

Shaw, Herbert Bell ^[1]

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by Grady L. E. Carroll, 1994

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**"1974-1980
Herbert Bell
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9 Feb. 1908–3 Jan. 1980**Grand Lodge.**

Herbert Bell Shaw, bishop of the [African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church](#) ^[3], was born in [Wilmington](#) ^[4], the son of John Henry and Lummie Virginia Hodges Shaw. He was named for the [Reverend Herbert Bell](#) ^[5], pioneer Zion minister in the Cape Fear Conference of the church. Shaw was educated in the [public schools of Wilmington](#) ^[6]; St. Emma's Preparatory School, Castle Rock, Va.; Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn., from which he received the A.B. degree; and [Howard University School of Religion](#) ^[7], where he earned a master's degree. He was awarded an honorary doctor of divinity degree from [Livingstone College](#) ^[8], Salisbury.

Converted to the Christian faith at [St. Luke's AME Zion Church, Wilmington](#) ^[9], in 1920, he preached his trial sermon on 12 July 1927 and was ordained deacon the following year. In 1930 he was ordained an elder. He served several churches in North Carolina as well as in Washington, D.C. From 1937 to 1943 he was presiding elder of the Wilmington District of the Cape Fear Conference. Still residing in Wilmington, Shaw headed the denomination's pension plan from 1944 to 1952. In May 1952 he was consecrated bishop and assigned to supervise churches in the two Carolinas and in the Bahamas. Becoming ever more active in the AME Zion church, Shaw organized overseas conferences in 1968, 1972, and 1976 in Jamaica, London, and Trinidad-Tobago, respectively. He was elevated to the post of bishop of the [First Episcopal District](#) ^[10], which included such widely scattered areas as New England, New York, Cape Fear, many islands of the Caribbean, and the London-Birmingham conferences in England.

Shaw was second vice-president of the [National Council of Christ in the USA](#) ^[11] and chairman of the board of trustees of Livingstone College, Salisbury. He was a member of the General Commission of the Army and Navy Chaplains, the presidium of the [World Methodist Council](#) ^[12] (1971–76), the [World Council of Churches](#) ^[13], the board of directors of the Community Boys Club of America and of the 4-H Club Foundation of America, and other boards and bodies. He also helped to prepare a hymnal for his denomination. Between 1951 and 1971 he was a delegate to five World Methodist Conferences and served as an officer at several of them. In 1962 he was a special guest of the Russian Orthodox Church. At the bicentennial celebration of Methodism in North Carolina in 1972, he was the principal speaker.

In September 1931 Shaw married Mary Ardelle Stokes, and they became the parents of a son, John Herbert, and a daughter, Marie. He died at a meeting of the board of bishops at Indianapolis, Ind., and his funeral was held at the mother church of AME Zion Church in New York City with burial in Wilmington.

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Additional Resources:

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North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Churches in Wilmington Appendix: <http://www.history.ncdcr.gov/1898-wrrc/report/AppdxB.pdf> ^[15]

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Authors:

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Origin - location:

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[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#) ^[23]

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