

Davenport, William Henry ^[1]

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by Brenda Marks Eagles, 1986

8 May 1868–20 May 1936

William Henry Davenport, clergyman and journalist, the son of Mack and Phillis Simmons Davenport, was born in New Bern where he attended the common school and State Normal School from 1884 to 1888. Beginning in 1888 he was a student at [Livingstone College](#) ^[2], Salisbury, from which he received the A.B. (1894), A.M. (1897), and D.D. (1906) degrees. He financed his education by working in the college printing office. Later he returned to Livingstone to edit the *Livingstone College Monthly*. From 1897 to 1900 he was a correspondent for the *Camden (N.J.) Daily Courier* ^[3]. While in New Jersey he was involved in the building of [African Methodist Episcopal Zion](#) ^[4] churches in Bayonne and Red Bank. From 1902 to 1904 he worked with the *Mobile (Ala.) Press* and edited the *Church Observer* while pastor of the State Street A.M.E. Zion Church. For the 1917–18 term he served as dean of Walters Institute in Warren, Ark., where he was also pastor of a church.

In the early 1920s Davenport moved to Durham to become pastor of Saint Mark's A.M.E. Zion Church; there he was again involved in the building of a new church. From 1924 until his death he was editor of the *Star of Zion* ^[5], the national periodical of the A.M.E. Zion church. He was the author of several books about the church, among them *The Anthology of Zion Methodism* ^[6] (1925) and *Membership in Zion Methodism* (1936).

On 15 Jan. 1895 Davenport married Mary I. Walker, and they had one child, Lillian M. (b. 12 Jan. 1897). He married his second wife, Nena M. Ray, on 1 May 1918. In the last decade of his life, he lived in [Charlotte](#) ^[7]. He died suddenly soon after being elected to his fourth term as editor of the *Star of Zion*. Politically he was an Independent.

References:

Thomas Yenser, ed., *Who's Who in Colored America* (1944).

Additional Resources:

W. H. Davenport (William Henry), b. 1868. *The Anthology of Zion Methodism with an Appendix*. Charlotte, N. C.: A. M. E. Zion Publishing House, 1925. Documenting the American South, UNC Libraries:
<https://docsouth.unc.edu/church/davenport/menu.html> ^[6]

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Origin - location:

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[Charlotte](#) ^[13]

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[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#),^[14]

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