

1819, May 14 – Meeting Street deeded to the “People of Color” by Moses Brown.

1820, June – African Union Meeting House and School opened for worship to Almighty God. Diverse groups from the 11,000 Africans residing in Providence, Rhode Island were free to worship.

1823, June – African Grays a private military Company, commandeered by Colonel George Barrett, a 1812 army veteran, made their first appearance at opening dedication services.

Meeting House was built on the hill just north of the present Music Mansion, in the back almost to Cushing Street. It was reached by a gang plank ten feet wide from Meeting Street.

Measuring 50’ long by 40’ wide, 30’ high. Pews were sold for \$20.00 each seating four.

1826 – Prince Hall Masonic Organization, The harmony Lodge #1 and the Mutual Relief Society were born within the Meeting House.

1853 – Rev. Chauncy B. Leonard pastored until 1855. He left to pastor a church in Baltimore because they offered him more money. In 1863 he was the first black Chaplain appointed by Abraham Lincoln to serve in the Union Army.

1863 – Nearly ½ of the male members of the church joined the 14th Rhode Island heavy artillery.

1869 – George Hale, the next door neighbor approached the church with an offer to exchange their property with property he owned on Congdon and Angell Court. The church refused the offer because they were free of debt. Then one day they come to the church and found it kindling wood.

1874 – (They then agreed to the land exchange). The church was built on Congdon Street at a cost of \$15,000.00 and changed its name to Congdon Street Baptist church. New England Baptist Missionary Convention organized in the vestry.

1880 – After some discord over the inability to pay the high cost of property mortgage, several members (40) left the church and met in Slaters Hall on Weybosset Street. They organized Ebenezer Baptist Church, erected a building and incorporated in 1888.

1891-6 – Rev. Joseph O. Johnson increased membership to 330. During his pastorate the church debt was cleared and mortgage burned.

1897 – Land and parsonage at rear of the church was purchased.

1901 – When the church dismissed R. J. a. Presley and locked him out of the church; 162 members left and organized the Olney Street Baptist Church.

1904 – Rev. Sidney Smith was called and served until 1915 during which time the church experienced great growth. It was during this time that William Younger, the chorister, developed the outstanding Senior Choir.

1914 – Deacon Edward Peters who served as deacon for 40 years, church clerk for 28 years and Sunday School Superintendent for 38 years died.

1938 – Gospel Chorus is formed.

1948 – Rev. M. Jerome Brown a recent graduate of Andover Newton ministered for 10 years. During this tenure several auxiliaries of the church were formed such as Flower Guild, and Lend-a-Hand.

1959 - Rev. Leardrew L. Johnson was called and was the second pastor named Johnson to write the church history.

1968 – Church became a sanctuary of 65 Brown University and Pembroke students who walked out in protest of the University’s failure to make a serious effort at recruiting minority students. Rev. Dennis Norris was the pastor.

1971 - Congdon Street Baptist Church added to the Nation Register of Historic Places.

1974 – Rev. Robert Leslie Carter was called and served for 23 years. He also served as the president of the American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island (ABCORI).

2000 - at the request of the 27th pastor, Rev. Theodore Wilson II, on March 27th the church becomes the setting for a call to action by Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy to address “crimes against people of color” upon the tragic death of black patrolman Cornel Young Jr. who was shoot by fellow officers who did not recognize him.

CSBC timeline

