

Information Sheet

R **Freedom Baptist Church (Morgan County, Mo.).**
418 **Records, 1844-1962.**
 Six volumes.

MICROFILM

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These are record books of the Freedom Baptist Church near Versailles in Morgan County, Missouri. The records include the articles of faith, rules of decorum, membership records, and minutes of church business meetings, August 1844 --January 1962, and the secretary's record book of the Baptist Young People's Union, 1929-1932.

Freedom Baptist Church was organized on 3 August 1844 as the United Baptist Church at New Hope. Eleven charter members from the Glensted community near Versailles adopted the articles of faith of the Concord Baptist Association, and the church was affiliated with that organization until the Lamine Baptist Association was formed in 1872. The congregation selected D. N. Johnson as its first pastor and Dave Bogar as clerk. In July 1845, the name Freedom Baptist Church was adopted. The earliest meetings were held in the homes of members and in a local store building. Construction began on a permanent church building in 1870 and was completed in 1874. Freedom Cemetery, adjacent to the church, was established shortly thereafter. The church building served the congregation until declining membership in the 1950s and 1960s led to the dissolution of the church in December 1969.

The records of Freedom Church consist of five record books containing the minutes of church business meetings and membership records, and a single volume containing the records of the Baptist Young People's Union. The minutes of meetings begin with the organizational meeting on 3 August 1844 and continue with only minor lapses through 14 January 1962. Church business generally included the admittance and dismissal of members, elections of officers and appointments of delegates to attend meetings of the Concord and Lamine associations, and the management of church property. The minutes prior to 1900 also include the investigations of improper conduct by members, which often led to expulsions from the church.

Membership records are interspersed throughout the record books. They were updated several times during the lifetime of the church and were generally well kept. Members of the family of Andrew Estes were especially prominent in the early years of the congregation, as were members of the Ball, Gabriel, Long, Sims, and Snodgrass families. Membership increased rapidly during the 1850s, with notable gains from protracted meetings in September 1853 and September 1857. The ante-bellum congregation also included many African-American members, presumably slaves. Nine "colored brethren" were listed as members in 1854 and others joined as late as 1868, but there are no persons of color identified as members after that date. In February 1855, a committee was appointed to hear preaching by "Fredrick," a Negro member, but the records contain no further information on his effort.

The later years of the church featured the organization of the Women's Missionary Society, a ladies aid society which raised money for improvements to church property, and a chapter of the Baptist Young People's Union. Church records include the secretary's record book of the young people's union with minutes of meetings and membership information for 1929-1932. Other activities of Freedom church in its waning years are recorded in Volume 5, which includes copies of church data sent to the Lamine Association in 1942-1944, and a history of the Baptist Young People's Union. Volume 5 also contains tipped-in newspaper clippings on the history of the church and the missionary society.

The records of Freedom Church document the activities of a small rural church beginning in the ante-bellum period and continuing within a few years of its demise. The records will be useful for genealogical and historical research in Morgan and adjacent counties.

Shelf List

These are record books of the Freedom Baptist Church near Versailles in Morgan County, Missouri. The records include the articles of faith, rules of decorum, membership records, minutes of church business meetings (August 1844 -- January 1962), and the secretary's record book of the Baptist Young People's Union, 1929-1932.

Volume 1: Record book, 1844-1867 (86 pages).

Volume 2: Record book, 1859-1887 (194 pages).

Volume 3: Record book, 1887-1910 (approx. 220 pages).

Volume 4: Record book, 1910-1928 (200 pages).

Volume 5: Record book, 1928-1962 (138 pages).

Volume 6: Baptist Young People's Union, secretary's record book, 1929-1932 (92 pages).

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Morgan County Historical Society

Loaned for microfilming

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