

ST. JOSEPH'S' MEMBERS IN HISTORIC MARCH

By Elva P. DeJarmon

Photographs by A. M. Rivera, Jr.

Members and friends of Saint Joseph's African Methodist Episcopal Church, Durham's oldest black religious facility, marched to their newly constructed church on Sunday, February 15.

With the weather cooperating and with songs of praise and thanks, the more than 400 marchers including some babies in strollers, pushed by their fathers, made the brisk walk in approximately twenty minutes. The trip had been marked off as one mile exactly.

The last meeting in the old edifice at 809 Fayetteville St., included following the ritual of the A.M.E. Church down to the prayer - with completion of the ritual and services in the new church, located at the corner of Fayetteville and Burlington Streets.

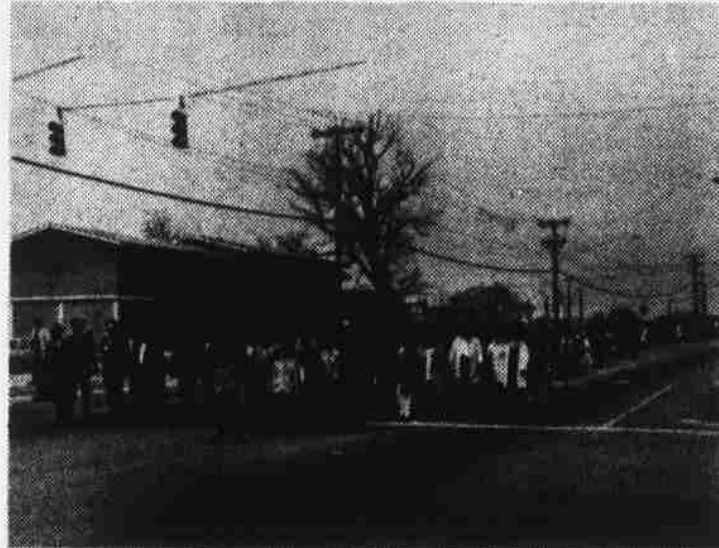
Led by Rev. Philip R. Cousin, members of his family and Rev. J. N. Sheares, the Presiding Elder, Inspirational Singers, Gospel Choir and Senior Choir, along with the Stewards, Trustees, Stewardesses and members, the group of parishioners marched down Fayetteville Street. A police escort was also provided. For those unable to make the long trek, the Emmanuel A.M.E. Church, a sister church, provided a ride. Several private cars carried those who desired a ride. Some 150 members were awaiting the processional at the new church and many visitors were in attendance. However, chairs were placed in the aisles and at other points to accommodate the overflow of members and visitors.



LAST MEETING IN OLD SANCTUARY



BEGINNING THE MARCH



THE LINE STRETCHES LONG



ALL AGES PROUDLY ON THE WAY

A beautiful portrait of Rev. Cousin, done by Miss Beverley Allen, was presented to him by her. She called it the "whole man". Miss Allen, a member of the Inspirational Singers of St. Joseph's is an Art student at North Carolina Central University. She is also the granddaughter of Mrs. Georgia Thompson.

The portrait will be hung in the entry hall of the church.

Following the inspirational sermon by Rev. Cousin, four new members affiliated with the church, thus making them a part of the history-making event.

Robert Markham, a great grandson of the founder of St. Joseph's was in attendance at

the services.

The A.M.E. Church was founded by Richard Allen in Philadelphia, Penn., in 1887 when he protested the discriminatory practices of the Methodists. Such practices included the separate seating and communion services to the blacks in attendance at the services.

St. Joseph's A.M.E. Church was founded by the Rev. Edian Markham in 1881. Following its growth and need for the larger facility, St. Joseph's edifice was built at 809 Old Fayetteville Street and has been the scene of many up-lift and progressive programs for black people. St. Joseph's Church was a sort of a casualty with the Urban Renewal program and plans were made to relocate the facility. Many citizens, both black and white, have made financial contributions to the development of St. Joseph's. Some of the stained glass windows in the old edifice carry the names of some of those families.

The new St. Joseph's facility provides seating space for 750 persons in the sanctuary, with shades of purple carpeting and lighter shades on the pews and chairs where ministry sit. Stained glass windows with a newer design adorn the sanctuary with a skylight. The other areas include meeting and educational rooms, kitchen facilities, and classroom area. A paved parking lot is also provided which will handle over 125 cars. There is space for continued development for other programs to be offered in the community.

Rev. Cousin says that "the church is new, but it will be used to enhance and bring to the community the services it may need. Churches are to be used, not only for worship programs, but for community services as well."



APPROACHING END OF MARCH



RECORDING EVENTS FOR POSTERITY



MARCHERS ENTER NEW SANCTUARY



FIRST MEMBERS IN NEW CHURCH