







## Being Black in a White Church

### By J. Stanley Lemons

One might wonder why people of color would join a white church. If they chose to be a Baptist in Providence, there was no alternative to the First Baptist Church until 1805. The number of blacks in the town was so few that the formation of a black congregation in Providence had to wait until 1819-1820 when a “critical mass” of people existed. Even then, they formed a non-denominational entity called the African Union Meeting and School because too few black Methodists, Congregationalists, and Baptists existed to support individual sectarian churches. That would have to wait until the middle of the 1830s when the number of blacks in Providence had grown and sectarianism had increased. By the 1840s, Providence had five African American churches: two Baptist, two Methodist, and one Episcopal church. In the 1820s most African Americans exited the white churches to worship together in the African Union Meeting and School, but it was a constant struggle which required continued help from sympathetic white churches. For the black community, the African Union Meeting was a place of their own, where they could worship as they pleased without white supervision and domination, where they could be the leaders, instead of having to sit in the white churches in segregated “pigeon holes,” as William J. Brown described them in his autobiography.

The First Baptist Church did not begin to keep any records of people who joined before June 1759 and had no list of members until 1764, so one does not know about people of color in the church prior to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The minutes record that Mary Cesar, “an Indian woman,” was baptized in 1762, and the 1764 list of members includes Mary Manning and John Carr, which means that these two were members even before 1759. Mary Cesar was the wife of William Cesar, a Narragansett-African American who later joined the church in 1790.

Then, a revival began in the church in December 1774 and lasted through nearly all of 1775. It was sparked, we are told, by the accidental shooting of a young man by a close friend, and the first converts to the church after this incident were two black women, Venus Arnold and Tamar Clemmens. Between December 1774 and November 1775, the church added 123 members, including seventeen African Americans. Among those new black members were two former slaves of Moses Brown, and several others who appeared still to be enslaved by various masters. It is interesting to note that on Sunday, April 2, 1775 when Joseph Brown, one of the famous Brown brothers, was baptized, three African-Americans were also baptized, including Providence Brown, a former slave of Moses Brown. In 1775 of the 122 pew owners (most of whom were not members of the church), thirty-six of them appeared to be owners of slaves. However, in the 1780s, especially after Rhode Island passed its gradual emancipation law in 1784, slave holding declined sharply so that by 1790 only two pew owners had slaves, and the attitude in the church turned to the point that John Brown (a pew owner, but not a member) angrily resigned his place in 1790. By then, Brown University president and pastor James Manning had freed his slaves and become a member of Moses Brown’s Abolition Society along with Congressman David Howell, Arthur Fenner, and Nicholas Brown, the younger—the man for whom Brown University was named. As the document shows, a steady stream of African Americans continued to join First Baptist right into the 1820s, even after the formation of the African Union and Meeting in 1819-1820.

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First Baptist was one of those sympathetic white churches that helped to launch and sustain the African Union. Among the black founders of the African Union were several men affiliated with First Baptist, including George Willis. They met in the vestry of the Meeting House of the First Baptist Church with the pastors of some white churches to plan the creation of the African Union. Especially supportive were Henry Jackson, a young white ministerial student, and Stephen Gano, pastor of First Baptist. Gano, nephew of James Manning, the first president of Brown University, served First Baptist from 1792 to 1828. Gano offered the prayer before the ground-breaking for the meetinghouse in April 1819, and Henry Jackson preached the first sermon when the vestry was dedicated for worship on Sunday June 4, 1820. All through the 1820s and 1830s, First Baptist gave money to support the African Union and provided Sunday school teachers for the school. When the Freewill Baptists gathered their own congregation from the African Union, First Baptist gave money to support their minister, John Lewis, and one woman, Hannah (Colin) Hopkins, transferred her membership to the Abyssinian Freewill Baptist Church in 1839. (This church still exists under the name of the Pond Street Baptist Church.). When two African Methodist Episcopal churches (Bethel and Zion) spun off in 1838 and 1839 and the Freewill Baptists left to meet elsewhere, the African Union was left with only about a dozen Regular Baptists, including George Willis. This remnant organized the Meeting Street Baptist Church in December 1840, and George Willis was its Deacon. He and several others officially transferred their membership to the new church. (This church is now the Congdon Street Baptist Church.)

A few African Americans continued to join First Baptist into 1868, but from 1869 to 1890 there were none. Then Adelia Wesley, whose father was the sexton of the church, joined in 1890, followed by her parents in 1900. Although many black children attended the daily vacation Bible school and Sunday school in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of black members was few or none at all (1960 to 1974). Since the 1970s the church has attracted Africans and West Indians in addition to some African Americans, so that by 2011 people of color constituted 10 percent of the total membership of the First Baptist Church in America, a percentage that parallels the number in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Before the 1970s no black person held a church office or position of responsibility. Today at First Baptist Church, one will find deacons and other leaders who are people of color.

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	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	date of entry	How	Name	date of departure	How	REMARKS
2						
3	1762, Aug 26	B	Cesar, Mary [Mrs. William]	1778, before December		<b>baptized</b> on Thursday; "Indian woman;" first wife of William Cesar; a free person according to 1774 RI Census; also on 1770 list; missing from the 1778-1779 list
4	1764 list		Carr, John	1774, before	D	on Winsor's 1770 list; <b>missing</b> from the December 1778-January 1779 reorganization list; The 1774 Census has no John Carr, but lists "widow Carr." African American
5	1764 list		Manning, Mary [or: Manny; or: Manney]	1778, before December		African-American; also on 1770 list; <b>missing</b> from the December 1778-January 1779 reorganization list; mentioned in <i>Minutes</i> , April 3, & July 3, 1777, a poor woman in need of assistance; boarded with Abigail Carr
6	1771-1774		Stevens, Roby [or: Stephens]	1790, March 4	L	<b>to</b> Charleston, SC; African-American
7	1771-1774		Barns, Tamar [or: Barnes]	1776, August 29	Ex	<b>excluded</b> for "awful Sin of Fornication" African-American; <b>restored</b> May 1, 1777
8	1777, May 1	Restored	Barns, Tamar [or: Barnes]	1789, September 6*	L	<b>restored</b> ; * no minutes record her dismissal, but the 1785 list [A] noted that she was dismissed <b>to</b> Boston [FBC Boston] on this date; African-American
9	1771-1774		Blandin, Roxalana	1789, July 2	L	<b>to</b> Boylston, MA; African-American
10	1774, Dec 4	B	Arnold, Venus	1803, before		<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; still a member in 1789; on 1785 list [A]; gone from 1803 list [B]
11	1774, Dec 4	B	Clemmens, Tamar [or: Climmins]	1822, after May	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; "mulatto;" still a member in 1789; on 1785 list [A]; on 1803 list [B]; on April 1806 list [C]; 1812 list [D]; on May 1822 list, but later marked "dead-unknown."
12	1775, Feb 5	B	Tillinghast, Membo [Mrs. Greenwich Navy / Nava 1762]	1798, May 24 (death reported)	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; was a slave when her husband, a free black man and laborer, purchased her August 7, 1753 from the estate of Joseph Tillinghast, and then was subsequently freed by him in 1762; on 1779 list as Membo Navy; received a load of wood from the church: <i>Minutes</i> May 1, 1777; the church paid for the expense of her funeral and her medicine bills: <i>Minutes</i> , May 24, & November 22, 1798.
13	1775, Feb 19	B	Arnold, Roby	1778, before December		<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>missing</b> from the December 1778-January 1779 reorganization list; African-American
14	1775, Feb 19	B	Greene, Kate	1803, before		<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; on 1778-1779 reorganization list; gone from 1803 list [B]
15	1775, Feb 19	B	Ebens, Patience [a.k.a.: Mrs. Francis Sisco]	1778, before December	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; a free person in 1774 RI census; <b>missing</b> from the December 1778-January 1779 reorganization list; was evidently <b>excluded</b> for nonattendance; <b>restored</b> May 2, 1782 as Patience Sisco



	A	B	C	D	E	F
16	1782, May 2	Restored	Sisco, Patience [Mrs. Francis] [also see: Ebens, Patience]	1803, before		African-American; <b>restored</b> when she repented of "having for a considerable time left her place in the church..." Vol. I, p.55.; missing from 1803 list [B]
17	1775,		Brown, Margaret [later: Harrison]			African-American; ex-slave, freed by Moses Brown in 1773. Not a member, but a "hearer;" moved to Boston in the 1780s, joined the FBC of Boston [Dr. Samuel Stillman, preacher and one of the founders of Brown University] and was a founding member of the first African-American church in Boston in 1805.
18	1775, Mar 5	B	Brown, Phillis [Mrs. Cudge Brown]	1804, in	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; ex-slave, freed by Moses Brown in 1773; married Cudge Brown (a slave to Moses Brown) November 20, 1768; her husband was a teamster
19	1775, Mar 5	B	Thompson, Venus / Sylvania / Lavinia	1804, in	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; on 1778-1779 list; identified as "Lavinia" on 1803 list [B]
20	1775, Mar 19	B	Wheaton, Caesar	1803, before		<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; husband of Phillis (Bowen) Wheaton; on 1778-1779 list; gone from 1803 list [B]
21	1775, Mar 19	B	Bowen, Phillis [a.k.a. Mrs. Caesar Wheaton ]	1822, after May	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; probably a slave: had difficulty with "her mistress:" (See: <i>Minutes</i> , April 24, 1785); on 1785 list [A], on 1803 list [B]; on 1806 list [C]; on 1812 list [D]; on May 1822 list; noted "died" in the membership book that was begun in 1816 and ended in 1838.
22	1775, Mar 26	B	Whipple, Cato	1778, before December		<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; <b>missing</b> from the December 1778-January 1779 reorganization list
23	1775, Apr 2	B	Brown, Providence	1788, April 3	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>excluded</b> for fornication; African-American; ex-slave, freed by Moses Brown in 1773
24	1775, Apr 2	B	Power, Caesar	1785, February 27	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>suspended</b> December 26, 1784; then <b>excluded</b> for immoral conduct / disorderly walking; African-American
25	1775, Apr 2	B	Sisco, Prudence [or: Cisco]	1782, May 2	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>excluded</b> for being disorderly; <b>restored</b> April 28, 1796; African-American; a free person according to 1774 RI Census
26	1796, Apr 28	Restored	Sisco, Prudence [or: Cisco] [later: Dennis]	1827, February 23	D	<b>restored</b> ; African-American
27	1775, Apr 9	B	Carr, Abigail [or: Kerr]	1787, June 29	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>excluded</b> for "some time past in keeping in her house persons of infamous character and both bedded [sic] and boarded with a certain white man, by the name of Simeon Anderson, and hath also been guilty of drinking to excess;" Vol I., p. 77; African-American; free person in RI 1774 census
28	1775, Apr 9	B	Jenckes, Sophia [later: Davis]	1776, May 29	suspended	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>suspended</b> ; African-American; <b>restored</b> February 27, 1785; "a servant to brother Jenckes." [probably a slave in 1776]

	A	B	C	D	E	F
29	1785, Feb 27	Restored	Jenckes, Sophia [later: Davis]	1828, February 28	D	<b>restored</b> "to her place in the Church again, upon giving the Church satisfaction of her repentance [for] former immoral conduct." African-American
30	1775, Aug 3		Nightingale, Nancy	1785, November 20	L	<b>admitted</b> on Thursday; "to any Baptist Sister Church in or near Boston." African-American; she had been a slave of [Congregationalist] Deacon Samuel Nightingale, (See Minutes: June 29, 1775 & August 3, 1775). She was admitted upon "her master's recommendation...." In the 1803 list [B] she is noted as "dead."
31	1779 list		Morris, Katherine	1785, November 20	L	<b>to</b> Samuel Stillman's Baptist [FBC, Boston]; African-American
32	1779 list	transient	Pettiface, Alice	1785, before		<b>from</b> Newport, living in Pawtucket during the British occupation of Newport. Returned to Newport after the war. African-American.
33	1789, Mar 22	L	Fenner, Yockey	1803, before		<b>from:</b> (not recorded); African-American; born in Africa and brought to America as a slave; had been a slave of John and Phebe (Brown) Fenner, ran-away: <i>Providence Gazette</i> , October 18, 1777= about 28 years old, 5 feet, 8 inches tall; \$6 reward offered for his return. John was the son of Arthur Fenner [1699-1788]; Phebe was the daughter of Obadiah Brown, the uncle who raised the famous Brown brothers, Nicholas, John, Moses, and Joseph. Gone from 1803 list [B]
34	1789, Mar 22	L	Fenner, Sambo	1803, before		<b>from:</b> (not recorded); African-American; a former slave of John & Phebe Fenner; gone from 1803 list [B]
35	1790, Mar 7	B	Cesar, William [or: Caesar or Ceaser ]	1812, September 10	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; Indian-African-American; voted in August 4, 1791 meeting; married [1] Mary Cesar; [2] to Bathsheba (Cesar) Smith; a free man according to the 1774 RI Census
36	1790, Nov 28	B	Hammond, Cuffee [or: Hammon]	1793, September 6	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American
37	1791, Jun 2	CE	Hopkins, Abigail	1796, November 24	Ex	<b>excluded</b> for drunkenness / profanity; African-American
38	1791 voting list		Hopkins, Nab	1803, before		African-American; voted on issue of laying on of hands, August 4, 1791; missing from 1803 list [B]
39	1792, Dec 26	L	Gardiner, Cato	1803, before		<b>from:</b> FBC, Boston [Samuel Stillman's church]; African American <b>NO CARD</b>
40	1793, Sept 1	B	Allen, Waite	1794, March 27	L	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>to</b> Killingly, CT; African-American
41	1800, Mar 27	L	Lippett, Jane [later: Freeman]	1810, May 3	Ex	<b>from</b> Warwick; <b>excluded</b> for disorderly conduct, for allowing two men into her house late at night, one of whom was sleeping in her bed in the morning (see charges: March 1, 1810); noted as Freeman on 1803 list [B]; African-American



	A	B	C	D	E	F
42	1803, about		Jenckes, Lavina	1804, June 21 (death reported)	D	African-American; first appears on 1803 list [B]
43	1805, Aug 4	B	Prophet, Mary A. [or: Profit] [later: Mrs. William P. Henry]	1839, February 28	L	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday at c. 16; <b>to</b> FBC, Pawtucket; born in RI in 1789; Narragansett Indian-African-American; married December 27, 1813; her husband was a barber (US1850)
44	1805, Aug 22	B*	Sterry, Patience [later: Borden]	1811, April 1	D	*baptized on a subsequent day; <b>baptized</b> at c. 46; <b>died</b> at 52; African-American; she bequested \$300 to the church "for the relief of indigent persons of colour who should be members of this church." (See: May 2, 1811). Her tombstone in the North Burial Ground bears the inscription: "PATIENCE BORDEN, commonly called Sterry. A free woman of Colour and humble disciple of Jesus. She gave to the first Baptist church in this Town, of which she was a member, 230 dollars, as a fund for the relief of the poor of Colour of that Church. She died <i>April</i> 1st, 1811 in the 53d year of her age."
45	1805, Dec 26	B*	Hammond, Hannah [later: Mrs. George Thomas]	1806, October 23	Ex	* <b>baptized</b> subsequently before January 5, 1806; African-American; <b>excluded</b> for fornication; <b>restored</b> December 24, 1807; married September 1811.
46	1807, Dec 24	Restored	Hammond, Hannah [later: Mrs. George Thomas]	1825, before	Ex	<b>restored</b> after having expressed her repentance for "backbiting and sinful conduct;" she was later <b>excluded</b> for profane swearing and <b>restored</b> August 4, 1825 as Hannah Thomas. Married September 1811; African-American
47	1825, Aug 4	Restored	Thomas, Hannah [Mrs. George] [also see: Hammond, Hannah]	1832, before		African-American; she had been excluded at some point for profane swearing; missing from 1832 printed list; married September 1811
48	1805, Dec 26	B*	Brown, Violet [later: Mrs. Robert Johnson]	1862, June 2	D	<b>baptized</b> at 33;[*voted on December 26 and subsequently baptized before January 5, 1806]; <b>died</b> at 90 of "old age" (RI Death Report); born in RI in 1772; African-American; married by Stephen Gano on October 30, 1808; widow by 1832; in Dexter Asylum (1850-1862); "pauper" (US1860), oldest inmate at Dexter Asylum
49	1806, Mar 3	B	Case, Joseph	1817, April 3	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>excluded</b> for stealing; African-American
50	1806, Jul 5	B	Howland, Sylvia	1810, February 11	D	<b>baptized</b> on Saturday; African-American; granted a letter to Newport for "transient communion," September 22, 1809
51	1806, Aug 30	B	Almy, Jesse	1816, August 6	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Saturday; <b>excluded</b> for "drunkenness & profaneness;" African-American; son of Prince Almy; granted letter to any church in NY for transient membership, April 27, 1809
52	1806, Aug 30	B	Lothrop, Lucy	1814, March 31	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Saturday; <b>excluded</b> for being disorderly in Boston, attending Roman Catholic meetings, attending dances and balls; she also confessed to having "cohabited with one Paul, a married Man," Vol II, p. 137, August 29, 1811; African-American

	A	B	C	D	E	F
53	1806, Aug 30	B	Lothrop, Sylvia [later: Dalton]	1838, November 5 (death reported)	D	<b>baptized</b> on Saturday; African-American; sister of Lucy Lothrop; granted letter for transient communion with any sister church, July 4, 1811; indicated "now Dalton" in 1812 list [D]
54	1811, Nov 28	L	Colin, Hannah [later: Mrs. Samuel Hopkins]	1839, October 3	L	<b>from</b> Rehoboth; <b>to</b> Abyssinian Freewill Bapt, Providence [she probably was part of the African Union Meeting until the Freewill Baptists split away]; unmarried in 1832; African-American; her husband was a mariner
55	1812, Apr 4	B	Walmsley, Sarah [Mrs. Stephen]	1856, April 5	D	<b>baptized</b> on Saturday at c. 39; <b>died</b> at 83 from "old age" (RI Death Report); born in Coventry, RI, c. 1773; daughter of James & Betsey (no last name listed); Narragansett Indian-African American; widow in 1832 of Stephen Walmsley--one of the founders of the African Union Meeting.
56	1812, May 3	B	Brown, William	1826, June 29	L	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>to</b> Abyssinian Baptist in NYC; husband of Hannah Brown; African-American
57	1812, Jun 7	B	Freeman, Caroline	1861, February 1	erased	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>erased</b> : "She having left the city many years since and is supposed to be dead." [listed as non-resident in 1832]; African-American
58	1812, Jun 7	B	Sweetland, Peggy (Simmons) [Mrs. Warwick]	1837, March 3	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; married by Stephen Gano on Warwick Sweetland on October 20, 1805; her husband was a laborer; U.S. Census (1830) said she was "of 100 and upwards." church voted to move her to Dexter Asylum "as soon as convenient." Vol II, p. 314, November 3, 1836
59	1812, Jul 5	B	Crawford, Peggy [Mrs.]	1821, November 1	L	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>to</b> Abyssinian Baptist in NYC; African-American
60	1812, Jul 5	B	Sawin, Betsey [later: Brown]	1858, March 25	erased	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>erased</b> for being absent many years in NY and joining the Episcopal church; she married after 1832 and moved to New York. She was listed as a non-resident member in the printed list of 1842.
61	1812, Aug 2	B	Waterman, Phillis	1827, April 14	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American
62	1812, Aug 2	B	Wright, Anna	1840, July 30	erased	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>"dropped,"</b> probably deceased; African-American
63	1812, Oct 4	B	Waterman, Esther [later: Mrs. Henry Tabor]	1823, July 3	suspended	<b>baptized</b> at 17; <b>suspended</b> until reconciled with her mother, Violet Mumford; African-American; <b>restored</b> September 30, 1824 as Esther Tabor; she was married by Stephen Gano to Henry Tabor October 2, 1814.
64	1824, Sept 30	Restored	Tabor, Esther [Mrs. Henry] [See also: Waterman, Esther]	1840, December 3	L	<b>restored</b> ; <b>to</b> the newly recognized Meeting St. Baptist [Congdon St.]; born in RI c. 1795; daughter of Violet Mumford; married by Stephen Gano to Henry Tabor on October 2, 1814; African-American. Henry was one of the founders of the African Union Meeting, and she attended the African Union Meeting.



	A	B	C	D	E	F
65	1813, Jan 3	B	Hammond, Betsey (Hull) [Mrs. Thomas]	1840, December 3	L	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>to</b> the newly recognized Meeting St. Baptist [Congdon St.]; African-American; she was married by Stephen Gano to Thomas Hammond on September 23, 1811; a widow by 1832. She attended the African Union Meeting before Meeting St. Baptist was organized.
66	1813, Feb 7	B	Willis, George C.	1840, December 3	L	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday at c. 36; <b>to</b> the newly recognized Meeting St. Baptist [Congdon St.]; born in 1786; African-American; sexton of FBC; laborer (CD1838); married [1] by Stephen Gano to Martha Prophet / Profit on April 25, 1813, who died in 1818, and married [2] by Stephen Gano to Phillis Anderson on January 2, 1820; a founding member of African Union Meeting & School in 1819-1820; Garrisonian abolitionist, subscriber to <i>The Liberator</i> ; died January 17, 1858 (aged 71)
67	1814, Mar 6	B	Harding, Amelia	1838, November 5 (death reported)	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; she probably attended the African Union Meeting in the 1820s and 1830s, which was why the church was not aware that she had died.
68	1815, Jan 1	B	Anderson, Phillis [later: Mrs. George C. Willis]	1834, October 14	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; 2nd wife of George C. Willis, married by Stephen Gano on January 2, 1820; African-American; her husband was a laborer and sexton of FBC; she would be one of the founders of the African Union and Meeting in 1819-1820
69	1815, Jan 1	B	Collins, Abby	1832, September 20	Ex	<b>baptized</b> at c. 27; <b>excluded</b> for "disorderly walking;" African-American; <b>restored</b> December 29, 1842
70	1842, Dec 29	Restored	Collins, Abby	1843, May 4	L	<b>restored</b> ; <b>to</b> Meeting St. Baptist [Congdon St. Baptist]; born in RI c. 1788; African-American
71	1815, May 7	B	Johnson, Betsey [later: Prior]	1858, March 25	erased	<b>baptized</b> on Friday; <b>erased</b> : "absent many years;" had moved to Haiti in 1819; joined a church there; African-American; she probably moved to Haiti in response to the Haitian invitation to African-Americans to receive free land and economic opportunities.
72	1815, Aug 6	B	Small, Molly [Mrs.]	1819, December 1	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American
73	1794, Apr 24	B	Brown, Hannah [Mrs. William]	1812, April 15	D	<b>baptized</b> on Thursday; noted on 1803 list [B] that she was a widow.
74	1815, Nov 5	B	Thurston, Flora	1821, July 28	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>excluded</b> for drunkenness; African-American; she was a free person heading a household of 4 in Newport (US1800), Providence (US1810)
75	1816, Feb 4	B	Rosario, Susan	1822, April 12	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>excluded</b> for lying and intemperance; African-American
76	1816, Feb 4	B	Almy, Mary [later: Greene]	1858, March 25	erased	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>erased</b> : absent many years in NY [listed as non-resident in 1842]; daughter of Prince Almy; African-American
77	1816, Mar 3	B	Jackson, Nancy	1830, September 21	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American

	A	B	C	D	E	F
78	1816, Mar 3	B	Slocum, Harriet	1873, October 31	D	<b>baptized</b> at c. 21; <b>died</b> at 78 at Dexter Asylum from "paralysis" [probably a stroke] (RI Death Report); born in RI in 1795; African-American ("mulatto"); single
79	1816, Mar 3	B	Westcott, Mary "Polly"	1861, March 12	D	<b>baptized</b> at c. 40; <b>died</b> at 85 of "old age" (RI Death Report); born "at the South" in 1776; African-American; unmarried
80	1816, Mar 3	B	Greene, Eliza [later: Jackson ]	1858, March 25	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>excluded</b> for being absent many years in NY; "a wicked person;" single in 1832, married by 1842; African-American
81	1816, Apr 7	B	Brown, Alice (Prophet / Profit) [Mrs. Noah]	1831, December 2/3	D	<b>baptized</b> at c. 45; <b>died</b> at 60; born 1771 in RI; Narragansett Indian-African-American; married [1] to Uriah Greene; widowed; married [2] on December 25, 1805 to Noah Brown, a former slave of Moses Brown. She was the mother of William J. Brown who authored <i>The Life of William J. Brown</i> . William Brown attended Sunday school at 1st Baptist, but never was a member. He became a leading figure in the Meeting Street Baptist Church [now Congdon Street]. Alice attended the African Union Meeting in the 1820s down to her death in December 1831.
82	1816, Apr 7	B	Willis, Martha (Prophet / Profit) [Mrs. George C.]	1818, July 7	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; Narragansett Indian-African-American; 1st wife of George C. Willis; married by Stephen Gano on April 25, 1813; her husband was a laborer and sexton of FBC
83	1816, Apr 7	B	Gibbs, Jenny [Mrs. Abram]	1817, June 26	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American; her husband was a founder of the African Union Meeting and School (Stephen Gano married him to Sally Cooke on July 22, 1824.)
84	1816, Jun 2	B	Robinson, John	1818, March 3	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday African-American; died in Calcutta; a seaman
85	1816, Jul 7	B	Mott, Thomas	1822, April 4	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>excluded</b> for intemperance and fighting; African-American
86	1816, Aug 3	B	Greene, Catherine	1820, February	D	<b>baptized</b> on Saturday; <b>died</b> in New York; African-American
87	1819, Apr 1	L	Brown, Martha (Hazard) [Mrs.]	1822, August 22	Ex	<b>from</b> Abyssinian Baptist, NYC; <b>excluded</b> for theft and falsehood; African-American
88	1820, Feb 5*	B	Nichols, Affa	1836, December 2	D	African-American* Although this date appears in the 1908 <i>Historical Catalogue</i> , there is no record in the church Minutes of her admission to the church; nor does she appear on any of the church rosters, but her death is noted in the Minutes, Vol. II, p. 314 under December 1, 1836
89	1820, Feb 5	B	Perry, Sarah	1838, before Nov	D	<b>baptized</b> on Saturday; African-American
90	1820, Mar 6	B	Greene, Henry	1832, August 30	Ex	<b>baptized</b> on Monday; <b>excluded</b> for joining the Episcopalians; also charged with "disorderly conduct" October 19, 1824; African-American; a whitewasher (CD1832) One of the founders of the African Union Meeting.
91	1820, Apr 1	B	Mumford, Violet [Mrs.]	1823, July 3	suspend ed	<b>baptized</b> on Saturday; <b>suspended</b> from communion until reconciled with her daughter, Esther (Waterman) Tabor. She also had been charged with telling falsehoods, but the falsehood charge was dropped (see: July 3, 1823); <b>restored</b> November 3, 1825; African-American



	A	B	C	D	E	F
92	1825, Nov 3	Restored	Mumford, Violet [Mrs.]	1825, November 3	L	<b>restored and dismissed to</b> New York; died 1831 in New York; African-American
93	1820, Aug 3	B	Harris, Nancy [later: Mrs.Ceaser Onion ]	1839, May 2	L	<b>baptized</b> at c. 27; <b>to</b> Exeter, RI; African-American; born in RI in 1793; unmarried in 1832; married by 1840
94	1821, Jun 30	B	Sweetland, Warwick	1833, October 28	D	<b>baptized</b> on Saturday; <b>died</b> in his late 90s; married by Stephen Gano to Peggy Simmons on October 20, 1805; African-American; laborer; he left a legacy of one share of stock in the Roger Williams Bank [see. V. pp. 16-18], a founder of the African Union Meeting and School
95	1822, May 2	B*	Greene, Sarah	1832, before		* <b>baptized</b> subsequent to the meeting on Thursday; African-American; missing from the 1816-1838 list; missing from the 1832 printed list.
96	1822, Oct 5	B	Butler, Eliza [later: Mrs. John Bisbett]	1834, June 12	L	<b>baptized</b> at c. 24; <b>to</b> African Baptist, Boston; born 1797 in RI. She was "sick and destitute" and living in New Bedford and the church sent \$10 "for her relief and more if found necessary."[\$10=about \$190 in 2004 dollars] (See: Minutes, December 4, 1823); African-American; single in 1832; John Bisbett was a mariner [she died from "dropsy" in February 1860 in Boston]
97	1825, Apr 17	B	Smith, Bathsheba (Cesar) [Mrs. William]	1829, May 16	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; 2nd wife of William Cesar who died in 1812; then she married William Smith who was a mariner (CD1836); African-American
98	1831, Jun 5	B	Morse, Amey [Mrs.]	1855, July 24	D	<b>baptized</b> at c. 63; <b>died</b> at 87 from "dysentery" (RI Death Report); born in NY c. 1763; African-American; widow when she joined
99	1831, Sept 4	B	Hall, Hannah	1845, December 6	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday at c. 18; <b>died</b> at 32 "cause of death unknown" (RI Death Report); born c. 1813; African-American
100	1832, Jul 22	B	Martin, Sarah "Sally" [Mrs. Pero]	1861, August 6	D	<b>baptized</b> at c. 46; <b>died</b> at 75 from heart disease (RI Death Report); born in RI c. 1786 in Newport, RI; daughter of .... Taylor; African-American; her husband was a laborer (CD1836) [he pre-deceased her.]
101	1832, Aug 5	B	Church, Phillis [Mrs. Daniel]	1849, May 12 [VR]	D	<b>baptized</b> at c. 53; <b>died</b> at 70[VR]; born 1779; African-American
102	1832, Aug 5	B	Clarke, Sylvia [Mrs.] [later: Mrs.David Offee ]	1890, May 4	D	<b>baptized</b> at 28; <b>died</b> at 85 from heart failure (RI Death Report); born May 4, 1804 in Providence, RI; daughter of Daniel & Phillis Church; African-American; a widow when she joined; married by 1842 to David Offee, a waiter (CD1857); widowed again January 20,1860; she and her daughter Mary were domestic servants in the home of Eliza B. Rogers, daughter of Stephen Gano (RI1865,1875)
103	1833, Oct 20	B	Brown, Mary Ann [later: Mrs. Henry Pero]	1842, September 12	Certificate	<b>baptized</b> at 21; <b>to</b> unite with the Christian Church of Westport, MA; African-American; born in RI in 1812; her husband was a laborer (US1850)
104	1834, Apr 6	B	Spywood, Patience	1836, April 14	Ex	<b>baptized</b> at c. 32; <b>excluded</b> for adultery; African-American; born 1802 in RI [she is listed as Patience Stephens, but living with Charles Spywood in US Census 1850]

	A	B	C	D	E	F
105	1834, Jun 15	B	Stober, Violet [Mrs.]	1848, September 1	D	<b>baptized</b> at c. 61; <b>died</b> at 75; born in RI in 1773; African-American; listed as a widow in 1836 CD
106	1835, Mar 15	B	Howard, Catherine	1837, March 2	D	<b>baptized</b> at c. 15; <b>died</b> at 17; born in 1820; African-American
107	1835, Apr 2	L	Lyndon, Robert Augustus	1840, December 3	L	<b>from</b> Cumberland Hill Baptist; <b>to</b> the newly recognized Meeting St.Baptist [Congdon St.]; African-American
108	1835, Aug 2	B	Greene, Anstis	1846, January 2	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American
109	1838, Aug 5	B	Sheffield, Martha Prophet [or: Profit] [later: Mrs. George Walter Hazard]	1862, September 23	D	<b>baptized</b> at 5 days short of 20; <b>died</b> at 44 from uterine cancer (RI Death Report); born August 10, 1818 in RI; Narragansett Indian-African American; daughter of Samuel & Flora Sheffield, a mariner (CD1832); her husband ran a cook cellar (US1850)
110	1840, Mar 29	B	Smith, John	1856, September 25	Ex	<b>baptized</b> at c. 14; <b>excluded:</b> long absence; African-American; born in RI c. 1826; servant (US1850)
111	1842, Jan 2	B	Gant, Josephine E. [Mrs.]	1851-1855	D	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; African-American
112	1850, Mar 28	CE	Waite, Nancy [Mrs.]	1864, January 5 VR	D	<b>joined</b> at 74; [widow when she joined]; <b>died</b> at 87 yrs, 10 ms, 28 days from "old age" (RI Death Report); born February 6, 1776 in Exeter, RI; African-American
113	1857, Jul 26	B	Smith, William Henry	1869, April 22	Certificate	<b>baptized</b> at 19; <b>to</b> unite with St. Steven's Episcopal, Providence; African-American; born March 7, 1838 in VA; son of John M. & Leifa Smith; married to Mary Jane Morris on December 13, 1863 [2nd marriage for both of them]; soldier in Civil War [pvt: 14th RI Heavy Artillery (August 13, 1863-convicted of mutiny, April 22, 1864: for protesting against unequal pay and mistreatment of fellow soldiers; sentence remitted to term of enlistment, discharged May 5, 1866)]; mechanic (US1860); janitor (CD1871); died October 18, 1901 (aged 63)
114	1868, Jan 24	L	Green, William	1869, May 27	L	<b>from</b> Meeting St. Baptist; <b>returned to</b> Meeting St.[Congdon St.]; African-American; born c. 1841 in VA; Civil War veteran [pvt. 9th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery (September 26, 1864), transferred to 88th U.S. Colored Infantry, then to 3rd U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery, discharged January 1, 1866); single; waiter (US1870)
115	1890, Jul 20	B	Wesley, Alelia E. [later: Mrs. Robert Evans]	1923, May 3	erased	<b>baptized</b> at 11; <b>erased:</b> had joined an Episcopal church in Orlando, FL in 1906; African-American; born November 1878 in RI; daughter of Noah & Annie E. Wesley; her father was the sexton at FBCIA for 46 years
116	1900, Nov 25	B	Wesley, Noah Cannon	1928, August 20	D	<b>baptized</b> at 46; <b>died</b> at 74 from prostate cancer; African-American; born February 22, 1854 in Baltimore, MD (RI Death Record); son of James and Margaret A. Wesley; married Annie E. Jackson on September 9, 1876 in Baltimore, MD; sexton at FBCIA (1882-1928)



	A	B	C	D	E	F
117	1900, Nov 25	B	Wesley, Annie E. (Jackson) [Mrs. Noah C.]	1949, September 27	D	<b>baptized</b> at 45; <b>erased:</b> moved to Philadelphia in 1930; African-American; born November 1855 in MD; married September 9, 1876 in Baltimore, MD; her husband was the sexton at FBCIA for 46 years
118	1901, Apr 7	B	Donigan, Julia [or: Dorrigan]	1920, July 28 (death reported)	D	<b>baptized</b> on Easter at c. 14; <b>died</b> on April 18, 1917 at c. 30 from tuberculosis in the Insane Department, Institute of Mental Health, Howard, RI; born August c. 1882 in Providence, RI; (she listed as "Dorrigan" in the Cranston Death Records); unmarried; African-American; servant (US1900)
119	1906, May 6	B	Prout, Clara R. [later: Mrs. Allan Rucker]	1923, April 22 (body found)	D	<b>baptized</b> at c. 25; <b>died</b> at c. 41 by drowning, "apparently a suicide:" she disappeared November 19, 1922, and her body found in the river April 22, 1923; African-American ["mulatto"(US1910, 1920)]; born c. 1881 in Boston, MA; daughter of Nathaniel & Sarah Jane (Jefferson) Prout; married c. 1921; she was a restaurant waitress and living at the Working Girls' Home in Providence (US1910); a servant in a private home (US1920); again living at the Working Girls' Home in 1921(church members list); she moved to Philadelphia with her husband, but became estranged from him; she came to Providence to visit her mother, but then was reported missing. The corner's report said she drowned, "apparently a suicide, said to have been mentally deranged." (Prov. Death Report, newspaper clipping, April 23, 1923)
120	1908, Mar 29	B	Woodrow, David A.	1909, February 18	L	<b>baptized</b> on Sunday; <b>to</b> Saratoga Springs, NY; African-American
121	1948, Mar 25	B	Shaw, Barbara V. [Mrs. Thomas L.]	1952, December	L	<b>baptized</b> at 25; <b>to</b> Negro Baptist, Birmingham, AL; Indian-African-American; born June 5, 1922; married in 1940s; half-sister of Anna Garedo; her husband was an elevator operator at Gladdings Dept. Store (CD1948) [died May 7, 2000 in Birmingham]
122	1948, Mar 25	B	Garedo, Anna [later: Carew; then: Lowman]	1960, October 19	Inactive	<b>Inactive</b> (ceased attending); African American / Indian / Chamorro (Guamian); married [1] Robert Carew in 1954, separated 1958, he died in 1962; Robert was a jewelry worker (CD1953), worked in a shipping room (CD1956), gas station attendant (CD1959), janitor at State House (CD1961); married [2] Lowman; half-sister of Barbara Shaw
123	1974, Jan 23	CE	Faminu, Enoch Ade	1984, April 15	erased	<b>erased:</b> returned to Nigeria; church gave financial assistance to meet his dire need while he was a student at RISD
124	1978, Mar 22	L	Stanford, Edia	1991, January 30	erased	<b>from</b> Shiloh Baptist, Norfolk, VA; <b>erased:</b> moved to NY c. 1986, no further contact; African American; sales coordinator (CD1979)
125	1986, Apr 6	CE	Parry, Christian	1991, January 30	erased	<b>erased:</b> moved to NYC, no further contact; West Indian graduate student at Brown (M.Sc. 1986)
126	1990, Oct 21	CE	Hibbert, Muriel	1998, August 19	resigned	<b>resigned:</b> dissatisfied with Rev. Hockensmith; immigrant from Jamaica; retired registered nurse
127	1998, Mar 15	CE	Dubose, Sheila [Mrs.]	2000, September 24	resigned / L	<b>joined</b> at c. 49 (divorced before joining); <b>resigned:</b> ceased attending in August 1999 [disaffected supporter of Rev. Hockensmith]; <b>letter later granted</b> , January 24, 2001, <b>to</b> FBC, Wickford, RI (Rev. Hockensmith's new church); born in February 1949; African American; secretary, later went to Andover-Newton, was ordained in 2007, and was called to be the pastor of the Roger Williams Baptist Church on January 31, 2010.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
128	1998, Nov 22	L	Powers, Martin S.	2001, February 22	L	<b>from</b> Park St. Baptist, Boston, MA; <b>to</b> 4th Baptist, Providence; stopped attending August 1999 [disaffected supporter of Rev. Hockensmith]; African American; US postal worker
129	2003, Apr 27	CE	Douglass, Robert Hurey			<b>from</b> Church of Christ; African American--a descendent of Frederick Douglass; born February 13, 1963; married July 21, 1987; graduate student in mathematics at Providence College; became math teacher at Classical H.S., then assistant professor of mathematics at Community College of Rhode Island in 2007
130	2003, Apr 27	CE	Douglass, Valerie [Mrs. Robert]			<b>from</b> Church of Christ; African American; born April 19, 1965; married July 21, 1987; registered nurse
131	2004, April 25	L	Hero, Estelle [Mrs. Anthony Goes]	2007, October 28	erased	<b>from</b> 4th Baptist, Providence; <b>ceased attending</b> when Rev. Jim Miller retired December 31, 2005; born August 8, 1955 in RI; married December 31, 2003 at FBCIA -- 3rd marriage (later divorced); Hindi-Cape Verdean descent; interior designer
132	2005, April 24	CE	Mangenda, Gloria			<b>joined</b> at 19; born June 6, 1985; refugee in July 2001 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo; daughter of John & Tess; accounting student at URI
133	2004, April 25	CE	Mangenda, John [Jean Pierre Tambwe]			<b>joined</b> at 58; born June 26, 1945; refugee in November 2002 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo; accountant; was chief financial officer of the University of Kinshasa
134	2005, April 24	CE	Mangenda, Mathy Kalengelayi [later: Mrs. Paul Kabasele]			<b>joined</b> at 23; born May 3, 1981; refugee in July 2001 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo; daughter of John & Tess; nursing student at URI; married July 14, 2007
135	2004, April 25	CE	Mangenda, Tess [Mbuyitess] [Mrs. John]			<b>joined</b> at 51; born, May 25, 1952; refugee in July 2001 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo; was cashier and part owner of a family food store
136	2010, Oct 24	CE	Adodoadji, Ahuma			<b>joined</b> at 64; from a Methodist background; born in Akuse, Ghana on January 21, 1946; son of Emmanuel & Isabella Adodoadji; married Eva Mukuria on June 16, 1973; M.A, University of London, U.K.; began with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship in the U.K, then worked for the Jimmy Carter Center, then with CARE, then was president of PlanUSA (focusing on education for girls in Africa), and then founder, president & CEO of Afrilink Entrepreneurs International. His profession is humanitarian service work.
137	2010, Oct 24	CE	Adodoadji, Eva, M.D. [Mrs. Ahuma]			<b>joined</b> at 61; from a Presbyterian background; born in Lower Kabete, Nairobi, Kenya on October 28, 1949; daughter of Dunson & Rachael Mukuria; married Ahuma Adodoadji on June 16, 1973; M.D. from the University of Nairobi, did residency in London, clinical work in USA, Kenya and Zambia. Has Master of Public Health from the U.of California, Loma Linda; presently the field coordinator at the Institute of Community Health at Brown University.
138	2010, Oct 24	CE	Fisher, Robert Charles			<b>joined</b> at 58, an ordained clergyman; born in Boston, MA on June 13, 1952; son of Robert & Edna (Uter) Fisher; his 2nd marriage was to Mary Bray in August 2001; graduate of Gordon-Conwell Seminary; ordained in 1987 at the 12th Baptist Church of Boston (Roxbury). He has been a probation officer for the State of Massachusetts from 1994 to the present.





The First Baptist Church in America was gathered by Roger Williams in 1638 and is the oldest church of any kind in Rhode Island as well as the oldest Baptist church in the nation. "Religious Freedom" was and is the watchword of this church.

The Rhode Island Black Heritage Society was organized in 1975 with a mission to collect and preserve historical materials that illuminate the legacy of African Americans in Rhode Island. The Society promotes Black history and culture through exhibitions, lectures, and public programs for youth and adults.

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