

1949, the church appears to have the double towers. The current building is brick veneer with a gabled roof and no towers. The house depicted just south of the church is now attached to the extended church building. The building may have been remodeled or replaced in the mid-20th century.

32

St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, Cemetery, & School (Rosenwald)*

St. Paul, or St. Paul's, Missionary Baptist Church is located just under 5 miles south of Muscle Shoals near the former Melrose Plantation, east of Cook Lane. The church was founded in 1891 along with an adjacent cemetery and a school in the early 20th century. The St. Paul School was one of eight Rosenwald schools in Colbert County. It was a one-room, one-teacher schoolhouse built in 1925. The school cost a total of \$2,000 to build using funds gathered from the community - \$1,150 from the African American community, \$450 from public county funds, and \$400 from the Rosenwald Fund. The school building was insured for a total of \$1,350. It was in use from 1925 to about 1970.

The St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery was most likely established at the turn of the 20th century alongside the church. The one-acre cemetery is immediately in front of the church to the west and certainly contains more than the 19 graves on record. The earliest recorded grave is that of Sallie Beulah Nolan (1907-1970), but most are from the current century. According to a local historian, several of the early unmarked graves are known to the church members and are filled in as needed. Common surnames buried here include Belue, Byrd, Freedman, Hillman, and Winston. Belue is very common, most

likely descendants of the slaves of the Belues as this area was once known as Beluetown before the Civil War.

The church first appears unlabeled on the 1926 USGS topographic map. By 1936, the USGS/TVA topographic map clearly labels the St. Paul School as a separate building from the adjacent church and cemetery. However, like most rural African American schoolhouses, the St. Paul School is no longer in use since 1971 although the building survived for some time after.

33

Shady Dell (Dr. A. W. Davis House)

The name "SHADY DELL" is neatly inscribed into the concrete step leading to the circa 1920 Tuscumbia home of Dr. Arthur W. Davis, the first African American physician in northwest Alabama. Dr. Davis' parents, Hannibal and Mary Davis, both most likely born slaves in the 1850s, were from Perry, Alabama. His father is listed a carpenter on the 1880 census. By 1900, Dr. Davis was still living with his parents in Perry and working as a teacher. In the following years he moved to the Tuscumbia area, where he presumably meet his wife, Hattie L. Jackson, of Tuscumbia. They married in 1906.

By 1910, Arthur Davis is recorded to be a doctor living with his wife and young daughter, Sadie, on Washington Street. The 1920 census for Tuscumbia was recorded in January of that year. By then, the Davis family had already moved into their home at 606 8th Street – Shady Dell. Dr. Davis passed away in January of 1941. The Dutch Colonial Revivalist home Davis built in southeast Tuscumbia in a historically African American neighborhood still stands but is in dire need of preservation.



(Below) 1920 Federal Census Excerpt Showing Arthur W. Davis as "Physician" (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com)

(Above) Aerial Photograph of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, Cemetery, and School, 1949 (University of Alabama, Historical Map Collection, Online)

8	606/155217	Davis	Arthur W	Head	DF	M	35	44	7m		Physician	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Yes	Physician	60
			Hattie J.	Wife		F	36	36	7m		None	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Yes	None	
			Sadie	Daughter		F	13	3	7m		None	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Yes	None	

KEY

- COMMUNITIES
- CEMETERIES
- CHURCHES
- PLANTATIONS
- SCHOOLS
- OTHER

* Indicates a Historical - Non-Extant Resource