



Savannah's Black Heritage

SAVANNAH
EST. 1733

Savannah Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
101 East Bay Street ~ Savannah, GA 31401

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We are one of the oldest and most historically significant African-American cities in the nation. This much-celebrated, culturally-rich town on Georgia's emerald coast has long been enticing visitors with its sultry ambience, striking beauty and old-world charm. From the elegant Historic District to festive River Street, visitors delight in all this coastal jewel has to offer. Enjoy the warm hospitality and relaxed pace as you take a stroll down the cobblestone streets where century-old live oaks shade magnificent homes, winsome gardens and picturesque squares.

Along the way discover first-class restaurants, family-friendly venues, guided heritage tours, beach recreation, shopping and more. Feast on fresh seafood in restaurants overlooking the scenic Savannah River or enjoy an evening of jazz and blues at one of the many clubs in the famed City Market.

Guests of Savannah are truly captivated by its charm, rich heritage and variety of activities, and we invite you to experience the soul of Savannah, where heritage is celebrated.

Welcome to Savannah

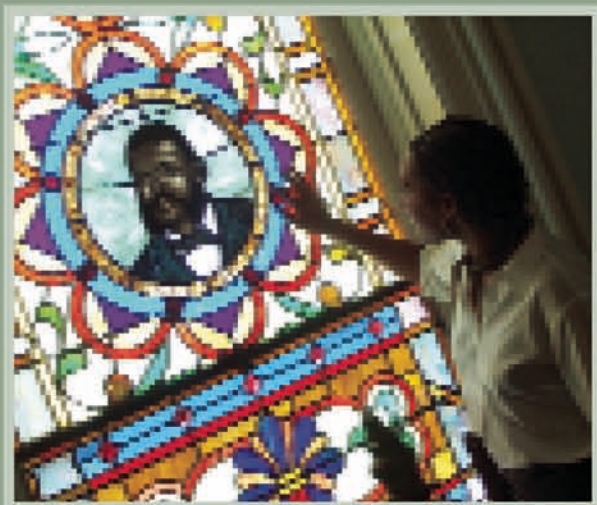


Churches

Guided by lantern light and the desire for something better, slaves constructed their very own houses of worship beginning in the late 1700s. The very first of these congregations, recognized as the Ethiopian Church of Jesus Christ in Savannah, would later be known as Old Jerusalem. Four present-day Savannah congregations which started in slavery are still in existence today: First African Baptist, First Bryan Baptist, Second African Baptist, and Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Churches. Here, we've provided you with a brief history of some of those congregations and invite you to enjoy an historic and spiritual experience in each.

First African Baptist Church

23 Montgomery Street ~ 912.233.6597
Tour times vary. Call for more information.

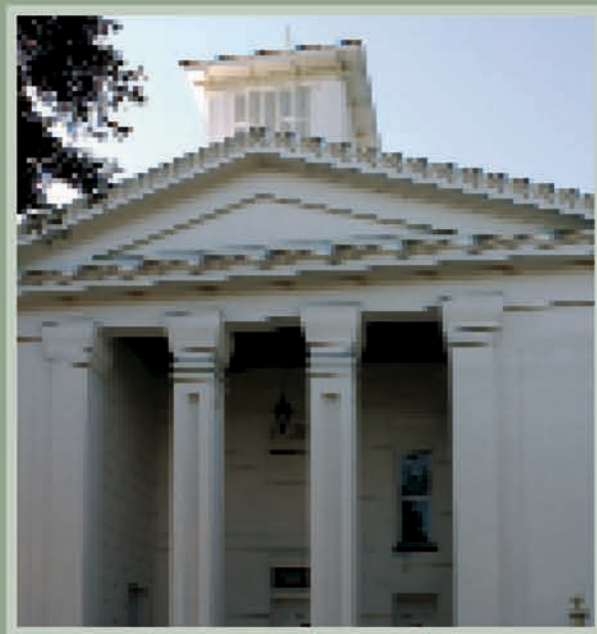


When you tour First African Baptist, you are visiting one of the oldest, continuous, black congregations in America and the oldest standing brick church building in Georgia. If one looks closely, many of the original

pews in the church's gallery bear the tribal markings of the African slaves who once worshiped there. The church was also used as a refuge for slaves seeking freedom on the Underground Railroad as clearly seen by the air holes carved in a diamond pattern on the church's floor - a pattern that beautifully disguised the holes' true intentions. March Haynes, a church deacon, was a conductor on the Underground Railroad.

First Bryan Baptist Church

575 West Bryan Street ~ 912.232.5526
Tours are given from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call for an appointment.



First Bryan Baptist is one of the oldest, continuous black congregations in America situated on the oldest, continuously-owned piece of church property in America. In 1789, the church's founder, Father Andrew Bryan, bought his freedom and soon after, bought that of his wife and daughter. A mere four years later, in 1793, Father Bryan purchased the lot where First Bryan Baptist now stands. By 1800, the church congregation had grown to 800 members. The 9th pastor, Ulysses L. Houston, was a member of the Georgia Reconstruction Legislature. A church museum

is open to the public by appointment, where copies of the church's history are available for purchase, among other items.

Second African Baptist Church

123 Houston Street ~ 912.233.6163
Tours are given from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Monday through Friday, drop-in.



On Jan. 16, 1865, General Sherman issued Special Field Order #15 in a field on the outskirts of Savannah. Shortly thereafter, on the evening of Feb. 2, 1865, General Rufus Saxton publicly addressed former slaves and church members at Second African Baptist on the provisions provided by Sherman's Special Field Order #15, better known as the famous "forty acres and a mule" proclamation. The church has weathered numerous changes including severe fire damage in February of 1925 that resulted in replacing the wooden exterior with red brick veneer and replacing the stained-glass windows.

St. Benedict the Moor

556 East Gordon Street ~ 912.232.7147
There are no set tour times. Call for more information.

St. Benedict the Moor Catholic Church was established in 1874, to provide for the spiritual needs of freed slaves in the years following the Civil War. Bishop William Gross invited the Benedictine monks from France to work with the black population of the Savannah area. Five Benedictine monks arrived to take on this ministry, and erected a small frame church on Harris and East Broad Streets. Father Gabriel Bergier established a school on Perry Street which opened in 1875 with 50 students. An epidemic of Yellow Fever brought a halt to the efforts of this first group of Benedictines. After a hiatus of about nine or ten years, the Benedictines returned and a larger church was built at the current site on East Broad Street in 1889. In 1907 the story of the parish took a new turn with the arrival from France of Father Ignatius Lissner, a member of the Society of African Missions. Under the leadership of the SAM Fathers, a new school and rectory were built. Father Lissner and his confreres were also responsible for the establishment of two other Savannah Catholic parishes for African-Americans: Most Pure Heart of Mary and St. Anthony's on the west side of town.

St. Philip's Monumental A.M.E. Church

1112 Jefferson Street ~ 912.233.8547
This is the rebuilt location; the original location was on Hull Street, which has since been renamed. There are no set tour times. Call ahead to book tours.

Founded June 16, 1865, St. Philip's is Georgia's oldest African Methodist Episcopal congregation and marked the beginnings of African-American Methodism as we know it today. The structure of the church itself has withstood a great deal including the toppling of its steeple by a hurricane in 1893 and again six years later when both the steeple and church itself were damaged by a fierce, 75-mile-per-hour wind.