

## PROSPECT AME CHURCH

### The Definitive History

The History of Prospect African Methodist Episcopal Church is a long and distinguished one.

The land which the church and burial grounds presently sits was purchased from Mr. William Edward Harris by the trustees of the church, Misters, Moses Robinson, Timothy Jacobs, Curtis Jacobs, George Ratcliffe, and Isaac Waples, on November 13, 1839. The cost of the land was 31.87%. The transaction was officially registered within the office of the Recorder of Deeds on January 13, 1840.

The first building erected on said location was used as both a church and a community schoolhouse for black youngsters.

In his book, "16 Miles From Anywhere", Wm. J. Wade describes the latter situation as follows:

Beginning about 1866, a school for black children was conducted in the Prospect A.M.E. Church on Railroad Avenue.

Georgetown did not take kindly to the black school.

In 1867, a black female teacher at the school was frightened out of town by a rock throwing mob. A report of the incident stated that Georgetown residents were deeply opposed to any education for black children."

In 1867, a new structure was built. The trustees received the deed on this building on June 1, 1900, at the cost of \$60.00.

The officers who supervised said transaction were, Bros. Robert and George Woolford, Moses Draper, John Short, Harry Ingram, Minor Ingram, and Riley Roberts.

The geographic location was at the time known as African Row.

For many years Prospect was the leading church within what was called "the Georgetown Circuit". The other churches were, Dickerson Chapel, Millsboro, and Antioch, Frankford.

In 1885, the officers of all three churches within the circuit purchased land in Georgetown, in order to erect a parsonage (the site is where Prospect's present parsonage sits).

The land on which the Hall rest was purchased in 1959 for \$1,577.78.

The property was sold from a sheriff's sale (Frank Dickerson was sheriff). Mr. George E. Jones was the previous owner.

Extensive remodeling and renovations of note took place within the church, during the administrations of Reverends M.P. Jackson, M.E. Harmon, and J.W. Smith.

God's cause continues to march on, for through His blessings and the pastorate of Reverend Gerald W. Scott, the following accomplishments have been achieved: a new piano, new carpeting throughout the sanctuary, a public address system, heater, liturgical coverings for the pulpit, hymnals, bibles, and other needed items, both in the church, parsonage, and hall.

Many devoted servants of God have left their indelible footprints within the life of the church.

Some of these soldiers of the cross were:

REVERENDS- A.H. Brown, Charles H. Johnson, Beecher Carter, W.W. Taylor, D.J. Blackston, Lee, Hill, S. Garrettson, Lauer, M.P. Jackson, Harris, Smith, Kirby, Sterling, Trader, Rothwell, W.N. Brown, C.D. Elliot, King, M.E. Harmon, David Daniels, Leah Coleman, Woodall, Dorster, Benjamin Washington, John W. Smith, Levi Jones, James Stewart, George Baker, Ronald T. Garnett, and our own present pastor, Gerald W. Scott.

For 150 years, Prospect, "the church by the railroad tracks", has served as a lighthouse throughout the community of Georgetown, leading men and women, boys and girls from the turbulent rocks along the stormy seas of life, to the calming and restful shores where Jesus lovingly awaits.

This is our heritage, and this will forever be our legacy.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Reverend Gerald Wm. Scott,

HISTORIAN

REFERENCE SOURCES:

"16 MILES FROM ANYWHERE", William J. Wade

Sister Ruth Fowler

Brother Charles Stewart

Sussex County Deed Books, #49-pp 189-91; #103-pp 283-284; #106-p 159; #502-p 80

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