

Notes for Zion-Olivet Church, 134 Cannon Street, Charleston, SC

Compiled Notes

- Zion Church of Charleston
 - Founded in 1850 by Reverend John B. Adger of Second Presbyterian Church of Charleston. Enslaved people had been observing services in the galleries of the church, but Adger felt that they would receive better services on their own. Zion Church had their main building on 123 Calhoun St and their first service had about 2,500 to 3,500 people. The church mainly had black reverends and elders, though the board of trustees were made up of both black and white members (regulation at the time).
- Olivet Presbyterian Church founded in 1879. Worshipped in a small one-room frame house at 93 Beaufain St.
- 1959 - Zion and Olivet church merge mostly due to a lack of funds in the Presbyterian church system. Zion was having trouble paying their reverends and their church at 123 Calhoun was too large for their dwindling numbers. Zion Church sold their property at 123 Calhoun at this time, though the combined church continued to worship there for the following months.
- 1963 – Zion-Olivet broke ground on their new church at 134 Cannon Street.
 - The H.A. DeCosta Company was hired to construct the new church. At the time, a young architect named William J. Clement was overseeing DeCosta's new construction.
 - William J. Clement is the son of Arthur J. Clement Jr, a very prominent businessman in Charleston. It appears W.J. Clement's grandfather, A.J. Clement, was an Elder at Zion Church. William graduated from the Avery Institute in 1952 and Howard University in 1956/7. He studied engineering and architecture at Howard. He then returned to Charleston and worked for DeCosta. During the 60s, DeCosta and Clement worked on many garden apartment buildings throughout the state, as well as other churches in Charleston. In 1967 Clement was elected to the consolidated Charleston County School Board. By the 1980s Clement moved to Columbia and was an assistant director for the state Division of General Services.
- 1964 – Zion-Olivet Church completed
- H.A. DeCosta Company
 - Founded informally in 1899 by Herbert DeCosta, Jr's grandfather Benjamin DeCosta. DeCosta's father then restarted the business in 1919 after World War I. DeCosta graduated from the Avery Institute in 1940, then attended Iowa State University and graduated in 1944. He then worked for the NACA (now NASA), until 1947 when he returned to Charleston and began working for his father. He took over the business in 1960. The company was mainly focused on restoration work in Charleston, with one of their most prominent projects working with HCF for the Ansonborough Rehabilitation Project in the 60s and 70s.

Black Architecture in the U.S.

- <https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.clemson.edu/stable/pdf/1424989.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A8d99fed9d112c5b677325f40ee4f6c51>
 - In 1970, there were about 50,000 architects in the U.S. Only 2% were black (pg. 61)
 - Howard University was the first black school to have a school of architecture
- <https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.clemson.edu/stable/43875909?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=african-american&searchText=architecture&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dafrican->

[american%2Barchitecture&refreqid=search%3Ab729000d3374f22c9d1fa5e25dee4ae3&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents](#)

- o Really good article on history of black architecture
- https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.clemson.edu/stable/2999294?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=african-american&searchText=architects&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dafrican-american%2Barchitects&refreqid=search%3A87f22c7d522c81129d4573700b15a2c3&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
 - o 1990s statistics on black students in architecture. Even at that time numbers were very, very low.
- Potential book: *African American Architects in Current Practice* by Jack Travis

Herbert A. DeCosta, Jr.

- <http://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/herbert-decosta-jr>
- <http://scafricanamerican.com/honorees/herbert-a-decosta-jr/>
- <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-great-escape-from-slavery-of-ellen-and-william-craft-497960/>
 - o Article on Ellen and William Craft, DeCosta's maternal great-grandparents
- https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/all_theses/1133/
 - o MSHP thesis on DeCosta's preservation work in Charleston
 - o Mostly useful for transcript of oral history HCF conducted with DeCosta in 2003 where he mentions Billy Clement, his architect
- <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:118008>
 - o Letter from NAACP in 1988
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/news/12657F7C74E6C150?p=AMNEWS>
 - o Letter to the editor after his death
 - o <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/news/1258A559E44EF88?p=AMNEWS>
 - Another one
 - o <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/news/125BF2545E327030?p=AMNEWS>
 - And yet another one
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/news/12530A93A63E0618?p=AMNEWS>
 - o Obituary
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/news/1256AC2E96F768E8?p=AMNEWS>
 - o More complete obituary
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/news/111F21E3B856FD28?p=AMNEWS>
 - o Article about when he received the award from HCF
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/news/111F1D32B8B17938?p=AMNEWS>
 - o VERY thorough article about DeCosta from 1998 and his involvement in Spoleto
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/news/0EB5872F94F2E288?p=AMNEWS>

- o Article about when he received the Governor's Award from the Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation

Zion-Olivet Church

- <http://www.thisday.pcahistory.org/2015/05/may-26-3/>
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13CCA871AD118D5A%40EANX-1593E7145127889D%402438513-159389C28BEB5B4%4011-159389C28BEB5B4%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22zion-olivet%20church%22>
 - o Newspaper article about the new church. Lists William H. (or J) Clement as the architect
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13E3762B9393175B%40EANX-157388845C525B22%402438194-15738738837D9108%4010-15738738837D9108%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22zion-olivet%20church%22>
 - o Article about construction of the church. Was going to cost \$117,000 when construction started

Clement and DeCosta Company info

- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13CCA871AD118D5A%40EANX-159C78991CE576F1%402439670-159C75D42DCCFFFD%4011-159C75D42DCCFFFD%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22william%20j%20clement%22>
 - o Article about Clement getting appointed to the "new consolidated" school board for Charleston
 - o Also a decent photo of him in there
 - o <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13CCA871AD118D5A%40EANX-159C78976E2A54A7%402439669-159C1C1075C41E75%401-159C1C1075C41E75%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22william%20j%20clement%22>
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13CCA871AD118D5A%40EANX-159295C4E4BB87A9%402437481-1591357AEAC5726C%4017-1591357AEAC5726C%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22william%20j%20clement%22>
 - o Article about Clement and DeCosta and a "Negro Apartment Building" they were planning on building in 1961
 - o <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13CCA871AD118D5A%40EANX-159BBB3E8C29FAC3%402438928-159AB639023062EA%4025-159AB639023062EA%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22william%20j%20clement%22>
 - o Clement and DeCosta are definitely developers in Charleston as well
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13E3762B9393175B%40EANX-157337BE72440D68%402437948-157334EE1150507D%4014-157334EE1150507D%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22william%20j%20clement%22>
 - o Clement became a registered architect in SC in 1962
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13CCA871AD118D5A%40EANX-159CC71062CBE8C9%402440101-159CC1247B301883%4031-159CC1247B301883%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22william%20j%20clement%22>
 - o St. Paul's AME Church was designed and built by Clement and DeCosta in 1968
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13CCA871AD118D5A%40EANX-159C60F91EF43D8B%402439520-159C1BF12F08AB56%4021-159C1BF12F08AB56%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22william%20j%20clement%22>
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13CCA871AD118D5A%40EANX-1594CC2F51CEBE5F%402438718-159389A940E49DEA%4011-159389A940E49DEA%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22william%20j%20clement%22>

- o Was an officer in the Boy Scouts
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13CCA871AD118D5A%40EANX-154BAC1B935E58BF%402443335-154BA5B26FD2D21B%4062-154BA5B26FD2D21B%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22william%20j%20clement%22>
 - o Article on DeCosta and discusses briefly how Clement runs the more lucrative side of the business
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13CCA871AD118D5A%40EANX-1589F327978C9F98%402434171-1589B1E786D51AD0%406-1589B1E786D51AD0%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22william%20j%20clement%22>
 - o Appears that Clement graduated from Avery in 1952. Spoke at the graduation
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13CCA871AD118D5A%40EANX-158E9DC48048EB1A%402435819-158E9C488A083385%404-158E9C488A083385%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22william%20j%20clement%22>
 - o Clement honored at Howard in 1956
- <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/news/0EB57F771B956A63?p=AMNEWS>
 - o Appears he moved to Columbia in the 1980s and started working for the Division of General Services
 - o <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.ezproxy.ccpl.org/resources/doc/nb/image/v2%3A13E3762B9393175B%40EANX-1582A9CA422A2574%402447571-1582A7A8FAAA6C82%4012-1582A7A8FAAA6C82%40?p=AMNEWS&hlterms=%22william%20j%20clement%22>
 - Assistant director of the state
 - In an interesting twist ended up supervising mostly preservation work