

Kentucky, a state of small farms of corn, hemp and cattle in the central Bluegrass area, was not suited for mass slave labor. During the 1850's less than 28% of whites in Kentucky owned slaves, and only 5 had more than 100. Fewer than 20 slaves was about average and 24% owning only 1 slave. In 1860 slaves accounted for 19.5% the total population. Scott County had 52% of all slaves, the largest in the state. Lexington in Fayette County had almost as many. In 1870 John Alvord, organizer and charter member of the Freedmen's Savings Bank, set up by Congress, during reconstruction, claimed that the 12,000 blacks in the Lexington area were among the most prosperous in all of the south....

Vice President during the term of Martin
Vice President Col. Richard M. Johnson, under Van Buren, and his family owned over 3/4 of Scott County, accounting for ownership of many of the slaves. Many of these slaves migrated to Nicodemus in 1877. Charles and Emma Williams, John and LeeAnna Samuels, Mary, Joseph, Henry, Zeriana, and Tom Johnson, Hiram Travis, and Beverly Herring, were among the many that were own by Col. Richard M. Johnson that migrated to Nicodemus. Other former slaves were the Lee, Scott, Lightfoot, McIntyre, Lewis, Moore, Clark, Craig, Reese, Kirtley, Buckner, Jackson,.....

During the Civil War in Kentucky military commander Gen. J.M. Palmer issued travel passes to almost any black, slave or free who requested one, to go where they pleased or leave the state. This began an exodus of thousands of blacks from the rural to urban areas and out of the state, substantially reducing the black population, in spite of legislative efforts to deny blacks the right to travel on stages, boats, and trains. When the Freedman's Bureau withdrew its efforts of financial and educational assistance to blacks after the war, in 1868 violence pursued and migration to the cities decline, for they no longer offered safety or opportunities that were expected. "Regulators", whites who wanted to control and regulate blacks began to murder, mutilate, sexually assault, and terrorize blacks.

The black churches which were exclusively controlled by blacks became the central driving force and primary instrument used to promote and defend blacks politicaly, econiomically and socially.

In 1877 transportation problems lessened for blacks and the Cincinnati Southern Rail Road opened a route that corssed the Ohio River and proceeded south through central Kentucky passing through Georgetown