

Black History Profiles in the Metuchen Area

By Tyreen Reuter

Tuesday, February 25, 7-8pm

Please join us as the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society presents a local history program in honor of Black History Month. Profiles of several persons from the Metuchen area will be shared in a presentation highlighting their importance and relevance to our community.

**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**



Registration is encouraged - sign up on the library event calendar
<https://www.metuchenlibrary.org/calendar/> or call us at 732-632-8526.



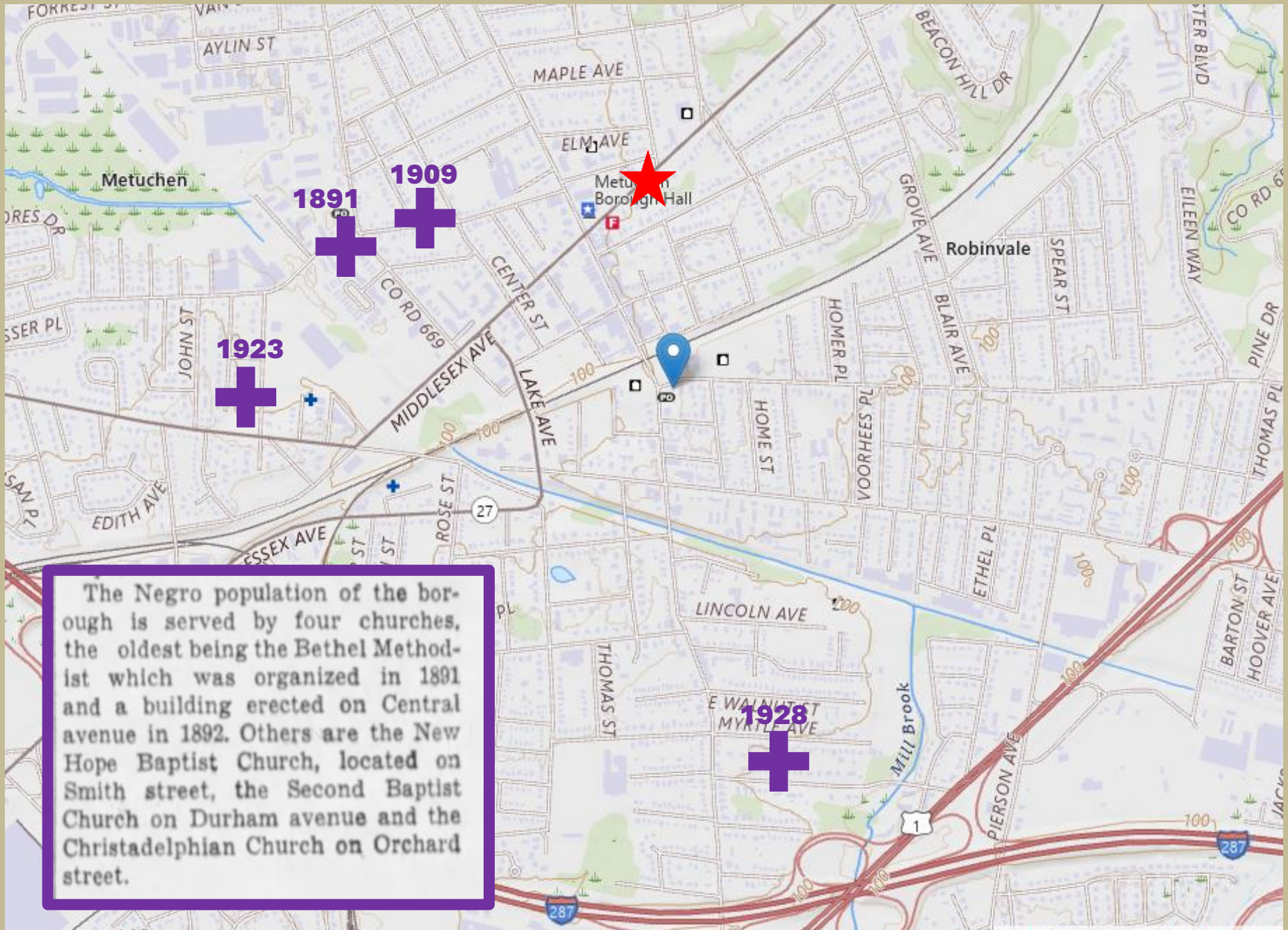
Sunday School Picnic (1937)



Partial Congregation of the Second Baptist Church, Metuchen, taken on July 29, 1937 by J.L. Grimstead.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Clarence Tate | 14. Marynetha Chisholm | 27. Margaret Scruggs |
| 2. Katherine Tate | 15. Nelson Tate | 28. Jeanne Tate
(Simpson) |
| 3. Josephine Scruggs | 16. a&b: Mrs. Jewels'
grandsons | 29. Mildred Letsinger |
| 4. Rose Wright | 17. Viola Scruggs | 30. Ester Letsinger |
| 5. Ms. Alma (?) | 18. Raymond Scruggs | 31. Leroy Tate |
| 6. Mary Bradshaw | 19. Ann Tate Lassiter | 32. Marguerite Tate
(Wareham) |
| 7. Perry Letsinger | 20. George Tate | 33. Nelson Tate |
| 8. Thelma Butler | 21. Mrs. Ethel Clements | 34. Frances Kearny
(Heavens) |
| 9. Musa Curry | 22. Nicholas Tate | 35. Perry Letsinger |
| 10. Mrs. Chisolm | 23. Raymond Nelson | 36. Reverend Nelson D.
Tate |
| 11. Lily Hopkins | 24. Doris Tate | |
| 12. Ruth Johnson
(Keaton) | 25. Harriet Scruggs | |
| 13. Lottie Miller | 26. Virginia Scruggs | |

Metuchen's Black Churches



The Negro population of the borough is served by four churches, the oldest being the Bethel Methodist which was organized in 1891 and a building erected on Central avenue in 1892. Others are the New Hope Baptist Church, located on Smith street, the Second Baptist Church on Durham avenue and the Christadelphian Church on Orchard street.

Bethel A.M.E. Church (1891-1999)
First Black Church in Metuchen, Durham Avenue



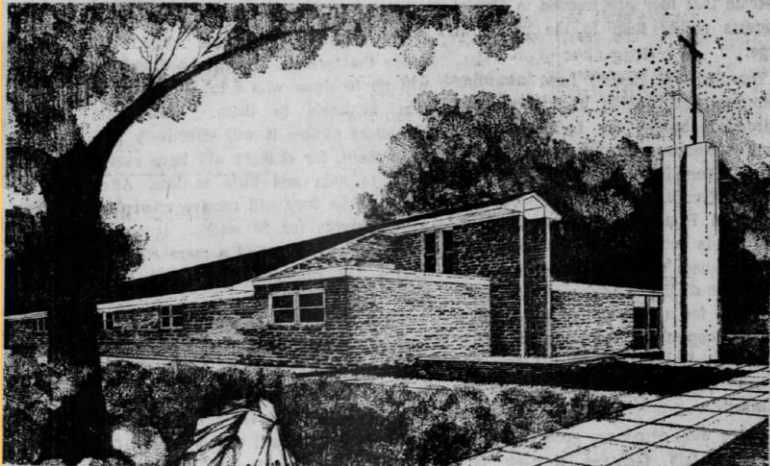
A New Colored Church.

Certificates of incorporation were filed in the County Clerk's office at New Brunswick, on Monday afternoon, for the Bethel African M. E. Church, of Metuchen. The incorporators are James H. Jewell, President; Oscar Green, Secretary; Amos M. Tunison, Sharp Dunham, Charles Moffatt and Henry Hegaman, Trustees.

Second Baptist Church of Metuchen



New Hope Baptist Church



PROPOSED CHURCH BUILDINGS—This is an architect's drawing of the proposed New Hope Baptist Church, Metuchen. The congregation has approved construction of the \$105,000 education wing, the first in a two-part building program.



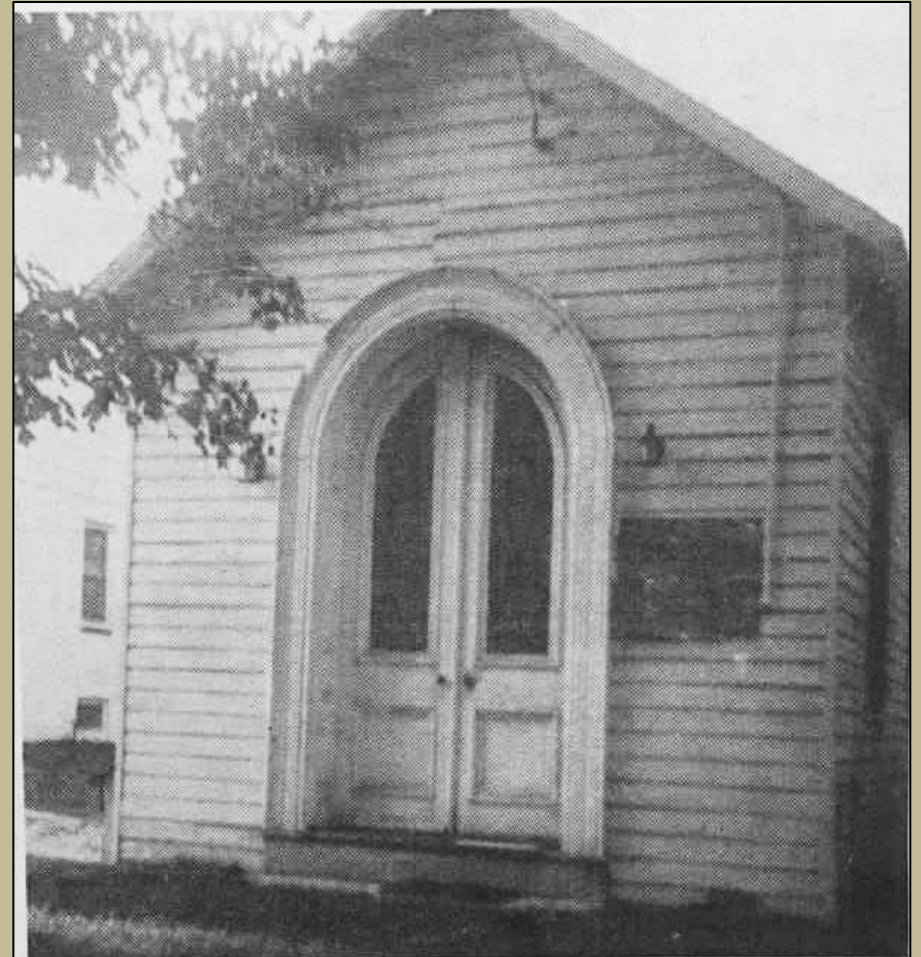
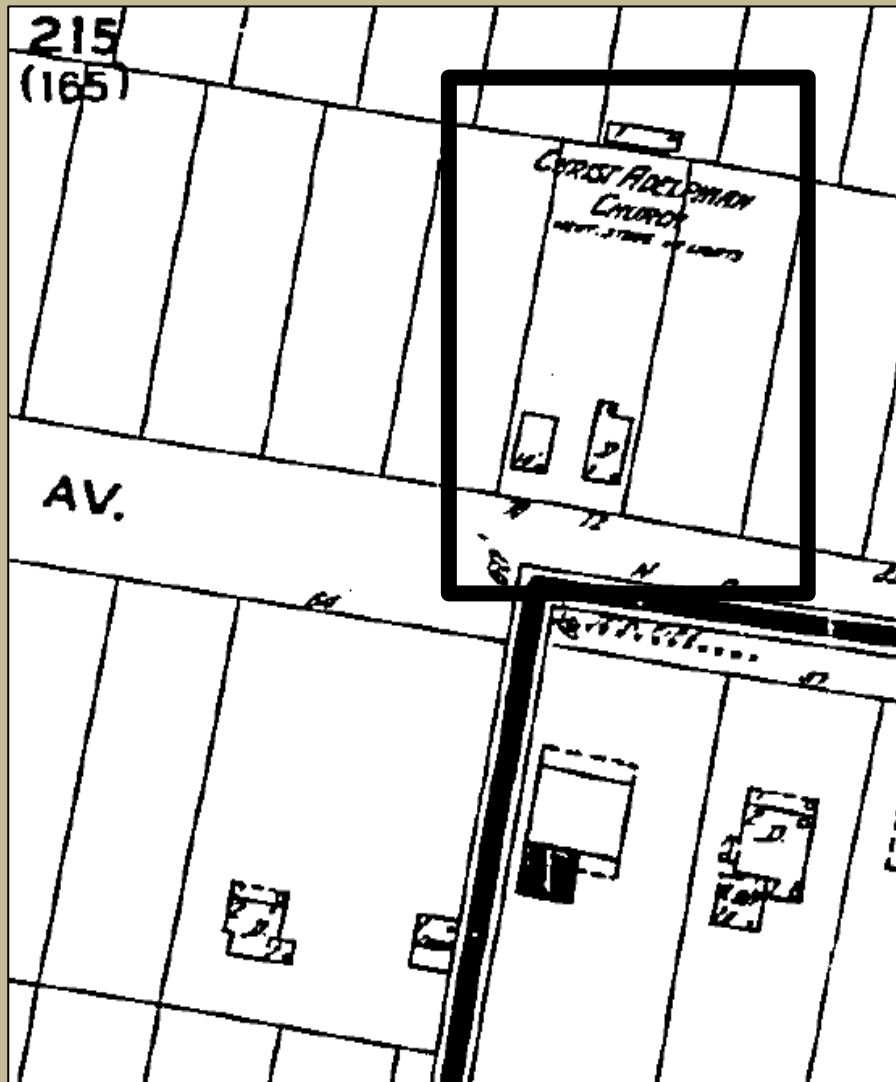
COMMUNITY CENTER—The Rev. Joseph J. Dale speaks with Mrs. George Johnson, left, expansion chairman; and Mrs. Virgil Brockman, president of the Missionary Society for the New Hope Baptist Church of Metuchen. The three are helping with the program for the open house of the congregations new Education Building which will serve as a community center.



IN THE SPIRIT — Members of the New Hope Baptist Church are participating with a booth that will offer baked goods and delicatessen items, with church members on hand, dressed in glittering aprons and clown hats. Putting finishing touches on the aprons are from left, Mrs. Almorian Brown, Mrs. Carson Tutt and Mrs. Sallie DeVore.



Christadelphian Church of Metuchen



Metuchen-Edison Branch NAACP

Metuchen

The NAACP will meet today at 8 p.m. in the Borough Improvement League House, Middlesex Ave.

Dr. Willis Elliott will speak on "Theology and Christian Faith" at the Union Service at 8 p.m. in the First Baptist Church Sunday. The service is sponsored by the Metuchen Council of Churches.

Officers Installed By Metuchen NAACP

Metuchen — Michael Dolan of 46 Jonesdale Ave. was installed as president of the Metuchen branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People last night in the Metuchen Public Library. He succeeds Perry Letsinger.

Other officers installed were: Vice president, Basco Dixon; recording secretary, Mrs. Gardenia Emanuel, and treasurer, Letsinger.



Woolworth Protests in 1960

Woolworth Store To Be Picketed

Pickets will be on hand to mark the opening of the new F. W. Woolworth store in the Menlo Park Shopping Center tomorrow, it was announced today by the Central Jersey Civil Rights Council.

The demonstrators will protest the company's policy of refusing lunch counter service to Negro customers in its Southern stores.

A delegation will visit the store manager to explain the purpose of the demonstration.

Pickets are expected from several communities in Middlesex and Somerset counties.



Pickets at Woolworth Dispersed

EDISON — Three Edison patrolmen last night dispersed without incident a group of Negroes who were picketing the F. W. Woolworth store in the Menlo Park Shopping Center.

Today the Central Jersey Civil Rights Council called the dispersement "illegal."

The officers were called to the scene after Henry Leeds, foreman for Sommer Bros. Construction Co. of Woodbridge, which owns the property, requested that the pickets be ordered to leave.

In Front of Store

Leeds noticed the Negroes in front of the Woolworth Store when he arrived at 6:50 p. m. Patrolmen Richard Barrett, John Herm-

sen and Ernest Bertha were called into the case at 7:45 p. m.

Leeds told Barrett that the group was in front of the store, and since the store was on private property, he wanted the picketing stopped . . . "unless the pickets have a court order allowing them to do so."

Wendell G. Addington of 226 Phillips Rd., Franklin Township, publicity chairman for the council, said it was the first time outside the Deep South that police halted "a peaceful demonstration against F. W. Woolworth's policy of refusing lunch counter service to Negro customers in Southern stores."

Restaurant

TAKING APPLICATIONS
FULL TIME AND PART TIME

RESTAURANT

Several Openings Available

Permanent Positions

Hours Can Be Arranged

Apply:

F.W. WOOLWORTH

Menlo Park Mall, Edison, N.J.

Metuchen Municipal Pool - 1967



Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Statue

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1990

350 at unveiling of life-size bust of Martin King Jr.

METUCHEN — A crowd of more than 350 people came out to see the unveiling of a life-size bust of Martin Luther King Jr. at a ceremony held by the Metuchen Civil Rights Commission yesterday.



The borough of Metuchen is ready to repair this damaged bust of Martin Luther King Jr.

King statue to be unveiled Sunday

By **PAULA V. INGRASSIA**

THE REVIEW

METUCHEN — The new bust of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will be unveiled in a ceremony Sunday on the 25th anniversary of the civil rights leader's assassination.

The original sculptor, John Cobbs was commissioned by the borough to create the bronze bust to replace the original, which was vandalized in November.

The bust will be placed on its marble base at Martin Luther King Park, Route 27, next to the library.

Marchers are expected to leave from Second Baptist Church, 100 Durham Ave., and New Hope Baptist Church, Hampton Street, at about 1:30 p.m. following Palm Sunday services. The dedication ceremony is expected to begin at 2:30 p.m.

Guests include Yvette Dunn, chairwoman of the Metuchen Human Rights Commission, Barry Albin of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Rev. Ronald Owens of New Hope Baptist Church, Rev. Williams of Second Baptist Church, Martin Spritzer of

the Middlesex County Human Relations Commission, Christie Davis of Sen. Frank Lautenberg's office and Mayor Susan Marshall.

"We're here to reflect on basically what Martin Luther King has taught and what we have learned," said Reginald Johnson, president of the Metuchen-Edison Branch of the NAACP. "Middlesex County is one of the most diverse areas in the state and we all have to learn to get along."

Immediately following the ceremony there will be a reception at the library.

Minnie Bell Veal (1907-1985) Educator & Community Leader

Minnie Bell Veal



MINNIE BELL VEAL
...champion of the poor

ATLANTA — Minnie Bell Veal, founder of the former Potters Community Center in Edison, died Dec. 28, 1985, at her home here.

She was a resident of Edison for more than 50 years and moved to Atlanta two years ago.



Minnie Veal, at right, director of activities at the North Edison playground on Grove Avenue, instructs children during yesterday's Junior Olympics at John P. Stevens High School. Mrs. Veal was honored with a plaque from the township and children for her "outstanding service and dedication" to the Edison Recreation Department and the community. For 30 years, she has directed the summer playground program in North Edison and held daily after-school programs for children at the North Edison Gardens complex. Above, from left, Monty Haskins, Myung Kim and Alford Lovell race to the finish line in the Edison Junior Olympics 100-yard dash for 12-year-olds. Nearly 500 children from Edison's 25 playgrounds competed in the event.



Paul Bustill Robeson (1898-1976)
Athlete, Lawyer, Activist, Performer

Potter's Civil Improvement Club, Inc.
Is Sponsoring



**PAUL
ROBESON**
IN A CONCERT
THURSDAY, SEPT. 18th
8:30 P. M.
AT
PLAINFIELD H. S.
AUDITORIUM

TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED AT—
Elks Home - 129 Pfld. Ave.
YWCA - - - 300 E. 5th St.
YMCA - - Watchung Ave.
Reserved Seats - - 2.40
General Admission - 1.80

BENEFIT OF
POTTER'S CROSSING COMMUNITY CENTER BUILDING FUND

His program was composed of folk songs, excerpts from Mendelssohn and Moussorgsky, a Hebraic chant and Negro spirituals. His encores included "The Four Insurgent Generals," a Spanish Loyalist song, and "Old Man River." In the latter, he changed the words, "I'm tired of living and scared of dying" to "I must keep fighting until I'm dying." He also sang "The House I Live In," and was applauded in the midst of the song at the point where America is described as "a place to speak my mind out."

He read Othello's last speech from "Othello" and an anti-discrimination poem, "The Freedom Train," by Langston Hughes at the conclusion of his program.

Negro Leagues Baseball



1931 Season

Legion Nine To Meet Brooklyn Royal Colored Giants Here

June 8	Brooklyn Royal Giants	July 27	Hilldale
June 15	Detroit Clowns	Aug 3	Baltimore Black Sox
June 22	NY Black Yankees	Aug 10	Cleveland Cubs
June 29	Cuban Stars	Aug 17	Hilldale
July 7	House of David	Sept 1	NY Black Yankees
July 14	NY Black Yankees		



Biz Mackey



Pop Lloyd



Martin Dihigo

Newark Eagles Topple Metuchen Club, 14-13

Colored Clouters Produce Winning Run in Sixth; Regan Stars at Bat

METUCHEN, May 22. — All pitchers were treated alike here last evening when the Newark Eagles of the Negro National League upset the Metuchen Baseball Club 14 to 13 in one of the wierdest games seen in this borough in many years. Darkness halted the slugfest in the sixth in-

ning. A five-run rally in the first inning, featured by Ernie Sabo's home run clout with two mates aboard, provided the Brainsy Borough nine with an early lead, but the Newarkers, after blowing a six-run lead in the fifth, pushed across the winning counter in the sixth frame.

Newark used four pitchers and of the quartet only Nichols, who pitched shutout ball in the second and third frames, escaped trouble. McDuffie, who essayed to stop the locals, yielded seven runs in his two-inning sojourn on the hillock. Beverly fell victim of the six-run uprising by the Brainsy Borough batsmen in the fifth and Evans finished the game by holding the locals scoreless in the sixth.

The Metuchen batsmiths collected 17 hits, four of which were drilled out by Manager Blackie Regan. Bud Humphries and Bob MacKinney yielded 13. Humphries gave up nine of the 14 Newark

runs in the three innings he worked.

The box score:

Newark Eagles (14)	
	a.b.r. h.p.o. a. e.
Dandridge, 3b	5 2 2 1 2 1
Wells, ss	5 2 3 0 0 0
Williams, 2b	4 1 2 2 2 0
Stone, rf	4 0 0 0 0 0
Suttles, 1b	2 3 1 7 0 0
Christopher, lf	3 2 2 0 0 1
Thomas, cf	3 1 2 1 0 0
Ruffen, c	4 2 0 6 0 0
McDuffie, p	1 0 1 1 1 0
Nichols, p	1 0 0 0 0 0
Beverly, p	2 1 0 0 0 0
Evans, p	0 0 0 0 0 0

Totals	34 14 13 18 5 2
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Metuchen (13)	
	a.b.r. h.p.o. a. e.
Jacobson, cf	3 3 2 0 0 0
Marsicano, 2b	5 3 3 3 0 0
Rodriguez, 1b	4 1 2 3 0 0
Sabo, lf	4 1 2 3 0 0
Newson, c	4 0 2 4 0 1
Galinsky, rf	2 1 0 1 0 0
Manuel, ss	4 1 0 3 3 0
Regan, 3b	4 1 4 1 1 1
Humphries, p	1 0 0 0 3 0
MacKinney, p-rf	2 1 1 0 0 0
Gresh, c	2 1 1 0 0 0

Totals	35 13 17 18 7 2
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Score by innings:

Eagles	144 131-14
Metuchen	520 060-13

Two-base hits: Jacobson, Sabo, Rodriguez, Gresh, Regan, Suttles, Wells. Three-base hits: Williams, Christopher. Home run: Sabo. Double plays: Dandridge to Williams to Suttles; McDuffie to Williams to Suttles. Struck out: by McDuffie 4, by Nichols 2, by Humphries 1, by MacKinney 2. Umpires: Danford and Sroyak.



**Walter Qualls
(1938-1987)**

**Metuchen's
First Black
Councilperson**

Gardenia Emanuel (1898-1990) Community Leader

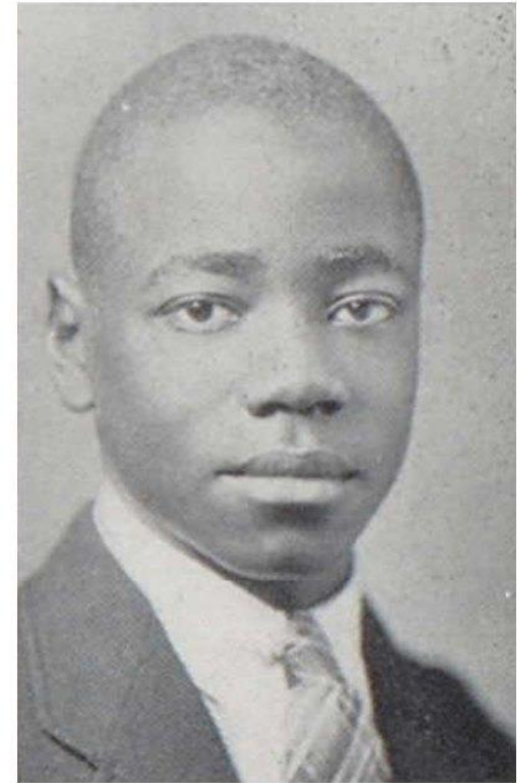


• • • Two Bronze Stars

Pfc. Alston A. Emanuel of 219 Central avenue, has recently received awarded for participation in the Normandy campaign June 6-July 29, 1944. The second star was for battle participation in the Northern France campaign on Jan. 31, 1945.

Private Emanuel was not heard from by his family for six months after the Normandy campaign. It was later learned that he was hospitalized for wounds. His latest letter, written April 24, reported him as well.

Private Emanuel is the son of Mrs. Gardenia Emanuel well known in Metuchen, and the nephew of Mrs. Rose Wright. His wife is one of the first two Negro telephone operators recently employed in New York City. Their attractive daughter, five-year-old Carol, is a kindergarten pupil at Franklin School in which Private Emanuel attended school.





CHARLES BUTLER

AGE: 76 ♦ PERTH AMBOY

Charles L. Butler, 76, of Perth Amboy died Saturday, July 7, 2007, in New Brunswick.



Born in New Brunswick, he formerly lived in Rahway and Metuchen. He was a Navy veteran of the Korean War.

Charley Butler, despite his Inter-service defeat, goes down as one of the all-time greats among Navy boxers. For the past four years, Butler has battled his way to an All-Navy boxing championship, a feat unheralded in modern All-Navy sports history. The husky Metuchen, N. J., youngster began his reign of All-Navy crowns in 1952 when he defeated Don Lee, SN, USN, for the light heavyweight title. The following year, Butler successfully defended his light heavy title as he defeated Ron Clark, AN, USN, of NAS Alameda.

In 1954, Butler dropped down to the middleweight class and took that All-Navy title as he decisioned Henry Brown, FN, USN, of NAS Alameda. And this year, it was a determined Butler that stepped into the squared circle with the game Antoine Bergeaux, SA, USN, of NTC San Diego.

Butler clinched his fourth crown in the last fifteen seconds of round two with two quick rights to the head and a short left jab that only traveled about 14 inches, but had enough power to chill Bergeaux.

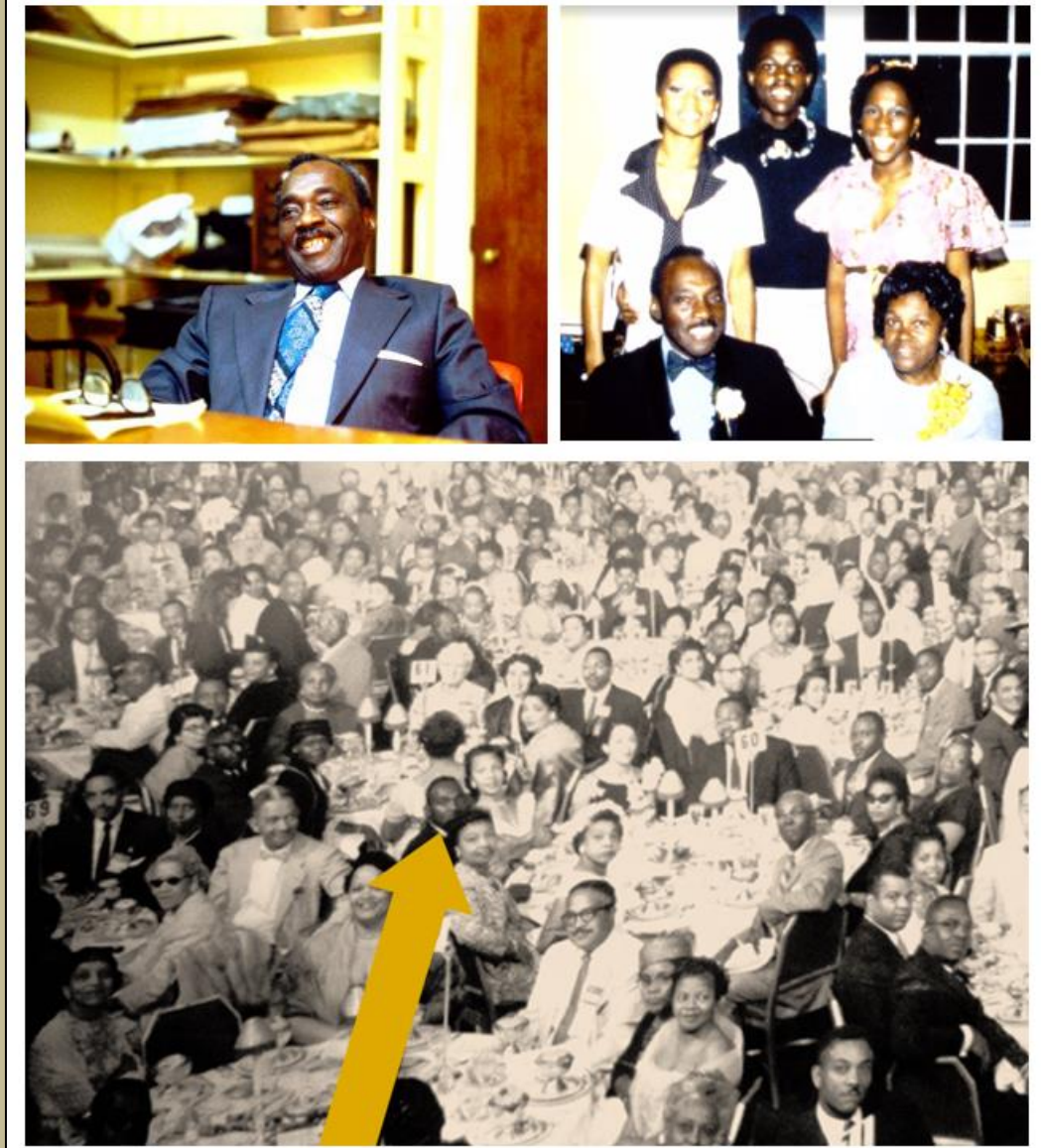
—Rudy C. Garcia, JO1, USN.

**Sgt. Charles Lee
“Charlie” Butler
(1931-2007)**

**Navy Veteran and
Champion Boxer**

Perry Lee Letsinger (1903-1993))

Community Leader



Sgt. George Rosco Conklin Smith (1886-1918)

Soldier, WWI



Form 1 240 REGISTRATION CARD		No. 26
1	Name in full <i>George R. C. Smith</i>	Age in yrs <i>30</i>
2	Home address <i>31 Pearl Place Metuchen N.J.</i>	
3	Date of birth <i>July 18 1886</i>	
4	Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? <i>Natural Born</i>	
5	Where were you born? <i>Cass County Virginia U.S.</i>	
6	If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?	
7	What is your occupation? <i>30 Babcock</i>	
8	By whom employed? <i>No one at present</i>	
9	Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support? (specify which)? <i>Mother by Wife</i>	
10	Married or single (which)? <i>Married</i> Race (specify which)? <i>American</i>	
11	What military service have you had? Rank <i>Private</i> branch	
12	Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? <i>No</i>	
I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.		
<i>CA George R. C. Smith</i>		

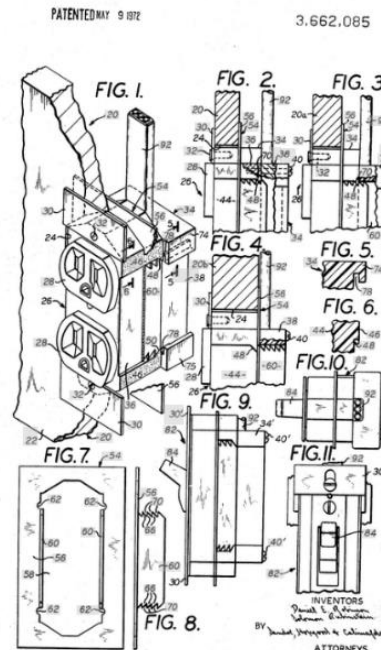
Sergeant Smith Buried With Military Honors

Sergeant Conklin Smith, 32 years of age, residing at 31 Pearl Place, Metuchen, and on December 7, after a protracted illness and was interred at the Dutch Reformed Cemetery, on Tuesday, Dec. 9. He was a resident of Metuchen for 28 years, being widely known in his town, New Brunswick and vicinity. He entered the army service November 19, 1917, and entrained for Camp Dix, where he was attached to the 350th Field Artillery, and later transferred to 50th Company, 13th Battalion, 153rd Depot Brigade. He was taken ill in camp and returned to his home in June. His condition became worse and he was taken to his bed in July.

A military escort of four comrades from Camp Raritan stood at attention at the bier during part of the service. Rev. Herbert Van Buren of Seabright a life-long friend, preached a touching sermon, paying tribute to the young man and his efforts to serve his country.

He leave to mourn his loss, a mother, Mrs. Emma Smith, a wife, Euritha Smith of Metuchen, a brother-in-law, Lurgi Crossman, now in France with the 350th Field Artillery, a father-in-law, James Crossman of New Brunswick, and a host of friends.

Sgt. Daniel Edward Robinson (1925-2013)
Cpl. Austin Franklin Banks (1923-2021)
Montford Point Marines





**QUEEN ESTHER
WOODS**

AGE: 90 ♦ METUCHEN

Queen Esther Moore Woods, 90, of Jonesboro, Ga., wife of Raymond Woods, passed away on Saturday, Sept. 9, 2006. She resided in Metuchen and Edison before moving to Jonesboro in 2004. The funeral will be held at 10:30 a.m. Saturday at Costello-Runyon Funeral Home. 568 Mid-



**Pvt. Queen Esther
Moore Woods
(1915-2006)**

**First Black unit of
the Women's Army
Corp in WWII**

Photo by Sheila Davis

Gail Fisher (1935-2000)

Actress

GAIL FISHER
"Fish"



Pert and mischievous, Gail is known for her high jump and high jinx. With a flare for singing and acting, she has entertained on our stage many times. Broadway, here she comes! "Ever sighing . . . ever singing," she is always friendly and well disposed.

Student Coordination Council, Cheerleader, Foot-lighters, F.T.A., G.A.A., Glee Club, Senior Play, Sophomore Dance.

A Future Star?

Gail Fisher, 24, another Metuchen High graduate, won honors of another sort.

She accepted a scholarship to the Lincoln Center of Performing Arts, her mother, Mrs. Ona Fisher of North Edison, announced this week.

Gail, currently on tour with "Raisin in the Sun," was the first Negro to win admission to the new school.

The young actress was in the original cast of "Purlie Victorious." She now lives in Manhattan.

Tune in on Mannix

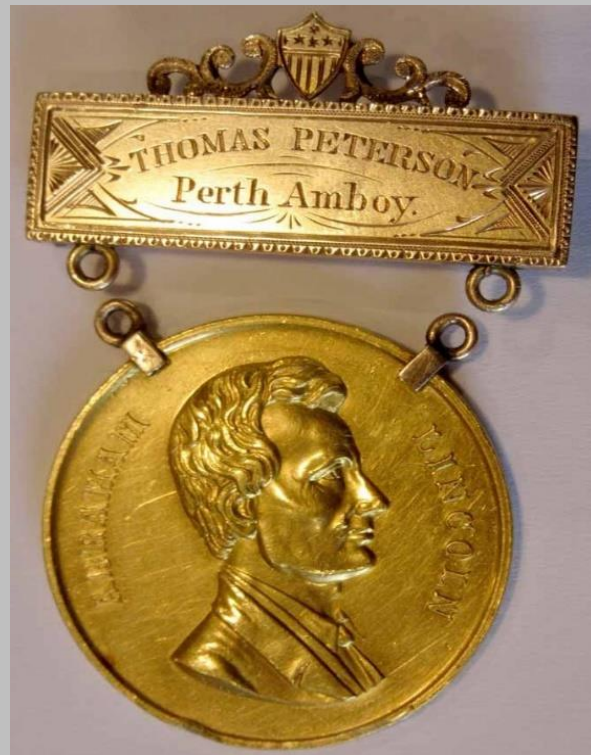
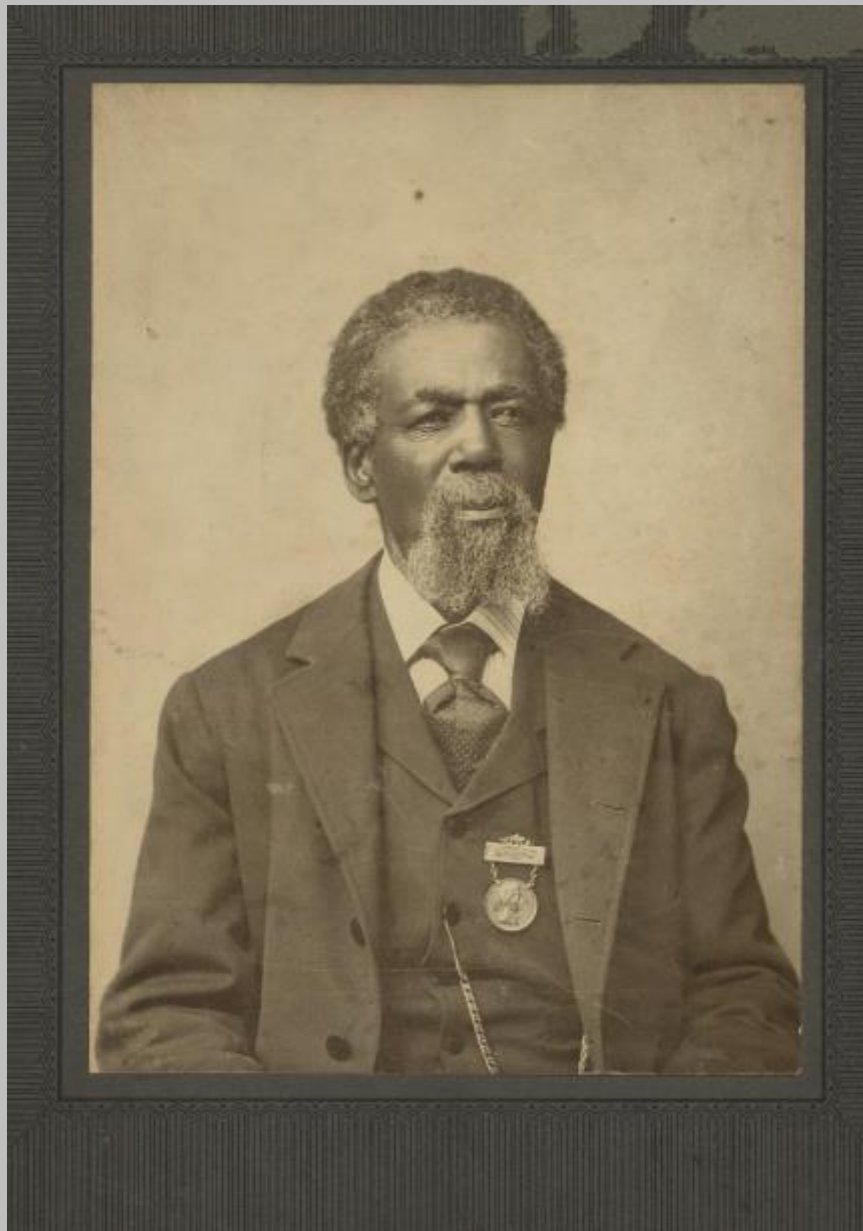
Gail Fisher, actress, model and Metuchen High School's first Negro cheerleader has a featured role in the TV series Mannix. Miss Fisher, who grew up in Edison and attended Metuchen High School, plays the role of Mannix's secretary. Miss Fisher made Recorder Billboard headlines some six years ago when she starred in the Buck's County Playhouse production of "A Raisin in the Sun."



Rodney Smith
Designer, Entrepreneur, Musician



Thomas Mundy Peterson (1824 - 1904)



The End?

Never!

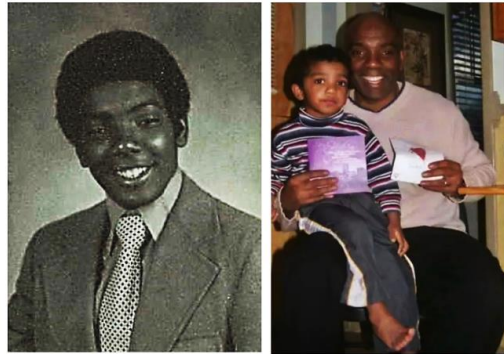
SO MANY MORE TO HONOR, SO MANY MORE TO COME!

Percy Milligan, 92, resident of Metuchen

METUCHEN — Percy Milligan, 92, of Blair Avenue died Thursday at Amboy Care Center, Perth Amboy. Born in the Kingston section of Franklin, Mr. Milligan had resided in Metuchen for the past 88 years. Mr. Milligan had been a chauffeur with Barr Brothers, Metuchen, before retiring. His wife, Georgie Ancrum Milligan, died in 1969. He is survived by a son, Percy Jr. of the Menlo Park section of Edison.



PERCY MILLIGAN ILL IN FRANCE
METUCHEN: Sept. 22 — Cpl. Percy Milligan, son of Mrs. George Milligan of Blair avenue, is ill with pneumonia at Marseilles, France.
 Cpl. Milligan has served 18 months overseas and is the recipient of three bronze stars for the campaigns of northern France, central Europe and the Rhineland.
 He can be reached at the following address: Cpl. Percy Milligan, 39776405, Hq. Det. 28th Q. M. Gr. (TC), APO 772, care postmaster, New York, N. Y.



Bernard Spigner remembered for his 'giant heart'

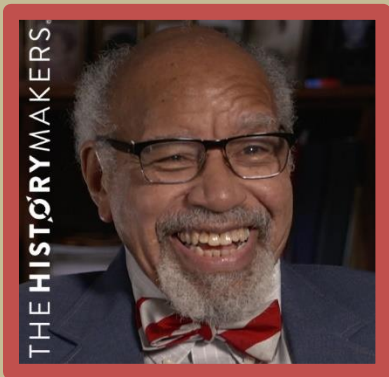
On April 23, Central Jersey lost one of her finest sons in Bernard Spigner. For those who were lucky enough to know him, they will always recall his gentle nature coupled with actions beyond his years on nearly any topic of discussion, sports, politics, news and everything in between.

On the local radio for five years, he reached out to Central Jerseyans with conviction, compassion and understanding. One begins with him on the radio and is awestruck as they were in person; he was the genuine article. I was fortunate to be a frequent listener of his program and called in very frequently. I was, by chance, his first caller on Sept. 11, 2001, calling him from across the street of the World Trade Center. It was a day when he never went home, giving his whole day to comfort an audience in shock and disbelief. I was also by chance his last caller on the air, a moment he said I looked back on with fond memories.

I am not alone in saying that Bernard will be missed. He was a man with a giant heart and strong moral character, a model citizen for us all. Any time I



Steve Zarucki (2/20/06) **Bernard Spigner, who died on April 23, is pictured at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford.**



Thinking More Many Things in Many Days

THE SUNDAY HOME NEWS

There Is Something For Almost All The Family

Romona Diane Tate
 Known for "D" being drum majorette, cultural personality.
Suppressed Desire: To find a way to get rid of her hair.
 For former: Being alone, matriculation, early days, husband, getting up early, some cultural people.
Wedding: Charles, Granddad Village, Washington, "Charles" "one" and "Charles" high hair style.
What to Come Next: Auntie's, Mommy, Color Guard, Freshman, Charles, B.A., One Chick, Chis, J. S. Tom.

Spicer-Tate Bridal Held In Metuchen



and...
 ????