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Guide to the

Second African Baptist Church (Savannah, Ga.) records

1812-1979

Sc Micro R-6632

Preservation of the Black Religious Heritage Project funded by the Lilly Endowment

Processed by Victor N. Smythe.

Summary

Creator: Second African Baptist Church (Savannah, Ga.)

Title: Second African Baptist Church (Savannah, Ga.) records

Date: 1812-1979

Size: 0.19 linear feet (3 reels)

Source: Microfilm, gift of Second African Baptist Church (Savannah, GA), 1992. Originals held by Second African Baptist Church, 123 Houston Street, Savannah, GA 31401.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: The Second African Baptist Church was founded in 1802 by members of the First Colored Church (now the First African Baptist Church of Savannah). The Second African Baptist Church (Savannah, GA) records include membership records, minutes, reports, financial records, legal documents, and printed matter.

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Preferred citation: [Item], Second African Baptist Church (Savannah, Ga.) records, Sc Micro R-6632, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Victor N. Smythe; machine-readable finding aid created by Apex Data Services; revised by Terry Catapano.

Creator History

The Second African Baptist Church was founded in 1802 by members of the First Colored Church (now

the First African Baptist Church of Savannah). In the early years of the 19th century, the Savannah River Association, an organization of Baptist churches composed of one Black and two white Baptist churches (the First Colored Church, the Newington Baptist Church and the Savannah Baptist Church), decided to strengthen the Association by organizing two additional Black churches out of the membership of the First Colored Church which at the time had a membership of 850. The two Black churches which were formed were Second Colored Church and the Ogeechee Baptist Church. Two hundred members were dismissed from the First Colored Church and joined with the African Americans who had been members in the white Savannah Baptist Church to constitute Second Colored Church.

Two African American ministers were ordained to serve the new churches. Rev. Henry Cunningham, a formerly enslaved person, became the first pastor of Second Colored Church, and served for thirty-one years from 1802 to 1833.

The founding members of Second Colored Church worked as domestic servants or mechanics and lived in the area where the church was located. Many members, who were formerly enslaved people, followed the example of their pastor and later purchased their freedom.

After its founding, Second Colored Church continued to have a close relationship with the First Colored Church. Following the death of Andrew Bryan, the second pastor of the First Colored Church, Second Colored Church provided, in regular succession, pastors for the First Colored, or mother church, from 1812 to 1846.

The first of the pastors that went to First Colored Church from Second Colored Church was Andrew Cox Marshall in 1815. Rev. Marshall had joined Second Colored Church after he had been baptized by Rev. Cunningham.

In 1823, the First Colored Church and the Second Colored Church were renamed First African Baptist Church and Second African Baptist Church respectively by the Sunbury Association, which had replaced the Savannah River Association.

The second pastor of Second African Baptist Church was Thomas Anderson. Rev. Anderson, one of the organizers of the original Second Colored Church, had been baptized by Andrew Bryan. In 1833, he was called to pastor the Third Colored Church, later renamed First Bryan Baptist Church, when it split from First African Baptist Church in that same year. Anderson pastored the newly constituted church then known as the Third African Baptist Church. After two years, in 1835, Anderson returned to Second African Baptist Church where he served until 1849.

Rev. John Cox, 1849-1871. Rev. H.L. Simpson, 1871-1881. Rev. Alexander Ellis, 1883-1889. During his administration the church was remodelled. In 1889, Rev. Ellis was deposed following a disagreement between himself and members of the choir. A council of three white ministers met and rendered a decision which was not acceptable to Rev. Ellis. An election was held on December 13, 1889 and Ellis was deposed as pastor. Ellis and his supporters then formed Beth Eden Baptist Church. Rev. J. J. Durham, 1891-1902. Final payment for the remodelling of the church was made during his tenure. Rev. John H. May, 1903-1907. Rev. S. H. Smith, 1907. He only served six months during which time he suffered a stroke and had to resign. Rev. Ira De Reid or D. A. Reid, 1908-1914. He was a native of the West Indies. A pipe organ was installed and the church was renovated during his administration. Rev. W. Boliver Davis, 1915-1918. Rev. P. W. Wrenn, 1919-1922. Rev. S. D. Ross, 1923-1928. Rev. Ross organized the church into fifteen departments. The church building was completely renovated following a fire in 1926. Rev. Miles A. Hunter, 1929-1931. Rev. Clifton Norman Perry, 1931-1934. Rev. Perry was noted as a good gospel preacher. Rev. Ivory W. Collins, 1935-1937. While serving as a waiter at the DeSoto Hotel Ivory W. Collins was selected as a supply minister. It was noted that although he did not have the training of previous pastors, he had a natural gift and talent for the ministry. Rev. Collins was

later accepted as pastor and served two years. He left to continue his studies in the ministry. Rev. C. L. Hawk, 1938-1942 Rev. Lewis Llewellyn Scott, 1942-1949 Rev. Edgar Perry Quarterman, 1947-1983. During Rev. Quarterman's tenure the church was renovated and a heating and cooling system installed. Rev. James H. Cantrell, 1983-Present (1997)

Scope and Content Note

The records of Second African Baptist Church, Savannah, GA were microfilmed by the *The Preservation of the Black Religious Heritage Project*(PBRHP) of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture during the month of June 1992. Originals were retained by the church. The records were arranged for microfilming broadly following the survey questionnaire. Some additional material made available during the course of microfilming were also arranged accordingly. Pages of bound ledgers were microfilmed sequentially as they appear. Records include minutes, membership files, financial materials, legal documents, reports, and printed matter.

Arrangement: Records organized into seven series: I. Church Minutes; II. Legal Documents; III. Church Rolls, Minute Books, and Annual Reports; IV. Financial Records; V. Sunday School Records; VI. Church Organizations' Minutes; and VII. Church History, Printed Matter, Miscellaneous.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American Baptists
African American churches
African Americans -- Georgia -- Savannah -- History
African Americans -- Religion
Church records and registers

Names

First African Baptist Church (Savannah, Ga.)
Second African Baptist Church (Savannah, Ga.)

Container List

Church Minutes 1872-1901

The *Church Minutes, 1872-1901*, series include records of membership, minutes of meetings with actions taken on disciplinary cases, and readmissions or dismissals. Most cases dealt with members charged with "licentious" behavior and dancing.

- r. 1 Members' Records 1872-1875
- r. 1 Disciplinary Case Records 1874-1879
- r. 1 Minutes Of Meetings 1889-1901
- r. 1 Church Roll 1874-1879
- r. 1 Conference Meetings Minute Book 1889-1901
- r. 1 Membership Dues Book 1892

Legal Documents 1812-1922

The *Legal Documents, 1812-1922*, series consists of papers on the purchase and sale of property by Henry Cunningham to the church, and abstracts of conveyance. A charter amendment, dated December 1922, is also included.

- r. 1 Property Purchase And Sale 1812-1922
- r. 1 Abstract Of Conveyance 1854-1922
- r. 1 Charter Amendment 1922

Church Rolls, Minute Books, and Annual Reports 1891-1978

The *Church Rolls, Minute Books, and Annual Reports, 1891-1978*, series is comprised primarily of recorded lists and rosters of committee members, conference meetings, and miscellaneous correspondence. Minutes of the joint sessions of the official boards, 1934-1937, also appear.

- r. 1 Minutes Of The Saint Paul Club Association 1891
- r. 1 Roll Of Committees 1922-1932
- r. 1 Conference Meetings 1924-1978
- r. 1 Annual Reports 1947-1948
- r. 1 Miscellaneous Correspondence And Meetings 1951-1963
- r. 1 Roll Book 1912-1914
- r. 1 Pastor And Deacons Council Meetings Minute Book 1922- 1932
- r. 1 Official Boards Joint Sessions Minutes 1934-1937

Financial Records 1879-1973

The *Financial records, 1879-1973*, series contains treasurer's books with detailed expenditures, collections, and annual reports.

- r. 2 Treasurer's Book For Sunday School 1879-1883
- r. 2 Treasurer's Book 1883-1891
- r. 2 Dues And Payment Book, Also Contains Christian Loving Society Minutes 1884-1892, 1887
- r. 2 Members And Dues Paid 1892-1893
- r. 2 Expenses And Collections 1895-1906
- r. 2 Treasurer's Book 1906-1915
- r. 2 Financial Book 1918-1919
- r. 2 Payments And Disbursements 1921-1930
- r. 2 Members And Dues Paid 1926-1933

Financial Records (cont.)

- r. 2 Treasurer's Report 1934-1935
- r. 2 Annual Report 1947-1948
- r. 3 Members' Names, Addresses, And Pledges 1925-1942
- r. 3 Financial Reports 1933-1963
- r. 3 Salary Accounts 1932-1933
- r. 3 Annual Report 1963, 1973

Sunday School Records 1922-1948

The *Sunday School Records, 1922-1948*, series consists of minutes with attendance, collections, and dues noted. Details such as hymns and bible verses used during classes are given.

- r. 3 Attendance And Collections 1922-1923
- r. 3 Journal 1928
- r. 3 Minute And Record Book 1929-1948
- r. 3 Record Of Drivers' Day And Night Shifts 1923-1941

Church Organizations' Minutes 1932-1973

The *Church Organizations' Minutes, 1932-1973*, series is comprised of minutes of meetings of the deacons, deaconesses, brotherhood, and church officers. A resolution by Adeline Graham to establish an orphanage for Black children, dated June 4, 1944, is included.

- r. 3 Conference And Board Meetings Minutes 1942-1946
- r. 3 Deacons And Deaconesses Meetings 1932-1973
- r. 3 Annual Deacons Meetings 1941-1968
- r. 3 Record Of Wards 1973
- r. 3 Deaconess Board Report 1950, 1962
- r. 3 Brotherhood Meetings 1951-1959
- r. 3 Officers Meetings 1953-1967

Church History, Printed Matter, and Miscellaneous 1892-1979

The *Church History, Printed Matter, and Miscellaneous, 1892-1979*, series contains anniversary journals and programs, one of which is the installation program for Edgar P. Quarterman in December 1949. An essay by Deacon W. S. Roundfield, which constitutes a history of Second African Baptist Church from 1802 to 1935, is included.

- r. 3 Legal Documents 1892-1948
- r. 3 Anniversary Journals, 119th, 145th
- r. 3 Programs 1966-1979
Notes by Deacon W. S. Roundfield on the history of Second African Baptist Church history, 1802-1935