

First African Baptist Church and Parsonage

209-211 West Jefferson Street

Georgetown

The First African Baptist Church traces its roots to a congregation of Baptists formed in Georgetown in 1810. The congregation was racially mixed, with black slaves baptized as nonvoting members along with their white owners. The first building on the property was a frame structure erected in 1815. In 1829 Kentucky Baptists organized a college in southeast Georgetown. In 1840 Howard Malcolm, president of the college, urged the church to move to the college neighborhood. The move was completed in 1848, and the African Americans in the congregation were given the former lot and building for their own separate congregation, which would operate under the care of the parent white church.

The first pastor of the black Baptist church was the Reverend George Washington Dupee, a slave born in Gallatin County in 1826. He was licensed to preach in 1846 and ordained to the ministry in 1851. On January 1, 1856, Dupee was sold at auction at the Scott County Courthouse. Dr. W. M. Pratt, a Lexington pastor, and others bought him and permitted the black congregation to purchase his freedom.

After the Civil War the congregation reorganized, changing its name from Georgetown Baptist Church to First African Baptist Church. The present building was constructed in 1870 at a cost of \$8,250, donated by both the black and white Baptist communities of Georgetown. The parsonage was constructed in 1923 and was at the time described as one of the handsomest buildings constructed for a black congregation in Kentucky. These two buildings today represent the oldest black congregation in the city of Georgetown and one of the oldest black congregations in Kentucky. [CA 3/1/84, 84001985]