

## **John W. Nottingham Sr.**

**July 28, 1885, John W. Nottingham was born in the lower Northampton county community of Townsend. He was born into the Christian home of John Walter and Fannie Wright Nottingham. In his family, respect and community were emphasized. John became a member of Ebenezer A. M.E. church at an early age. His family were some of the founding fathers of the church who stood under an old oak tree until they built a church. The original church burned down and under his leadership, as the general contractor, the present church was built. Some of the materials had to be laid out to dry. Mr. Nottingham then selected only the best pieces to be used in the rebuilding of God's Holy Temple.**

**John Nottingham, as a young man, was educated in the public schools of his community. His father died at an early age, John and his brothers Levi and Nelson and his sister Martha were reared by their mother Fannie Wright Nottingham and his sister Mary. John went to Hampton Normal Institute, in Hampton, Virginia to learn a trade. John graduated in 1906 as a Master of Carpentry and Masonry. Then he built the family home in Cheapside, which stands today, more than one hundred (100) years old. A picture of the original home can be found in the archives of Hampton University.**

**Mr. Nottingham worked as a builder at the World Fair in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. While working, he remarked about the beautiful voice he heard down the street from his rooming house, it belonged to the great Marian Anderson, whom he had an opportunity to meet.**

**In 1912, he married Mae Smith and one son was born. They both died early. Some twenty-two years later, he married Bernice L. Spady and eight children were born.**

**John Nottingham touched the lives of many people in Northampton County. He trained many of the carpenters on the Eastern Shore under a government apprentice program. He, with the help of many of his apprentices, built homes for both black and white citizens of Northampton County.**

**Those who trained under him include: Ira Bailey, Robert Bailey, Ivey Bracey, Reuben Brown, John Brown Seaton, Ed Nottingham, Rev Spencer, Calvin Smith, Gayzar Ames, Carlton Smith, Clifton Stevens Jr., John L. Downes, Alponso Fitchett, Timothy Smith, Robert L. Smith, Lafayette Stevens Ora W. Spady, Winslow Spady, William "Jack" Ames, William White, Jack Manley, Daryl Cypress, Robert Moses, William Moses, Howard Darden, Southley Trower, Tasley Townsend, George Sunkett.**