

Madison Richwine

African Baptist Church (African Meeting House)

The African Baptist Church, also known as the African Meeting House, is located in Boston, Massachusetts. It was founded on August 8, 1805 by Reverend Thomas Paul and it was formed after a group of black congregants left the white first and second Baptist Churches. This church, in the beginning, had a total of 24 members; 9 men and 15 women. At first, the church was in a bad shape so a group of African American craftsmen was organized to fix it up. Together, this committee fundraised around \$1,500 to make any necessary repairs. The first meeting of the congregants took place around 1800. Although white admittance was “plainly dissuaded,” the African Baptist Church brought the black community together.

The African Baptist Church is an extremely important landmark in Boston, Massachusetts. Not only did it expand the black community, but it was also the first church of its kind in Boston. In 1863, the meeting house served as a recruitment post for the Massachusetts’s 54th volunteer regiment, which was the first official African American Military regiment to fight for the union in the Civil War. It also became the Jewish Congregation Anshi Libavitiz in 1904. It functioned as more than a house of worship. It also played an instrumental role in development of a group identity of black Bostonians. This church was a very important site in Black history.

Today, this site is still in Boston and in 1972; it was acquired by the Museum of African American History. The African Baptist Church was the one place in which blacks appeared content to support segregation. It empowered as a community, it could establish and assert their strength and independence. This landmark had a huge impact on Black History.

