

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

OCT 10 1975

DATE ENTERED

OCT 6 1975

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

South Schraalenburgh Church

AND/OR COMMON

South Presbyterian Church

**LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Corner of Prospect Ave. &amp; W. Church St.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Bergenfield

VICINITY OF

9th

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

New Jersey

CODE

34

COUNTY

Bergen

CODE

003

**CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION** IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS** OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE** YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO**PRESENT USE** AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Board of Trustees of South Presbyterian Church

STREET &amp; NUMBER

West Church Street and Franklin Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Bergenfield

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Jersey

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Bergen County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Hackensack

STATE

New Jersey

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory (#406.1)

DATE

1962

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Sites Section, Dept. of Environmental Protection

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The site chosen for the original church was a plot of ground 100' x 440', west of Long Swamp Brook and on the north side of a road laid out in 1717. Its position was about 150' east of the present structure and is "marked". The original stone building erected during the years 1725-28 is estimated to have been approximately 36' square (as it held 260 persons), and cost about 220-260. During the Revolution it, as well as the parsonage, was damaged as entrenchments were only a few hundred yards away.

In 1798 the congregation decided to build a new and larger church and this is basically the edifice that stands today. The master builder was Aaron I. Westervelt of Tenafly and the 50' x 60' 3-bay by 3-bay building was completed in 1799. It had no apse but instead there was a large window on the north side behind a free-standing pulpit. Two stairways led up to the U-shaped balcony from a 10' vestibule. There were 92 box pews on the main floor and 18 in the balcony. Services were probably carried on in the old building during construction as the latter was not pulled down until 5 or 6 years later.

In 1866 a decision was made to do some major renovating. This took a year to complete and the church was reopened April 21, 1867. Stairways were changed to the sides, windows flanking the front door were made into doors and the building extended 13'-2", plus a 4'-6" apse. It is now a 3-bay by 4-bay Neo-Gothic one story structure with a central front tower topped by a tall octagonal steeple. The whole is covered with a slate gable roof which extends beyond the four walls in Victorian bracketed fashion. It measures 50'-5" x 81'-8" at the base. The exterior is native sandstone neatly cut and coursed and is broken by tall three-feather Prince Albert windows containing etched glass bordered by stained glass. Over the front door is a builder's date stone inscribed in Dutch, and inside the bell tower there is another stone with initials and the year 1748, which may relate to the building of the stone parsonage - no longer extant. The 1801 bell was cast with a considerable amount of silver and had a beautiful tone but it cracked and was replaced in 1919 by the present one made at the Meneely works in Troy, N.Y. The interior has carpeted wood floors and a coved flat ceiling that has a large central medallion from which one large chandelier hangs. The U-shaped balcony is supported by slender fluted columns and contains an organ loft at the rear. This very large working 53-pipe organ was donated in 1928 and, fortunately, the building is blessed with splendid acoustics to bring out its tone.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES    1799

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SOUTH SCHRAALENBURGH CHURCH AND CEMETERY

The Schraalenburgh Dutch Reformed Church was founded in 1724 as part of a plan of Guillian Bertholf (who was the founder of every Dutch Reformed Church in New Jersey during the years from 1694 to 1724) to break up the Hackensack Church into a number of separated congregations because of the growth of that part of New Jersey. A building was completed in 1728, near the site of the present church, whose ministers and congregation played an important part in the Revolutionary War and in founding Queens College, which they had hoped to establish at Hackensack. (The congregations at Hackensack and Schraalenburgh were united at that time.) In 1755 the Schraalenburgh congregation was divided into Coetus and Conferentie congregations who used the same church building, the Coetus being patriots and the Conferentie Tories. In 1799 the Coetus congregation decided to build a separate church building, the present South Church. (In a year or two the Conferentie built the North Church of Schraalenburgh, the result being that there were two splendid examples of "Dutch" architecture within one small farming community.) The architectural style is unique to the lower Hudson Valley, and the two Schraalenburgh churches are among the best examples. The Schraalenburgh Church seceded from the Dutch Reformed Church in 1822 to form the True Reformed Church which was one of the two church organizations which make up the modern Christian Reformed Church. On May 5, 1913 the congregation voted formally to join the Presbyterian Church and the name became "The South Church of Bergenfield", or the South Presbyterian Church. Many Revolutionary War soldiers are interred in the old burying ground. Also two of the early ministers are here: Solomon Froeligh (1750-1827) and John Henry Goetschius who died in 1774 and was buried in a vault 20' east of the church. It was in such disrepair in 1867 it was removed and there is a possibility that his remains were then placed below the altar. The church and cemetery are distinguished by a New Jersey Tercentenary sign as well as a Bergen County Historical Society cast aluminum marker.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- South Church Records, Rutgers University Library
- The Buildings of the South Church by Adrian C. Leiby (Bergenfield 1968)
- Manual of the Reformed Church in America by E.T. Corwin (New York 1902)
- Annals of the Classis of Bergen by B. C. Taylor (New York 1857)
- A History of the Classis of Paramus (New York 1902)
- History of Bergen & Passaic Counties, New Jersey by W. W. Clayton & W. Nelson 1882 (p. 164-172)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5.822

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 8	5, 8, 3, 8, 9, 0	4, 5, 3, 1, 1, 8, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Adrian C. Leiby, historian

ORGANIZATION

South Presbyterian Church

DATE

4-25-75

STREET & NUMBER

West Church Street & Franklin Avenue

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Bergenfield, New Jersey

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*[Handwritten Signature]*

TITLE

Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection

DATE

9/26/1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER.

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*[Handwritten Signature]*

DATE

12/6/75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11.28.75

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED OCT 10 1975

DATE ENTERED

DEC 6 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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8. Significance cont'd. 7. Description con'd

South Schraalenburgh Church

Bergen County 003 New Jersey 34

CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 8 & 7 PAGE

7. Description (cont)

The South Schraalenburgh Church, as originally built, was a nearly square 3-bay by 3-bay well caused and tooled red sandstone edifice with a center projecting tower.

The tower presently has a late 19th century wooden octagonal cupola and spire. This may have been added in the 1860's when the rear of the building was extended, gothic arches cut in the windows. Two doorways formed from the two windows flanking the central tower entrance, and two small porches created to provide a minimum of protection from poor weather.

Save modern conveniences and the most necessary maintenance the church has not been altered since.

Religion

The South Schraalenburgh Church is representative of the Dutch Reformed Churches built throughout northern New Jersey in the late 18th century and into the early 19th century.

Religion played an important part in America's physical development as well as its moral conscience. Differences in religion was not only evidenced by a person's expressed ideas, but by a region's physical appearance as well. The style of a religious edifice - elegant, austere, or refined - was an indication of the relative character of the congregation's constituency.

Specifically, the stable, practical, and economical considerations important to Dutch Reformed Church members is exhibited by the church building itself. The edifice generally appears substantial in form, yet almost plain, without a great deal of superficial detail.

Built in 1799, the South Schraalenburgh Church in Bergenfield clearly embodies those characteristics. Further, its minimum alterations, interior and exterior, point to the main congregation's conservative and functional nature; in spite of minor schisms.