

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 11 1977
DATE ENTERED	MAY 6 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

**

"Old First" of Elizabeth

AND/OR COMMON

First Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth *Use this*

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

14-44 Broad Street (Broad St. and Caldwell Place)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Elizabeth

VICINITY OF

12th District

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New Jersey

034

Union

039

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Trustees of First Presbyterian Church

STREET & NUMBER

Broad Street & Caldwell Place

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Elizabeth

VICINITY OF

New Jersey 07201

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Union County Court House

STREET & NUMBER

Broad Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Elizabeth

New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey
New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory 1008.4

DATE

1935-37, 1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress
Dept. of Environmental Protection, P.O. Box 1420

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Washington, D.C.

New Jersey

Trenton

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The exterior dates for the most part from the late 1780's.

The original building, a wooden structure covered with shingles, was built between 1666-67. In 1724, it was replaced by a new church. This one was also wooden with shingles. It was 42'x58' and had a high steeple with a bell. Sixteen feet were added in the rear and galleries in 1766 so that there was now room for pews for two hundred and forty-four families. In 1780, this church was burned by the British. A new church was begun in 1783 and completed in 1793. It was constructed of brick and red sandstone with a belfry steeple. The Sanctuary was about sixty feet square. The interior architecture resembled that of a New England meeting house. The church had a gallery in three sides with two tiers of superimposed columns, the lower to support the gallery, and the upper to give intermediate support to the roof trusses above.

In 1842, substantial repairs were made to the church. These included rebuilding the floor, rearrangement of pews, preparation of the columns, and reinforcing the roof trusses.

In 1851, the building was extended by twenty-seven feet in the rear and was remodeled in the Victorian Gothic Style. These alterations were applied over the original structure, so it was not lost entirely. The church bell, cast in England in 1822, is still functioning in the belfry.

The exterior of the church, which has suffered no architectural changes since its completion in 1793, was altered by a tornado which destroyed the spire in 1899. When it was replaced a few years later, the proportions were slightly altered and the heights increased. The design of the railing at the foot of the railing spire was changed from a Chinese fret design to vertical balusters.

The wooden portions of the tower above the square brick portion, the entire roof and the interior of the church were destroyed by fire in 1946. The restoration that followed in 1947, followed the plans that were left of the original 1780's church and not that of the Gothic revisions. However, the steeple has not been replaced as yet.

The church has balconies or galleries at the rear and both sides. There is a Chancel at the front of the Sanctuary with antiphonal Choir stalls to the rear of a raised pulpit on the south side, and a lectern on the north side of the Chancel.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

First Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth has been called the Church of the Founding Fathers of New Jersey. It is the oldest English-speaking congregation in the state having been founded in 1664. Governor Carteret called together the first Colonial legislative assembly to meet in the original meeting house on May 26, 1668.

It became affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in 1717, under the leadership of Reverend Jonathan Dickinson.

A royal Charter was obtained for First Church in 1753 through the office of the royal Governor at that time, Jonathan Belcher, a member of the Church.

Two ministers who served the Church that should be noted were Jonathan Dickinson and James Caldwell:

The Reverend Jonathan Dickinson, fifth minister of the Church from 1708 to 1747, follower of Log College ministry, was one of the founders and first president of the College of New Jersey, later Princeton University. The college classes met in the Church Manse in 1747.

The Reverend James Caldwell, served as minister from 1762 to 1781. He was minister of the Church during the Revolution and served as Chaplin of the New Jersey Militia.

His wife, Hannah, was fatally shot by a British soldier at the parsonage during the battle at Connecticut Farms, and Reverend Caldwell was killed by a sentry at Elizabethport in 1781.

The Church and the War

Elizabeth, lying just across the Arthur Kill from Staten Island - the main British supply base during the war was thus a corridor through which much of the action of the war took place. The Church was sometimes used as a hospital for the wounded. The town academy (now the Church Parish

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cunningham, John T. New Jersey America's Main Road, Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966.
 Ellison, Harry C. Church of the Founding Fathers of New Jersey: First Presbyterian Church, Elizabeth, New Jersey 1664-1964 Cornish, Maine: Carbrook Press.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.5
 UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>18</u>	<u>566300</u>	<u>4501380</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

(Revisions--Nanci Kostrub Historic Sites Office, DEP, Trenton (609) 292-2023

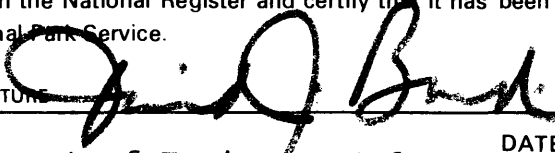
NAME / TITLE Reverend Raymond L. Wallace, Ph.D., Minister
 ORGANIZATION First Presbyterian Church DATE _____
 STREET & NUMBER Broad Street and Caldwell Place TELEPHONE _____
 CITY OR TOWN Elizabeth STATE New Jersey

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:



NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE 
 TITLE Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection DATE October 8, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DATE 5/6/77
 ATTEST:  KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE 5.6.77

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 11 1977
DATE ENTERED	MAY 6 1977

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

"Old First" of Elizabeth
Elizabeth
Union County
New Jersey 031

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE #2

DESCRIPTION

A room originally designed as a Chapel, but not finished, is located to the rear of the Chancel at the west end of the church. This room is flanked by two rooms on each of the first and second levels. There are four stairways leading to the second floor, one at each corner of the church. The basement is unexcavated except for two rooms located under the Chancel and rear chapel at the west end. These are used for the heating system storage.

The exterior brick work in the front is Flemish bond, the sides common bond and the rear is English bond. The quoins and trim are red sandstone. It has a three bay by seven bay plan with a balcony.

Graveyard

There are over two thousand known grave locations as well as several hundred unknown. The oldest stone dates to 1687, is now set in the rear wall of the Church in order to inhibit deterioration.

Parish House

The present parish house is located on the Caldwell Place side of the Church and is the site of the original town academy founded in 1767. This structure was built in 1917.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

"Old First" of Elizabeth
Elizabeth
Union County

New Jersey 034

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

3

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 11 1977

DATE ENTERED

MAY 6 1977

Item #7 Description Addendum

The 1793 church was constructed on the site of the earlier 1724 church. The 1665 church occupied the ground covered by the eastern portion of the present church. Behind it, in the area comprising the western portion of the existing building were buried the early settlers of ElizabethTown. Later, when the extension of the church westward necessitated building over the old burying ground, the tombstones were moved to their present location at the western end. In 1724, for unknown reasons, the 1665 church was replaced by a more pretentious structure on the same site. On January 25, 1780, the church and parsonage (located several blocks away) were burned by loyalists in retaliation for the patriot preaching of the Rev. Mr. Caldwell. By 1783, the building committee began laying the foundations of a new church. The building was completed in 1793 and is the structure that is still standing today.

Item #12 Certification Addendum

The wooden portions of the tower above the square brick portion, the entire roof, and the interior of the church were destroyed by a fire on June 25, 1946. During the summer of 1947 the major part of the debris was removed after careful measurement and check of all members not burned beyond recognition. The exterior walls all stood after the 1946 fire. Most of the rear wall was knocked out later in order to remove the debris from the fire. The entire interior was gutted. Consequently, the interior is a complete reconstruction, based on conjectural evaluation. The Gothic alterations of 1851 had been applied to the existing elements by nailing and plastering on of decorative **elements**. When removing the debris from the fire, they were able to determine the original condition of the remaining interior.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 11 1977
DATE ENTERED	MAY 6 1977

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

"Old First" of Elizabeth
Elizabeth
Union County

CONTINUATION SHEET New Jersey 024 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE #2

SIGNIFICANCE

House) was used as a supply depot by both armies at various times. In 1780, the Church was burned by the British troops.

Some of the more prominent members of Old First Church just before the Revolution were:

1. General William Livingston, first Governor of the State of New Jersey and the builder and occupant of "Liberty Hall." He served as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1787.

2. General Elias Boudinot, one of the most influential members of First Church. He served as President of the Board of Trustees of First Church in 1765, when he was just 25 years of age. He served in the Revolution as Commissary General of Prisoners. He was elected to the Continental Congress in 1778, and served as President of the Congress 1781-82. He also served on the delegation which drew up the treaty of peace with Great Britain. He was appointed Superintendent of the United States Mint in 1795.

3. Abraham Clark, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, New Jersey delegate to the First Continental Congress of 1774, and the Second in 1775. Served as Trustee of First Church 1786-90.

4. Elias Dayton, one of the members of the Committee of Correspondence, and Colonel of the Elizabeth Militia. As a General, he commanded the 3rd Brigade of the New Jersey Militia during the war. After the war, he was elected to Congress of the United States. He also served as Mayor of Elizabeth, and President of the Board of Trustees of Old First Church.

Included in the membership of Old First Church who served in the Revolution, in addition to the above, were Generals Jonathan Dayton, William Crane, and Philemon Dickinson. Also, Colonels Aaron Ogden, Matthias Ogden,

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

"Old First" of Elizabeth
Elizabeth
Union County New Jersey 031

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 11 1977
DATE ENTERED	MAY 6 1977

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE #3

SIGNIFICANCE

Moses Jaques, and Oliver Spencer. Altogether there were thirty-one (31) officers and fifty-two (52) enlisted men from the congregation of First Church who served in the war.

The Graveyard

The oldest known gravestone dates from 1687. This marks the graves of the Two Lawrance brothers, who were step-sons of Phillip Carteret, the first royal governor of New Jersey. There are over two thousand graves in the cemetery. Many graves of Revolutionary War participants are found here, including those of Generals Elias Dayton, Aaron Ogden, Matthias Ogden, and William Crane; also Reverend James Caldwell.

The Sunday School, which meets in the Parish House on the northeast corner of the Church land, was founded by the Reverend Dr. John McDowell in 1814, and is one of the oldest Sunday Schools in the state.

The Church has social significance because it was an important meeting place for the founders and leaders of both Elizabethtown and the State. Since there were very few places for social gatherings the Church was an important center of communication among the townspeople.

Though the interior of this church was destroyed by fire in 1946, the exterior brick walls of the 1783-93 structure and 1851 enlargement are intact. On the exterior the church retains its late 18th century fabric. The form has been retained with the reconstruction of the roof. Only the upper spire is lacking. The interior reconstruction of 1947 was based on early records and surviving fragments remaining after the fire.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

"Old First" of Elizabeth

Elizabeth

Union County

New Jersey 034

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 11 1977

DATE ENTERED MAY 6 1977

Item #8 Significance Addendum

The First Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth has played a significant role in the early history of New Jersey. The original building, the first place of worship constructed by the English in the State, served as Church and Town Meeting House for the New Jersey founders and their descendants. It was in this building that the first sessions of the Colonial General Assembly met on May 26, 1668.

The church building, built in 1783-93, is the only extant 18th century church in Elizabeth. The building itself is typical of the Palladian Revival style of architecture which was prominent in this country during the period that the church was reconstructed. The church resembles the First Baptist Meeting House in Providence, Rhode Island, in form and design.

On January 25, 1780, the second building on that site was burned by loyalists in retaliation for the patriot preaching of the Rev. Mr. Caldwell. By 1783, enough subscriptions had been pledged to enable the building committee to begin laying the foundations of a new church. The architectural character of the interior which was attractive and dignified, preserved the tradition of the New England meeting house. There was no indication of the more pretentious innovations being introduced at the time by the builders of Episcopal churches. This fact has been established by old pew plans and old records.

"Old First" has significance in both the religious background of the church and its relationship to the settlement of the town and the beginnings of New Jersey Colonial Government. The church is also significant for the role it played in the Revolutionary War. The church served as a hospital for the American wounded and the ministers who served as pastors during the war played very prominent roles in the events of the war.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

"Old First" of Elizabeth

Elizabeth

Union County

New Jersey

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE #2

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

JAN 11 1977

DATE ENTERED

MAY 6 1977

Major Bibliographical References (Cont'd)

Gugler, Kimball and Husted, Architects, Architectural History, of First Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth, New Jersey. 1947

Hatfield, Rev. Edwin F. History of Elizabeth, New Jersey, New York: Carlton & Lanahan, 1868.

Murray, Rev. Nicholas, Notes Concerning Elizabethtown, E. Sanderson, 1844; reprinted Columbia University Press, 1941.

Wheeler, W.O. and Halsey, E.D. Inscriptions of Tombstones and Monuments in the First Presbyterian Church Graveyard at Elizabeth, New Jersey. New Haven, Conn.: Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor, 1892.

Sessions and Trustees Records of First Presbyterian Church.