

PART THREE

More Nuggets of Coal

THE CHURCH OF JOHN HALE

FROM: THE MEDIUM, October 22, 1975

MT. ZION PASTOR, DEACONS AND STAFF

In 1906, the property located at 11th and Union became the home of Mount Zion. The property was purchased from Mrs. Payne-Ellison and a building was erected in 1907. The original building was a one-room wooden frame structure. A boardwalk crossed a gully in front of the church. The windows were plain glass panes and placed high so as to emit light. The choir stand was in back of the pulpit. There was a pot-belly stove in the center for heat. The pews were old fashioned wooden benches without backs. Later, the structure was raised upon stilts and a partial basement added. The basement was used as a dining area and for fun and fellowship on Sunday afternoons.

Paradoxically, only two Negro families lived in the proximity of the church. The mode of transportation made it necessary to remain there all day.

Rev. Gordon McPherson from Tacoma, was called to the pastorate following Rev. George Maney. Rev. Walker followed Rev. McPherson. His stay with the congregation was less than a year and he was followed for an even shorter period of time by Rev. Wiggins. Rev. Wiggins resigned and was succeeded by Rev. R.H. Thomas. After the departure of Rev. Thomas, the congregation was without a pastor for about 3 or 4 months. The services were carried on by the deacons and visiting ministers.

In 1909, the Alaska-Yukon, Pacific Exposition (World's Fair) lasted from June to October. Its purpose was to exhibit the general development, resources, products, and the advantages of the State of Washington. The Exposition was held on the present site of the University of Washington. Some 3,000,000 persons attended. In fact, Mr. Casmon arrived in Seattle at this time. The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad reached Seattle via Snoqualmie Pass. This gave Seattle three transcontinental rail connections.

While Mount Zion was without a pastor, a local white Baptist Church was also without a pastor. Thinking Rev. Berry was white, the White Baptist Church called him to lead them. After the arrival of Rev. Berry, he was found to be a Negro. They proceeded to offer him to Mount Zion. After his trial sermon, he was called to pastor the church. An old balance on a piano was paid in full and a large new Bible for the rostrum was purchased during his pastorate. He resigned after ministering for about two years.

The year is 1912. Seattle is now the chief center of trade between Alaska and the Orient. Excellent docks and other port facilities are complete in time to benefit from W.W.I. San Francisco is now envious of its commerce and trade. The population is over 230,000 with approximately 2,000 Negroes. The city is wealthy...

Many people say that the Rev. W.D. Carter was called to pastor Mount Zion at just the right psychological moment. The struggling

congregation had become discouraged in the face of overwhelming odds. Because he was able to defeat despair in this tiny congregation of about 140, he was often referred to as the "Daddy" of Mount Zion.

Rev. W.D. Carter was born in Carroll County, Mississippi. He was one of ten children. He settled in Missouri in 1889 as pastor of the Green Chapel Baptist Church of Clarksville. He was educated at Western Washington College, Macon, Missouri. On September 5, 1899, he married Miss Corrine McMahon. Before coming to Seattle, he pastored the Pilgrim Baptist Church, St. Paul, Minnesota for ten years. He resigned to become financial secretary to Western College. This college later conferred the Doctor of Divinity Degree upon him. He was called to Mount Zion in the fall of 1912.

Mrs. Corrine Carter was a trained YWCA executive. She completed Social Service and Recreational Training in Chicago. She organized the first Negro branch of the YWCA in Seattle. The original structure was located in a dwelling at 26th and Howell. Later it was moved to 102 21st Avenue North and was called the Phyllis Wheatley Branch.

Rev. W.D. Carter is described as being very good to his members. It is often said that he often made reference to his mother when instructing others. The members loved him and were united. They are reported to often say to him, "Where thou leadest, we will follow." The mortgage indebtedness of \$2,500 was paid and the membership increased to over 300.

Although the old building was a credit to its founders, the growth of the membership, the automobile industry, and other factors, made it necessary for the church to seek a new location. In 1918, a beautiful lot 80x122 was purchased at 19th and Madison for \$6,000. There was a beautiful 8-room house located on this lot. It was fully remodeled and became the parsonage. Many may recall that this building was used until it was raised in 1962 to make room for the present Educational Wing. The 11th Avenue church site was sold for \$10,000.

During the construction of the building, the congregation met in the Masonic Hall at 21st and Jefferson. The architect was Harry James. The superintendent was E.R. James. Dr. Felix Cooper was Chairman of the Building Committee.

Approximately three months later, the building was completed and the congregation moved. The local, Caytons Weekly carried the following story....."The new church building is 53 feet wide and 87 feet long with a seating capacity of about 700. It is well equipped with ladies parlor, choir rooms, baptistry; ladies and gentlemen's dressing rooms, Pastors study and gallery. The basement is equipped with everything to make it a modern workshop for the Sunday School. This property is an evidence of the church pride of its members and Race in general in Seattle. It is valued at \$50,000 and bespeaks the sacrifices made by members and friends." From little acorns, big oaks grow!!!

Meanwhile, Seattle is continually growing and enjoying prosperity because of several historical events. The opening of the Panama Canal in 1915 shortened the water route between Seattle and New