

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0681610

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
AUG 9 1978  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED DEC 21 1978

**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

Reformed Dutch Church of Second River

AND/OR COMMON

The Belleville Dutch Reformed Church

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

171 Main Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Belleville

VICINITY OF

11th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New Jersey

34

Essex

013

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

X PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

X RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

X YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

X OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Reformed Church in America

STREET & NUMBER

171 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Belleville

VICINITY OF

New Jersey

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Newark

New Jersey

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory (#386.4)

DATE

1975

FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Office of Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Trenton

New Jersey

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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

The Belleville Reformed Church is Gothic Revival style and has a simple basilican form. It is a red sandstone church with an engaged projecting center entrance tower. The linear facade has six bays each enhanced by buttress framing with sandstone caps. The windows on the side all have pointed Gothic arches and contain religious scenes in stained glass. Over the stained glass is modern aluminum storm sash.

The entrance tower projects slightly above the church roof peak and is further capped by a belfry and steeple. The tower has single buttresses at each corner, the engaged portion emerging from the roof line. Originally the caps of these buttresses had wood pinnacles which miniaturized the belfry and steeple, but these were removed in the last decade (Personal accounts of their removal are contradictory, but a slide taken in the 1960's still shows the pinnacles). In the belfry rests a cast bell on a frame base. This bell was installed shortly after the church was built. The inscription reads, "MENELEYS' WEST TROY, N.Y. 1864." The wood belfry is octagonal as is the pointed slate-covered steeple.

The main double entrance door in the tower has a pointed arch and is accentuated by a stone hoodmold. Flanking the main entrance are side doors.

Above the tower entrance is a Gothic arch window with a simple twin arch wood tracery.

The stonework at the front entrance facade is machine-cut and coursed, while the sides and rear have roughly coursed stone facades.

The rear of the church has an apse which on the interior forms the pulpit.

The interior of the Belleville Church (Beyond the vestibule) has a center aisle and side aisles with two sets of wooden pews. These box pews are 19th century and possibly original.

The pulpit at the apse in the front is also wood and ornately carved. An 1877 photo in possession of the church shows the pulpit and elders chairs as they appear today.

There is a balcony across the rear which has three Gothic arch entrances. Above the center door is a small rose window.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" 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

1853

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

William H. Kirk

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although the building dates to 1853, the congregation was established as early as 1697. The 1853 structure was designed by architect William Kirk of Newark and is the only Gothic Revival style religious edifice in the town. The Belleville Reformed Church is a good example of the early Gothic form of architecture as it was commonly implemented in the United States.

## Architecture

The only known church edifice in Belleville designed by William Kirk, the Belleville Dutch Reformed Church is a good example of the Gothic Revival format as constructed by master builders in New Jersey and is probably the least altered of Kirk's buildings.

William H. Kirk was a noted builder/architect of the firm of Kirk and Kirkpatrick of Newark. Credited with building approximately a dozen churches in New Jersey from 1839-1858, primarily in the Greek Revival form, the Belleville Dutch Reformed Church is representative of the buildings they designed later in their practice. Never seriously altered, the Belleville Church manifests substantial features of the Gothic Revival period.

William H. Kirk was an architect, builder/contractor, supplier, statewide politician, and legislator and churchman who was (among other things) a member of the Reformed Church. He is among the earliest Newark and New Jersey area prolific architects of many masonry churches, contemporary to and following noted Moses Dodd and Minard Lafever locally. Especially was he an obvious disciple of the latter (Lafever) -- in four architectural styles (2 Anglo Norman--Early Romanesque), Greek Revival and Gothic Revival. He is also credited with several porticoed Greek Revival county courthouses, all believed demolished, including that of Hudson County. A competent architect who left some mundane works as well as masterpieces, his architectural designing career was by the Civil War diminished in relation

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Belleville, N.J. History of Reformed Dutch Church at Second River.  
 Benjamin Taylor —  
 Belleville, N.J. Reformed Dutch Church - Contributions to early history. Aaron Ward  
Municipalities of Essex County, N.J. 1666 - 1924. Volume 2  
 Joseph Fulford Folsom

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.841 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	8	9	7	1	7	6	0	4	5	1	5	2	0	0
ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING								

B 

ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING							

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The church faces East on Main Street. The north side of the church is on Rutgers Street. The west side of the church is bounded by the cemetery which is on the east side of Stephens Street. The south side of the church is adjacent to 165 Main Street. [Block 13, Lot 12 - Belleville Tax Map.]

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Terry Karschner, Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Office of Historic Preservation

DATE

December 1977

STREET & NUMBER

109 West State Street

TELEPHONE

(609) 292-2028

CITY OR TOWN

Trenton

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.

Deputy

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Terry Karschner*

7-12-78

TITLE

Deputy Commissioner  
 Department of Environmental Protection

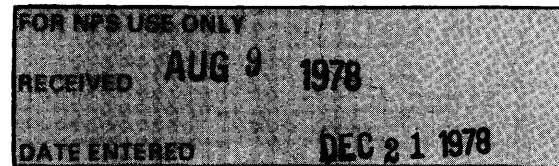
DATE July 12, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

<p><i>Charles B. ...</i></p> <p>DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION</p>		<p>DATE 12-21-78</p> <p>KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER</p>
<p>ATTEST: <i>Lynn D. ...</i></p> <p>KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER</p>	<p>DATE Dec. 20, 1978</p>	

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Belleville Reformed Church

Belleville

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New Jersey 034

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The interior walls of the Belleville Church are stuccoed and scored to simulate stone.

The ceiling has open vaulted wooden arch trusses with quadrafoil designs.

Alongside the pulpit is a large organ. Originally located in the balcony, this organ fits nicely with the interior details of the church and may be third quarter 19th century.

The main church is attached to the Chapel via a single room one story unit.

The Chapel, built in 1895, has an irregular pattern stone front, but is brick throughout the rest. Now known as Fellowship Hall, this building is a large 1 1/2 story structure with a gable end front facing the street.

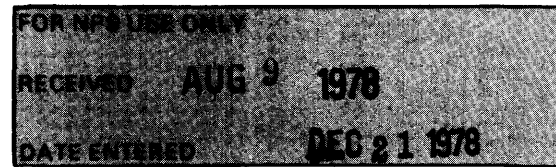
The interior has most of the original details intact including wainscoting and wooden window framing. The stained glass windows in the Chapel are all original and intact.

The Belleville Reformed Church had an excellent view of the river and openspace opposite the river, but a few years ago this was seriously effected by Route 21, an elevated expressway situated in front of the church between the river.

In the cemetery behind the buildings are buried many founders of the town as well as Revolutionary soldiers. The cemetery is separated from the street by a stone wall.

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B elleville Reformed Church  
Belleville  
Essex County New Jersey 034  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

to his great civic, political, contracting and supply businesses. He is reputed to have had cement mines near Kingston, New Jersey-- where both he and Lafever also designed buildings.

Most notable of Kirk's surviving work is the great brownstone Gothic--North Reformed Church, 1857-59 adjoining Mutual Benefit Life on Broad Street facing Washington Park, Newark. He did the 1852 simpler, similar Reformed Church by the Belleville Bridge. Especially noted and charming is his red brick, white columned, gold domed, 1839 Greek Revival church of the Presbyterians at Basking Ridge. By 1841, he had completed another very notable Greek Revival Church for Jersey City's most historic congregation, Old Bergen Reformed.

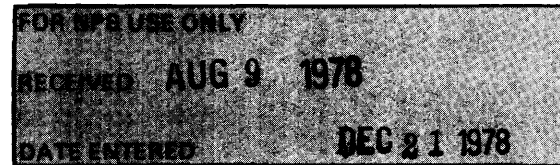
Religion

Established in 1697, the Belleville Dutch Reformed Church is the third oldest Reformed congregation in New Jersey and as such has functioned as a religious and social focal point for the Belleville area for over 275 years.

The exact date of the origin of the Belleville Church is not known but the known facts indicate that it was established in the year 1697. In the beginning, services were held by Reverend G. Berthoff in conjunction with the Church at Acquackanonk. Old records tell us that the original Church building was replaced by a new one in 1725, under the direction of a committee composed of Garrit Weurterse, Frans Van Dyck, Gideon Van Winkle and Johannes Koning.

The ground for this new house of God, located where the present Church stands, was conveyed by a deed by Francis Speer and his wife, Catryna. The new building was a square stone structure with a belfry constructed upon the centre of the roof and the sexton, when ringing the bell, stood in the center aisle. The belfry was later removed to a stone tower erected in the north end of the Church.

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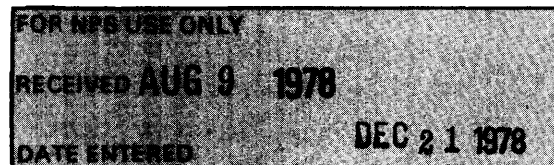
CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

The Reverend Henricus Coens was installed as pastor in 1726. He also served Acquackanonk and other Reformed Churches in the northern part of the State. It was during his pastorate that the "Schuyler Trust" was established and to this day, the Church continues to benefit from the proceeds of this bequest. In appreciation, the consistory gave to the Schuylers the right to call upon any minister of the faith, when a replacement was required. The first pastor called under this agreement was the Reverend Geradus Haughoort from the Church at Freehold. He was installed in 1735. The next fifteen years were years of considerable spiritual development and growth for the Church and town. Reverend Haughoort served until his death in 1776 and he was buried under the Church. During the Revolutionary period and until 1784 there was no regular pastor, services being conducted by the Voorleser or Clerk of the Church.

In 1784, Reverend Henricus Schoonmaker, pastor of the Acquacknonk Church, entered into an agreement to supply part of the time. On June 5, 1790 the Church became incorporated as "The Reformed Dutch Church of Second River." Reverend Peter Stryker was installed as pastor in October 1794. He was the first pastor to conduct services in other than the Dutch tongue although he continued to preach monthly in the mother tongue. He also constructed the Church of Stone House Plains (Brookdale) in 1801 from the members of the western section of the congregation.

In 1804, a violent tornado rendered the Church unfit for services and a new edifice was erected and dedicated in 1807. During the period of construction they were permitted to hold services in the Episcopal Church. This demonstration of the ability to work together in a common cause and in unity with other faiths was again demonstrated when in 1835 the use of the Church was permitted during the building of a new Episcopal Church. The same spirit of friendly cooperation was again evident in 1846 during the rehabilitation of the Methodist Church whose congregation were accorded the use of the building.

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The present Church was erected and dedicated in the year 1853 during the pastorate of Reverend Isaac S. Demund who in turn was followed by Reverend Thomas Dewitt Talmadge. The latter started his illustrious career here, to be followed by a quarter of a century of service at the Brooklyn Tabernacle and then in Washington, D. C. The building committee for the present church consisted of Messrs. John Van Rensselaer, Hohn H. Joralemon, Micholas N. Joralemon, John C. Lloyd, James Brown, Sebastian Duncan and Dr. Samuel L. Ward.

The present chapel was built and dedicated in 1895, while Reverend Andrew Hageman was pastor. The dedication service was one of the most impressive events ever witnessed at the Church and included the presentation of several of the memorial windows. The services were of a week long duration.

In 1915 under the leadership of Reverend J. Garland Hamner, a fund was raised sufficient to obtain from the Carnegie Foundation, a like amount with which to purchase a new organ which is still in use and has served to make more impressive the religious and other services.

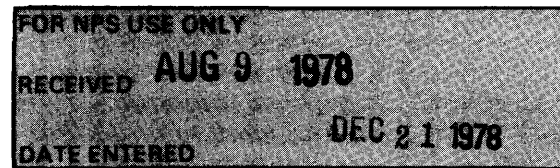
Church organizations provide for fellowship and mission work. The Ladies' Aid, the Guild, the Sunday School Junior and other departments support missions at Annville, Twin Wells Mission, Winnebago, and Taiwan, mentioning a few. The Missionary Society was 75 years old in 1950.

The Couples and Friendship Club, Stamp Club, Youth Canteen, Choir concerts and Talent Shows promote fellowship as well as spiritual inspiration. Girl Scouts and Sea Scouts hold regular meetings weekly.

The Ladies' Guild was started in 1960. A nursery program during church hour started also. In the summer youth attend conferences.



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CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

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Newark News - May 26, 1934 - "Church observes 237th Anniversary"

Newark Star Ledger - December 20, 1925. "Dutch Church Records  
Reveal History of Belleville."

Newark News - September 27, 1947 - "Belleville Church nears its  
250th Anniversary."

Sunday Call - September 15, 1901. "Belleville's Old Church."

New York Times - June 27, 1915 - "Jersey Will Honor its Oldest  
Church."

Sunday Call - March 18, 1925 - "An Ancient Church."

Belleville Times - December 5, 1946 - "The Old Dutch Church."

"The Two Hundred Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Old Church  
in Valley." (The Belleville Reformed Church). Booklet - 1972