

Fourth Ward Landmarks: Churches

The Fourth Ward emerged as Houston's most prominent African American neighborhood when thousands of freed slaves flooded into the city after emancipation. These newcomers settled on the fringes of the third, fifth, and fourth wards. The Freedmentown area north of San Felipe and the streets west of downtown not only attracted the largest number of the new black residents but also housed the first black churches, schools, and political organizations.

The Fourth Ward provided a home to early black religious and educational institutions. It had, in fact, achieved this distinction even before emancipation. In 1851 black Methodists began worshiping in their own church, adjacent to the white Methodist church on Milam Street. This black church briefly housed a school for blacks in the late 1850s. After the Civil War the Fourth Ward attracted two of the city's most important African American churches, Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church on Travis at Bell, and Antioch Baptist Church, located initially at Rusk and Bagby, and later on Robin Street.

By 1869 black churches were instrumental in the organization of the Harris County Republican Club, an integrated political organization that held most of its meetings in Antioch Baptist Church.

Source: *Handbook of Texas Online*

- Antioch Missionary Baptist Church
 - 600 Clay at Andrews
 - Organized in 1866
 - Recorded Texas Historic Landmark: See historical marker
- St. James United Methodist Church
 - 1217 Wilson at Andrews
 - Organized in 1873
- Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
 - 801 Andrews
 - Organized in 1891
 - Currently Bethel Church Park
- Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church
 - 1401 Ruthven
 - Organized in 1898
- Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church
 - 1407 Valentine
 - Organized in 1915: See historical marker
 - Currently Mt. Carmel Baptist Church Park
- Mount Horeb Missionary Baptist Church
 - 118 W. Gray at Cushing
 - Organized in 1945