TORRENCE CHAPEL
A. M. E. ZION CHURCH
1869-1970
One Hundred First Anniversary



Rev. J. N. Torrence, Pastor

FORMER CHURCH BUILDING



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Mrs. Lottie Street
Miss Vertie Torrence
Miss Annie M. Gaston

PREFACE

Having been inspired by the loyalty of this membership, I feel divinely inspired to write this "Historical Brief" of the various aspects of Torrence Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church. I pray that this little booklet will serve to commemorate the works of past members who played important roles in establishing this church; to inspire present members to greater religious zeal, and to leave a historical foundation upon which future generations can build a bigger and better Zion. With these things in mind, I send this little booklet forth in the name of God, for I believe that it is the duty of every man to follow the wisdom of Solomon: "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shall find it after many days."

In my attempt to treat this subject, I have tried to be, as much as within me lies, impersonal; for I know that history deals with facts and what is not factual is not historical material. Since Torrence Chapel has existed for more than 100 years, I have gathered such historical materials as I thought valid, from various secretaries of the church, from inscriptions on corner stones, from papers delivered by members during the "101st Anniversary Week," and from personal inquiry of individuals of the church and community.

Torrence Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church, with two towers, surrounded by a graveyard, a grove of tall oaks, a green lawn and an arbor, located on highway 144, one mile north of highway 73 in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, stands magnificently reflecting the laborious sacrifices, religious enthusiasm and joys of one of the most loyal memberships of Zion Methodism.

This loyal membership pauses for a series of services, October 19th to 25th, 1970, commemorating the church's 101st anniversary, and will reflect its historical beginning, development, progress and contributions.

Torrence Chapel has progressed as the years passed. There is a membership of over 300 that joined together in the last six years under the leadership of our pastor, Rev. J. N. Torrence, to annex a new 20 by 40 foot front to our church, which includes a Sunday School Room, a well-equipped office and a baloncy that seats 109 people, new pews in the sanctuary, new carpet, stained windows, and other improvements.

As we look ahead to the next 100 years, we pray that God will bless us to be as inspiring and devoted as those that brought Torrence Chapel to its present status.

Samuel Knox

Historical Sketch

This "Historical Sketch" includes information about the "Founding Minister and Laymen."

Torrence Chapel's historic beginning was similar to that of most rural churches. With only a few members, it was organized by Rev. Ephrim Torrence, a few years prior to the year of 1869. Rev. Torrence came from Charlotte, N. C., nineteen miles south of Cornelius. After many trials and hardships, a "Brush Arbor" was built, near the Township of Cornelius, N. C., in a small Negro settlement called "Smithville." A few years later, the membership moved to the present location and built a frame structure (in the year 1869), on a site of land given to them by white friends: the Glaspies.

Among the lay-members who participated in organizing Torrence Chapel were Mr. Miles Work, who died at the age of seventy-five years, and Harrett Torrence, who died at the age of 106 years. Names of several other lay-members who helped organize this church, would be listed, if we had substantial evidence as to their identity. Nevertheless, the names of persons not listed, as well as the names of those listed, have a host of living relatives to perpetuate the memory of many of the founders who did great work in creating this ever growing, ever enlightened, and ever loyal church.

Torrence Chapel has developed remarkably in physical structure and organization.

Growth of the membership and decay of the old building necessitated a new structure. Hence, another frame structure was completed in the year of 1909. Rev. A. L. Newby was Pastor. The present brick structure (replacing the old frame structure), was begun by Rev. B. A. Crawford in 1928. Several lay-members (who began and finished this building) are deceased, namely: Mrs. Bessie Rush, Mrs. Julia Torrence, Mr. James Torrence, Mr. David S. Reid, and Mr. W. M. Work. Mr. John Brice, who helped build this frame structure is still living.

Various organizations developed simultaneously with the physical plant to meet the increasing needs of the membership.

1. The "Trustees Board" began with the founding of the church. Mr. Jack Glaspie, Mr. Plumber Johnson, and Mr. Rufus Potts were among the first trustees. A list of the present Board members follows: Samuel Knox, Wilson Potts, Raymond Cuthbertson, Ferman Hill, John Brice, Johnnie Heath, Ozon Brice, Willie Torrence.

Original copies of deeds will give the names of others who served on the Trustees Board throughout the years.

The first deeds read thus: "F. A. Goodrum and wife to trustees of Torrence Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church—$12.50, 18th day of November 1902—filed for registration on the 30th day of June 1903, at 6:40 o'clock P. M. and registered in the office of the Register of Deeds for Mecklenburg County, N. C., 1st day of July 1903, at 2:30 o'clock P. M. in book 179 of Deeds, on page 258. (Signed) A. M. McDonald, Register of Deeds." Notice individual names of trustees are not listed on deed.

Second deed: "From C. A. Caldwell and wife Mary Caldwell to the trustees of Torrence Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church—consideration of 12th day of February 1923. Filed for registration—19th day of February 1923 at 2:00 o'clock P. M. and registered in the office of the Register of Deeds for Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, the 20th day of February 1923 at 10:45 o'clock A. M. in book 488 of deeds and page 295 etc. (Signed J. R. Renflow, Register of Deeds." Trustees: "G. M. Burton, John Brice, Graham Patterson, Troy Pharr, David Reid, Thomas Brown, C. H. Watts, Will Work, and J. D. Grier."

Third deed: "We J. F. Gamble and wife M. E. Gamble, Will Work and wife, W. H. Blakely and R. C. Hayes, and Cora Robertson, all owners of land adjoining the hereafter described land—released and forever quit claim and by these presents do for ourselves, our heirs—forever quit claim unto James Torrence; Gospie Burton; David Reid; Will Work, Norman Bush; Elrado Davis; Clifton Watts, Troy Pharr and Charlie Torrence as trustees of Torrence Chapel African Episcopal Zion Church." Registered:

History Continued

State of North Carolina: "County of Mecklenburg, this 17th day of July 1930. (Signed) Hattie L. Neely, Deputy Clerk, Superior Court."

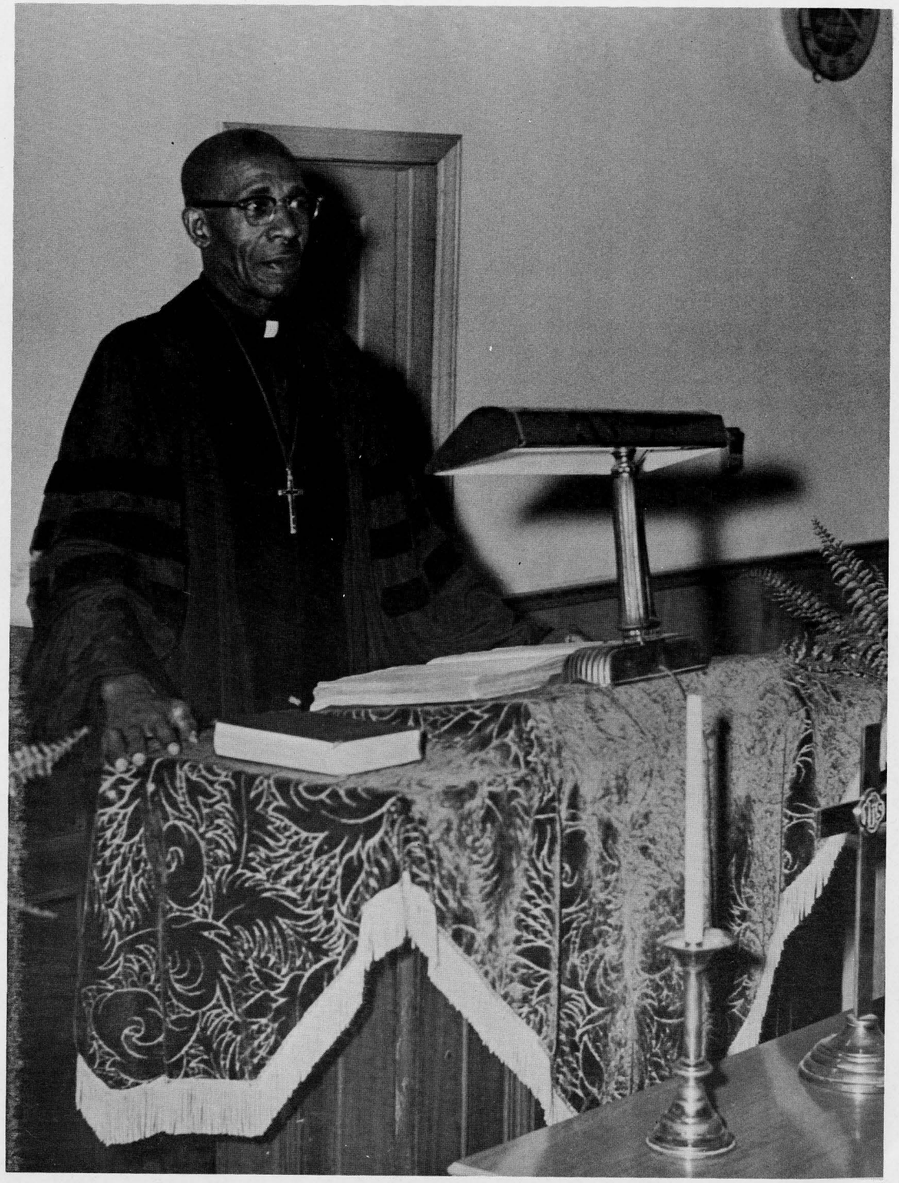
Fourth deed: 10th day of December 1941, by Will Work and wife Henrietta Work—to the Trustees of Torrence Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church ($100.00) dollars and the valuable consideration—(signed) J. B. Readling, Notary Public. Individual names of Trustees not listed.

Fifth deed: "This deed made this the 14th day of September, AD, 1949 by and between William Work and wife, Henrietta Work of the County of Mecklenburg and the State of North Carolina. Parties of the first part and Trustees of Torrence Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church and their successors in office: Ozon Brice, James Derr, J. H. Heath, Will Work, Towey Withers."

Ministers

(in order of service)

1. REV. EPHRIM TORRENCE: founder of first church. Served 1869-
2. REV. HUTTLE: served 1886-
3. REV. STITTS: served 1888-
4. REV. M. C. CRAY: served 1894-
5. REV. HITE: served 1896-
6. REV. S. W. HAMILTON: served 1898-
7. REV. MUDDOCK: served 1900-
8. REV. HITE: returned 1902-
9. REV. BLANTON: served 1904-
10. REV. J. J. PARKS: served 1905-
11. REV. NEWBY: served 1909, rebuilt church.
12. REV. JOE TORRENCE: served 1910-
13. REV. H. H. JACKSON: served 1911
14. REV. B. J. IVERY: served 1918
15. REV. MUSGROVE: served 1920
16. REV. C. E. MORMENT: served 1921-
17. REV. LINSEY: served 1923-
18. REV. T. P. TURNER: served 1923
19. REV. B. A. CRAWFORD: 1928-1931, began new church.
20. REV. W. Q. WELCH: 1932-
21. REV. ROBERT SIMMONS: 1933-
22. REV. L. E. CARR: served 1934, moved in new church.
23. REV. N. V. JONES: served 1936-1943, finished new church and built arbor.
24. REV. V. R. HILL: served 1944-1949, left June 12, 1949.
25. REV. D. L. BLAKEY: 1949—began service June 15th, 1949.
26. REV. W. F. OWENS: served 1949-1953
27. REV. G. BURNETT: served 1953-1954
28. REV. L. A. HOLLOWAY: served 1954-1955
29. REV. BAGBY: served 1956-1957
30. REV. E. K. WATKINS: 1957-1959
31. REV. W. J. JILES: 1959-1961
32. REV. H. D. BONNER: 1961
33. REV. WALTON: 1961-1963
34. REV. J. N. TORRENCE: served 1963 —until the present)



Rev. Joseph N. Torrence, born in Rowan County, North Carolina.

Attended Rowan County school; a graduate from Price High School. Graduated from Livingstone College in 1944 and majored in Religious Education.

United in marriage on Sept. 9, 1939 to Miss Fairy Byers. Family includes one daughter and three grandchildren.

For seven years he has served at Torrence Chapel faithfully.

Secretaries and Former Pianist



Ronald Potts

SECRETARIES: Left to right: Miss Annie M. Gaston and Mrs. Margaret Howard.
Inset: Ronald Potts, former pianist (now serving in U. S. Army—Vietnam).

THE TRUSTEE BOARD



The Trustee Board of Torrence Chapel Church consisted of the following men who were among the 1st.—Jack Glaspie, Plumber Johnson, and Rufus Potts. Other members who were active were, Wilson Black, James Reid, James Derr, Craven Davis, James Davis, Matthew Barringer, Eugene Howard, Nora Caldwell, Deceased), Wm. Works, Towy Withers, David Reid, James Barringer, and Wadell Henderson.

The present board consists of Chairman, R. E. Cuthbertson; Secretary, Wilson Potts; Treasurer, Ferman Hill; John Brice, John Heath, R. A. Works, Ozon Brice, Willie Torrence, Samuel Knox, Wm. Barringer and C. W. Howard, also James Forney and Rev. J. N. Torrence.

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Building Committee was revised in October 1962, Chairman, Mr. Wilson Potts. New addition to the church began in July 1964—A twenty by forty foot front included an office and class room at the main entrance to the church and a balcony that seated 109 people (all completed). On May 19, 1964 the Building Committee elected Mr. Potts, chairman; Raymond Cuthbertson, Treas. and Samuel Knox, Secretary. At present our Church anticipates building a new Educational Dept.

THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

Our Budget Committee is made up of seven members. Mr. Ozon Brice has served in the past and is now serving as Chairman. Mrs. Lottie Street is secretary. Ladies who served as secretaries in the past are Mrs. Estelle Withers and Mrs. Jennie V. Brice. Other members who serve as captains are Mrs. Mattie Reid, Mrs. Mazella Forney, Mrs. Jennie V. Brice, Mrs. Estelle Withers, and Mrs. Lillian McNeely.

PURCHASED WINDOWS

MR. & MRS. CHARLIE TORRENCE, MR. & MRS. TOWY WITHERS, MR. & MRS. SAMUEL KNOX, WM. WORKS & FAMILY, MR. & MRS. DAVID REID, MISSIONARY SOCIETY, MR. & MRS. CLARENCE KNOX, MR. & MRS. JOE GRIER, WILSON POTTS & FAMILY, USHER BOARD, GOODNEIGHBOR'S CLUB, MR. & MRS. HENRY WATTS, LAYFETTE POTTS, MR. & MRS. JOHN BRICE, R. E. CUTHBERTSON.

THE STEWARD BOARD



The Steward Board of Torrence Chapel Church was organized at the beginning of the church with a number of old members serving on the Steward Board as well as the Trustee Board.

Some of the first Stewards were Jack Glaspie, Aaron Burton, Alex Pickens, Julius Reid, I. A. Withers, Graham Patterson, Charlie Torrence, and Jordan Withers all deceased.

The Stewards who have served for the past twenty years are still active, namely, John Heath, John Brice, C. C. Cornelius and Ferman. James Derr, now retired, served as chairman of this board for a number of years. Ozon Brice served as chairman for a year and our present chairman, James Reid has served for the past two years. Present officers are: Assistant ceairman, Ferman Hill; Secretary, Margaret Howard; Treas. Cleo Montieth; Home Treas. Thomas Howard; other members are: C. W. Howard, James Ried, Jr., Gerald Potts and Ozon Brice.

THE STEWARDESS BOARD # 1



The Stewardess Board # 1 organized under the pastorate of the late Rev. H. H. Jackson in 1911 with the late Mrs. Liza Stinson as president serving forty years. Mrs. Bessie Bush served seven years and Mrs. Lucy Patterson served until her death. Mrs. Mary Stinson and Mrs. Annie Work became chairman, Mrs. Works is still serving. These leaders and members have contributed to the church spiritually, financially and materially.

STEWARDESS BOARD # 2



Present officers of Stewardess Board # 2 are: Mrs. Henrietta Works serving as president of board; Secretary, Mrs. Estelle Withers; Treasurer, Mrs. Susie Cuthbertson, and a membership of eleven.

We have worked diligently each year to provide for our Minister and Church. Our last gift for the pastor was a robe; for the church we furnished an area for the comfort of mothers and their babies.

CONFERENCE WORKERS



The Conference Workers have worked faithfully this year for the support of the District and Annual Conferences.

Some of our past Conference Workers are: Mrs. Henrietta Works, Mrs. Jennie Patterson, Mrs. Geneva Black and Mrs. Essie Davis. The present Conference Workers are: Mrs. Susan Brice who has served for a number of years, Mrs. Elsie M. Sherrill, Mrs. Theolia Davis and Mrs. Theretha Torrence.

CLASS LEADERS

Class Leaders were organized into a working body along with the development of the church. Among the first leaders were Rufus Potts, L. Potts, Green Grier, Sam Stinson, Wm. Works, David Reid, Towy Withers, Louise Reid, Maggie Reid all deceased. Other leaders that served in the past are Frances Reid and Bertha Jones. Present Leaders for more than twenty years are: John Brice, Geneva Black and Maccine Cornelius. Other Leaders are James Reid, R. A. Works, Ozon Brice, Susan Brice, Catherine Works, Susie Cuthbertson and Henrietta Works.

THE SENIOR CHOIR



The Senior Choir was organized in 1885. Monroe Johnson was first Chorister. A number of choristers and presidents have served. 1890 to 1900 John Johnson, 1910 to 1918 J. A. Dean, Chorister and I. A. Withers was president. 1918 to 1933 Mrs. Susan Brice, Chorister and Gospie Burton, president. 1933 to 1935 R. C. Jones, chorister; 1935 to 1968 Towy Withers, deceased served as president.

Our present members are: President, Ozon Brice, Chorister, Susan Brice who has served for many years, Secretary, Mrs. Henrietta Works and Treasurer, John Heath. Members are Mrs. Theolia Davis, Mrs. Geneva Black, Mrs. Hazeline Knox, Mrs. Lillian McNeely, John Heath, Mrs. Estelle Withers, Mrs. Henrietta Works, Mrs. Jannie Patterson, Mrs. Jennie V. Brice, Mrs. Girlee Brice, Samuel Knox, Mac Brice, Wm. Barringer, R. E. Cuthbertson. Mrs. Lilly Caldwell is the Pianist.

THE GOSPEL CHOIR



A group of singers known as the "Junior Travelers" was organized in 1949 under the direction of Mrs. Susan Brice, and Alexander Davis was Pianist. This group of singers along with others were organized into a Junior Church Choir under the direction of Mrs. Bobbie Potts. The Pianists for these groups were Mrs. Erma Black, Mrs. Lillie Von Caldwell and Ronald Potts. In February 1970 our Gospel Chorus was organized with Mrs. Lottie Street, Directress, Mrs. Eudean Knox, president, Mrs. Erma Black and Mr. Charles Redfern Pianists.

THE JUNIOR CHURCH



Mrs. Bertha Jones, the first supervisor of the Junior Church served for many years. Other persons who have served as leader of the Junior Church are: Mrs. Margaret Howard, Mrs. Mazella Forney, Mrs. Eudean Knox, and Mrs. Mary Frances Kerns. Mrs. Lottie Street is our present leader with Mrs. Mazella Forney as assistant. These leaders have worked faithfully through the years and have seen the fruits of their labor through the leadership of our young adults today. The following youth have served on the District Youth Council: Cathy Potts, Secretary, Miss Betty Dixon, president 1969-70, Miss Carol Work, Assistant Treasurer 1969-70.

GOODNEIGHBOR'S CLUB



The Goodneighbor's Club has contributed much to the support of the church namely: helped equip office, purchased pew and window for the church.

This board consists of twenty members. The present officers are President, Mrs. Isadore Davis; Secretary, Mrs. Pasny Derr; Treasurer, Mrs. Bunie Heath. Members are: Mrs. Sudie Cornelius, Mrs. Sudie Johnson, Mrs. Elsie M. Sherril, Mrs. Lillie M. Torrence, Mr. & Mrs. C. C. Cornelius, Misses Lura & Hattie Potts, Mrs. Nora Caldwell, Mr. & Mrs. James Derr, John Heath, Mr. & Mrs. Mac. Brice, Mrs. Estelle Withers, Mrs. Geneva Black and Mrs. Agnes Potts.

Our Aim: To help the people of the Community as well as our Church.

THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



The Christian Education Department was organized in 1968 under the leadership of Rev. J. N. Torrence. The first officers were President, Samuel Knox; Vice-president, Mrs. Bobbie Potts; Secretary, Mrs. Eudean Knox; and Treasurer Willie Torrence. Present officers are: President, Mrs. Eva Ried; Vice-president, Mrs. Lottie Street; Secretary, Mrs. M. Howard; Assistant Sec., Mrs. Bobbie Potts and Augusta Works, Treasurer. This department tried as much as possible to plan program to meet the economic, physical, educational, social and spiritual interest and needs of the church. We have contributed considerably to the financial support of the Church School.

In the years 1969 and 1970 our group sponsored the "Mother of the Year" program at Torrence Chapel. Mrs. Sarah Gaston and Mrs. Isadore Anderson were crowned for the respective years. Also during the same years, Easter Sunrise Services were held. All of the projects that we have undertaken have been successful for our Church.



USHER BOARD



The Usher Board was organized under the leadership of Rev. D. L. Blakey. It was composed of twenty members: President, Bobbie Potts, Vice-president, Muriel Ried, Secretary, Frances Ried, Treasurer, Willie Torrence. Five of these members are active, Bobbie Potts, Essie Davis, Louise Anderson, Willie Torrence and Wilson Potts. The present officers are: President, Bobbie Potts, vice president, Margaret Howard, Secretary, Annie Gaston, Assistant secretary, Carrie Howard, Treasurer, C. W. Howard. We have (36) thirty-six members on roll.

By the Grace of God we have accomplished all of our achievements. Through the years we have made a number of donations to the Trustee Board and Building Fund, sponsored pews, purchased hymnals, Holy Bible, Cross and Candle Holders, Church Window, speaker stand and install Church Bulletin Board.

We do not mention these gifts to receive praise, but that others might be inspired to do greater things. Thank God for the years that we have served, and may He crown our efforts with success.

OUR MOTTO

"Together we stand; divided, we fall."

FAMILIES WHO PURCHASED PEWS

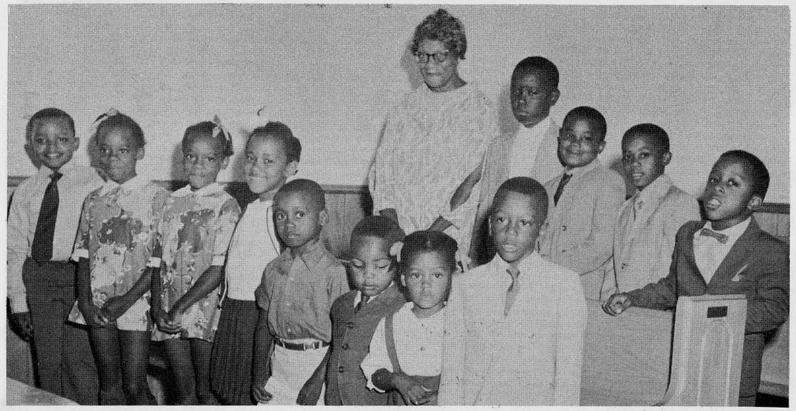
MACK BRICE & PEARL McCLINTON, TOWY & ESTELLE WITHERS, WILSON & GENEVA BLACK, BUSH FAMILY, GOODNEIGHBOR'S CLUB, HUBERT BRICE FAMILY & OZON BRICE FAMILY, MARGARET McNEELY & JAMES TORRENCE, BARRINGER FAMILY, ED. & SARAH BLACK, GERALD POTTS & FAMILY, STINSON & GRIER FAMILY, HONOR OF JOHN & SUSAN BRICE, GASTON FAMILY, WILSON POTTS FAMILY, MR. & MRS. CLARENCE KNOX & FAMILY, MEMORY OF W. M. WORKS & FAMILY, REID FAMILY, JOHN & PORTIA LOWE, HONOR OF JOHNNIE HEATH, STROLLER SINGERS, USHER BOARD.



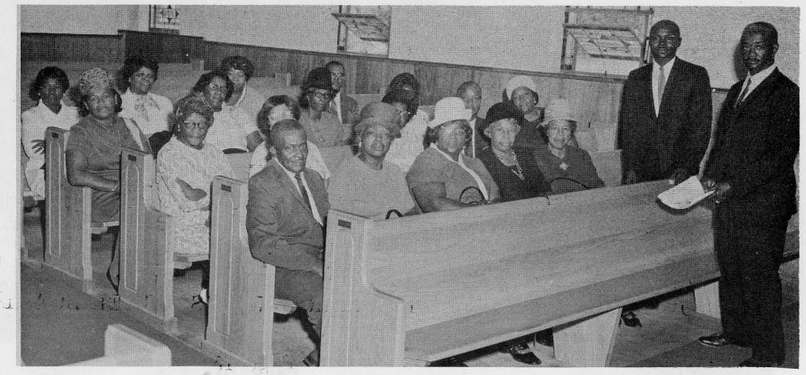
INTERMEDIATE
SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS



JUNIOR
SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS



BEGINNERS
SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS



ADULT
SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

DEACONESS BOARD



The original Deaconess Board was organized under the Leadership of Rev. D. L. Blakey, it was composed of seven faithful members from middle age to older; Mrs. Maggie Ried, Mrs. Lucy Patterson, Mrs. Lettia Black, Mrs. Cora Robinson (all deceased), Mrs. Agnes Potts and Mrs. Maccie Cornelius.

The present members are: President, Mrs. Girlee Brice (inset); Mrs. Maccie Cornelius, Mrs. Sarah Gaston, Mrs. Bunie Heath, Mrs. Louise Anderson, Miss Catherine Works, Mrs. Agnes Potts and Mrs. Mattie Ried.

These ladies serve faithfully & loyally each 1st. Sunday of the Months.

Left to right in photo above: Rev. J. N. Torrence, Miss Catherine Works, Mrs. Louise Anderson, Mrs. Mattie Reid and James Reid.

THE OLDEST COUPLE



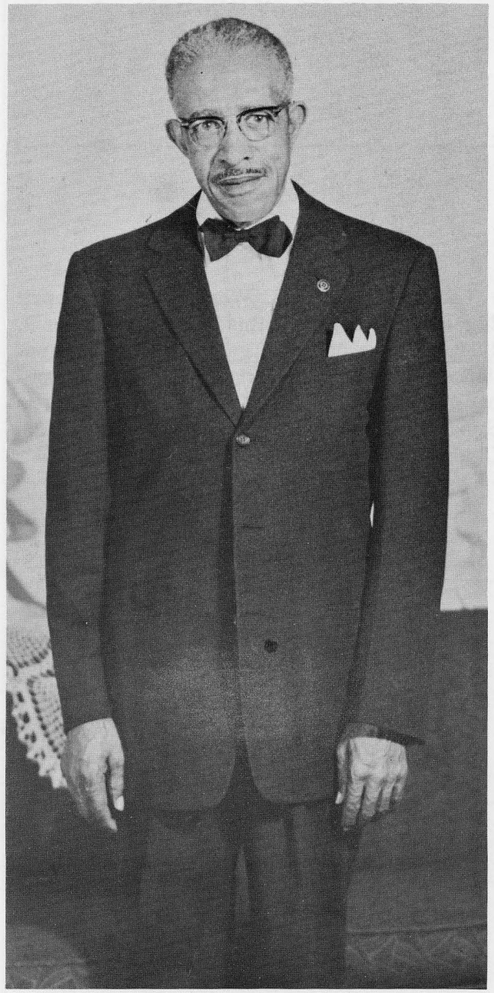
Mr. and Mrs. John Brice who have celebrated their Golden Anniversary is our oldest married couple of this church and two of our best workers.

Mrs. Susan Brice has held the following offices: President of the Stewardess Board No. 3 since 1933, Conference worker for 25 years, Class Leader for a number of years, Choister and member of the Senior Choir, also organizer of The Junior Traverlers in 1949.

Mr. John Brice with his dynamic spiritual leadership has been a tower of strength to the church and to his many friends and family. He is the oldest Trustee, Class Leader, Stewart, member of the Senior Choir and Church Custodian.

Congratulations are extended to Mr. and Mrs. Brice from the Pastor and members of the church.

MEMORIALS



Towy Withers deceased at age 72 was devoted to his church, family and community. Towy was a respected Class Leader for a number of years when 19 members chose him to lead them. Towy was a member of the Trustee Board, Chairman of the Graveyard Committee, and President of the Senior Choir. Towy lived the life that speaks Christianity. Towy retired from Davidson College after 35 years of service.

"Because there is a God
We'll always have a smile
And somehow we'll find a way
To make each day worthwhile."

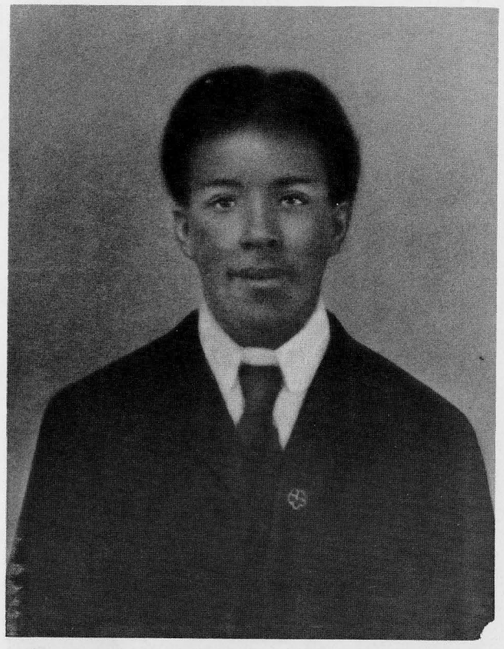
Estelle Withers,
Loving Wife



James Patrick Torrence served as a loyal and faithful president of the Usher Board for many years, beginning in 1932.

In Memory of our Loved One.
The Torrence Family

MEMORIAL



The late William S. Work was born April 28, 1888 and departed this life on December 9, 1960. He was one who gave his time and patience unselfishly and served as a faifthul member of Torrence Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church as Superintendent of the Sunday School and Chairman of the Trustee Board.

The Work Family

MEMORIAL

In loving Memory of our loved Ones.

Mr. & Mrs. David Reid, Mrs. Cassie B. Stewart, Mr. Clayton Reid, Mrs. Iris Reid, Mrs. Lillie W. Grier.

"Gone and forgotten by some, you may be
But dear to our memory, you ever will be."

The Reid Family

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AUTOGRAPHS

My Dear Ron,

I hope you receive this book, and that it will provide you with many happy memories of the years you served in your Church and may it bring you happy reading + looking, at faces you know and love. Until you return to take up your post - if not in this Church - in someones Church - doesn't matter - because as I have said in my letters to you "God is everywhere" Don't forget that ever - and may he keep you safe until you return to us.

Love, Mom

Congratulations to

Torrence Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church

101 Years of Service to Mankind

REEVES BROTHERS, Inc.

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