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Letter of Support for the Listing of Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal
Cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places

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Dear, Alachua County Historical Commission:

We are humbly asking for a letter of support expressing your endorsement to list the Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Cemetery holds a profound national, regional and local African-American significance that is intricately intertwined with our nation's historical developments during a turbulent period following the commencement of the Civil War. The historical importance of this site is underscored by its association with broad patterns of U.S. History, as evidenced in congressional reports that investigated disenfranchisement among African-Americans shortly after the Civil War.

We strongly urge you to consider the unique historical value of Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Cemetery, and to support our inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The listing Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Cemetery will not only honor the memory of those interred but will also contribute to the broader narrative of American history.

Sincerely,

The Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Cemetery Restoration Organization

BMECRO

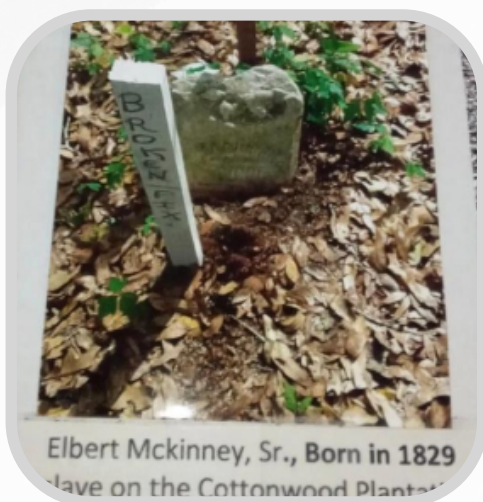
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The Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery of Archer, FL was established in 1873. In 1999 Clyde Williams founded the Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Cemetery Restoration Organization to preserve and protect the final resting place where many of the community's ancestors are buried including veterans of World Wars I and II and enslaved African Americans.



In 2021, BMECRO partnered with the Historic Preservation programs at the University of Florida & Florida Public Archaeology Network to survey, document, and prepare a preservation plan. More than 60 unmarked graves were discovered using ground-penetrating radar. The unveiling of the State of Florida Historic Marker commemorating ancestors at the BME Cemetery was held February 4, 2023.



There are 118 known ancestors listed on the monument (next page), along with Reverend Major Reddick who donated the first acre of land for the BME church.

This grave to the left belonged to Elbert McKinney, Sr. who was born in 1829. He was enslaved on the Cottonwood Plantation. Mr. McKinney's job during that time was plantation Blacksmith.

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- Duke Energy
- Waste Pro
- Florida Public Archaeology Network
- Florida Credit Union
- Keep Alachua County Beautiful
- University of Florida
- Clay Electric Foundation
- City of Archer
- Campus USA
- Volunteers & Community Leaders

For more information, visit our Facebook page at Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Cemetery Restoration Organization or our website: BMECRO.wordpress.com. The BME Cemetery is located at 14309 SW 175th Terrace, Archer, Florida 32618. If you're interested in learning more or taking a tour, contact BMECRO President Roberta Campbell Lopez at info@BMECRO.com.

