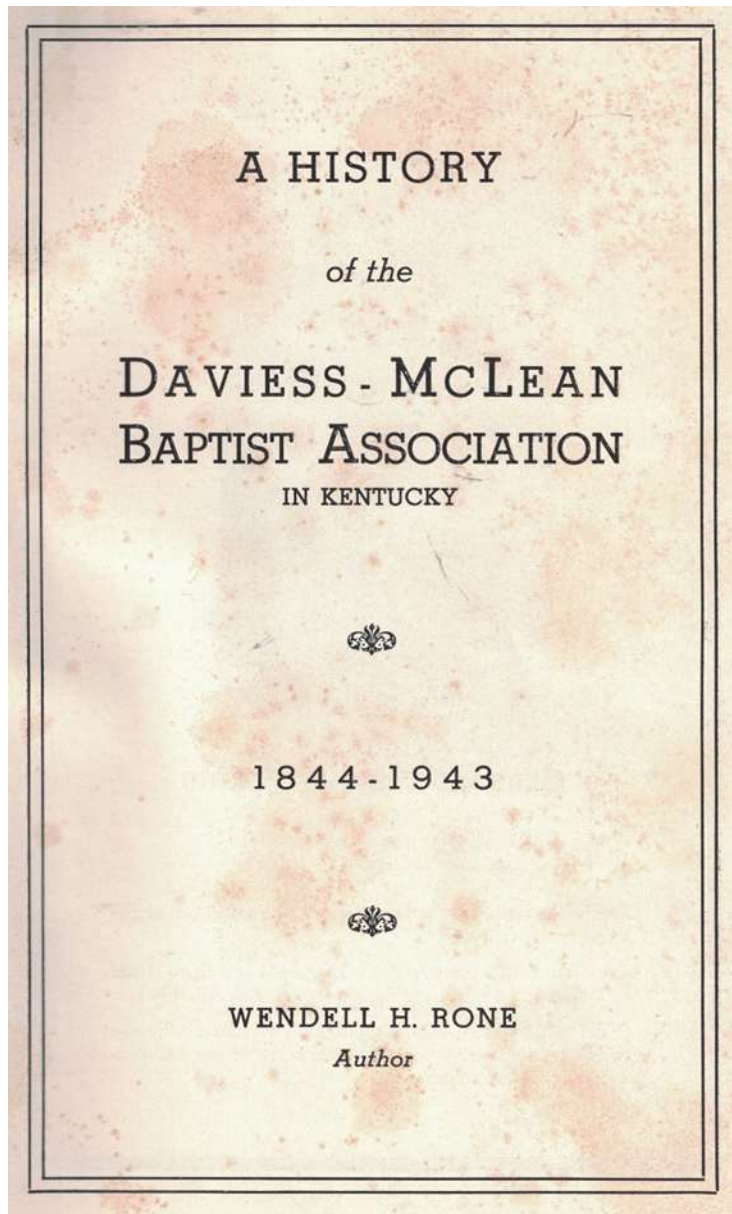


**Negro Members of the Daviess – McLean  
Baptist Association**

**By Rev. Wendell H. Rone**



**A History of the Daviess-McLean Baptist Association in  
Kentucky, 1844-1943, Rev. Wendell H. Rone, 1943, pp.19-20:**

**NEGRO MEMBERS**

It is a strange bit of information to many that in the days prior to and even after the Civil War the Baptist Churches of this section had many negroes in their membership. These negroes

were slaves who belonged to many of the white members of the churches. As late as the year 1875 we note that the churches reported negro members in their membership lists. Even after that many of the older negroes remained members to their death. Many of the older brethren and sisters among our white churches can remember such cases. These old negroes were often referred to as "Uncle" or "Aunt" so and so because of their character and deep toned piety.

The records of most of the churches organized prior to the Civil War contain the names of these negro members. They are referred to in the following manner. . . . Charles, the property of Will Jones, etc. On many occasions the negro members were permitted to organize churches of their own under the supervision of the white brethren. As they very often had members of their own race who were called to preach the white brethren would ordain them to serve the colored congregations. When this was not possible the white pastors often served and directed them in their worship service. It is an admirable thing that the white brethren were concerned about the negroes and saw to it that they had the Gospel preached to them. Many of the revivals in the white churches saw numbers of the colored people make professions of faith in Christ and their consequent baptism into the fellowship of the white churches.

The negroes were given all the privileges of church membership with the white brethren but that of voting in the business meetings. This was not allowed because their masters might influence their vote to the detriment of the church. They generally sat in a special section of the church reserved for them. When the time came for them to observe the Lord's Supper one of the white brethren would superintend the service if one of their own preachers was not present. Records show that on many occasions the white brethren would secure a white pastor to minister to their spiritual needs. After the Emancipation Proclamation was set forth in 1863 the white brethren began to assist the colored members in organizing churches of their own. For that reason the majority of the Negro Baptist Churches in the Green River Country were organized after that date.

The Negro members were subject to the disciplinary action of the church the same as the white members. Records are plentiful to show that they were dealt with for stealing from one another and their masters, fighting among themselves, immoralities, non-attendance, contempt of the church, and many other things. Generally after such disciplinary action became necessary they were later restored by repentance and acknowledgment to the church. What was true of them was also true of the white members.

No record of the number of colored members is given in the minutes of the Association until the year 1851. From then on to the year 1877 a column is given each year to the numbers in each church. To give you some conception of their large number we include a few of those lists:

1851	337 colored	1829 whites
1856	339 colored	1735 whites
1865	675 colored	2525 whites
1866	377 colored	2873 whites
1871	58 colored	3622 whites
1876	5 colored	4254 whites

For many years the First Baptist Church, of Owensboro, Kentucky, had more colored members than white. In 1854 there were 184 colored and only 80 whites; in 1857 it was 213 to 87; in 1860 it was 215 to 110, etc. The church at Pellville reported 2 colored members in 1877. This was the last report by any of the churches of the number of colored members in, their membership.