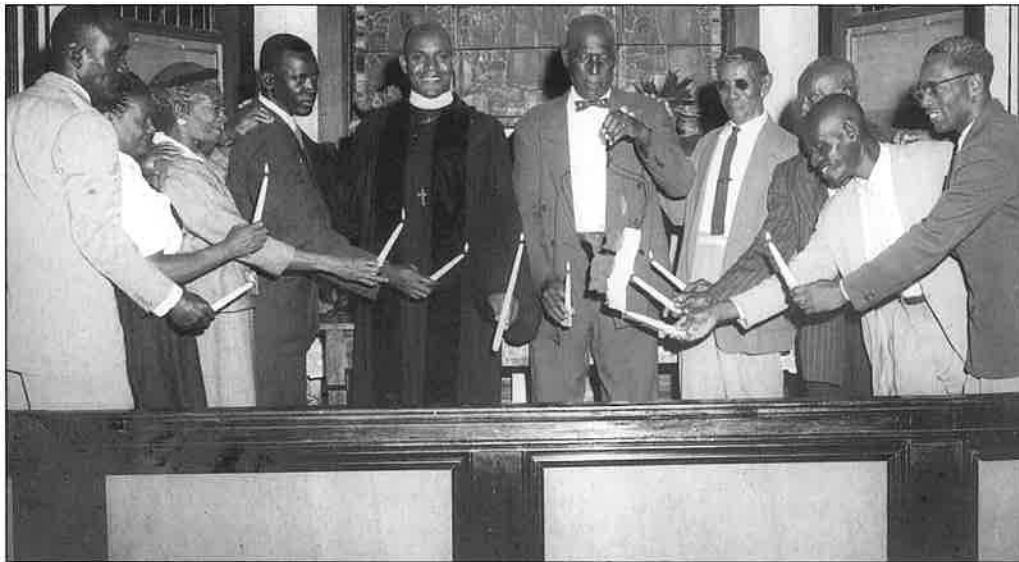




Most black ministers were merely visitors to Key West, only serving a congregation for a specified time. However, Rev. Franklin Hooper was a hardworking, dependable, committed leader in the Key West community. He was pastor of historic Cornish Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church during the mid-1950s to mid-1960s. He taught the bible, counseled the youth, and still made time to participate in civic endeavors.



Another landmark event celebrated by the early black churches in America is the ceremonial "burning of the church mortgage papers," declaring clear ownership of the property. The special ceremony photographed took place at historic Cornish Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church on November 22, 1958. The Trustee's Board, from left to right, are Augustus Morgan, Lucille Pope, Atlanta Jemison, George Sands, Rev. Franklin Hooper, George Dean Sr., Gilbert Albury, Leon Sumner, and Eddie Lampkins.

Winifred Sands Johnson shared Bahamian and Cuban ancestry and was raised as a devout Catholic. Her mother made sure she knew Cuba, and her father helped her to become an educated woman. Mrs. Johnson was an excellent educator and the first black columnist for *The Key West Citizen's* weekly colored news section from the 1950s to the late 1960s.



In 1946, Mrs. Marie Welters was elected the first president of the VFW Post 168 Women's Auxiliary, and in 1958 she became the first director for Key West's black USO. She provided leadership in the community through membership in many civic organizations and was a devoted member of St. Mary's Star of the Sea Catholic Church. She was revered for her compassion, beautiful personality, and radiant smile.

