

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Ethiopian Star Lodge #308  
Other name/site number: Dabney Hill Lodge Hall  
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 211 County Road 267  
City or town: Snook State: Texas County: Burleson  
Not for publication:  Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
( nomination  request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the  
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my  
opinion, the property ( meets  does not meet) the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:  
 national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

 Chief Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
Signature of certifying official / Title  
Date: 10/28/2025  
Texas Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
Signature of commenting or other official  
Date  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

**Category of Property**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	2	structures
0	0	objects
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>total</b>

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions:** SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

**Current Functions:** VACANT

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification:** NO STYLE

**Principal Exterior Materials:** WOOD/WEATHERBOARD, WOOD/SIDING, WOOD/VERTICAL BOARD

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 7-7 through 7-9)

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>A</b>	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>B</b>	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>C</b>	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Ethnic Heritage/Black, Social History (*local level of significance*)

**Period of Significance:** c.1908–1975

**Significant Dates:** c. 1908

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** NA

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 8-10 through 8-18)

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheets 9-19 through 9-21)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Part 1 approved on (date)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property:** Less than 1 acre

### Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (use decimal degree format)

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 30.503879° Longitude: -96.469059°

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The nominated boundary is the southwestern 0.3-acre portion of the legal parcel (Reference ID: 28885) recorded by Burleson CAD: A0030 HOLLINGSWORTH J .954 ACRES accessed April 1, 2024 (Map 4).

**Boundary Justification:** The boundary is a portion of the historic property drawn to include intact resources associated with the nominated building. It does not include the ruins of Missionary Baptist Church.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Tyra Brunz, Hannah Curry, Pushpita Eshika, Mitch Ford, Julia Russ, and Saneea Sakhyani, Architectural Historians at SWCA Environmental Consultants with support from Conor Herterich of Preservation Texas; and Charles E. Smith, Gloria Smith, and Jamonica Jackson of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church.

Organization: SWCA Environmental Consultants

Address: 10245 West Little York Road, Suite 600

City or Town: Houston

State: Texas

Zip Code: 77040

Email: <mailto:Saneea.Sakhyani@swca.com>

Telephone: (281) 617-3217

Date: November 1, 2025 (resubmitted to NPS)

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheets Map-22 through Map-23)

**Additional items** (see continuation sheets Figure-24 through Figure-32)

**Photographs** (see continuation sheets Photo-33 through Photo-48)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

**Photographs**

Name of Property: Ethiopian Star Lodge #308  
City or Vicinity: Snook, Burleson County, Texas  
Photographer(s): Sanea Sakhyani, SWCA Environmental Consultants, Photos 0001 to 0024.  
Carter Design Associates, Photos 0025 to 0030 (Lodge, second-floor interior)  
Dates: March 2024

**Photograph Number: 0001**

Description: Setting Overview, CR 267; view southeast.

**Photograph Number: 0002**

Description: Setting Overview, CR 267; view northwest.

**Photograph Number: 0003**

Description: Setting Overview, Church with Lodge in Background; view northeast.

**Photograph Number: 0004**

Description: Setting Overview, Church with Storm Damage; view north.

**Photograph Number: 0005**

Description: Setting Overview, Church and Smokehouse; view northeast.

**Photograph Number: 0006**

Description: Setting Overview, Lodge Hall; view north.

**Photograph Number: 0007**

Description: Setting Overview, Lodge and Smokehouse; view north.

**Photograph Number: 0008**

Description: Setting Overview, Smokehouse, Unknown Building, and Jones School Gymnasium in Background; view west.

**Photograph Number: 0009**

Description: Setting Overview, Jones School Gymnasium; view west/southwest.

**Photograph Number: 0010**

Description: Setting Overview, Church and Jones School Gymnasium in Background; view south.

**Photograph Number: 0011**

Description: Setting Overview, Church; view southeast.

**Photograph Number: 0012**

Description: Setting Overview, Church, Historic Well (Obscured by Tree), Land; view southeast.

**Photograph Number: 0013**

Description: Setting Overview, Historic Well Located Underneath Tree; view north.

**Photograph Number: 0014**

Description: Setting Overview, Historic Well Located Underneath Tree; view north.

**Photograph Number: 0015**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge exterior, south elevation; view facing northeast.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

**Photograph Number: 0016**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge exterior, west elevation; view facing east.

**Photograph Number: 0017**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge exterior, north elevation; view facing southwest.

**Photograph Number: 0018**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge exterior, east elevation; view facing west.

**Photograph Number: 0019**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge exterior, south and east elevations; view facing northwest.

**Photograph Number: 0020**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge first-floor interior, overview; view north.

**Photograph Number: 0021**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge first-floor interior, overview; original wood window sashes from Dabney Hill Baptist Church stored on the first floor of the Lodge; view northwest.

**Photograph Number: 0022**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge first-floor interior, overview; view northeast.

**Photograph Number: 0023**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge first-floor interior; view northeast.

**Photograph Number: 0024**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge first-floor interior, stairs to second floor; view east.

**Photograph Number: 0025**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge interior, second floor from landing to the first floor; view east. Photo courtesy of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Photographed by Carter Design Associates.

**Photograph Number: 0026**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge interior, second floor anteroom with altered window-turned-door on left; view west. Photo courtesy of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Photographed by Carter Design Associates.

**Photograph Number: 0027**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge interior, second floor lodge room; view north. Photo courtesy of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Photographed by Carter Design Associates.

**Photograph Number: 0028**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge interior, second floor lodge room; view south, toward anteroom. Photo courtesy of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Photographed by Carter Design Associates.

**Photograph Number: 0029**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge interior, second floor platforms and podium; view northwest. Photo courtesy of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Photographed by Carter Design Associates.

**Photograph Number: 0030**

Description: Dabney Hill Lodge interior, second floor; original pews surviving in the lodge room, view north. Photo courtesy of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Photographed by Carter Design Associates.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

## Narrative Description

The Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, also known as the Dabney Hill Lodge Hall, is a circa 1908 two-story rectangular wood-frame building located in the Dabney Hill Freedom Colony, now part of present-day Snook in Burleson County, Texas. Constructed by and for a rural fraternal organization, the lodge features a plain design with a corrugated metal side-gable roof, box frame construction, and a pier-and-beam foundation. The interior consists of open-plan layouts on both floors, with the second floor including a podium and other elements characteristic of Masonic lodge design. Despite its deteriorating condition, Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 retains its historical integrity in terms of location, design, workmanship, setting, and feeling. It holds significant historical value as a rare surviving example of a rural African American fraternal lodge in this region and its connection to the Dabney Hill Freedom Colony.

---

## Location and Setting

The Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 (or Dabney Hill Lodge Hall) is in the Dabney Hill Freedom Colony on County Road 267 in Snook, Burleson County, Texas. Burleson County is located in east central Texas and is bordered by Washington County to the south, Milam County to the north, Lee County to the west, and by the Robertson and Brazos counties to the east. From the state capital of Austin, Burleson County is roughly forty-five miles east. Burleson County spans 668 square miles across the Post Oak Belt region. The closest major north-south highway system is State Highway 36, with State Highway 21 as the east-west thoroughfare. The county is situated within the Brazos River drainage basin. An alluvial valley runs along the eastern border.<sup>1</sup> “The area surrounding Dabney Hill features vegetation typical of central Texas, including mature oaks, sumac, milkweed, honeysuckle, clover, and Texas bluebonnet, and is home to many species of wild birds, including mourning doves and quail, and endangered species, including falcons.”<sup>2</sup>

Dabney Hill is a rural agricultural community that covers approximately 50 acres and was historically anchored by a school, church, and the nominated lodge hall. African Americans formed Dabney Hill in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it remains an active, albeit dispersed, community today. The ruins of the wood-frame Jones High School and Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church are immediately south of the lodge. A mobile home park, not associated with Dabney Hill, is southeast and a small number of historic-age homes are to the north.<sup>3</sup>

Ethiopian Star Lodge is at the northeast corner of a 0.5-acre tract behind the Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church. The lodge, built c.1908, is approximately 32 feet 8 inches × 22 feet 4 inches (three by two bays). The three-bay-wide side gable elevations of the building are arranged on a southwest to northeast orientation. The associated parcel contains small and large trees. The rear end of the building is populated with thick shrubs and tall trees. Presently, there is a backfilled well dating to circa 1900 in the periphery of the building along its southeast corner. There is a smokehouse located on the north side of the property and directly west of the lodge, dating to circa 1950. Historic aerials are not available prior to 1930. The backfilled well was likely constructed circa 1900, around the time as the early establishment of the Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church per local historian Gloria Smith. Undated historic photographs show that the well was present during the Church’s early history (Figure 10). The well was likely constructed to supply water to the Church, Lodge, and neighboring properties. Based on a review of available aerial imagery, historic photographs, and construction materials, the date of construction of the well is determined as circa 1900. The well is backfilled, and dense vegetation almost completely obscures its view. From what is visible, the well appears to have a round shape. There are wood planks

---

<sup>1</sup> Charles Christopher Jackson, “Burleson County,” Handbook of Texas Online, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/burleson-county>

<sup>2</sup> “Dabney Hill, Burleson County, Texas,” *Race and Space*. <https://www.tclf.org/sites/default/files/microsites/landslide2021/locations/dabney.html>.

<sup>3</sup> The known limits of the Dabney Hill Freedom Colony may have been previously identified, but writers of this nomination could not locate this information. However, typical Freedom colonies consisted of a church, cemetery, school, and Masonic Hall, and homesteads (according to the following Race & Space article <https://www.tclf.org/sites/default/files/microsites/landslide2021/locations/dabney.html>). Resources remaining in the roughly half-acre property of the Dabney Hill Baptist Church consist of the storm-impacted church building, the Masonic Hall, and the Gymnasium from the previously segregated Jones School. There is also a historic, backfilled well and a smokehouse.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

scattered nearby, a likely result of the well cap that has collapsed and deteriorated over time. It does not retain enough integrity to be considered a contributing resource.

Aerial imagery review of the parcel shows that while the well was present in 1932, but the smokehouse was not. The smokehouse first appears in the 1958 aerial image, and therefore, it was likely constructed circa 1955. The smokehouse is a small, rectangular, wood framed structure built circa 1955. The smokehouse is not fully enclosed. It has a side-gabled roof that is clad in sheet metal, and has deteriorated screens wrapped around the wood framing. Inside the smokehouse, there is a brick smoker that appears to be in fair condition. There are various materials stored inside, including a Church metal bell and a historic-aged wood door. Overall, the smokehouse is in deteriorated condition. Due to scant primary and secondary documentation available at present to support the historical significance of the historic-age well and smokehouse, they have been determined as non-contributing resources to the Ethiopian Star Lodge nomination.

### Ethiopian Star Lodge #308

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 is a rectangular two-story wood frame (32x22) building on pier and beam foundation with a shallow pitched, front gable corrugated metal roof. A metal flue for a wood stove projects from the roof ridge. The building was constructed 14 feet tall from its sill to eave, providing each story with approximately 7 feet clear height in its edges. Today, however, it sags due to its poor condition. Flat corner boards and exposed roof rafter tails are the primary distinguishing exterior façade details. Built using a wooden box framing system with board-and-batten perimeter walls, the vertical boards measure 1 × 12 inches attached to 2 × 4-inch and 4 × 4-inch studs exposed on the ground-level interior. During the period of significance, exterior horizontal runs of pattern #105 drop siding measuring 1 × 8 inches (7-inch exposed face) were attached directly to the original battens. The building was divided at an unknown date into two bays in its longitude by a row of wood studs in the middle of the building. A 5-¼ × 3-½-inch wood beam spans the center of the room and supports the second story on 2 × 8-inch second-story joists. Although the original massing and fenestration patterns remain, no exterior doors or windows survive in place.

The estimated built date is circa 1908; however, it is possible that the building is older. Experts from local architectural firm Carter Design Associates (CDA) completed a comprehensive study of the building and published their findings in a report titled “Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Prince Hall Masonic Lodge Stabilization Report, CDA Project #202315” on May 24, 2024. In the report, CDA estimated the built date for the Dabney Hill Lodge as circa 1890 to 1910, based on the following, “The as-found conditions and materials including wood, hardware, modified balloon framing, wire nails, and siding profiles comport with a construction period between 1890 and 1910 and are consistent with a construction date that could be closer to the establishment of Dabney Hill in the 1890s rather than a later date.”<sup>4</sup> Additionally, wire nails were used to fasten structural elements of the building; wire nails were frequently used to construct buildings in the United States during the 1890s.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Exterior*<sup>6</sup>

Wood siding extends from the **south (front) elevation** (Photo 15) ground level through the gable end with purlins along the roofline, fascia boards, and some remnants of corner boards also visible. The off-centered first floor opening has a square threshold made of concrete with aggregate. Another long, narrow opening is on the second story toward the western end of the south elevation. On the **west elevation** (Photo 16) first floor is a central door opening with a smaller window opening north of it. The second story also has two regularly spaced, wood-frame window openings measuring 2x4.5. The **north elevation** (Photo 17) has two, 2 x 4.5 windows on the second floor. The **east elevation** (Photo 18) has four, irregularly spaced openings on the ground level. Whether these were window openings or are part of deterioration it is not known. The second story has two openings that are symmetrical to the west elevation.

---

<sup>4</sup> Carter Design Associates, *Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 Prince Hall Masonic Lodge Stabilization Report*, 24 May 2024, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Carter Design Associates, *Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 Stabilization Report*, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> National Trust Determination of Eligibility for Dabney Hill Lodge, sourced from the personal archive of Gloria Smith, March 2024.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

*Interior*

The **first floor** is a singular rectangular room measuring approximately 32 × 22 feet with five square wooden posts down the center, running east-west. The first story has 1 × 4-inch tongue-and-groove pattern wood flooring. There is no drop ceiling other than the beams and ceiling joists that support the superstructure. The original 2 × 8-inch floor joists are in direct contact with the ground because of settlement and decay. An interior 38-inch-wide L-shaped staircase wraps the southeast corner of the building.

The **second story** is a finished space in contrast to the first story. The stairs terminate in a second-story anteroom measuring 9 feet 6 inches × 5 feet 8 inches. This anteroom provided access to the lodge hall through two four-panel wooden doors (2 feet 8 inches × 6 feet 8 inches × 1-½ inches). One of these doors originally had a circular “peephole” that would allow for communication between the lodge room and the anteroom during meetings and ceremonies. The hall measures 21 feet 0 inches × 25 feet 6 inches. Three raised platforms remain: a two-step platform (51 × 72 inches) on the north side of the room for the Grand Master, a smaller platform (38 × 40 inches) on the east side for the Junior Warden, and a platform (36 × 40 inches) for the Senior Warden on the south side. Several unpainted wooden plank benches and an unpainted wood podium, integrated into the two-step platform, are extant in the chamber. Several ceramic light sockets in the ceiling, and electric wiring in the wall groove indicate that the building was at one time electrified. The floor to ceiling height is 7 feet 1 inch and both the lodge room and anteroom were finished with horizontal runs of 1 × 4-inch tongue-and-groove shiplap painted blue and fastened to 2 × 4-inch studs that formed the partition walls. The flooring and ceiling were also made from 1 × 4-inch tongue-and-groove boards; the ceiling was painted blue, and the floor was unfinished.

**Integrity**

Despite its current condition, Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 retains the essential characteristics needed to convey its historical significance as an early 20th-century fraternal lodge built by and for the Dabney Hill Freedom Colony, a rural African American community. Although long vacant and missing its original doors, windows, and sections of exterior siding, enough original materials remain to illustrate the types of resources, finishes, and construction methods available to its builders in the early 20th century rural context.

The lodge’s box-frame vernacular construction is clearly visible, preserving its integrity of workmanship. Additionally, the building has undergone no significant alterations since its construction in 1908, maintaining its design integrity and contributing to the feeling and association of the historic Dabney Hill Freedom Colony and community. Furthermore, the second-floor lodge room retains original elements associated with Masonic traditions, including its east-west orientation, with an entrance and anteroom on the east and a platform for the Worshipful Master on the west.

Although severe storms have damaged the surrounding built environment—including the partially ruined Missionary Baptist Church and Jones School, both key community landmarks—the open, natural surroundings remain intact and reflect Dabney Hill’s characteristic rural setting. Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 demonstrates integrity in design, workmanship, location, and setting – as well as retains significance of materials, feeling, and association - which collectively preserve its historical sense of purpose and place.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

### Statement of Significance

The Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 is in the rural African American community of Dabney Hill near Snook in Burleson County, Texas. Built c. 1908, Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 served as a subsidiary lodge of Prince Hall Freemasonry. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, African American fraternal lodges provided vital mutual aid for communities like Dabney Hill and served as vital spaces for supporting civil rights, education, and fellowship. Ethiopian Star Lodge also connected its rural membership to a national network of Prince Hall lodges. Historical records confirm that a fraternal order was active in Dabney Hill by 1909, though the Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 may predate this documentation. The lodge is nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance in the areas of Ethnic History: Black and Social History. It is recognized for its historical importance as a rare surviving example of a rural African American fraternal lodge and as a cultural landmark of the Dabney Hill Freedom Colony. The period of significance spans from circa 1908-1975, marking the 50-year threshold for National Register listing. The Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 remained active through the 1990s, continuing to serve as a central institution of the Dabney Hill community.

---

### Dabney Hill, Burleson Texas and Freedom Colonies

African Americans came to Burleson County, Texas in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as property of Anglo settlers associated with empresario Stephen F. Austin's colony.<sup>3</sup> Records enumerated approximately 330 enslaved people and a small number of Free African Americans living within the county by the late 1840s. By 1860, the number of enslaved people quadrupled to 2,003, which reflected the rapid expansion of the county's agricultural economy that depended on enforced labor. During the Civil War, an influx of "planter refugees" moved to Burleson County from other states seeking to protect their slave property and the Black population increased another 50% between 1860 and 1864.<sup>7</sup> Following emancipation, many African American built new lives and communities in the county. Supported initially by the local Freedman's Bureau, Burleson County's African American citizenry continued to grow reaching 37% of the total population in 1870 and peaking at 46% in 1910.<sup>8</sup>

At least 11 rural, self-contained agricultural communities formed throughout the county in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> Dabney Hill was one such Freedom Colony. Historians Thad Sitton and James H. Conrad are credited for coining "Freedom Colonies" in their 2005 book, *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow*. They defined these as "independent rural communities of African American landowners (and land squatters) that formed in the South from 1865 to 1930."<sup>10</sup> Alternatively called Freedmen Settlements or Freedmen's Towns, these communities were typically established in

...places unplatted and unincorporated, [and] individually unified only by church and school and residents' collective belief that a community existed. Up in the sand hills, down in the creek and river bottoms, and along country lines... typically on pockets of wilderness, cheap land, or neglected land previously untouched by cotton agriculture.<sup>11</sup>

The cultural landscape, as Dr. Andrea Roberts observed, that generally characterized these communities included agrarian homesteads anchored by a church, school, lodge, and cemeteries.<sup>12</sup> Freedom Colonies were intentional, self-sustaining settlements that separated and thereby protected Black Americans from white society.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Charles Christopher Jackson, "Burleson County," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed December 13, 2024, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/burleson-county>.

<sup>8</sup> Jackson, "Burleson County."

<sup>9</sup> According to data obtained from the Texas Freedom Colonies Atlas 2.1 on December 13, 2024. Andrea Roberts, PhD, "The Texas Freedom Colonies Project," <https://www.thetexasfreedomcoloniesproject.com/> (accessed December 13, 2024).

<sup>10</sup> Sitton and Conrad, *Freedom Colonies*, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Sitton and Conrad, *Freedom Colonies*, p. 2 and 3.

<sup>12</sup> Thad Sitton Revised by Andrea Roberts, Grace Kelly, and Schuyler Carter. "Freedmen's Settlements," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/freedmens-settlements>

<sup>13</sup> "Dabney Hill, Burleson County, Texas." Race & Space. The Cultural Landscapes Foundation. Accessed September 2024, <https://www.tclf.org/sites/default/files/microsites/landslide2021/locations/dabney.html>

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

From 1865 to 1920, more than 500 of these settlements provided security, independence, and community to formerly enslaved individuals and their descendants across Texas.<sup>14</sup> These close-knit communities allowed for safety during the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras, opportunity to exercise newly established rights, and spaces to bond as a community. Freedom colony settlements allowed for the profound self-sufficiency and independence African Americans had been fervently denied for decades. Not only did Freedom Colonies provide a place to safely exercise newfound civil liberties, but they were also a foundation for creating generational wealth in the African American community, demonstrating the significant Black ownership and community-based prosperity evident throughout Freedom Colonies. Dabney Hill represents the historical importance of Freedom Colonies in Texas, in that the landscape provided much-needed support to local African American residents for decades.

Many of the Freedmen Colonies throughout rural Texas continue to be documented through Dr. Andrea Roberts and her collaborators, through the “Texas Freedom Colonies” project, which consists of a comprehensive database of freedom colonies with corresponding ethnographic and archival research documenting community stories of these incredibly historically significant settlements.<sup>15</sup>

### *Dabney Hill*

Dabney Hill is rural African American community established by Daniel Dabney Sr. (1815-1889) in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century out 50 acres of his property. Dabney was born into slavery in Virginia around 1818. Unable to marry legally, he formed a partnership with an enslaved woman named Susan, who was born circa 1808. By 1855, state records indicated that Dabney, Sr., and his family were in Texas. The couple was listed as living in Burleson County, Texas, when the 1870 census was conducted.<sup>16</sup> Dabney, Sr., worked hard to establish himself in a post-slavery world and took advantage of the new freedoms he was afforded as a free African American man. Not only did he establish a larger community, also worked to build generational wealth within his family as he conveyed 12 acres to his son Daniel Dabney, Jr., in 1882.<sup>17</sup>

The original land titles were granted to Milam and Washington Counties in 1835, prior to the establishment of Burleson County in 1846. In 1870, a formerly enslaved man Daniel Dabney, Senior (1815–1889) purchased 60 acres of land on a hill near present-day Snook from W. B. Hill and established the Dabney Hill Freedom Colony.<sup>18</sup> The name “Dabney Hill” is most likely from this purchase of a “Hill tract” from Mr. Hill, but the advantages of establishing a settlement on the safety of a hill in the flood-prone Brazos River valley was likely not lost on Dabney and his community. By the 1870 census, Dabney, Sr., was one of 1.8 percent of African American landowners in the state of Texas.<sup>19</sup> With the ratification of the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that same year, Dabney, Sr., was granted the right to vote, securing his rights and becoming a full U.S. citizen.

According to county records, trustees of Dabney Hill Colored School House secured a site for free schooling purposes immediately after they settled in the mid-1870s.<sup>20</sup> Dabney, Sr., and members of the Dabney Hill Freedom community secured the building site and built the 14 × 20-foot building, the wooden blackboards, and long-benched student desks by

---

<sup>14</sup> Thad Sitton and James Conrad, *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005); Thad Sitton, *Freedmen Settlements*, TSHA Handbook of Texas Online, 2022, accessed April 2024, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/uef20>

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Andrea Roberts, “What are Freedom Colonies?” Accessed September 30, 2024. <https://www.thetexasfreedomcoloniesproject.com/what-are-freedom-colonies>

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Dabney, 1870 United States Federal Census, accessed April 2024, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/5060017:7163?tid=&pid=&queryId=095a5312-7078-404f-9f3b-3204f9d36081&phsrc=yZX41&phstart=successSource>

<sup>17</sup> Burleson County Deed Records, Vol. 4, p. 615, June 19, 1882.

<sup>18</sup> Burleson County Historical Society, *Astride the Old San Antonio Road: A History of Burleson County, Texas*. (Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1979), p. 16.

<sup>19</sup> Thad Sitton and James Conrad, *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), p. 2.

Also reference: Burleson County Deed Records, Book J, pages 8 and 9, Dec. 6, 1869.

<sup>20</sup> Burleson County Deed Records, Vol. 2, p. 374, February 27, 1888; Interview with Louis A. Nelson, age 90, on August 30, 2019, transcript in possession of author.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

hand. The first session of Dabney Hill Colored School occurred in the 1880.<sup>21</sup> The freedmen continued to make improvements and build additional supportive buildings as the need arose. During the segregationist Jim Crow era, the Jones High School opened in 1950 for African American children in Dabney Hill.<sup>22</sup>

Along with a school, the early founders of Dabney Hill Freedom Colony also established the Dabney Hill Baptist Church, a key institution for the community. In 1882, Dabney, Sr., purchased approximately 74 acres of land that were once granted to empresario Stephen F. Austin. In 1887, the Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church was built on the new tract of land. Prominent church organizers included Rev. J. Shorter, Daniel Dabney, Jr., R. E. Hoskins, and Allen Washington. The first pastor of the church was Rev. J. Shorter, who served one year.<sup>23</sup> Several of the founders were called to preach at Dabney Hill, with two of them becoming prominent Texas pastors during the vanguard of the Civil Rights Movement.

With the deliberate installation of schools, churches, and lodge halls, Freedmen colonies like Dabney Hill established themselves as uplifting and supportive communities. Education, religion, and social fellowship were common among freedmen's colonies – each of these ideals were thoroughly interwoven and their institutions became stitched together to create the Freedmen Colonies' cultural landscapes.

*Snook, Burleson County*

Dabney Hill is located near Snook, Burleson County. During the late-nineteenth century, Czech farming immigrants settled in the area that would become known as the town of Snook, located at the intersection of Farm Roads 60 and 2155 in eastern Burleson County. The settlers originally called the area "Sebesta's Corner" in reference to the Sebesta family, who were early settlers in the area. The name was later shortened to Sebesta.<sup>24</sup>

This fertile valley initially consisted of a community of Czech immigrants who established the Sebesta farming community near Dabney Hill.<sup>25</sup> These two communities lived cooperatively and worked together to create solutions that were mutually beneficial to each group.

Around 1874, a post office had already been established in Dabney Hill.<sup>26</sup> As commercial interests expanded, the Czech population living nearby in Sebesta requested a post office for their settlement to enhance communication. John S. Snook, the postmaster in Caldwell, executed a compromise that arranged for the Dabney Hill post office to be relocated halfway between Dabney Hill and Sebesta.<sup>27</sup> The post office was named after Caldwell's postmaster, John S. Snook, who later became the namesake of the city when both Sebesta and Dabney Hill converged into the city of Snook, Texas. Key infrastructure improvements included electrification in 1901, and the tapping of an artesian well for increased water supply during the 1920s.<sup>28</sup> In 1910, a white lodge hall was established for the Slavonic Benevolent Order of the State of Texas. Two years later, the two communities of Sebesta and Dabney Hill merged into the town of Snook.<sup>29</sup>

By 1914, the town boasted two general stores, a grocer, a blacksmith, and the construction of a schoolhouse for white children was underway. The population at this time was around 75 residents. Population growth soon outpaced the original schoolhouse leading to the creation of the Snook Consolidated School District in 1935. By the 1940s, Farm-to-Market Road 60 became the first paved road to be established in the area. Following World War II, Snook's population

---

<sup>21</sup> Burleson County School First Circular Annual, Caldwell, Tx. Dabney Hill School, District No. 26., pp. 99–100, December 4, 1913. From the personal archive of Gloria Smith

<sup>22</sup> Burleson County Historical Society, *Astride the Old San Antonio Road: A History of Burleson County, Texas*. (Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1979), p. 268.

<sup>23</sup> Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church 100-Year Anniversary Program 1887-1987, Sunday, October 4, 1987, Snook, Texas, in possession of author; Interview with Doris Workmon, March 18, 2018, transcript in possession of author.

<sup>24</sup> R. L. Skrabanek, "*Sebesta, TX*," (Texas State Historical Association, 1995), accessed March 22, 2024, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/sebesta-tx>

<sup>25</sup> Skrabanek, "*Sebesta, TX*."

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Burleson County Historical Society, *Astride the Old San Antonio Road: A History of Burleson County, Texas*. (Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1979).

<sup>29</sup> Mark Odintz, *Snook, TX*, (Texas State Historical Association, 2020), accessed March 22, 2024, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/snook-tx>

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

steadily rose.<sup>30</sup> Because of the growth of Bryan-College Station, Snook's population increased from 140 in 1950 to 384 by 1970. During the 1960s, the white Snook School was integrated with Jones School for African American students in nearby Dabney Hill. Snook was incorporated in 1972 and by 2000, the population had reached 568 residents.<sup>31</sup>

*Key Historical Figures Associated with the Dabney Hill*

Daniel Dabney, Sr., was one of the key founders of the Dabney Hill Freedom Colony in Burleson County, Texas. Other prominent members included J. Shorter, R. E. Hoskins, and Allen Washington. Many members of the Dabney Hill settlement were also steadfast in their commitment to community support, mutual aid, and the establishment of the Ethiopian Star Masonic Lodge #308 in Dabney Hill. Several early community founders and members were part of the Dabney Hill Baptist Church congregation and members of the Dabney Hill Lodge Hall. The lodge played an important role in consistently working toward the aforementioned goals.<sup>32</sup> Members, including Dabney's son, Daniel Dabney, Jr., supported the national prohibition movement of the 1920s. Burleson County banned the sale of alcohol and imported beverages, and Dabney, Jr., was appointed as a committee chair to help persuade the voters of Snook to vote in favor of the Prohibition Amendment to the Constitution on May 24, 1919. Education and literacy were a common and significant focus for freedmen, so members Daniel Dabney, Sr., David Napper, Sr., and John Munson, Sr., organized the Dabney Hill Colored School in 1874.<sup>33</sup>

Albert Anderson Lucas (1886–1963) was a prominent Texas minister from the Dabney Hill community. Born to Gustus and Caroline (Dabney) Lucas, Albert was the grandson of one of Dabney Hill's founding members, Daniel Dabney, Sr.<sup>34</sup> Albert A. Lucas graduated with a theology major from Conroe College in 1915 and married Rena Etta Utley. Lucas was ordained as a minister in the Baptist Church and became a well-respected reverend, pastoring in Waco's Second Baptist Church before moving to the Mount Olive Baptist Church in Galveston. Lucas and Rena moved to Houston where he became the pastor of Good Hope Baptist Church (later known as Good Hope Missionary Baptist), one of the largest African American Baptist churches in Houston, where he remained for the rest of his life.<sup>35</sup> In 1939, Lucas was elected president of the Houston branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) while he maintained his role at Good Hope Baptist. Lucas fought tirelessly alongside political icons such as then NAACP's legal counsel Thurgood Marshall to eliminate the white primary election. Marshall later became the U.S. Supreme Court's first African American Chief Justice. Lucas also encouraged his congregation to join the NAACP and engage in the reform of the countless rights and liberties African Americans were fighting for during his lifetime.<sup>36</sup>

Another Dabney Hill congregant, Reverend (Rev.) Dr. Sylvester Marilyn (S. M.) Wright (1927–1994) was a prominent African American political strategist and Dallas leader. Wright was invested in his education after earning his college education following his enlistment in the U.S. Army.<sup>37</sup> Wright began his ministerial career when he became the pastor of People's Missionary Baptist Church in South Dallas in 1957, where he passionately presided for 37 years before his death in 1994. Known as one of Dallas leading spiritual and political figures, he befriended President Lyndon B. Johnson, Governor John Connally, and worked with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1962 to register voters. Former Texas

---

<sup>30</sup> City of Snook, "Our Rich History," accessed March 28, 2024, [www.cityofsnook.com/about](http://www.cityofsnook.com/about).

<sup>31</sup> Mark Odintz, "Snook, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed March 28, 2024,

<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/snook-tx>

<sup>32</sup> Thirty-Fourth Annual Communication, Fort Worth, Texas, commencing July 20, 1909, A. L. 1909. From the personal archive of Gloria Smith.

<sup>33</sup> Burleson County Deed Records, Vol. 2, p. 374, February 27, 1888; Interview with Louis A. Nelson, age 90, on August 30, 2019, transcript in possession of author.

<sup>34</sup> Texas, County Marriage Index 1837-1977, FamilySearch and Texas Voter Records, 1867-1918, FamilySearch, referenced by Gloria Smith.

<sup>35</sup> Robert J. Duncan, "Lucas, Albert Anderson (1886-1963)," Texas State Historical Association, accessed March 22, 2024, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/lucas-albert-anderson>

<sup>36</sup> 1872-1997: 125th Church Anniversary, Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church, March 23, 1997, Houston, Texas, in possession of author; Pruitt, pp. 172–174; 1900 United States Census, Burleson County, Texas (Sheet 20A), District 40, line 20.

<sup>37</sup> Daniel J. Nabors, "Wright, Sylvester Marilyn (1927-1994)," Texas State Historical Association, accessed March 22, 2024, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/wright-sylvester-marilyn>

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Governor George W. Bush renamed State Highway 310 in Dallas as the S. M. Wright Freeway to posthumously honor his legacy in 1995.<sup>38</sup>

Lastly, prominent African American pioneering educator Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) is associated with Dabney Hill Freedom Colony. In fact, he visited the Dabney Hill community personally. It is unclear when this visit occurred, but it is likely to have occurred in the early twentieth century, during the Reconstruction era, and as part of his collaboration with Julius Rosenwald in establishing Rosenwald Schools for African Americans. Rosenwald and Washington met in 1911, and Washington was granted funds in 1912. The building program ended in 1932.<sup>39</sup>

During the years between 1912 and 1932, Rosenwald built roughly 5,000 rural schools in the American South during the early twentieth century. This extraordinary effort allowed for increased access to education for numerous African Americans, who were still facing discrimination, institutional racism, and barred access to the resources necessary for establishing a robust and widespread educational system.<sup>40</sup> The efforts to establish Rosenwald Schools were largely a result of a significant partnership between Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington, prominent African American educator, reformer, and principal developer of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (presently Tuskegee University).<sup>41</sup>

Washington spent twelve months traveling to African American churches in the South.<sup>42</sup> According to community member and historian, Gloria Smith, Washington visited early settlers of Dabney Hill Freedom Colony and the congregation of Dabney Hill Baptist Church as part of this travel, presenting community members with a Holy Bible (Figure 10). The Bible was signed and presented to Dabney Hill Members by Washington (Figure 11).

### Rural Black Freemasonry

African American and/or Black Freemasonry has been practiced in the United States as early as the American Revolution. In 1775, Boston freedman Prince Hall (1748-1807) and about a dozen other free African American men were initiated into the Irish Military Lodge No. 441, making them some of the first people of African descent formally admitted into freemasonry in the western world.<sup>43</sup> Considered the founder of “Black Freemasonry,” Hall formed the Grand Lodge of North America and was unanimously elected as Grand Master, where he served until his death in 1807. Hall was considered a leader in the free African American community in Boston and is still considered one of the most influential free African American leaders in the late-eighteenth century.<sup>44</sup>

The Masonic Lodge is the basic organizational unit of freemasonry, where members meet regularly to conduct social and business formalities at local, state, and even national levels. Although masonic fraternities allowed African Americans some of the same opportunities as white masons, African American masons were not allowed to participate in all traditions as equals to their white counterparts.<sup>45</sup> Because fellowship and mutual aid remained at the forefront of freemasonry, Freedmen often incorporated these social organizations alongside churches as they established their

---

<sup>38</sup> Dallas Morning News, Prominent pastor S.M. Wright 67 dies, 4 November 1994; Texas Birth Index, 1903-1997, Sylvester Marilyn Wright, February 7, 1927, Burleson County, FamilySearch, September 1, 2018; United States, Genealogy Bank Obituaries, 1980–2014.

<sup>39</sup> Mark Tabor, “Rosenwald Schools: History, Description, Finding, Impact, Segregation & Facts.” Accessed October 16, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Rosenwald-schools>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> “Booker T. Washington: Biography, Books, Facts, and Accomplishments.” Accessed October 16, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Booker-T-Washington>

<sup>42</sup> This information and source citation was provided by Gloria Smith to SWCA via email correspondence on September 6, 2024. The source for information about Booker T. Washington’s travels to the South: UNT Portal, Caldwell News-Chronicle, Vol 22, No. 26, Friday, Nov. 22, 1901. p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Stephen Kantrowitz. *All Men Free and brethren: Essays on the History of African American Freemasonry* (Cornell University Press, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> Steve Gladstone, *Freedom Trail Boston – Ultimate Tour & History Guide: Tips, Secrets, & Tricks* (CreateSpace Publishing, 2014).

<sup>45</sup> Joanna Brooks. Prince Hall, Freemasonry, and Genealogy. *African American Review* 34, no. 2 (Summer 2000), 197–216. Indiana State University.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

settlements.<sup>46</sup> Guided by the ideology of morality, social charity, and obedience to the law of the land, freemasonry societies share many foundational elements with religion but are not officially affiliated with any religious institutions, working within its own philosophies that could be considered “complementary” to religion.

Despite clear attempts by religious institutions to separate religion from freemasonry, many freemasons, particularly rural Black freemasons, understood the social connection between religion and freemasonry. Religion is often mentioned in masonic lodge mission statements of all sizes. Texas’ state level of Prince Hall masonic lodge, the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge and Accepted Masons of Texas and Jurisdiction, states directly that their lodge “strives to teach a man the duty he owes to God, his neighbor, and to himself,” establishing a significant connection between the state masonry lodge and religion.<sup>47</sup> There is no official United States Grand Lodge, but the Grand Lodge of Alberta clarified their masonic relationship with religion, claiming the practice of freemasonry was “not a substitute for a person’s chosen faith, but rather supplements faith [and] spirituality.”<sup>48</sup> The benevolent activities at the forefront of freemasonry and the church fits snugly within the social tapestry of rural culture at this time and both could be considered the two major pillars of Black rural Texas society in the reconstruction and early 20<sup>th</sup> century eras. In rural areas like Dabney Hill, both freemasonry and religious institutions were vital in establishing well-organized, successful community settlements.

Between 1871 and 1873, five Prince Hall Lodges were recognized as the “first Negro Free and Accepted Masonic Lodges organized” in the state of Texas. These lodges included San Antonio Lodge #22, Mt. Bonnell Lodge #23, Magnolia Lodge #24, Galveston Lodge #25, and Mt. Lebanon Lodge #26. On August 20, 1875, representative members from each of these Lodges met in Brenham, Texas and established the first state-level, “Negro Grand Lodge.” Their purpose was to organize a state-level “Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Texas.”<sup>49</sup> As a result of this convention, two men from Brenham, Texas were established as Grand Officers: Rt. Worshipful Brother J. R. Taylor, S. G. Warden, Brenham, Texas and Rt. Worshipful Brother J. P. Ball, G. Register, Brenham, Texas.<sup>50</sup> The involvement and appointment of Grand Officers from nearby rural Brenham, Texas, establishes an active freemason presence near the rural town of Snook, Texas, and Dabney Hill at this time. At present, each chapter of the first five Prince Hall Lodge’s appears to still be active; however, after review of their respective websites, none of the original lodge buildings are extant.

In a scholarly article about the significance of Black Greek-letter organizations, Dr. Ali D. Chambers emphasizes the significance of “safe spaces, protected areas...or havens” like fraternal organizations, as they allow and encourage the development of “collective identities” for minority groups.<sup>51</sup> As autonomy and personhood was granted to formerly enslaved individuals, the establishment of Freedom colonies allowed for groups of disenfranchised individuals to not only rely on and support each other internally, but to also create a “haven” to build their collective identities as freedmen. Dr. Chambers argues that the immersion in these purpose-forward spaces “enables individuals to identify with the movement and see themselves as an intricate part of the movement,” thus allowing individuals to feel connected and experience “inclusiveness, rather than exclusiveness,” in these vital spaces.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the significance of Freemasonry and similar fraternal groups cannot be understated within Freedom Colonies, and especially in rural areas, where formerly enslaved individuals faced extreme segregation and discrimination outside of the safety of their own communities.

---

<sup>46</sup> Raper, Arthur F. Preface to *Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties*. University of North Carolina Press, 1936, p. 373.

<sup>47</sup> “Mission and Purpose.” Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Texas and Its Jurisdiction, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.mwphlotx.org/about-freemasonry/mission-and-purpose/>

<sup>48</sup> “What Is Freemasonry?” Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund | Alberta. Accessed September 30, 2024, at the Wayback Machine. <http://www.mhebf.com/freemasonry.html>

<sup>49</sup> “Mission and Purpose.” Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Texas and Its Jurisdiction, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.mwphlotx.org/about-freemasonry/mission-and-purpose/>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Dr. Ali D. Chambers, “Cultural Solidarity and the Free Space of the Black Fraternity,” *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol. 7, no.3 (September 2014) p. 266. <https://www.jpanafrican.org/docs/vol7no3/7.3-18-Chambers.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> Lawrence Ross. *The Divine Nine*. New York: Kensington 2000.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

### Ethiopian Star Lodge #308

The Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 was built circa 1908 as a fraternity lodge to promote political engagement and strengthen social bonds in the Dabney Hill community, echoing the West African social organizations in place prior to the transatlantic slave trade. The two-story Lodge Hall is known in the Dabney Hill community to be a subsidiary unit of the order of Prince Hall Freemasonry. The original Prince Hall of African origin was founded in 1775 and served as the community cornerstone in many African American settlements. The masonic fraternity was attractive to many freedmen because it was founded on the ideals of liberty, equality, and peace.<sup>53</sup> Prince Hall masons were known for their benevolence and support of community members in need, often assisting widows and orphans of deceased members through charitable contributions and relief funds.<sup>54</sup> A death proof of Lillian Dabney, spouse of Frank Dabney who preceded her in death, shows community relief funds were paid to her family upon her death in 1970.<sup>55</sup> Like other Prince Hall Freemasonry Lodges, The Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 was also an advocate for literacy, mathematics, and social justice.

It is likely that the first floor of the lodge was used as a school room and the second floor as the meeting space or “hall” for members, which was typical for Masonic Lodges.<sup>56</sup> According to Carter Design Associates, it is unclear when and for how long the first floor functioned as a school, but there are characteristics that support this use, such as the built-in seating around the center columns.<sup>57</sup>

Dabney Hill Lodge’s layout and shape are representative of a typical Masonic Lodge, and therefore, it represents specific symbolism and traditions. Masonic Lodges were intentionally designed and there were certain requirements builders of Lodges had to meet. For example, Lodges have a rectangular form that represent the “symbolism and proportions of Solomon’s ancient world and Solomon’s temple.”<sup>58</sup> The rectangular serves to “connect the farthest points of Solomon’s known world” viewed as a rectangle.<sup>59</sup> The short sides of the rectangle should face east and west, with the long portions of the triangle facing north and south, roughly three times as long as the wide points. Lodges are also typically two stories, the ground level symbolizing the earth and the second level “the expanse to the heavens.”<sup>60</sup>

The interior of Masonic Lodges was arranged in a particular fashion that represented Member roles (see Figure 12 for a typical layout of a Masonic Lodge). The east side functions as the front of the lodge, usually with a platform where the “Worshipful Master” takes his place. To the south and north are the Secretary and the Treasurer, respectively. The Senior Warden takes his place to the west. The entry is typically on the west side, where there is a preparation room as well as a station for the tiler (tyler).<sup>61</sup> The west end also features two pillars representing the Temple of Solomon. A platform in the center of the floorplan is where the Volume of the Sacred Law sits, and it is lit by a total of three lights.<sup>62</sup> Present-day evidence of the platform, the location of the entry and stairs, in addition to the overall design of Dabney Hill Lodge clearly portray that it was built as a typical Masonic Lodge and represented the traditional Masonic Member roles.

---

<sup>53</sup> Maurice Wallace, “Are We Men?: Prince Hall, Martin Delany, and the Masculine Ideal in Black Freemasonry,” *American Literary History* 9, no. 3.

<sup>54</sup> Robert L. Uzzel, *Prince Hall Freemasonry in the Lone Star State from Cuney to Curtis, 1875-2003* (Fort Worth: Eakin Press, 2004), vii.

<sup>55</sup> Death Proof Blank for Lillie M. Dabney (1915–1970); Texas Certificate of Death 16484.

<sup>56</sup> Raper, Preface to Peasantry, p. 380

<sup>57</sup> Carter Design Associates, Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 Stabilization Report, p. 14.

<sup>58</sup> Carter Design Associates, Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 Stabilization Report, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> According to website MasonicFind, a tiler or tyler in Freemasonry is “an appointed officer of a lodge who is responsible for guarding the lodge’s meetings against those who are not recognized Masons and who seek entry, usually called cowans and eavesdroppers.” Source: “What is the Role of a Tiler in Freemasonry?” MasonicFind, Your Gateway to Masonic Knowledge and Community. Accessed on October 22, 2024, <https://masonicfind.com/the-role-of-a-tyler-in-freemasonry>

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

The lodge provided a fraternal brotherhood to the freedmen, a gathering place for the community, a space for shelter and rest for visiting preachers and travelers, and a place of safety during a time when discrimination, racism, and violence were omnipresent. The Dabney Hill lodge, along with the network of other rural Black freemasonry lodges, served as a reprieve from an unjust society and a haven to build a community that aligns with their personal and community values.

Dabney Hill community members recognize Ethiopian Lodge #308 as a Prince Hall affiliate, but few records exist to document its history in greater detail. Furthermore, the cultural magnitude of the lodge within the context of a rural African American Freedom Colony cannot be understated. It is understandable that Black freemasons, especially those located in rural areas, would not feel burdened to seek official masonic affiliation, as Freedom colonies themselves operated as a self-sustaining entity. The balance of urban and rural freemason membership and retention has been a mounting and growing issue for the Grand Lodge organization. William Alan Muraskin claims that by 1926, the organization's growth of urban membership had come at the expense of freemasonry in rural lodges.<sup>63</sup> Members of the Ethiopian Star Lodge No. 308 were still participating in masonic funeral rituals in 1966.<sup>64</sup>

The building stopped functioning as a Masonic Lodge around 1995. It is currently unknown when the building became vacant; however, no other use for the building post-1995 has been identified at present. Through email correspondence in 2020 between Dabney Hill community member and historian Gloria Smith and a previous archivist at The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas, information from Annual Conference Proceedings was provided that indicate that the Ethiopian Star Lodge No. 308 members met annually from 1908-1995. The following officers and their corresponding roles were included on page 218 of the document, Thirty-Fourth Annual Community, Fort Worth, Texas, commencing July 20, 1909, A.L. 1909 – Robert E. Hoskins, W.M.; Reubin C. Nicholson, S.W.; George W. Willis, J. W.; Ephriam Jones, Treasurer; Simon P. Nicholson, Secretary; Henry Morris, S. D.; Daniel B. Dabney, J. D.; Arthur Boyllin, S. S.; Eugene McKinnie, J. S; Richard Wormley, Tiler. Additionally, the following members were mentioned in addition to the officers: Norris Henderson and Henry Wiggins.<sup>65</sup>

Moreover, the information for the officers and members in 1995 was included in the email correspondence. The following officers with their corresponding roles were named: Anderson Lucas, W. M.; Anderson Jones, Jr., Secretary; R. W. Kemp, S. W.; Junior L. Thomas, J. W.; Henry Nollie, Chaplain; Jessie Dix, Treasurer; James A. Atkinson, S. D. Lastly, Willie S. Bright was a member in 1995 without a specific role detailed.<sup>66</sup>

## Conclusion

The Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, built circa 1908 in the rural African American community of Dabney Hill near Snook, Texas, was a Prince Hall-affiliated fraternal lodge that played a vital role in local civil rights, education, and mutual aid. As a rare surviving example of a rural Black lodge, it connected members to a national network and remained active into the 1990s. The lodge is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its significance under Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage: Black and Social History at the local level of significance for the period c. 1908 to 1975.

The local community, particularly the representatives from the Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church that assisted in the preparation of this (Gloria Smith and Jamonica Jackson), envision that the Lodge will remain a historic resource in the

---

<sup>63</sup> William A. Muraskin, *Middle-class Blacks in a White Society: Prince Hall Freemasonry in America*. (Oakland, CA: University of California press, 1975), p. 113. [https://archive.org/details/bub\\_gb\\_tKoc4KF8u1cC/page/n1/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_tKoc4KF8u1cC/page/n1/mode/2up).

<sup>64</sup> "Lonnie Robinson." *The Bryan Daily Eagle*, Vol.91. Dec. 30, 1966, Bryan-College Station Eagle, p.2.

<sup>65</sup> The archivist who sent this information in an email to Gloria Smith has since passed away and therefore was not able to be contacted. Writers of this nomination contacted the Grand Lodge but were unable to get a copy of the Annual Conference Proceedings to confirm the information by viewing the primary resources first-hand. Our query to the Grand Lodge was forwarded to the Wilbert M. Curtis Library Museum at the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas in Fort Worth on September 16, 2024. They may have the proceedings available for viewing, but we have not heard back from them. We thank Gloria Smith for providing a copy of the email and the information regarding the correspondence dated April 23, 2020.

<sup>66</sup> Writers of this nomination do not know if any of these members are still living. Future research efforts could involve investigating if there are any surviving Dabney Hill Lodge members, and potentially conducting interviews or oral histories to gain more insight about the Lodge's history and significance to Dabney Hill Freedom Colony community members. Additional research would also provide more clarity on the use of the Lodge post-1995.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

community for years to come. They have spent many years advocating for the preservation and restoration of this important building. The Dabney Hill Lodge Hall was awarded \$75,000 through Preservation Texas's Rural African-American Heritage Grants Program which is funded by a National Parks Service Paul Bruhn Grant. The owner's intention is to raise the building, stabilize the first-floor framing and place it on a new pier and beam foundation, repair the roof, and mothball the building until further funding can be secured to complete the next phase of construction. This future phase will involve installing new siding, windows, and doors. The owner is working with the City of Snook to use the building as a community center for after-school youth programming once the rehabilitation is completed.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

## Bibliography

- Brooks, Joanna. "Prince Hall, Freemasonry, and Genealogy." *African American Review*, 34, no. 2 (Summer 2000) 197–216. Indiana State University.
- Burleson County Deed Records. 1869 Book J, pp. 8–9, December 6, 1869. Burleson County Courthouse. Caldwell, Texas.
- Burleson County Deed Records. 1888. Volume 2, p. 374, February 27, 1888; Interview with Louis A. Nelson, age 90, on August 30, 2019, transcript in possession of author.
- Burleson County Historical Society. *Astride the Old San Antonio Road: A History of Burleson County, Texas*. (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing, 1979).
- Burleson County School First Circular Annual, Caldwell, Texas. 1913. Dabney Hill School, District No. 26., pp. 99–100, December 4, 1913.
- Carter Design Associates, *Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 Prince Hall Masonic Lodge Stabilization Report*, May 24, 2024. Accessed September 2024 via email correspondence with Gloria Smith.
- Chambers, Dr. Ali D. "Cultural Solidarity and the Free Space of the Black Fraternity," *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol. 7, no.3 (September 2014) p. 266. <https://www.jpanafrican.org/docs/vol7no3/7.3-18-Chambers.pdf>.
- Chase, C. Thurton. *A Manual on Schoolhouses and Cottages for the People of the South* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1868).
- Chevalier Ramsay Lodge, "What is Freemasonry?" Accessed April 2, 2024, <https://chevalierramsay.be/what-is-freemasonry/>.
- "Dabney Hill, Burleson County, Texas." *Race & Space*. The Cultural Landscapes Foundation. Accessed September 2024, <https://www.tclf.org/sites/default/files/microsites/landslide2021/locations/dabney.html>
- Dabney Hill Historical Society. Texas Historical Marker Application, Narrative. June 11, 2020. On file at the Texas Historical Commission.
- Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church 100-Year Anniversary Program 1887-1987, Sunday, October 4, 1987, Snook, Texas, in possession of author; Interview with Doris Workmon, March 18, 2018, transcript in possession of author.
- "Death Proof Blank for Lillie M. Dabney (1915–1970)"; Texas Certificate of Death 16484. Sourced from the personal archive of Gloria Smith, March 2024.
- "Determination of Eligibility for Dabney Hill Lodge." *National Trust for Historic Preservation*. Sourced from the personal archive of Gloria Smith, March 2024.
- Duncan, Robert J., "Lucas, Albert Anderson (1886-1963)," *Texas State Historical Association*. Accessed March 22, 2024, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/lucas-albert-anderson>.
- Gladstone, Steve. *Freedom Trail Boston – Ultimate Tour & History Guide: Tips, Secrets, & Tricks* (CreateSpace Publishing, 2014).
- Jackson, Charles Christopher. "Burleson County," *Handbook of Texas Online*. Accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/burleson-county>.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

- Kantrowitz, Stephen. *All Men Free and Brethren: Essays on the History of African American Freemasonry* (Cornell University Press, 2013).
- O'Brien, Michael, "Load-Bearing Single-Wall Constructions from Shanties to Structural Insulated Panels." *Journal of Construction History*, 28, no.1. (2013), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43856027>.
- O'Brien, Michael. *The Last Institution Standing in the Dabney Hill Freedom Colony: The Ethiopian Star, a Prince Hall Lodge #308*. Sourced from the personal archive of Gloria Smith, March 2024.
- Odintz, Mark, "Snook, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online*. Accessed March 28, 2024, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/snook-tx>.
- "Our Rich History." City of Snook. Accessed March 28, 2024, [www.cityofsnook.com/about](http://www.cityofsnook.com/about).
- Livingston, Rick. "Booker T. Washington: Biography, Books, Facts, and Accomplishments." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed October 16, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Booker-T-Washington>.
- "Lonnie Robinson." *The Bryan Daily Eagle, Vol.91*. Dec. 30, 1966, Bryan-College Station Eagle, P. 2.
- "Map of Burleson County within Texas." *Wikimedia Commons, 2024*. Accessed April 29, 2024, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burleson\\_County,\\_Texas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burleson_County,_Texas)
- "Mission and Purpose." *Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Texas and Its Jurisdiction*. Accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.mwphglotx.org/about-freemasonry/mission-and-purpose/>.
- Muraskin, William A. *Middle-class Blacks in a White Society: Prince Hall Freemasonry in America*. (Oakland, CA: University of California press, 1975), p. 113. [https://archive.org/details/bub\\_gb\\_tKoc4KF8u1cC/page/n1/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_tKoc4KF8u1cC/page/n1/mode/2up).
- Nabors, Daniel J., "Wright, Sylvester Marilyn (1927-1994)," Texas State Historical Association. Accessed March 22, 2024, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/wright-sylvester-marilyn>.
- "Prominent pastor S.M. Wright 67 dies." *Dallas Morning News*, November 4, 1994. Accessed September 2024 via [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com)
- Raper, Arthur F. *Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties*. University of North Carolina Press, 1936. Accessed September 2024, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.b3428225&seq=433>.
- Roberts, Dr. Andrea. "What are Freedom Colonies?" Accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.thetexasfreedomcoloniesproject.com/what-are-freedom-colonies>.
- Robinson, Willard B., "Box and Strip Construction," *Texas State Historical Association*. Accessed April 3, 2024, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/box-and-strip-construction>.
- Ross, Lawrence. *The Divine Nine*. New York: Kensington 2000.
- Skrabanek, R. L., "Sebesta, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online*. Accessed March 28, 2024, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/sebesta-tx>.
- Sitton, Thad and Conrad, James. *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Sitton, Thad. "Freedmen Settlements." *TSHA Handbook of Texas Online*. Accessed September 2024, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/uef20>.

Tabor, Mark. "Rosenwald Schools: History, Description, Finding, Impact, Segregation & Facts." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed October 16, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Rosenwald-schools>

Texas, U.S. Birth Certificates, 1903-1932. "Sylvester Marilyn Wright." Accessed April 29, 2024, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/3003003:2275?ssrc=pt&tid=13995067&pid=312357377804>.

Texas, U.S. Voter Registration Lists, 1867–1869. Accessed March 2024 via [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

Texas, County Marriage Index 1837-1977, FamilySearch and Texas Voter Records, 1867-1918, FamilySearch, referenced by Gloria Smith.

Thirty-Fourth Annual Communication, Fort Worth, Texas, commencing July 20, 1909, A. L. 1909. The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Texas, Library Archives. Received via email correspondence to Gloria Smith on April 23, 2024.

United States Federal Census, 1870, "Daniel Dabney." Accessed April 2024, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/5060017:7163?tid=&pid=&queryId=095a5312-7078-404f-9f3b-3204f9d36081&phsrc=yZX41&phstart=successSource>.

Uzzel, Robert L. *Prince Hall Freemasonry in the Lone Star State from Cuney to Curtis, 1875-2003*. (Fort Worth, Texas: Eakin Press, 2004), vii.

Wallace, Maurice, "Are We Men?: Prince Hall, Martin Delany, and the Masculine Ideal in Black Freemasonry," *American Literary History*, 9, no. 3.

"What Is Freemasonry?" *Masonic Higher Education Bursary Fund | Alberta*. Accessed September 30, 2024, at the Wayback Machine. <http://www.mhebf.com/freemasonry.html>.

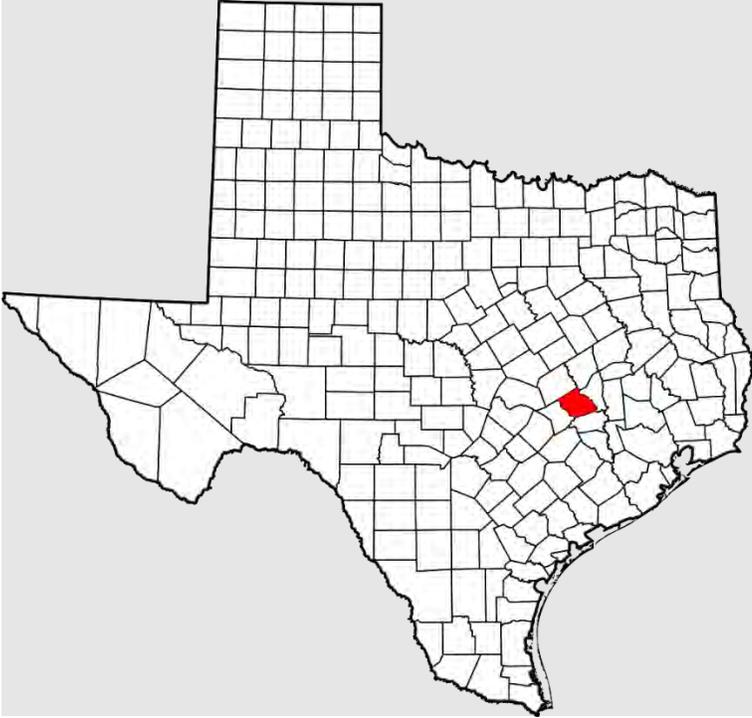
1872-1997: 125th Church Anniversary, Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church, March 23, 1997, Houston, Texas, in possession of author; Pruitt, pp. 172–174; 1900 United States Census, Burleson County, Texas (Sheet 20A), District 40, line 20.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

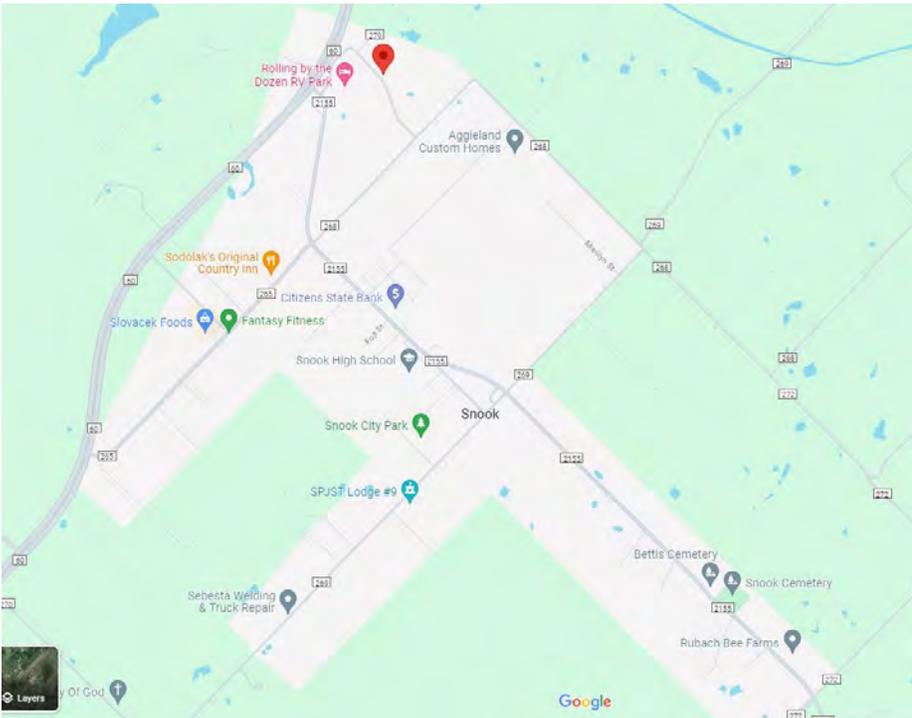
---

**Maps**

Map 1 – Burleson County within Texas (Wikimedia Commons 2024).



Map 2 – Map showing the Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, the red pin, in relation to the city of Snook (Google Maps 2024).



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

Map 3 – The Ethiopian Star Lodge #308 at coordinates 30.503879° -96.469059° in Snook is identified as the only contributing resource for this nomination (circled in yellow). The four red circles denote the smokehouse, well, Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, and the Jones High School and Gym ruins – all four are noncontributing. The green box denotes the nominated boundary line corresponding to the parcel boundary per the Burleson County Appraisal District.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

**Figures**

Figure 1 – Texas Historical Commission (THC) subject marker for Dabney Hill Freedom Colony (THC 2020).

FOLLOWING EMANCIPATION IN 1865, FORMERLY ENSLAVED AFRICAN AMERICANS ESTABLISHED INDEPENDENT COMMUNITIES KNOWN AS FREEDOM COLONIES OR FREEDMEN’S TOWNS. BETWEEN 1865 AND 1920, MORE THAN 500 OF THESE SETTLEMENTS WERE ESTABLISHED IN TEXAS. THESE SAFE HAVENS WERE SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT AUTONOMY AND SELF-RELIANCE. THEY PROVIDED ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR THEIR FAMILIES AND DESCENDANTS THROUGH LAND OWNERSHIP.

BY 1870, DANIEL DABNEY SR. (1815-1889), A FORMER BURLESON COUNTY SLAVE BORN IN VIRGINIA, PURCHASED 60 ACRES ON A HILL NEAR PRESENT-DAY SNOOK. DABNEY PURCHASED ADDITIONAL ACREAGE FOR HIS FAMILY, WHO WENT ON TO HELP BUILD AND ESTABLISH DABNEY HILL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH AND ETHIOPIAN STAR LODGE NO. 308 ON THE SITE. THE CHURCH AND LODGE BECAME ANCHORS OF THE COMMUNITY, ASSISTING WITH ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SECURITY AND SUPPORT.

IN 1874, DABNEY HILL COLORED SCHOOL WAS ORGANIZED UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF DANIEL DABNEY, SR., DAVID NAPPER, SR., AND JOHN MUNSON SR. THE COMMUNITY BUILT AND DONATED THE FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT. THE SCHOOL LATER MERGED WITH OTHER FREEDOM COLONY SCHOOLS TO FORM JONES HIGH SCHOOL DURING SEGREGATION. IN THE 1880s, CZECH IMMIGRANTS ESTABLISHED THE COMMUNITY OF SEBESTA NEAR DABNEY HILL. THE TWO SETTLEMENTS EVENTUALLY COALESCED INTO THE COMMUNITY OF SNOOK WHEN A POST OFFICE OPENED BY THAT NAME IN 1895. RARE FOR THE TIMES, AFRICAN AMERICAN CITIZENS FROM DABNEY HILL SERVED AS POSTMASTER, INCLUDING ROBERT E. HOSKINS, SON OF WASHINGTON HOSKINS, AND JOHN A. DABNEY, GRANDSON OF THE TOWN FOUNDER. MANY DESCENDANTS OF THESE FOUNDERS WENT ON TO BECOME EDUCATORS, POLITICIANS AND LEADERS IN THE COMMUNITY. ALTHOUGH A SMALL, RURAL SETTLEMENT, THE DABNEY HILL FREEDOM COLONY REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND INSPIRING STORY OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND LIBERTY.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---



Figure 2 – Photograph of Dabney Hill leaders, ca. 1910. Standing: Ben W. Johnson, Mingo Kemp, William “Buddy” Jones, and Rev. J.H. Ussery. Seated: Sam Munson, Daniel Dabney, Jr., John Dabney, and George Willis. Originally published *Old Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church 120-Year Church Anniversary Program 1866-1986*, Sunday June 29, 1986. Courtesy Gloria Smith and the Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church.



Figure 3 – Photograph of Dabney Hill Lodge, ca. 1988. Courtesy of Gloria Smith and Sharon Prejean.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas



Figure 4 – 1958 Aerial of Dabney Hill to show surrounding context area around the Ethiopian Star Lodge. The neighboring sites are identified as the Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church and the Jones School; these non-contributing sites once consisted of functioning buildings, but are now in ruinous condition. -Source: HistoricAerials.com

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas



Section FIGURE, Page 28

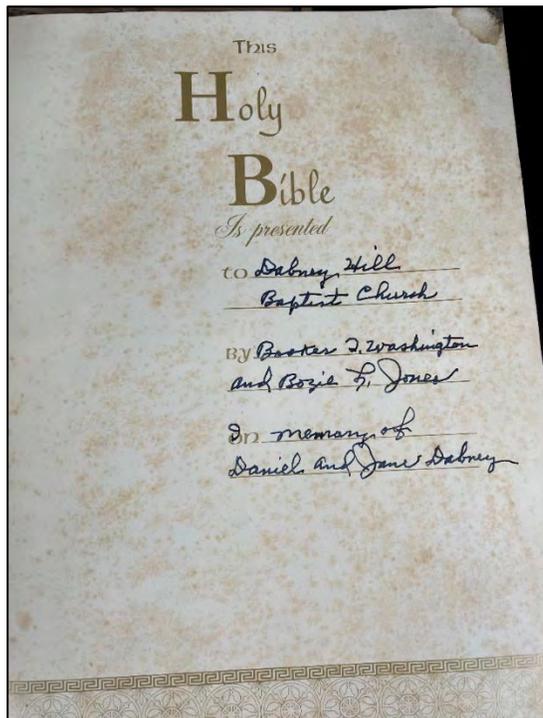


Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

Figure 7 – Current Elevations of Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, May 2024, by Carter Design Associates. Courtesy of Gloria Smith.



Figure 8 – Cover of Holy Bible; Bible Donated to Dabney Hill Baptist Church by Booker T. Washington (Date Unknown). Courtesy of Gloria Smith.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Figure 9 – Interior Page of Holy Bible; Bible Donated to Dabney Hill Baptist Church by Booker T. Washington (Date Unknown). Courtesy of Gloria Smith.

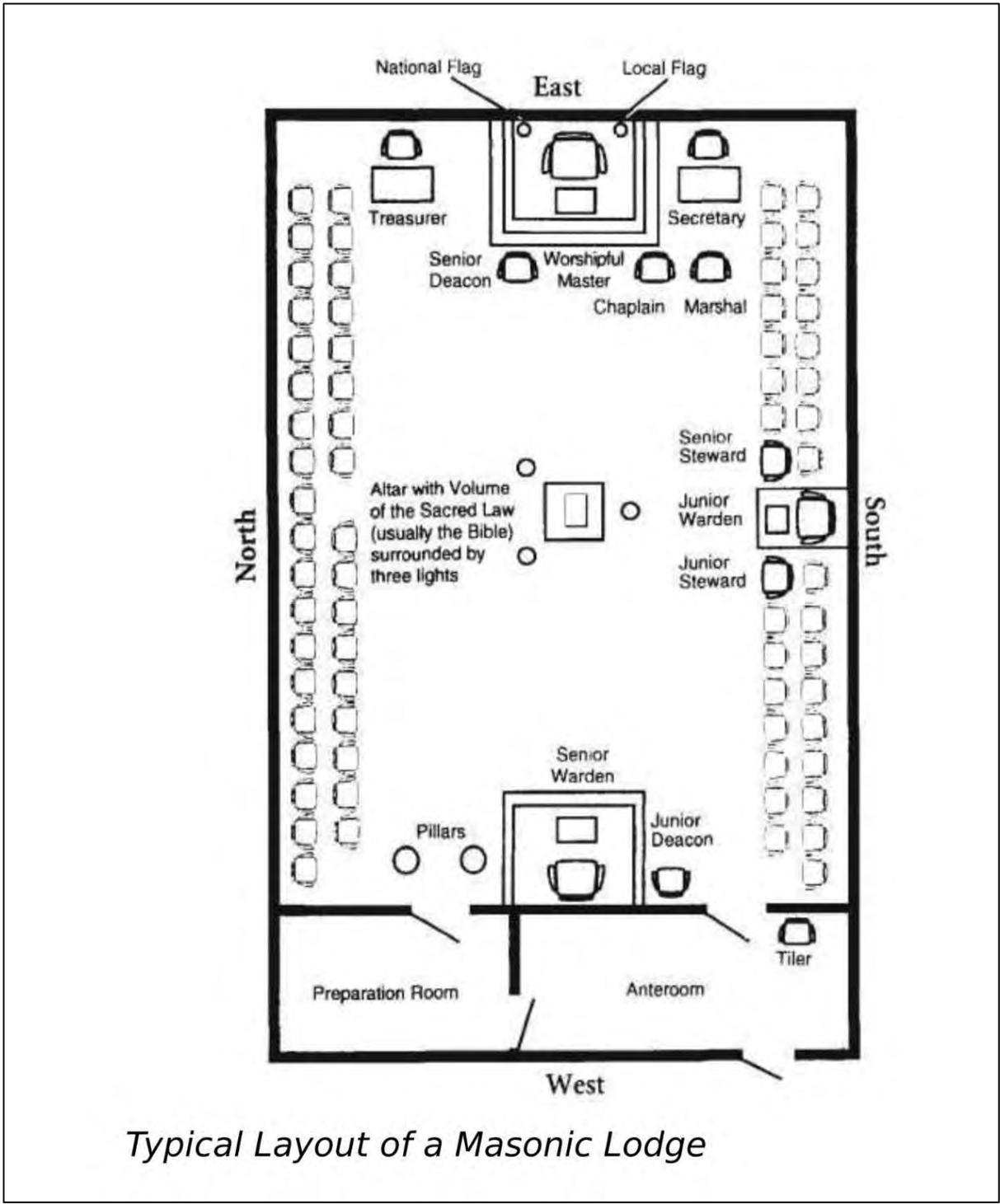


Figure 10 – Undated photograph of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church (top), Dabney Hill Lodge (bottom background), and historic well on property (bottom foreground). The original stained-glass windows from the Church are currently stored on the first floor of the Lodge. Courtesy of Gloria Smith.



Figure 11 – Dabney Hill Baptist Church Cornerstone. Courtesy of Gloria Smith.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas



*Typical Layout of a Masonic Lodge*

Figure 12 – Typical Masonic Lodge Layout, selected from the Carter Design Associates report titled, “Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Prince Hall Masonic Lodge Stabilization Report, CDA Project #202315.” May 24, 2024. Courtesy of Gloria Smith.

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photographs

Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

Photographer(s): Sanea Sakhyani, SWCA Environmental Consultants, Photos 0001 to 0024.

Carter Design Associates, Photos 0025 to 0030 (Lodge, second-floor interior)

Dates(s): March 2024

Photograph Number: 0001, Setting Overview, CR 267; view southeast.



Photograph Number: 0002, Setting Overview, CR 267; view northwest.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0003, Setting Overview, Church with Lodge in Background; view northeast.



Photograph Number: 0004, Setting Overview, Church with Storm Damage; view north.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0005, Setting Overview, Church and Smokehouse; view northeast.



Photograph Number: 0006, Setting Overview, Lodge Hall; view north.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0007, Setting Overview, Lodge and Smokehouse; view north.



Photograph Number: 0008, Setting Overview, Smokehouse, Unknown Building, and Jones School Gymnasium in Background; view west.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0009, Setting Overview, Jones School Gymnasium; view west/southwest.



Photograph Number: 0010, Setting Overview, Church and Jones School Gymnasium in Background; view south.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0011, Setting Overview, Church; view southeast.



Photograph Number: 0012, Setting Overview, Church, Historic Well (Obscured by Tree), Land; view southeast.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0013, Setting Overview, Historic Well Located Underneath Tree; view north.



Photograph Number: 0014, Setting Overview, Historic Well Located Underneath Tree; view north.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0015, Dabney Hill Lodge exterior, south elevation; view facing northeast.



Photograph Number: 0016, Dabney Hill Lodge exterior, west elevation; view facing east.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0017, Dabney Hill Lodge exterior, north elevation; view facing southwest.



Photograph Number: 0018, Dabney Hill Lodge exterior, east elevation; view facing west.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0019, Dabney Hill Lodge exterior, south and east elevations; view facing northwest.



Photograph Number: 0020, Dabney Hill Lodge first-floor interior, overview; view north.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0021, Dabney Hill Lodge first-floor interior, overview; original wood window sashes from Dabney Hill Baptist Church stored on the first floor of the Lodge; view northwest.



Photograph Number: 0022, Dabney Hill Lodge first-floor interior, overview; view northeast.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0023, Dabney Hill Lodge first-floor interior, view northeast.



Photograph Number: 0024, Dabney Hill Lodge first-floor interior, stairs to second floor; view east.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0025, Dabney Hill Lodge interior, second floor from landing to the first floor; view east. Photo courtesy of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Photographed by Carter Design Associates.



Photograph Number: 0026, Dabney Hill Lodge interior, second floor anteroom with altered window-turned-door on left; view west. Photo courtesy of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Photographed by Carter Design Associates.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0027, Dabney Hill Lodge interior, second floor lodge room; view north. Photo courtesy of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Photographed by Carter Design Associates.



Photograph Number: 0028, Dabney Hill Lodge interior, second floor lodge room; view south, toward anteroom. Photo courtesy of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Photographed by Carter Design Associates.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0029, Dabney Hill Lodge interior, second floor platforms and podium; view northwest. Photo courtesy of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Photographed by Carter Design Associates.



Ethiopian Star Lodge #308, Snook, Burleson County, Texas

---

Photograph Number: 0030, Dabney Hill Lodge interior, second floor; original pews surviving in the lodge room, view north. Photo courtesy of Dabney Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Photographed by Carter Design Associates.

