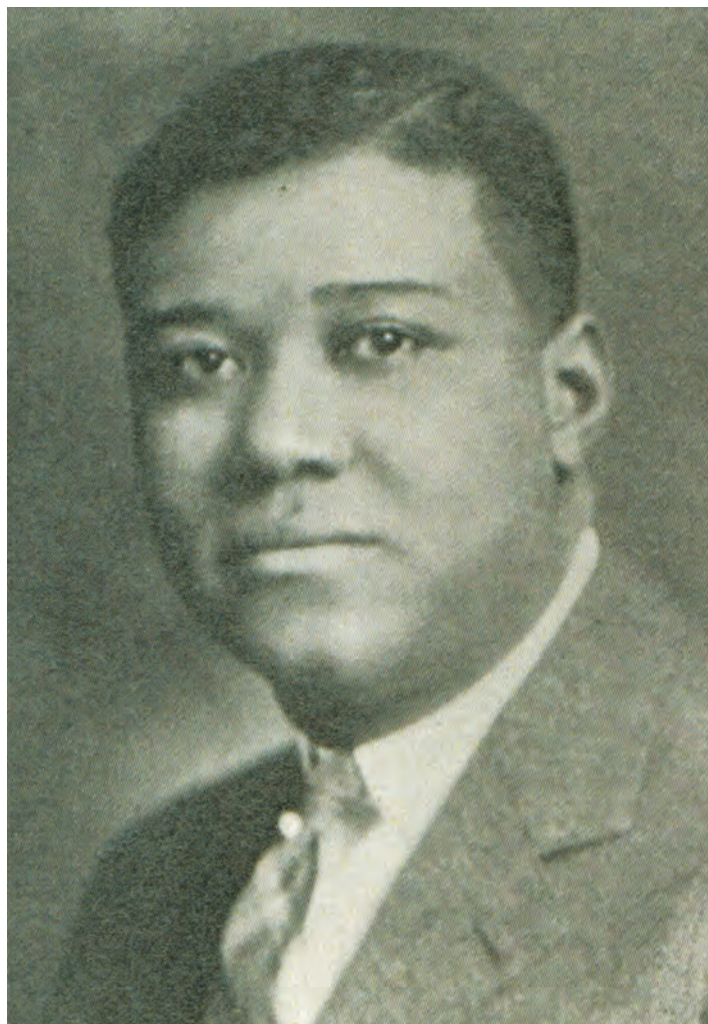


SAMUEL PLATO



Samuel Plato, a gifted designer, architect and early civil rights advocate, was active in Marion from 1902 to 1920. The buildings Plato designed are historically valuable because of their amazing craftsmanship, unique variety of styles, as well as their timeless design. Plato structures are part of the now famous Arts & Crafts movement. All Platonian buildings have finely crafted windows, and many have retained the original glass and casings. Plato's styles range from bungalow, to Mediterranean, to Greek-revival, yet are all related by the superior craftsmanship. Eight Platonian structures are on the National Register of Historic Places.

Samuel Plato was born in 1882 in Waugh, Alabama and arrived in Marion at the height of the Gas Boom in 1902. Though construction projects were plentiful, Samuel Plato, an African American, had difficulty landing a job. He was dismissed from one assignment after one hour because the other workers refused to work with him. As he left the worksite he prophesied that those who

would not work *with* him would some day work *for* him. His prophesy came true in 1912 J. when J. Wood Wilson hired Plato to build a mansion that we know today as the Wilson Vaughn Hostess House. At that point Plato used his influence in the construction industry to convince white builders to allow African-American workers into their union. Plato is also credited as the first African American to be awarded a contract to design and construct federal buildings. Though Plato left Marion in 1920, his amazing talent and indomitable spirit helped shape the landscape and character of this community for all time.