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DURHS
441 Monroe Street
P.O. Box 04390
Detroit, MI 48226
(313) 818-0130
email DURHS@ATT.NET

Place
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DETROIT UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY (DURHS)

441 Monroe Street
P.O. Box 04390 • Detroit, MI 48204
(313) 818-0130 • email DURHS@ATT.NET



Where History and
Memories are Preserved in

THE A.R.C.

The Archives Research Center
and Tours of the Underground
Railroad Station

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH OF DETROIT

The Church was founded by 13 former enslaved Christians in 1836. They left a segregated First Baptist Church of Detroit in search of dignity and freedom to worship as free men and women. From the very beginning of the church, members were assisted to freedom under the leadership of the first minister, Rev. William C. Monroe. On December 26, 1856, the congregation, under the leadership of Rev. William Troy, purchased a small church on the present site of the church complex. It was later expanded to produce the edifice which stands today.

The church became the vital Crogan Street Station in the complex, national network of the Underground Railroad Stations (The street was later renamed Monroe). Second Baptist was under the leadership of Rev. Troy (1856-1859), Rev. C.W. Anderson (1859-1861), and Rev. Supply Chase (1861-1874) during that period of history. The dynamic Frederick Douglas spoke at the church in March, 1859 before he met with pre-Civil War revolutionary, John Brown. They met in the home of church member William Webb.

Education remained important at Second Baptist Church, Rev. Monroe became the first teacher of Black children in Detroit in 1839. In 1865, the Detroit Board of Education hired Second Baptist Church member, Fannie Richards to teach Black students in segregated schools.

Rev. Robert Louis Bradby, minister from 1910-1946, was active in securing employment for newly arrived church members. He also served as Detroit NAACP Branch President.

The 1950 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Dr. Ralph Bunche was baptized at Second Baptist on September 4, 1927.

Rev. Allen A. Banks became minister in 1947. Under his leadership, the church grew to a membership of over 4,800.

Foreign missions began in 1896, extending to Haiti and Liberia. Mary Branton Tule, Lula Cooper, Marie Louise Reid, and Evelyn D. Hillman served the church in these missions.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. first visited the church in 1945 with his father, and returned in 1954, 1958, and 1962. Second Baptist was instrumental in raising more money than any other church, for Dr. King's civil rights activities in Montgomery, Alabama.

Rev. Dr. William Saxe Epps led the church from 1983-1987. Rev. Dr. Kevin M. Turman was elected minister in 1988, and continues to serve.

ABOUT THE A.R.C.



John Wesley & Angeline Washington, first couple married in Second Baptist Church, November 26, 1868 by Rev. Supply Chase

The Archives Research Center (A.R.C.) is designed to serve as a repository for documents, i.e., obituaries, paintings, photographs, and visual and auditory records of the history of families who have been a part of the Second Baptist Church of Detroit experience.

This concept was first conceived by Dr. Nathaniel Leach (1911-2005). He was the first church historian, and a Detroit Public Schools Administrator. Dr. Leach conducted extensive research, and organized historical records and photographs. He introduced the story of the Underground Railroad to a generation that had forgotten their important history and legacy.

The A.R.C. is divided into five services:

- 1) Family histories through obituaries and other important documents;
- 2) Photographs and paintings for display on special occasions;
- 3) Artifacts, i.e., quilts, tapestries, etc.
- 4) Lectures for community groups, schools, church groups, and family reunions;
- 5) Youth scholars who are trained in the religious, and family histories contained in the A.R.C.

Some documents may be reproduced and provided for a modest fee.

A general call is made to individuals and families, to provide photographs and documents for permanent preservation in the A.R.C.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Visit the Second Baptist Connection to Freedom and take an historical ride on an imaginary train that traveled without tracks.

Sit in the Crogan Street Station and hear the story of oppressed people escaping slavery, who rested in secret at Second Baptist Church before crossing the Detroit River to Canada on the boat, "The Whitney", owned by church member, George DeBaptiste.

~ GROUP TOURS BY APPOINTMENT ~

Donation:

Adults: \$5.00, Children under 13 years: \$3.00

Tour Schedule:

10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday

Saturday: Walk-Ins may join

Special, limited tours available on Sundays

to accommodate family reunion groups that have worshiped with us



Dr. Nathaniel Leach, the late Second Baptist Historian and Historical Committee founder, lecturing on the Underground Railroad. Historical Committee was renamed D.U.R.H.S. in 2015.

