



# Bessie Coleman

— AVIATRIX & SPEAKER —

The Central Florida Connection

Orlando was Bessie Coleman's last place of residence before her untimely death in 1926.

She met and befriended the Orlando couple, Rev. Hezakiah Keith Hill, and his wife,

Viola Tillinghast Hill, respected community activists of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist

Church; staying at the parsonage on Washington St. She was here to earn money to

buy a plane. Money earned from her work at a local beauty salon as well as a final

sponsorship from Orlando resident and Beeman Chewing Gum heir, Edwin Beeman Jr.

allowed her to bring the old airplane, an old "Jenny" to Florida. Her final plane ride

would end in a tragic accident in Jacksonville, FL, where her body would lay in state.

She would have an Orlando funeral at Mt. Zion before her body was put on the train

back to Chicago for the final service and burial.

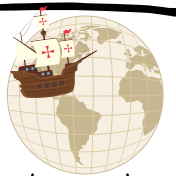
## Notable Achievements

*comment  
ça va*

learned French while  
living in Chicago



1st Black  
American Female



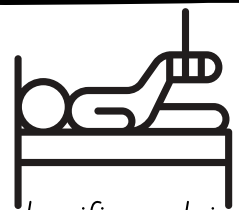
Sailed to France twice to  
learn flight & tricks



became known  
for wearing a  
flowing scarf  
and long coat  
during stunts



earned money in  
an Orlando  
beauty salon to  
purchase her  
own plane



survived a horrific crash in California  
flew again about 18 mths later