

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Mallalieu United Methodist Church and Parsonage (formerly First Ward Methodist Episcopal Church)

Owner: Mallalieu United Methodist Church

APPLICANT: Mallalieu United Methodist Church, Stephen Williams

LOCATION: 1918-1920 Hickory Street – First Ward

HEARING NOTICE: Apr-22-2003

AGENDA ITEM: I

HPO FILE NO.: 03L107

DATE ACCEPTED: Apr-01-2003

HAHC HEARING: May-22-2003

PC HEARING: Jun-12-03

SITE INFORMATION

Lot 6 and 7, Block 268, W. R. Baker Addition, NSBB, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The buildings on the site include a one-story, wood-frame church building (1918 Hickory) and a one-story, wood-frame parsonage (1920 Hickory).

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

The present wood-frame church building, known as Mallalieu United Methodist Church, was built in 1926. The church was originally called First Ward Methodist Episcopal (M. E.) Church, being established in the First Ward on June 23, 1885. In 1900 the church was renamed Mallalieu Episcopal Church in honor of Bishop Willard Francis Mallalieu, who served as Bishop of New Orleans. The building was reconstructed after being destroyed during the 1900 Galveston Hurricane that damaged much of Houston as well. The church was deemed a “colored denomination” of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1915. When the building became too small for the growing number of worshippers, it was replaced in 1926 with the present building. It is interesting that most of the building materials for the construction of the new church came from Camp Logan. Camp Logan, a large U.S. Army training facility during World War I, was located in present-day Memorial Park. When the camp was eventually closed, some of the buildings were relocated to adjacent neighborhoods while others were dismantled and the building materials were used in construction elsewhere, including at Mallalieu Church. The church building and parsonage are significant because they house one of the earliest Methodist Episcopal Church congregations for Blacks in Houston. Also the church building is significant because of its unique design, being constructed in the shape of a plus “+” sign with the flat-roofed bell and pedestrian entry tower being situated at its southwest corner.

Mallalieu United Methodist Church is located in the First Ward, one of the four original wards created in 1840 (ending in 1912) by the City of Houston to manage municipal representation. According to the 1870 Census 488 whites, mostly Italians, and 250 African-Americans were living in First Ward, that number being the smallest Black population of any of the wards. It is located in a neighborhood that contains a large concentration of mid to late-19th century buildings and some early 20th century buildings. Most of the houses in the area are modest, one-story frame cottages. However, there are a few large Victorian-era homes found also in the neighborhood as well as some early 20th century commercial buildings fronting Houston Avenue. As the 20th century progressed, new housing reflected changes in architectural styles. Bungalows were built among the Victorian-era homes, but the essential character of the neighborhood did not change. During World War II, many of the houses were converted from family ownership to mostly tenant rentals, resulting in high absentee land ownership and decline in maintenance. Today, there is an apparent interest in the restoration of these homes once again to single-family ownership.

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There are two divisions of Black congregations of the Methodist Church. The first division includes the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) and Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (CME). The second includes the Methodist Episcopal Church where their congregations are Black.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) grew out of a protest by Richard Allen against racial discrimination in St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, in 1787. Rather than suffer indignities in that white-controlled church, Allen formed a separate black congregation. In 1816 he organized several black Methodist congregations into a new denomination called the African Methodist Episcopal Church. In the tense times leading to the Civil War, the AME Church was not permitted to operate in Texas, or in most other parts of the slaveholding South.

The Methodist Church reported approximately 7,500 black congregants in 1860, the largest number of recorded members of any other communion. After the Civil War, most Black churchgoers became Baptist. Northern whites controlled the Methodist Episcopal Church and aggressively and successfully pursued Black members.

The first African Methodist Episcopal Church missionary in Texas, M. M. Clark, arrived in Galveston in 1866, after the surrender of the Confederacy and the end of slavery. Like African Methodist missionaries elsewhere in the former slave states, Clark wanted to organize black Methodists. Although Texas had had no AME congregations previously, many black Methodists had worshipped in the Methodist churches of their masters. Clark intended to bring them into the AME Church and to recruit others to Methodism. The congregations he and other missionaries organized were originally supervised by Bishop Jabez P. Campbell from New Orleans. Through its relationship with the Freeman's Bureau, however, the Methodist Episcopal Church was able to secure ownership of church buildings, a valuable asset in the Methodist competition for Black adherents who owned little property.

A meeting to organize an annual conference of the AME Church in Texas took place in Galveston, probably in 1867. (Administrative and doctrinal matters for the church as a whole are attended to in general conferences held every four years. Annual conferences handle church affairs within states.) Another conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church leaders met at Trinity Church in Houston in 1867 and organized the Texas Conference. On October 22, 1868, the first AME Texas conference met in Galveston, presided over by Bishop James A. Shorter. Among those present were the early leaders of African Methodism in Texas, Houston Reedy, Steven Patton, Emmanuel Hammitt, and Johnson Reed. The conference claimed 3,000 members and probationers that year, and membership grew steadily though not spectacularly afterward. By 1871 the Conference claimed 7,934 Black members and fifty-one ministers.

In many ways the churches aided the former slaves' social progress. During the years immediately after emancipation, Black Texans sought to satisfy their hunger for education. Many churches conducted their own schools, both Sunday schools and secular schools, for the benefit of children as well as adults. At a time when business opportunities for African-Americans were still limited, the churches also taught their members how to raise and sometimes how to manage money. The Texas Conference of the AME Church founded Paul Quinn College in the Metropolitan AME Church in Austin in 1872. The school was later moved to Waco. In addition to its religious functions, the African Methodist Church has helped blacks maintain a sense of community and provided them with a place to express their demands for civil rights. The West Texas Conference was organized in 1875 and the Central Texas Conference was organized in 1883.

African-American churches in Texas grew steadily through the late 19th and early 20th centuries. When the census bureau counted churches in 1890, the Baptist state convention tallied 111,138. The African Methodist Episcopal Church showed 23,392 members and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church had 6,927. The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church with 14,895 adherents in 1890, was the third largest Black church in the state. From the 1890s through the early decades of the 20th century, increasing numbers of Blacks abandoned farm tenancy for jobs and new lives in the city where they experienced urban churches where pastors were college or seminary trained.

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First Ward Methodist Episcopal Church (not affiliated with the AME or CME Church, but a white congregation) was established in Houston in the First Ward on June 23, 1885. Their first pastor, Reverend I. D. Rose, was assigned to the church during the Conference of November 26, 1885 held in Houston by Bishop R. S. Foster. Reverend C. C. Minnegan served as secretary. The church purchased a lot in First Ward soon after the conference according to a deed filed in 1886. In the early years of the Methodist Episcopal Texas Conference most member churches were located within a triangle formed by Galveston, Bryan, and San Antonio. By 1890 Methodist Episcopal membership in Texas had reached 23,000, and the church had four conferences.

In 1900 First Ward Methodist Episcopal changed its name to Mallalieu Episcopal Church, and Reverend J. T. Lindsay was its first pastor. The church was renamed in honor of Bishop Willard Francis Mallalieu (1828-1911), who served nine years as Bishop in New Orleans before retiring in 1904. During the 1900 Hurricane that struck Galveston and Houston, the church building was destroyed. After the conference met in Marshall, Texas it was decided to rebuild Mallalieu.

Bishop Mallalieu was born in Sutton, Worchester County, Massachusetts on December 11, 1828. He graduated from Wesleyan University in 1857. He received the Methodist Episcopal Church and joined in the New England Conference in 1858. He received his D. D. from East Tennessee Wesleyan University in Athens. In 1882 he was the presiding elder in the Boston District. He was elected Bishop in 1884, and was the Presiding Bishop of the Texas Conference in 1897 and 1902, retiring soon thereafter in 1904. With more than 20 years of service, he was a highly esteemed pastor and preacher.

The pastors of Mallalieu who followed Reverend Lindsay were: Rev. S. W. Johnson, S. A. Pryor, Louis H. Barnett, J. F. Barnes. According to *The Red Book*, page 120 Mallalieu Church was first listed as a Black congregation with R. H. Warren as Pastor in 1915. The church was listed as "Colored" under the name Mallalieu Chapel M. E. (Methodist Episcopal) Church. Pastor Warren was followed by F. T. Lee and Reverend Wardoff.

During World War I, the church served the members and people of the First Ward through those trying times. In 1924 the Conference sent Rev. F. D. Mayes to Mallalieu and immediate plans began to build a new church building. Rev. Mayes served as pastor from 1924 to 1927.

By 1926 the Methodist Episcopal Conference had reached 34,000 members, ranking second to Baptists among Black churchgoers. In that year they held nine conferences. Also in that year, the present day chapel of Mallalieu was built in 1926 under the guidance of the trustees, including Gilbert Hicks, George Archer, L. J. Ambrister, Willis Luster, A. A. Smith, Eli Wilson and Carrie Teague. On March 9, 1926 the church took out three loans totaling \$3,900 from the Jones Lumber Company, Houston, to pay for the construction costs. It is interesting that most of the building materials for the construction of the new church came from Camp Logan. Camp Logan, a large U.S. Army training facility during World War I, was located in present-day Memorial Park. When the camp was eventually closed, some of the buildings were relocated to adjacent neighborhoods while others were dismantled and the building materials were used in construction elsewhere, including at Mallalieu Church. According to personal interviews, lumber and other supplies were hauled away from Camp Logan in mule drawn wagons to the site of the new church to be built at 1918 Hickory. After construction, Mallalieu M. E. Church was listed in the 1926 Houston City Directory under "colored" denominations, with its Pastor Rev. F. D. Mayes residing next door at 1920 Hickory Street, the current parsonage.

Camp Logan was created initially as an emergency U. S. Army training center in World War I. The site was originally a National Guard camp just beyond the western city limits of Houston. Construction of the center began on July 24, 1917. In the Houston Race Riot of 1917, some of the Black soldiers quartered at Camp Logan had a confrontation with Houston Police resulting in a riot on August 23 and the declaration of martial law in Houston. Later, the camp was used for hospitalization of wounded men in 1918. At the close of the war the site, including more than 1,000 acres, was acquired by William C. Hogg and his brother, Mike, who donated it to the City of Houston. Today, the site is known as Memorial Park, the city's largest recreational area.

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Mallalieu Chapel was constructed on a raised, brick pier and beam foundation and was constructed and clad with wood, 117 siding (teardrop). Its design is in the form of a plus “+” sign with four gable roofs facing each direction (north, south, east and west) intersecting in the center. A large wooden bell and pedestrian entry tower, with a flat roof, was constructed at the southwest corner of the church. The church was built to seat 100 people (sanctuary running north to south) with the pulpit, choir loft and pastor’s study placed at the north end. The construction was done by the trustees under the design and coordination of Gilbert Hicks, a trustee and teamster, who worked at the Houston and Texas Central Railroad. Mr. Hicks was a resident of First Ward and lived on Summer Street. He was instrumental in providing many jobs for minority laborers in the community, through contracts with local businesses and homeowners. He learned the building trade from his father, who had worked for many Houston businessmen including Ben Riesner, whose former property is now the site for the headquarters for the Houston Police Department and Municipal Court Complex on Riesner Street.

The parsonage located to the north of the church was constructed in the Bungalow style, with its front porch partially inset under the main gable front roof. The house features unusual, double beveled clapboard wood siding and is raised upon brick piers.

The pastors following Rev. Mayes included Rev. L. B. Allen (1928-1929), Allen M. Harris (1930) and F. T. Lee (1931-1932), W. L. McDonald (1933), S. A. Jones (1934-1935) and C. T. Wardah (1936-1940).

Mallalieu Church continued to serve the members and the community throughout the years of the Great Depression, filling many voids in the lives of the families in the First Ward. In 1939 the Methodist Episcopal Church completed a long sought merger with the Methodist Episcopal Church South. At issue between groups had been the status of African-Americans. Bowing to Southerner’s demands for a segregated church, the Methodist Episcopal Church organized a separate Black organization called the Central Jurisdiction. All of the denomination’s Black conferences from every part of the country, including the Texas Conference and the West Texas Conference, were included in the Central Jurisdiction. For the first time, Blacks elected their own bishops, but they reported to the Central Jurisdiction rather than an integrated general conference. However, many remained unsatisfied with that outcome and the church lost much of its influence among Black Texans as a consequence of the merger. It was during this time in 1939 under the tenure of Rev. Wardah that Mallalieu officially became Mallalieu Methodist following the Methodist Union. In 1941 the conference sent Rev. R. H. White to Mallalieu Church where he served as pastor until 1943. Rev. White sponsored a program featuring the “Wings Over Jordan Singers” and was successful with the proceeds in paying off the remaining mortgage on the church.

Following Pastor White were: W. L. Robertson (1944-45), C. H. Peyton (1946-1947), H. J. Johnson (1948-1949), Richard H. Robinson (1950), W. L. Robertson (1951-1954), R. H. White (reappointed in 1955), Isaiah Davis (1956-58), George Brannon (1959-63) and C. J. Mayberry (1964-68). In 1968, amid the civil rights movement, the conference abandoned the detested Central Jurisdiction (created in 1939) while meeting in Dallas, and the Conference joined with two other Methodist organizations to form the United Methodist Church and did away with its policy of racial segregation. Moreover the church responded to demands from the Blacks for hymnals and instructional materials that included Black contributions to focus on issues related to African-American history and culture.

Rev. Mayberry was followed by Rev. Samuel Jenkins who served in 1969. In 1970 Rev. F. W. Logan was sent to Mallalieu by the Conference. Rev. Logan served as pastor from 1970-1983, being the longest pastoral tenure in its history.

Rev. Logan was the nephew of Rev. Wade H. Logan, D. D., a Houston resident and one of the founders of many of the colored Episcopal churches here. His uncle had invited Rev. Logan to live in Houston and thus was influenced by his uncle to attend Wiley College in Marshall, Texas. It was there that he began his ministry and came to serve the Texas Conference as Treasurer for twenty years. After retirement Rev. Logan and his wife,

Rachel, came to Houston to serve Mallalieu where he was instrumental in creating many ministries, while educating the congregation on being members of the United Methodists. Rev. Logan died in August 1983.

Pastor Logan was followed by Rev. C. K. Hayes (1984-1986). In 1987 the Conference sent Rev. Michael Pradia to Mallalieu where he quickly began to expand the horizons of the church. Rev. Pradia is credited for the Mallalieu Shalom Zone Ministry, which continues today to bring health care to the community at no cost. During his tenure, the parsonage was rehabilitated and converted to a multi-purpose center to serve many of the church ministries, especially that of the children. In 1997 the adjacent lots to the south were purchased for a parking lot and children's playground. Rev. Pradia assisted local law enforcement in reclaiming City of Houston Summer Street Park away from drug and gang activity. He helped Mallalieu in partnership with other churches in the conference to start a program to feed and clothe the homeless during Thanksgiving and Christmas. He also organized the collection and donating of toys, clothing and school supplies, and health fairs and tutoring for the children of the community. Today, his Friday Night Kids Program is well known throughout the Conference. Rev. Pradia has received many letters of appreciation from local dignitaries, including Mayor Katherine Whitmire, who proclaimed Sunday, November 12, 1989 as Mallalieu United Methodist Church 104th Anniversary Celebration Day. Rev. Pradia was followed by Rev. C. McCall (1999-2000).

In June 2001 the Conference assigned Rev. Edcell Blake to Mallalieu Church. Rev. Blake continues to carry on the mission of all previous pastors before him. Under his tenure, the congregation feels that the church has prospered and its future has never been brighter. Today, Mallalieu is the only remaining Methodist Church providing ministries to the Black congregation in First Ward.

RESTORATION HISTORY/CURRENT CONDITION:

Mallalieu United Methodist Church has undergone a few changes since its original construction. In the mid 1990s an enclosed, hall corridor was constructed between the church and the parsonage which is not noticeable from the street. The enclosed corridor, incorporating the rear porch of the parsonage, was constructed with wood, clapboard siding and a gable roof that connects with the church at the rear (northeast corner) and does not impact the architectural significance of either building. Also, a simple, metal 23' pyramid steeple was attached to the original, flat roofed entry tower in 1997. The steeple houses the original church bell. The original paired, wood horizontal paneled front doors have been replaced with similar paired, wood doors. A small wooden awning now shades the paired entry doors. A few of the original wood sash, double hung windows with 2/2 lights have been replaced with plate glass insets in the original window openings, although most of the original windows remain in place. The original wood, porch post support column for the parsonage porch has been replaced with another type of wood post. All of the changes that have been made to the two buildings are compatible as well as reversible and do not impact the architectural significance of the buildings.

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APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION:

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation of a Landmark.

(a) The HAHC and the commission, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the type of designation:

S NA

S - satisfies NA - not applicable

- (1) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area possesses character, interest or value as a visible reminder of the development, heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, or nation;
- (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event;
- (3) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is identified with a person who, or group or event that, contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city, state, or nation;
- (4) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city;
- (5) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in a neighborhood;
- (6) Whether the building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation;
- (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;
- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the Houston Planning Commission accept the recommendation of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and recommends landmark designation of Mallalieu United Methodist Church and Parsonage to the City Council.

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Site Location Map
Mallalieu United Methodist Church
1918 Hickory Street
Not to Scale