

## **Shiloh's Historic Sanctuary**

### **Dedication Week of Shiloh's Historic Sanctuary**

The Annual Trustee Day in 1983 honored the original trustees of Shiloh Baptist Church with this very fitting commendation:

"Seven men along with other determined Christians pooled their resources and purchased the land on which this building (the historic sanctuary at 1401 Duke Street) now stands. To us today, this appears as a very small accomplishment because of the cost (\$8,000) but realizing the fact that at that time, many of the members of the Mission Baptist Church (as Shiloh was known at that time) earned less than 50 cents a day, for a workday that lasted from sun up to sundown. When the land was purchased, a trustee had to hold title to the property in the city or have equity in the property to assure the seller that the land would be paid for. Those seven men – Thomas H. Ball, Isaac Carter, Milrod Mallory, Jerry B. Payne, Ruben Redd, Silas White, and William Diggs, Chairman – with faith in a living God and determination to erect a building dedicated to Christ, inspired all the members of the Mission to work together so their dream could be realized. It was, during their lifetime."

### **Record of the Opening Day**

The new Shiloh Colored Baptist Church was dedicated on Sunday, October 22, 1893, in the presence of a large assemblage. There were at least 1,500 persons present, among them many white citizens of Alexandria, who had contributed to the erection of the Church, and for whom seats were reserved on the right of the pulpit. The cornerstone was laid with imposing Masonic ceremonies on August 1, 1891. The building was completed on October 1, 1893. The church was built of ornamental pressed brick. It occupies a space of 45 feet by 70 feet. It fronts the south and is situated at the corner of Duke and West streets.

The interior of the church is magnificent. The ceiling is of tessellated iron composition, beautifully painted. In the center of the ceiling swings a large reflector, resplendent with glass prisms, spreading a beautiful light over the auditorium. The walls are frescoed. The color of the whole room is of a light hue. The church has a seating capacity of 900 persons. The pews are of the most modern style and are arranged in circular form. The gallery is located in the south end of the church and affords a clear view of the whole room below.

The lecture room is in keeping with the audience room. In the rear of the lecture room are located reception rooms and a pastor's study, which communicated with the pulpit. Furnaces heat the church. In the southwest (southeast) corner of the structure arises a great tower, which affords a view of the whole city. A large bell will call the people to the House of God. Shiloh is the only colored church with such a bell. The eight large memorial windows of the church are of beautifully stained glass and were donated to the church by the following: Fern Leaf Club; Lily of the Valley Club; Rose of Sharon Club; Robert Quander and family; the Samaritan Club of Shiloh; Manhattan Fountain, No. 157; Banneker Fountain No \_\_\_ of True Reformers; and Willing Workers Club.

### **Opening Day Timeline**

- The dedication service began at 11:00 AM, conducted by the pastor, Rev. Henry H. Warring. Rev. S. W. Madden, Alfred Street Baptist Church, gave the prayer, and Rev. James H. Lee, Third Baptist Church of Washington, D.C., preached the dedicatory sermon. Roberts Chapel M.E. Church choir rendered the music.

- At the 3:00 PM service, Rev. Fields Cook, Ebenezer Baptist, and Rev. S.M. Johnson, Zion Baptist, joined Rev. Warring as they listened to a sermon by Rev. Dr. G.W.P. King, the President of Wayland Seminary. There was music by Alfred Street Baptist.
- The preacher at the third service of the day was Rev. Daniel Morris, Beulah Baptist Church, and Shiloh's choir presented the music.
- The church was crowded for the three previous Sunday services, but long before the hour for opening the Monday night service, the church began to fill, and by 7:30 PM, there was standing room only. The choir did a mini-concert, and Mrs. Julia Waugh Mason-Layton of Washington delivered an address on the life of Rev. Leland Warring.

### **Shiloh Baptist Church Art & Industrial Fair**

One of the celebration's highlights took place the following Monday evening, October 30, 1893 – the opening of the Shiloh Baptist Church Art and Industrial Fair. The beautifully decorated lecture room (our Fellowship Hall) was filled magnificently with more than 300 exhibits from Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, New York, and many other places, showing the skill and progress of the colored American in all branches of trade and art. The Art Gallery was fitted with a splendid collection of portraits, including many Alexandria people. The evening was interspersed with speeches and excellent vocal and instrumental music.

The building and dedicatory exercises (services) of New Shiloh, the concert exercises, the eloquent speeches, and the great fair will ever remain in the historical memory as one of the greatest events of Alexandria.