



Richard Allen and the AME Church Facts

- Richard Allen was born a slave on February 14, 1760 in Philadelphia but grew up in Delaware.
- Richard taught himself to read and write.
- Allen was qualified as a preacher in 1784, at the first conference of the Methodist Church in North America, in Baltimore, Maryland. He was allowed to lead services at 5 a.m.
- Allen and Absalom Jones, also a Methodist preacher, resented the white congregants' forcing them to a segregated section for worship and prayer. They decided to leave St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church to create independent worship for African Americans. This brought some opposition from the white church and the more established blacks of the community.
- They formed the Free African Society (FAS), a non-denominational mutual aid society, which assisted fugitive slaves and new migrants to the city.
- In 1787 Allen and Jones led the black members out of St. George's Methodist Church and established the A.M.E. Church/denomination in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1787.

- Allen along with Absalom Jones, William Gray and William Wilcher found an available lot on Sixth Street near Lombard. Allen negotiated a price and purchased this lot in 1787 to build a church, but it was years before they had a building.
- Allen and others wanted to continue in the Methodist practice. Allen called their congregation the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME). Using a converted blacksmith shop which they moved to the site on Sixth Street, they opened the doors of Bethel AME Church on July 29, 1794, and were affiliated with the larger Methodist Episcopal Church. In the beginning, they had to rely on visiting white ministers.
- This site is now occupied by Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, this is the oldest parcel of real estate in the United States owned continuously by black people.
- In 1794 Bethel AME was dedicated with Allen as pastor.
- In 1799, Allen became the first black Methodist minister ordained by Bishop Francis Asbury, in recognition of his leadership and preaching. He and the congregation still had to continue to negotiate white oversight and deal with white elders of the denomination.
- Allen then met and married Sarah Bass in 1801; six children.
- To establish Bethel's independence from interfering white Methodists, Allen, a former Delaware slave, successfully sued in the Pennsylvania courts in 1807 and 1815 for the right of his congregation to exist as an independent institution.

- In 1816 Allen united four African-American congregations of the Methodist Church in Philadelphia, Salem, New Jersey; Delaware, and Maryland. Together they founded the independent denomination of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), the first fully independent black denomination in the United States.
- On April 10, 1816, Allen was elected its first bishop. The African Methodist Episcopal Church is the oldest and largest formal institution in black America.
- Allen Died on March 26, 1831 at his home.

An excellent book to learn more about Richard Allen and the AME Church is :

The African Methodist Episcopal Church:

A History

By Rev. Dennis Dickerson, Ph.D.

Retired Historiographer of the Connectional AME Church

\$34.99

Amazon Link:

https://www.amazon.com/African-Methodist-Episcopal-Church-History/dp/0521153964/ref=sr_1_1?crid=9ATU2LO03RIN&keywords=dennis+dickerson&qid=1645057191&srefix=dennis+dickerson%2Caps%2C360&sr=8-1