

Reverend Andrew Heath

Heath was born in Henderson, Kentucky on February 20, 1832 as a slave to A.T. Heath, who moved to Louisville with Heath shortly after his birth. A.T. Heath moved to Texas in 1843, so Andrew Heath was sold to Knott, Wicks & Co., from whom he bought his free when he 26 years old. When Heath was 17 years old he taught himself to read and write and began to study the Bible. In 1866, Reverends Adams of Louisville, DeBaptist of Chicago, and Troy of Springfield, ordained Heath as a minister. Heath was appointed assistant pastor of the Fifth-street Baptist Church where he had been a lifelong member. Upon the death of Reverend Adams three years later, Heath became pastor of the church and remained so until his death on February 19, 1887.

In 1851, Heath married Lucy Hamilton, a slave belonging to Mrs. George Ormsby. Together they had eleven children, six of whom survived him. "George Walker and James Taylor, leading men of their race, married daughters of the deceased." In 1885, Heath was stricken with paralysis that allowed him to continue working until 6 weeks before his death when he was confined to his bed. Reverend Richard Hatchett voluntarily nursed Heath until his death.

According to his obituary, "Rev. Heath was a most prominent colored preacher, his long service and ability rendering him a leader in the church and social circles of his people. The funeral will probably be the largest ever according to any colored man in Kentucky. Mr. Heath was a prominent member of Mount Maria Lodge F. and A.M., and was one Grand Master of the lodge. ... Mr. Heath was not only popular with people of his own race, but was much esteemed by the white Christians, who recognized his ability and who aided him in attaining his prominence." Reverend Heath was also a Mason. Reverend Dr. Simmons, a good friend of Heath's and president of the Kentucky State University, preached the funeral sermon.

No headstone has been found for Heath. However, his obituary states that he was buried in Eastern Cemetery.

Written by Savannah Darr