



REV. WILLIAM WILLIAMS

Practically nothing is known about the early life and preparation of the Rev. William Williams, third pastor of The Union.

He was called to the pastorate at Union in 1861 and served for eight years, during those hectic days of the Civil War and early Reconstruction. His optimistic reports and fine outlook for his race indicate the greatness and nobleness of his character.

During his ministry he led the church from Lewis Street to the North Street site, and increased its membership from 65 to 210. That he was held in very high regard by the other ministers of the city may be attested to by the action of the Rev. Noah Davis, founder and wholetime

minister of the Saratoga Street venture, when that very distinguished prelate lay dying in 1866. He assembled his little congregation about him and urged them to disband and go to join the Union Baptist Church under the Rev. William Williams. This new life and added manpower forged Union a step ahead and gave her a prestige she had never before known.

On May 2nd, 1869 the Rev. Williams conducted his regular morning worship as he was wont to do; baptized five persons in the afternoon and was in the act of giving out the hymn, "Lord Why Was I Made to Hear Thy Voice." when he lost his speech and fainted. He never regained his speech and died eleven days thereafter. He was buried within Laurel Cemetery with other notables of our great church.

In tradition and memory he was revered as one of the strong characters within our early denominational life. In later years the leaders of our church honored him by naming its school for him and Moses. "The Clayton-Williams Seminary."