

acknowledged
9/19/55

Transcript By ^{Copeland} Mary Frances Linnette

Biography

Before the clouds of the Civil War had passed or the echo of booming cannons had ceased, there was one who realized that unless we, as a group possessed an instrument whereby our people might be guided and governed religiously, there could be little or no progress made toward the growth and expansion of higher intellect. He was aware of the fact that the Church plays an important part in any community. Therefore, in the year 1866, one Robert Snead grasped the idea and made a step in this direction by organizing a group of religious people. He was instrumental in securing two lots, located on what was then known as the Great Bridge Road near Berkley, in the village of Lewiston from Henry C. Percy and his wife, Francis A. Percy in the year 1860. As some of you know, every church had a bell which served as a call to worship. These two persons contributed a bell to the church as well as the two lots upon which to build a church.

use this point to include my bells

Shortly after this time, Brother Peter Sheppard known throughout Virginia as "Father Sheppard" came to Berkley and took over the leadership of the church. Together Brother Robert Snead and Brother Ransom McCoy built the church and it was called "St. James ^{Chapel} A. M. E. Church. On the deed to this property we find the names of Robert Snead, Isaac Smith, Ransom McCoy, Lewis Motten and George Washington. Mention is made in this deed which reads as follows: "They shall at all times forever hereafter permit Ministers authorized by the Annual Conference of the A.M.E. Church to preach and expand God's Holy Word therein."

Talk soon! Talk!

The church grew under the pastorate of "Father Sheppard." Following him came Rev. Overton, who accomplished great things for the church. Beginning in the year 1884, Rev. James A. Haynes spent two years. Other pastors who served were Rev. Ed Scarboro, two years; Rev. J. E. Cook, three years; Rev. J. A. Mackey, one year; Rev. J. Cuffey, two years; Rev. Tony, one year, and Rev. I. L. Butts, who merits special mention, being the first person to attempt to write a book in order to preserve the birth and expansion of African Methodist in Vir-

ginia Becoming dissatisfied with the location of the church because of the interference of trains and traffic, arrangements were made for the purchase of other property upon which to build a larger and more modern building. This spot, as many of the older persons will recall had, in previous years been used for a school building and was known as "Bray's School." Following Rev. Butts pastorate, Rev. George Williams served one year, Rev. Robert Davis, one year, Rev. Alfred J. Nottingham, four years; Rev. O. T. Day, five years; Rev. Isaac Ewer, one year; Rev. Seaton, one year; Rev. Saunders, who kept the church alive during an epidemic when all churches, schools and public places were compelled to be closed. Rev. L. L. Berry a strong man and an outstanding Minister, not only contributed to the growth of St. James A. M. E. Church, but to the entire conference and to the communities wherever he pastored. A church parsonage was built during his pastorate here. ^(ob influenza) ^{when pop was P, E,} ~~Rev. P. A. Scott was sent to pastor the church when Rev. Berry was moved, after having served three years. Rev. Wing spent one year and Rev. R. L. Tillery followed him. He was instrumental in erecting the present building.~~

These Ministers whose names have been mentioned could not have accomplished this great work, had it not been for the pioneers and their descendants, who were willing under strenuous circumstances and unfavorable conditions to lend their efforts in their support and we feel they are worthy of being mentioned:

Robert Snead, Ransom McCoy, Isaac Smith, Lewis Motten, George Washington, Jim Miller, John Smith, Miles Newton, ^(married Horrett McCoy's daughter) Luther Anderson, Sr. Sam Thomas, George Munden ^{who was blind in day}, Spencer Archer, Ed Ward, ^(new) David Wilson, Sr., Bro. Owens, George Carson, Oscar Woodhouse, George Diggs, Julian Woodhouse, Mark Finney, Walter Fulford, Sr., Lazarus Mathis, Nemiah McCoy, Joseph Moore, Alexander Moore, Nicholas Towns, Miles Simmons Demus Jacocks, Walter Tazewell, George Moton, Martin McCoy, John James, Frank G. Russell, J. E. Fulford, Charlie Griffin, Josiah Copeland, Martin Luther Anderson, William McCoy, Richard Nelson, Noah Painter, Alex McCoy, Horatio Sykes, Willoughby Fulford and Thomas Fulford: ^{was Willie's brother} Frank Russell, ^{Berd McCoy -} Mary Munden, Fannie McCoy, Caroline Washington, Jane Jimerson, Mary Thomas ^{mother of Geo Munden}

Mary Fulford, Eliza McCoy, Elsie Felton, Bell Reid, Martha McCoy, Mariah Finney, Charity Bushell, Rebecca Mantley, Betty Woodhouse, Betty Carrington, Diza Johnson, Joanna Mitchell, Agnes Moore, Ella Bell, Susan Carson, Florence Painter, Mahalia James, Frances Gunnell, Eliza Stratten, Georgia Archer, Susie Sykes, Vaugham, Sylvia Wilson, Mary T. Simmons, Pennie Skinner, Frances Dunstan, Dora Johnson, Jane West Finney, Lucy Clark, Luberta Moore, Elizabeth Copeland, Lelia Harrell, Emma Dozier, Tissue Miller, Harriett Anderson, Eva. Floyd, Louise Holly, Cora Nelson, Maggie Anderson, Rachel Ford, Lydia Simmons, Sarah White, Sallie Towns, Robert Wilson, Ossie Wilson, Lonnie McCoy, Georgia Mantley Leggett, Georgia Brickhouse.

The Fifth Sunday Night Concerts had their origin during the pastorate of Rev. L. L. Berry at St. James Church

Musical Renditions used on the occasion of the
Memorial

Bethel A. M. E. Church, Hampton - A Solo "Come Ye Disconsolate"
By Mr. Levon Judge

Norfolk
St. John A. M. E. Church - A Quartett, "The Soul of Righteousness"
by Mrs. Viola Haskins Smith, Soprano
Mrs. Geneva Frances Archer, Alto
Mr. Lafayette Johnson, Tenor
Mr. Edwin A. Rogers, Bass
Accompanist Mrs. Marietta Johnson Davis

Greater St. James A. M. E. Church, South Norfolk -
A Solo, "Face To Face"
by Mrs. Mary Copeland Linnette
Accompanist Mrs. Lula West

Emanuel A. M. E. Church, Portsmouth -
A Solo, "Lead Me, Guide Me"
by Mrs. Fredrica Hildebrand