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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUN 26 2015

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or 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 listed in 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 Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church

other names/site number Colemantown Meetinghouse

2. Location

street & number 311-313 Elbo Lane not for publication

city or town Mount Laurel Township vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Burlington code 005 zip code 08054

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I 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.

Rich Bucary 1/31/13
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

NJ DEP.
State or 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 this property is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>11/10/15</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____

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.)

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total). Values: buildings (2, 0), sites (1, 0), structures (0, 0), objects (0, 0), Total (3, 0).

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, SOCIAL / meeting hall, FUNERARY / cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- RELIGION / religious facility, SOCIAL / meeting hall, FUNERARY / cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete, walls Vinyl siding, Wood, board and batten siding, roof Asphalt, other

Narrative Description

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

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.)

- X 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:

- X 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.
X G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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 #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE (African American)

Period of Significance

1849-1970

Significant Dates

- 1849
1866-67
1882
1970 (Mount Laurel Case)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical DataAcreage of property About 1.4 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	509820	4419950
	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 Byname/title Paul W. Schopp (consulting historian) and Douglas McVarish (HPO staff)organization Paul W. Schopp Historical Consultant date September 2015street & number PO Box 648 telephone (609) 462-4572city or town Palmyra state NJ zip code 08065-0648**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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Churchstreet & number 318 Elbo Lane telephone _____city or town Mount Laurel state NJ zip code 08054**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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Continuation Sheet

Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church
Burlington County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 1

Introduction

The Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church, its associated cemetery, and the Colemantown Meetinghouse are located on the south side of Elbo Lane, east of its intersection with Moorestown-Mount Laurel Road in a residential neighborhood of Mount Laurel Township, Burlington County, historically known as an African American settlement named Colemantown. The Chapel, built in 1866-67, and the Meetinghouse, built before 1840 and moved to the site in 1965, are both set back from the road. The Jacob's Chapel Cemetery, which dates from 1849, is located behind (to the south of) the Chapel (Photo #1) and adjoins the Mount Laurel Society of Friends Cemetery to the west. On the west side of the Chapel, a small gravel parking area with a concrete path leads to the Chapel's entrance. The Church and Meetinghouse are contributing buildings; the associated cemetery is a contributing site.¹ The Meetinghouse has been enlarged in the 20th century, but its appearance from the front still evokes its 19th-century appearance and uses. The Chapel is clad in materials that date from a remodeling in 1983, during the years when the third of the "Mount Laurel cases" was being decided in the New Jersey Supreme Court (see Section 8). Its overall appearance still reflects the period of significance.

Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church

According to the *Black Historic Sites in New Jersey* survey, the first purpose-built African American churches in New Jersey, which began to appear in 1840, were small, rectangular, frame buildings with plain exteriors. The construction of larger buildings by prosperous black congregations, and the further embellishment of existing smaller churches, generally did not begin until the post-Civil War period. Jacob's Chapel, a vernacular building of 19th-century construction that was long understood to have been constructed in 1859, has recently been discovered through documentary research to have been constructed in 1866-67, immediately after the war, and exemplifies this type of small, purpose-built African American church.

The Chapel is a one-story, three-bay by three-bay, rectangular, frame building that faces north, with a footprint of approximately 26 feet by 40 feet and a shallow roof with its gable end oriented to the street (Photo #2). It is set back about 40 feet from the street, with a lawn in front. A short concrete sidewalk leads to a small porch of four brick steps at the entrance and a gravel drive is located to the west. A row of oak trees extends to the south between the Chapel and the meetinghouse. Two small signs added in the front yard identify the church.

The building today reflects modifications made in 1983 by general contractor William Olliver and reported in the *Burlington County Times*.² It was at that time that the walls were clad in vinyl siding in imitation of clapboard and the cornice covered with sheet aluminum. Stained glass windows that date from the early 20th century were restored and the brick stairway at the main entrance (north façade) was constructed. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles; a chimney (probably stucco over brick) likely vents a heating unit in the basement crawl space at the northwest corner of the building. A small plastic

¹ Additional parking is provided in a gravel area across the street, on the north side of Elbo Lane. The congregation's administrative offices are located in a c. 1950 ranch house, set well back from the road, on this parcel.

² "Restored chapel is members' dream come true," *Burlington County Times*, 12 June 1983.

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Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church
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louvered vent panel is located at the apex of both the south and north gable ends. A wood cross hangs below the louver on the north façade. Modest plantings extend along the gravel drive and either sides of the entrance. A series of shrubs are planted along the west and east sides of the building.

A one-story, one-bay, vinyl-clad, shed-roofed structure on the rear (south) elevation appears to be an addition, although the date is not known (Photo #3). The apse is located within this structure on the Sanctuary interior and illuminated by stained glass windows on the east and west walls. Another louvered vent is centered in the gable end of the original building.

There are two building entrances. The primary entrance is centrally located on the north façade and accessed via a brick stairway with modern metal handrails. The pair of metal doors set within a wood frame at this entrance open to a small Vestibule (narthex). A secondary entrance is located at the west end of the south (rear) elevation (Sketch Floor Plan). This entrance was apparently added to make the building handicapped accessible; a concrete ramp leads to a single metal door which opens directly into the Sanctuary.

The north façade is organized symmetrically with the central doorway and a leaded glass window to each side. Windows on the building are relatively large, leaded glass windows with simple floral motifs in greens, reds and yellows, of the style that would have been available from a local studio or by mail order in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Photo #4). Windows are in wood frames with wood surrounds and sills. They are obscured on the exterior by faded polycarbonate panels.

Fenestration on the east and west (side) elevations is asymmetrical. Three windows on each elevation are spaced unequally, although there is no evidence on the exterior or interior for this variation. All side windows illuminate the Sanctuary.

The interior of the Chapel is divided into two parts: the Vestibule and the Sanctuary. The narrow Vestibule, which extends across the width of the building, has two, single-leaf, paneled wood doors leading to the Sanctuary, one on each end of the Vestibule. The floor is covered in vinyl tiles; the walls are finished plaster. A hatch in the floor along the north wall opens to a dirt cellar.

The Sanctuary is a rectangular room with an apse at the south end (Photo #5). Rows of wood pews (installed in 1983) are separated from the apse by a low, wooden railing with turned wood balusters. This balustrade may be original to the building; it appears at least to be an early addition (Photos #6 and 7).³ Modern light fixtures suspended from the ceiling illuminate the room. The walls are finished plaster above a beaded board wainscot. The floor is covered with modern carpeting.

The Jacob's Chapel Cemetery lies behind (to the south of) the Chapel, separated from the Mount Laurel Society of Friends' Cemetery by a low iron fence extending along the southern boundary of the cemetery.

³ The pews, which had been salvaged from a condemned church building in Delair, were cut to size to fit in the Chapel. "Restored chapel is members' dream come true," Burlington County Times, 12 June 1983.

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Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church
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Graves in the Jacob's Chapel cemetery are marked with small granite stones. There are likely many early, unidentified, and unmarked burial sites. The most elaborate grave site belongs to the Still family (Photo #8); it has a low fence surrounding the plots as well as a large stone and brass marker, a tall obelisk, and a concrete book on a pedestal.

The location, setting, feeling, and association of the Jacob's Chapel site survive through the physical relationships between the Chapel, Meetinghouse, and Cemetery (providing context) and the physical integrity of the Meetinghouse in particular. The Chapel's building form survives, although its physical integrity has been compromised by the addition of vinyl siding to the exterior and the loss of any original furnishings which may have been removed when the current pews were installed. Overall, the integrity for the property is good.

Colemantown Meetinghouse

The Colemantown Meetinghouse was for most of its history situated on the north side of Elbo Lane. It was moved to its current location, south of the road and east of the Chapel, in 1965. The current location is approximately 60 yards south of its previous Colemantown location. It is a rectangular frame building, three bays wide (approximately 20 feet) and three bays deep with a two-bay addition at the rear (Photos #9 and 10). It is set back from the street amidst an expanse of lawn. There are mature trees to the south and east and shrubs at the northeast corner. A row of Hostas is planted along the western elevation of the building. The two-bay addition to the rear was built during the middle of the 20th century and added about fifteen feet to the building's length. Although the construction date of the addition is no longer precisely recalled, this addition is shown in a 1963 aerial photograph prior to the 1965 move of the building, and the windows (see below) are of a type that were popular in house construction during the 1950s.

The main, front, portion of the Meetinghouse consists of two sections. The older section, which is expressed as the second and third bays as visible on the east and west sides (Photos #9 and 10), was built during or before 1840 (and possibly not in the location where it afterward stood; see Section 8). This section was a 20-foot-by-20-foot frame building that may have likely been constructed as a schoolhouse. Rural schoolhouses in early 19th-century New Jersey were often frame buildings constructed on a 20-foot by 20-foot plan,⁴ a footprint seldom used for meetinghouses. This construction history is revealed through minor differences in the structural framing visible in the interior (Photos #12 and 13). The front section, which added about ten feet to the depth of the building, was added in the middle of the 19th century, undoubtedly following the acquisition by the Colemantown congregation (see below).

The exterior of the main, front portion is clad with board-and-batten wood siding and has a front gable, an asphalt shingle roof, and a wood cornice with eave returns. The primary (north) entrance has a central, double-leaf, wood door with full-length glass panes that is a modern replacement. Concrete steps with a pipe handrail on each side provide access to this entrance. Windows on the façade are wood, six-over-six,

⁴ See Robert W. Craig, *New Jersey's Public School Buildings: A Brief Field Guide* (article, published by NJ Historic Preservation Office, 2006).

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double-hung sash with wood surrounds and wood sills (Photo #11). There is a wood-framed, four-light, fixed-pane window set on a diagonal in the gable end (Photos #1 and 9), comparable in type and age to one in the Carpenter Street School in Woodbury (evidence suggests that both date from the 1870s or '80s). The east and west side elevations have three wood windows with six-over-six, double-hung sash that apparently date from the 19th century.

The two-bay-deep, wood-frame, rectangular addition at the rear of the building is slightly wider (on the west side) than the full width of the front portion. The addition, which houses a kitchen and bathroom, has a low-pitched gable roof and two interior aluminum pipe chimneys. A single-leaf entrance is located in the west elevation to the right of two small, fixed windows. The entrance is accessed by concrete steps with a modern metal pipe railing. The rear (south) elevation of the addition has three wood windows with one-over-one, double-hung sash. The east elevation has two wood windows with one-over-one, double-hung sash.

The interior of the front portion of the original Meetinghouse consists of one open room, currently used by the congregation as a multi-purpose space. Evidence of the early framing of the Meetinghouse survives at the top of the walls, where what appear to be hand-hewn beams are visible (Photos #12 and 13). Such beams were common in early schoolhouses, but had all but disappeared by the middle of the 19th century in school and church construction. The interior is plastered and the plaster is carried about one-third of the distance up the roof where a truncated, flat ceiling occupies about two-thirds of the area of the floor. This, too, was a common practice in early schoolhouses and appears here to be a holdover. The conversion of the building for meetinghouse use evidently led to the removal of the transverse plates that tied the side walls together and this function has been assumed by iron tie rods that hold the side walls together (Photo #13).

The Cemetery

The cemetery is situated behind the Chapel and slightly to the west of it (Photos #1 and 2). It is best known for the presence of the burial plot of the Still family (Photo #8), which includes the grave of James Still (1812-1882), the so-called "black doctor of the Pines." The cemetery occupies about a half-acre and includes some dozens of grave markers from the late 19th through the 20th centuries. The irregular rear boundary, which juts to a sharp corner at the southernmost point, reflects that the property abuts the rear lot line of the Friends meetinghouse to the west, a property that fronts on the Moorestown-Mount Laurel Road.

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<u>Jacob's Chapel and Colemantown Meeting House</u> Name of Property <u>Burlington County, NJ</u> County and State

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SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Summary Paragraph

The Jacob's Chapel A.M.E Church property, which includes the Colemantown Meeting House, the Chapel itself, and their associated cemetery, possesses local significance under Criterion A in African American ethnic heritage as the last remaining resources that mark the emergence, growth, and decline of Colemantown, an antebellum African American settlement established in 1828 that flourished into the 20th century. The emergence of Colemantown was an important event within Burlington County history. The Colemantown Meeting House, evidently placed in the settlement in 1840 and moved to its current location in 1965, served as both the first worship sanctuary in Colemantown and as a schoolhouse for the hamlet's children. It is one of the oldest all-black schoolhouses still extant in New Jersey, a remarkable survival. It is likewise remarkable that this survival was a re-purposed building adapted to become the congregation's first sanctuary. Before about 1840, African American congregations in New Jersey worshipped exclusively in re-used buildings, before the first purpose-built black churches appeared.¹ The Colemantown Meeting House is the only known survivor of this early group of black churches. The cemetery was inaugurated about 1849. In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, the growing congregation, then led by Jacob Mitchell, an A.M.E minister known for his success in helping other black churches build their own sanctuaries, led the effort to build the present Jacob's Chapel in 1866-67.

The period of significance for the nominated property thus extends from 1849, with the establishment of the cemetery, to 1970 when the property was associated with events that surrounded the filing of the first of the lawsuits that led to the landmark New Jersey Supreme Court decisions popularly known as the Mount Laurel cases. With these decisions, the New Jersey Supreme Court set legal precedents concerning the responsibility of municipalities statewide to provide low- and moderate-income housing to address local and regional affordable housing needs. As a religious property, the Jacob's Chapel A.M.E Church meets Criteria Consideration A by its association with important historic events in local African American history and in New Jersey legal history. As a property that possesses statewide significance derived from associations of the past fifty years, Jacob's Chapel meets Criteria Consideration G as exceptionally important because it was uniquely the venue for the event that launched the litigation resulting in the Mount Laurel decisions, which transformed affordable housing from a zoning decision to a civil right. An October 1970 meeting held at Jacob's Chapel directly led to the decision to file suit. The Colemantown Meeting House and the cemetery still substantially reflect their 1970 appearance. The Jacob's Chapel, itself, is slightly modified from its 1970 appearance by a modest 1983 renovation.

Before Colemantown: African Americans as Slaves and Freemen in Evesham Township

Old Evesham Township's documentary history fails to record when the first slave entered the original bounds of the township. A 1709 census of residents in neighboring Northampton Township enumerates nine "negro" slaves and six "Indian servants" among the 281 people counted in the census.² Early

¹ For evidence in support of this conclusion, see New Jersey Historical Commission, "Black Historic Sites in New Jersey: Final Report of Project OHP-I82-3," October 12, 1984. (copy at NJ Historic Preservation Office, Trenton, NJ).

² John Rodgers. "Census of Northampton, Burlington County, 1709." Published in the *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*, Vol. IV, No. 1. Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1849, 33-36.

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probate records for Evesham Township residents provide some glimpses of slavery in Evesham. The earliest estate to include slaves in the inventory was that of William Heulings. John Kay and Samuel Coles prepared the inventory on 9 July 1713, which included “five ‘niggoris’ £140.—” among Heulings’ personal estate.³ The following year, a George Smith died while holding a slave. The inventory for Smith’s estate includes the following entry: “A negro man named Anthony Waterman bought in the year 1712. To whom, when purchasing him, George Smith promised his freedom after twelve years’ service, which promise is to be fulfilled by the executrix, £35.”⁴ Josiah Haines died as a township resident and his personal estate inventory included “a negro boy” with a value of £30.⁵ In January 1729, Sarah Cole died in Evesham Township and her inventory included a “neygoris” valued at £20.⁶ During February 1729, Thomas Smith died while in possession of “a negro man and woman” worth £60.⁷ Then in March 1729, William Evens [Evans] met his demise. His personal estate contained “six negro slaves.”⁸

Many of the Evesham Township slaveholders were members of the Society of Friends in America (Quakers) who grappled with the issue of “owning” other human beings during the 18th century. The discussion about the evils of slavery began in the late 17th century among the Society of Friends in England, but meetings that operated under the aegis of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting did not adhere to decisions emanating from the Society in Great Britain.⁹ The Chester Meeting in Pennsylvania drafted the first language in the Middle-Atlantic colonies concerning society members owning slaves in 1711.¹⁰ In New Jersey more than 25 years later, the Haddonfield Quarterly Meeting directed the Monthly Meeting “...to make inquiries into, and to answer in their reports, the situation of their members, respecting the buying and selling slaves” during First month, 1738.¹¹ Almost another 40 years had elapsed before the Haddonfield Quarterly Meeting appointed “...a committee to procure manumission papers, and assist the members of the monthly meetings to manumit their slaves; and also to see to the education of coloured children” in Fourth month, 1777.¹² This quarterly meeting committee continued to operate for a period of two years until they reported in the Ninth month, 1779 that they had fulfilled their commission and obtained the necessary manumissions. A few members continued to hold slaves and the committee reported those members’ names to the monthly meeting for the enforcement of discipline. The quarterly meeting minutes for 1781 note, “It appears there has been a general releasement from bondage of the Africans among us, except in a few instances, where the women only are in membership.”¹³ The

³ William Nelson. *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey. Vol. XXIII. Calendar of New Jersey Wills, Vol. 1. 1670-1730.* Paterson: The Press Printing and Publishing Company, 1901, 225.

⁴ Nelson, *Documents*, 426.

⁵ Nelson, *Documents*, 200.

⁶ Nelson, *Documents*, 109.

⁷ Nelson, *Documents*, 433.

⁸ Nelson, *Documents*, 157.

⁹ William Evans. *A Brief Statement of the Rise and Progress of the Testimony of the Religious Society of Friends, Against Slavery and the Slave Trade.* Philadelphia: Joseph and William Kite, 1843, 10.

¹⁰ Evans, *A Brief Statement*, 9.

¹¹ Evans, *A Brief Statement*, 14.

¹² Evans, *A Brief Statement*, 31-32.

¹³ Evans, *A Brief Statement*, 32.

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Haddonfield Meeting hosted separate religious meetings "...frequently held for the people of colour; and Haddonfield Monthly Meeting raised on one occasion £131, for the education of negro children."¹⁴ Other Friends' Meetings in West New Jersey followed a similar trajectory to Haddonfield, including Evesham Meeting.

By the 1780s, Evesham Township residents began to manumit their slaves with some regularity, reporting the manumission to the Burlington County Clerk's Office for recordation. The clerk initially recorded the freedom documents in the county deed books. For example, Elizabeth and John Lippincott manumitted Phoeby [*sic*] Tonkins on 12 February 1787 and on the same date Joseph Eves granted his two slaves, Mary White and Hannah Mintus, their freedom.¹⁵ Also on the same date, Evesham resident Esther Wilkins granted freedom to her two slaves, Philip Still and Hope Still; Thomas Wilkins freed his slave, Candas Still; and Isaiah Haines manumitted James Hooper.¹⁶ William Wilkins freed his two slaves, Beulah Waters and Patience Pere (or Pero), on 2 March 1787.¹⁷ On the same date, Nathan Haines released his slaves named Nanny, Ronnia, and Kingston.¹⁸ Then on 19 June 1787, Nathan Haines granted freedom to his slave Chloe.¹⁹ John Hinchman manumitted his two slaves, Cato Hammey and McIntosh Hammey on 16 September 1788.²⁰ On 30 October 1790, Abraham Matlack issued freedom papers to his slave, John Sobers.²¹ These freed blacks, along with other former slaves from surrounding municipalities and counties, formed the foundation of the black community in Old Evesham Township as the United States moved towards the 19th century.

In 1797, the Burlington County Abolition Society canvassed the various municipalities in the county to prepare a census of free and enslaved blacks.²² The society identified six slaves (a family of three as well as three individual slaves) and 81 free blacks residing within Evesham Township. Many of the free blacks initially resided on or near farms, where they worked as laborers, or out in the woods, where they held occupations such as sawyers or colliers. During the 1820s, local African Americans, and those who arrived from other states, began to create discrete enclaves of settlement. In Old Evesham Township these settlements include the oldest one, Colemantown (described below) and Little Texas, both along Elbo Lane in present-day Mount Laurel Township; Petersburg, along the west side of Moorestown-Mount Laurel Road on the north side of the mount in present-day Mount Laurel Township; Kenilworth, a community of fugitive slaves around the shore of Kenilworth Lake in present-day Evesham Township; Milford, in lower western Evesham Township; Cross Roads, in present-day Medford Township; and Dingtletown and the Indian Mills area in present-day Shamong Township.

¹⁴ Evans, *A Brief Statement*, 40-41.

¹⁵ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book A. Mount Holly, 1787, 223-224, 227.

¹⁶ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book B. Mount Holly, 1787, 110-112; Book C, 290.

¹⁷ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book A. Mount Holly, 1787, 182-183.

¹⁸ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book A. Mount Holly, 1787, 220-222.

¹⁹ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book B. Mount Holly, 1787, 71.

²⁰ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book B. Mount Holly, 1788, 72-73.

²¹ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book B. Mount Holly, 1790, 220.

²² Burlington County Abolition Society records, Burlington: Burlington County Historical Society, 1797.

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The Roots of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Evesham Township

Born in 1760, Richard Allen, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.), grew up in Germantown, Pennsylvania as a slave of Benjamin Chew. When Allen was still a child, Chew sold him, his parents, and his brother to a family in Delaware. At the age of 20, he later recorded, the spirit of God fell upon him and he underwent a Christian conversion. After Allen's experience, his master in Delaware sought out preachers to come and minister to his household. Likewise, Allen held daily prayer meetings with the family, which began in the kitchen, but moved to the parlor at the master's urging. The master became morally and spiritually convinced of the evil of continuing to hold slaves, so he permitted Allen and his brother to buy their remaining time and be granted their freedom. After becoming a freeman, Allen accepted numerous manual labor jobs to earn his living, but after the American War for Independence ended, he felt moved to become a preacher of the Gospel. Allen notes,

After leaving Wilmington [Delaware], I went into New-Jersey, and there travelled and strove to preach the Gospel until the spring of 1784. I then became acquainted with Benjamin Abbot, that great and good apostle. He was one of the greatest men that ever I was acquainted with. He seldom preached but what there were souls added to his labour. He was a man of as great faith as any that ever I saw. The Lord was with him, and blessed his labours abundantly. He was as a friend and father to me. I was sorry when I had to leave West Jersey, knowing that I had to leave a father.²³

Allen's travels through West New Jersey presumably resulted in the spiritual conversion of many people, but at this time he viewed himself as a preacher/evangelist in the Methodist tradition and not a church planter. Two years later, however, he spent time preaching in Philadelphia and established a congregation—a society—of 42 members. Feeling the burden of the black people living in the city, he "...saw the necessity of erecting a place of worship for the coloured people."²⁴ Allen finally opened his first black church in 1794. Allen's original desire to establish this church grew out of an increasing discontent during the late 18th century among black Methodists with the uncharitable treatment they endured while attending Saint George's Methodist Church on North Fourth Street in Philadelphia. The final straw came when church leaders relegated the African American congregants to the balcony. White ushers at Saint George's ejected remonstrators, including Allen's friend and colleague, Absalom Jones, from the church when they protested the segregation of black worshipers to the balcony area.²⁵

With Francis Asbury then visiting in the Quaker City, Allen implored him to come and dedicate the new church. Asbury agreed to do so and preached that day in July 1794, while the Rev. John Dickins sang and prayed. During the prayer, the Rev. Dickins prayed that the church might be a Bethel and this prayer

²³ Richard Allen. *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen....* Philadelphia: Martin & Boden, Printers, 1833, 8.

²⁴ Allen, *The Life*, 12.

²⁵ Richard R. Wright, *Centennial Encyclopedia of the African American Methodist Episcopal Church....* Philadelphia: [Book Concern of the A.M.E. Church], 1916, p.8.

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request provided Allen with a name that the church still carries today.²⁶ Bethel remained under the umbrella of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but increasing racial hostility from white ministers and conference officials led to a general meeting of black Methodists in April 1816. At the meeting:

Delegates from Baltimore and other places which met those of Philadelphia, and taking into consideration their grievances, and in order to secure the privileges, promote union and harmony among themselves, it was resolved, "That the people of Philadelphia, Baltimore, &c. &c., should become one body, under the name of the African Methodist Episcopal Church."²⁷

Based on the results of this meeting, Richard Allen declared his Philadelphia congregation—Bethel Methodist Church—separate and distinct from the Methodist Episcopal Church and a congregation now associated with the new A.M.E. denomination. Richard Allen subsequently became his new denomination's first bishop.²⁸

While Richard Allen and his associates established the new protestant denomination in April 1816, it appears church officials failed to retain records of the General Conference held that year to initially form the A.M.E. Church. Likewise, no records exist for an 1817 Philadelphia Annual Conference, if one even occurred. The first annual conference in Philadelphia for which records exist is the 1818 gathering.²⁹ The minutes from this conference, held on 18 May 1818, provide the first glimpse at the denomination's sixteen churches and their membership:

Philadelphia, 3,311; Baltimore, 1,066; Salem, N.J., 110; Trenton, 73; Princeton, 33; Snow Hill, 56; Woodbury, 29; Attleborough, 41; New Hope, 33; Frankfort, 28; Westchester, 46; Plemeth [Plymouth, PA], 8; Whitmarsh, 29; Bridgeport, 6; Brunswick, 40; Charleston, 1,848; making a total of 6,748.³⁰

Based on the above list of A.M.E. churches, five congregations then existed in New Jersey: Salem, Trenton, Princeton, Snow Hill, and Woodbury, with no mention of an active congregation in Evesham Township or anywhere else in Burlington County. The denomination would grow through the hard work of its elders, its deacons, and missionaries (self-appointed and otherwise) who pushed out into the hinterlands of New Jersey and elsewhere.

Following the 1818 annual conference held in Philadelphia, there is a complete absence of records for any yearly gatherings in the City of Brotherly Love until 1822, suggesting that annual conferences had entered a period of hiatus for 1819, 1820, and 1821. Minutes do exist for an 1822 Philadelphia Annual Conference and the records from that meeting demonstrate strong denominational growth with a dozen

²⁶ Allen, *The Life*, 12-18.

²⁷ Allen, *The Life*, 21.

²⁸ George R. Prowell. *The History of Camden County, New Jersey*, Philadelphia: L.J. Richards & Co., 1886, p.708.

²⁹ Daniel A. Payne. *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, Nashville: Publishing House of the A.M.E. Sunday School Union, 1891, 16, 26.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

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new congregations in New Jersey including one shown in Evesham, which had 47 members of record.³¹ The local Evesham A.M.E. body represents the very first organized meeting of the denomination in Burlington County. This solid evidence of the Evesham congregation being established by 1822 refutes Joseph H. Morgan's conjecture that "...Evesham was organized about 1826."³² Although church officials held an annual conference in Philadelphia during 1823, Payne notes that the denomination failed to allocate the necessary funds to print the minutes from that gathering, so no record exists of the business transacted. Philadelphia again hosted the annual conference for 1824 during the month of May. Similar to the published minutes of other annual conferences, A.M.E. officials provided a record of all churches and their membership. In the entry covering the Evesham church, the conference secretary for 1824 recorded the congregants as specifically meeting for worship at "Cross Roads" and that the congregation then had 42 members, indicating a loss of five from two years earlier.³³

A woman named Delia or Delilah Johnson, who served as an early missionary for the A.M.E. Church, played a pivotal role in establishing the church at Cross Roads, working with a black Evesham resident named Robert Evans. Johnson and Evans also labored to gather a congregation in Mount Holly.³⁴ An 1877 newspaper article stated that she traveled the countryside of South Jersey to declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all and the advantages of the A.M.E. denomination to many black residents. Known as "Aunt Delia," she lived for almost 100 years before dying in December 1876 in Mount Holly. Delia Johnson was someone "...who sixty years ago went in the hills, valley, plains and woods in pursuit of sinners and was the means of rearing churches in Mt. Holly, Burlington, Mt. Laurel [originally Evesham], Snowhill, Jordantown, Milford and Shemning [Shamong]."³⁵ Of these enumerated churches that Delia Johnson assisted in founding, only Jordantown, located in current-day Pennsauken Township, and Snow Hill, now Lawnside Borough, stand outside of Burlington County in Camden County.

Dr. James Still, writing in his autobiographical volume, records an event in his life during 1838 after he had lost his first wife: "I kept a bachelor's hall most of the time, or until late in the fall, when I let an old lady, by the name of Delilah Johnson, move in with me, and also Charles Lopeman. We succeeded very well together until spring."³⁶ Dr. Still, whose mother had been a very strong adherent of Methodism, experienced his own moment of spiritual deliverance along the road to his father's house during the same month he lost his first wife, Angelina, who died in August 1838.³⁷ It appears Delia Johnson was born sometime during the American War for Independence, so when she arrived at Dr. Still's house to stay, she was approximately 60 years old. The Charles Lopeman mentioned by Dr. Still was a young man of 22

³¹ Payne, *History*, 33.

³² Joseph H. Morgan. *History of the New Jersey Conference of the A.M.E. Church, from 1872 to 1887...*, Camden: S.Chew, Printer, 1887, 70.

³³ Payne, *History*, 44.

³⁴ Morgan, *History*, 70, 82.

³⁵ Rev. George A. Mills. Letter to the Editor, published in the 25 January edition of *The Christian Recorder*, microform edition, Philadelphia: *The Christian Recorder*, 1877, 1.

³⁶ James Still. *Early Recollections and Life of Dr. James Still*, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1877, 66.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 62-65.

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when he came to stay at the Still house with Delia Johnson. He not only served as an assistant and aide for Miss Johnson, but also worked as a missionary in his own right at that time. Within two or three years of staying with Dr. Still, Lopeman married and settled down in the area of Cross Roads in Evesham Township (later known as Medford Township, beginning in 1847).³⁸

Although the church may have initially begun in members' homes, it is probable the congregation soon started meeting on Sundays at the Brace Road School, an early 19th-century, one-room schoolhouse located within the hamlet of Cross Roads. Dr. Still records a similar use of a school for church meetings from his childhood during the early 1820s:

I must have been now about eleven years old.... I had a great love for truthfulness, and was very fearful of the devil and ghosts, particularly at night. I was also afraid of Indian Job. He was a tall man, I think six feet and six inches high. He would often get drunk, and go whooping about in Indian fashion, which was a great terror to me. Job was killed finally. I recollect one night that his [Job's] son and myself went to meeting, and as we were standing outside of the door we heard a shrill shout, which seemed to come from the graveyard where old Job was buried. Young Job said to me, 'That's daddy.' ...I trembled in every muscle and sweat from every pore. We went into the meeting-house, and I watched the door and windows, expecting to see old Job enter, but he did not come.

...My father sent me to the same school-house where the meeting had been held another time—in the evening—to get the master's spectacles. I had to obey him, not daring to say no, lest he would manifest his love to me in the Scriptural fashion I before spoke of, so I went along with my heart rising in my throat. When I came to the door I stopped to listen for a moment, to see if all was right. Hearing nothing, I made a rush at the door with the key in my hand, unlocked it, pushed it open, flew to the desk, seized the spectacles, ran out of the house, and started for home. ...I mention these things that my younger readers may see that untrained imagination will lead one from the right way.³⁹

The schoolhouse in the text above from Dr. James Still's autobiography is undoubtedly the Hartford Friends School, located on Stokes Road. The Upper Evesham Preparative Meeting, the Quaker meeting in Medford Village, purchased three acres of land along Stokes Road near Schoolhouse Lane in 1805 to establish a school and a burial ground.⁴⁰ The circumstances described, however—specifically the use of school buildings for religious meetings—occurred in numerous other localities across Burlington County. Since "Aunt Delia" Johnson's work led to the establishment of an A.M.E. church in Shamong, this is likely the congregation with which the Still family worshiped.

Further evidence of the A.M.E. congregation at Cross Roads can be found in Thomas F. Gordon's 1834 work, *A Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey*, in which a description of the settlement appears: "Cross

³⁸ United States Census Bureau. Seventh Decennial Census, microform edition, Medford Township, Burlington County, New Jersey, roll M432-444, 1850, 453A. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.

³⁹ Still, *Early Recollections*, 22, 23-24.

⁴⁰ George Flemming. *Brotherton*. Medford: Plexus Publishing, 2005, 139-140.

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Roads, hamlet of Evesham t-ship, Burlington co., 8 miles S. from Mount Holly; contains a tavern, a store, a Methodist church, and 8 or 10 dwellings; soil, sandy loam.”⁴¹ Throughout his gazetteer, Gordon does not distinguish A.M.E. churches from other types of Methodist churches. Furthermore, just over a mile away, a regular Methodist Episcopal edifice stood in Medford village on Branch Street by the late 1820s.⁴² Since Gordon lists a Methodist church and not a schoolhouse at Cross Roads, it is probable that either he misinterpreted the building’s use during his reconnaissance through the community or someone in the hamlet told him it was the meeting place for the A.M.E. or “colored Methodist” church.

It is not surprising that the founding of the first A.M.E. church in Burlington County occurred in Evesham. In the earliest federal decennial census records available for New Jersey (1830), Evesham Township contained far more blacks than any other municipality in the county. During that same census, the enumerator recorded 194 African Americans residing in a total of 46 households. Within 10 years, the total number of blacks living in Evesham had dramatically increased to 355. Only the City of Burlington contained a number approaching Evesham, with the canvasser identifying 327 blacks living in the city during 1840.⁴³ The continuing presence of Quakers in Evesham Township likely contributed to the feeling of a safe haven that some blacks held concerning the township. Prominent Quakers residing in Evesham Township, including members of the Evans and the Darnell families, provided the local African Americans with food, shelter, and paying work.

In his work on the A.M.E. Church in New Jersey, Joseph Morgan, writing in 1887 about the congregation in Evesham, notes, “The following have been Pastors. 1827-28-29-30, -;” meaning the name or names of the pastor, if any, serving at during that time period was unknown.⁴⁴ The earliest pastor of record for the Cross Roads A.M.E. Church was Noah Cannon, who served the congregation in at least 1831-32.⁴⁵ In 1826, Morgan records Cannon’s primary preaching station as Mount Moriah, then located near Mount Holly. Cannon presumably traveled to Cross Roads after completing services at Mount Moriah.⁴⁶ Although Morgan does not list Cannon as the official pastor at Cross Roads prior to 1831, he probably served that congregation as soon after building the original Mount Moriah church as feasible. Prior to the founding of the Mount Holly church, local preachers (denominational deacons), local lay people, or a circuit rider likely provided religious service to the Cross Roads faithful. Beginning in 1831, the bishop of the A.M.E. Philadelphia Annual Conference created a three-point circuit for the pastor of Mount Moriah, which included the Bethlehem A.M.E. Church in Burlington and Cross Roads as part of his responsibilities.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Thomas F. Gordon. *Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey...*, Trenton: D. Fenton, 1834, 124.

⁴² Helen W. Johnson. “Houses of Worship.” Published in *Medford: Pioneering Township*, Medford: Medford Historical Society, 1975, 120.

⁴³ Ernest Lyght. *Path of Freedom: The Black Presence in New Jersey's Burlington County, 1659-1900*. Cherry Hill: E&E Publishing House, 1978, 43-44, 47.

⁴⁴ Morgan, *History*, 70.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 70, 82.

⁴⁷ Morgan, *History*, 65, 70, 82.

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The Reverend John Cornish followed Noah Cannon at Mount Holly, Burlington, and Cross Roads, serving all three churches for the years 1833-34. Pastor William Moore arrived as the minister for the trio of congregations in 1835 and served through 1836, after which the bishop assigned John Boggs for the year 1837.⁴⁸ Following the Reverend Boggs, it appears the next pastor provided to the three-point circuit would play an important role in the history of the Cross Roads church. The Philadelphia Conference bishop appointed the Reverend John C. Spence to the pastorate of the Burlington, Mount Holly, and Cross Roads congregations beginning in 1838.⁴⁹ At about the same time, the Evesham church reported 39 members.⁵⁰ Many of these members and unaffiliated congregants lived near a prominence known variously as Penny Hill, Evesham Mount, Evans Mount, or Mount Pray, located approximately three miles west of Cross Roads.⁵¹ For every worship service or other church event held at Cross Roads, the congregants from the mount area would travel that distance in each direction as they trekked to and from the Brace Road School. These settlements near the mount included Colemantown, Little Texas, and Petersburg.

The Founding of Colemantown

Colemantown was the oldest black community in present-day Mount Laurel Township. This antebellum hamlet once stood along Elbo Lane east of Mount Laurel Road.⁵² The earliest black landowners here included Charles Coleman, who purchased one and one-half acres along the north side of Elbo Lane from local Quaker farmer Edmund Darnell on 25 January 1828 for \$30.00.⁵³ On the same date, Darnell sold an adjoining one and one-half-acre lot to Edward Wilson, "a colored man," for the same price.⁵⁴ It was Charles Coleman who lent his surname to the settlement. Some sources indicate the founder of the settlement as a John Coleman, but this misinformation can be singularly traced back to the work of Major E.M. Woodward. Writing in his 1883 history of Burlington County, Woodward states, in part, "Colemantown, named in honor of John Coleman, a pioneer and, when living, a prominent man of the place, is a small hamlet at the four corners, half a mile south of Mount Laurel."⁵⁵ Typical of the 19th-century racial bias found in local and county histories, Woodward never mentioned that Colemantown comprised a black community. No evidence has been found in the documentary record, including searches of deeds and census schedules, to associate a John Coleman with Colemantown. Charles Coleman and Edward Wilson likely erected small frame dwellings on the land they had purchased and

⁴⁸ Morgan, *History*, 70, 82.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Anonymous. "Sketch of Churches and Ecclesiastical Organizations among the People of Color." Published in the 14 October edition of *The Colored American*, microform edition. New York: Robert Sears, 1837, Unpaginated, [2].

⁵¹ Harry Marvin and Charles S. Boyer. "Penny Hill." Published in the July edition of the *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*. Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1934, 177.

⁵² J.W. Otley and R. Whiteford. *Map of Burlington County*. Philadelphia: Smith & Wistar, 1849.

⁵³ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book W2. Mount Holly, 1828, 198.

⁵⁴ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book W2. Mount Holly, 1828, 199.

⁵⁵ E.M. Woodward and John F. Hageman. *History of Burlington and Mercer Counties, New Jersey....* Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1883, 373.

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leased the houses out to both area black residents and new arrivals at the settlement. The nascent settlement presumably comprised a group of either local manumitted slaves or the free-black progeny of those same slaves, along with a number of runaways—both single and families—who arrived from southern states, primarily Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

Black settlements such as Colemantown became possible due to the passage of the New Jersey 1804 Gradual Abolition Act. African American historian Clement Price noted, “This law provided that children born of slaves after July 4, 1804 were to be free, with such offspring becoming servants of the owner of the mother until the age of twenty-five for males and twenty-one for females.”⁵⁶ So, theoretically, many more free African Americans would be living across the Jersey landscape during the mid to late 1820s as a result of this law. It is likely the nexus of more free blacks from the 1804 law and the beginning phase of the migration of fugitive slaves from south to north that brought about the creation of discrete black enclaves strung across South Jersey.

The Colemantown Meeting House

After purchasing 1.5 acres of land in Colemantown during 1828, Edward Wilson relocated to Philadelphia by September 1831 and during that month and year, he sold the 1.5-acre lot he had acquired from Edmund Darnell to patent-medicine manufacturer William Swaim of Philadelphia for \$150.⁵⁷ The text of the deed includes the following passage: “all that lot of land and buildings thereon erected.” Swaim remained tenured in the land and unknown buildings for over six years before selling it to “Charles C. Green of Moorestown...farmer” for \$200 on 13 April 1837.⁵⁸ Green is known as someone who participated in the founding of the Mount Moriah A.M.E. Church in Mount Holly along with Wardell Parker, brother of “King” David Parker, of Timbuctoo.⁵⁹

It appears Green sought to foster growth and a relocation of the Cross Roads A.M.E. congregation to Colemantown with this land purchase from Swaim. At this time (1837), the Evesham A.M.E. congregation comprised 39 members.⁶⁰ On 15 June 1840, Green sold 0.06 acres from that 1.5-acre parcel to “...Charles Coleman, William Basset, Henry A. Wilson, Stephen Johnson, & William Muse trustees in trust...” for the nominal amount of \$4.00.⁶¹ The land Green conveyed to these trustees evidently contained no buildings, as the text of the deed contains the following passage: “Together with all and singular the woods, ways, waters, privileges, and appurtenances thereto belonging or in any wise appertaining...[to the] described lot or piece of land...”⁶²

⁵⁶ Clement Alexander Price. *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey*. Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1980, 80.

⁵⁷ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book B3, 615.

⁵⁸ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book Q3, 188.

⁵⁹ Lyght, *Path of Freedom*, 65; Morgan, *History*, 82.

⁶⁰ Anon. “Sketch of Churches...”

⁶¹ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book Y3. Mount Holly, 1840, 344. Timbuctoo was another early African American settlement in Burlington County, begun about 1824.

⁶² *Ibid.*

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The indenture continues by requiring that the trustees "...have erected or cause to be built thereon a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."⁶³ The deed then set the rules for the trustees to function, established a mechanism for the election of successive trustees, and restricted the trustees from using the land and building for anything other than what Green intended:

[to] use occupy or set a part for any purpose whatever the house built on the lot of land herein before mentioned and described except as a place of worship for the members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church or for the purpose of having a school taught therein, that then and from thenceforth this present indenture shall become null and void to all intents and purposes whatsoever, anything herein before contained to the contrary thereof notwithstanding.⁶⁴

The A.M.E. Church referenced in the above deed had already taken a step to more formally organize. The congregation held a special meeting following sacred services on 13 March 1840 with either Benjamin Buckman, a local justice of the peace who later served as the Burlington County Surrogate, or Pastor John C. Spence taking down the minutes of the meeting. The document serves as a *de facto* certificate of incorporation for the congregants, forming "The African Methodist Episcopal Church of Mount Zion." The Rev. John C. Spence served as chairman of the meeting, with Samuel Still fulfilling the role of secretary and Charles Coleman as treasurer. The first board of trustees consisted of Thomas Gross, Stephen Johnson, Joshua Smith, Henry A. Wilson, and William Muse.⁶⁵

For some unknown reason, the pastor and/or the trustees did not record this document at the county clerk's office until 21 October 1840. This delay might suggest that the congregation did not complete the relocation of their meeting place to Colemantown until the fall of 1840. A second page of the document records a series of three affirmations for the trustees, consisting of an affirmation of allegiance to the government of the State of New Jersey; an affirmation to support the Constitution of the United States; and affirmation that the trustees would "...faithfully, fairly, and impartially execute the trust reposed..." in them to the best of their "...abilities and understanding."⁶⁶ Although the Mount Zion A.M.E. Church shared some of its newly elected trustees with the trusteeship established in the 15 June 1840 deed from Charles C. Green, including Stephen Johnson, Henry A. Wilson, and William Muse, the two bodies of trustees were separate and distinct. The trusteeship in Green's document came to be known as the Colemantown Meeting House, an unincorporated association, while the Mount Zion trustees held a trust from the congregation of a specific church body.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book Y3, 509.

⁶⁶ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book Y3., 509.

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Charles C. Green charged his trustees that "...they have erected or cause to be built thereon a house or place of Worship for the use of the members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church..."⁶⁷ This building would become known as the Colemantown Meeting House, with the term "meeting house" used during the period to designate a place of worship for several different Protestant denominations, including Methodist. The completed building would be the property and responsibility of the trustees named by Charles C. Green. Whether the building already stood on the property or the trustees relocated it from somewhere else or they constructed it new is currently unknown, but it was likely ready for use as a church by sometime in 1840 and certainly in October of that year. The above-noted reversionary clause in Green's 1840 deed, requiring that the building always be used as an A.M.E. church or as a school,⁶⁸ would make it likely that the Mount Zion congregation used the building on Sundays and on other days as directed by the pastor, but that during the weekdays local black children attended school there. The 1849 Otley and Whiteford map of Burlington County locates with a small square the Colemantown Meeting House on the north side of Elbo Lane and labels it a "school."⁶⁹

Physical evidence further supports a schoolhouse theory of this building's origin. In his analytical article on historic New Jersey schoolhouses, architectural historian Robert W. Craig discusses the sizes and shapes of early 19th-century schools. He notes:

The shape of early schoolhouses took various forms....There is some evidence that many favored a square plan for schoolhouses, based on descriptions that survive. Such schools ranged from 16x16 feet to 24x24 feet, and 20x20 feet may have been the most common size. The original part of the old Franklin School in Metuchen (ca.1807, expanded ca.1840; HABS NJ-226) originally featured a square 20x20-foot schoolroom.⁷⁰

The original section of the Colemantown Meeting House measures approximately 20x20 feet, strongly suggesting the building first served as a schoolhouse. No other building type in early New Jersey is known have commonly employed the same size footprint.⁷¹ The original site of the specific schoolhouse that may have been moved to Colemantown has not yet been determined. Before 1840, schools stood adjacent to the village of Mount Laurel near the intersection of Moorestown-Mount Laurel Road and Hainesport-Mount Laurel Road. The Colemantown Meeting House could also have been the earliest building erected as the Brace Road School, which, perhaps, became surplus when the township constructed a new building. It is interesting to note, however, how closely the original section of the Colemantown Meeting House resembles the Carpenter Street Schoolhouse in Woodbury, built in 1840 and currently the oldest, purpose-built, African American school in New Jersey. Not only are the overall

⁶⁷ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book Y3. Mount Holly, 1840, 344.

⁶⁸ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book Y3. Mount Holly, 1840, 344.

⁶⁹ Otley and Whiteford, *Map of Burlington County*.

⁷⁰ Robert W. Craig. *New Jersey's Public School Buildings: A Brief Field Guide*. [New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, Trenton, New Jersey], n.d., 2.

⁷¹ Robert W. Craig, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, personal communication.

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dimensions and appearance very similar, but each building features a diamond window in the gable over the front entrance [probably a shared, 19th-century alteration].

Following the relocation of the Cross Roads congregation to Colemantown, the A.M.E. Bishop for the Philadelphia district moved John C. Spence to another church, replacing him on the Burlington Circuit with Israel Scott for 1842-43. John Boggs followed for the year 1844 and Henry Davis for 1845. Israel Scott returned to the Burlington Circuit for 1845-46 but, in the latter year, Thomas Oliver joined with Scott in serving the circuit churches, including the growing congregation at Colemantown. The Rev. George Grinly rode the circuit in 1847, Clayton Durham and John Henson during 1848, and Clayton Durham alone in 1849. George Grinly returned in 1850, serving in partnership with Andrew Till. In 1851-52, the bishop assigned Pastor Isaac B. Parker to the Burlington Circuit.⁷² No further mention of a Methodist church in Cross Roads has been found.

The Founding of Colemantown Colored Cemetery

On 17 November 1849, William Hillman, a native of New Jersey then living in Philadelphia and serving as the white superintendent of the Shelter for Colored Orphans in that city, sold five and three-tenths acres of land on the south side of Stacy Haines Road (Elbo Lane) to Thomas Salter, "a colored man," for \$300.^{73,74} A group of Quakers who had formed the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans (ACCO) in 1822 established the shelter to offer a full array of services to their unfortunate charges, including living accommodations, meals, personal hygiene and medical care, education, and, at a proper age, an apprenticeship program to promote the teenaged residents into the workforce.⁷⁵ Hillman, also a Quaker, had purchased this land on 21 November 1842 from an African American named Charles P. Gibson for \$330, who acquired the 5.3 acres from William Johnson, another black man, on 17 February 1840.^{76,77} At this time, Gibson resided in a hamlet named Owlton, which extended along Greentree Road east of Springdale Road in present-day Cherry Hill Township. At the time Salter purchased the land from Hillman, the 1849 Otley and Whiteford map depicts approximately nine houses in Colemantown.

Almost two years after he purchased the 5.3-acre tract, Thomas Salter sold almost an acre (0.98) of the same property on 25 October 1851 for \$40 to Charles C. Green, William Gray, Thomas Gross, Charles Coleman, and Robert Davis, trustees, as the site of a burial ground or house of worship for members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.⁷⁸ Salter's sale of the land to Charles Green and the other trustees led to the creation of the Colemantown Colored (or Negro) Cemetery on the parcel. As reported

⁷² Morgan, *History*, 70.

⁷³ United States Census Bureau. Seventh Decennial Census, microform edition, City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, roll M432-819, 1850, 153A. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.

⁷⁴ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book X4. Mount Holly, 1849, 459.

⁷⁵ Anonymous. "For the National Gazette. Coloured Orphans." Published in the 4 November edition of the *National Gazette*, microform edition. Philadelphia: *National Gazette*, 1824, 4.

⁷⁶ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book D4, 338.

⁷⁷ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book W3, 513.

⁷⁸ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book E5, 444.

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above, trustee Thomas Gross also served as a trustee of Mount Zion A.M.E. Church and community founder Charles Coleman also served as a trustee of the Colemantown Meeting House. The oldest known burial in the cemetery, based on grave markers, was Eliza Green, who died on 11 April 1849. Since her death date predates the founding of the cemetery by one and one-half years, it suggests that Hillman intended for a portion of the tract he conveyed to Thomas Salter to be used as a black cemetery. On the same day as Salter's deed to Charles Green and the other trustees for the cemetery, William Hillman executed a quitclaim deed on the property conveyed because he held Salter's mortgage from the land transaction in 1849. This indenture was necessary to provide the 0.98-acre parcel with an unclouded title.⁷⁹ During May 1858, Salter sold a house and one-quarter-acre lot to Susan Tillman adjacent to the east side of the "colored peoples burying ground" for \$18.00.⁸⁰

The 1858 Burlington County map by Parry, Sykes, and Earl labels the building on the north side of Elbo Lane as a "Colored M.H." or "meeting house."⁸¹ The map also depicts the cemetery on the south side of Elbo Lane across from the meeting house, labeling it as a "Bur. Ground." Two years later, the Lake and Beers map of Philadelphia and vicinity clearly identifies all of the landowners in Colemantown and labels the building on the north side of Elbo Lane as an "African Ch[urch]" and the burial ground on the south side of the road as a "Cem."⁸² The Lake and Beers map also depicts approximately 13 dwellings in Colemantown; *circa* 6 houses in Petersburg; and 10 or 11 homes in Little Texas. All of these black enclaves, as well as the other African American hamlets in the general area, provided potential congregants for the A.M.E. church at Colemantown; the deceased from these settlements were probably interred at the Colemantown Colored Cemetery. Notables buried in this cemetery include members of the Still family, including Dr. James Still, the so-called "Black Doctor of the Pines," whose office building still stands along the north side of Church Road in the Cross Roads section of present-day Medford Township. Many other families associated with Colemantown can also be found interred in the cemetery along with a number of veterans who lie in repose at Colemantown.

Bishopric pastoral assignments to the Burlington Circuit continued with the Rev. Shepherd Holcomb serving in 1853-54. Pastor George W. Johnson succeeded Holcomb, serving on;y during 1855. John Butler received the next assignment to the circuit, including Evesham, serving in 1856. The Rev. Holcomb returned to the circuit flocks for 1857-58, followed by Joshua Woodlin, who filled the pulpits for 1859. Henry Davis returned for the year 1860 after which year Joseph H. Smith became circuit pastor for 1861-62. During the remainder of the Civil War years (1862-65), Theodore Gould shepherded the circuit flocks, including Colemantown.⁸³

The Building of Jacob's Chapel Church

⁷⁹ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book E5. Mount Holly, 1851, 470.

⁸⁰ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book H6. Mount Holly, 1858, 117.

⁸¹ William Parry, George Sykes and F.W. Earl. *New Map of Burlington County*. [Philadelphia]: R.K. Kuhn and J.D. Janney, 1858.

⁸² D.J. Lake and S.N. Beers. *Map of the Vicinity of Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: J.E. Gillette & Company, 1860.

⁸³ Morgan, *History*, 70-71.

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During August 1863, Evesham church hosted the Burlington Circuit's Quarterly Conference. The diminutive Colemantown Meeting House could not hold the crowd that attended. The Rev. Theodore Gould reported,

MR. EDITOR: Our Quarterly Meeting came off at Evesham, on Sabbath, the 2d day of August. The people congregated from all parts of the country, for several miles in distance, until the house was filled to its utmost capacity. Seats were prepared outside, and they were filled, and yet they came until there were more outside of the house than in. Our love feast commenced at nine o'clock, and we had a good time. After breaking bread and drinking water, numbers testified of the hope they had in Christ. At eleven o'clock public preaching commenced, after which the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered, and we felt the gentle dews of heaven distilling upon us. A large number communed, while they partook of the emblems, by faith they seemed to drink from the living fountain of life for many were the hearty amens and hallelujahs to God...

Pray for us, that the good Lord will continue his blessing on the church in this place.

T. GOULD

Evesham, August 10th, 1863.⁸⁴

The following month, Pastor Gould placed a notice in *The Christian Recorder* for a planned Sabbath School outing:

NOTICE.

The A.M.E. Sabbath School of Evesham propose going out on an excursion in the woods, on Thursday, Sept. 24th. Dinner will be prepared in the woods for the accommodation of all present. The neighboring schools are invited to participate with them on the occasion. Addresses will be delivered on the occasion by Rev. J.P. Campbell and others. Come one, come all. The proceeds are for the raising of funds to build a new church in that place.

T. Gould. *Minister in charge*.⁸⁵

This excursion notice provides the first indication that the Evesham congregation had seriously deliberated about the construction of a new edifice on the land of the Colemantown Colored Cemetery, as provided for in the trusteeship associated with the cemetery. In May 1865, the Rev. Gould placed another notice in *The Christian Recorder*:

NOTICE.

The Lord willing, the corner stone of the new A.M.E. Church at Eversham [*sic*], New Jersey, will be laid on Thursday, the 18th day of May, 1865, exercises to commence at 2 o'clock, P.M. Bishop Wayman and other prominent ministers of the gospel are expected to be present on the occasion. An invitation is extended to all the lovers of the cause of Christ, to come and participate in the ceremonies and assist us with their means. We would like to raise \$100 on the occasion.

T. Gould.

⁸⁴ Theodore Gould. "Good News from the Burlington Circuit." Published in the 15 August edition of *The Christian Recorder*, microform edition, Philadelphia: *The Christian Recorder*, 1863, 130.

⁸⁵ T. Gould. "Notice." Published in the 19 September edition of *The Christian Recorder*, 1863, 150.

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Minister in Charge.⁸⁶

In October of the same year, the Rev. Thomas Clement Oliver passed through Colemantown while on a tour of Evesham and Mount Holly. Oliver reported,

A VISIT TO MOUNT HOLLY.

Mr. Editor: —Having some leisure moments, and having just returned from a very agreeable tour to Eversham [*sic*] and Mt. Holly, two of the appointments embraced in the Rev. T. Gould's circuit, I could not allow myself to be so stupid and indifferent as to say nothing of the improvements which the people there are making, under the good management of Brother Gould.

On Friday, I visited Eversham, and there found the foundation laid for a new meeting house, — dimensions, 26 x 36. Some of the lumber is already on the ground, and preparations for immediate operations going on. With the blessing of God, you may expect soon to hear good news from that quarter.

T.C.O.⁸⁷

While writing a chapter on Theodore Gould, historian Joseph Morgan echoes Oliver's observations by stating, "At Evesham the foundation and corner-stone of a new church were laid. The lumber was nearly all on the ground and paid for and the money in the treasury with which to pay the carpenters."⁸⁸

In June 1865, the Philadelphia District of the A.M.E. church held its annual conference. The changes in church and circuit assignments at that conference included a reassignment of Theodore Gould from Burlington Circuit, and his replacement with Jacob Mitchell. In July 1866, the Rev. Mitchell placed a notice in *The Christian Recorder* concerning a camp meeting at Evesham:

CAMP MEETING.

A union camp meeting will be held in Samuel Evans' woods, near the Eversham [*sic*] church, the place where the Sabbath School anniversary has been formerly held, on the third Friday in August, for the benefit of the new church, which is about to be built. We hope the friends will favor us with their presence. There will be no selling within two miles of the camp.

Bishop Wayman, Revs. W.W. Grimes, M.F. Sluby, James Lynch, and others, will be present.

For sixty cents, the Eversham stage, at the Arch Street Ferry, Camden, N.J., will convey those desiring to attend to the camp.

COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

William Muse, John Thompson, Jefferson Johnson, Charles Green, William Roberts, Jas. Winder, Stephen Johnson, Charles Lopemaine, Robert Davis.

JACOB M. MITCHELL, Pastor.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ T. Gould. "Notice." Published in the 6 May edition of *The Christian Recorder*, 1865, 71.

⁸⁷ Thomas C. Oliver. "A Visit to Mount Holly." Published in the 7 October edition of *The Christian Recorder*, 1865, 157-158.

⁸⁸ Morgan, *History*, 28.

⁸⁹ Jacob Mitchell. "Camp Meeting." Published in the 21 July edition of *The Christian Recorder*, 1866, 115.

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A short paragraph in the 25 August 1866 edition of the same newspaper reported, "We learn that Rev. Jacob Mitchell's [*sic*] camp meeting at Eversham, N.J., was very largely attended by all classes of persons."⁹⁰

Apparently little new work was accomplished on the new church, beyond completing the foundation and stockpiling of lumber during late 1865 and throughout the first six months of 1866, until Pastor Mitchell arrived to serve the circuit's congregations. It appears he took it as a personal charge to see the construction work quickly completed. By the end of July 1866, workers had erected enough of the building that it could accommodate the Burlington Circuit's Quarterly Meeting. Jacob Mitchell reported on the second Quarterly Meeting in November 1866:

QUARTERLY MEETING AT EVESHAM, NEW JERSEY.

MR.EDITOR: —I wish to inform your numerous readers that we held our second Quarterly Meeting in the new church at Evesham, NJ, and the presence of the Lord was made manifest in the conversion of five souls, and the adding of forty-seven persons to our church membership and the work is still going on. ...May the good Lord bless the dear people. I am going to leave for home on Thursday, and shall go with a happy heart.
JACOB M. MITCHELL, *Pastor*.⁹¹

During 1867, the Rev. Mitchell advertised Quarterly Meetings and summer camp meetings at Evesham. Bishop Alexander W. Wayman published his upcoming schedule of appearances in the 7 September edition of *The Christian Recorder*. The listings included "Sunday, Sept. 29th, dedication, Eversham [*sic*], NJ."⁹² A week later, Jacob Mitchell placed the following notice:

NOTICE.—

The dedication of the new church at Eversham [*sic*], Mount, NJ, will take place on Sunday, September 29th, and the Quarterly Meeting will be held the same day. Quarterly Conference on the 28th commences at 12 o'clock PM. All the members are requested to be present. We invite our friends to come and pay us a visit. A very little aid will clear us of debt. Bishop Wayman, Rev. W. Moore, and other will be present.
Rev. JACOB MITCHELL, pastor.
September 14. —3t.⁹³

Still basking in the glow of achieving success in completing the new church at Colemantown, the Rev. Jacob Mitchell dispatched the following letter to the editor of *The Christian Reporter*:

LETTER FROM REV. J.M. MITCHELL.—

BRO. EDITOR: —Knowing how you feel toward everything that has a tendency to promote the cause of religion, I feel it my duty to inform you, and through you the people, as it may be of

⁹⁰ Published in the 25 August edition of *The Christian Recorder*, 1866, 134.

⁹¹ "Jacob Mitchell. "Quarterly Meeting at Evesham, New Jersey." Published in the 3 November edition of *The Christian Recorder*, 1866, 175.

⁹² Bishop Wayman. "Special Notice." Published in the 7 September edition of *The Christian Recorder*, 1867, 142.

⁹³ Jacob Mitchell. "Notice." Published in the 14 September edition of *The Christian Recorder*, 1867, 147.

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interest to the many readers of the *Christian Recorder*, and more especially to the members of the A.M.E. Church, to learn the condition of our church at Evesham. We commenced building in June 1866, and on last Sabbath, Sept. 29th, 1867, it was dedicated. It costs us fifteen hundred dollars, and we have paid the last cent we owe. We return great thanks to our noble sisters for the energetic labor they manifested in helping us out of debt. Sisters Eliza Johnson, Susan Tillman, and Mary White, deserve great credit for what they have done. This is thirteen churches I have built, and I feel, through God, that I could build thirteen more if I had the strength. I have done in fifteen months what others have been trying to do in twelve years.⁹⁴

With the new church completed and being used for worship, the role of the separate Colemantown Meeting House in everyday community life likely diminished and returned to primarily serving as a school and, perhaps a fellowship hall for those who attended the church. On 7 March 1872, the New Jersey State Legislature erected Mount Laurel Township out of Old Evesham Township. Colemantown residents could be numbered among the population of the new municipality.⁹⁵

In June 1873, Charles Green, now 71 and the last surviving original trustee of the Colemantown Meeting House, decided it was time to pass the mantle of trusteeship to the next generation. Green retained the services of a local commissioner to draft an instrument to accomplish the transference of the trusteeship:

Instrument
This Deed

Made This 14th Day of june
In year of 1873

Between the Great Chas. Green party of the First part, Trustee of Colemantown Meeting House to Second Party

William Muse, David Gaines, Henry Lucis [Lukins], Sammy Johnson Trustees

Witnesseth That the said Party of First part in consideration one Dollar lawful money of united states and other goods By the party of the Second paid to First part in Full The first part Does Hereby Grant and Release To said party of second party and their Heirs and assigns forever all [that] certain lot piece or parcel of Land situate in Mt. Laurel New Jersey known as Colemantown. Tract in width front 45 on north side Colemantown Road, Depth 60 feet at one End 12 feet other End.

With appurtenances and all the estate and right of said party of First part in and for said premises to have and to Hold the same Granted premises unto the said party of second part their heirs and assigns forever.

George Ke???ser
Samuel Stephenson
Edmund S. Jones
Witnesses

x John Green

?????? ??????

Signed, Sealed Deliver
In the presence of and

⁹⁴ Jacob Mitchell. "Letter to the Editor." Published in the 12 October edition of *The Christian Recorder*, 1867, 162.

⁹⁵ John P. Snyder. *The Story of New Jersey's Civil Boundaries*. Trenton: Bureau of Geology and Topography, 1969, 97.

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Attested By
???? ???nis commissione[r]⁹⁶

Only a photocopy of this unrecorded document exists today in the files of the church and it was never recorded with the Burlington County Clerk's Office. While many people have examined and misunderstood this document as being from a much earlier period, it is clearly not dated "1813." There is a slight horizontal line coming off the top of the vertical stroke and extending to the left that actually renders the date 1873. There are several passages within the document itself that refute the presumed 1813 date and confirm the 1873 date:

1. The document specifically references the toponym "Mount Laurel," which is a place name that never existed prior to *circa* 1845, and certainly had never been spoken or thought of in 1813;⁹⁷ the New Jersey State Legislature erected Mount Laurel as a separate township out of Evesham Township in 1872;⁹⁸
2. The document specifically references "Colemantown." No known evidence currently exists to support the conclusion that the "Colemantown" place name predates—by some 15 years—Charles Coleman's 1828 purchase of his first parcel of land in the area;⁹⁹
3. The 1860 and 1870 federal decennial census for Evesham Township, Burlington County, New Jersey records the following birth years for the men listed as the new class of trustees:
 - a. William Muse, born 1848¹⁰⁰
 - b. David Gaines, born 1842¹⁰¹
 - c. Henry Lucis [Lukins], born 1820¹⁰²
 - d. Samuel Johnson, born 1813¹⁰³
 - e. Charles C. Green, born 1802¹⁰⁴

It is possible that one or two of these men, as parties of the second part, may be juniors of their father, *e.g.*, William Muse, but certainly not all four of them together in this one group of men. Furthermore, the most crucial piece of evidence is Charles C. Green and his birth year. Green was a major mover and shaker in Colemantown and in the Colemantown Meeting House and it is doubtful that he would have signed such a document at the age of 10 or, at that age, would be called "the Great Charles C. Green" by

⁹⁶ Charles C. Green. Instrument. On file, Mount Laurel: Jacob's Chapel, Inc., 1873.
⁹⁷ William R. Lippincott. *Traditions of Old Evesham Township...*, Moorestown: Moorestown Republican, 1911, 4.
⁹⁸ Snyder. *The Story of New Jersey's Civil Boundaries*, 97.
⁹⁹ Burlington County Clerk's Office, Burlington County Deed Book W2. Mount Holly, 1828, 198.
¹⁰⁰ United States Census Bureau. Ninth Decennial Census, microform edition, Evesham Township, Burlington County, New Jersey, roll M593-854, 1870, 339B. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.
¹⁰¹ United States Census Bureau. Eighth Decennial Census, microform edition, Evesham Township, Burlington County, New Jersey, roll M653-685, 1860, 1089. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.
¹⁰² United States Census Bureau. Ninth Decennial Census, microform edition, Evesham Township, Burlington County, New Jersey, roll M593-854, 1870, 335A. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.
¹⁰³ United States Census Bureau. Ninth Decennial Census, microform edition, Evesham Township, Burlington County, New Jersey, roll M593-854, 1870, 334A. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.
¹⁰⁴ United States Census Bureau. Eighth Decennial Census, microform edition, Evesham Township, Burlington County, New Jersey, roll M653-685, 1860, 1096. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.

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the person who prepared the instrument. Subsequent to being a signatory to this deed, Green left Colemantown for the Germantown section of Philadelphia, where he died.¹⁰⁵

The crude handwriting and somewhat simplified text in this 1873 document fulfill several purposes. Charles C. Green structured the 1840 deed as a usufruct, retaining a right of reversion if the property ever ceased to be used as an A.M.E. church or a school. In the 1873 deed, Green "...Does Hereby Grant and Release to said party of second part and their Heirs and assigns forever all certain lot piece or parcel of Land..." thereby vesting all of the rights and privileges associated with the land in the new trustees and forever removing the reversionary clause of the 1840 deed. The measurements delineated in the 1873 deed are 45 feet frontage, 60-foot side to the east, and 12-foot to the west. This equals 2,700 square feet or 0.06 acres, the exact amount of land conveyed in the 1840 deed. The 1873 deed also represents a transference of the trusteeship in the Colemantown Meeting House from the old generation—Green—to the next generation: Muse, Gaines, Lucis [Lukins], and Johnson. This might be why Green and/or the other trustees did not go to the trouble of having this document recorded at the county clerk's office. Green had reached the age of 71 and he felt the time to transfer the trusteeship had arrived.

At some point after 1867, but prior to the turn of the 20th century, the Evesham/Mount Laurel A.M.E. Church became known as "Jacob's Chapel," the most obvious inference being that it was named for the Rev. Jacob Mitchell who completed construction of the edifice. The earliest published source identified for naming it "Jacob's Chapel" is an 1894 Moorestown city directory. The 1900 edition of the same directory contains the following listing:

JACOB'S CHAPEL, MT. LAUREL. (Methodist.)
(Colored.)

Pastor—Charles Fisher

Trustees—John Anderson, David Gaines, Timothy Johnson, Allen Still, John Wesley.

Sunday School Superintendent—William Muse.¹⁰⁶

Mid-Twentieth Century Land Transactions and Reincorporation

On 20 March 1950, a puzzling land transaction occurred between the trustees of the Colemantown Meeting House and the "...trustees and members of the congregation of Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church of Mount Laurel..."¹⁰⁷ For the nominal payment of \$1.00, the Colemantown Meeting House transferred control of land on the south side of Elbo Lane to the trustees and members of Jacob's Chapel. The deed reads in part,

All that certain tract or parcel of land being and situate in Mount Laurel, county of Burlington, State of New Jersey, bounded and described as follows:

¹⁰⁵ United States Census Bureau. Tenth Decennial Census, microform edition, City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Enumeration District 445, roll 1181, 363C. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.

¹⁰⁶ Percy Lovell. *Chronicle Directory of Moorestown...*, Moorestown: Lovell Printing Co., 1900, 67.

¹⁰⁷ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book 1079. Mount Holly, 1950, 303.

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BEGINNING at a point 500 feet from the Southeasterly corner of Coleman Road [*sic*] a distance of 326 feet 2 inches; thence (2) southerly at right angles to Coleman Road a distance of 220 feet; thence (3) southwestwardly at an angle of 110 degrees more or less a distance of 291 feet; thence (4) northwestwardly at right angles a distance of 231 feet; thence (5) northwardly at an angle of 160 degrees more or less and a right angles to Coleman Road a distance of 300 feet to the point and place of beginning.

BEING the same tract or parcel of land which Albert Jacob granted and conveyed unto the TRUSTEES of COLEMANTOWN MEETING HOUSE on the 14th day of March 1859, in fee.¹⁰⁸

The Colemantown Meeting House trustees who signed the deed included Leroy Henson, the Rev. David H. Gaines, Harry Gains, and Christopher C. Bayard. The land these men transferred by this deed includes the Colemantown Colored Cemetery property, the lot where Jacob's Chapel stands, and a portion of the lot now containing the Colemantown Meeting House, which presents a problem, because no known written evidence currently exists that Albert Jacob(s) was ever in the record "chain of title." Thomas Salter had already conveyed that same land to a group of trustees to create the cemetery in 1851 and sold the adjoining land to the east to Susan Ann Tillman in 1858. Furthermore, an exhaustive search of Burlington County Clerk's Office land transaction indices and various federal decennial censuses failed to reveal anyone named Albert Jacob that could have had even the slightest relationship with owning land in Evesham Township in 1859 and the 14 March 1859 deed is not recorded in the books of the county clerk.

After consummating the 1950 transaction, the trustees of Jacob's Chapel incorporated on 25 June 1951, forever extinguishing any association of the congregation with the 1840 incorporation as Mount Zion A.M.E. Church. The church received a new name under this certificate of incorporation: "Jacobs' Chapel African Methodist Church of Mount Laurel, New Jersey." Regarding this new name, the certificate also contains the following: "...The purpose for which this corporation are [*sic*] formed are to...perpetuate the name of Albert Jacobs [*sic*] who donated the ground for this place of worship and its burying grounds."¹⁰⁹

The desire to memorialize Albert Jacob in the incorporation papers as donor of the ground for the church and burial ground was misplaced. As noted above, it was Thomas Salter and his deed of 1851 that conveyed the land for the church and burying ground and the church edifice itself received its moniker from Jacob Mitchell. In fact, the known 19th-century written record does not currently support the inference that a white Quaker donated any of the lands historically associated with Jacob's Chapel or Colemantown Meeting House to the trustees. To the contrary, the written record from the 19th century supports the conclusion that the lands historically associated with Jacob's Chapel and Colemantown Meeting House, on both the north and south side of Elbo Lane, were derived from African Americans, namely Charles C. Green and Thomas Salter, for nominal considerations. Or, in the case of the cemetery property, the trustees purchased the rights to the land for cash from white Quaker John Hillman in his quitclaim mortgage release of 1851.

¹⁰⁸ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book 1079. Mount Holly, 1950, 303.

¹⁰⁹ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Book of Corporations Q. Mount Holly, 1951, 25.

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A second deed, signed 28 December 1951, further compounds the seemingly inexplicable transaction of 20 March 1950—again, devoid of any reference to the Green, Salter, or Hillman deeds—which contains the same legal description of land to be sold and cites the purported Albert Jacob deed from 14 March 1859. The second deed records a transaction between trustees Mabel Thomas, Morris Still, Leroy Henson, Clarence Cannon, Mary Robinson, and John C. Hill, as well as Mabel Thomas, Clarence Cannon, and Mary Robinson in trust “...for the members and congregation of an unincorporated association known as the Colemantown Meeting House, of Mount Laurel, Burlington County, New Jersey.” The deed subsequently states,

AND it having been discovered subsequent to the last conveyance aforementioned that one of the conditions thereof was that the Colemantown Meeting House should not affiliate with any other church body and that the conveyance to the Trustees and members of the Congregation of Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church was a breach of the condition of said original grant; and it being the intention and desire of the Trustees and members of the congregation of Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church to rectify and cure said breach of condition and for that purpose this deed is executed and delivered.¹¹⁰

The purported restriction against affiliation “with any other church body” flatly contradicts the deed that Charles Green executed—and recorded—in connection with his 1840 land sale and the establishment of the original Colemantown Meeting House trusteeship. That document specifically states that the meeting house be used as an African Methodist Episcopal Church:

...the said Charles Coleman, William Basset, Henry A. Wilson, Stephen Johnson, and William Muse and their successors in office forever in trust that they have erected or cause to be built thereon a house or place of worship for the use of the members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America according to the rules and discipline of said church which from time to time may be adopted and agreed upon by the ministers & preachers of the said African Methodist Episcopal Church or by the several conferences authorized by the said General Conference to preach and expound “God's Holy Word” therein....¹¹¹

In addition, the 1851 Salter deed, pursuant to which Thomas Salter simultaneously conveyed the parcel of land for establishing the Colemantown Colored Cemetery in 1851 and created the original board of trustees for the cemetery, also contains language expressly permitting the construction and use of an African Methodist Episcopal Church on the cemetery property:

The said Charles C. Green, William Gray, Thomas Gross, Charles Coleman, & Robert Davis, trustees as aforesaid and their successors in office forever, in trust, that they may occupy and use the same for a burial ground or shall and may erect or cause to build thereon a house or place of worship for the use of the Members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America and in further trust and confidence that they shall at all times forever hereafter permit such ministers and preachers belonging to said Church as shall from time to time be duly

¹¹⁰ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book 1079, 1115.

¹¹¹ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book Y3, 343.

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authorized by the General Conference of the Ministers and Preachers of the said African Methodist Episcopal Church or by the Annual Conferences authorized by the said General Conferences to preach and expound God's Holy Word therein....¹¹²

Since William Hillman's quit claim deed of 25 October 1851 for the cemetery land states that he held a mortgage on the lands that Thomas Salter purchased from him in 1849, it is possible that Hillman sold or assigned the unrecorded mortgage to someone named Albert Jacob or Jacobs. A thorough review of the 1850 and 1860 federal decennial census, however, fails to reveal anyone with that name that could be remotely associated with Hillman. The purported 14 March 1859 Jacob(s) deed would have required signatures only 16 days before William Hillman died in Philadelphia.¹¹³ To date, no confirmative documentation has been found concerning this supposed 1859 transaction—or, for that matter, concerning the connection with Colemantown of someone named Albert Jacob(s)—other than the references set forth in the 1950 deed, the 1950 incorporation certificate, and the 1951 deed.

Another more remote possibility could be fraudulent activity. Albert Jacob might be the alias of someone who intentionally defrauded the Colemantown Meeting House trustees by selling them land that others already owned. Without access to a copy or other direct written records of the unrecorded 1859 Jacob(s) deed, it is not currently possible to reconcile the supposed 14 March 1859 Jacob(s) transaction with the Charles Green, Thomas Salter, and John Hillman conveyances, all but one of which occurred before the supposed 14 March 1859 Jacob(s) deed (the sole exception being the 1873 deed, releasing his right of reversion, which really amounts to a release of rights rather than an outright conveyance of land).

On 6 April 1954, the trustees of Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church became grantees in two separate deeds that provided the congregation with some additional land on the south side of Elbo Lane adjacent to the church. The first involved the 0.25-acre parcel that Thomas Salter conveyed to Susan Ann Tillman in 1858. According to the text contained within the 1954 recorded indenture, Susan died intestate, leaving only two nephews, William Sharp and Alexander Sharp Sr., both residents of Mount Laurel Township, as her heirs at law. At the end of 1927, the township tax collector recorded the taxes chargeable to the Sharp brothers as in arrears. On 13 January 1928, Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church paid the \$35.73 sum of arrearage plus interest to the township, but the collector failed to issue a Tax Sale Certificate to the church trustees at that time or at any point subsequent to the payment, although "...the Trustees of Jacobs Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church of Mount Laurel, New Jersey, have been in actual, open and notorious possession of the premises herein referred to at all times since January 13, 1928...."¹¹⁴ So, to effect a transfer of the Tillman lot, the remaining heirs executed and recorded a deed of conveyance to the church trustees.

¹¹² Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book E5, 444.

¹¹³ "Deaths." Published in the 1 April edition of the *Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette*, microform edition. Philadelphia: *Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette*, 1859, 2.

¹¹⁴ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book 1184, Mount Holly, 1954, 274.

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The second parcel of land conveyed on 6 April 1954 to Jacob's Chapel stood adjacent to the west side of Susan Ann Tillman's lot. On 29 October 1870, Joshua Borton conveyed a 0.25-acre lot to Charles C. Green, William Roberts, and George H. Ganes, trustees for the Holcom Tabernacle No. 12, an independent order of the Brothers and Sisters of Love and Charity.¹¹⁵ The trustees never incorporated the organization and, at some point in time, the group disbanded and dissolved its trusteeship. The last living trustee was George H. Ganes (or Gaines), but he died and his last living heir at law in 1954 was William Pope, a single man who resided in the City of Montclair, Essex County, New Jersey. So on 6 April 1954, Pope conveyed the 0.25-acre lot to the trustees of Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church for the nominal amount of \$1.00.¹¹⁶

To this day, congregants of Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church continue to worship in their frame country church. As a discrete community, Colemantown slipped into the fog of history with the last house situated across from Jacob's Chapel—a typical front-gable one and one-half-story dwelling featuring a lean-to shed on the back—disappearing sometime after July 1985. In 1965, the trustees of Jacob's Chapel moved the Colemantown Meeting House to the south side of Elbo Lane on the lot adjacent to the chapel that Susan Ann Tillman's house formerly occupied. These two structures, along with the adjoining Colemantown Colored Cemetery, are the only remnants of a once-thriving black community.

Jacob's Chapel and its Role in the Mount Laurel Court Decisions

The Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church is also directly connected to a much more recent event of at least statewide importance in legal and community planning history: the landmark Mount Laurel exclusionary zoning lawsuits. There were two "Mount Laurel" cases decided by the New Jersey Supreme Court in which Jacob's Chapel members were principal plaintiffs. A decision was reached in the first case, *Mount Laurel I*, in 1975; a decision was reached in the second case, *Mount Laurel II*, in 1983. The importance of these cases to the theory and practice of land use in the United States is summarized by the initial paragraph of a 2013 *New York Times* editorial, "The Mount Laurel Doctrine:"

The New Jersey Supreme Court's 1983 ruling in the Mount Laurel [II] fair-housing case is rightly regarded as one of the most important civil rights decisions of modern times. The ruling, which greatly influenced fair-housing policy across the nation, limited the use of exclusionary zoning as a means of preventing the construction of affordable housing in wealthy communities.¹¹⁷

The critical role of these decisions in the evolution of exclusionary zoning legislation is further testified to by the great number of law review articles that examine their continuing implications.¹¹⁸ A similar

¹¹⁵ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book K8, Mount Holly, 1870, 145.

¹¹⁶ Burlington County Clerk's Office. Burlington County Deed Book 1184, 484.

¹¹⁷ *The New York Times*, "The Mount Laurel Doctrine", January 28, 2013.

¹¹⁸ A few examples include "Inclusionary Zoning Devices as Takings: The Legacy of the Mount Laurel Cases" (Lawrence Berger, *Nebraska Law Review* (1991)), "Inclusionary Housing in California and New Jersey: A Comparative Analysis" (Calavita, Grimes and Mallach, *Housing Policy Debate* (1997)), "Exclusionary Zoning: Mount Laurel in New York?" (Terry Rice, *Pace Law Review* (1986)), and "Mount Laurel and the Fair Housing Act: Success or Failure?" (Franzese, Bernard and Van Doren, *Fordham Urban Law Journal* (1991)).

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review of zoning case law texts reveals that the Mount Laurel cases are discussed in virtually all of them.¹¹⁹ In addition, the editors of *Planning and Environmental Law* included Mount Laurel as one of the 25 most significant planning and environmental law cases in the United States, noting that it “created the model fair housing remedy for exclusionary zoning.”¹²⁰ It is also one of the cases included in a recent compilation, *Courting Justice: 10 New Jersey Cases that Shook the Nation*.¹²¹

The genesis of the Mount Laurel cases may be traced to the efforts by a local community action agency, the Springville Community Action Association (SAA), to improve housing options for the largely African American residents of Springville, in Mount Laurel Township. This neighborhood was described in a *Trenton Times* article as a “tiny town with big city problems.” Roy Robinson, a local resident and a founder of the committee, estimated that 50 families in the community were in need of improved housing.¹²²

Springville initially developed adjacent to (east of) Colemantown as part of an early 20th-century effort to resettle poor Jewish immigrants from the slums of Philadelphia into a more salubrious location. Land was purchased along Hartford Road between Mount Laurel-Hainesport Road and Elbo Lane. During the Depression, middle-class Jewish families began using the settlement as a summer and weekend resort, when it became known as Springville. With the housing shortage that followed the return of soldiers after World War II, some of these soldiers and their families rented houses in Springville. After they moved on, the community became home to primarily African American families, a number of whom attended Jacob's Chapel on Elbo Lane.¹²³ According to Carl Bisgaier, the lead attorney retained to represent the community in court, Jacob's Chapel represented the heart of the Springville community. The leader of the effort to develop a Springville housing project was Mary Robinson, a lifelong Jacob's Chapel church member.¹²⁴

In the 1960s, as suburban development began to transform the farmland of Mount Laurel into subdivisions, the attention of town officials turned to Springville. Believing renovation of the housing stock to be infeasible, they began an effort to condemn buildings in the community and demolish them. To circumvent state requirements that replacement housing be provided for displaced residents, building inspectors waited until units were empty before starting the condemnation process.¹²⁵ In place of Springville and other remnants of the vanishing rural township, local leaders envisioned Planned Unit

¹¹⁹ Examples include *Understanding the Law of Zoning and Land Use Controls* (Lexis Nexis 2009), *Cases and Materials on Land Use* (WestLaw 2008), and *American Law of Zoning* (Thompson Reuters).

¹²⁰ http://centralpt.com/upload/342/Professional_Development/16133_Top25CasesinPlanningandEnvironmentalLaw.pdf

¹²¹ Paul L. Tractenberg, editor, *Courting Justice: 10 New Jersey Cases that Shook the Nation* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013), Chapter 3.

¹²² *Trenton Evening Times*, “Springville...A Tiny Town With Big City Problems,” October 20, 1968.

¹²³ Paul Schopp, “Springville,” *The Burlington Spy*, Summer 2008.

¹²⁴ Carl Bisgaier, lead attorney for the plaintiffs in the Mount Laurel case, interview, December 30, 2014.

¹²⁵ Douglas S. Massey, Len Albright, Rebecca Casciano, Elizabeth Derickson, and David N. Kinsey, *Climbing Mount Laurel: The Struggle for Affordable Housing and Social Mobility in an American Suburb*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, 33.

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Developments (PUDs), large developments integrating residential, commercial, and institutional uses on a single tract of land, catering to middle- and upper-class residents who moved to the township from Philadelphia and the inner Philadelphia suburbs. At the time of the exclusionary zoning controversy, four PUDs were planned.¹²⁶ One was later abandoned. No affordable housing was provided in any of these PUD proposals.¹²⁷

Springville residents could see the writing on the wall. With farms shrinking and their community being razed unit by unit, it was simply a matter of time before there was no affordable housing remaining in Mount Laurel. At the time, the SAA was, according to Rev. Stuart Wood, the Presbyterian minister who was one of its founders, a bit of a “disorganized mob,” in which members of Jacob’s Chapel were heavily represented.¹²⁸ Wood remembered that Mary Robinson, her daughter Ethel Lawrence, and Ethel’s daughter Thomasene Lawrence were very active in the group, and that Ethel Lawrence emerged as the group’s leader. They experienced Springville’s shortcomings first-hand. Thomasene Lawrence spent \$88 per month in rent for a converted chicken coop in Springville in which she stated that everything leaked and got mildewed. According to Lawrence, “[An] open sewer ran right through the back polluting our drinking water.”¹²⁹

To address this community problem, the SAA developed plans for a 48-unit housing complex, secured a \$6,000 grant from the State Department of Community Affairs, acquired an option on a 50-acre parcel of land, had plans drawn by an architect, and determined that the necessary construction financing could be obtained through the Farmers Home Administration. Before the proposed housing could be built, Mount Laurel would have to amend its master plan that allowed only single family residences. The first step in the application process was to gain the approval of a variance by the Planning Board. The plan was submitted to the Board in December 1967. Six months later no action had been taken on the application. Concerns cited by board members included sewage disposal and concerns that the project would bring in “undesirable elements from outside.”¹³⁰

Early in 1968, during a discussion on low income housing, the mayor indicated that it was the intention of the township committee to take care of the people of the township, but not to make any area of Mount Laurel a home for the county. A committeeman added that it was the intent of the township to clear out

¹²⁶ The four PUDs were Birchfield (1240 housing units on 200 acres), Cross Keys (975 housing units on 160 acres), Larchmont (7540 housing units on 1200 acres, and Ramblewood (1824 housing units on 260 acres). Ramblewood began construction in the mid-1960s, while Larchmont began construction in 1970. Birchfield began construction in 1973, while the plan for Cross Keys was abandoned. The four PUDs are identified and characterized in the initial complaint that led to the Superior Court case (Dugan 1971).

¹²⁷ Bisgaier 2014.

¹²⁸ Rev. Stuart A. Wood interview, December 30, 2014.

¹²⁹ Trachtenberg, *Courting Justice*, 47. The role of Jacobs Chapel in the Mount Laurel litigation was the subject of a roundtable discussion held in Mount Laurel in February 2015, attended by persons involved in the legal action, some of their children, and by Rev. Terrell Person of Jacobs Chapel.

¹³⁰ Pat Kaye, “Apartment Project Hangs Fire in Mount Laurel Township,” *Trenton Evening Times*, May 4, 1969.

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substandard housing and thereby get better citizens. At their April 1, 1968 meeting, the Township Committee passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Springville Action Association is desirous of building a moderate-income housing development in the Springville area of the Township; and
WHEREAS, the said Springville Action Association has been in negotiation for funds available pursuant to the terms of the New Jersey Housing Finance Law (Chapter 81 P.L. 1967) with regard to the possibility of obtaining a loan for the purpose of undertaking such construction.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Mount Laurel, County of Burlington and State of New Jersey that the Township Committee is aware of the concerted effort of the Springville Action Association to undertake the project to improve the appearance, economic situation, and community life of that area of the Township, and it is hereby resolved that there is a need for moderate-income housing in the Springville Area and it is understood that said moderate-income housing will be constructed subject to the regulations with reference to zoning, planning and building and all other applicable ordinances and codes of the Township.¹³¹

At a 1969 meeting, a variance to permit multi-family dwelling units was rejected because the committee failed to see a need for such construction. At a 1970 meeting, a committeeman, during a discussion of rundown and worthless homes, indicated that the policy was to wait until these homes were vacant, "because if these people are put out on the streets, they do not have another place to go." During a September 1970 meeting, a township committeeman, when referring to pressure from the Federal and State governments to encourage low-cost housing, retorted that their most useful function was to evaluate and screen away all but the most beneficial plans: "We must be as selective as possible: approving only those development plans which will provide direct and substantial benefits to our taxpayers."¹³²

By October 1970, the Committee had reached a final decision on the zoning variance and Mayor William Haines agreed to announce it at a meeting to be held in Jacob's Chapel. This meeting, held on a Sunday evening and attended by about 60 members of the Chapel and the community, proved to be the spark that lit the flame of litigation in the case. The sentence that ignited the fight was uttered by Mayor Haines after discussing all of the changes that were occurring in Mount Laurel: "If you people can't afford to live in our town, you will just have to leave."¹³³

¹³¹ Mount Laurel Township Committee, Minutes, April 1, 1968:6.

¹³² Southern Burlington County N.A.A.C.P. v. Township of Mount Laurel, 119 N.J. Super. 164 (1972).

¹³³ Maureen Fitzgerald and Sharon Tubbs, "Legacy of a Lawsuit: New Laws, Same Housing," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 18, 1996; Stephanie Marks Sawyer, *Mount Laurel* (Mount Pleasant, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2014), 71; David L. Kirp, John P. Dwyer, and Larry A. Rosenthal, *Our Town: Race, Housing and the Soul of Suburbia*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1997, 1-2. According to Carl Bisgaier, the quote attributed to Mayor Haines may have been apocryphal, but those who attended the meeting and recalled it at the round-table discussion in February 2015 remember the tense atmosphere and the Mayor's hostile attitude (see note 133 above).

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Unbeknownst to the community, attorneys at Camden Regional Legal Services, a non-profit organization representing poor families living in five South Jersey counties, had already been researching exclusionary zoning and were looking for plaintiffs to challenge these policies in state court. Rev. Stuart A. Wood, the Presbyterian minister who was instrumental in the establishment of the Springville organization, connected Ethel Lawrence, a local civil rights activist and lifelong member of Jacob's Chapel, with attorney Carl S. Bisgaier. Bisgaier, one of Camden Legal Services' young attorneys, worked with fellow attorneys Kenneth Meiser and Richard J. O'Connor to file a lawsuit challenging provisions of the township master plan and zoning ordinance in Burlington County Superior Court.¹³⁴

The lawsuit was filed as a class action with an initial complaint in May 1971, to which Mount Laurel Township, as the principal defendant, responded. The plaintiffs' case was heard in a four-day trial held in March 1972. Ethel Lawrence, an active member of Jacob's Chapel, was named one of the lead individual plaintiffs and many SAA meetings related to the litigation were held in her home.¹³⁵ During the trial, township officials denied establishing a pattern of economic and social segregation, instead assigning the blame to market forces beyond their control. The case was heard by Edward Martino, the court's senior judge. In his opinion issued on May 1, 1972, Martino sided with the plaintiffs and ordered the township to undertake a study to identify the existing number of substandard dwelling units in the township and the number of individuals and families who would be displaced by an effective code enforcement program. Furthermore, he issued the following order:

Defendant shall, upon completion of the analysis...., develop a plan of implementation, that is, an affirmative program, to enable and encourage the satisfaction of the needs....The plan shall include an analysis of the ways in which the township can act affirmatively to enable and encourage the satisfaction of the indicated needs and shall include a plan of action which the township has chosen for the purpose of implementing the program.¹³⁶

Both the plaintiff and the defendant appealed the judge's decision to the State Supreme Court. (The plaintiffs' decision to appeal resulted from Martino's finding that exclusionary zoning in Mount Laurel did not result in regional harm).¹³⁷ Three members of Jacob's Chapel, Catherine Still, Ethel Lawrence, and Thomasine Lawrence, were among the named plaintiffs in the appeal.¹³⁸ On March 5, 1973, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in two pending exclusionary zoning cases, *Mount Laurel* and *Oakwood at Madison v. the Township of Madison* (see below).¹³⁹ The Court failed to reach decisions on either case by the end of its term when three justices faced mandatory retirement. The cases were then

¹³⁴ Massey, et al.: 36.

¹³⁵ It was revealed at the 2015 roundtable discussion that the Jacobs Chapel congregation was divided over the lawsuit and that the church did not formally endorse it. Subsequent to October 1970, meetings related to supporting the lawsuit were not held at Jacobs Chapel.

¹³⁶ Southern Burlington County NAACP v. Township of Mount Laurel.

¹³⁷ Carl Bisgaier, 2014.

¹³⁸ Southern Burlington County NAACP, et al. v. the Township of Mount Laurel, et al. (67 N.J. 151, 336 A.2d 713 (1975)); interview with Ethel Lawrence Halley, February 2015.

¹³⁹ Madison Township in Middlesex County, which became Old Bridge Township in 1975.

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ordered reargued during the following term. The second round of arguments, again attended by Ethel Lawrence, occurred on June 8, 1974.¹⁴⁰

On March 24, 1975, the Court ruled unanimously for the plaintiffs in the case of *Southern Burlington N.A.A.C.P., Camden County C.O.R.E., Camden County N.A.A.C.P., Gladys Clark, Betty Weal and Angel Perez, Plaintiff-Respondents and Ethel Lawrence, Thomasine Lawrence, Catherine Still, Mary E. Smith, Shirley Morris and Jacqueline Custis, plaintiffs, v. Township of Mount Laurel, Defendant-Appellant and Cross-Respondent*. The decision was synopsisized, as follows:

The Supreme Court...held that a developing municipality may not, by a system of land use regulation, make it physically and economically impossible to provide low and moderate income housing in the municipality for various categories of persons who need and want it; that ordinances permitting only single-family detached dwellings and which was so restrictive in its minimum lot area and building size requirements as to preclude single-family housing for moderate income families was contrary to the general welfare...

The court concluded that there exists an affirmative obligation by communities throughout the state to provide housing opportunities for all social and economic classes.¹⁴¹

Affordable Housing in New Jersey

With the increasing wealth engendered by the economic boom of the post-World War II period came an increased desire for exclusivity in residential communities. This led to the implementation of large-lot zoning ordinances in many "exclusive suburbs" such as Short Hills, New Jersey; New Canaan, Connecticut; and Scarsdale, New York, as well as in communities such as Mount Laurel, located at the edge of a rapidly engulfing suburban development.

As a result, scattered exclusionary zoning controversies began elsewhere in New Jersey at roughly the same time as the emergence of the Mount Laurel campaign. The first of these cases involved efforts by the Greater Englewood Housing Corporation No. 1 in Bergen County to construct 146 units of cluster-type, two-story apartments on a 10-acre tract of city-owned land in a district zoned for one-family dwellings. In that case, decided on July 6, 1970, the New Jersey Supreme Court upheld a zoning variance for low-income housing.¹⁴²

In 1971, Johns-Manville, the industrial corporation, filed suit in Bedminster in Somerset County, arguing that the five-acre lot minimum lot size of the community amounted to economic segregation and lessened the value of the more than 800 acres the company owned in the township.¹⁴³ In October 1971, in a suit

¹⁴⁰and Rutgers-Newark School of Law, "Timeline of Mount Laurel Litigation," website: https://njlegallib.rutgers.edu/njdll/ML_timeline.php, accessed March 9, 2015; Kirp, Dwyer, and Rosenthal 1995: 78.

¹⁴¹*Southern Burlington County N.A.A.C.P.[et al] v. Township of Mount Laurel*, 67 N.J. 151 (1975).

¹⁴²DeSimone v. Greater Englewood Housing Corporation, 56 N.J. 428, 267, A. 2nd 31 (170), July 6, 1970.

¹⁴³Carter B. Horsley, "Company Brings Suit to Fight 5-Acre Zoning in Jersey Area," *New York Times*, September 2, 1971.

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brought by the Suburban Action Institute, a non-profit formed to file legal challenges to exclusionary zoning ordinances,¹⁴⁴ a Superior Court in Middlesex County struck down an exclusionary zoning ordinance with minimum lot sizes and floor space requirements in the *Oakwood* case mentioned above. The court in that instance held that the “ordinance under attack must be held invalid because it fails to promote reasonably a balanced community in accordance with the general welfare.” The Township appealed and initial oral arguments on both the Mount Laurel and Madison cases were held by the New Jersey Supreme Court on the same day in March 1973.¹⁴⁵

In March 1972, New Jersey Governor William T. Cahill asked the New Jersey Legislature to approve a balanced housing plan that included a system of local zoning reform to end exclusionary zoning.¹⁴⁶ There was no immediate legislative response. Several other exclusionary zoning lawsuits were active both shortly before and at the same time as the Mount Laurel case. However, each of these cases focused on the constitutionality or unconstitutionality of a specific local ordinance. *New York Times* land-use writer Ronald Sullivan explained what set the Mount Laurel case apart:

While other courts have issued zoning rulings in other communities, virtually all of them were content merely to strike down the zoning laws that were held responsible for the wrongs cited in their decisions. But both sides involved in today's [Mount Laurel] ruling agreed that the court had established new legal ground by prescribing specific remedies and applying a deadline for their fulfillment.¹⁴⁷

The sweeping decisions in the Mount Laurel cases ensured that affordable housing was not an issue to be solved by a select few communities, including Mount Laurel, but was to require a wholesale revision of zoning and land use ordinances throughout the state. The Supreme Court's ruling that local zoning had to take into account regional housing needs obligated each of the state's then-566 municipalities to provide their “fair share” of affordable housing. It is the sweeping nature of the decision that imbues it with exceptional importance.¹⁴⁸ Paul Davidoff, director of the Suburban Action Institute, was quoted as saying that the Mount Laurel decision might prove as important in providing equal housing opportunities as *Brown v. the Board of Education* was in barring racial segregation in schools.¹⁴⁹

Though the 1975 decision mandated construction of affordable housing, the Township continued with a series of legal maneuvers to delay compliance. The similar, continued recalcitrance of many municipalities to adhere to the provisions of the 1975 Mount Laurel led to a second Supreme Court case,

¹⁴⁴ Joseph Berger, “Paul Davidoff, 54, Planner Challenged Suburbs' Zone Rules,” *New York Times*, December 28, 1984.

¹⁴⁵ *Oakwood at Madison, Inc. v. The Township of Madison*, 117 N.J. Super. 11, 283 A. 2d 353 (1971) and Rutgers-Newark School of Law, “Timeline of Mount Laurel Litigation.” Ronald Sullivan, “Restrictive Zoning is Upset in New Jersey,” *The New York Times*, October 30, 1971.

¹⁴⁶ Ronald Sullivan, “Cahill Asks a Housing Plan With Local Zoning Eased,” *The New York Times*, March 28, 1972.

¹⁴⁷ Ronald Sullivan, “Restrictive Zoning is Upset in New Jersey,” *The New York Times*, October 30, 1971.

¹⁴⁸ Alan Mallach, “The *Mount Laurel* Doctrine and the Uncertainties of Social Policy in a Time of Retrenchment,” *Rutgers Law Review* 63:3 (2011), 849.

¹⁴⁹ Joseph Sullivan, “Zoning in Mahwah is an Issue Again,” *The New York Times*, April 21, 1975.

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often referred to as Mount Laurel II. In 1983, responding to a case filed by attorneys for New Jersey's Public Advocate, the Fair Share Housing Center, and other groups, the New Jersey Supreme Court issued a decision spelling out the specific requirement that every municipality in the state must provide its "fair share" of the regional need for low- and moderate-income housing. Towns would have to provide a "realistic opportunity" for such housing. Since 1985, as the result of Mount Laurel litigation, approximately 60,000 affordable housing units have been built in New Jersey suburbs.¹⁵⁰

However, not until 1997, after many planning board hearings, council meetings, and attempts to reach a legislative solution, was the first affordable housing development approved in Mount Laurel. Located off Moorestown-Mount Laurel Road, the 140-unit complex was named Ethel R. Lawrence Homes, in honor of Lawrence (1926-1994), the lead plaintiff in the Mount Laurel I and II cases. The first group of 100 rental units was completed in November 2000, while the second group of 40 units was completed in March 2004.¹⁵¹

A number of other locations are associated with the Mount Laurel cases, most notably the Springville community in Mount Laurel, the home of Ethel Lawrence in Mount Laurel, and the Burlington County Courthouse in Mount Holly. The Springville community no longer exists in any recognizable form. Ethel Lawrence's house, which does still stand on Elbo Lane near the corner of Texas Avenue, evidently no longer maintains its 1970 appearance. The Burlington County Courthouse, in which the Superior Court trial was held in 1972 in the first Mount Laurel case, is a large, 20th-century, public building containing several courtrooms. It still stands, but has been the venue for decades of locally-significant judicial activity, and conveys no suggestion of a special association with the Mount Laurel litigation. Compared to these other sites, Jacob's Chapel is the only intact property associated both with the Mount Laurel litigation and with the long-established minority community from which the litigation arose.

¹⁵⁰ Fair Share Housing Center, "Mount Laurel Doctrine," n.d.

¹⁵¹ Fair Share Development, Ethel R. Lawrence Homes, 2014.

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

<u>Jacob's Chapel and Colemantown Meeting House</u>
Name of Property
<u>Burlington County, NJ</u>
County and State

Section number 9 Page 2

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

<u>Jacob's Chapel and Colemantown Meeting House</u>
Name of Property
<u>Burlington County, NJ</u>
County and State

Section number 9 Page 3

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A Word on Sources

The assembly of primary source materials on the Mount Laurel case for use in this nomination proved unexpectedly frustrating and challenging. Minutes of the Mount Laurel Planning Board from 1968 to 1970 appear to be missing from the Township offices. Minutes of the Township Committee are conspicuously circumspect concerning affordable housing, and Mayor Haines's meeting with the Jacobs Chapel community is not included in the minutes.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

<u>Jacob's Chapel and Colemantown Meeting House</u> Name of Property <u>Burlington County, NJ</u> County and State

Section number 9 Page 4

The files for the Superior Court case are also missing. The Burlington County Vicinage Civil Division requested all the case files for the case (L-25741-70). These case files were temporarily stored in a repository in Middlesex County. Six boxes were returned, but none contains information about the original litigation. The Superior Court Archives in Trenton has sorted out all its affordable housing case files and indexed them under the category of "Mount Laurel." Only a small number of boxes contain information on Burlington County cases, and none of these files relate to the original exclusionary zoning case.

Several additional avenues were also pursued. Ethel Lawrence's daughter, Ethel Lawrence Halley, searched through her mother's papers but was unable to locate a transcript of the original case. Carl Bisgaier, the lead attorney, also does not have a copy of the case transcript. The Rutgers School of Law at Newark Library, which is the home of an affordable housing archive, was also contacted. They, too, do not have a copy of the transcript of the Superior Court case.

Due to these missing materials and the lack of press coverage of any of the relevant meetings, it has not proved possible to assemble a definite timeline of the local review of the Springville affordable housing proposal nor to definitively describe the process by which the decision passed from the Planning Board to the Township Committee.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church
Burlington County, New Jersey

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundary for this resource encompasses Lots 3.01 and 3.02 in Block 802 of Mount Laurel Township, Burlington County.

Boundary Justification

The National Register boundary encompasses three related contiguous resources. It includes Jacob's Chapel and its associated cemetery (Lot 3.01) and the Colemantown Meetinghouse (Lot 3.02). The Chapel has been in this location since its construction, although the cemetery appears to predate the Chapel by at least a decade. The Colemantown Meeting house was moved to its current location in 1965. All are located on the south side of Elbo Lane, east of its intersection with Moorestown-Mount Laurel Road. The cemetery is located behind (and to the south of) the Chapel and adjoins the Mount Laurel Society of Friends Cemetery to the west.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 1

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Jacob's Chapel AME Church
Burlington County, NJ

Section number photos Page _____

Name of Property: Jacob's Chapel AME Church
City or Vicinity: Mount Laurel Township
County: Burlington County
State: NJ
Name of Photographer: Douglas C. McVarish
Date of Photographs: June 2015
Location of Digital Files: NJHPO, 501 East State Street, Trenton, NJ 08625

Photo #1

Context of chapel with north façade (left) and west elevation (right), camera facing southeast.

Photo #2

North façade (left) and west elevation (right), camera facing southeast

Photo #3

Rear gable (left) and east elevation (right), camera facing northwest.

Photo #4

Interior. Central window, west wall, camera facing west.

Photo #5

Interior. General view of sanctuary, camera facing southwest.

Photo #6

Interior. View of balustrade and portion of the apse, camera facing southwest.

Photo #7

Interior. View of apse and rear exit, camera facing southwest.

Photo #8.

Cemetery. General view of Still plot, camera facing west.

Photo #9

Colemantown Meeting House. North façade (left) and west elevation (right), camera facing southeast.

Photo #10

Colemantown Meeting House. Rear gable (left) and east elevation (right), camera facing northwest.

Photo #11

Colemantown Meeting House. West elevation, camera facing east.

Photo #12

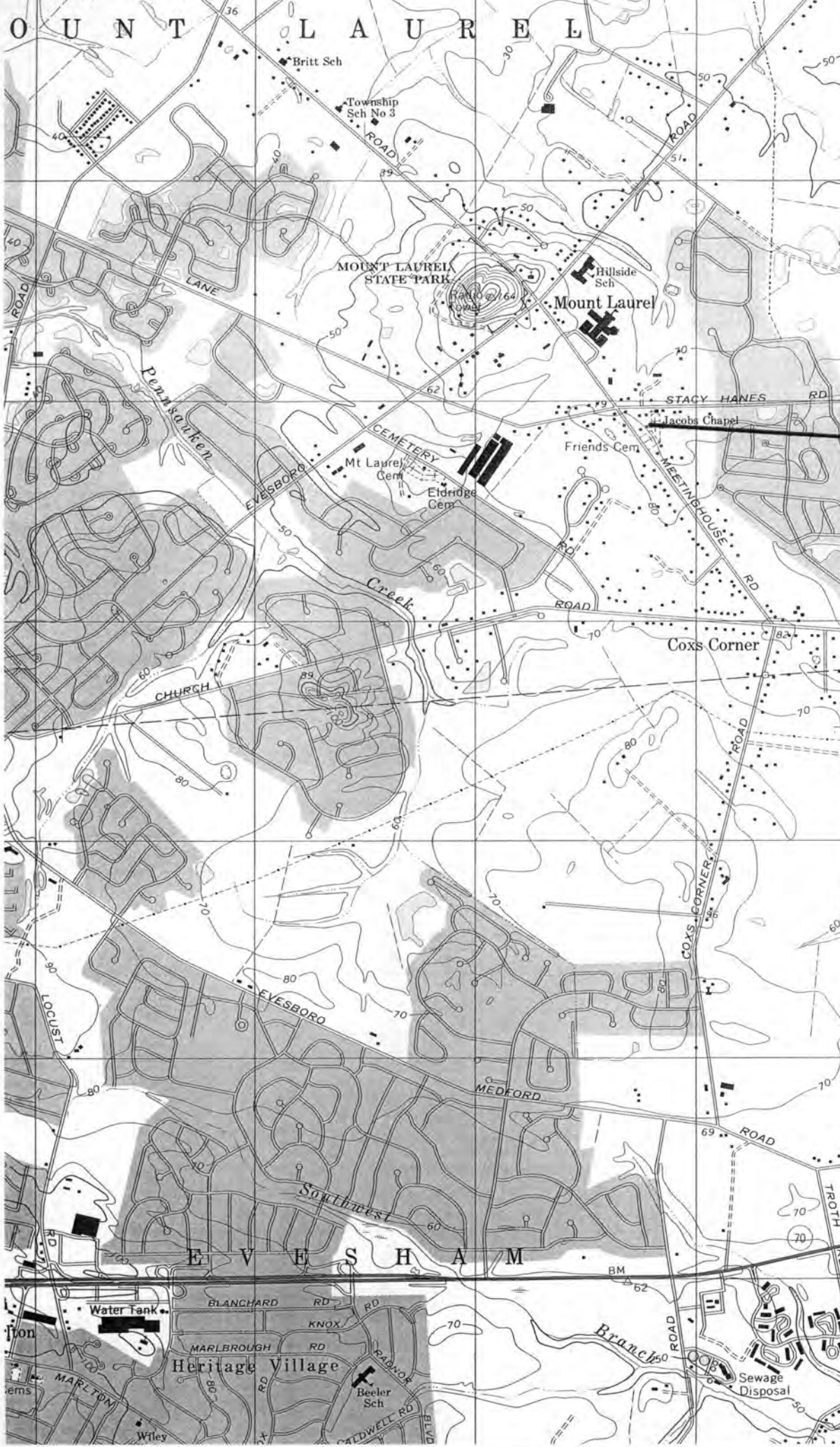
Colemantown Meeting House. Interior, camera facing northwest.

Photo #13

Colemantown Meeting House. Interior. General view of interior, camera facing northeast.

Photo #14

Colemantown Meeting House. Interior. View of northwest corner of interior, camera facing northwest

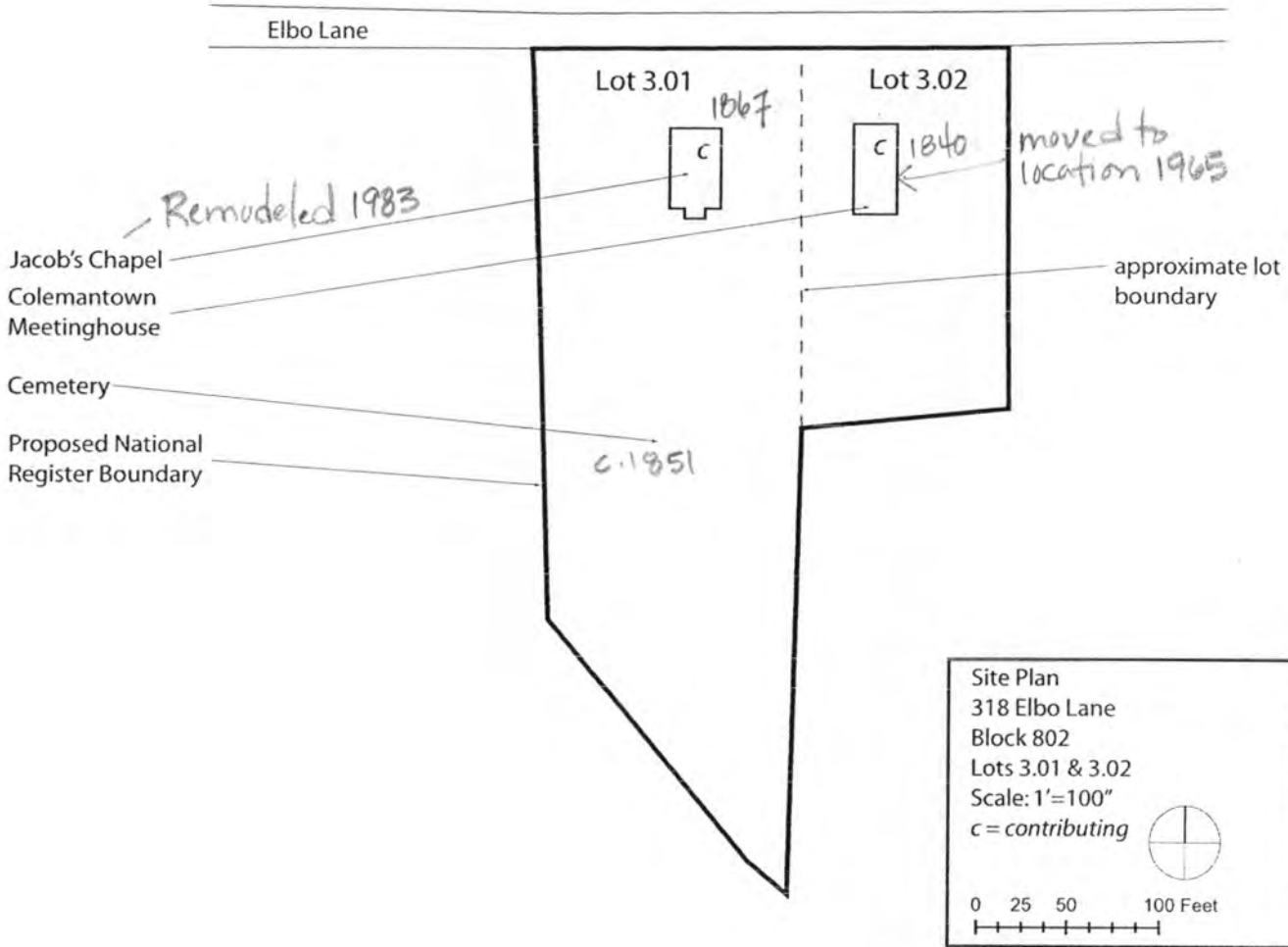


JACOB'S CHAPEL
 A.M.E. CHURCH
 BURLINGTON COUNTY, NJ


Z = 18
 E = 509820
 N = 4419950

*21
 *20
 *19
 55'
 *18
 *17
 *16

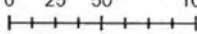
Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church
Burlington County, NJ



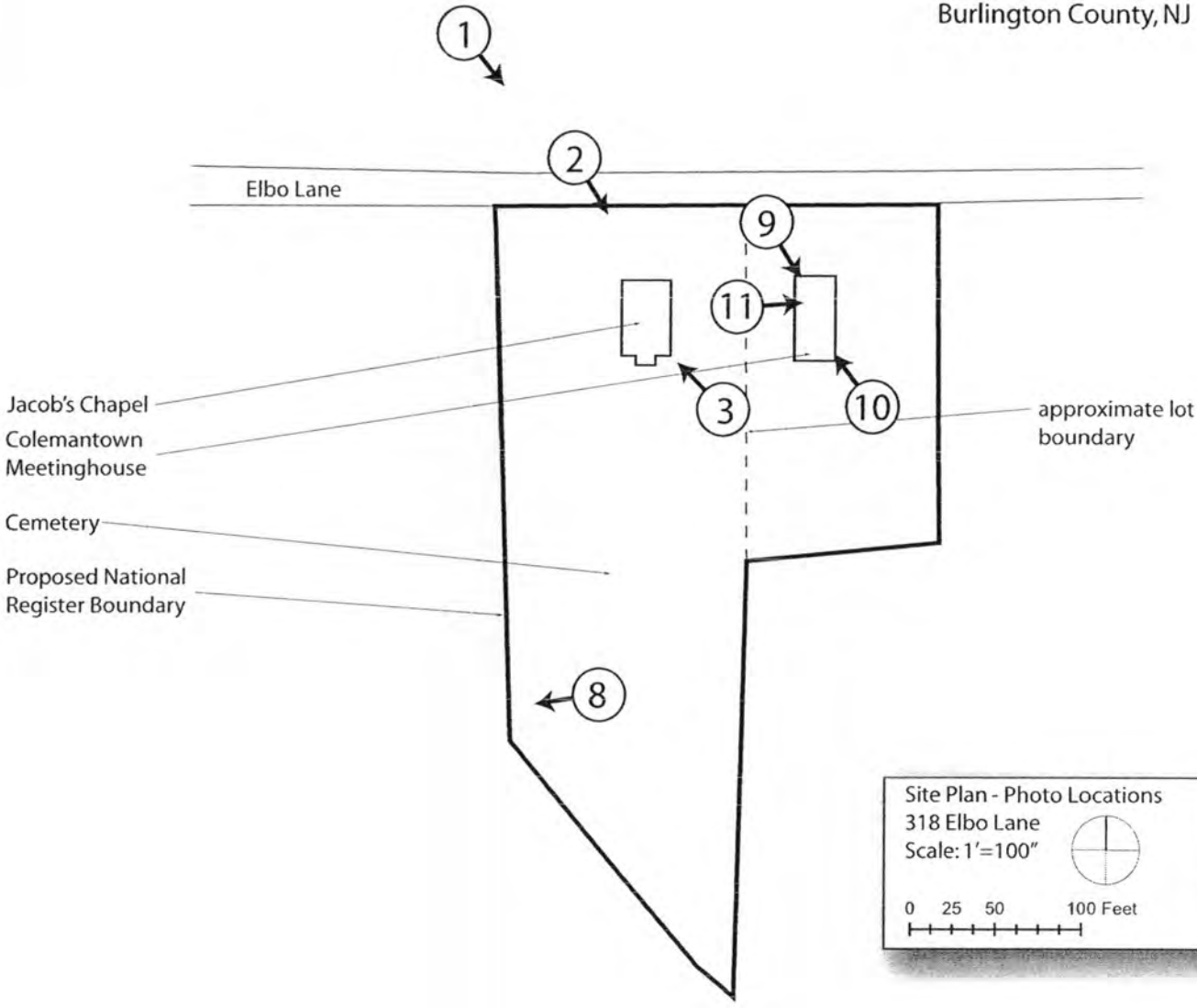
Site Plan
318 Elbo Lane
Block 802
Lots 3.01 & 3.02
Scale: 1"=100"
c = contributing



0 25 50 100 Feet



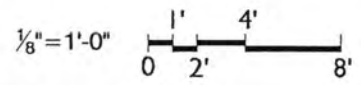
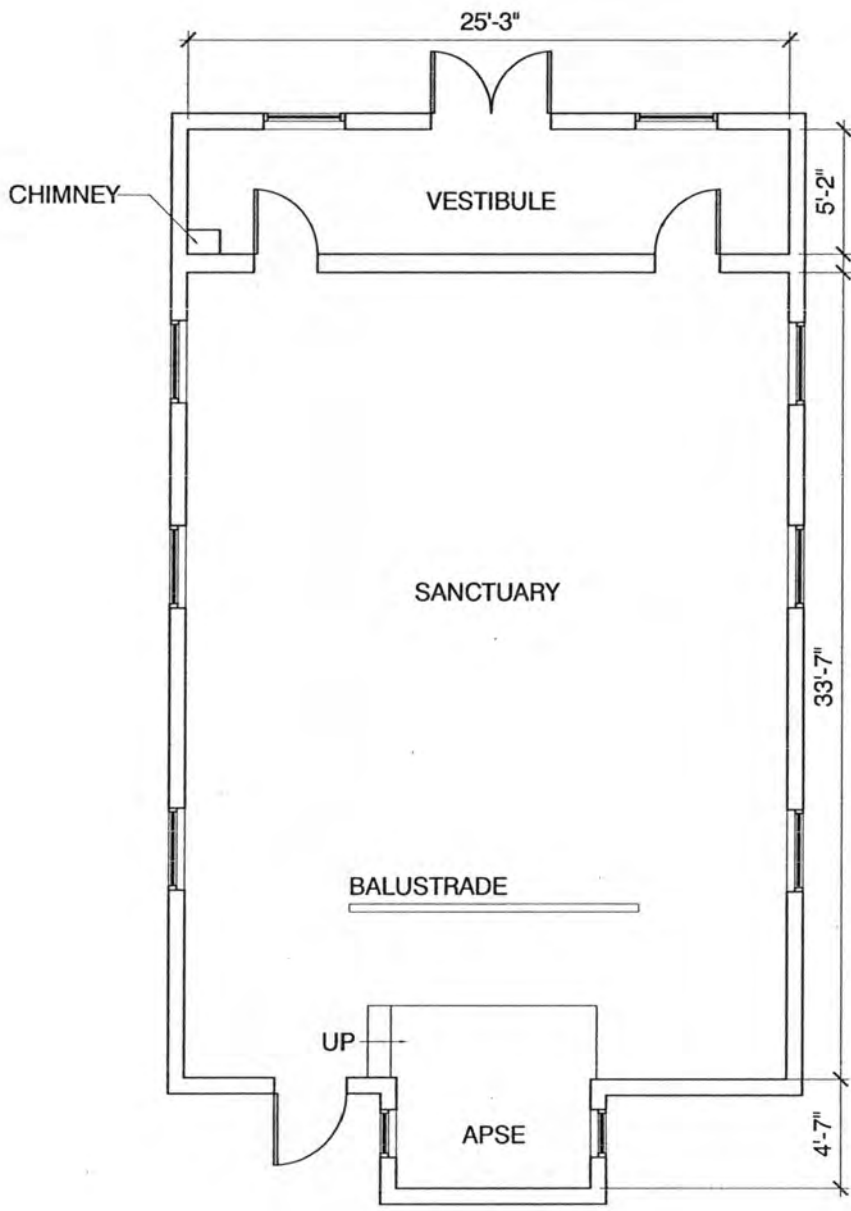
Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church
Burlington County, NJ



Site Plan - Photo Locations
318 Elbo Lane
Scale: 1"=100'

0 25 50 100 Feet

The complex block contains a title, address, scale, a north arrow symbol, and a scale bar with markings at 0, 25, 50, and 100 feet.



Kise Straw & Kolodner
 ARCHITECTS PLANNERS & HISTORIANS
 123 South Broad Street, Suite 1200
 Philadelphia, PA 19102
 Tel: 215.790.1000
 Fax: 215.790.0015
 E-mail: jkolodner@kisk.com

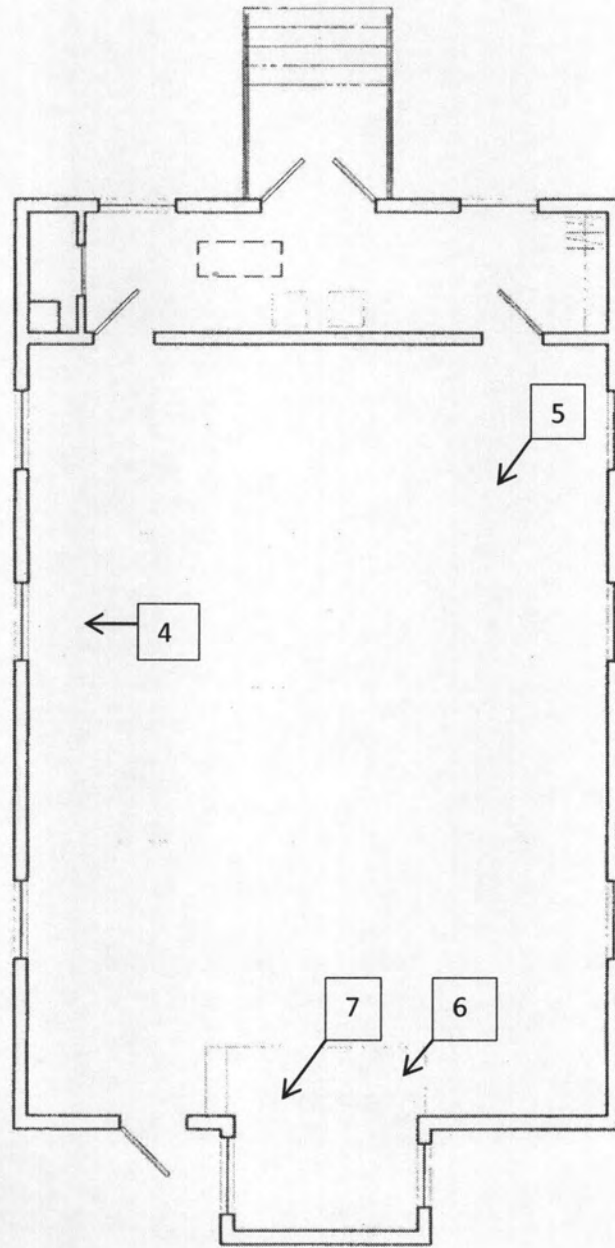
**JACOB'S CHAPEL A.M.E. CHURCH
 CHURCH
 FLOOR PLAN**

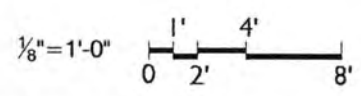
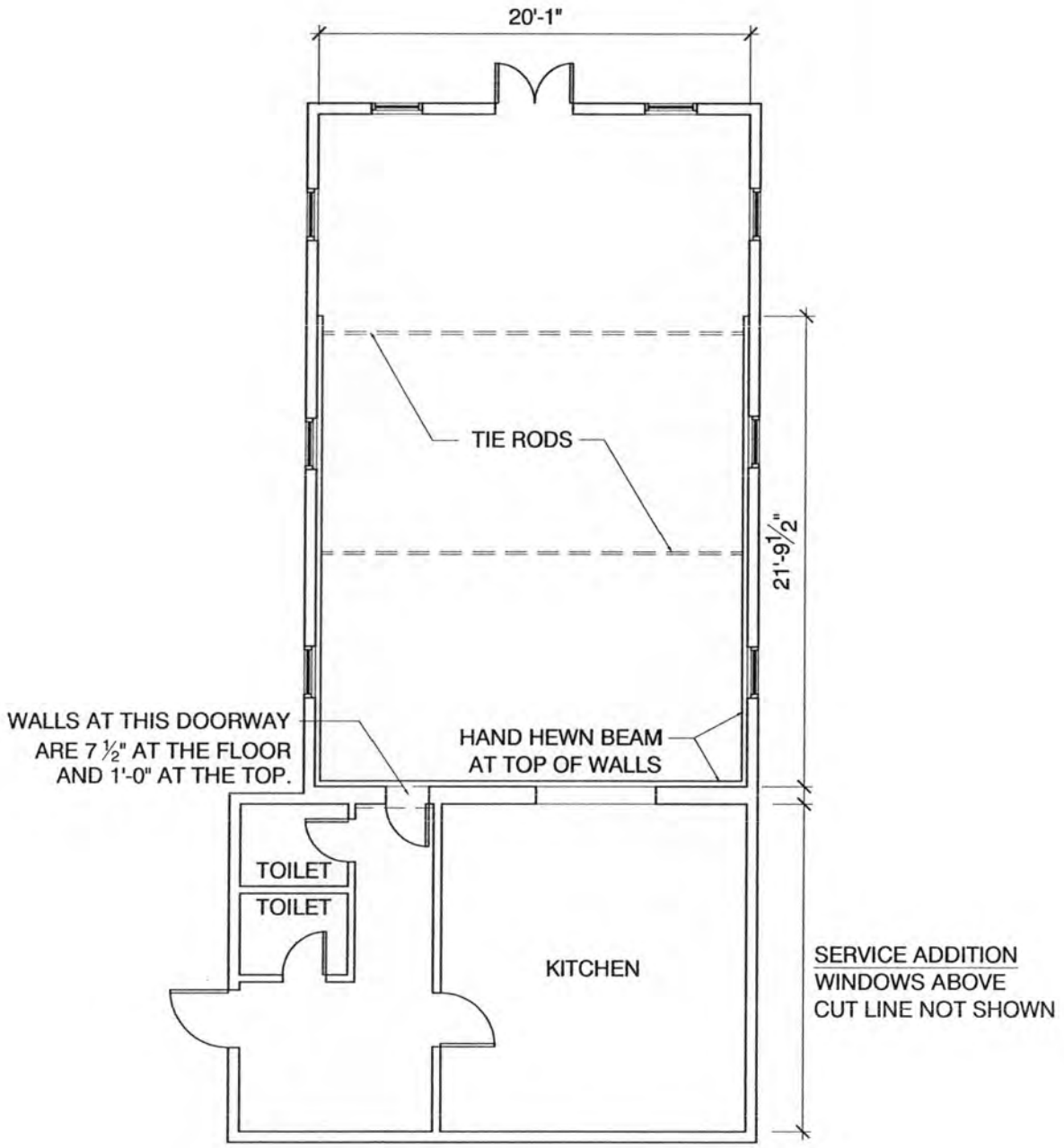
JOB NUMBER: 060005

DRAWING DATE: 3.27.08

Photo Locations
Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church

Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church
Burlington County, New Jersey





Kise Straw & Kolodner
 ARCHITECTS PLANNERS & HISTORIANS
 1215 South Broad Street, Suite 1215
 Philadelphia, PA 19107
 Tel: 215 790 1032
 Fax: 215 790 0215
 E-mail: sk@kiseandkolodner.com

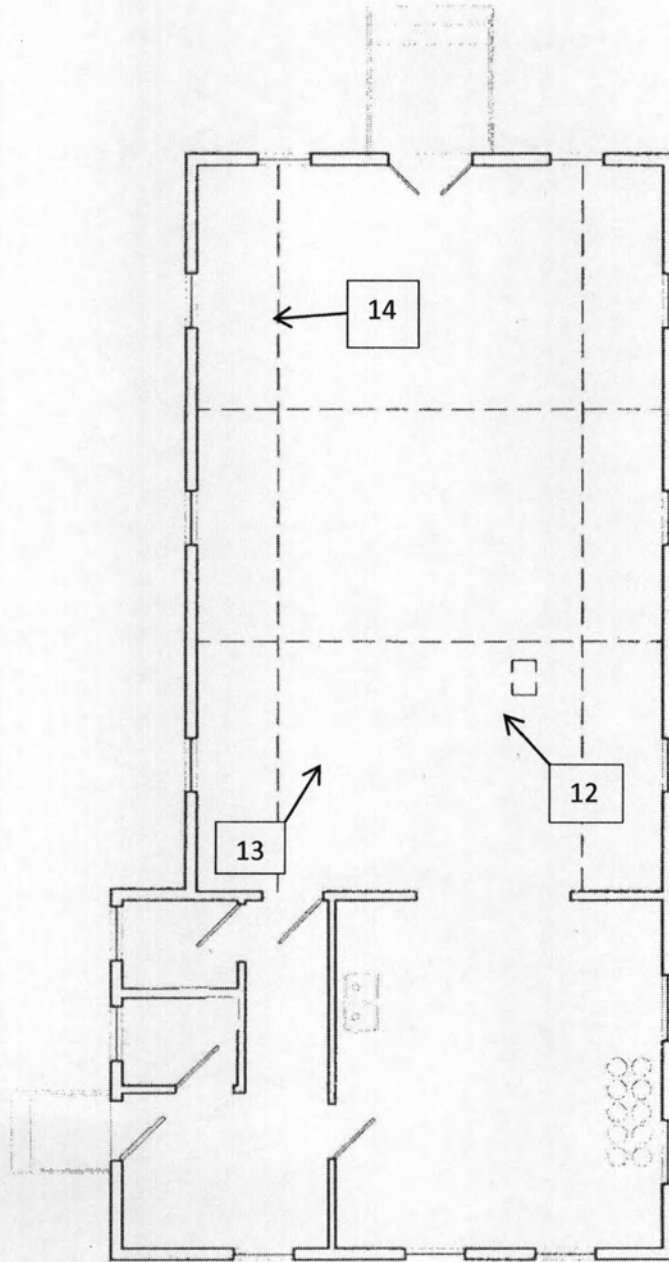
**JACOB'S CHAPEL A.M.E. CHURCH
 COLEMANTOWN MEETINGHOUSE
 FLOOR PLAN**

JOB NUMBER: 060065

DRAWING DATE: 3.27.08

Photo Locations
Colemantown Meetinghouse

Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church
Burlington County, New Jersey





Jacob's Creek A.M.E. Church
Mt. Laurel, Burlington County, NJ
Historic Photo – No Date



Jacobs Chapel
— A.M.E. CHURCH —
LENAPE
HIGH SCHOOL
SERVICES - 10:00 AM
INFO: 856-286-7900

JACOBS CHAPEL
— A.M.E. CHURCH —
MT LAUREL NJ
REV. THOMAS...
PASTOR...



JACOBS CHAPEL
AME CHURCH
MT LAUREL NJ

Small plaque on the wall to the left of the door.

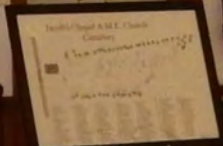
317







EXIT





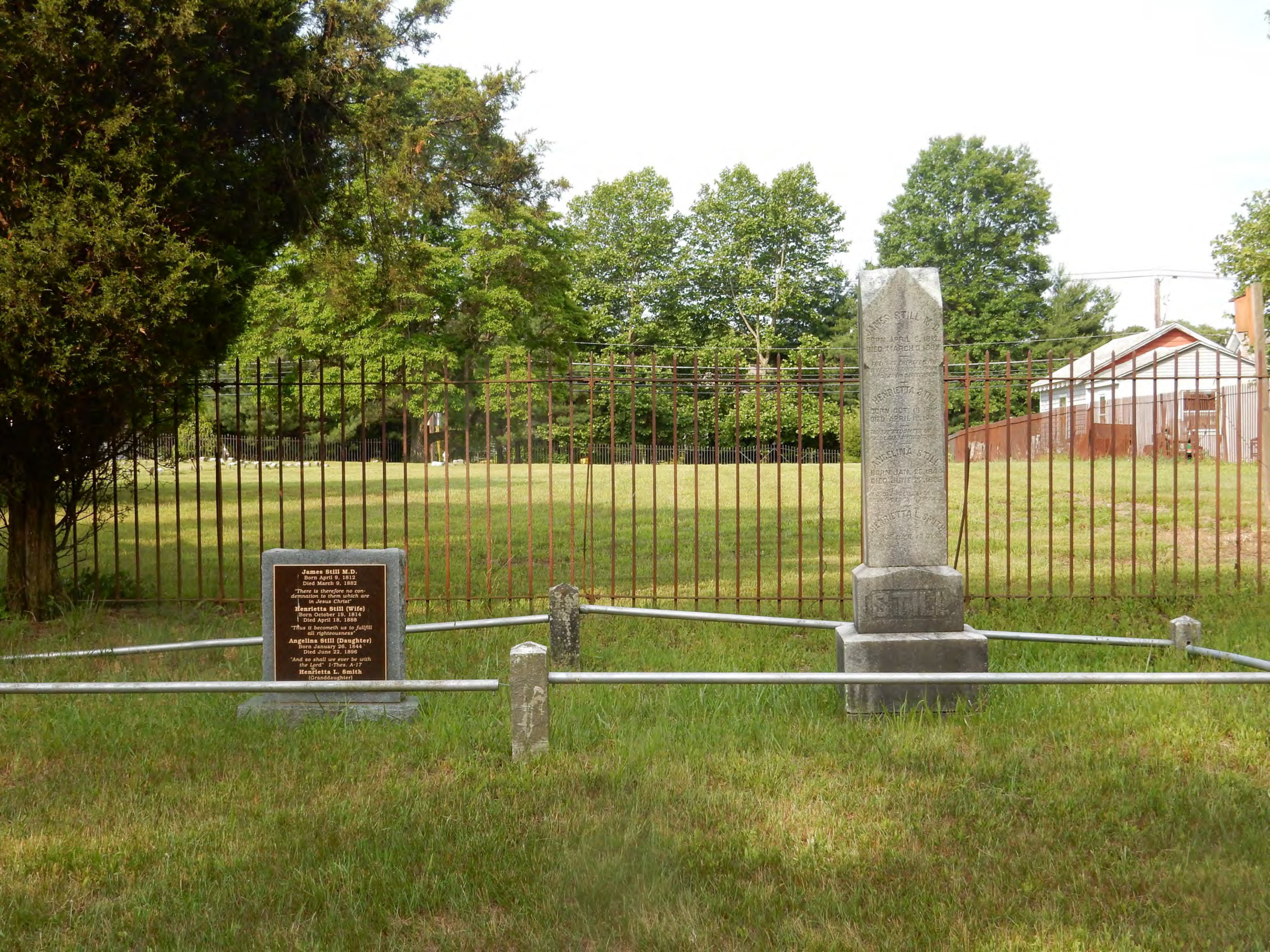


JESUS

EXIT

James Still M.D.
Born April 9, 1812
Died March 9, 1882
"There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Jesus Christ"
Henrietta Still (Wife)
Born October 19, 1814
Died April 18, 1888
"Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness"
Angelina Still (Daughter)
Born January 26, 1844
Died June 22, 1896
"And so shall we ever be with the Lord" 1-Thes. A-17
Henrietta L. Smith
(Granddaughter)

JAMES STILL M.D.
BORN APRIL 9, 1812
DIED MARCH 9, 1882
HENRIETTA STILL
BORN OCT. 19, 1814
DIED APRIL 18, 1888
ANGELINA STILL
BORN JAN. 26, 1844
DIED JUNE 22, 1896
HENRIETTA L. SMITH
BORN JAN. 12, 1875





313









EXIT

WINTER
INTERING
CLASS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, Burlington

DATE RECEIVED: 9/25/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/10/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000137

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 11/10/15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Pos 1840-1970
local & state level of sign.
ethnic heritage - A.A*

RECOM./CRITERIA A
REVIEWER W. D. Davis DISCIPLINE H. S. J.
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 11/11/15

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



HPO Proj. #08-0005-6
Chrono #: A2013-279

State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Office of the Assistant Commissioner

MAIL CODE 501-03A

PO Box 420

Trenton, New Jersey 08625

609-292-3541/Fax: 609-984-0836

BOB MARTIN
COMMISSIONER

CHRIS CHRISTIE
GOVERNOR

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

January 30, 2013

Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

I am pleased to submit the nomination for the Jacob's Chapel AME Church, Burlington County, New Jersey, for National Register consideration.

This nomination has received majority approval from the New Jersey State Review Board for Historic Sites. All procedures were followed in accordance with regulations published in the Federal Register.

Should you want any further information concerning this application, please feel free to contact Daniel D. Saunders, Administrator, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, Mail code 501-04B, P.O. Box 420, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420, or call him at (609) 633-2397.

Sincerely,

Rich Boornazian
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, Burlington

DATE RECEIVED: 2/15/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/08/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/25/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/03/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000137

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: Y
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 4/3/13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

See attached comments

RECOM./CRITERIA Return
REVIEWER W. Schme DISCIPLINE Historic
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 4/3/13

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Comments
Evaluation/Return Sheet**

Property Name: Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church

Property Location: Burlington, NJ

Reference Number: 13000137

Date of Return: 4/8/2013

Reason for Return:

The Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church nomination is being returned for technical and substantive issues.

The nomination does not provide sufficient context to evaluate the property's significance at either the local or state level for the period of significance of 1970-1986. In addition, the association that this property played in the Underground Railroad needs further documentation, and architecture, as an area of significance, needs further clarification.

While Jacob's Chapel played a role in the Mount Laurel court cases, additional information is needed to understand this property's contribution within the local and state context of these cases. When was the zoning variance from the Springville Action Council denied and by whom--the mayor, town council, or the zoning board? How was this communicated besides the announcement made by the mayor at Jacob's Chapel? Was this the only public meeting held, the first public meeting, or did others follow concerning this zoning variance? Are there minutes that document the zoning board or town council discussions concerning multi-family zoning variances that lead up to the mayor making his announcement?

In Section 8, page 28, explain what is meant by: "The mayor's startling announcement in Jacob's Chapel brought the case...into state court"? Contextual information is missing that provides this link between the chapel meeting where the mayor spoke and the state court cases—particularly Mount Laurel I. Are there other extant local resources that contributed to events leading up to or after the Mount Laurel I decision? What was the immediate impact of the 1975 New Jersey Supreme Court ruling with regard to affordable housing constructed in the Mount Laurel community?

What is “exceptionally important” to warrant the period of significance extending to 1986? Please refer to the National Register Bulletin, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, pgs. 41- 42 for guidance. Additional contextual information is needed addressing affordable housing issues at the state level to justify this level of significance. How did other NJ communities handling land use and zoning variances in rapidly developing areas? Was Mount Laurel the first to use litigation as a means for change?

Additional information is needed that ties the work of the Rev. Thomas Clement Oliver to this particular property as a stop on the Underground Railroad. Please clarify.

Architecture was not listed on the form as an area of significance. In Section 8, the text mentions Criterion C but does not provide an analysis of what features of the meetinghouse make it a significant example of a first generation black church. Please clarify.

Provide a map showing where the meetinghouse was originally located or indicate in the text the approximate distance the building was moved.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Lisa Deline, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
Lisa_Deline@nps.gov



HPO Project # 08-0005
HPO-F2015-315

State of New Jersey

MAIL CODE 501-04B

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

P.O. Box 420

Trenton, NJ 08625-0420

TEL. (609) 984-0176 FAX (609) 984-0578

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

BOB MARTIN
Commissioner

RECEIVED 2280

JUN 26 2015

**Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service**

June 23, 2015

Patrick Andrus
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Andrus:

The New Jersey Historic Preservation Office is re-submitting the National Register nomination for the Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church, in Burlington County, New Jersey—National Register reference number 13000137, for National Register consideration. The nomination was returned for substantive and technical issues; specifically for a more comprehensive evaluation of its significance, better documentation of its association with the Underground Railroad, better clarification of its architecture as an area of significance, and additional information that defines the property's contribution within the context of the Mount Laurel court cases. All changes have been made in compliance with your recommendations.

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact Bob Craig of the Historic Preservation Office staff by email at bob.craig@dep.nj.gov or by phone at (609) 984-0541.

Sincerely,

Daniel D. Saunders
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, Burlington

DATE RECEIVED: 6/26/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/11/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000137

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 8/11/15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA [Signature]

REVIEWER Lisa DeLune

TELEPHONE _____

DISCIPLINE Historic

DATE 8/11/15

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y see attached SLR Y/N

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Comments
Evaluation/Return Sheet**

Property Name: Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church
Property Location: Burlington, NJ
Reference Number: 13000137
Date of Return: 8/17/2015

Second Return

Reason for Return:

Based on an August 13, 2015 conference call with Bob Craig, NR Coordinator, at the NJ SHPO, the following technical and substantive issues were discussed. The August 17, 2015 follow-up e-mail text serves as the second return comments.

“Here are the updates needed for the Jacob's Chapel NR nomination:

- ✓ • Drop Criterion "C" on the form. Revise the POS to 1840-1970. Drop 1970-1986. Clarify what the significant dates represent - they must be within the POS.
- ✓ • Page 3 of the description - give a rough estimate of how many yards the meetinghouse was moved across Elbo Lane to its current location.
- ✓ • Drop the Underground RR references.
- ✓ • Update and edit the statement of significance summary paragraph. Drop the references to a "first period of significance" and a "second." For readability, start a second paragraph for the discussion of the significance of Jacob's Chapel and the beginning stages of the Mount Laurel cases.

The nomination never quite explains whether other sites are still extant that were involved in preparation for the Mount Laurel cases. It would be helpful to add something that shows there may be

other properties associated with this event but Jacob's Chapel seems to be the only documented property from this early stage that eventually led to litigation.”

Let me know if you have any questions.

Lisa Deline, Historian
National Register of Historic Places
Lisa_Deline@nps.gov



Deline, Lisa <lisa_deline@nps.gov>

Jacob's Chapel #13000137 NJ - a second return

1 message

Deline, Lisa <lisa_deline@nps.gov>

Tue, Aug 18, 2015 at 8:07 AM

To: Edson Beall <edson_beall@nps.gov>, Kevin Moriarty <kevin_moriarty@nps.gov>

Hi - The NJ SHPO is revising this nomination again...

--

Lisa Deline

Historian

National Register of Historic Places

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2016

National Park Service
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create the next generation of park
visitors, supporters, and advocates.**



HPO Project # 08-0005
HPO-I2015-279

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SEP 25 2015

State of New Jersey

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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

P.O. Box 420

Trenton, NJ 08625-0420

TEL. (609) 984-0176 FAX (609) 984-0578

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

BOB MARTIN
Commissioner

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

September 17, 2015

Lisa Deline
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Deline:

The New Jersey Historic Preservation Office is re-submitting the National Register nomination for the Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church, in Burlington County, New Jersey—National Register reference number 13000137, for National Register consideration. The nomination was returned for substantive and technical issues. All changes have been made in compliance with your recommendations.

If you have any further questions or comments, please contact Bob Craig of the Historic Preservation Office staff by email at bob.craig@dep.nj.gov or by phone at (609) 984-0541.

Sincerely,

Daniel D. Saunders
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

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SEP 25 2015

Resub

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or 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. 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 listed in 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 Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. Church

other names/site number Colemantown Meetinghouse

2. Location

street & number 311-313 Elbo Lane not for publication

city or town Mount Laurel Township vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Burlington code 005 zip code 08054

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I 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.

Rh Booy 1/31/13
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

NJ DEP
State or 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 this property is: Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

- 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:) _____

