



18.1996.1 Shaffer Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Delaware County  
Marker Text Review Report  
08/12/2014

## Marker Text

Structure, circa 1893, is Muncie's oldest standing public school building. Purchased by church congregation, circa 1928. Rallying point in August 1930 when bodies of two African-American men, lynched in Marion, were brought to Muncie for embalment by church's pastor J.E. Johnson, a mortician.

## Report

While some of the Shaffer Chapel historical marker text is difficult to verify with primary sources, all of the claims can be corroborated, except the statement regarding the building's origins as a school. This report will provide additional background on the history of the church, discuss further the significance of the Marion lynching, and demonstrate Shaffer Chapel's importance as a center of community solidarity in Muncie. The marker text refers to the 1930 lynching of two young African American men who were accused of crimes against a white couple. Accounts of the infamous Marion lynching vary greatly among sources, especially in newspaper articles. However, a few details remain fairly consistent across all accounts. (Copies of the newspaper articles referenced are available in IHB's extensive file for this marker; a lengthy annotated [bibliography](#) created by IUPUI Public History graduate students is also available.)

According to local newspaper reports, 19-year-old Abram Smith and 18-year-old Thomas Shipp, were arrested on the morning of August 7, 1930 on suspicion of the murder of Claude Deeter and the rape of Mary Ball.<sup>1</sup> A rumor circulated that they had confessed under questioning to the crimes. However, the two men would never stand trial or receive legal representation. A mob formed outside the Marion Jail where Shipp and Smith were being held, along with a sixteen-year-old African American boy named Herbert Cameron, who was allegedly riding with the two accused.<sup>2</sup> Some reports suggest that as a mix of news about the shooting, and racially charged rumors circulated, the mob grew to somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000 white men, women, and children. This was not a small gathering of KKK members who can be written off as extremists – it was a mob of average citizens, “perhaps the majority of the inhabitants of Grant County,” according to historian Emma Lou Thornbrough in *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*.<sup>3</sup>

On the evening of August 7, 1930, Smith and Shipp were torn from their cells by a white lynch mob and then beaten, abused, lynched, mutilated, and left hanging as “object lessons” to be contemplated by local African Americans.<sup>4</sup> The *Indianapolis Recorder* reported that the relatives of Mary Ball stated that Shipp and Smith were not the perpetrators of either crime.<sup>5</sup> The young men's bodies were finally cut down the morning following their brutal murder in Marion's Courthouse Square.<sup>6</sup> Because no black mortician operated in Marion, Reverend J. E. Johnson of Shaffer A.M.E. Chapel in Muncie set out for Marion to retrieve the young men's remains.<sup>7</sup> (Marion had a small, though visible African American presence, while Muncie's African American population was approximately two and a half times that of Marion.)<sup>8</sup>



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The marker's claim that Shaffer Chapel became a "rallying point" after the Marion lynching is difficult to confirm. There were rumors that a mob, possibly assisted by the KKK, would come to claim the bodies, and residents gathered at Shaffer to resist any such attempt.<sup>9</sup> According to historian Hurley C. Goodwall, "Muncie's colored community vowed that this was not going to happen and for the first time they armed and organized themselves using Shaffer Chapel A.M.E. Church as their headquarters and command post to ward off any mob."<sup>10</sup> An oral history interview with Thomas Wesley Hall, an African American resident of Muncie at the time of the lynching, also claims that Muncie's African American community may have played a role in protecting Shipp and Smith's bodies. In the interview, Hall confirms that Muncie's black community feared that a white mob would try to remove Ship and Smith from Reverend Johnson's mortuary, and so Muncie citizens gathered to protect the young men's bodies from further desecration.<sup>11</sup> Since Reverend Johnson's mortuary was located in the 1400 block of Highland Avenue in Muncie and Shaffer Chapel was located on the 1500 block it is plausible that the church served as a staging area for those defending the bodies of Shipp and Smith.<sup>12</sup> Newspaper accounts of what happened after the tragedy vary widely in the claims, much like those that described the event. Several articles mention that Shipp and Smith's bodies were moved to Muncie, and one article mentions that mortician Reverend Johnson transported the remains to prepare them for burial. Yet these newspaper accounts, including those in African American newspapers such as the *Indianapolis Recorder*, only acknowledge the efforts of the National Guard and local police in protecting the victims' bodies after the lynching.<sup>13</sup> No mob appeared; newspaper accounts confirm that Johnson returned Shipp's and Smith's bodies to Marion under National Guard escort following embalment.<sup>14</sup> Indiana Law provided that those found guilty of lynching could be given the death penalty or life in prison, while accessories could be imprisoned two to twenty years.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, Indiana law required that "any sheriff or other officer . . . who shall unlawfully suffer or permit such person [prisoner] to be taken from such custody and lynched, shall be deemed guilty of failure of official duty" and could be fined and removed from office.<sup>16</sup> Several newspaper articles speculated that the lynching was likely planned and that Marion's Sheriff, Jacob Campbell, was warned by the Indiana NAACP's President, Flossie Bailey, and others well in advance; but he took no action to prevent the mob from gathering.<sup>17</sup> Efforts to break up the mob as it formed were half-hearted, and as the rioters broke into the jail, Campbell refused to fire into the crowd, supposedly for fear of hitting the women and children present.<sup>18</sup> Campbell and several leaders of the lynching were indicted, but none were ever convicted for their crimes.<sup>19</sup> See James Madison's 2001 monograph, *A Lynching in the Heartland: Race and Memory in America*, for more information.

The marker's first statement about the "oldest standing public school building" is difficult to confirm. IHB now avoids the use of subjective and superlative terms such as "first," "best," "most," and "oldest." Such claims are often not verifiable and/or require extensive qualification to be truly accurate. More research is needed to prove that Shaffer Chapel was originally built in 1893 as a school.

Beyond the events described in the marker text, Shaffer Chapel and its community have a rich history of significant contributions to the African American community in Muncie and Indiana. An African American congregation came together to organize Shaffer Chapel African Methodist Episcopal



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(A.M.E.) Church in 1919. According to a 1973 church history, black Methodist believers convened at 1224 East Sixth Street on June 10, 1919, “to be organized as a church by Reverend J. P. Q. Wallace, the Presiding Elder of [the] Richmond District of the Indiana Conference.” In the course of the meeting, the core group selected the name Shaffer Chapel, presented by Sister Nora Sterling Tarver.<sup>20</sup>

Forty-eight individuals agreed to become the “founding congregation” of Shaffer Chapel, which was originally located at the intersection of Penn and Butler Streets in order to be within walking distance of other potential congregants and their children. Congregants purchased the property on September 5, 1920 for \$2,300 during the pastorate of Shaffer Chapel’s first minister, Reverend Benson. A June 1973 newspaper article states that Shaffer Chapel “moved to larger quarters at its present location, 1501 Highland” in 1929.<sup>21</sup> According to a Delaware County deed record, Ida McGalliard transferred ownership of lot 7 in block 42 of the Whitely Lane Company’s First Addition to the City of Muncie to the Trustees of Shaffer Chapel A.M.E. in 1928.<sup>22</sup> It is possible that this property included the school house the marker claims the congregation purchased in 1928. However, more research is needed to confirm this point.

Shaffer Chapel, like other black churches in the 1900s, functioned as a gathering place for spiritual and community-focused activities. In *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century* (2000), Emma Lou Thornbrough stressed that black churches were centers for welfare activities that provided a sense of “dignity and status,” as well as “opportunities for self-development and leadership.” In short, black churches supplied those services and esteem denied to African Americans during the post-World War I period of increased racism and extralegal violence.<sup>23</sup>

Shaffer Chapel members continued to spearhead communal initiatives into the late twentieth century. For example, the Tarver Women’s Missionary Society of Shaffer Chapel facilitated charitable activities in the black community of Muncie. In one of her 1970 Local Society Reports, president Lucille Williams, notes that her missionary chapter brought flowers to hospitalized church members and financially supported the local Action Incorporated and Salvation Army organizations.<sup>24</sup> According to church history and scholarly biographies, succeeding ministers of Shaffer Chapel emerged as influential social leaders and spokesmen for the black community in Muncie. Reverend A. J. Oliver aided in “securing many jobs for the Negro in Muncie.”<sup>25</sup> Starting in the 1920s, Reverend John E. Johnson aligned himself with other black leaders who worked to end segregation.<sup>26</sup> These activities included the prevention of “the construction of an all colored elementary school in the Whitely area.”<sup>27</sup>

Starting in 2011, the Whitely Community Council, Ball State University elementary education students, and neighborhood residents began working to create a fund to restore the Shaffer Chapel. According to the April 2014 newsletter of the Whitely Community Council, the project had raised \$55,000 “to refurbish and repair the run-down structure, signage, and landscape.” On March 30, 2014, a crowd of 50 people attended a “ground breaking restoration ceremony” at the chapel.<sup>28</sup>



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**Further Reading:**

James H. Madison, *A Lynching in the Heartland: Race and Memory in America* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

Cynthia Carr, *Our Town: A Heartland Lynching, A Haunted Town, and the Hidden History of White America* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2006), 143-146.

**Listen:**

"Strange Fruit: Anniversary of a Lynching," *Radio Diaries*, August 6, 2010,  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129025516>.

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Indianapolis Recorder accessed Center for Digital Scholarship, Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis, University Library, <http://ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections/IRecorder>

<sup>1</sup> "Marion Quiet After Lynchings," *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, August 8, 1930, 1-3, 5, 11; "Marion Residents Feel That Youth Arrest with Father for 'Trivial' Was Slugged To Death," *Indianapolis Recorder*, August 16, 1930, 1, 8; James H. Madison, *A Lynching in the Heartland: Race and Memory in America* (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 5-11, 88; Arthur Franklin Raper, *The Tragedy of Lynching* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933): 386-406.

<sup>2</sup> "Infuriated Mob Hangs Youths in Courthouse Yard," *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, August 8, 1930, 1, 11; "Marion Quiet After Lynchings: Infuriated Mob Hangs Youths in Courthouse Yard," *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, August 8, 1930, 1-3, 5, 11; "Marion Mob Lynches Two: Negroes Guilty of Murder and Rape Executed: 1,000 Men Force Way Into Jail, Hang Culprits Nearby," *Logansport Press*, August 8, 1930; *Indianapolis Recorder*, August 16, 1930, 1, 8; "Lynching Probe Ends, Marion," *The Indianapolis Recorder*, Oct 4, 1930, 1.

<sup>3</sup> "Infuriated Mob," 1, 11; Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*, 67.

<sup>4</sup> "Marion Quiet After Lynchings," 1-3, 5, 11; "Marion Residents Feel," 1, 8; "State Militia Stands Guard as Funeral Rites for Lynched Marion Youths Are Held," *Indianapolis Recorder*, August 16, 1930, 1; Raper, 386-406; James H. Madison, 5-11, 88; Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*, 67-69.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> "Marion Quiet After Lynchings," 1-3, 5, 11; "Marion Residents Feel," 1, 8; Madison, *Lynching in the Heartland*, 11.

<sup>7</sup> "Bodies of Lynched Negroes Brought To Local Mortuary," *Muncie Morning Star*, August 8, 1930; "Gather Lynchers' Names: Board of Inquiry at Marion Finds First 20 Reside in County," *The Logansport Press*, August 10, 1930, 1, 6; Hurley Goodall and J. Paul Mitchell, *History of Negroes in Muncie* (Muncie, Indiana: Ball State University Press, 1976), 25; Hurley Goodall and Elizabeth Campbell, "A City Apart," in *The Other Side of Middletown*, ed. Luke Eric Lassiter, Hurley Goodall, Elizabeth Campbell and Michelle Natasya Johnson (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004): 62; Thomas Wesley Hall, interview by



Johnnie Johnson, circa 1971-1976, *Black Muncie History Project*, Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University, [http://libx.bsu.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/MidOrHis&CISOPTR=49](http://libx.bsu.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/MidOrHis&CISOPTR=49).

<sup>8</sup> Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*, 67; Jack S. Blocker Jr., "Black Migration to Muncie," *Indiana Magazine of History* 92:4 (December 1996): 303.

<sup>9</sup> "State Militia Stands Guard," 1; Thomas Wesley Hall, Interview by Johnnie Johnson; Jessica Booth and Eric Efaw, "Engaging in Religious Practices" in *The Other Side of Middletown*, 210-11; Cynthia Carr, *Our Town: A Heartland Lynching, A Haunted Town, and the Hidden History of White America* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2006), 127;

<sup>10</sup> Hurley C. Goodall, *A Time of Terror: The Lynching of Two Young Black Men in Marion, Indiana on August 7, 1930* (Muncie, Indiana: Middletown Center, Ball State University, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> "Guardsmen on Patrol; Fear Mob Violence," *Avalanche Journal*, August 10, 1930, 1, accessed NewspaperArchive.com; Thomas Wesley Hall, interview by Johnnie Johnson, 9-10.; Goodall and Mitchell, *Negroes in Muncie*, 25-26. In *A History of Negroes in Muncie*, historians Hurley Goodall and J. Paul Mitchell quote Muncie resident Raymond Pittman, who was among the defenders outside Reverend Johnson's mortuary. Pittman's account of events after the lynching in Marion supports many of the details of Hall's memories. One August 10 newspaper article also mentions a demonstration in Muncie after the lynching, which may refer to the crowd that gathered at Shaffer Chapel.

<sup>12</sup> "Bodies of Lynched Negroes Brought to Local Mortuary," *The Muncie Morning Star*, August 9, 1930, 2; "Precinct Map of 'Whitely' in Muncie, Indiana," submitted by applicant. Reverend Johnson's mortuary was located at 1414 East Sixth Street. Shaffer Chapel is located at 1501 E. Highland Avenue.

<sup>13</sup> "State Militia Stands Guard," 1; "Marion is Calm through the Night," *Marion Chronicle*, August 8, 1930, 10; "Quiet Follows Night Tragedy at County Jail," *Marion Chronicle*, August 8, 1930, 1, 6; "Troops Leave Marion Today," *Marion Chronicle*, August 11, 1930, 1; "Bodies of Lynched Negroes," 2; "Tense Feeling May End with Negro Burials," *Muncie Morning Star*, August 11, 1930, 1; "State Militia Stands Guard," 1, 8; "Marion Residents Feel," 1, 8.

<sup>14</sup> "Gather Lynchers' Names," 1, 6.; "State Militia Stands Guard, 1; "Marion is Calm," 10; Goodall and Mitchell, *Negroes in Muncie*, 25-26; Goodall and Campbell, "A City Apart," 62.

<sup>15</sup> "Offenses Against the Public Peace," *Laws of the State of Indiana Passed at the General Assembly Begun on the Fifth Day of January, A.D. 1905*, Chapter 169, sec. 440, p. 685; Robert C. Anderson, "Obtain Names of 20 Alleged Dual Lynchers," *Muncie Sunday Star*, August 10, 1930.

<sup>16</sup> "Offenses Against the Public Peace," *Laws of the State of Indiana Passed at the General Assembly Begun on the Fifth Day of January, A.D. 1905*, Chapter 169, sec. 443, p. 686; Harold C. Freightner, "Indiana County Government," *Indiana History Bulletin* 9:6 (March 1932): 302.

<sup>17</sup> "Negroes Want Sheriff Out: Committee of Eleven Asks Leslie to Force Campbell to Quit Job," *The Logansport Press*, August 21, 1930; "The Marion Lynching," *Indianapolis Recorder*, August 16, 1930, 4; Carr, *Our Town*, 46, 99.





<sup>18</sup> “Infuriated Mob,” 1-3; “Cameron To Be Tried in Grant Court,” *The Logansport Press*, August 9, 1930, 1; “Negro Killers Hanged in Courthouse Yard After Big Mob Storms Jail,” *Muncie Evening Press*, August 8, 1930, 1; “Indiana Troops Go to Lynching Scene,” *New York Times*, August 9, 1930, 4, accessed ProQuest.

<sup>19</sup> “Next Step in Lynching is Public Test,” *The Vidette-Messenger*, August 8, 1930; Robert C. Anderson, “Obtain Names of 20 Alleged Dual Lynchers,” *Muncie Sunday Star*, August 10, 1930, 1, 8; “State Aides Push Inquiry,” *The Marion Chronicle*, August 12, 1930; “Leslie Advises Group to Wait Action by Jury,” *The Marion Chronicle*, August 21, 1930; “Ogden Swoops Down on Marion Lynchers,” *The Indianapolis Recorder*, October 18, 1930, 1; “Drop Charges in the Marion Lynching Case,” *The Indianapolis Recorder*, March 21, 1931, 1; Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks*, 68; Carr, *Our Town*, 143-146.; Madison, *Lynching in the Heartland*, 70, 89-92;

Two days after the double lynching, an inquiry board, which included deputy attorneys-general Earl Stroup and Merl M. Wall, Grant County Prosecutor Harley F. Hardin, and Sheriff Campbell, formed to investigate the lynchings. Despite the board’s initial promises to probe the lynchings, articles in the *Muncie Morning Star*, *Muncie Evening Press*, and the *Marion Chronicle* revealed the board’s lack of dedication to the investigation, as well as the reluctance of its members to prosecute those responsible for the violence. Following the inquiry board’s first meeting, Hardin already expressed doubts that justice would be done, stating, “I feel sure that indictments may be obtained but convictions look doubtful to me.” By August 16, the board filed affidavits against six ringleaders of the lynching, but Grant County Judge O.D. Clawson refused to sign indictments to authorize their arrest.

Local newspapers cited several reasons for the board’s slow deliberation process, none of which acknowledged racial discrimination as a factor. In the newspapers, Indiana Governor Harry Leslie argued that the prosecution of mob members would incite riots and further violence against Marion’s African American community. Several articles also claimed that Hardin received letters threatening him with violence should he move forward with the prosecutions. Other articles cited public opinion as a deterrent. For example, an August 8, 1930 article from the *Vidette-Messenger* indicated that public opinion would influence whether or not the mob was convicted. Hardin openly expressed his opinion that Shipp and Smith “didn’t get much more than was coming to them.”

Some officials did try to bring the mob to justice. While the grand jury continued to defer the investigation through September, State Attorney General James Ogden personally filed charges in October against seven members of the mob and Marion’s sheriff, Jacob Campbell. Only two of the men were brought to trial, and they were soon acquitted. By March of 1931, Ogden dismissed the charges against the other six men and Campbell, believing it was unlikely that he could obtain a conviction.

<sup>20</sup> “History of Shaffer Chapel A.M.E.,” pamphlet, *Lucille Lucas Williams Papers, 1897-1982*, Folder 6, Box 2, Indiana Historical Society, Manuscript Collection.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*; “Church to Burn Mortgage,” undated newspaper article, Folder 4, Box 1, *Virtea Downey Papers, 1913-1985*, Indiana Historical Society, Manuscript Collection.

<sup>22</sup> Deed of Sale from Ida McGalliard, Erville A. McGalliard, Verda McGalliard, Cora O. Barber, Ross Barber, Pearl I. Piner, and Raymond H. Piner to Trustees of Shaffer Chapel A.M.E., July 14, 1928 (filed 22 January 1929), Delaware County, Deed Record 210, submitted by applicant.



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<sup>23</sup> Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks*, 17, 48; Goodall and Mitchell, *A History of Negroes in Muncie*, 25.

<sup>24</sup> Women's Missionary Society, "Local Society Report to the Area Meeting," April 11, 1970, Folder 13, Box 2, *Lucille Lucas Williams Papers, 1897-1982*, Indiana Historical Society, Manuscript Collection.

<sup>25</sup> "History of Shaffer Chapel A.M.E. Church," pamphlet.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*; Hurley Goodall, "Reverend John E. Johnson: Minister, Undertaker, Businessman, 1884-1931," n.p., submitted by applicant.

<sup>27</sup> Goodall, "Reverend John E. Johnson" n.p.; For more information about integration efforts see: Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks*, 63.

<sup>28</sup> Whitley Community Council, *Newsletter*, April 2014,  
<https://whitelycc.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/wcc-newsletter-april-2014.pdf>.