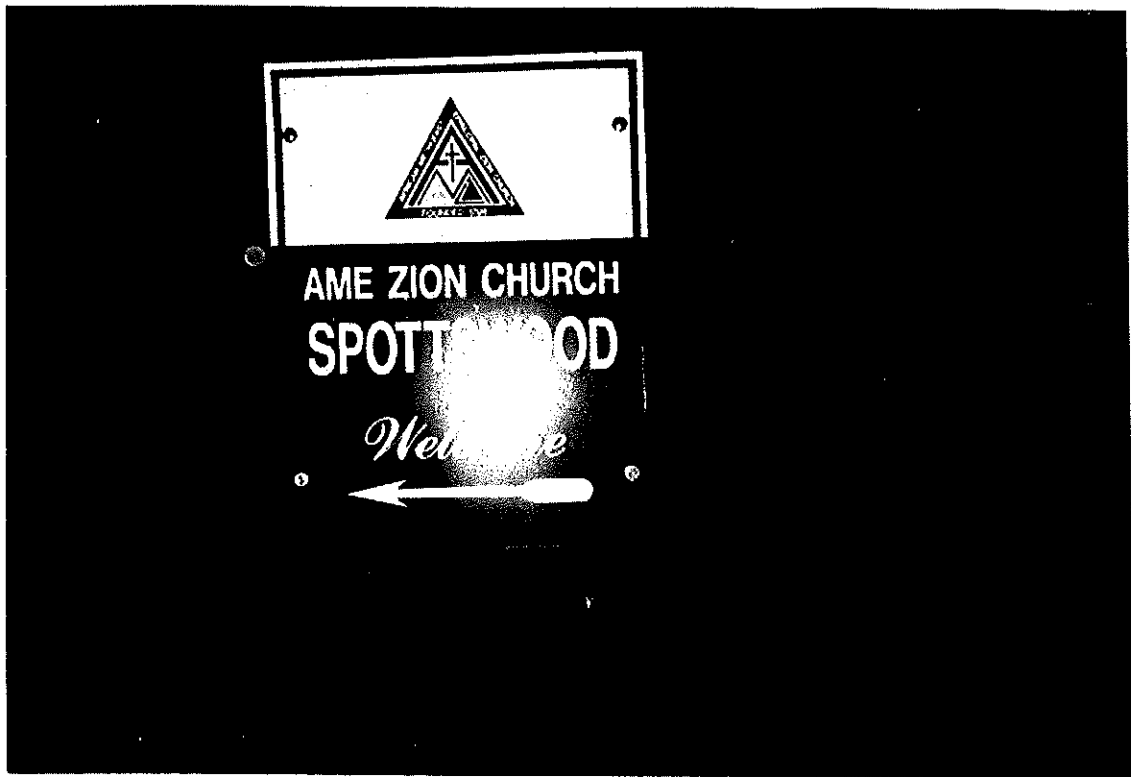
Nb 1939 p9 colored 359; whites males 34294, females 33834

P 76 union African Methodist zion 317 church pastor rev sailsman weller 315 church

P 707 weller sailsman Wm Rev (Rosa L) pastor union African Methodist Zion church h. 315 church

NB 1930

P 10 pop (1920) 59316
Est (1929) 81856



New Haven
Varick

“James Varick worked hard also, to establish the church in New Haven, Conn., as early as 1818, with 35 members. This church later became a part of Zion connection in 1820. It was formerly the John Wesley Church on Webster Street, now the Varick Memorial Church, mother church of the New England Conference, at Dixwell Avenue and Charles Street. p. 91 quote Warner

Varick Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church History, p. 1. 1841 First recorded address of the church was a building on Broad and Hospital Street in the Hill neighborhood Black churches not located in the “Negro Section” on around Negro Lane. In 1845, Bishop Christopher Rush organized four northern conferences. The New Haven Church is the “Mother Church of the New England Conference.” A fire in 1847 destroyed the church building at Broad and Hospital Streets. A new church edifice organized at the corner of Broad and Morocco.

Female Steward, Eliza Ann Paine Gilpin, was a prime mover in helping the church acquire its first church building Broad and Hospital Streets.

Rev. James Walker Hood arrived in New Haven in 1855. He worked as a waiter at the Torrentine Hotel. (This was the same hotel that Daniel Fisher aka William Winter found safety and support during his flight from slavery en route to Deep River Connecticut. Hood preached his trial sermon at Varick, however, he moved on to an appointment as pastor of Brigdeport’s AME Zion mission in 1863.

In 1861, the Hannah Gray Home, left in the care of white trustees, was in the care of the women of Varick. Varick purchased its first “architecturally designed church edifice” from white Methodists of Fair Haven in 1866. Rev. B. George Biddle, a graduate of Yale, pastor of Varick in 1889. He founded the national journal for the AME Zion connection called “Zion’s Trumpet” while in New Haven. Prior to his appointment at Varick, Biddle served as a military chaplain during the Civil War.

1902 Rev. J.W. Davis pastor of Varick. His daughter Mary was christened in 1902 and grew up to become “one of the beautiful mothers” of Varick. Rev. Davis helped lead the effort in planning the building for a new church, the current location of Varick on Charles Street and Dixwell Avenue. He also led the search for a parsonage. Construction for the new church began in 1908. It was a eventful and fateful time. By 1909, the construction company placed a lien on the property for non payment of debts. Church members worked hard to pay the outstandings and by 1911, the lien was released.

In October 1915, Booker T. Washington, founder of Tuskegee Institute delivered an address from the Varick pulpit.p. 2 He titled his address “How the North Can Help the South” p. 20 M.K. Holland made the arrangements for Washington to come to New Haven and Varick. Washington was a member of the Zion Church. Another great orator had spoken at Varick some decades earlier. It was Frederick Douglass. (Cynthia Y. Newell, *163 Years of African Methodist Episcopal Zionism Varick Memorial A.M.E. Zion*

Church New Haven Connecticut, unpublished manuscript, Varick Church archives. (New Haven, CT)

Many more developments to come. The lean years of the depression. During World War II, southern migration brought new members. Church pastors assisted in the quest for work. 1940, Re. R.A.G. Foster pastor at Varick. He was also New Haven's first African American alderman. (*Varick Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church History* p.2)
Woman's role p. 111

1876 general conference strike out the word male in the Discipline. This permitted woman the right to vote.

4/3/1880

The AME Zion's mission of this city, having voted to petition the conference not to send them a resident pastor for the coming year, the Rev. Alex. Du Bois will preach his farewell sermon in the lecture room of the Y.M.C.A. building, at 7:30 o'clock, to-morrow evening. All the friends of the mission are invited. The conference meets in New Haven, Wednesday, April 7.

Put this in the New Haven section

"Brevities"

The colored Methodists held their thirty-second annual conference in American M. E. Zion church, New Haven, Wednesday. The session will last over Sunday. Bishop Moore is present as president. Nine churches and nine missions are represented, among them Meriden, 4/9/1880 MDR

Check reality of Black Church – was this 32nd annual conference? Couldn't find MDR – Meriden Daily Republican

Zion Church Methodists (New Haven)

The New England conference of the A.M.E. Zion connection; opened its thirty-third annual session at the M.E. Zion church in Foote street, New Haven on Wednesday. There were nine churches and nine missions represented, including those from the cities of Boston, Providence, Worcester, New Bedford, Hartford, New Haven, Middletown and Bridgeport, and from the towns of Plainville, Windsor, Attleborough, Great Barrington, Nantucket, Derby and Cambridgeport, Mass. Right rev. J.J. Moore, D.D., presided, and opened the session by reading a portion of the scriptures; prayer was offered by Rev. S.B. Hunter of Boston. The one feature of the business of the first morning was the election of officers for the ensuing year. Those elected were as follows: Secretary, Rev. R.R. Morris; assistant secretary, Rev. T.A. Davis; reporter, Rev. J.C. Lodge; marshals, J.E. Lloyd and D.F. Bradley. Bishop Moore's annual address, which followed the election of officers,

was a strong vindication of the church and the rights of the colored man. He spoke at length upon the establishment of the book concern and expressed a strong desire that a full delegation be sent to the general conference. It is expected that at the next session of the general conference the question of the southern exodus of colored men will be discussed, and some action taken regarding it. It was reported that the membership of the eighteen organizations was about 900 with 22 clergymen and missionaries. In the Sunday schools connected with these organizations there are 700 scholars. Thursday was an interesting day with the conference; the vital topics of Sunday schools, temperance and education were discussed. The ground taken was a high one upon all these questions and they were argued in the affirmative with vigor and force by a large by a large proportion of the delegates. In the evening there was a pleasant occasion, it being a formal reception to Bishop Moore. This was tendered on account of his recent return from an extensive European tour, where he had been sent to solicit funds for the churches. After a very cordial address of welcome, the bishop gave an interesting sketch of his trip and its results. He succeeded in collecting about \$5000. Other addresses, interspersed with singing by the congregation, followed. The conference will be in session several days longer. 4/9/1880 MDR Friday

A.M.E. Zion Conference (New Haven)

The principal business of interest before the New England conference of A.M.E. Zion churches at the Foote street church in New Haven, Monday, was the ordination in the afternoon of deacons, and the announcements of the appointments for the coming year. The ordination services took place a three o'clock, Rev. J.B. Small of Bridgeport preaching the sermon. Those ordained were A.J. Talbot of Norwich, T.S. Taylor of Hartford and W.B. Bowen of Worcester, Mass. Mr. Small spoke from 1 Corinthians, ix, 12. The sermon was an able one and contained much good advice to the candidates. In the evening a missionary meeting was held in which most of the clergymen of the conference took part. At the close of the evening session Bishop Moore made the following appointments for the year: For the church in Boston R.H.G. Dyson; Providence, First church, J.H. Anderson; Providence, Second church, J.H. Anderson; Providence, Second church, P. Ross; New Bedford, S.H. Washington; Hartford, R.R. Morris; New Haven, J.W. Brown; Middletown, J.C. Lodge; Bridgeport, J.B. Small; Cambridge, S.H.S. Bill; Missions – Attleboro, C.C. Ringold; Norwich; including New London, A.J. Golbert; Waterbury, including Derby and Ansonia, Wm: B. Brown; New Milford, including Great Barrington, Lee and Norfolk, S.A. Mitchell; Meriden, including Plainville, Windsor, Springfield, and Wallingford, J. F. Lloyd; Supernumeraries, A. Meeker, S. Peakes, Daniel Davis. Delegates were appointed to attend the several annual conferences of the country and also committees upon education, book concern, temperance, and Sunday School. The conference closed about half past nine o'clock, the session being considered one of the most interesting ever held by the churches. 14/13/1880 MDR

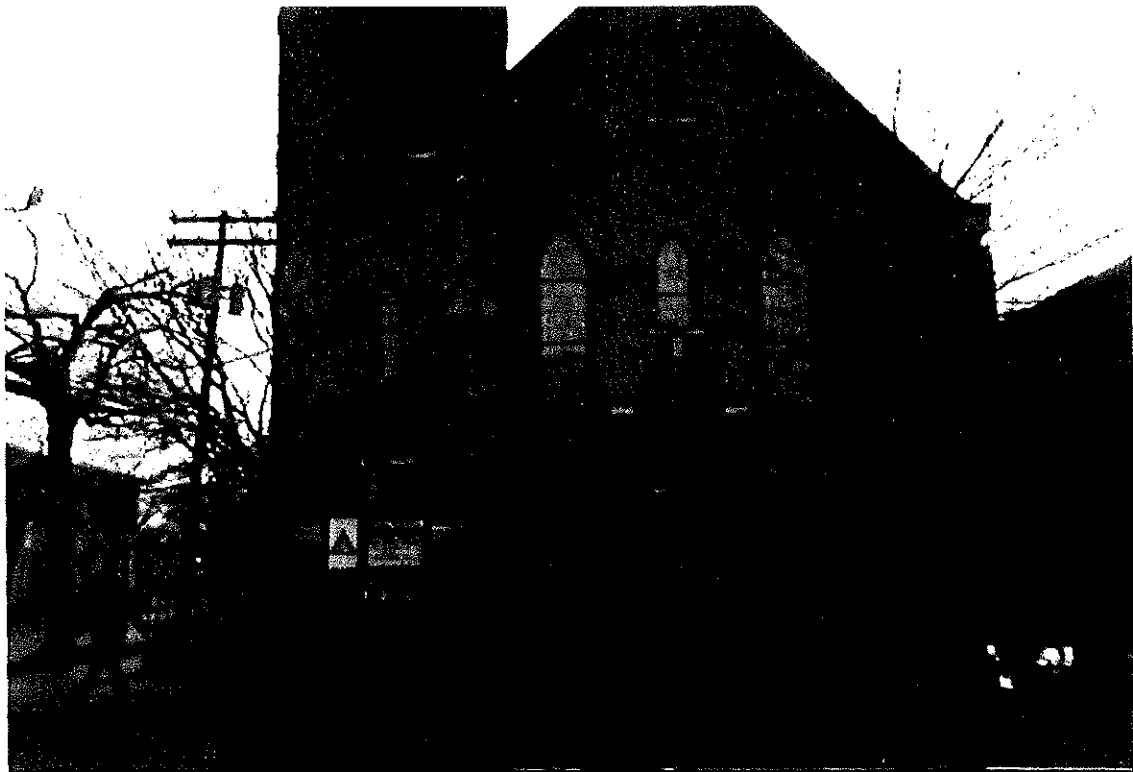
9/9/1879 MDR

The members of Calvary African M.E., Zion church, Norwich, went to Shelter island on a barge Saturday. They were met by the several land owners, who told them that they could not land. The excursionists offered to pay double the usual sum for the privilege of landing, but were again refused, the land owners saying that they would be objectionable to the guests of the hotels. When this became known among the excursionists they were indignant, and it required great effort on the part of the influential members of the church to restrain the brethren who proposed to go ashore and throw the land owners from the dock. Fearing trouble the captain of the tug steamed away. The church members talk of a suit against the land owners and hotel proprietors for damages.

8/21/1883 MDR

The decision in the civil rights case of the Rev. George A. Smith, colored, formerly of Norwich, was announced on Saturday – the Washington restaurant keeper who refused him admission into this place was found guilty of a misdemeanor. The court holds that under the common law an innkeeper is bound to take in and receive all travelers and wayfarers, and that by the act of March 1st, 1875, it is made a misdemeanor to discriminate against a traveler on account of race and color, regardless of any previous constitution of servitude.

NOTE – I don't know if this was an AME Zion minister or not.



VARICK MEMORIAL
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

REV. DR. W. DAVID LEE
PASTOR

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30 A.M.
WORSHIP SERVICES 8:00-10:00 A.M.

GOD'S WORK BY CREATING IS DONE
OUR WORK OF PRAISING HAS JUST BEGUN

JOB 38:1-18

Norwich

Evans Memorial African Methodist Zion Church

1872 Early Summer, James L. Smith started a small mission church. Smith a runaway slave. In July 1872, the New England AME conference sent Rev. James F. Brown to Norwich, Ct. (Zion Connection)*The Church had only six members. Miss Hannah Ripley donated the ground on which the church now stands. Bishop J. J. Clinton and Rev. R. H. Dyson appealed to members of the Norwich community for funds to help build the church edifice. In July 1874, a contractor named Mr. Ladd laid the cornerstone, cost \$2,500.

1874-1886 Church in its infancy. Finances membership issues, local community supported the mission with funds. November 28-30, 1886 church celebrated burning of the mortgage. New Plans.

In 1892, Rev. Samuel E. Robinson remodeled the church. A gallery was built near the front door of the church where the choir sang. 1892-1913, Rev. E.H. Carroll paid the final note on the church renovations. It had taken twenty years to pay for the renovations. Nine different pastors at the helm during that twenty year period.

M.A. Bradley 1885-1887 to E. A. Carroll 1911-1913.*

1913-1920 Rev. W.D. Francis purchased house for parsonage. Between 1920-1960 Seventeen pastors served in the church. The Helping Hands Club, Steward Board and "personal sacrifices kept the church afloat during these times."

1958-1960 Rev. Ann Bedford first female pastor.

1960-1966 Four pastors. Rev. Hyatt changed the name of the church from McKinley Avenue AME Zion Church to Evans Memorial AME Zion Church

Norwich

From 1966 to 1983 Rev. Sampson M. Greene was Pastor. When he was appointed, there were only six members. Revived the community, motivated the parishioners, membership expanded. Church was remodeled. New paneling, paint, new carpet, new pews, air conditioners, new roof and new furnace. Church hosted two district conferences. From 1983-1998. Two Pastors served. During the time of Rev. George Browne, 1983-1985, the parsonage restored, 1985-1998 Rev. Herbert Rattley served as pastor. Under his leadership two houses were purchased. Fire destroyed the parsonage. Rev. Rattley served twelve and one half years. In February 1998, Bishop Walker appointed Rev. Barbara White Pastor. "supply pastor" she served without salary. May 1998, Rev. White officially appointed.

A Commemorative Chronological History of the Evans Memorial African Methodist Zion Church (Unpublished two page manuscript from church Archives, Norwich, 2002).

M. Cottman, Evans Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church 1874 - 1998 (unpublished manuscript from church archives, Norwich, CT, 1998)

Keep

move Delete here Keep Danbury for appendix
Mount Pleasant African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church History 2003

Mt. Pleasant A.M.E. Zion Church was organized in 1889 under the leadership of Rev. Munzingo, a missionary preacher sent to Danbury by the New England Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The black population was surveyed and worship services for Sunday evenings were organized and held in a home on Cherry Street. Services were moved to various homes until the congregation became large and strong enough to rent a place of worship on Liberty Street which was later purchased as church property. After a while, this property was lost due to a lack of interest and diminishing financial support. Worship services did pick up again and were held in the loft of Barnum's Grain Store on Main Street. Later, property was purchased on South Street but met with resistance. Transactions were then made for a site on Rowan Street in exchange for the South Street property.

The congregation succeeded in building a church edifice on Rowan Street in 1908. The records show that the church was dedicated in September 1909. Rev. A.S. Tolbert was pastor, Bishop Walters was the Presiding Predate and the Rev. Balls was the Presiding elder of the Hartford District.

On October, 1964, under the pastorate of the Rev. Leslie Lawson, the ground was broken for a new edifice. The old building was raised to make way for a new sanctuary. Rev. Lawson, one of the outstanding pastors of Mt. Pleasant, led the congregation into a new delete here edifice for the first service on December 16, 1965. The Rt. Rev. Stephen Gill Spottswood was Bishop and Rev. Dr. James Charles Brown was Presiding Elder. The official opening was May 8, 1966 and the cornerstone laid on October 30, 1966.

Rev. A.J. Parker was sent to pastor Mt. Pleasant in 1969 and initiated the first of our annual Church Anniversary Celebrations. This was done during the week of April 5-12, 1970. The dining hall was renovated this year by the Action Day Care Center in order to accommodate the food service program adopted by the church. Mr. Bill Oliver and Mr. Sam Neville accomplished the construction.

The Rev. Leroy Blair came to Mt. Pleasant as pastor in 1971. he began to work with the youth of the church and started several educational and recreational programs during his tenure. The Junior Choir was also organized for them. The front structure of the church was renovated under Rev. Blair's administration. As our pastor, he was active in civic and political affairs of the city.

Bishop Herbert Bell Shaw, our then Presiding Predate, considered the needs of the church and appointed the Rev. Leounidas Reed Dumas. The new pastor, his wife Lillye and daughter Beverly arrived on August 17, 1973. Under his leadership, the following groups were organized: Deaconess Board, Men's Chorus and the Lay Council. Other departments such as the Junior Choir. Buds of Promise and Young Women's Department of the WH&OM were revitalized. Under the leadership of Rev. Dumas, the several changes made brought new zeal to the church and community.

5/11/10

Danbury

The role of pastor was assumed by the Rev. William James Hooker in 1978. Rev. Hooker steered Mt. Pleasant on a steady Christ centered course. Progressive growth of the congregation, numerous physical improvements were made to the church, parsonage, including vinyl siding, a new roof for the church, the purchase of a 15 passenger van were the hallmarks of his administration. During this time, the First Lady, Mrs. Doris Hooker, spearheaded a project of fencing the church property. In 1986, Mt. Pleasant acquired additional property in a three family unit adjacent to the church. The parking lot of the church was expanded as well. A ramp for the handicapped was also added. In 1987, we worked diligently to secure the ministries of the church and community. The efforts came to fruition in our outreach program. The program started with senior citizens transportation and personal care. It was extended to include a food pantry, health information and a screening located in one of the city's housing complexes. Our church was greatly blessed under Rev. Hooker's guidance. He was the pastor for 15 years. Rev. Hooker was retired by the New England Conference in May 1993. We thank him for the years of service and for being faithful, caring shepherd.

The Rev. March John Roderick, Sr. was appointed pastor of Mt. Pleasant at the 1993 Annual conference by Bishop George Washington Carver Walker, Sr. He came to Danbury with his wife, Betty Lou and their son, the Rev. Mark J. Roderick, Jr., then ordained Deacon. The Rodericks have brought new spirit to the church with their ministerial style.

Mount Pleasant Rev. Roderick's tenure has now spanned ten years. The improvements and enhancements of the church have been benefited tremendously by his hard work and excellent administration. Physically the church, parsonage and grounds have never looked better; financially the church has grown; Spiritually the church has never been as blessed; and for the future, the church has been as prepared. Since last year, we have purchased another apartment house (twofamily) and we will soon add fifty percent more parking spaces on the landed acquired with the house, along with a donated piece of property. The parsonage has been completely renovated from cellar to the roof with a new section built to add more living space. The cost of the parsonage renovation has been paid in full, cutting a twenty year mortgage down to just nine years.

Mrs. Colleen Cyr Parker AMEZ

Keep, but move up

In 1880, Richard jAlonzo Jeffrey, nicknamed "Lon," was elected President of Meriden's A.M.E. Zion Mission and also as Superintendent of the Sabbath School that year. In 1895 and 1896 he was elected Vice-president of the Board of Trustees for what had become the A.M.E. Zion Church.

Keep this here move other material on New London here New London

The name of New London's historic African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church commemorates the efforts of one of the denomination's most devoted leaders, Bishop William Jacob Walls.

A brief history by Mr. Spencer Lancaster, Trustee
Pastor Rev. Wilson
Walls Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

The Walls Temple A.M.E. Zion Church began in the living room of Mrs. Emma Baxter of New London in 1903. Early members included Mrs. E. Jeter Greene, Mrs. Mary E. Hawkings, Mrs. Nola Nelson, Mrs. Lovenia Fitzhugh, Mrs. Alice Conover, Mr. William Conover, Mr. Mitchell Purnell, Mrs. Mary Purnell, Mrs. Nell Harris, et al. The congregation worshiped in various homes and buildings until 1911. Under the leadership of Rev. S.E. Robinson, the membership purchased the former Bethany Chapel on the corner of Bank Street and Ocean Avenue, and was called the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and worshiped there for nineteen years. The following served as pastors of the church: Rev. Moses Monzingo-1912-1913; Rev. George S. Green, 1914-1916; Rev. E. George Biddle-1917-1919; Rev. J.S.N. Tross-1920; Rev. Edward W. Gantt-1921-1923; Pastorate vacant in 1924, Rev. Isaac B. Walters-1925-1928 and Rev. J.B. Wallace-1929.

Walls Temple

On May 2nd, 1930, (after nineteen (19) years at the corner of Bank Street and Ocean Avenue) the church purchased a tract of land on 16 Belden Street, (Present Location) from Annie MacDowell Jordan for the consideration of One (\$1.00) Dollar. On this property a new church was erected under the supervision of The Rev. William B. Jones, the new pastor. It was dedicated on Sunday, January 24th, 1931, and was named Walls Temple A.M.E. Zion Church, after Bishop William Jacob Walls. (Rev. George J. Simmons also served as pastor in 1930). After accepting the call to pastor, the A.M.E. Zion Church in New Britain, Rev. Jones was succeeded by Rev. A.J. Stockley in 1931. Others pastoring Walls Temple early on were Rev. U.B. Betrand-1932; pastorate vacant in 1931; Albert A. Garvin-1934-1935; (The W.H. & O.M. local society was organized under Rev. Garvin's administration). Rev E. Horace served from 1936-1938 and during his pastorate, a session of the New England Youth Congress was held. The keynote address was given by Bishop W.J. Walls, of Chicago, Illinois. Other addresses were given by Dr. J.W. Eichelburger, Chairman of Christian Education, Chicago, Illinois, The Rev. Dr. W.B. Scott of Brooklyn, New York and Dr. Thomas W. Wallace of Washington, D.C.

Other pastors of Walls Temple were Rev. A. McL. Spaulding-1939; Rev. A. Edward Berry-1940; and Rev. Gilbert Coffey-1941-1944. In June 1942, Walls Temple hosted the Ninety Eight (98th) Session of the New England Annual Conference, Rev. Coffey, host pastor. The Rev. George C. Battle pastored from 1945-1949; Rev. John A. Stringfield-1950-1951; pastorate vacant-1952; Rev. Benjamin G. Shaw, Jr. -1953; Rev. P.F. Thurston-1954-1955; Rev. Homer S. Roan-1956; Rev. John A. Bagby-1957-1959; Rev. Ballard-1960; Rev. Thomas C. McDougal-1961-1966; Rev. Hezekiah Williams-1967-1971; Rev. Donald W.H.E. Ruffin-1972-1995 and Rev. William DuBois Wilson in May, 1995.

Under the pastorate of Rev. Donald W.H.E. Ruffin, Walls Temple experienced outstanding growth. The church membership went from nine members to as high as 400. The church that was heavily in debt was free in five years, The Ministry of Kindness was expanded, a Scholarship Fund established as well as a Recreation Fund. Through the recreation fund, the church traveled extensively.

Pastor Wilson and the Walls Temple family were in a phase of rebuilding and renewal.

Rev. Wilson is married to Phylis and they have three children: Shaun, Reuben and Marlise.

New London

A View from the Sixties: The Black Experience in Southeastern Connecticut

A Memoir Linwood W. Bland Jr.

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Jobs for blacks in the service area boomed in the 1930s. Many blacks came to the region because friends and relatives told them about the availability of employment. The

Mohican hotel, Crocker House, Griswold Hotel, Pease House, Seaport Manor, Red Rooster, Skipper's Dock, Norwich Inn, Rotisserie, Pequot Casino, Oswegatchie House, Lighthouse Inn, Ninigret House, and Cinderella Inn offered places of employment. In Pawcatuck, Connecticut, The Orchard House was co-owned by two black women, Mrs. Minnie Epps Carter and her sister Mrs. Gertrude Epps Owens. The sisters opened the establishment for the express purpose of providing decent lodging for traveling black professionals. During the summer months, they also provided employment for local residents. William H. Baum, a black New London resident, operated the Blue Parrot Inn.

In 1935, such churches included a Holiness Church of a minor denomination, the Walls Temple African Methodist-Episcopal Zion Church, and the Shiloh Baptist Church. I was unable to trace the name of the pastor at the Holiness Church. The pastor of the AME Zion Church was The Reverend Albert Garvin, Sr. The pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church was The Reverend David Moss.

In all likelihood, The Reverend David W. Moss, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, introduced Black History Week to this area. Blacks were very scarce in the early mid 1920s. But in the late 1920s and early 1930s, their numbers began to increase noticeably. Reverend Moss was pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in the 1930s. He worked closely with Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana. Dillard had a history of arranging programs for Black History Week. Black History Week was an annual February event at Shiloh during Reverend Moss's tenure there. I am not sure whether the event was carried on at Shiloh beyond 1936, but I feel certain it was a February main event at Walls Temple in later years.

In 1936, the last year Black History Week was scheduled at Shiloh, The Reverend Gilbert Coffey was guest speaker. Reverend Coffey was from Bridgeport. I discovered that he was pastor of Walls Temple AME Zion Church here in New London from 1941 through 1944. That is why I feel Black History Week was not forsaken at Walls Temple while Reverend Coffey was there. Those who knew him reported that Reverend Coffey was an outstanding and dedicated scholar. Early New London residents said that he was a man who was knowledgeable about black achievement. Reginald Eccleston, Jr., said, "He was always studying about our race."

New London keep

New London

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Pastor Rev. Wilson

Walls Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

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A brief history by Mr. Spencer Lancaster, Trustee and Pastor Rev. Wilson, Walls Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (New London, Connecticut, 2003)

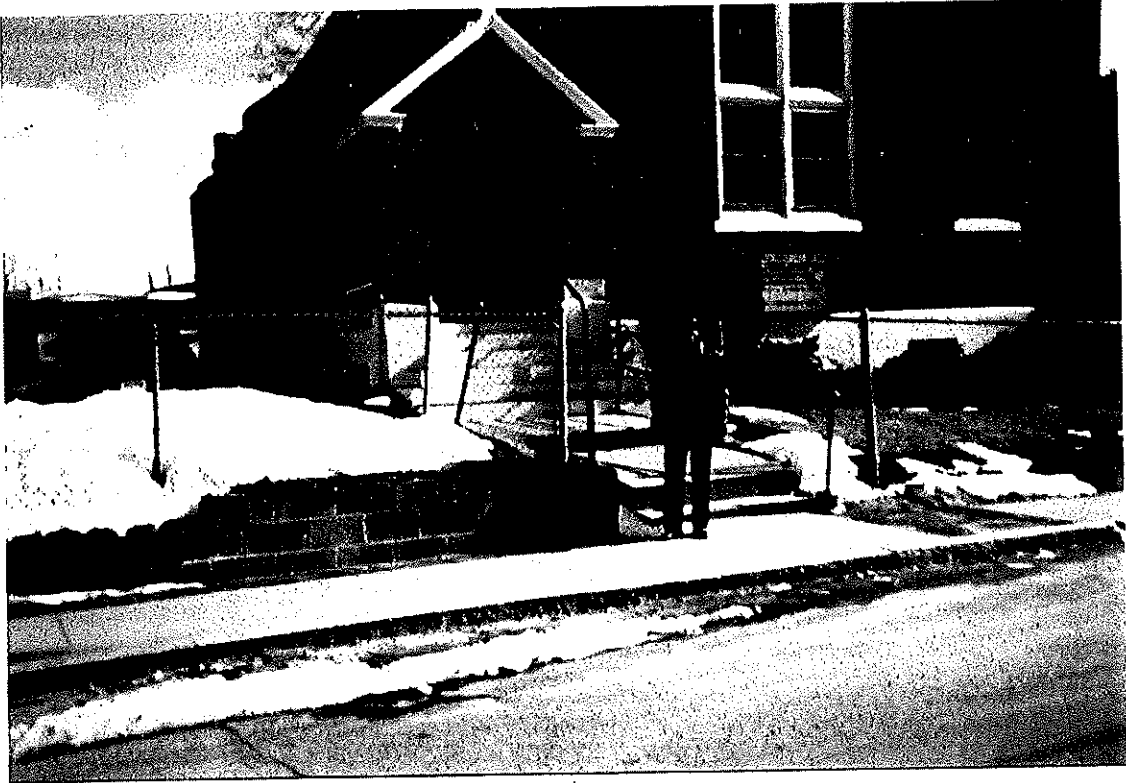
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New London

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Linwood W. Bland Jr, *A View from the Sixties: The Black Experience in Southeastern Connecticut A Memoir Linwood W. Bland Jr.*(The New London County Historical Society, Inc.: New London, 2001)





Plainville

Redeemer's African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

"Dec 2, 1875 The entertainment given by the Sabbath School of the A.M.E. Zion society was quite a success....The efforts which this society is making to sustain regular religious meetings are highly creditable to the members, and they deserve special encouragement." (Weldon, p. 1)

"Jan. 8, 1903 The African M.E. Church of the Redeemer have bought of Don Scott a building lot on the Southington road next to the Scott house. The lot is 110 feet front and 132 deep and the price paid \$225.00. There are seven charter members and for two years they have been holding regular services with an attendance of 40 to 50 every Sunday." Funds collected through concerts and lectures to build a church. Plan to begin by the spring. Hezekiah Baker collected pledges. "There is a large colored population in town and men of business and ability among them who are working for the good of their race." (Weldon, p. 1)

Dec. 3, 1903 "The colored people held a fair at Edmonds Hall to raise money for their church. The foundation is finished and the brick walls are now being built." (Weldon, p. 2)

June 16, 1904 "Next Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock the cornerstone of the A.M.E. church on Whiting street is to be laid. Speakers from Hartford and New Haven are expected to be present." (Weldon, p. 2)

Sept, 8, 1904" The Redeemers A.M.E. Zion church on Whiting Street was dedicated Sunday. Bishop Hood delivered the address. Rev. A. H. Croole, presiding elder, and Rev. George Biddle also spoke. There was quite a large audience present." (Weldon, p. 2)

April 6, 1905 "The A.M.E. Zion society give a concert Thursday evening in Newton's hall. (Weldon, p. 2)

January 21, 1921 "Despite severe cold weather Tuesday evening there was a fair attendance at the public meeting a [at] the A.M.E. Zion church to complete plans for organizing the New Britain-Plainville branch of the National Association for the advancement of [the] colored people. Mrs. Fred Seymour of Hartford spoke on the general conditions needed for the advancement of the colored people following which the election of officers took place. [the] result being as follows: President, S H. Baker; vice president, Rev. G. H. Stanton of Hartford; Secretary, Rev. E. F. Harrows, pastor of the local church; treasurer, John C. Baker (second); executive committee Mrs. Julia C. Baker, Miss Corrine Bacon, of New Britain, Mrs. A. F. Baker also of New Britain, Mrs. Arthur Mason, Miss Jessie O'Neil and Charles O'Neil Sr." (Weldon, p. 3)

Plainville

July 21, 1922

Rev. T. Washington, pastor of the Redeemer's A.M.E. Zion Church has announced that William Picken, a graduate from Yale and a worker for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will come to the church this fall. He gave a lecture at the church last Sunday. His topic was "Ignorance" which dealt with the conditions existing between the whites and colored people in the southern districts. He also spoke of the lynching which occurs there often." (Weldon, p. 4)

Nov. 4, 1922 "Colored Assn. Elects. Election held at Redeemers: officers: Mrs. Annie Baker of New Britain, President; F.T. Washington, vice-president; W.L. Martin, secretary; Mrs. J. W. Thompson assistant secretary; John Baker, treasurer; Mrs. J. W. Thompson named chairman of the executive board. "Mrs. Mary Semour of Hartford, state director of the Anti-Lynching Crusaders, was present and read a digest of the Dyer Anti-Lynching bill... The speaker, in answering the often raised objection to the bill on grounds of alleged unconstitutionality, said it had been endorsed at the annual meeting of the American Bar Association in September, and its passage was urged. This she said, indicated that the ablest lawyers in the land believed the law to be in strict accord with the constitution.

Presenting statistics on lynchings that have occurred in the United States, Mrs. Seymour said 82 women have been put to death by mobs since 1891.

Will Speak on K.K.K.

The pastor will speak on the Ku Klux Klan at 11 o'clock service. The 7 o'clock services will be conducted by the Anti-Lynching Crusaders. At the 6:30 o'clock service, Miss Adeline Woods will be the leader of a meeting of the Varick Christian Endeavor. The Subject "Better Thinking."

Occasions celebrated 25th anniversary of laying of cornerstone (1929), mortgaged burning, plan announced July 5, 1929, 24th anniversary of the dedication celebrated Sept., 1929, pew rally announced for September 1930 (Weldon, p. 4), choral and theatrical performances. Worship at the Torrington A.M.E. Zion church, groups to aid victims of fire. Committee from the church and Ionic Lodge No. 7 of the Masons, pp. 4-5

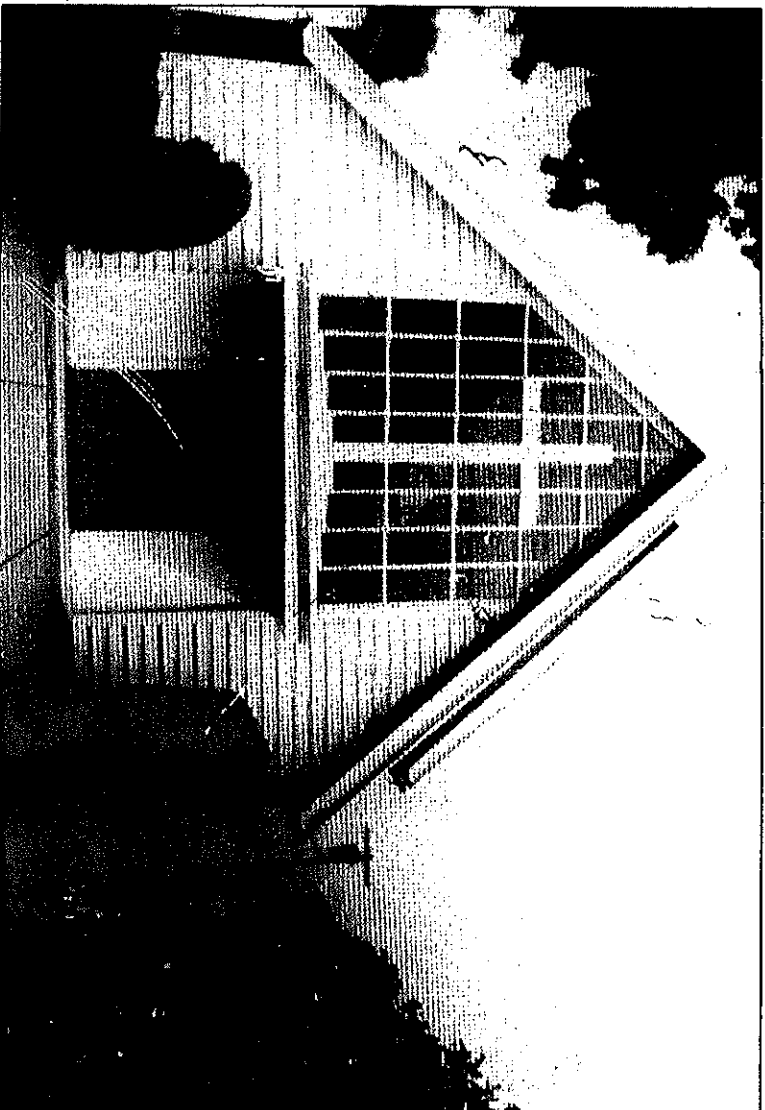
Dec 24, 1940

Social gathering at the church, the Colored Voters League sponsored a Christmas party for the "young folks" at the social rooms of the A.M.E. Zion Church (Weldon, p. 7)

90th Anniversary

Redeemer's

African Methodist Episcopal Zion C



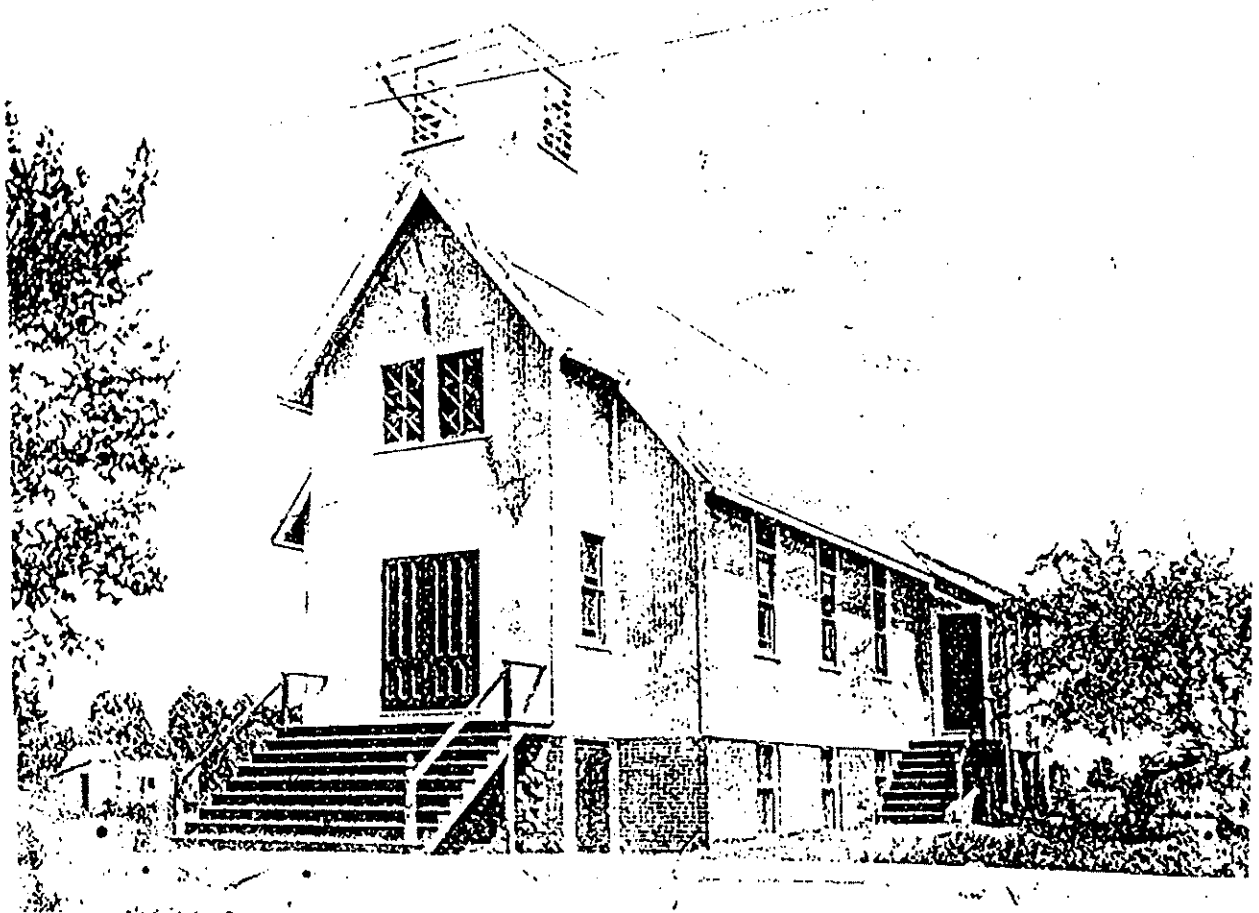
Bishop George W. Walker, Presiding Prelate

Mrs. Geraldine Walker, Missionary Supervisor

Reverend James M. Hubert, Presiding Elder

Reverend Charles H. Woody, Sr., Pastor in Charge

Reverend Isaac Douglas, Associate



A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

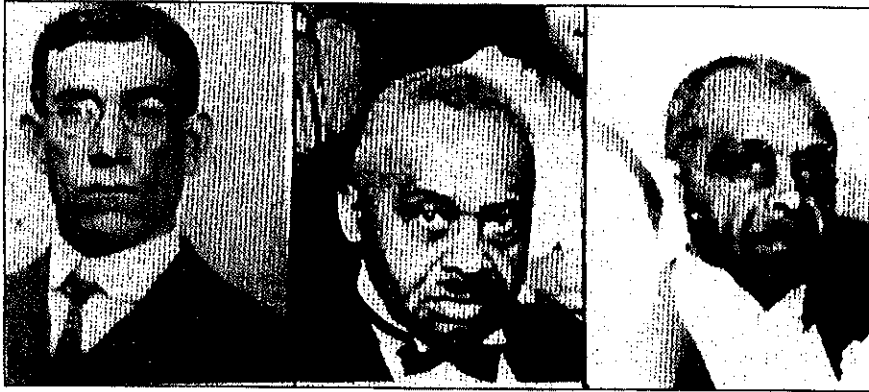
Plainville, Connecticut

1875 - 1940

BY

Charles R. Weldon

Founding Trustees



Charles O'Neil

Thomas Baker

Hezekiah Baker

Old Church



*90th Anniversary
Redeemer's
can Methodist Episcopal Zion C*



Bishop George W. Walker, Presiding Prelate
Mrs. Geraldine Walker, Missionary Supervisor
Reverend James M. Hubert, Presiding Elder
Reverend Charles H. Woody, Sr., Pastor in Charge
Reverend Isaac Douglas, Associate
Mrs. Maxine S. Woody, Local Preacher

*For We Are God's Fellow Workers;
You Are God's Field, You Are God's Building.*

I Corinthians 3:9

Torrington
Workman A.M.E.Zion Church
60 Brightwood Avenue
Torrington

Bess and Merrill Bailey, *The Formative Years, Torrington 1737 to 1852*, first of three parts, Torrington Historical Society, Torrington, Connecticut, 1975
Early African Americans in Torrington and religion Abijah Holbrook in 1798 arranged for emancipation of his two slaves, Jacob and Ginne Prince, (p. 71, 72) Descendants of the two were many. Families related to them the Perceys, Ormsbys, Gunns, plus the Roses of New York State. Charles Gunn, a member of the State Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, is the family historian. (p. 73) Mr. Gunn is also a member of Workman

Religion – Congregationalist. Rev. Lemuel Haynes, pp. 68-69. But church was not always receptive to African Americans.
p. 63 the Strict Congregational Society
In 1785 the Strict Congregational Society hired Lemuel Haynes as a minister ,p. 68
p. 73 “After he [Prince] was freed, he joined the Goshen Church, where he was assigned to a “nigger pew.” Since this did not coincide with his ideas of freedom, he stopped going to church. He was denied the privileges of the church, a punishment that he seems to have endured with remarkable fortitude. Perhaps he found solace in attendance at Father Mill’s church.”

Hopkins, p. 67; Mills, pp. 46, 47; Shebro Island and Mills Burgess expedition, p. 47.
Father Mills’ Church was in Torrington, pp. 50-51

Rededication Program Workman AM.E. Zion Church Sunday 31, 1965 Torrington, CT
(Torrington Historical Society), p.
African Americans in Torrington 1798. Mostly in the Advent Church and the Congregationalist Church. Numbers small, but they did grow. “About 90 years later a number of other colored people came to Torrington and engaged in different kinds of work and could not fit into the old religious set-up. Therefore they expressed their desire to organize a negro church.”
In 1895, a Baptist Missionary came to the city. Rev. H. B. Thomas organized the “all colored mission” and held services in the Banquet Hall on Main Street. Thomas stayed a year. Various views could not be reconciled regarding the direction of the mission. More and more people arrived particularly from the south. Interest still in the spiritual needs of community. Another meeting called. Present were Nathan Chatfield, Samson Blake, Eugene Harrison, Daniel Johnson, Rufus Johnson and William Orasby. “At this same meeting was the young Fred Blake

who had just returned from Virginia Seminary. His mother suggested that he organize a church for African Americans. Those present at the meeting pledged their support. "Mr. Blake, knowing that the A.M.E. Zion Church was the strongest denomination in Conn., suggested that it be given a trial.

A request was made to the New England Conference for a missionary to be sent to Torrington twice a month as a test case. In 1897, Rev. W.B. Caines was sent as Resident Minister. First Trustees were Nathan Chatfield, Sampson Blake, Fred Blake and Eugene Harrison. The congregation met in Band Hall. In 1899, Rev. Moses Monzingo replaced Caines. Purchase of property- deed 1902 paid by Workman. Building completed? Fire destroyed property. Church had been meeting in a little hall on East Main Street before moving to the Brightwood Street location. In 1920 African Methodist Episcopal Zion Mission renamed Workman African Methodist Episcopal Zion Mission

Ministers

1897, Rev. W.B. Caines

1899, Rev. Moses Monzingo

1942 Rev. J.C. Taylor

Rev. Nathaniel Jarrett

Rev. Mark Roderick

Rev. Trent McIntire

Rev. Shelley Copeland

Rev. Swatei Lomontay

1943 Rev. N.R. Scott

Rev. E.P. Boyce

Rev. D.D. Fogg

Bess and Merrill Bailey, *The Growth Years*, Torrington 1852 to 1923

p. 74 George D. Workman was president of the Electric Light Company, director of Turner and Seymour and a member of the Board of Burgesses. "He was benefactor of the Workman A.M.E. Church to which he devoted a good deal of his time and money."

p. 92 Town became a city in 1923.

"Blacks of the period", p. 112 Pete Saunders who ran a barber shop in the basement of the Granite Block, his brother-in law was Billy Hearitage. Billy lived with Pete. P. 113 There were four Mix brothers who were friends of Historian [Charles Johnson]. Chauncey lived in one of the few houses on Pearl Street during the early times. Edward and Willard lived with the Lathrop family. Phineas worked at the Needle Shop. Willard had been baptized by immersion in the Cap Shop dam pond.

Bailey, the formative years, Torrington, 1737 to 1852, pp. 71-72, 71-73 Ginne Prince, Jacob Prince, Jeremiah Prince

18th century African American population. 19th century, Torrington had stations along the underground railroad, the Isiah Tuttle House and the Uriah Tuttle House [Connecticut Freedom Trail.]

Waterbury

Mount Olive
82-100 Pearl Street
Waterbury

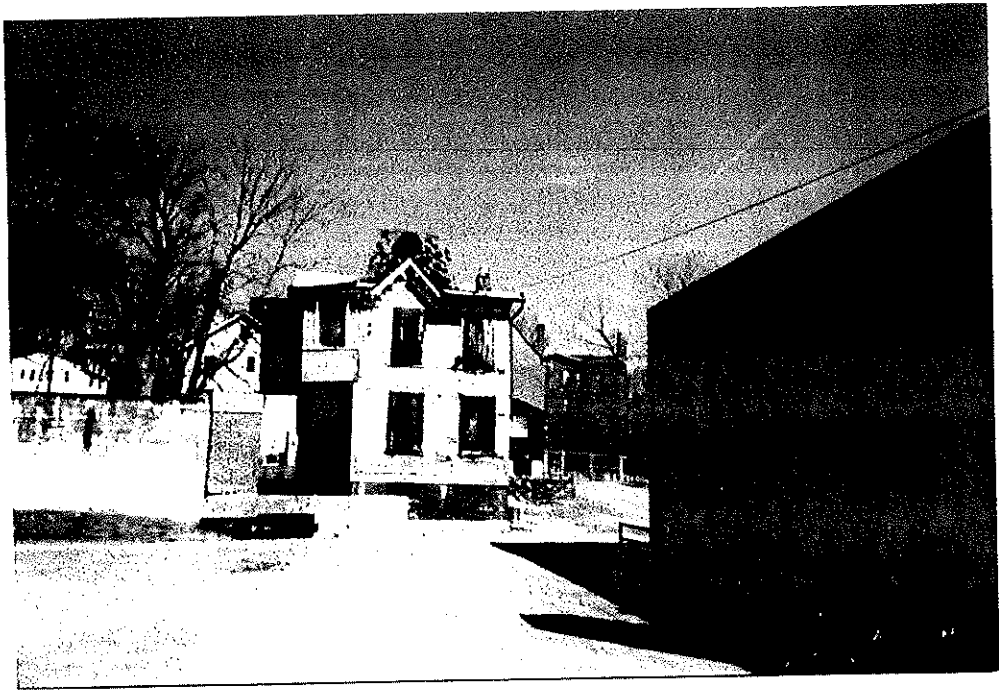
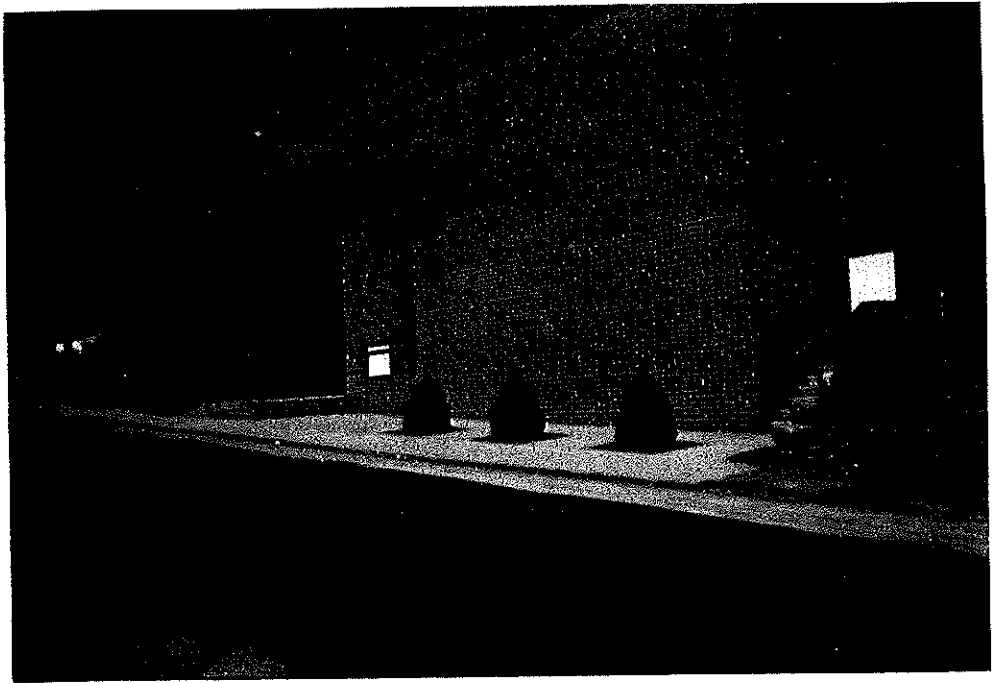
The church banner reads, Waterbury's oldest African American institution. Waterbury's African American community's presence in the city dates from the seventeenth century. In the mid to late 1600s, British settlers left Farmington, Connecticut and laid the foundation for Waterbury on the lands of the Mattutuck (Native Americans). While these British citizens brought with them the Protestant religious traditions of their original home, they also brought enslaved Africans who toiled the provision plantations producing rye, barley and other grains.

Waterbury's colonial records list enslaved Africans in church records of St. John's Episcopal Church, probate records and the first census of the United States in 1790. Connecticut's 18th century gradual abolition laws (1784, 1793) offered freedom to many enslaved African Americans after the Revolutionary War, slavery was not abolished until 1848. A certain complexity exists because despite this fact, Waterbury was on the network of passages for escaped slaves enroute to Torrington, another station along the network of the Underground Railroad. This was a part of the historical backdrop in which Mount Olive African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded. Its history – long present African American community, underground railroad, and post Reconstruction era. By 1879, when members of the community organized the mission. The church banner reads, Waterbury's oldest African American institution.

Structure on Pearl Street sits on the land on which the original church was built. Early 20th century structure, replicated Victorian architectural form. The current building, modern rectangular geometric design. The interior has a small chapel and larger meeting hall, facility for senior citizens luncheons. The facility was built during the years of Rev. Bonner's appointment as pastor of Mount Olive. Adjoining property the church owns, apartment complex for citizens.

Infusion of members over time. 19th, 20th
Post Reconstruction southern migration,, (not connected to the Brass Industry) Labor recruiters went south, for example, South Carolina, to recruit African Americans to work for wealthy white American families in personal service in Waterbury and in outlying areas – Litchfield and Middlefield? Based on discussions with Robert Wright whose parents were members of Mount Olive AMEZ, grandfather was a trustee.

Living eldest members of Mount Olive – Mr. And Mrs. Theodore Hatcher and several others. Members veterans of WWII, tended to be active in community, labor movement particularly the teamsters, fraternal Freemasons, Elks and women's societies – Daughters of the Eastern Stars.



Willimantic

Stanley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Stanley Chapel organized in 1894. Current site of church occupied since 1916.

In 1926 address listed African Methodist Episcopal, AME Zion Church
74 Spring Street with Pastor Rev. David R. Overton

Willimantic Windham and Coventry Directory 1926 (New Haven,
Connecticut: The Price and Lee Co., 1926,) p. 259
African Methodist Episcopal, AME Zion Church
74 Spring Street
Pastor Rev. David R. Overton
<http://www.smartpages.com/home/stanleychapelamezionchrl>

Windsor

Archer Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church
321 Hayden Station Road
Windsor

Windsor's African American heritage spans centuries. African American veterans of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars have found their final resting places in Windsor cemeteries. Nancy Tooney, the last recorded enslaved African American in Connecticut is also interred in Windsor.

Commemorating the African American man Sandy Archer, who freed himself by running away from slavery in the south, Archer Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion sits at Hayden Station on land donated by Archer in the early 20th century. The church grew out of camp meetings held in the early 1800s when Reverend Hatfield was sent to Windsor to minister to the African American community.

An important step to formally establish the church took place in April 1887 when Reverend Chauncy Douglass and Reverend Mr. Bell of Hartford met at the Windsor Town Hall formally organize the first African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Windsor, Connecticut.*

Original members of the church came mainly from three neighborhoods of Windsor: Hayden Station, Cook Hill and the center of Windsor. The members were farmers, brick makers and a carpenter. Church leaders were: Class Leader, Deacon Thomas Harris, Trustees, Henry Douglass, Samuel Thompson and Richard Johnson; and Steward, Theresa Anderson. The trustees elected Samuel Thompson as treasurer, Henry Douglass as President and Daniel P. Weeks as Secretary.**The History of Archer

Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, p. 1) Other original members Mr. Archer (and Mrs. Elizabeth Archer)

In 1897, landowner named William O. Hayden sold parcel of land in the Pine Groves to the trustees of the A.M.E. Zion Church for the price of one dollar. This was the same site on which camp meetings held. Property measured 119'W x 300'L. Mr. Frederick Thrall donated a significant sum to the church. Rev. White was the pastor. He was also a carpenter and with help from other members he built a small white church in the Pine Grove. In 1908, Sandy and Elizabeth Archer quit claimed another portion of their land on Pink Street (currently Hayden Station) for "an amount between one dollar and one hundred dollars for the church's use." (p. 2 Archer Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church presents Our One Hundred-Fifteenth Church Anniversary Celebration "A Journey in Faith" May 4, 2002-May 5, 2002) In 1915, the second resident pastor came to Archer. He was Rev. Byron Scott. (3) The original church on Pink Street was moved using logs to leverage the building and horses and wagons to pull it. In 1915, the church was renamed Archer Memorial in honor of senior member Sandy Archer. "During this same time period, fire destroyed roof of church. It took ten years to renovate and reconstruct. Catherine Taylor was one of the church members who held services in her home. Archer Memorial Services held in homes of other members and the First Congregational Church of Windsor Hayden Station chapel. In the 1930s Reverend William Durante assigned as the 16th pastor to Archer. He, the congregation and friends of the congregation worked hard to rebuild the church. Durante pastored for seventeen years at Archer. Rev, Leslie Lawson, Sr. served as pastor 1954 to 1956. Between the 1950s and 1970s, several more developments: declining membership but a core group

remained determined to rebuild and expand, church building deteriorated and building condemned. June 29, 1973 church purchased an additional parcel of land adjacent to the church property. In 1975, Reverend Claudius Williams sent to pastor Archer and presided over the rebuilding. Archer met in the First Church chapel in Hartford and the Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion parsonage. In 1981, Rev. Williams and Associate Pastor Reverend Maryann Jones continued work on the rebuilding. In 1983, Reverend Bernard Richards sent to Archer. (4)

Rev. Richards instituted and re-organized many of Archer's auxiliary organizations. Membership grew from few to over 100 (4) As this unfolded, church officials informed that State of Connecticut transportation was planning to build a road which cut off the church's access to the adjoining cemetery where some of the church's founding members were interned. Rev. Richards and the congregation negotiated with the State of Connecticut and the town of Windsor to protect Archer's historic site although the access road was built in 1922. The state has named the road Archer Road (6) honoring Sandy Archer. The church purchased two additional adjacent tracts of land in 1991. (p. 5) Parsonage on 22 Pond Road (purchased under Rev. Tillett.(p. 6)

After a decade of service at Archer, Reverend Richards moved on to become Dean at Howard University's Rankin Chapel in Washington, D.C. (p. 10) In the years since, Presiding Elder James M. Hubert, Reverend Lloyd McKenzie Jr. and Charles Tillett Jr. have served as pastor. Current pastor is Rev. Jeffrey Hill.

The donation of land motivated the building of a church edifice between 1912 and 1914 although the Archer's origins are located in the late 1800s. The original church building has been replaced, but it served as the sanctuary for many members of the

Windsor community including Archer's current pastor, Reverend Jeffrey Hill who attended the church as a child.

The current church facility was constructed in 1983, but Archer Memorial has formed a bridge connecting several generations. Mr. William Bess, Windsor's first African American police officer, still remembers Mr. Sandy Archer. The church is a site on the Connecticut Freedom Trail and host for the annual September Freedom Trail events. (10) The activities commemorate the efforts of those Connecticut citizens who challenged slavery and inequality despite the opprobrium from those who supported property rights in ownership of human beings. Mr. Archer's defiance of slavery and AME Zion Church's early embracing of abolition are a testimony to the endurance of that historic struggle into the 21st century.

Information of Archer Memorial's early history was supplied by Mr. Al Narcisse and Reverend Jeffrey Hill during discussions in March 2003. Photos and a more complete Mrs. Barbara Alleyne, oral historian on Windsor and Hartford, reservoir of insight..



Conclusion

Churches and chronological period

1800s precede civil war or war between the states. Varick Cross Street, Metropolitan. Bethel in New Haven. Post reconstruction 1870s and 1880s. Norwalk, Clinton, Parker, and Mt Olive. 1890s to early 20th century, era of Jim Crow and southern migration. Bethel in Greenwich, Archer AME, Zion, Stanley Chapel the Great Migration 1910-1920 sometimes 1915-1920 when an estimated 500,000 African Americans left the South. Bethel AME's establishment in 1916 overlapped that migration. Most of the Connecticut churches already established, but benefited from new members.

Trend mission churches Blackwell AME Zion; mission churches McCall AME Zion in Waterbury. Resurrection A.M.E Zion in New Britain no longer functioning and Bethel AME on Albany Avenue Hartford. Community outreach,

Churches organized by conferences- Bethel in New Haven organized by Allen's representative and Varick A.M.E. Zion organized by Varick.

Churches which began with meetings in homes organized by local communities. Cross Street, Derby-Ansonia A.M.E. Zion, Archer A.M.E. Zion, Bethel A.M.E. in Hartford, now Bloomfield. Activities.

Churches once vigorous, currently not very active Norwich AME.

Original Structures – Workman, Redeemers AME Zion, Norwich, and Bethel in Greenwich structures modified. Original sites occupied, Walters AME Zion since 1835, Workman 1905, Redeemers 1903, Bethel in Greenwich 1882, Norwich 1874. Sites occupied over fifty years, though not the original site on which church was founded- Ansonia 1921, New London 1935.

Important lessons about clashes in society. African Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church began as civil rights and civil liberties acting upon the principles of liberty enshrined in the political documents of the United States. Religion was not immune to the prejudices. Reverend Easton described his families experiences in white congregations segregated in gallery or isle seats. When the family purchased their own pew, the church member tarred the pew. They returned to church with their own chairs and were told they could sit outside on the porch. (Walls) Frederick Douglass recalled incidents of humiliation too when he attended churches of white Methodists.

Such insults drew African American Methodists to the AME and AME Zion church. The history also reveals cooperation. George Workman, son of German immigrants, donated money to purchase land and build AME Zion Church that bears his name. Reverend McIntire, white American Methodist, served as pastor at Workman. In another gesture of cooperation, abolitionist Samuel Whiting in Bridgeport sold lots to African Americans who would found Bethel AME and Walters AME Zion Churches. In Windsor white American Windsor landowner Mr. Hayden sold land for a nominal fee to the congregation of Archer.

Survey of the African Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Churches has connections to other themes in Connecticut history. religion and social politics, property ownership, urban growth, demographics. Little Liberia in Bridgeport still there but not marked while Metropolitan's Pearl Street location occupied by Hartford law enforcing building. Waterbury's Mt. Olive AME Zion Church located still in area of historic late 19th and 20th African American community.

Appendix

Bridgeport

Joel Freeman must have been a man of influence in this community, as the church purchased land close by his house on June 17, 1835, and his name is listed first among three trustees of the organization (Ibid. Volume 5, 99, 100, 101). The church cornerstone was laid July 5, 1835. That Joel was trusted by members of his peer group is evidenced by the number of times in the remainder of his life he was called upon to serve in positions of import, such as executor of the estates of deceased church members.

Church located in the section of Bridgeport called 'Little Liberia' where it remains today. Original building no longer standing, but present edifice sits on the land the church has occupied since 1835.

"Little Liberia" located on Long Island Sound in the south end of Bridgeport was a natural drop off point for runaways and for free Blacks looking for a place to settle.

Community – schools, grocery,

Abolitionist Ministers of Walters Memorial AME Zion

The ministers who served early in the history of Walters Memorial were all abolitionist. From the pulpit they rallied for Jesus while fighting racism and oppression. Through their strong orations and defiant acts, the abolitionist movement took on importance. The ministers' actions originated the strategies that further developed the abolitionist movement and the underground railroad. Strategies included developing a speakers' bureau of ex slaves to talk about their slave experiences to sympathetic whites.

In 1838 Rev. William Serrington an early minister of Walters Memorial, while serving as pastor in New Bedford, Massachusetts at the Second Street AME Zion Church, met Frederick Douglas-fresh out of slavery. It was he that encouraged the spirit of Douglas and offered him brotherly advice. Douglas became very active in the Second Street Church under the tutelage of Rev. Serrington. Douglas became exhorter and later an ordained minister. Rev. Peter Ross, another abolitionist minister of Walters Memorial, also served at the Massachusetts church and worked with Douglas while strengthening the abolitionist cause. Rev. John P. Thompson an abolitionist who was an early minister at Walters worked in Massachusetts with Douglas promoting and developing the abolitionist movement. Rev. D. Vanderere, Rev. J.W. Hood, Rev. John Taylor, Rev. J.W. Spywood and Rev. Leonard Collins served in the Bridgeport church and worked

Walters Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
(2002).

throughout the Pennsylvania, New York and New England Conferences promoting the eradication of slavery. Through the strong support of the ministers, the movement grew. The northern churches, along with spreading the gospel, were beset with the challenge of an abolitionist movement. The “tactic” which intensified and captured world wide attention.

The abolitionist movement in New England meant that runaway slaves before 1850 stopped in “Little Liberia”. By 1848 slavery was abolished in Connecticut and until 1850 runaway slaves were protected by law to some degree if they ran to Connecticut and made it their home.

“Little Liberia” located on Long Island Sound in the south end of Bridgeport was a natural drop off point for runaways and for free Blacks looking for a place to settle.

The Colored Methodist Episcopal Ebenezer Society and Church was the stabilizing factor for many who sought to find homes in ‘Little Liberia’. The evolution of two churches from the one, allowed options of worship while the community continued to grow.

In 1845, Rev. Leonard Collins, a minister of AME Zion Church and owner of a grocery store located on Main Street started a library. Under the leadership of Rev. Collins and members of the church a notice was put in the Bridgeport Standard Newspaper to solicit donations of books from the greater community-for the purpose of a library.

Before the city of Bridgeport developed a school district ‘Little Liberia’ under the leadership of the church developed an African Free School.

An article in the *Bridgeport Post* on April 1, 1928, recounts the story of the organization of the A.M.E. Zion Church: “A band of Negroes inhabiting the farms and woods around the embryo town of Bridgeport met one summer evening under the shadow of a great elm tree that stood there the public library is now situated. This huge tree constituted a sort of open air forum for the Negroes who were wont to meet under its spreading branches, hold divine service, and discuss the general situation.” Joel Freeman must have been a man of influence in this community, as the church purchased land close by his house on June 17, 1835, and his name is listed first among three trustees of the organization (Ibid. Volume 5, 99, 100, 101). The church cornerstone was laid July 5, 1835. That Joel was trusted by members of his peer group is evidenced by the number of times in the remainder of his life he was called upon to serve in positions of import, such as executor of the estates of deceased church members. Walters Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (2002)

excerpts Walters Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Millenium Booklet
1835-2000 (2002), pp. 1-9

*A brief history Walls Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church by Mr. Spencer
Lancaster, Trustee*

The Walls Temple A.M.E. Zion Church began in the living room of Mrs. Emma Baxter of New London in 1903. Early members included Mrs. E. Jeter Greene, Mrs. Mary E. Hawkings, Mrs. Nola Nelson, Mrs. Lovenia Fitzhugh, Mrs. Alice Conover, Mr. William Conover, Mr. Mitchell Purnell, Mrs. Mary Purnell, Mrs. Nell Harris, et al. The congregation worshiped in various homes and buildings until 1911. Under the leadership of Rev. S.E. Robinson, the membership purchased the former Bethany Chapel on the corner of Bank Street and Ocean Avenue, and was called the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and worshiped there for nineteen years. The following served as pastors of the church: Rev. Moses Monzingo-1912-1913; Rev. George S. Green, 1914-1916; Rev. E. George Biddle-1917-1919; Rev. J.S.N. Tross-1920; Rev. Edward W. Gantt-1921-1923; Pastorate vacant in 1924, Rev. Isaac B. Walters-1925-1928 and Rev. J.B. Wallace-1929.

On May 2nd, 1930, (after nineteen (19) years at the corner of Bank Street and Ocean Avenue) the church purchased a tract of land on 16 Belden Street, (Present Location) from Annie MacDowell Jordan for the consideration of One (\$1.00) Dollar. On this property a new church was erected under the supervision of The Rev. William B. Jones, the new pastor. It was dedicated on Sunday, January 24th, 1931, and was named Walls Temple A.M.E. Zion Church, after Bishop William Jacob Walls. (Rev. George J. Simmons also served as pastor in 1930). After accepting the call to pastor, the A.M.E. Zion Church in New Britain, Rev. Jones was succeeded by Rev. A.J. Stockley in 1931. Others pasturing Walls Temple early on were Rev. U.B. Betrand-1932; pastorate vacant in 1931; Albert A. Garvin-1934-1935; (The W.H. & O.M. local society was organized under Rev. Garvin's administration). Rev. E. Horace served from 1936-1938 and during his pastorate, a session of the New England Youth Congress was held. The keynote address was given by Bishop W.J. Walls, of Chicago, Illinois. Other addresses were given by Dr. J.W. Eichelburger, Chairman of Christian Education, Chicago, Illinois, The Rev. Dr. W.B. Scott of Brooklyn, New York and Dr. Thomas W. Wallace of Washington, D.C.

Other pastors of Walls Temple were Rev. A. McL. Spaulding-1939; Rev. A. Edward Berry-1940; and Rev. Gilbert Coffey-1941-1944. In June 1942, Walls Temple hosted the Ninety Eight (98th) Session of the New England Annual Conference, Rev. Coffey, host pastor. The Rev. George C. Battle pastured from 1945-1949; Rev. John A. Stringfield-1950-1951; pastorate vacant-1952; Rev. Benjamin G. Shaw, Jr. -1953; Rev. P.F. Thurston-1954-1955; Rev. Homer S. Roan-1956; Rev. John A. Bagby-1957-1959; Rev. Ballard-1960; Rev. Thomas C. McDougal-1961-1966; Rev. Hezekiah Williams-1967-1971; Rev. Donald W.H.E. Ruffin-1972-1995 and Rev. William DuBois Wilson in May, 1995.

Under the pastorate of Rev. Donald W.H.E. Ruffin, Walls Temple experienced outstanding growth. The church membership went from nine members to as high as 400. The church that was heavily in debt was free in five years, The Ministry of Kindness was expanded, a Scholarship Fund established as well as a Recreation Fund. Through the

recreation fund, the church traveled extensively. Pastor Wilson and the Walls Temple family were in a phase of rebuilding and renewal.

Rev. Wilson is married to Phyllis and they have three children: Shaun, Reuben and Marlise.

Danbury

Mount Pleasant African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church History 2003

Mt. Pleasant A.M.E. Zion Church was organized in 1889 under the leadership of Rev. Munzingo, a missionary preacher sent to Danbury by the New England Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The black population was surveyed and worship services for Sunday evenings were organized and held in a home on Cherry Street. Services were moved to various homes until the congregation became large and strong enough to rent a place of worship on Liberty Street which was later purchased as church property. After a while, this property was lost due to a lack of interest and diminishing financial support. Worship services did pick up again and were held in the loft of Barnum's Grain Store on Main Street. Later, property was purchased on South Street but met with resistance. Transactions were then made for a site on Rowan Street in exchange for the South Street property.

The congregation succeeded in building a church edifice on Rowan Street in 1908. The records show that the church was dedicated in September 1909. Rev. A.S. Tolbert was pastor, Bishop Walters was the Presiding Prelate and the Rev. Balls was the Presiding elder of the Hartford District.

On October, 1964, under the pastorate of the Rev. Leslie Lawson, the ground was broken for a new edifice. The old building was raised to make way for a new sanctuary. Rev. Lawson, one of the outstanding pastors of Mt. Pleasant, led the congregation into a new edifice for the first service on December 16, 1965. The Rt. Rev. Stephen Gill Spottswood was Bishop and Rev. Dr. James Charles Brown was Presiding Elder. The official opening was May 8, 1966 and the cornerstone laid on October 30, 1966.

Rev. A.J. Parker was sent to pastor Mt. Pleasant in 1969 and initiated the first of our annual Church Anniversary Celebrations. This was done during the week of April 5-12, 1970. The dining hall was renovated this year by the Action Day Care Center in order to accommodate the food service program adopted by the church. Mr. Bill Oliver and Mr. Sam Neville accomplished the construction.

The Rev. Leroy Blair came to Mt. Pleasant as pastor in 1971. he began to work with the youth of the church and started several educational and recreational programs during his tenure. The Junior Choir was also organized for them. The front structure of the church was renovated under Rev. Blair's administration. As our pastor, he was active in civic and political affairs of the city.

Mount Pleasant African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church History 2003

Bishop Herbert Bell Shaw, our then Presiding Prelate, considered the needs of the church and appointed the Rev. Leounidas Reed Dumas. The new pastor, his wife Lillye and daughter Beverly arrived on August 17, 1973. Under his leadership, the following groups were organized: Deaconess Board, Men's Chorus and the Lay Council. Other departments such as the Junior Choir, Buds of Promise and Young Women's Department of the WH&OM were revitalized. Under the leadership of Rev. Dumas, the several changes made brought new zeal to the church and community.

The role of pastor was assumed by the Rev. William James Hooker in 1978. Rev. Hooker steered Mt. Pleasant on a steady Christ centered course. Progressive growth of the congregation, numerous physical improvements were made to the church, parsonage, including vinyl siding, a new roof for the church, the purchase of a 15 passenger van were the hallmarks of his administration. During this time, the First Lady, Mrs. Doris Hooker, spearheaded a project of fencing the church property. In 1986, Mt. Pleasant acquired additional property in a three family unit adjacent to the church. The parking lot of the church was expanded as well. A ramp for the handicapped was also added. In 1987, we worked diligently to secure the ministries of the church and community. The efforts came to fruition in our outreach program. The program started with senior citizens transportation and personal care. It was extended to include a food pantry, health information and a screening located in one of the city's housing complexes. Our church was greatly blessed under Rev. Hooker's guidance. He was the pastor for 15 years. Rev. Hooker was retired by the New England Conference in May 1993. We thank him for the years of service and for being faithful, caring shepherd.

The Rev. March John Roderick, Sr. was appointed pastor of Mt. Pleasant at the 1993 Annual conference by Bishop George Washington Carver Walker, Sr. He came to Danbury with his wife, Betty Lou and their son, the Rev. Mark J. Roderick, Jr., then ordained Deacon. The Rodericks have brought new spirit to the church with their ministerial style.

Mount Pleasant Rev. Roderick's tenure has now spanned ten years. The improvements and enhancements of the church have been benefited tremendously by his hard work and excellent administration. Physically the church, parsonage and grounds have never looked better; financially the church has grown; Spiritually the church has never been as blessed; and for the future, the church has been as prepared. Since last year, we have purchased another apartment house (two family) and we will soon add fifty percent more parking spaces on the landed acquired with the house, along with a donated piece of property. The parsonage has been completely renovated from cellar to the roof with a new section built to add more living space. The cost of the parsonage renovation has been paid in full, cutting a twenty year mortgage down to just nine years.

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