

Mrs. Irene Land's history states that the congregation moved into a building on this lot between Preston and 20th streets. On June 13, 1878, the church was deeded Lots 1 through 4, Block 54. The congregation's first new church building was constructed at this location, on the corner of Houston and East 22nd streets. In 1920 it was replaced with a new church. The current Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church is the third one to stand at this location. It was dedicated on April 9, 1961.

Special thanks to: Mr. Bill Page for his historical research, Mr. John Blair for editing Sister Turner's narrative history and preparing the marker application, Mr. Henry Mayo and the Brazos County Historical Commission for their encouragement and financial support and the Texas Historical Commission for providing the beautiful marker.

In ending, we would like to recognize the families who have been with the church the longest: Mrs. Helen Drayden and The Gooden family for 7 generations and Mrs. Clarise Robinson and the Hickman family for 6 generations. Each of these families have 5 generations presently attending the church today. And our member with the longest membership is Mrs. Elaine Steward, who has been a member 86 years. To each of these I would like to present a copy of the narrative of the Allen Chapel History 1866 -2009, as it was submitted to the Texas Historical Commission, with an addendum from 2009 until the present.

Sister Callie Turner

ALLEN CHAPEL AFRICAN METHODIST CHURCH TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2014
2:30 P.M.

501 NORTH HOUSTON AVENUE
BRYAN, TEXAS 77803



PROGRAM

Welcome:

Mr. Henry Mayo
Chair, Brazos Co. Historical Commission

Invocation:

Presiding Elder, Darrell Caldwell
Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church

Recognition of Guests and Dignitaries:

Mr. Henry Mayo

Brief History of A.M.E. Congregation and Allen Chapel:

Sister Barbara Cooper, Steward ProTem
Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church

Bill Page
Marker Chair, Brazos Co. Historical Commission

Unveiling and Presentation of Historical Marker:

Allen Chapel Trustees

Blessing of Historical Marker:

Rev. Kennan W. Jackson
Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church

Closing Comments:

Mr. Henry Mayo and Church officials

A Brief History of the African Methodist Congregation

The A.M.E. Congregation in Bryan was founded by a former slave, Emmanuel Hammitt. In 1866, Hammitt was preaching under a brush arbor in Freedmantown to a Methodist congregation when he was sent to Galveston to be ordained a deacon. While there, he met an A.M.E. minister who gave him the history of the church and persuaded him to transfer his membership. He was then sent back to Bryan to preach under the brush arbor. When he referred to the church as being "African Methodist", many of the members did not like the name "African" so they eventually left the congregation. Hammitt's remaining supporters became the A.M.E. congregation of Bryan.

Rev. Hammitt was replaced in 1867 by the Rev. Charles Foster who also preached under the brush arbor for a while. He eventually moved the congregation to the Federal school house on what is now Military Drive. It had recently been built by the U.S. Freedmen's Bureau. Records of the May 15, 1869 Second Quarterly Conference show the Bryan congregation as having 35 members, with 8 on probation and 60 members in the Sunday school.

Rev. Foster also stated there had been no money collected for the purpose of a building, but on July 19, 1870 there is a deed to Rev. Foster and the A.M.E. trustees from Harvey Mitchell, for the purpose of erecting a house of worship. Records are not clear on the exact location of this property located "adjacent to the tract on which Alfred Smith Freedman now resides." One month later, on August 31, 1870 there is another deed to Rev. Foster and the church trustees for land purchased from W.R. Green and A. Groesbeck, described as being Lot 1, Block 56.