

# Jeanie's Corner

Since the last newsletter, we have received the following collections:

July Mullis Farrell and her family shared the collection of their father, William Mullis, who together with Louis Ambos, founded Tradewinds. He also founded and owned Neptunalia Restaurant, Neptunalia Seafood Company and Gold King Frozen Foods. Mr. Mullis was known as "the father of frozen breaded shrimp." His story along with pictures and newspaper clippings are included in this large and interesting collection.



Yvonne and Mike Feltovic brought in their huge collection of Thunderbolt pictures and newspaper clippings and memorabilia. There are pictures of the Little League teams, parades, the Blessing of the Fleet, the Fire Department, the Police Department and many more.

Warren Mathieu brought in a picture of his 1951-1952 sixth grade class at Thunderbolt Elementary School.

Mary Jane McCane sent more pictures of the 1956 victory banquet for the Shrimpers Little League team taken at Neptunalia. We now have an album for these little winners.

A photograph of a Lutheran Church gathering in front of the City Hall circa 1955 in which the only person identified in this picture is Rev. Shealy. We could use some help on identifying the others.

Frank Tilton, a friend and former classmate of mine from Thunderbolt Elementary, shared some pictures of his family when they lived in Thunderbolt. He promises to bring more the next time he comes to Savannah!

Van Hettinger of Englewood, Colorado sent a CD with beautiful color photographs of the 1956 Centennial Parade.

Mary Barrowman brought the museum two shoe boxes full of pictures. I'm working on this collection now. Myrtice Lewis donated a photograph of her father's business B.J. James Variety Store which was taken circa 1950.



# The Thunderbolt Time Capsule



December, 2009

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## Grounded in History Central Missionary Baptist Church

By Luciana M. Spracher, Bricks and Bones Historical Research

This coming January, Central Missionary Baptist Church, on Shell Road, will celebrate its 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Originally a branch of First African Baptist Church of Savannah, Central split from its mother church on January 3, 1900 as Thunderbolt First African Baptist Church. Led by Reverend William Dunn, the organizing members included Eliza Batiste, Joseph Bennett, Amanda Campbell, Father John Hopkins, Minnie Houston, Jacob Johnson, Joseph Johnson, Martha Mancrum, Felix McIntosh, Georgia Pray, Cornelia Rivers, Mary Washington, Carolyn Wright, Lucy A. Wyatt, and Jack Young. Jacob Johnson and Felix McIntosh were ordained as the first deacons, and John McIntosh was Dunn's first candidate for baptism.

After four years, Rev. Dunn was succeeded by Reverend R. H. Thomas. During his tenure of seven years, the rostrum was remodeled and extended across the entire church (the original church was built by the members location in the community.

Under the third pastor, Reverend Dan D. Mills, electric lights were installed in the church during the mid-1910s. Mills was followed by Reverend Albert W. Wilder, who served for almost ten years during which an annex was built on the rear of the church and a vestibule was constructed. Following Wilder's death, Reverend G. W. Jones and Reverend I. Riley led the church. In 1932, Reverend H. S. Stone was called to pastor. During Stone's service, the church belfry was remodeled.

Following Stone's resignation in 1939, Reverend J. J. Dinkins served briefly before Reverend L. L. Smalls was called to pastor in 1940. Smalls served for six years, during which time he baptized members in the Wilmington River. Reverend Smalls resigned in 1946, but was recalled in 1949. While he was gone, the church members filled in the ditch in front of the church and purchased the property adjoining the church on the west side.

## Grounded in History Continued.... Central Missionary Baptist Church

After Smalls' return, the church underwent several improvements, including painting of the church floor, remodeling the choir stand, and installing modern restrooms.

In 1955, Reverend James E. Bailey was called to pastor. During his service, Bailey received twenty-nine by Christian experience and baptized fifty-six candidates.

A Junior Choir was organized and extensive improvements to the church property continued with the addition of a Pastor's Study, ladies lounge, new roof, and two new pianos. Oscar Greene and his family donated the kitchen sink in memory of Deacon Eddie Green, while Earl J. Toomer donated two fans in remembrance of Sister Agnes Washington.

After eleven years, Reverend Bailey resigned in 1966. Assistant Pastor Reverend Carl James Faison was called up to serve as pastor. Faison served as Central's pastor for the next twenty-three years

During that time, the church purchased sixty chairs for the choir stand, remodeled the exterior of the church by covering the original wood cladding with brick, installed a new roof, added central heat and air, and put stained glass windows in the sanctuary. Reverend and Sister Faison also donated a sterling silver drinking set for the pulpit. Following Faison's death in 1990, the members hung portraits of Rev-



In December 1990, Reverend Wilson Scott, Jr. was called as Central's pastor. Under Scott's leadership the church rejoined the

Berean Association and established a Junior Deacons ministry. A street sign was installed directing visitors to the church and Central's plumbing lines were connected to the Thunderbolt sewer system. A new Fellowship Hall was completed and dedicated in honor of Deacon Cleveland L. Lewis. Minor improvements to the church helped modernize it, including a new

sound system, fire extinguishers, and a handicap ramp. The property to the west of the church was paved with a driveway and parking lot, and fenced in.

Following Reverend Scott's resignation in 1999, Reverend Timothy M. Sheppard, formerly of Thankful Baptist Church, accepted the call as Central's thirteenth and current pastor. Sheppard added Primary and Youth & Young Adult sections to the Bible Study classes. A new computer system was purchased, and water coolers added in the annex and foyer. In July 2002, Central hosted the Berean Congress of Christian Education.

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## Central Missionary Conclusion

Fifty new bibles were donated by a church member, and fifty hymnals were purchased by the church. Under Sheppard, Central continued to be active in the community, holding its first Christmas Musical and Community Memorial Day Picnic, as well as participating each year in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Parade.

Among the greatest recent accomplishments of Central has been the addition of a Family and Community Center. In July 2007, the church held a groundbreaking ceremony for the annex including classrooms, a pastor's study, clerical office, and a dining area capable of seating over two-hundred people. The Youth Department raised over \$5,000 to assist in the construction. The new addition enabled the church to hold its first ten-week Summer Camp in 2008.

During its 110 years, Central has grown and evolved with its congregation. Today it has almost two-hundred members, ranging from toddlers to Mother Maggie Houston Baker, the church's oldest member who just celebrated her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday in September. Central is thriving with a fifty member choir and six Sunday School classes. The church continues to work with its sister churches, Wilmington Missionary Baptist, Litway Baptist, College Park Baptist, and First African Baptist of East Savannah, to pool resources and expand their efforts in the community. Central Missionary Baptist Church has a bright future as it looks forward to the next 110 years.

## We Need Your Help

In 1956 and early 1957, "The Thunderbolt", a local newspaper was printed. The owner and editor was Robert C. Beville. The Museum has some editions, but we are missing many. If anyone has these, please contact the museum to help us complete this "Mayberry USA" type collection. We can make a copy of it, and then return the original to you, unless you would like to donate it.

Remember the huge anchor that sat in the median of Victory Drive at the foot of the Thunderbolt Bridge? We need pictures of it while it rested there in the median. We have the pictures of the huge anchor being brought in on a shrimp boat and a newspaper article of its being moved when the new bridge was built, but we don't have any pictures of it prior to it being moved. Please let us copy your pictures.

We have assembled all of the Blessing of the Fleet programs into one collection and find that we are missing the following issues:

1952 to 1963  
1970, 1971, 1985 and 1991

Please check to see if you have any of these so that we can complete this historic collection.