

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Sheppards Mill Road, Springtown  not for publication

city or town Greenwich Township  vicinity

state New Jersey code \_\_\_\_\_ county Cumberland code 011 zip code 08323

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 9/29/99  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
 Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources?DSHPO  
 State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
 State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Edson H. Beall 11/12/99

Bethel A.M.E. Church  
Name of Property

Cumberland Co., NJ  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic

Federal Vernacular

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Sandstone

walls Sandstone covered with stucco

roof Asphalt over wood

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage: Black

**Period of Significance**

c. 1838-1885

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Nathaniel Murry, Leven Bond, Ezekiel Cooper  
Julia Stanford and Alga Stanford

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Bethel A.M.E. Church  
Name of Property

Cumberland Co., NJ  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 2 Acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 471580 4361210 UTM  
Zone Easting Northing  
2               

3                 
Zone Easting Northing  
4                 
 See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Mrs. Laura A. Aldrich, Trustee

organization Bethel A.M.E. Church date 03/07/99

street & number 5349 Wayne Avenue telephone (215) 842-1760

city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19144

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Bethel A.M.E. Church

street & number RD 2 Sheppards Mill Road telephone (609) 451-2700

city or town Springtown, Greenwich Twp. state NJ zip code 08323

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section 7 Page 1

Bethel\_A.M.E. Church

Springtown, Cumberland County, NJ

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**Narrative Description**

The Bethel A.M.E. Church is located on Sheppards Mill Road in the historical African American settlement of Springtown, Greenwich Township located in Cumberland County New Jersey.

It consists of a two story main block rectangular plan, with the one-story chancel, also rectangular in plan, projecting from the rear on south, elevation (Figure 4). The main block is three bays by three bays, and the chancel is one bay by one bay (Photos 1,2, and 3). The walls of the main block and chancel are New Jersey conglomerate sandstone covered with a mortar parge. The gable roof, asphalt shingles over earlier wood shingles, has a ridge perpendicular to the road. The main block is about 26' by 50', with the narrow gable end facing the road to the north. Over the entrance on the north elevation is a wooden belfry, with a pair of arched window openings on each face and surmounted by a pyramidal roof. The belfry contains a bell.

The first two bays toward the north side, nearest the road, were constructed between 1838 and 1841, and the southernmost bay and chancel were added in 1885. The ceiling of the 25'-wide interior clear span of the original structure is supported by two king-post trusses with "X" bracing (Photo 4). The rafters in this section are mortised and tenoned and pegged at the ridge. In the 1885 bay, the ceiling span is supported by shallow trusses; conventional rafters, butt jointed at the ridge, support the roof.

The entrance doorway is a round-headed masonry opening containing double paneled doors surmounted by a lunette transom with three vertical muntins (Photo 5). The doors are historic, and possibly original but the exterior faces are concealed by a layer of thin plywood (Photo 6).

In the gable wall, centered over the door, is a lunette-shaped niche in the masonry. This may hold a masonry plaque with the date of construction; if so, it has been covered with mortar parge or paint.

The original windows have been replaced with vinyl double storey replacement windows containing colored plexiglass. The two windows flanking the entrance door are taller than those on the side elevations, and reach up to the line of the eaves. The heads of the windows on the sides of the 1841 section were originally at the same level as those on the front, but the heads have been lowered by about two feet, possibly at the time of the 1885 addition; the original configuration of the windows in the addition has not been determined, but they are the same as the current size of the c. 1841 side windows. The windows on the sides of the chancel are similar to those in the main block, but smaller. The appearance of the historic sash is not known.

The belfry was added in 1885 (Photo 7). Each face is comprised of coupled round-headed openings which held wooden louvers; the louvers are now missing. The

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Bethel A.M.E. Church

Springtown, Cumberland County, NJ

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pyramidal roof is now covered with asphalt shingles, but was originally wood-shingled. The church bell reportedly was originally located in a belfry on the Patriotic Order of Sons of America Lodge (currently the Cumberland County Historical Society's Maritime Museum) on the main street in Greenwich, and was moved to the church when the belfry was built. The bell is rung from the balcony by a rope which hangs down through an opening in the ceiling.

A twentieth-century concrete masonry unit chimney has been added outside the exterior stone wall on the west elevation to serve an oil-burning furnace located within the nave. In the attic can be seen the remains of a brick flue which was located against the north wall; the chimney apparently was on the ridge of the roof over the entrance door, and served a stove. This chimney was probably removed when the belfry was added in 1885. The location of the chimney used between the demolition of the original one in 1885 and the construction of the extant one has not been determined.

The entrance doors open onto a small narthex, separated from the nave by a vertical board wall containing double doors. On the east side of the narthex is an "L" shaped stair with winders leading to the balcony. The lower leg of the "L" has a wooden railing with straight-sided square-sectioned balusters with corner beads. The newel is also square in section, but is tapered. This leg of the stair was originally open, but has been enclosed; the stair is now reached through a doorway which is aligned with the riser of the first step (Photo 8). A small door under the upper leg of the stair provides access to a closet under the stairs.

To the west of the entrance doors is a wall which partitions off a rest room; the restroom replaces a second stair to the balcony, originally a mirror image of the extant stair, which has been removed.

The balcony has been closed off from the nave (Photo 9), but remains intact, except for the missing stair, with original pews in place (Photo 10). On the plaster walls at the cornice line is a painted Greek key design in gray and black (Photo 11). The balcony is lighted by the top portions of the windows on the north wall, and the northernmost windows on the east and west walls.

The nave has a center aisle with pews on either side extending to the exterior walls (Photo 12). Two turned posts support the balcony. The altar area in front of the chancel and the choir loft are raised three steps above the nave floor. The front edge of the altar is set 3' 4" back from the front edge of the choir loft, and a communion rail separates the space from the nave (Figure 4 and Photo 13).

The plaster walls are covered with thin plywood. The floor is carpeted. The oil-fired space heater is located on the west side of the nave. The nave is lighted by two pendant light fixtures and two sets of track lights.

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Springtown, Cumberland County, NJ

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The pews are constructed of vertical boards on the back and ends. The tops of the balcony pew ends are finished with a simple trim piece (Photo 10); the pews in the nave have a heavier trim piece with top and bottom scroll (Photo 14). It is probable that the scroll trim was retrofitted to original pews.

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Bethel A.M.E. Church  
name of property  
Springtown, Cumberland County, NJ  
county and State

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Bethel A.M.E. Church is a rare, surviving African American institution with a documented association with multiple participants in the Underground Railroad. The church, built between 1838 and 1841 (and enlarged in 1885) stands in the historically black village of Springtown, which emerged in the early nineteenth century as an important destination for fugitive slaves leaving Delaware and the eastern shore of Maryland. For some it was a temporary destination before moving on; for others it was the end of their running, and their presence swelled the size of Springtown and strengthened it as a force for abolition. Because of the importance of the Underground Railroad as a historical event, the church meets National Resister Criterion A and Criteria Consideration A. It also meets Criterion B because some of the persons involved in this work were significant local figures.



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Bethel A.M.E. Church

Springtown, Cumberland County, NJ

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**History of the Bethel AME Church**

Early members of Methodist Episcopal (ME) churches were vehemently opposed to slavery and until the early 1800's black and white Methodists in southern NJ worshiped together. When membership grew and included Methodist who owned slaves, church leaders softened their position against slavery in response to slaveholders' complaints.<sup>1</sup> People of African descent soon found themselves unwelcome and considered "a nuisance in the house of worship." The turmoil between Methodist in Philadelphia had far-reaching affects in the Salem circuit in southern New Jersey. Under the control of Bishop Enoch George in Philadelphia, members of the African Church were often without a preacher from the Methodist Society and subjected to the same humiliation as their African American brethren in Philadelphia.

Separate and not equal in the white Methodist churches, African Americans began to organize their own churches that served as religious institutions, social centers, forums to exchange ideas and training centers for leaders. They wanted to remain Methodist and enjoy the simple spontaneous style of service. Richard Allen said, "We are beholden to the Methodist under God, for the light of the Gospel we enjoy: for all other denominations preached so high-flown that we were not able to comprehend their doctrine."<sup>2</sup>

The year that the Greenwich Methodists of African descent decided to form a separate church Society is not known. The earliest documented evidence of the Methodists Society is the purchase of land and a small house or log cabin for \$100.00 from the estate of Thomas Maskell on February 13, 1810.<sup>3</sup> The African Society of Methodists in Greenwich had at least two trustees, Jacob Bryan (Bryant) and Charles Lockerman.

In 1817, members of the African Society of Methodists joined the newly formed African Methodist Episcopal Church, chartered in Philadelphia. A suspicious fire destroyed the church in the late 1830's and the congregation used the Hicksite Meeting House until a new church was built. Between 1838 and 1841, the congregation decided to build a church about one mile away from the original church site; next door to Algy Stanford, an Underground Railroad Operator.

When Richard Allen left the Stockley Plantation in Delaware, he spent the next couple of years in Dover, Delaware. Between 1783 and 1785 he came to West Jersey

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Klots, *Richard Allen Religious Leader and Social Activist* (New York, New York: 1991) Page 30-31.

<sup>2</sup> Klots, *Richard Allen*, Page 29.

<sup>3</sup> Liber 16, (Cumberland County Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ) Page 541.

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Bethel A.M.E. Church

Springtown, Cumberland County, NJ

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(southern New Jersey) as a traveling Methodist preacher. According to local history, Allen spent about one month at Gravely Run (in Hopewell Township) while on his way to Rev. Benjamin Abbott's farm. Today Gravely Run, now know as Stowe Creek, borders the Head of Greenwich. Many of the first African American settlers lived and bought land in this area. Circumstantial evidence indicates Allen met followers who would become members of his organization when he preached in the Greenwich area. Local church records substantiate that Nathaniel Murray was associated with The Right Reverend Richard Allen and that Murray was the first local minister.

Information about white or black Methodism in Greenwich during their formative years is sparse. Before the Episcopal and Methodist denominations united, St. Stephens Episcopal built a church in 1729 that was abandoned towards the end of the Revolutionary War. According to Cumberland County historian Steelman, "no other Episcopal church was started in the county for more than a century."<sup>4</sup>

According to Sickler, Methodists attempted to establish a church at the Head of Greenwich in 1790.<sup>5</sup> Stowe Creek (Gravely run) and Greenwich congregations did not have organized churches and circuit preachers traveled from house to house or barn to barn to preach the gospel. In 1786, Bishop Frances Asbury of Philadelphia, who estimated he traveled more than six hundred miles a year on horseback, preached in Stowe Creek.<sup>6</sup>

It is not clear where African Methodists worshiped before buying a church in 1810. In the 1800 census, there were approximately seventy-eight free people of African descent in Greenwich Township in addition to an equal number of slaves. Because there was a cohesive group of free blacks in the area around 1790, it is believed the African Society of Methodists worshiped with the Methodist Episcopal congregation until the meeting sites were abandoned in the early 1800's.

Nearly twenty years after Richard Allen left St. George ME Church in Philadelphia, he decided that it was time his breakaway church joined forces with similar black Methodist churches. Delegates, selected to represent churches within their circuit, met in Philadelphia on April 9, 1816 and formed the African Methodist Episcopal connection. They followed the teachings of the Methodist church founded by John Wesley and accepted the Methodist doctrine and discipline almost in its entirety. One delegate, Reuben Cuff, who lived in Lower Alloways Creek, Salem County, represented churches from Salem, Springtown, Bushtown, and other independent African churches in the Salem Circuit.

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<sup>4</sup>Robert Bevis Steelman, *Cumberland's Hallowed Heritage* (Bridgeton, NJ: 1965) Page 11.

<sup>5</sup>Joseph S. Sickler, *Tea Burning Town*, (Bridgeton, NJ: 1950) Page 76.

<sup>6</sup>Steelman, *Cumberland's Hallowed Heritage*, Page 14.

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Bethel A.M.E. Church

Springtown, Cumberland County, NJ

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Bushtown, a small black settlement, is located in Mannington Township, Salem County, New Jersey. The Bushtown church was organized in 1807. According to the 1887 AME Conference Report, "many of the old members have passes away and the young seem to have lost their zeal for church work" and "are sadly in need of a new church."

Shortly after the meeting in Philadelphia, members of the African Society of Methodists in Greenwich took steps to unite with the new denomination and changed their deed to conform to the African Methodist Episcopal Discipline. On September 28, 1816, Jacob Bryant and Charles Lockerman transferred title of the deed to Trustees Charles Papsby, Levin Robinson, Burton Jacobs, Nathaniel Murry, and Levin Bond for the nominal sum of Twenty-Five dollars.<sup>7</sup>

Between 1816 and the conveyance of a deed dated December 15, 1818,<sup>8</sup> Bishop George of Philadelphia expelled all five of the trustees from the African Society of Methodist in Greenwich. The deed does not mention if Trustees Leven Robinson and Burton Jacobs became members of the newly formed African Methodist Episcopal Church. The other three trustees, Charles Papsby, Nathaniel Murry and Leven Bond "have since joined & attached themselves members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Greenwich aforesaid and have been regularly elected & appointed trustees of said society." It is believed all members of the African Society joined the African Methodist Episcopal Church, since no other Methodist church was started until the early 1830's.

Africans, as blacks were often called in the late 1700's, could worship "free and clear without hindrance or molestation from...any person or persons who may at any time hereafter belong to the Methodist Episcopal Society of Africans under Bishop George by these presents." The deed of 1818, states the property is "held in trust for the African Methodist Episcopal Church." In 1816, the church had twenty-six members and Nathaniel Murry was the first local preacher.

Bishop Allen appointed Clayton Durham the circuit pastor for Salem, Greenwich (Springtown) and Bushtown Churches in 1817. The first A.M.E. Conference Report in 1818 does not mention Greenwich (Springtown) or Bushtown but their memberships are included in the number of 110 for the Salem Circuit.<sup>9</sup> The omission of the names Springtown and Bushtown from early records led to misinformation and misunderstanding of the early circuitry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Reuben Cuff was a delegate for the Salem Circuit and did not represent Salem alone. Bushtown founded in 1807, "came over to the A.M.E. Church at the organization of the

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<sup>7</sup> , Liber 30, (Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ) Page 450.

<sup>8</sup> , Liber 35, (Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ) Page 335-337.

<sup>9</sup>Daniel A. Payne, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, (New York, NY: 1969) Page 26.

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Bethel A.M.E. Church

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A.M.E. Connection.<sup>10</sup>

The Reverend Jarena Lee preached in the Greenwich church between 1821 and 1822. In her autobiography, Mrs. Lee describes the hardships she endured as the first female A.M.E. Minister including being denied access to the pulpit. Nevertheless she said, "If they persecute you in one city, flee into another." She came to Greenwich, where she found a "lively congregation, had unusual life and liberty in speaking, and the power of God was there."<sup>11</sup>

Jarena (no last name) was born February 11, 1783 in Cape May, New Jersey and by the age of six she was a servant for the Sharp family. As a young adult, Jarena attended Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches, but when she heard Richard Allen preach, she decided "this is the people to which my heart unites." Jarena, a deeply religious woman, first asked Allen's permission to preach in 1809. Allen refused her request citing, "the Methodist Discipline did not call women preachers." In 1811, she married Reverend Joseph Lee, pastor of an African Society church in Snow Hill (Lawnside) NJ. In 1817, she repeated her request to preach, and this time Allen relented. She became a traveling preacher and missionary for the AME church.

In 1822, the Salem Circuit included Port Elizabeth, Transfield (Gouldtown), Greenage [sic], (Springtown), Salem, Bushtown, Dutchtown, Woodbury, Snowhill (Lawnside), and Evesham. The Reverend Samuel Ridley reported at the 1822 A.M.E. Conference forty-two members for the "Greenage" society, seventh-two members for Salem, and ten members for Bushtown.<sup>12</sup>

Greenwich had thirty-eight members, Salem had eighty members and Bushtown reported thirty-six members in 1824.<sup>13</sup> Bushtown, Springtown, and Salem churches shared the same pastors until 1848.

Bethel A.M.E. Church continued to grow but their ongoing activity in the Underground Railroad was not welcomed by some members of the local and surrounding community. Supporters of slavery are believed to have set a suspicious fire that destroyed the church in the late 1830's. County historian Lucius Q. C. Elmer wrote in 1869, "their first small church was burned and was replaced in 1838 by the present edifice

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<sup>10</sup>Joseph H. Morgan, *Morgan's History of the New Jersey Conference From 1872-1887*, (Camden, NJ: 1887) Page 65.

<sup>11</sup>Jarena Lee, *Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee*, Philadelphia, PA: 1849) Page 23. Information taken from the Internet.

<sup>12</sup>Payne, *History of The AME Church*, Page 33.

<sup>13</sup>Payne, *History of The AME Church*, Page 44.

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Bethel A.M.E. Church

Springtown, Cumberland County, NJ

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of stone."<sup>14</sup> The congregation then used the Hicksite Quaker Meeting House until the present church in Springtown was built in 1838 under the leadership of Reverend Noah Cannon.

The only surviving church receipt book<sup>15</sup> has sporadic entries from 1858 to 1906 and most of the receipts are payments to sextons. In reviewing the book, it is evident that some members of the church were literate though most could only sign with an "x". According to the receipts, John Bryant, one of the descendants of the founder Jacob Bryant, was literate in 1861.

Other receipts are; rough casting to the church in 1858, and in 1862 the church was painted and glazed. The church made their first installment payment on a heater (stove) in 1862. In 1866, the church paid \$27.71 toward household goods for Reverend Daniel Draper (probably to furnish the parsonage).

On September 24, 1867, Annamias Williams sold a tract of land to members of Bethel A.M.E. Church that bordered the corners of Jacob Bryant and Nathaniel Murry's property leading from Greenwich to Roadstown.<sup>16</sup> From original church receipts on August 14, 1869, William Steward received fifty dollars from Perry Johnson "on account" for the Bethel Parsonage.<sup>17</sup> On June 19, 1873, Steward received twenty-six dollars and eighty nine cents on the principal and four dollars and twenty-two cents on the interest from Jacob Bryant, descendent of the original cofounder and a trustee. The church continued making payments to William Steward until November 1876.

Building committee members William Price, Stephen Denby, and Samuel Murry paid Enoch N. Mulford one hundred six dollars for a new roof on the church January 12, 1876. During 1889, contractor H. W. Davis received payment for the construction of a dance hall on land formally used for the parsonage.<sup>18</sup>

In 1876, the church membership increased to one hundred and four members, and plans were made to accommodate the growing congregation. The work began in 1885 when Rev. C. C. Green became the pastor. The money was borrowed from Peter D. Grinnage, "and the church was made larger and the bell put on." At the Sixth District Conference in Trenton NJ on April 20, 1887, the delegate said that as far back as 1833, Springtown was considered among the strongest AME Church in South Jersey. They reported "the old church has been remodeled and garnished until the old edifice has

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<sup>14</sup>Lucius Q. C. Elmer, *History of the Early Settlement and Progress of Cumberland County New Jersey*, (Bridgeton, NJ: 1869) Page 118.

<sup>15</sup> , Original Receipt Book of Bethel AME Church.

<sup>16</sup> , Liber 118, (Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ) Page 128.

<sup>17</sup> , Original Receipt Book of Bethel AME Church.

<sup>18</sup> , Original Receipt Book of Bethel AME Church.

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Bethel A.M.E. Church

Springtown, Cumberland County, NJ

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been lost in the new."

A bazaar held in 1889, netted one hundred twenty dollars, the largest amount ever raised by the members. It cleared a debt that lingered more than five years extending over the Ross, Wilson (s/b Watson), Peterson, Cochran, Green and Waters Administrations.<sup>19</sup>

In June 1890, members of Bethel AME sold subscription books and raised money to erect another parsonage. On June 16, 1890, they collected three hundred thirty-six dollars "to aid and now there stands a seven room neat comfortable structure, costing at that time \$600.00." Their minister, Reverend J. E. Fry, helped excavate the cellar and moved into the parsonage on June 9, 1891.<sup>20</sup>

During 1869, Lucius Q. C. Elmer wrote that Bethel A.M.E. Church has 126 members. He also noted the "colored race, depressed as they are by many discouraging circumstances, have the Gospel preached to them, and have about as many church members in proportion to their numbers, as the more fortunate whites."<sup>21</sup>

The church gave the colored American the "opportunity to be himself, to think his own thoughts, express his own convictions, make his own utterances, test his own power and thus, in the exercise of the faculties of his own soul, trust and achieve."<sup>22</sup>

Bethel A.M.E. Church served more than the spiritual uplifting needs of its congregations. The African American church was an important institution in the Community. Cut off from participation in the social, business and political life of the township, the church was a training ground for the many black enterprises and gave its members the very unusual opportunity of developing leadership skills. It was a place for self expressions, social interacting, and for the improvement of life in the African American community.

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<sup>19</sup> , Hand written notes by Louvisa Bryant, member of Bethel AME Church.

<sup>20</sup> , Notes by Louvisa Bryant.

<sup>21</sup> Elmer, *History of Cumberland County*, Page 18.

<sup>22</sup> Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York, NY: 1969) Page 69.

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**Historical Background of Springtown**

Springtown, located in the northeastern end of Greenwich Township is one of the oldest black settlements in Cumberland County. The village gradually developed after the Manumission Act of 1786, when Quakers sold small tracts of land to free blacks. Springtown is a short distance from the Cohansey river that flows into the Delaware Bay; thus an ideal location for self-manumitted slaves who escaped from Delaware and Maryland. The village of Springtown, never incorporated, has disappeared from most maps although local residents continue to refer to themselves as Springtowners. Cushing & Sheppard describe the village as, "a settlement of colored persons, scattered over a considerable tract of sandy land."<sup>23</sup>

Quakers, the first to settle in Greenwich in 1685, either brought slaves with them or they arrived shortly thereafter. According to William C. Mulford's manuscript at the Cumberland County Library in Bridgeton NJ, the inventory of Joseph Browne's estate in 1711 included "six negro slaves valued at 220 English pounds and one indian boy, valued at 40 English pounds."

In 1790, Cumberland County had eight thousand inhabitants, but only one hundred and twenty slaves.<sup>24</sup> Justice Ewing's hand written census for Greenwich Township in 1800<sup>25</sup> listed the number of free blacks and slaves living in households but does not list their names or ages. Often there were free blacks and slaves living in the same household since many manumitted slaves remained with their former owners.

The Manumission Act of 1786 opened the door for manumissions without a security bond and enabled Quakers to free their slaves without financial hardship. The township in which the manumission took place was "responsible" if the person became a public charge. Tubal Cain and Nancy (no last name) were the first slaves in Greenwich Township to receive a Certificate of Overseers of the Poor on March 25, 1792, and April 21, 1793 respectively.<sup>26</sup> Mary Lewis was the last slave to be manumitted by her owner, Mary Bacon of Greenwich Township on February 3, 1829.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Thos. Cushing and Charles E. Sheppard, *History of the Counties of Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland New Jersey*, (Philadelphia, PA: 1883) Page 681.

<sup>24</sup> Francis Lee Bazley, *New Jersey As A Colony and As A State Vol. Four* (New York, NY: 1902) Page 41.

<sup>25</sup> , NJ 1800 Cumberland County Census Index, (NJ State Archives, Reference # A 9976.9 J13.13)

<sup>26</sup> , Miscellaneous Records, Book A, (County Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ) Page 10.

<sup>27</sup> , Miscellaneous Records, Book D, Page 166 (Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ) Page 166.

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On March 14, 1820 Quakers, David Bacon, David and Thomas R. Sheppard bought "Wm. Pipes" from Robert Wright in Queen Anne county Maryland for four hundred dollars.<sup>28</sup> No reason was given for this unusual transaction.

New Jersey Gradual Abolition of Slavery Act in 1804 required the registration of births of slave children born after July 4, 1804. The children were declared "free" but bound as servants to the owners of their mothers for a period of twenty-five years for males and twenty-one years for females. David Sheppard was the first owner to record the births. Publis Vergielus was born on April 1806; Enoch was born to Violet on August 14, 1808; and Agnes was born to Juno on August 8, 1813. All of these births were recorded on September 4, 1813.<sup>29</sup> The law stated that any person entitled to bound service was required to file the birth of the child within nine months to the county clerk. The penalty for neglecting to file was five-dollar plus an additional one dollar for each month of delinquency. There was no notation that Mr. Sheppard ever paid a fine.

Missing census records for 1790 would identify the early settlers, their state of origin and their status - free or slave. There are records of free blacks owning land as early as 1802. Jacob Bryan (Bryant) bought his first piece of land on December 17, 1802<sup>30</sup> for one hundred one dollars, a considerable sum for any man - black or white, during that period. According to Abel Bryant, his great-grandfather Jacob came to the Greenwich Township (from Colonial New England) shortly after the Revolutionary War. Jacob continued to buy small parcels of land. According to the 1834 New Jersey Greenwich Tax Ratables he had accumulated twenty-three acres and owned two horses, two heads of cattle and one wagon. Jacob Bryant is not in the 1840 census and it is believed he died in 1835.

One interesting person who lived in Springtown was Daniel Croker.<sup>31</sup> Daniel was a half-brother of the first elected Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev. Daniel Coker from Baltimore, Maryland.<sup>32</sup> Both bore the name Daniel Coker to conceal their identity from slave catchers. Springtown's Daniel purchased land on June 8, 1833, indicating confidence that his secret was hidden.<sup>33</sup> Daniel is listed in the 1840 census as between fifty-five years and less than one hundred year's old. In the 1850 census, he was eighty-five years old and his wife Harriet was eighty years old. Daniel was a mulatto and both he and his wife were born in Maryland.

<sup>28</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Misc. Book C, (Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ) Pages 140-141.

<sup>29</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Misc. Book C, Page 21, (Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ), Page 21.

<sup>30</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Liber 4, (Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ) Page 541.

<sup>31</sup> Payne, *History of AME Church*, Page 88.

<sup>32</sup> Coker was forced to resign, and Richard Allen was elected bishop.

<sup>33</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Liber 58, Page 12, (Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ), Page 12.



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Another family who escaped from slavery in Maryland was Anne, William and their young son, Samuel Ringgold Ward. Anne, a strong physical woman, gave birth to a small sickly frail son. Anne was willing to lose her son to death but she refused to lose him to slavery on the auction block. After months of tender nurturing, young Samuel's health improved, but the separation of mother and son was imminent. As her son would later recount, Anne Ward said to her husband William, "We must take this child and run away. She said it with energy; my father felt it. He hesitated; but he was not a mother. She was decided: and when decided, she was *decided* with all consequences, conditions, and contingencies accepted."<sup>34</sup>

It was the aspiration of every enslaved person to "get the best directions" and set out for a free state preferably one with a large Quaker population. Samuel Ward's parents obtained the best directions available and headed for Cumberland County to live among the Quakers. They arrived in Greenwich and lived there from 1820 to 1826 before the threat of capture forced them to move to New York.

Samuel Ringgold Ward, who came to be known in the 1850's as the "Black Daniel Webster" for his oratory skills, remembered Quakers as "not loving in word and tongue, but in deed and truth." Ward wrote "there were no slave-holders in that part of the State, and when slave-catchers came prowling about the Quakers threw all manner of peaceful obstacles in their way, while the Negroes made it a little hot for their comfort."<sup>35</sup>

This confirms oral history that Springtown residents protected their boundaries by any means necessary. Louisa Bryant, mother of Abel Bryant, wrote that it was dangerous for slave-catchers to enter Springtown as "watchmen were ready to kill at a moments notice. Every strange white man had to give a good account of himself or leave."<sup>36</sup>

Sydney Steel was not as fortunate in her escape from Maryland to join her husband Leven. With her four children, she fled to Springtown but was soon captured and returned to her master. Meanwhile Levin moved to Burlington, New Jersey and changed his name to Still. The surname Still was a long-established one in southwestern New Jersey, originating in the era of the Swedish and Finish colony of the middle seventeenth century. By the end of the eighteen century there were several black Still's as well.

Once again Sydney escaped and rejoined Levin. This time she left the two boys, Peter and Levin behind. To conceal her identity, Sydney changed her name to Charity Still. Levin and Charity soon reunited and settled in Burlington County. They had other children, one of whom, William Still (1821-1902), who himself became a leader

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<sup>34</sup> Samuel R. Ward, *Autobiography of A Fugitive Negro*, (New York, NY: 1968) Page 20.

<sup>35</sup> Ward, *Autobiography of A Fugitive Negro*, Page 25.

<sup>36</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Church Records, by Louvisa Bryant, Bethel AME Church.

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of the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia.

The Greenwich New Jersey Tax Ratables in 1834 listed twenty-nine African American households, and of these, seven were property owners. By 1837, the number of households had increased to fifty-one and the number of property owners to sixteen. The community grew and was able to support two other churches, a Wesley Methodist in 1832 and the African Union Church in 1850.

The passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 by Congress was a threat to the liberty of every person of African descent and particularly to those members of an African Methodist Episcopal Church who openly advocated freedom for all people. Many of its members had first hand experience of an unjust system of human bondage.

The Reverend C. Woodyard, who would one day become pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church in Springtown, was bound out in 1854 at the age of six. When his parents died soon afterwards, young Woodyard was claimed as a slave.<sup>37</sup> As an A.M.E. Minister, he strongly believed the doctrine that God loved all men equally and that no man should be held in bondage.

The strongest compelling evidence connecting Springtown to the Underground Railroad is Wilbur H. Siebert's book *The Underground Railroad, From Slavery to Freedom*. Mr. Siebert gathered his information from The Rev. Thomas C. Oliver, an Underground Railroad Conductor on the Salem, New Jersey line. Rev. Oliver described the Greenwich line as "a circle of Quaker residences enclosing a swampy place that swarmed with blacks." When enslaved persons arrived in Greenwich, some felt safe enough to remain in the area for life. Others wanted to put more distance between themselves and their slave masters and continued the journey to Swedesboro and then to Evesham Mount. Once there, conductors guided the passengers to Mount Holly for the trip into the northern or Philadelphia route.<sup>38</sup>

Mr. Siebert connects Bethel A.M.E. Church to the UGRR when he lists: Leven Bond, Ezekiel Cooper, Nathaniel Murry, Algy Stanford, Julia Stanford, J.R. {E} Sheppard, and Thomas Sheppard as Station Masters in Cumberland County.<sup>39</sup> All seven Underground Railroad Operators are erroneously identified as white. Through census, death certificates, and church records, Bond, Cooper, Murry, Algy and Julia Stanford are known to have been African Americans and had a connection to Bethel A.M.E. Church.

When fire destroyed the first Bethel A.M.E. Church, members bought property in 1838 that connected to Algy and Julia Stanfords's property. The church deed reads, "beginning at a stone for a corner in the middle of the road leading from the house where Algy Stanford now lives to Sheppard Mill then along said road north eighty

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<sup>37</sup> Morgan, *History of the AME Church*, Page 53.

<sup>38</sup> Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad, From Slavery to Freedom*, (Gloucester, MA: 1968), Page 125

<sup>39</sup> Siebert, *The Underground Railroad*, Appendix E, Page 413

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five degrees...).<sup>40</sup> The Stanfords bought their property April 19, 1831 and the boundary begins from a stone in the road that leads from Presbyterian Church to Roadstown.<sup>41</sup>

Algy Stanford would later be remembered as tall, with a masculine presence: he would walk about four miles to the shore of the Delaware Bay to meet fugitives who might have escaped from across the Bay. He had strong arms and they were "bent to the oar in bringing the refugee across the water of the bay in darkness of the night."<sup>42</sup>

One evening, slave-catchers were lurking around Algy and Julia Stanford's home. A self-manumitted fugitive recognized his master's overseer, and asked if there was any "hog-fat" (lard) in the house. Algy Stanford obliged and the fugitive removed his clothes, rubbed the lard over his body and told Stanford to open the door. The slave-catcher grabbed him, but the fugitive was too slippery and slithered out of the catcher's grip. He escaped and fled to the "swamp".<sup>43</sup> The "swamp" (not identified) was probably between the Stanford's home and Bethel A.M.E. Church on Sheppards Mill Road. On the Greenwich map of 1876, Molly Wheaton Run, a tributary of the Cohansey River, borders the church property. The swamp bed is visible and a small stream still trickles under Sheppards Mill Road.

The Stanfords, considered prominent people in Springtown, owned real estate valued at \$400.00 in the 1850 census. According to church records, their son, Anthony L. was a local minister of Bethel A.M.E. Church. Algy Stanford worked in a tannery owned by John and Evan Miller. He was sixty years old when the 1850 census was taken; his wife Julia Anne was fifty-four. His birthplace is not stated; she was born in Maryland. In later years, the Stanfords relaxed on summer evenings "enjoying the liberty they had earnestly endeavored to give to their brothers and sisters in bondage."<sup>44</sup> On March 17, 1879, Algy (Algey) died at the age of eighty-six. His death certificate says he was a widower, and admits that he was born a slave in Maryland, and resided in New Jersey for fifty or sixty years.

Another underground operator, Nathaniel Murry married Judith Willet in 1812. He was a trustee for the African Society of Methodist in Greenwich in 1816 and the first local minister when Bethel A.M.E. Church joined Richard Allen in 1817.

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<sup>40</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Liber 69, (Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ), Page 609.

<sup>41</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Liber 54, (Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ), Page 417-419

<sup>42</sup> Bessie Ayars Andrews, *Reminiscences of Greenwich*, (Vineland, NJ:1910) Page 39.

<sup>43</sup> George Fishman, *Telling About the UGRR In Greenwich and Springtown NJ*, (Cumberland County Historical Society, Spring 1987-Vol.20, No.1), Page 5.

<sup>44</sup> Andrews, *Reminiscences of Greenwich*, Page 32

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On January 2, 1822, Nathaniel bought property from John and Mary Sheppard for Twenty-Five dollars.<sup>45</sup> He also bought property in 1828, 1832, and 1839. In the 1850 census for Hopewell Township, Nathaniel was recorded as a sixty-three years old farmer whose birthplace is unknown, another suggestion that he, himself, escaped slavery also.

Ezekiel Cooper was the third local minister at Bethel A.M.E. church. In 1836, he was one of the founders of an A.M.E. church in Port Elizabeth.<sup>46</sup> Of all the underground operators, Mr. Cooper was the most elusive. He never bought property and did not appear consistently in census reports. In the 1870 census, eighty year old Ezekiel lived in Millville and was reported to have been born in Maryland. He died May 10, 1875, according to A.M.E. Conference records. Evidence of his official death certificate has evaded this writer.

Leven Bond was a trustee of the African Society of Methodists Church in 1816. He is listed in the Tax Records for 1810, 1812, and the 1834 Greenwich Tax Ratables for Cumberland County. In the 1850 census, Leven was recorded to be seventy years old and born in Maryland. His wife Mary, was sixty years old and born in Pennsylvania. Their property was valued at \$200.00. Levin died during the A.M.E. Conference year 1853.

Harriet Tubman is said to have brought fugitives through the Greenwich area. Among the residents and descendants of Springtown and Greenwich, there is persistent and widespread oral history that Harriet Tubman lived in and worked out of Springtown during her trips south to lead fugitive slaves to freedom. Boats from the New Jersey shore carrying blue and yellow signal lights, the nautical emblem of the Underground Railroad, met fugitive slaves, and transported them across the Delaware River. When the watchman signaled that all was clear, the oarsmen guided the boat to a safe cove or the wharf of John E. and Thomas R. Sheppard, the Quaker Station Masters. They were met by free African Americans of the neighborhood, including Harriet Tubman or John Mason who claimed to have helped 1800 slaves to freedom.<sup>47</sup>

If this is so, it is most likely to have happened between her own escape in 1849, and approximately 1852 or 1853. During this period, she is documented as having worked some of the time in Philadelphia, PA and Cape May, New Jersey, placing her in the vicinity. After 1853, she became a celebrity in abolitionist circles, and her whereabouts are well documented. When she was not working in slave territory, she was living in New York State and Canada.

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<sup>45</sup> , Liber 40, (Courthouse, Bridgeton, NJ) Page 501.

<sup>46</sup> Morgan, *History of the New Jersey Conference*, Page 88.

<sup>47</sup> Lee, *New Jersey As A Colony*, Vol. 4, Page 55.

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However, throughout her work on the Underground Railroad, she may have made use of the Greenwich-Springtown Station. Her route North through Delaware to Wilmington and Thomas Garrett's Station is the one most famously noted, but Tubman's first major twentieth-century biographer, Earl Conrad, writes that "Her most favored passage was that which took her northward out of Dorchester County into the State of Delaware, then into New Jersey and Pennsylvania until she reached Philadelphia."<sup>48</sup>

The relationship of Harriet Tubman and Thomas Garrett is well-documented. When the relationship of the Garrett and Sheppard family is investigated it gives credence to the oral history of Tubman being in the Greenwich-Springtown area. The marriages of the Sheppards and Garretts created a valuable underground railroad link between Harriet Tubman, Delaware, Maryland, the Greenwich Line, and its connection to the Philadelphia Route.

Thomas Garrett had a family connection with two of the Station Masters in Greenwich. Clarkson Sheppard, born 1813, (son of John and Mary Sheppard) married Ann Garrett,<sup>49</sup> the daughter of Philip. Thomas Garrett's niece Margaret, daughter of his eldest brother, Philip, was married on January 2, 1840 to John E. Sheppard, who is almost certainly the J. R. Sheppard listed as a Station Master by Siebert. Thomas R. Sheppard, also listed by Siebert, was John E. Sheppard's brother. The Garrett and Sheppard families apparently continued in close contact, because in 1867, John E. Sheppard's son, Philip Garrett Sheppard, married Thomas Garrett's granddaughter Elizabeth W. Garrett, daughter of Thomas's eldest son, Elwood.<sup>50</sup> John E. Sheppard owned the wharf at Greenwich and was a merchant in lumber and coal. With his maritime resources, he was in an ideal position to participate in the transportation of fugitives across the Delaware Bay.

The Sheppard family dates back to the early settlement of Greenwich in the late 1600's. They and other Quakers settled along the Cohansey River. Greenwich became a thriving port and the main artery of commercial travel beginning in 1701. The Port of Greenwich was easily accessible from the Delaware River and Bay. When the elder John Sheppard acquired the wharf property in 1760, it played another important role: that of a port of entry for sea-weary fugitives slaves. It is believed the first attempt to organize a society for the abolishment of slavery occurred at the

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<sup>48</sup> Earl Conrad, *Harriet Tubman*, (Washington, DC: 1943) Page 57.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Shourds, *History And Genealogy of Fenwicks Colony*, (Greenwich, NJ), Page 217

<sup>50</sup> James A. McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad: The Life and Letter of Thomas Garrett*, (Moylan, PA: 1977), Pages 158-59: Cushing and Sheppard: Delaware Historical Society Garrett genealogical file.

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home of John Sheppard, Esq. in Greenwich, February 12, 1796.

Seldom mentioned, except by the people of Springtown, is the importance the Lenni Lenape Indians played in the Underground network. The inconspicuous travelers knew the variations of nature's warning sounds, the tide, current and every inlet in and around Greenwich from their many trips across the Delaware to visit their relatives. In addition, the few remaining Native Americans married African Americans, many of whom were fugitive slaves from Delaware and Maryland. Native American also had an interest in freeing slaves because they had first-hand knowledge of slavery by the early settlers of Fenwick's Colony.

According to local oral history, David Boley, the grandson of the chief of the Mackanippa tribe (Lenni Lenape) helped Algy Stanford guide boats back and forth across the Delaware River. At a predetermined time Algy and David would ease their boat out during the middle of the night and catch the tide going to Delaware. A watchman on the deck would indicate there was danger by swinging yellow and green lights. If they were not swinging, it was safe to pick up the passengers and head back across the Delaware River to Greenwich. They used the same signal on the Greenwich side, and if necessary the boat changed its course and headed up the channel to Stow Creek or another safe inlet.

New Jersey was one of the few northern states that enforced the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, and slave-catchers walked the countryside ready to capture free blacks or slaves for resale in the south. One afternoon Dr. William B. Ewing, a resident of Greenwich, went out for an afternoon stroll. He noticed a well-dressed stranger walking about and after conversing with the gentleman, Ewing realized the stranger was looking for a boy who might be at his house. Dr. Ewing casually walked away, and once out of sight, hurried home and told the boy, to run to Springtown, because the people in the Swamp will hide you.<sup>51</sup>

At the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, Lincoln was slow recruiting African American soldiers. The governor of New Jersey never enlisted their support. There is no record of any male from Springtown joining the Massachusetts 54<sup>th</sup> Infantry when the colored troop was organized in January 1863. If they joined, they traveled to another city and state to register. When Lincoln finally authorized the War Department to organize the Bureau of Colored Troops, Springtown men put on the blue uniform to demonstrate their patriotism. On June 28, 1863, the first twenty-nine volunteers from Hopewell and Greenwich Township traveled to Bridgeton NJ and were transported to Camp William Penn in Cheltenham PA, the training camp for the United States Colored Troops.

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<sup>51</sup> Fishman, *Telling About The Underground Railroad*, Page 5.

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William B. Bryant who died in 1909, is believed to be the last Civil War Veteran buried in Ambury Hill Cemetery, the church grounds of the African Society of Methodist in Greenwich. Mr. Bryant enlisted in the Navy, December 1, 1863, and served as a landsman. According to his pension papers, he lost his wife and five adult children between 1892 and 1896. William B. Bryant is the grandson of Jacob Bryant, the co-signer of the Bethel A.M.E. Church deed in 1810.

Springtown had its largest population after the Civil War until about 1890. Some who fled for either fear, safety, and/or liberty, returned to Springtown to join their families. Others migrated from the south for a "promised" better life only to find this was not the case. The local residents farmed for themselves or worked as farm laborers. Gradually the population of Springtown declined as farm laboring opportunities were reduced and families moved to larger industrial cities for social, economic, and educational advantages.

In the 1880's, Springtown was a thriving village with at least eighty heads of households, three churches, and a school that closed in 1950. Since the mid-twentieth century, the settlement's population has declined, and attrition of nineteenth-century buildings has accelerated, leaving one active church and a handful of nineteenth-century dwellings, interspersed with a few modern houses. Most of the empty lots have grown up in brush.

Prior to 1994, the membership of Bethel AME church had declined to four members. Today there are twenty-seven members who are committed to the restoration of the church. In 1998, Bethel AME Church was awarded \$89,058.00 in matching funds from the New Jersey Historic Preservation Bond Program.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Bethel A.M.E. Church occupies Block 8; Lot 12, Greenwich Township Tax Map.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary included the entire parcel containing the Bethel A.M.E. Church.

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**Illustrations:**

- Figure 1, Area location map.
- Figure 2, Site location map.
- Figure 3, Map of Greenwich, Upper Greenwich, and Springtown, 1876.
- Figure 4, Sketch floor plan

**Photograph List**

The following information is the same for all of the photographs listed:

- 1) Name of property: Bethel A.M.E. Church
- 2) City, county and state: Springtown, Cumberland County, New Jersey
- 3) Photographer: Craig Terry
- 4) Date of photographs: March 15, 1999
- 5) Location of negatives: Craig Terry  
264 E. Landis Avenue  
Vineland NJ 08360

6) and 7) Description of views indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 of 14: View of church looking west along Sheppards Mill Road.
- Photo 2 of 14: View of church looking southeast.
- Photo 3 of 14: View of church looking northwest.
- Photo 4 of 14: View of attic, looking south.
- Photo 5 of 14: Historic paneled entrance doors from interior, looking north.
- Photo 6 of 14: Entrance door, north facade.
- Photo 7 of 14: View of belfry, looking northwest.
- Photo 8 of 14: View of narthex, looking east.
- Photo 9 of 14: View of Sanctuary, looking north.
- Photo 10 of 14: View of balcony, looking west.
- Photo 11 of 14: Painted stencil in balcony, east wall.
- Photo 12 of 14: Sanctuary, looking south.
- Photo 13 of 14: Chancel, altar, and communion rail (1885).
- Photo 14 of 14: View of pew in Sanctuary, looking north

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

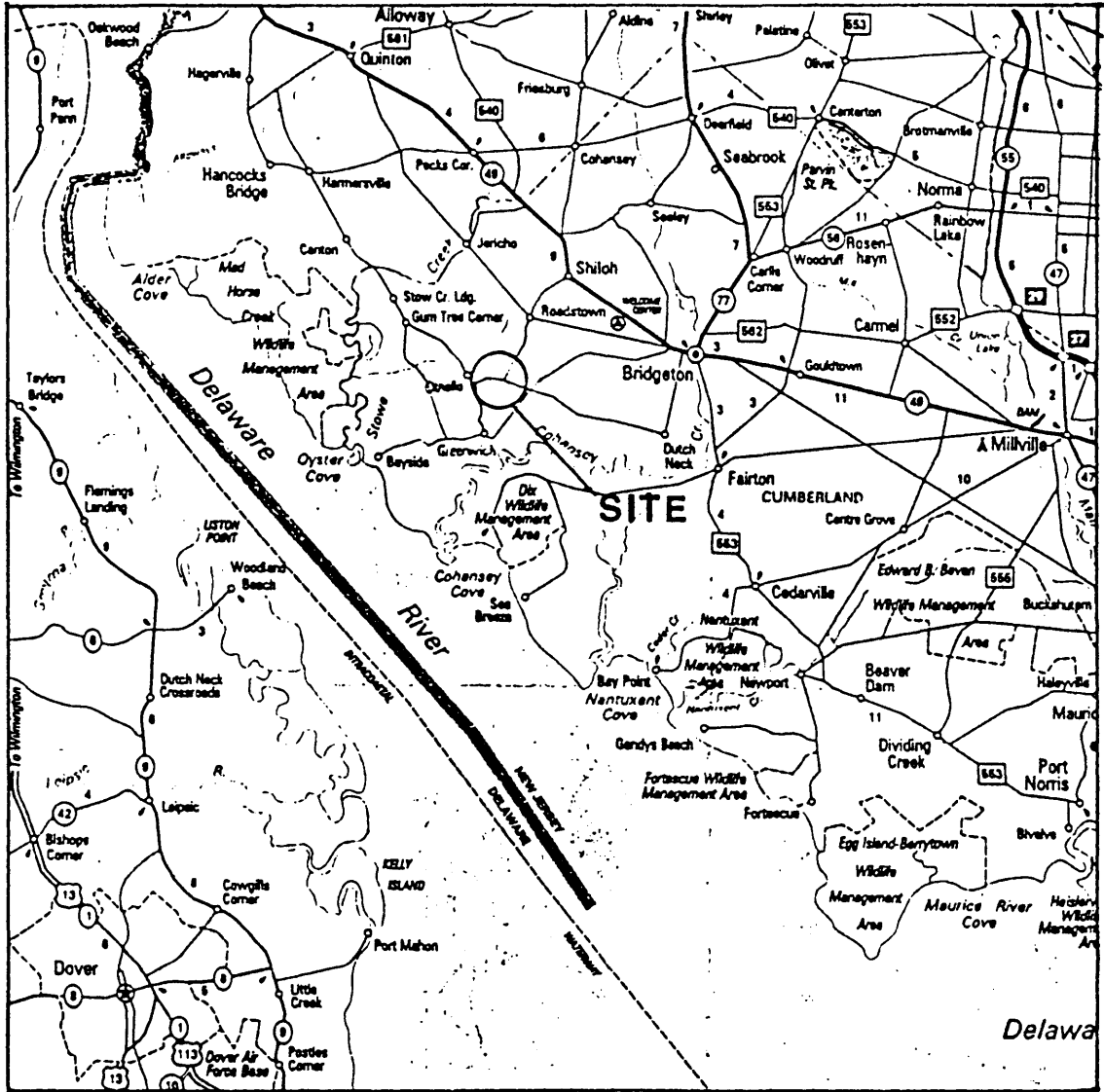
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Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church  
Greenwich Township (Springtown)  
Cumberland County  
New Jersey

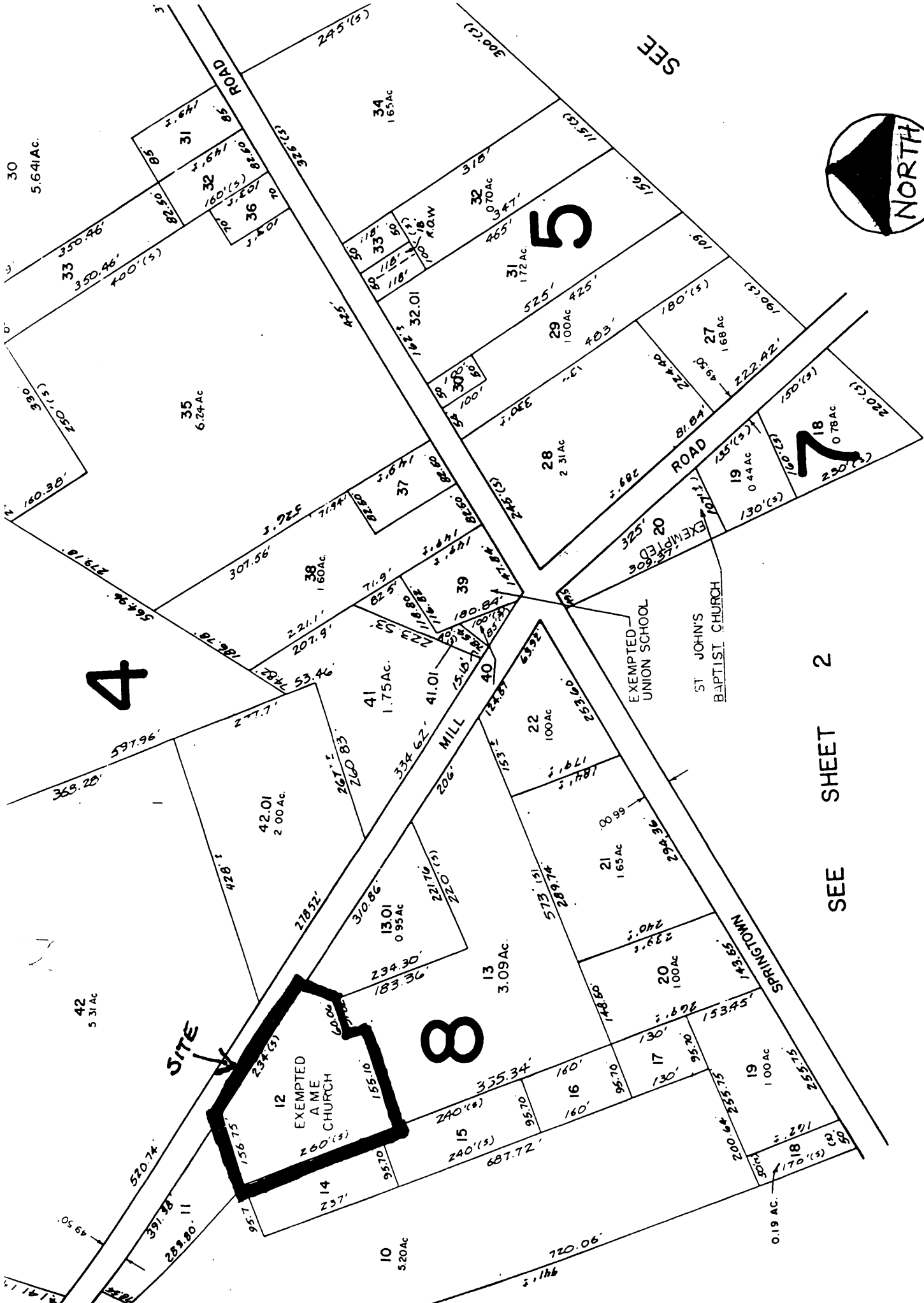
### **Addendum to Section 8, Page 8**

#### New Jersey Manumission Act of 1786

In 1786, the New Jersey Legislature prohibited the importation of slaves and recognized the legality of owners voluntarily freeing their slaves. This Manumission Act was relatively weak and only applied to slaves brought from Africa after 1776. It was not until 1804 that the New Jersey Legislature enacted a law for the gradual eradication of slavery.



Site Location Map  
USGS 7.5 Minute Series Shiloh Quadrangle  
Scale: 1:24,000



4

8

5

7

SEE

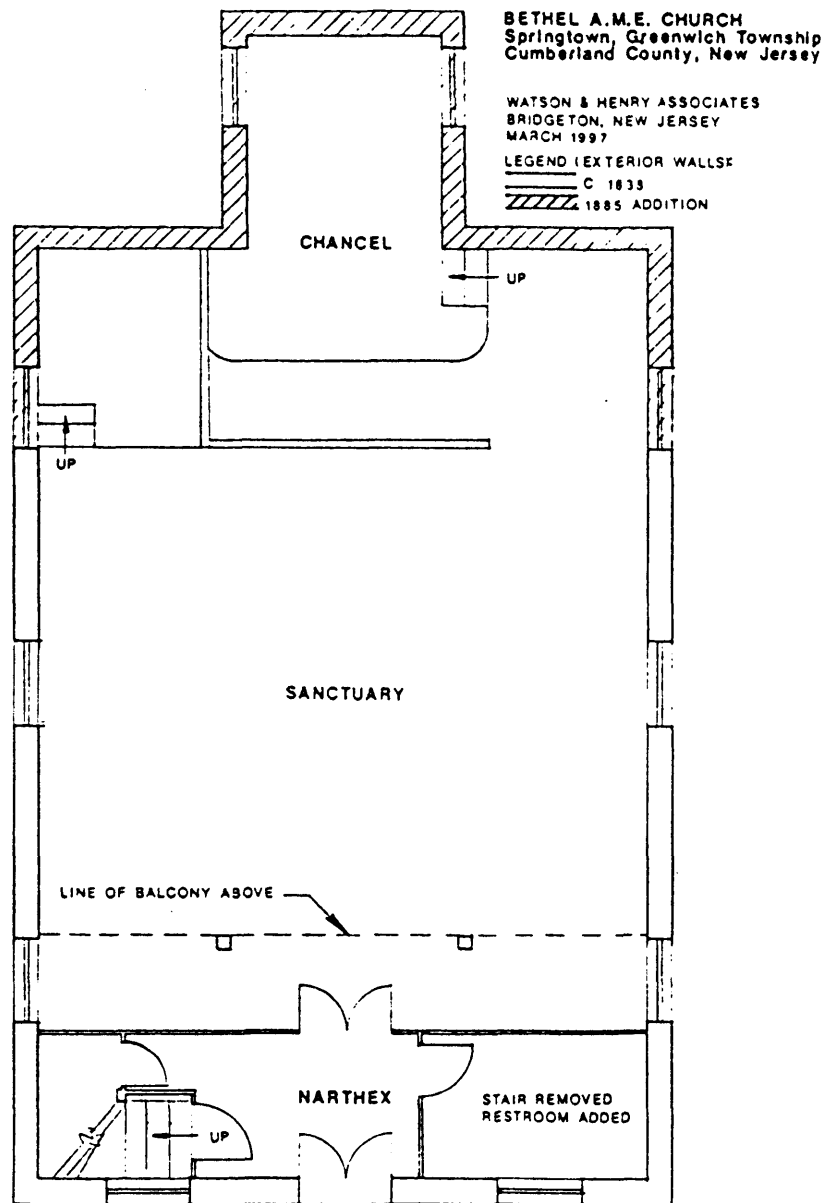
SHEET 2

SEE



SCALE: 1" = 200'-0"

SITE MAP OF BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH



Sketch Floor Plan  
Scale: 1/8" = 1' -0"

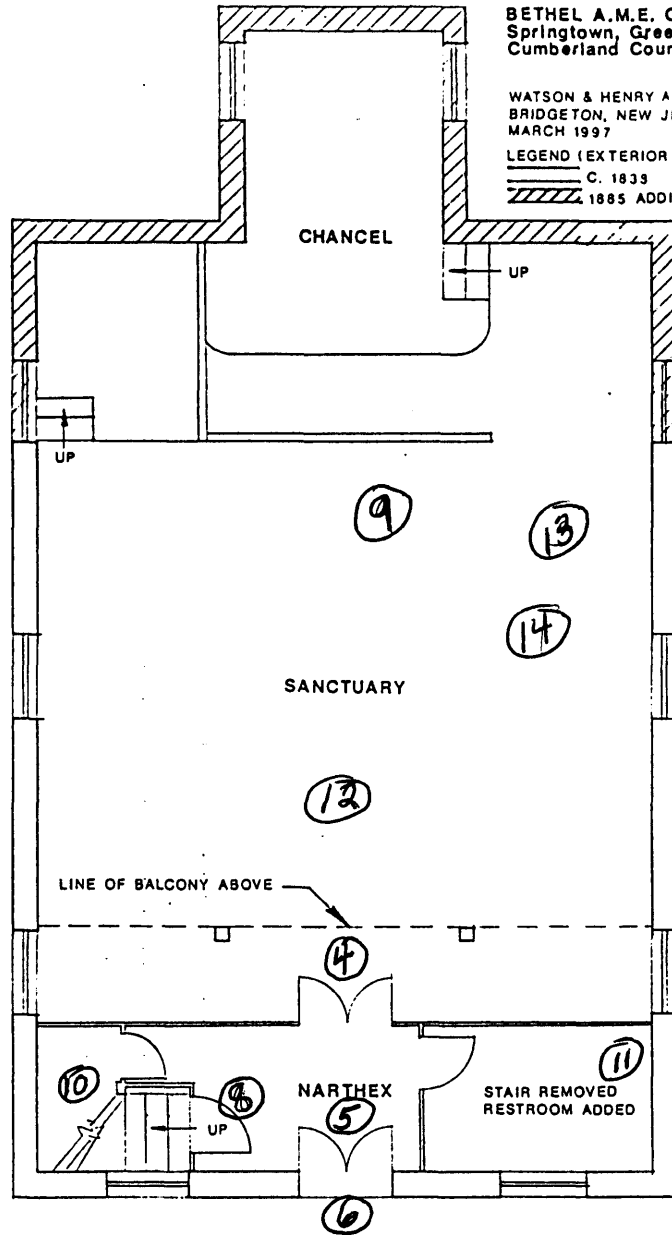
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BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH  
Springtown, Greenwich Township  
Cumberland County, New Jersey

WATSON & HENRY ASSOCIATES  
BRIDGETON, NEW JERSEY  
MARCH 1997

LEGEND (EXTERIOR WALLS)  
C. 1833  
1885 ADDITION



W

E

7

1

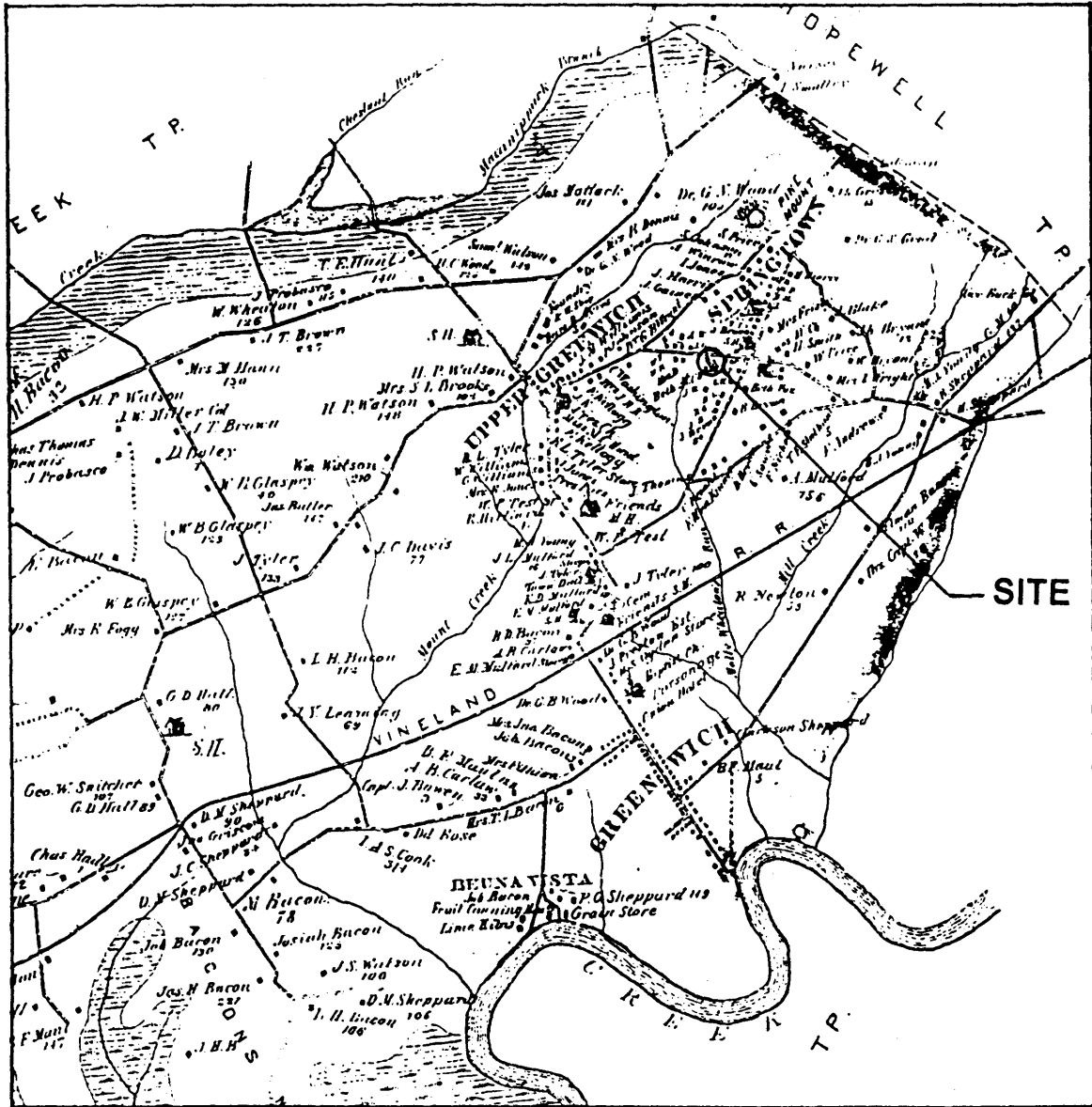
2

Sketch Floor Plan  
Scale: 1/8" = 1' - 0"

FLOOR PLAN - WHERE PHOTOS WERE TAKEN - BETHEL AME

N





Map of Greenwich, Upper Greenwich, and Springtown, 1876  
No Scale

D. J. Stewart, *Combination Atlas Map of Cumberland County, New Jersey*, Philadelphia, PA, 1876