



“Preserving—Sharing—Caring”

# Crossroads

## A May Queen Plays a Starring Role in the Earliest History of Trinity—as One Story Goes

By Pamela C. Crosby

Customs, beliefs, and stories, passed down through the years make up the folklore and history of our culture. One story that combines a folk tradition that lasted over 140 years with a description of an almost 200-year-old beginning of our church’s history was told by Rev.

**Norman Booth**, who wrote in *Trinity United Methodist Church: Tallahassee’s First Church, 1824-1999*, that **Mary Myers**, whom he referred to as Tallahassee’s first May queen, was the daughter of a “**Mr. Myers**,” whose house was the site of the organizational meeting of a

(cont. on p. 2)



In 1844, Mary Antoinette Myers was crowned May queen. Though we have no photos of her, there are many photos of May queens along with photos of May queen celebrations in Tallahassee’s history, which were significant events in the city. For example, in 1904, little Janet Byrd (mother of long-time Trinity member Rubie Butterworth) is seen here standing by herself on the back row as “queen of the fairies,” another ritual during the May party celebration. The title of the photo is “Azalee Moor, May queen - Tallahassee, Florida.” Florida Memory. Pr11501. <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/9908>.



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### Contact Info:

Pam Crosby, Editor, at  
[pcrosby@tumct.org](mailto:pcrosby@tumct.org)

Methodist society that would become the Tallahassee Station (now Trinity) of the Methodist Episcopal Church (Booth, 1999a, pp. 9-10).

Mary Antoinette, however, was not the *first* May queen, but rather the first *known* May Queen. As explained in a story in a 1959 *Democrat* article about the history of May queens in Tallahassee—the names of the queens in the early years of the celebration were not published because names of young ladies were not printed in newspapers.

## Hezekiah Myers

Hezekiah and his family are noted in the 1825 Leon County Census, and they moved in 1832 to a house across from the Capitol in Tallahassee (1825 Leon County...; “Capitol Center...,” 1966, p. 11).

It was also reported that in 1824, Hezekiah Myers was appointed a constable of Gadsden County—the home county of Tallahassee at that time

Heads of Families	White Males over 21 years	White Males under 21 years	White Females over 21 years	White Females under 21 years	Total of White Male & Female	Total of Colored Male & Female	Total of Colored
Miller John	2	2	2	2	8	-	8 Tiller
Miller Joseph	1	3	1	2	7	8	15 Tiller
McLean John	1	4	2	2	9	2	11 Tiller
Murray Jacob	3	"	1	1	5	2	7 Tiller
Monday Jacob	1	-	-	-	1	-	1 Tiller
Murray Nephew	1	3	1	-	5	-	5 Tiller

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Pictured are the two oldest brothers of Mary Antoinette Myers. Left: Edward Howell Myers. From Lee, Luccock & Dixon, 1900, p. 635. Right: Selim Woodworth Myers. 1870 (circa). Florida Memory. NO42728. <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/150778#!>

before Leon County was formed (Court Minutes 1824...,” n.d.; “History & Characteristics,” n.d.).

Sources referred to Hezekiah’s family as an old “Jewish” family in Tallahassee including a caption in *Historic Photos of Tallahassee*, a book by Andrew Edel, who was at one time the director of exhibitions of the historic Capitol. Edel, however, provided no references to support this claim. We do know that Hezekiah’s wife was a member of the church that would become Trinity, and as mentioned earlier, there have been unconfirmed claims that his house was the site of Trinity’s first organizational meeting. Hezekiah’s name, however, cannot be found in the church’s extant membership rolls (Edel, 2007, p. 18; 1830 U.S. Census; Smith, 1913, p. 239; “Church Register...,” n.d.).

Hezekiah died in Tallahassee in 1839 at the age of 49, leaving a wife, three sons, and a daughter (“Obituary,” 1839, p. 2; McLarty, n.d.).

### **Mother: Mary Howell Myers**

Mary Antoinette’s mother was **Mary Howell Myers**, born 1790 in New York. She was listed as the first person in the 1828 membership records of Tallahassee Station (Trinity UMC) and joined

the church body in 1827. It is likely these are among the first official membership records in Trinity’s history because the church body first entered the South Carolina Conference in 1828. Mary H. was described as a “saintly woman” (McLarty, n.d.; *Church Register Book Two*, n.d., pp. 10, i; Smith, 1913, p. 239).

Mary Howell Myers died on February 12, 1845, leaving Mary Antoinette, age 15, and her older brothers as orphans (*Church Register Book Two*, n.d., p. 120; McLarty, n.d.; Patterson, 1921, p. 4).

### **Brother: Edward Howell Myers**

Mary A.’s oldest brother was a well-known preacher, editor, historian, and college president. **The Rev. Dr. Edward Howell Myers** was born in New York in 1816. He served as a pastor at Trinity for half a year in 1843 and later went on to become a professor at Wesleyan Female College, president of the college during two separate terms, and chief editor of the *Southern Christian Advocate* (“Death. . .,” 1876, p. 1; Smith, 1913, p. 239; Yates, 1999, p. 8).

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### Brother: Selim Woodworth Myers

Her second oldest brother was **Selim Woodworth Myers**, born in 1818 in New York. He was known throughout Tallahassee as a distinguished business partner with Frederick Towle of Towle & Myers. Selim was a watchmaker, and Towle was a jeweler (McLarty, n.d.; “Frederick...,” n.d.).

Selim was an active leader at the Tallahassee Station (Trinity), where he served as a steward and class leader. He also held the position of a Tallahassee councilman for several years. He was appointed a register of the Land Office at Tallahassee in 1854 (“The Second Quarterly...,” n.d. [1844]; “The First Quarterly...,” n.d. [1845]; Van Brunt, 1939, p. 3; “Confirmations,” 1854, p. 2).

### Brother: Oscar A. Myers

Her third brother was **Rev. Oscar A. Myers**, who was born in 1823 in Pensacola, FL. In 1846, he was licensed as a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South at the Second Quarterly Conference of the Tallahassee Station

(Trinity). We know that in 1850, he worked as a clerk of the Circuit Court of Leon County. And in 1858, he served as pastor of Bainbridge First United Methodist Church (McLarty, n.d.; “Second Quarterly...,” n.d. [1846]; Florida Supreme Court, 1887, p. 119; “List of Pastors...,” n.d.).

According to the book, *A Century of Methodism in Gainesville*, Oscar served in the Confederate Army in 1862 and was appointed to preach at the Gainesville Station in 1863. After his appointment as the local elder in 1864, he was assigned to Newnansville, FL (a former town in Alachua County). He acted as secretary of the church minutes at church members meetings from at least 1869 to 1883 (Limper, 1957, p. 7).

...

There is evidence that Oscar, Selim, and Edward supported and defended slavery, a topic that will be explored in future articles of *Crossroads*. At the time of the 1830 census of Leon County, Hezekiah owned one female slave. At the time of the 1840



Mary A., as an orphan, went to live with Selim Myers, her brother. The caption from Florida Memory says: Included in the picture are “Mr. and Mrs. J.P. Myers, R.B. Gorman, E.H. Myers, Mrs. Selim W. Myers, and Louisa Jackson holding Maud H. Myers. Easter is the maid by the gate.” 1874 (circa). PR12152. <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/10542> According to Florida Memory (state library and archives) website, Selim Myers’s house was at 701 South Adams Street. <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/41710>

Federal Census, Selim owned four slaves (Rivers & Brown, 2001, pp. 8, 12; “Quarterly Book...,” 1876, p. 171; Myers, 1875; 1830 Census of Leon County; 1840 United State Federal Census).

### Mary Antoinette Myers: Childhood

Mary Antoinette Myers was born in Tallahassee on September 3, 1829. She was baptized in Tallahassee Station (Trinity). After her widowed mother died (1845), Mary lived with her brother Selim in Tallahassee (Patterson, 1921, p. 4; “Interesting Bit...,” 1909, p. 1).

In 1844, Mary Antoinette was crowned May queen of Tallahassee. The crowning of the May queen was the highlight of an annual festival, selected by popular vote of the young persons in the town. Everyone (in the White communities) participated in the event—the old, young, poor, and wealthy (Marie Antoinette...,” 1941, p. 2; Jordan, 1959, p. 21).

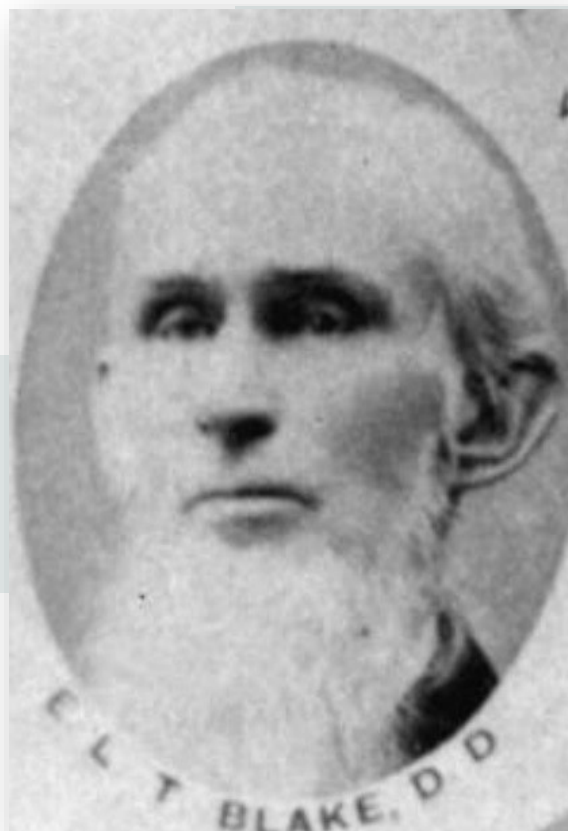
According to custom, the crowning was to take place in the first week of May with the queen

clad in imperial robes of white, decked with flowers and the flowery crown placed upon her head by the King of her own choosing. Courtiers many and stately, maids dainty and beautiful, following in her train.

In many May parties of the long ago, we can picture some of the famous guests, among them being Prince and Princess Murat.... (Ausley & Lively, 1927, p. 5)

Mary A. attended Wesleyan Female College in Macon, GA, where her brother Edward was a professor and later a president. Her life would soon dramatically change when, in 1847, **Bishop William Capers** of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MECS) sent **Rev. Edwin L. T. Blake**—in his fourth year as a minister (MECS)—to Trinity (Patterson, 1921, p. 4).

Described as “handsome,” “courtly,” “scholarly and pious,” he drew the attention of Mary and in turn, he was drawn to the “fair, cultured and deeply spiritual young lady,” as Mary was portrayed in an account of their courtship. They were married in January 1848 at the house of her brother, Selim, with **Rev. William Choice**, officiating (Patterson, 1921, p. 4; Booth, 1999, p. 19).



“E.L.T. Blake, Methodist Episcopal Minister - Tallahassee, Florida.” 1870 (circa). Florida Memory. No42400. <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/150481>

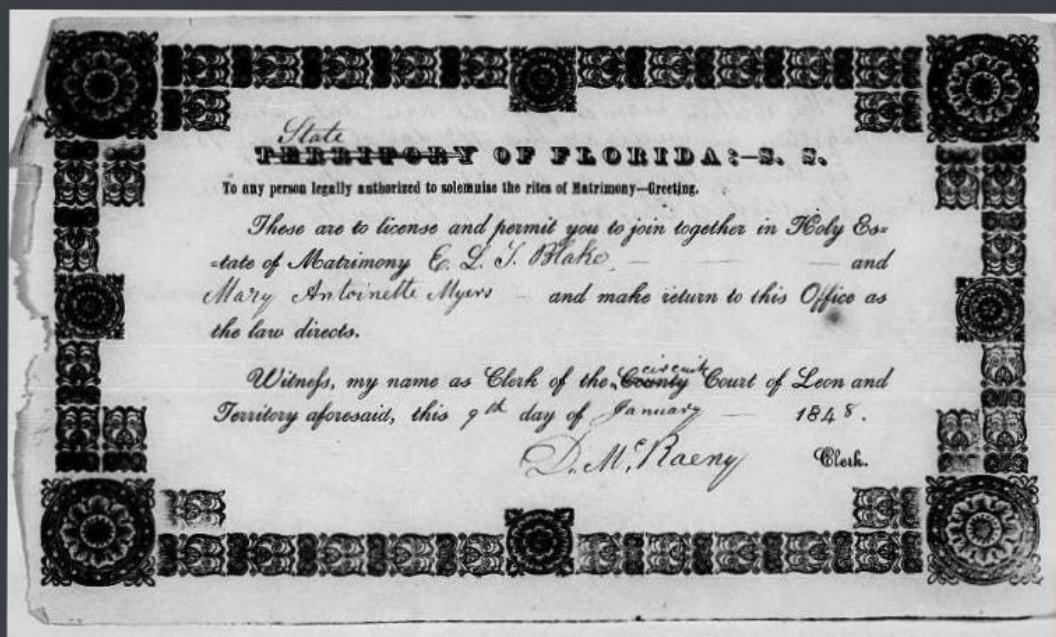
### Rev. Dr. Edwin L.T. Blake

There is considerably more known about The Rev. Dr. Edwin L. T. Blake than about his wife, Mary Antoinette. E. L. T. Blake was born on June 26, 1823, in St. Mary’s, GA. He joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1835 (Honiker, 1898, p. 50).

In 1842, he was licensed to preach at Newnansville, in Alachua County, FL. At the first session of the Florida Conference in Tallahassee in 1845, he was received into full connection and was ordained a deacon. He was Trinity’s pastor from 1846-1847 (first of two periods as pastor) and was ordained an elder at Quincy, FL, in 1847 (Honiker, 1898, p. 50; Yates, 1999, p. 8).

Rev. Blake experienced illness that prevented him from carrying on his work as a pastor in 1851. He worked for the American Bible Society as an agent from 1852-1854 and entered public life in

(cont. on p. 6)



The marriage license of Mary Antoinette Myers and Rev. E. L. T. Blake, dated January 9, 1848. Notice that “Territory” is crossed out: Florida had recently become a state in 1845. “Florida Marriages, 1830-1993,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:23C4-4BC : 22 February 2021>), E L T Blake and Mary Antoinette Myers, 1848; citing Marriage, Leon, Florida, United States, citing multiple County Clerks of Court, Florida; FHL microfilm 982,707.

1858 as a register of Land Office in Tallahassee (Honiker, 1898, p. 50; “Appointments...” 1858, p. 2).

By 1871, he had resumed his pastoral duties. For his distinguished and dedicated work in the Church, Emory College paid tribute to him in 1877 with the honorary degree of doctor of divinity. He returned to Tallahassee as Trinity’s pastor in 1878 and served until 1881 (Honiker, 1898, p. 50; Yates, 1999, p. 8).

## Children

In some accounts, the number of children of Mary A. and Edwin Blake is listed as eight, and other sources indicate seven. The names of six found in documents are **Mary P., Jessie, Florence, Hammie, Robert, E. M.,** and **Annabel**, who died as an infant and is buried in Tallahassee (“Mrs. E. L. T....,” 1916, p. 1; “Patterson, 1921, p. 4; “Local and Personal,” 1908, p. 3; Death of Robert...,” 1907, p. 12; Castner, n.d).

The children were especially close to their parents and offered their assistance as the couple grew older. Jessie never married and was described as Mary A.’s

constant companion and nurse.... She not only lived *with* but *for* her mother, and laid her life upon the altar of her devotion. (Patterson, 1921, p. 4)

In 1892, Edwin, Mary, and their daughter Jessie moved to Ocala, FL, to live with the couple’s son Robert (“Death of Dr. Blake,” 1897, p. 1).

## Widowhood

Five years later, Rev. Dr. Edwin L. T. Blake died. During the 49 years that Mary A. and Edwin were married, she was his “inspiration” and loving partner and “helpmate” (“Death of Dr. Blake,” 1897, p. 1; Patterson, 1921, p. 4).

After her husband’s death, Mary Antoinette and Jessie moved back to Tallahassee. Mary was active at Trinity, being one of the charter members of the auxiliary of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary So-



ciety along with her daughters, Jessie and Florence Gorman. An organization of women, likely a Bible study or class, was named after her in Wonsan, Korea (“Marie Antoinette ...,” 1941, p. 2; Davis, n.d., cited in Butterworth, 1999, p. 36; “Tallahassee...,” 1928, p. 5).

Mary Antoinette’s fame as one of the first May queens followed her throughout her life. In 1914, during the annual celebration of the May Party, Mary A. attended the event as a special guest. As one story goes, **Katherine Fitzgerald**, queen that year, “descended from her throne and gave half of her flowers” to Mary Antoinette, aged 74, who was seated in a wheel chair because of ill health. Another story reported that Queen Katherine placed her crown upon Mary’s head (Jordan, 1959, p. 21).

### A Life “Dwelt in Loving Thoughtfulness”

Mary Antoinette Myers Blake died on June 26, 1921. A memoriam from the *Florida Christian Advocate* was also published in the 1921 Florida Annual Conference proceedings as well as in the *Tallahassee Democrat*. The day after her death, a *Democrat* article, titled “Noble Woman Is Called Home,” was printed on the front page (Patterson, 1921, p. 4; “Noble Woman...,” 1921, p. 1).

She was described as the “most universally beloved woman in the city.” She lived “in her little cottage home,” a place “where Jesus loved to dwell.” She “manifested a spirit in communion with God and in love with all mankind” (“Mrs. E.L.T. Blake...,” 1916, p. 1; Patterson, 1921, p. 4).

Sadly for nine years before she died,

she was paralyzed, partially, and had been helpless ever since, never able to walk alone. For the past three months she had been confined to her bed and her suffering was acute. She lost her sight some months before her death. (Patterson, 1921, p. 4)

And although

Frail of body continually in pain, dependent on the strength of others, yet no note of repining, no thought of self, she dwelt in loving thoughtfulness of others. (Patterson, 1921, p. 4)

It was widely known that Mary Antoinette (daughter of Hezekiah Myers, the “Mr. Myers” whose home is said to be the site of our church’s first meeting) had been a most beautiful May queen. Yet, according to those who knew her, it was the beauty of her heart that was the most extraordinary thing about her.

### May Queen Tradition

And what about the annual selection of the May queen, an honor that brought stardom to

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“May Day celebration by large live oak tree in Lewis Park - Tallahassee, Florida.” Florida Memory. (1958). PR15030. The caption reads: “May 1958. Photographed is queen Linda Gormley and king Edgar Moore with their court. Gormley beat out Faye Dunaway to become the 1958 May Queen.” <https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/13143>

young ladies in Tallahassee, including the fair maid, Mary Antoinette? The May queen tradition in various versions continued for decades in Tallahassee with some interesting stories.

For example, **Margarita “Marge” Cawthon** (later married to **Leslie Bogan** of Gulf Breeze) was a spirited but rebellious young woman, who shaved her head on the eve of the 1927 crowning ceremony to wreak revenge on her parents who had punished her for climbing out of her window late one evening. She wore a wig and hat to “conceal” the “damage.”<sup>2</sup> The film star **Faye Dunaway** was in contention in 1958 for the honor of May queen, but lost her bid to another young lady. She lamented in her autobiography that she had come “so close” after being only six votes shy of winning the crown (“Former May Queens,” 1959, p. 21; Knott, 1995, pp. 62-63; “Gormley...,” 1959, p.1; “May Day...,” n.d.; Dunaway & Sharkey, 1997, p. 49).

Various organizations took turns sponsoring the annual event, including women from Trinity. But according to Tallahassee historian **Claude Kennson**,

Due to difficulties during integration, Leon High had to abandon the festival and none was held in 1970. The January 21, 1970 *Tallahassee Democrat* sadly announced: “Annual May Party Dropped.” But, good news returned on April 20, 1971, with the announcement from the same paper that a revival of the City May Party was planned. The Tallahassee Sons of the American Revolution, took up the task, sponsored and paid the expenses for the Fest. They kept it going until 1974; there have been no citywide May Parties since. Thus ended Florida’s and some say the South’s oldest annual event of its kind.... (2019, p. 4)

#### Note

<sup>1</sup> See Crosby’s 2021 article on Tallahassee’s first year for one proposed theory to explain how Booth arrived at this conclusion.

<sup>2</sup> Margarita Cawthon was married to Leslie Bogan, brother of my husband’s (Don Crosby) mother. “Aunt Rita” had a mischievous but good natured personality and a quick and entertaining wit until her death in 1999 in Gulf Breeze, FL.

#### Acknowledgement

I often gratefully depend upon the research and documents shared by Lynn McLarty that help to confirm my own research and which introduce me to treasured resources. I am also grateful to Matt Lutz, director, Records Management at the City of Tallahassee, for his assistance in locating and sharing documents and records.

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## Making History: Quarterly News from Trinity's Historical Society and Preservation of Church History Committee

### Historical Briefs

Historical briefs earlier included in the worship bulletin will resume, leading to the 200th anniversary celebration. Those written by Vice Chair Linda Yates will be repeated as a reminder to our congregation and as an introduction to subsequent briefs.

### Timeline Project

Work on the wall display timeline in the Yates Center will resume in January 2022 with a selection of photos considered for presentation.

### Volunteers for Inputting Data

We are grateful to **Margie Wright** and **Carol Marchant** for volunteering to assist **Mary Margaret Rogers** in updating church membership records by imputing data from baptism and death records. There is always need for volunteers to carry on the project of in-

putting data so that we meet historical as well as UMC requirements. Contact **Pam Crosby** at [pcrosby@tumct.org](mailto:pcrosby@tumct.org) if you have interest in working with this church membership records project.

### Easel Display

An easel display of framed photos of the marker designating Trinity's historic significance in the state of Florida, the plaque celebrating Trinity as the site of the first Florida Methodist Episcopal Church, South Conference, and the script of the dedication of the state marker, has been placed in the vestibule and will occupy that space in the weeks to come. **Lisa Boyd** assisted **Lynn McLarty** in creating the display. We send our appreciation to both as well as to **Judy Levy** for her work in this project. They have made it possible to welcome our church members and guests to our sanctuary by highlighting Trinity's historical significance in our home state and denomination.

## “Open for Viewing”: Our Online Archives Are Never Closed to Visitors!

Visitors to our website can read our *Quarterly Conference Minutes*, research membership records, view videos, and read past issues of *Crossroads*—among other media at any time! Just go [to https://www.tumct.org/welcome/about/history/historical-resources/](https://www.tumct.org/welcome/about/history/historical-resources/) Here are some examples.

### Hey, Where Are the Women? Trinity's Stewards in the 1920s

<https://www.tumct.org/history/Combined%20for%201915-1926.pdf>

Ques. 15. Are there reports from the trustees, and what do they show in answer to the following questions: (1) What is the number of churches and parsonages, and what has been expended on the same during the year? (2) What is the value of the same? (3) What amount of insurance is carried on churches, parsonages, and schools? (4) What amount has been paid in premiums? (5) What amount of losses, if any, has occurred, and what amount has been collected thereon? (6) Do the deeds contain the trust clause in the Discipline? (7) Where are the title papers kept? (8) Where are they recorded? (Give office, book, and page.) (Special form is provided for this report in Supplement.) *Report (S)*

Ques. 16. How many societies are there which do not own houses of worship? *none*

Ques. 17. Who are elected stewards for the ensuing year?

<i>B.H. Bridges</i>	<i>Geo I Davis</i>	<i>M.A. Smith</i>
<i>F.J. Black</i>	<i>C.A. Gray</i>	<i>L.K. Talbot</i>
<i>A.B. Bird</i>	<i>J.N. Gaddard</i>	<i>Colmes Taylor</i>
<i>W.P. Bevis</i>	<i>J.F. Jones</i>	<i>O.C. Van Bunt</i>
<i>B.M. Cates</i>	<i>P.J. Mickler</i>	<i>J.W. Yon</i>
<i>E.J. Crider</i>	<i>O.O. Mickler</i>	<i>D.A. Yon</i>
<i>M.W. Carter</i>	<i>C.L. Mizell</i>	
<i>A.H. Charlieville</i>	<i>A.F. Phillips</i>	
<i>M.H. Collins</i>	<i>J.L. Stickland</i>	

Quarterly Conference Minutes, November 24, 1920

Ques. 15. Are there reports from the trustees, and what do they show in answer to the following questions: (1) What is the number of churches and parsonages, and what has been expended on the same during the year? (2) What is the value of the same? (3) What amount of insurance is carried on churches, parsonages, and schools? (4) What amount has been paid in premiums? (5) What amount of losses, if any, has occurred, and what amount has been collected thereon? (6) Do the deeds contain the trust clause in the Discipline? (7) Where are the title papers kept? (8) Where are they recorded? (Give office, book, and page.) (Special form is provided for this report in Supplement.) *NONE*

Ques. 16. How many societies are there which do not own houses of worship? *NONE*

Ques. 17. Who are elected stewards for the ensuing year?

<i>B.H. Bridges</i>	<i>R.A. Gray</i>	<i>O.C. Van Bunt</i>
<i>F.J. Black</i>	<i>J.B. Game</i>	<i>F.C. Gilmore</i>
<i>A.B. Byrd</i>	<i>J.F. Jones</i>	<i>G.W. Saxon</i>
<i>W.P. Bevis</i>	<i>P.J. Mickler</i>	<i>C.C. Holt</i>
<i>B.M. Cates</i>	<i>O.O. Mickler</i>	<i>Frank Webb</i>
<i>M.W. Carter</i>	<i>R.F. Mickler</i>	<i>J.F. Moore</i>
<i>A.H. Charlieville</i>	<i>C.L. Mizell</i>	<i>J.C. Moore</i>
<i>J.W. Collins</i>	<i>A.F. Phillips</i>	<i>Boston Burns</i>
<i>M.H. Collins</i>	<i>M.A. Smith</i>	
<i>Geo. I Davis</i>	<i>Colmes Taylor</i>	

Quarterly Conference Minutes, December 5, 1922



Sup B. Tallahassee Fla  
Jan 26<sup>th</sup> 1917.

Sunday School Supt's Report  
to First Quarterly Conf.  
Trinity Church—

The Sunday School has  
a membership of 515.  
With a growing attendance,  
last Sunday the total  
attendance was 328, and  
of that number 52 were  
in two mens classes  
an 17 in the Ladies Class  
making 69 Grown men  
and Women Students,  
In addition to this  
there were 31 officers and

about the Women and  
children—

We are hard pressed  
now for adequate space  
for our classes, and  
I want to make it  
necessary to have  
additional facilities  
provided—

I am confident I  
have a loyal Consecrated  
Corps of Teachers and  
officers, and I believe  
the Bible is being taught  
in its purity, with an  
eye single to the  
advancement of the

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teachers present, making  
an even 100 adults  
in the school last  
Sunday outside of  
the two College Girl's  
Classes and Bro Smith's  
Class of Grown young  
ladies— This is a  
good showing, but I  
want to see 75 men  
in Trinity Brotherhood  
and 50 in the young men  
Miley Class— It has been  
said that if we can  
get the men in the  
Sunday School we will  
not have to bother

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1917

Cause of Christ and  
the saving of the souls  
of the boys and girls,  
men and women of  
the church—

I have been so closely  
confined to my business  
for the past 6 weeks,  
the School and its  
interests have had to  
go on without me almost,  
however I trust I  
will soon be able to  
 devote more time to  
the work—  
Respectfully Submitted  
Flourney Phillips  
Supt.



## A Tribute to a Fellow Historian—and Friend: Rubie Plant Butterworth



To see Rubie Butterworth's 2018 interview with Lynn McLarty 2018 and produced by Rex Adams, please go to <https://www.tumct.org/rubie-butterworth-memories-of-trinity-full-interview/>

**R**ubie Plant Butterworth, fellow historian at Trinity, died on November 23, 2021. Below are responses to the contributions she made to the Historical Society, our church, and our lives.

### Dot Binger

Rubie and I both entered Florida State College for Women in the fall of 1942 and met each other at an open house event at the Wesley Foundation. Because of our contacts there and at Trinity, we were friends except for the years she lived away from Tallahassee. I learned that she was a living storehouse of information and a gracious spirit about Methodism and about Trinity specifically. It was always with anticipation we greeted her when she attended our Historical Society meetings. In memory I will keep greeting Rubie and her smile.

### Mary Margaret Rogers

I've known Rubie Plant Butterworth since I can

remember. As a child she seemed to be very important at church, and church for me meant Trinity Methodist. Then Rubie went away, but, oh, how fortunate we are that she came back "home" to Tallahassee and brought her family with her.

When Rubie returned and went to work at Trinity ministering to the senior members, my parents were retired and dearly loved attending luncheons and events planned by Rubie. My mother had been a member of Trinity since they moved to Tallahassee in 1929, but my father had joined First Baptist Church. Rather than thinking of it as a divided family, I grew up thinking of it as supporting two churches. Daddy taught adult Sunday school at First Baptist, and the two of them alternated attending 11 o'clock services at both churches. However, as Rubie planned more events and Daddy began to feel a part of the Methodist adult Sunday school class and the group of senior citizens, he decided it was time to move to Trinity,

home of the rest of his family. You might say Rubie converted an almost lifetime Baptist to Trinity. I greatly appreciate what Rubie did to enhance their later years.

In recent years, Rubie had been a valuable resource for church history. I especially enjoyed her stories of the early years when she worked at the church with an office in the old parsonage next to the sanctuary, how records were kept, how pigeons were kept at bay, the bad boys from MYF, her steel trap memories of connections and people no longer around.

Rubie was a treasure from God for all who knew and loved her, and she will be greatly missed.

### Judy Levy

My introduction to Rubie Butterworth began over 50 years ago. I admired her from afar as a member of the staff with Trinity. We became good friends when our youngest daughters (Beth and Karen) became friends at MYF. You knew Rubie was always available for car pooling and activities

with the girls. She has exuded the classical characteristics of a true Christian Southern Lady. She never once said a bad word about anyone, never raised her voice to express her opinion and respected your opinion, knew almost everything about Trinity and Tallahassee. She will be sorely missed, but has left tons of beautiful memories.

RIP, Good and Faithful Servant.

### Wayne and Ramona Wiatt

My first introduction to Rubie Butterworth and Trinity was in 1977 as I began the first of three summers as the youth intern under **Rev. Phil Roughton, Dr. John Green, and Dr. Eugene Zimmerman.** Rubie Butterworth took me under her wing and shared with me her love for Trinity and her deep commitment to Christian education.

Forty-five years later, I was appointed to Trinity as the lead pastor in 2016, and it was Rubie Butterworth who hosted a luncheon for Ramona and me at Westminster Oaks. She invited all of our church membership who were residents at W.O.,

(cont. on p. 14)



The Council on Ministries met in late May 1975 to assign work areas goals adopted by the Administrative Board. The Council was composed of the staff and representatives of work areas and divisions. Standing, LR: Chairman Robert Peirce, Leslie Williams, Susan Ridge, the Rev. Ed Norman, Sandra Mowell, Hollis Pemberton Jr., Rubie Butterworth, and David Kerns. Seated: The Rev. Joe Mills, Griffith Pugh, Clelia Pugh, Lisa Miley, the Rev. Harold Brown, and Peggy Busacco. Photo published in *Monthly Tidings*, June 1975, volume 2, number 6, and in *Crossroads*, July 2019.

(cont. from p. 13)

and introduced us to her many friends and neighbors.

She toured us around the entire facility and shared with us much of the rich history of Trinity.

I will be forever grateful for Rubie Butterworth and her many kind expressions of hospitality and words of wisdom as we began our ministry with this great congregation!

### **Rev. Wayne Curry**

Rubie was what I would call a “quiet evangelist.” Whenever I looked out to where she was sitting on Sunday mornings (always about half-way back on the lectern side), I would often see someone new sitting with her, someone she had invited to join her for worship. Rubie dearly loved Trinity Church, and she wanted others to experience the joy she experienced.

During the pandemic I had a number of long phone conversations with Rubie. She would tell me (briefly) what was happening in her life but



Laurie Plant (Rainer) four years old, left, and Rubie Plant (Butterworth), seven years old, right, with their grandmother, Rubie Bernard Byrd (Mrs. T. B.), in front of their grandmother's house on South Monroe Street (Tallahassee) in summer 1932. Also published in *Crossroads*, July 2020.

would always turn the conversation to others: asking how so-and-so was doing and giving me a few suggestions to whom I might make a pastoral call. Always thinking of others. She reminded me of an old gospel song entitled simply “Others”:

Lord, help me live from day to day in such a self-forgetful way that even when I kneel to pray, my prayer shall be for others. Others, Lord, yes others. Let his my motto be. Help me to live for others that I may live like Thee.

Truly, one of Rubie's life-motto's was “others.”

### **Rhonda Work**

Although Rubie Butterworth was not an official member of the Committee on Preservation of Church History, her contributions were outstanding and never ending. Prior to the pandemic, the Committee and Historical Society would meet jointly, and Rubie always had a tale to tell. When we no longer could meet in person, our emails took the place of conversation. A committee member would have a question about some aspect of the church's history, Rubie invariably would respond with additional information or a gentle correction. Her knowledge ran deep. She graciously shared all that she had. Other members knew Rubie better than I, but she made a lasting impression on me as well.

### **Lynn McLarty**

I have placed my memories of Rubie in the 2018 interview in her Westminster Oaks apartment. She was at her true self during the interview: most-poised, most-articulate, and most-authentic in sharing her family's association with Trinity. I can add no more lasting attributes connecting our friendship than my beautiful memories of having been seated next to her and having listened to her recall those innermost recollections. An extraordinary lady she was!

### **Pam Crosby**

Rubie Butterworth was a natural historian with an extensive knowledge of the history of Trinity and Tallahassee. She was an author of the chapter, “Preparing for a New Century—1875-1919,” in *Trinity United Methodist Church: Tallahassee's First Church—1824-1999*, edited by Linda Yates,



where she focused on the history of missions and Sunday school (Butterworth, 1999).

She was also a delightful and gracious oral story-teller as evident in Lynn McLarty's [interview with her in 2018](#), on which a series of articles was published in the [January](#) and [April](#) 2019 *Crossroads*. My favorite part of her life story was when she was a young, inexperienced church secretary at Trinity after she graduated from Florida State College for Women with a degree in modern languages. She described her church office as being especially drafty, with nothing under its loosely spaced floor boards. A church member had made a gas stove out of a galvanized pipe in which he drove holes, surrounded it with tin, and vented it out of the window. She explained that

as the wind blew through that vent, it blew the flame out. And then I would smell gas. I did not have any heat, I had gas! I don't think I could have been killed by it because there was so much draft in there that it would have saved me. I could tell when it was out, and then I would go light it again!

She also told of another challenging experience while being church secretary. Associate Pastor Ralph Huston lived in a house north of the church at the corner of Call and Duval. When Rev. Huston was away at his ordination ceremony, Rubie was asked to spend evenings in the house with Mrs. Huston who was expecting a baby at any time. Rubie remembered being "scared to death" during these visits at Mrs. Huston's home because she did not know what she would do if the baby came while she was there. Fortunately for Rubie, the baby waited until its father returned to make its appearance in the world.

This job responsibility seems quite unusual for a church secretary, but Rubie—although having little training in secretarial work or midwifery—was willing to do her best to help out the church when she was needed. That was Rubie: always willing to give her all to help out.

And she had much to give—her gifts benefiting all facets of church life. For example, in assisting us amateur historians, she was our fact checker, adding detailed contexts to our sketchy descriptions and memories in such a gentle but

comprehensive way. We depended upon her extensive knowledge of church history and Tallahassee when we published articles and gave talks.

For all that she was to us, the Historical Society mourns the loss of a gifted mentor and fellow historian, who was the model of kindness, intelligence, and charm.

### **Linda Yates**

Rubie Butterworth underwrote everything she did with love. She eagerly researched history material for a friend when the colleague was unable to find its source. It wasn't difficult for her because history of her church was a life-long passion. She befriended newcomers to the group and helped develop them into writers. Her warm welcome as a resident of Westminster Oaks, where she made her home for many years, was based on sharing her love.

### ***Rubie Plant Butterworth Scholarship Fund***

*The Rubie Plant Butterworth Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance to individuals attending one of the 13 United Methodist seminaries to pursue ordination as a deacon. Jim Butterworth, who was seeking a way to honor his mother for her 90th birthday and years of service in The United Methodist Church (UMC), initiated the scholarship fund.*

*Applicants must be attending a UM seminary and be in the Deacon track of service to the church. Preference given to those working in a local church or preparing to work in a local church setting. Must demonstrate leadership in the local church and call to Deacon. To apply, please go to*

<https://www.gbhem.org/loans-scholarships/scholarships/list-of-scholarships/>

*To see the news article on her scholarship, go to*

<https://www.gbhem.org/news/new-scholarship-fund-for-deacons-honors-a-woman-who-dedicated-her-life-to-church-service/>

## Committee for the Preservation of Church History

Rhonda Work, Chair

Dot Binger, Secretary Pamela C. Crosby, Publications Editor

E. Lynn McLarty, Membership Archivist Mary Margaret Rogers, Membership Records Assistant

Linda H. Yates, Vice Chair

### Contact Information

Physical Location: 120 W. Park Avenue – Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1086

Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Historical Society Email: [pcrosby@tumct.org](mailto:pcrosby@tumct.org)

Crossroads Email: [pcrosby@tumct.org](mailto:pcrosby@tumct.org)

Crossroads Online Archives: <https://www.tumct.org/crossroads-newsletter/>

### Church Leadership

The Rev. Dr. Wayne Wiatt, Lead Pastor

The Rev. Neal Avirett, Associate Pastor

Dr. Nick Quinton, Director of Discipleship & Adult Ministries

*The purpose of Crossroads is to provide descriptions of historical events and to publish news related to the Trinity United Methodist Church Historical Society. Its intent is not to endorse or criticize theological or ethical positions related to issues that these descriptive accounts might raise. While we strive to be as accurate as possible, we make mistakes sometimes. Please send your comments, corrections, and requests for printed copies as well as inquiries about submissions to Pamela Crosby, chief editor, at [pcrosby@tumct.org](mailto:pcrosby@tumct.org).*

Appreciation to Dot Binger, Rev. Wayne Curry, Judy Levy, Lynn McLarty, Mary Margaret Rogers, Dr. Wayne Wiatt, Ramona Wiatt, Rhonda Work, and Linda Yates for their contributions and helpful comments during the editing process of this publication.

## Submission Guidelines

*If you would like to be a published author in an upcoming issue, see guidelines below:*

### Call for Stories and Articles

- **“I Remember When” snapshots:** These are short descriptions that recount church life memories. They are usually **25–100 words long**. See below for general guidelines.
  - **Oral interviews:** Interviews may be audio or video taped. Trinity historians write up the interviews in narrative form with approval from the persons interviewed before publication. Videos or audios of the interviews may be posted on Trinity’s website with permission from persons interviewed.
  - **Firsthand stories:** Individuals may submit stories based on their firsthand experience at Trinity. The stories are generally **500 words, but can be longer**. See “General Guidelines.”
  - **Research articles:** These articles are more formal in nature.
- o Criteria for formal articles include **relevance** to the purpose of the newsletter, which is to publish articles that per-

tain to the history of Trinity in a substantial way; **quality of writing**; historical **accuracy**; **clarity**; **conciseness**; **coherence**; and **reability**.

o Articles should be **original** works and not excerpts.

o The word limit for articles **is usually around 500 words, but can be longer**.

A list of resources used for historical research may be requested. **Original** sources (instead of information from history books, newspapers, or newsletters) are preferred when possible.

### General Guidelines

- Writing should be free of disrespectful language.
- Photos and information should not violate privacy, copyright, or other established laws.
- All accepted works are subject to editing in compliance with all *Crossroads* guidelines, including style guide standards, and **must pass editorial approval** before publication.
- Submit Word document to **Pamela Crosby**, editor, at [pcrosby@tumct.org](mailto:pcrosby@tumct.org).