

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



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HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

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 Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal Church

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

2. Location

street & number 261 - 265 Spruce Street

☐ not for publication

city or town Camden City

☐ vicinity

state New Jersey

code 034

county Camden

code 007

zip code 08103

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.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date 1/4/12

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:

☒ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ removed from the National  
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

[Signature]

3/12/12

**Macedonia A.M.E. Church**

Name of Property

**Camden, New Jersey**

County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ Private

☐ public-local

☐ public-State

☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)

☐ district

☐ site

☐ structure

☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

0

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

0

Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Religious Facility

Social

Meeting Hall

Recreation and Culture

Auditorium

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Religious Facility

Religion

Meeting Hall

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick; construction block

roof tar & paper

other

**Narrative Description**

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

**See continuation sheets Section 7 pages 1- 4**

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## Narrative Description

Macedonia A.M.E. Church is a two-story, brick building built in 1884, forty feet by seventy-five feet in plan, facing South from the north side of Spruce Street located in South Camden's Central Waterfront District, within the City of Camden, in Camden County. [photo #1] It stands in a once densely-populated, middle-class neighborhood that today is filled with vacant lots and abandoned or deteriorated row houses. A small number of homes have been maintained rather well by area residents despite the overwhelming evidence of neighborhood neglect. Vacant lots, which lie north and west of the church, provide parking for people who come to Camden to attend the city's Waterfront attractions. Row homes are located east of the church. Underutilized and abandoned property is located south of the church. [photos #2 & #3] A corner, paved parking lot lies east of the church and a small lawn is located behind and on the west side of the church. The church's property is enclosed by a black, wrought-iron, estate fence. The current building contains first-floor rooms, a second-floor sanctuary, and a partial third-floor gallery. The division of space within this plan shows a first-floor, central entrance at the southern end of the church [photo #1]. The current building been altered in minor ways since its original construction. These changes include (1) upgrades and improvements to the building's heating and plumbing systems (2) conversion to electric lights (3) wood floors covered with tile or carpet (3) original tin interior walls covered with wood panel or dry wall, (4) the addition of an emergency exit from the second floor sanctuary, (5) exterior masonry over the original brick, and (6) a flat roof that replaced the original gabled roof which was destroyed by hurricane Hazel in 1954. The impact of these changes, however, does not prevent the building from conveying a strong sense of its 1886 appearance.

## EXTERIOR

The general style of the church, a combination of late Victorian design with a Romanesque flavor was a style favored for many nineteenth-century churches. The building's original exterior masonry is covered with a special applied brick. The trim around the round-arched, stained-glass windows is also accented with a cement brickface coating. The windows are finished with a brownstone white-painted trim. [photo #4 & #5] The original façade reflected the provisions of the church's 1884 building contract. This document stipulated that the walls would be thirty-two feet high to square. The front wall of the building would be made of the best Philadelphia pressed brick. The sides would be stretchers brick and back-front mortar. [photo #6] The rear would be hard brick. Although changes were made to the church's external masonry in the mid-1970s, the building remains representative of the type of churches built in the nineteenth century in African American communities all over the eastern portion of the United States.

## South Elevation

Entry to the building is through a pair of three feet wide, double metal doors that are modern replacements. These doors are approached by two concrete steps approximately seven feet wide with 7½ inch risers. The steps are anchored on either side by black, wrought-iron handrails installed in recent years. Two round-arched, stained-glass memorial windows flank the central front entrance. The names of persons or organizations who donated these windows are engraved in the glass. The windows on the west side of the entrance display the following listed from west to east: Donated by H. Brady; Donated by Mrs. Lavenia M. Nixon in Memory of My Father & Mother Mr. & Mrs. Nehemiah Mosley. The windows on the east side of the front entrance display the following listed from west to east: Donated by the Usher Board; Donated by Mrs. C. Preston, Mrs. M. Bryant & L. Nixon. A transom approximately six feet by two and-a-half feet is located above the church entrance. The words *Macedonia AME Church* are etched in the glass. [photo #7] What appears to be the church's original date stone is embedded in the brick above this transom. The dimensions of the marker are approximately two feet by one foot. The following words are carved into the marker: AME,

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MACEDONIE CHURCH, FOUNDED 1833, REBUILT 1850, REBUILT 1884. [photo #8] The second and third stories are articulated by seven, round-arched, stained-glass windows. A large center window, located above the stone marker, is flanked by two, smaller, arched windows. Two other windows are located on the west side of these center windows and two are on the east side.

**West & East Elevations**

The west and east elevations of the church feature eight, round-arched, stained-glass windows located at the second and third floor levels. Four windows are on the west side of the building and four are on the east side. At the first floor level two unadorned windows are on the west side of the church and one, glass block window is on the east side. An emergency exit door and fire escape on the west side of the building extends from the second floor sanctuary to the ground. [photos #9 & #10]

**North Elevation**

The rather planar north elevation of the church is relieved by two, single exit doors. A small patio, handicapped-persons' ramp, and two air-conditioning units, all recent enhancements, are also located at the rear of the building. [photo #11]

**Roof**

The existing roof maintains a partial flatness. To this day there is an application of a built-up roofing system of tar and roofing felt paper. The building originally had a gabled roof. [Camden County Historical Society Macedonia A.M.E. Church photo] It was destroyed by hurricane winds in 1954 and was replaced by the current tar and paper roof.

**INTERIOR****Foundation**

The existing cellar has remained closely faithful to the original materials used in the church's construction. Part of the foundation of the 1850 church, a 26 by 60 foot building, is believed to have been retained in the cellar walls of the present (1884) building. [photo #12 & #13] Other salvageable materials from the previous church were also used for the current building. The brick piers holding up the massive wood beams that support the three (3) inch thick wood flooring system is evidence of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and nineteenth-century construction style. [photo #14 & #15] The cellar's dirt floor remains unchanged. [photo #16] The church's heating system is located in the cellar. This system was upgraded from coal to oil in the 1940s. Conversion to gas was completed in the mid-twentieth century.

**First Story**

The interior walls have been paneled with a thin, wood-type paneling over a once painted metal covering. The vestibule provides an attractive transition space from the street to the first floor of the church. A central hall extends from the double-door front entrance to a large, multi-purpose room at the north end of the first floor. An office and kitchen occupy the spaces to the east and west sides, respectively of the hall. [photo #17] Two side staircases, immediately inside the front entrance, provide access to the second floor. [photo #18] Each staircase is anchored with a wrought-iron handrail. Two, short side entrance halls provide access to the cellar and bathrooms. The multipurpose room is an open space area with an altar located at the north end of the room. The altar [photo # 26] was discovered under a stage [photo # 17] which was removed during 2007 renovations. The kitchen and room currently used as an office were partitioned off from the multi-purpose room in the early twentieth century. The kitchen walls still reflect the original tin walls used in the church's

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1880s construction. Fluted cast-iron columns marked "Gloucester Iron Works" are present in the first floor multi-purpose room as supporting members for the second floor.

**Second Story**

The second floor sanctuary is divided into four sections – narthex, nave, altar area and choir loft. [sketch #1] The original tin walls for this entire level were covered in the mid-twentieth century with a thin, wood paneling.

**Narthex**

The narthex is located at the south end of the second floor. It is reached by the staircases that rise from the vestibule below. Three, round-arched, stained-glass windows across the width of the narthex provide natural light for this area of the second floor. The windows' upper panels display religious symbols. The lower panels reflect the names of those who donated the windows. These windows, listed from west to east, are: A Bible surrounded by flowers – In Memory of The Stewardesses by Mrs. Lucy Little; A Lamb – In Memory of Mr. & Mrs. Richard Teal & Daughter, Laurel Teal; A Menorah – In Memory of Mrs. Augusta Cunningham by Mrs. Helen Bowers.

**Nave**

The narthex opens directly into a wide nave that occupies the full width of the building. A center aisle leads from the south end of the nave to an altar area. Two side aisles extend the full length of the nave to a choir loft located at the north end. A rear aisle provides access to the side aisles. Four columns on the aisles at the southern end of the nave support the third floor half gallery. [photos #19 & #20] Wide, wooden pews, installed in the mid-1950s, flank the center aisle. [photo #21] A decorative crown molding accents a flat, plaster covered, white ceiling. This ceiling replaced the building's original vaulted ceiling that was destroyed by hurricane winds in 1954. There are eight, round-arched, stained-glass windows in the nave. Four are located on the west wall and four are on the east wall. The lower panel of each window displays the names of members who donated them. The upper panel depicts one or more religious symbols. The following windows are located on the west side of the nave, listed from north to south. The Wheat Harvest (a bundle of wheat) – In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Randall Wiggins, Mr. & Mrs. Henry Turner. By Dr. & Mrs. U. S. Wiggins; No religious symbol panel (the original was destroyed and not replaced) – In memory of Mrs. Ida B. Garcia. By Rev. H. Alan Garcia & Sons; A White Dove carrying a small olive branch, Donated by Arthur Waples; A stained-glass window only. The windows on the east side of the nave, listed from north to south, are: A Cross, Bible, Physician's Healing symbol and AME religious symbols – By Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Mays, Mrs. Mamie Ruff, Mrs. Wilda R. Smith; A Baptismal Font – In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Allen Pitts & Mr. Nathaniel Pitts. By Rev. George Pitts; A Bible over a Cross – Mr. & Mrs. Lorenzo Goings, Mrs. Mae G. Williams & Mrs. Elizabeth G. Davis. By the Family; A stained-glass window only. [representative photos #22 & #23]

An altar rail at the north end of the second floor separates the pulpit area from the main body of the nave. This rail, which extends across the width of the pulpit area, gradually curves at both ends. The curved ends, which stop about four feet in front of an elevated choir loft, provide east/west access to a raised pulpit. A large, decorative, wood podium, chairs and communion table are located on the platform and behind the altar rail, respectively. This furniture was donated during the mid-1950s. The remaining furniture - pedestals, baptismal font and podium - were more recent additions.

A choir loft and massive pipe organ are located at the north end of the church. The pipe organ, installed in the church in the early twentieth century, visually dominates the choir loft and is the focal point of the sanctuary. [photo #24] Two, wood trophy cases flank the pipe organ. They house trophies which were won

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during the early twentieth century by the church's award-winning choirs. The organ's chimes, installed during the mid-twentieth century, are on the northwest wall of the sanctuary. The choir loft is framed by a metal balustrade and cloth drapes, both modern enhancements.

**Third Story**

A gallery, which spans the southern end of the narthex, provides a partial third floor. Arch-shaped, stained-glass windows provide natural light. These windows display religious symbols on the upper panels and the names of those who donated the windows on the lower panels. The windows, listed from west to east, are: A Harp – By Mr. William F. Spearman; A Lilly; A flowering, thorny branch; A Cross – Donated By the Pastor's Aid. Mrs. Florence Carswell, Pres. Mrs. Bessie Bailey, Sec. The gallery's original tin-covered walls are nearly completely covered with a thin, wood panel. The space of this level is divided into two rooms that serve as an office and media room. [photo #25]

\*

**8 Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheets Section 8 pages 1-17

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheets Section 9 pages 1-3

**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 AmericanReligionSocial HeritagePolitics / Government**Period of Significance**1832 – 1956**Significant Dates**1886**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**N/A**Architect/Builder**James Aspden (builder)**Primary location of additional data**

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

Name of repository:

Camden County Historical Society; Newspapers



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Summary

Founded in 1832, Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church was Camden's first, and therefore oldest, African American institution. It was established in Fetersville, Camden's first urban neighborhood. It remains on the same site on which it was founded in 1832, which thus becomes the oldest parcel of real estate continuously owned by African Americans in the city. Macedonia has a long history of fighting for the rights of Camden's African American residents. It began its fight in 1832 and continued the struggle for more than one hundred forty years. In the nineteenth century, Macedonia served as a stop on the Underground Railroad where it engaged in aggressive and oftentimes perilous activities to help secure freedom for those who fled actual or impending slavery. It was a house of worship as well as a place where African Americans throughout the city could meet and openly express their ideas and beliefs without censorship or the fear of punishment, imprisonment or both. During the twentieth century the church continued to serve as a location for major events such as graduations, banquets and political rallies, in the African American community. The church's commitment and political influence in the city of Camden also resulted in the elimination of Camden's discriminatory legislation. Its ongoing commitment to self-help and empowerment led to the implementation of academic and vocational training programs for the city's minority population. Macedonia began as a beacon of hope for those who sought religious freedom. However, it quickly became and remained a powerful voice of the community - voice through which African Americans could seek social justice and freedom, achieve economic advancement and attain political equality and power. The building thus meets Criterion A for its many associations with the emergence and rise of the African American community in Camden and New Jersey.

## Introduction

Camden, New Jersey is the largest city in South Jersey. It was legislatively incorporated February 14, 1828 and soon became one of the Delaware Valley region's leading cities. It held this level of distinction through the first four decades of the twentieth century. Fetersville, Camden's first urban neighborhood, was established by Richard Feters, a man considered to be the city's most successful urban housing and land developer of the antebellum period.<sup>1</sup> When Feters came to Camden from Philadelphia, he recognized the opportunities for growth along the Camden waterfront. As such, in 1833 he purchased large tracts of land from Charity<sup>2</sup> and Grace Kaighn,<sup>3</sup> wealthy landowners in the city. He surveyed the streets, laid-out building lots and constructed inexpensive housing for laborers who moved to Camden from nearby Philadelphia and southern New Jersey. He encouraged middle-class Philadelphia African Americans to settle in his newly developed community that was bounded on the North by Line Street, on the South by Cherry Street, on the East by Third Street and on the West by the Delaware River. The neighborhood was prosperous throughout the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the twentieth century Fetersville was absorbed into a larger geographic area in the city.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey M. Dorwart, *Camden County, New Jersey. The Making of A Metropolitan Community 1626-2000*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001) 59-60.

<sup>2</sup> Charity Kaighn to Richard Feters, May 28, 1833. Gloucester County Deeds Book M-3, 90, Gloucester County Clerk's Office, Woodbury, New Jersey.

<sup>3</sup> Grace Kaighn to Richard Feters, October 11, 1833. Gloucester County Deeds Book I-3, 101, Gloucester County Clerk's Office, Woodbury, New Jersey.



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## Pre-Civil War

Macedonia A.M.E. Church can trace its beginning in 1832<sup>4</sup> to a small group of African American settlers who had a vision, an abundance of faith, and the determination to do whatever it took to realize their dream. Their dream was to build a house of worship that would serve as a beacon for social and political justice. It would be a sanctuary for those who felt forsaken and a place of comfort for weary souls who sought spiritual and physical relief. The small group included several neighborhood residents. The most prominent members were the Wilsons, the Petersons and the Truitts. Benjamin Wilson, a property owner, was an outstanding individual in the African American community and a Methodist Episcopal clergyman.<sup>5</sup> Wilson's sons, Perry and Ephraim, were hominy makers who probably ran the local hominy mill. They, too, were considered to be successful persons of the community.<sup>6</sup> Daniel and Mary Peterson came to Camden from Philadelphia. Peterson, a property owner and tailor, was later described as a "Methodist preacher of ability."<sup>7</sup> His wife, Mary, was the daughter of the Reverend Jonathan Truitt, a follower of Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>8</sup> The final affluent member of the group was early Camden resident and property owner, Lydia Truitt,<sup>9</sup> Mary Peterson's sister.

As the neighborhood grew between 1832 and 1833, the residents never lost sight of their vision to build a church. They regularly gathered at each others' homes to conduct prayer meetings and make plans. During a prayer meeting at the home of Benjamin Wilson, the group made the decision to adopt resolutions to erect a small building for worship. Finally, they were going to build their church. At some point prior to beginning of construction they recommended and adopted the name *Macedonia*.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Lillian G. Burns, "History of Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal Church." (unpublished manuscript, n.d.). Burns's history of Macedonia contains much useful information but some questionable assertions also. Rev. J.J. Earl, from Mercer County, has been identified as an Underground Railroad organizer (Emma M. Trusty, *The Underground Railroad Ties That Bound Unveiled*. (Philadelphia: Amed Literary, 1990) 376.) Conflicting information regarding the congregation's first itinerant minister is found in Prowell, who identifies Richard Williams as the first leader of Macedonia A.M.E. Church (Prowell 475). He later served as Pastor of Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church in Philadelphia from 1840-1844. *The First Episcopal District's Historical Review of 200 Years of African Methodism* (Philadelphia: The First Episcopal District, 1987) 159. This may also be William Richardson, an itinerant minister on the Salem Circuit. He was the pastor assigned to Bethel A.M.E. Church, Springtown in 1829 (Trusty 75). In the early A.M.E. Church, pastors, (itinerant or "traveling" elders), were considered to be men of status. They retain this status today. "Local" ministers work at churches as subordinates of the pastor. (G. Lovelace Champion, Sr., *Pastor's Manual of the A.M.E. Church: Volume I Toward Deaconate Orders*. (Nashville: The AME Sunday School Union, 1985), xxxv and *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*. (Nashville: The AMEC Sunday School Union, 2001) 134-135.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Fethers to Benjamin Wilson, November 1, 1834, Gloucester County Deeds Book Q-3, 199, Gloucester County Clerk's Office, Woodbury, New Jersey. See also US Census, 1850.

<sup>6</sup> *Cassady's Camden City Directory*, 1864.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Fethers to Daniel Peterson, September 4, 1834, Gloucester County Deeds Book K-3, 459, Gloucester County Clerk's Office, Woodbury, New Jersey. See also Mechanic's Liens, Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey. The Peterson's substantial three-story house, built by lumber merchants George and John Browning, was indicative of their status.

<sup>8</sup> Howard D. Gregg, *History of the A.M.E. Church* (Nashville: Henry A. Belin, Jr., 1980) 16.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Fethers to Lydia Truitt, April 12, 1834, Gloucester County Deeds Book K-3, 90. Gloucester County Clerk's Office, Woodbury, New Jersey.

<sup>10</sup> George R. Prowell, *The History of Camden County, New Jersey* (Philadelphia: L. J. Richards and Co., 1886), 421. The name, *Macedonian*, also appears in early city histories and elsewhere. According to Trusty, a spiritual meaning lay behind

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Initially, church services were held in a small, one-story frame building, measuring twenty by thirty feet, until members could raise enough money and obtain additional resources to build a permanent structure.<sup>11</sup> The cornerstone for a one-story, twenty foot by thirty foot frame building was laid in 1833. The building was completed and dedicated by the Reverend Joseph Caul.<sup>12</sup>

During the early years of the A.M.E. Church, individual or local churches were led by itinerant ministers who were assigned a number of churches within a particular geographic area or "circuit." When Macedonia was completed,<sup>13</sup> Camden had a modest African American population.<sup>14</sup> As such, Camden became part of the Salem Circuit of the A.M.E. Church. Reverend Joseph Earls was Macedonia's first itinerant minister. He began to visit the church in 1833.

**Building & Rebuilding Before the Civil War**

Within two years of constructing or acquiring the first wooden building, Macedonians made another decision to purchase a lot on which to build a larger structure. This may have been the result of their discussions with Bishop Morris Brown, then the leader of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>15</sup> On July 7,

the name. The Apostle Paul in his dream of Macedonia heard a man call for someone to come to Macedonia and help them. Macedonia A.M.E. Church developed out of prayer meetings. As the church continued in prayer, they heard the cries of the enslaved brothers and sisters more clearly. Trusty 357.

<sup>11</sup> Burns 2. An account of the dedication of the current church, on October 24, 1886, appearing in the *Christian Recorder* reported that the new church was, "the third building... successfully reared on the same lot." The wooden building or buildings may have been the house or houses, which were most often frame structures, of a resident or residents of Fetersville. Early local ministers, Benjamin Wilson, Daniel Peterson and George Johnson all lived in frame dwellings. If it was a specific building it may have been the home of Benjamin Wilson, who lived next to the site of the first church. It also may have been a structure owned by Jacob Ham, who had a frame dwelling erected on a property for which he paid ground rent. The building was at the southern end of town lot #69 and was described as a "...certain two story frame dwelling house, fourteen feet by twelve feet standing on ground rent upon a lot in that part of the city of Camden called Fetersville bounded on the west by an African Church on the east by John Bond's lot fronting on Spruce Street..." (Miley Butler, by Sheriff, to Henry Grimes, November 4, 1843, Gloucester County Deeds Book C-4, 269-270, Gloucester County Clerk's Office, Woodbury, New Jersey). This lot, which was owned by Lydia Truitt, was next to the land upon which the first church structure was erected. Ham eventually took up permanent residence nearby on South Second, now Locust Street. This is conjectural but takes into account details in Burn's church history, earlier church histories, primary source documents and other secondary sources, such as Prowell.

<sup>12</sup> Burns 2.

<sup>13</sup> Burns 2.

<sup>14</sup> US Census, 1830. In the US Census for 1830 there was an estimated 67 African Americans living in the City of Camden.

<sup>15</sup> R. R. Wright Jr., Compiler, *Encyclopedia of African Methodism*. (Philadelphia: The Book Concern of the AME Church, 1947) 566-567. Morris Brown was the second bishop of the A.M.E. Church from 1828 to 1845. He was born on January 8, 1770 in Charleston, South Carolina. He secured a license to preach and was ordained a deacon in 1817 and an itinerant elder in 1818. Brown, who was born a free person, also was a prosperous boot and shoemaker. He befriended his slave brothers and helped a number of them purchase their freedom. These activities resulted in Morris' imprisonment for one year before 1822. Morris eventually fled north to Philadelphia because conditions for free African Americans had become increasingly intolerable and because he was suspected of being involved with the Denmark Vesey insurrection in Charleston. His family joined him in 1823. Brown's energy, intelligence and business acumen caught the attention of the A.M.E. leadership. He was elected a bishop in 1828 and served as an assistant to Bishop Richard Allen whose health was beginning to fail. After Allen died in 1831, Bishop Morris Brown remained the sole bishop of the A.M.E. Church until 1836 when Bishop Edward Waters was elected to assist. Morris Brown College, Atlanta,

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1835, the members, under the leadership of Bishop Brown, acquired town lot #68 from Richard Fetters, the developer of Fettersville. Although the lot's purchase price was originally \$100, Fetters reduced the price to \$70 based on Bishop Brown's stated intention to erect a church on the property.<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, the first one-story wood structure was totally destroyed by fire on December 8, 1839 at 3:00 a.m. The newspaper article attributed the fire to "...an incendiary as there had been none used in it since the previous Sunday."<sup>17</sup> The congregation was devastated but the strength of their faith and depth of their courage spirited them on to regroup and rebuild their church on the same site. A new two-story brick structure, measuring thirty feet by forty feet, was completed by, perhaps, 1842.<sup>18</sup> Due to the church's membership growth, the congregation undertook the reconstruction of its 1842 brick edifice. The Revs. Henry Highland Garnet and Octavius V. Catto laid the ceremonial cornerstone for the reconstructed church in June 1850.<sup>19</sup> The church was reputedly completed later that same year. Five years prior to that date, Bishop Brown had all deed restrictions lifted from the property before transferring it to the local trustees of the church.<sup>20</sup> The dimensions of the new building are reported to have been twenty-six feet by sixty feet with the gable end facing Spruce Street.<sup>21</sup> The church's layout and design was probably similar to that of Philadelphia's original Bethel A.M.E. Church.<sup>22</sup>

The growth rate of Camden's African American community was explosive over the two decades following the establishment of Macedonia A.M.E. Church. Fettersville, the community that contained Macedonia, became a mecca for this group of people. By 1840, there were 297 residents in the area of which 100 were children under the age of 10.<sup>23</sup> Ten years later, the area's number of African Americans had increased to 725 or slightly more than 17%.<sup>24</sup> During the same time frame, Macedonia was a guiding light in the lives of area residents and served as the spiritual and philosophical center of the burgeoning community.

of the A.M.E. Church until 1836 when Bishop Edward Waters was elected to assist. Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Georgia, was established in 1885 in honor of Bishop Morris Brown. (Andrew White, *Know Your Church Manual*. (Nashville: The AMEC Publishing House, 1965) 19).

<sup>16</sup> Richard Fettes to Morris Brown, July 7, 1835, Gloucester County Deeds Book O-3, 273, Gloucester County Clerk's Office, Woodbury, New Jersey.

<sup>17</sup> *Philadelphia North American*. Microform edition. (Philadelphia: *Philadelphia North American*, December 10, 1839) 2.

<sup>18</sup> Morris Brown conveyed the property on which the church was built to the church's trustees on May 23, 1840. This may have signaled the beginning of construction of the church (Morris Brown to Miley Butler, et. al., May 23, 1840, Gloucester County Deeds Book Y-3, 417, Gloucester County Clerk's Office Woodbury, New Jersey); also Burns 2. William Carman v. Trustees, Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal Church, December 30, 1841. Mechanics Lien for lumber only, Gloucester County Document Collection, Gloucester County Historical Society, Woodbury, New Jersey. Prowell, 474-75.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel R. Biddle and Murray Dubin, *Tasting Freedom: Octavius Catto and the Battle for Equality in Civil War America*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 154.

<sup>20</sup> Morris Brown to Henry Grimes, et. al., February 11, 1845, Camden County Deeds Books A, 489, Camden County Clerk's Office, Camden, New Jersey.

<sup>21</sup> L. F. Fisler, *A Local History of Camden* (Camden, NJ: Francis A. Cassedy, 1858) 62. The shape and orientation of the original building is based on an interpretation of Fowler and Bailey's, *Bird's Eye View of Camden, New Jersey in the Centennial Year, 1876* in the collection of the Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey.

<sup>22</sup> The First Episcopal District's Historical Review of 200 Years of African Methodism (Philadelphia: The First Episcopal District, 1987) 158-159.

<sup>23</sup> US Census, 1840.

<sup>24</sup> US Census, 1850. Also, Prowell 422. While Prowell reports that African Americans comprised nearly one fourth of the South Ward's total population, actual numbers indicate that in 1850 the number of African Americans was slightly greater than 17%, (725 African Americans versus total ward population of 4,112).

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The building that was completed in 1850 met the needs of an expanding membership whose numbers had grown beyond the 1838 figures of 34 adults and 26 children.<sup>25</sup>

**Macedonia and the Underground Railroad**

The African Methodist Episcopal Church is the oldest African American religious institution in the United States. It was founded during a time when slavery was a legal, thriving, and profitable way of life. The vision of the A.M.E. Church was based on the principle of freedom and an accompanying call for racial solidarity and the abolition of slavery. The church's motto, first prepared by Bishop A. Daniel Payne, "God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer, Man Our Brother," shaped the religious, social and political attitudes of its congregants and served as a constant reminder that the church was established to help others and to fight for their rights.

Macedonia's connection with the Underground Railroad was a logical next step in its pursuit of equality for African Americans. However, before doing so, it was very involved in the fight for the rights of African Americans within its own community. Early on, Macedonia's congregation put the principles and beliefs of the A.M.E. Church into action when they supported anti-slavery activities. This was evidenced by eyewitness accounts of the members' aggressive responses against slave-catcher activity.

In an early 1880s interview with George Johnson, a life-long Fetersville resident, Johnson remembered a situation that had happened nearly fifty years earlier or shortly after the church was built. Slave hunters appeared in Fetersville with the sole purpose to abduct John Collins, an African American living near the church. Before these slave hunters could complete their horrific mission, they were driven off by a mob of women wielding clubs and pokers.<sup>26</sup>

Another incident took place during the local ministry of Reverend Thomas Clement Oliver,<sup>27</sup> who later, as an itinerant minister, served several other A.M.E. churches in New Jersey. Based primarily on the work of Wilbur H. Siebert, the Reverend Oliver was the foremost authority on the Underground Railroad in New Jersey.<sup>28</sup> Members were holding prayer meeting at the church when they were called upon to free a suspected fugitive. According to one account, "...the officers having captured a fugitive in the country put him in a wagon and were driving towards the ferry passing by the Macedonia church. When they came opposite the church the prisoner raised a forceful cry of "kidnappers," which, in a few moments, emptied the church of worshippers

<sup>25</sup> Burns 2. This membership figure is consistent with Mickle's 1838 description of the Fetersville community.

<sup>26</sup> Prowell 421. George Johnson, whose name appears in the *Camden City 1850 Directory*, lived at 247 Spruce Street.

Another George Johnson, also listed in the *Camden City 1850 Directory*, lived at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> & Cherry Streets. Prowell's reference to George Johnson does not list the actual address of the Johnson who was interviewed. As such it is unclear which Johnson recalled the events of the earlier kidnapping attempts. His eyewitness account, however, supports the notion that Macedonians actively supported the mission of the Underground Railroad. The George Johnson who was born in 1802 would have been age 30 when the church was founded. He was 82 years old in the early 1880s.

<sup>27</sup> Burns 6. According to church history, Reverend Thomas Clement Oliver was the local "pastor" of Macedonia A.M.E. Church from 1846-1847. He probably shared his duties with Reverend Israel Scott, an itinerant minister on the Burlington Circuit. Reverend Oliver did not become an itinerant minister until 1848 (Trusty, 328). Conflicting information is found in Prowell 475, regarding the succession of itinerant ministers at Macedonia A.M.E. Church. However, he did include Reverend Israel Scott among the early itinerant ministers to serve the Fetersville community.

<sup>28</sup> Giles R. Wright, *Steal Away, Steal Away. A Guide to the Underground Railroad*. (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, Department of State, n.d.) 10. Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery To Freedom: A Comprehensive History*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1898).

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[who] surrounded the wagon with rescuers. While they were vehemently discussing the situation, Hannah Bowen cut the traces, and the horses, minus the wagon, were driven away, while the officers were glad to exchange their prize for their own personal safety."<sup>29</sup>

Like most A.M.E. congregations, Macedonia A.M.E. Church became a station on the Underground Railroad. It was later recounted that, "from Philadelphia, the runaways were taken across the Delaware River to Camden, where Mr. Oliver lived; there they were conveyed northeast following the course of the river to Burlington, and thence in the same northeast direction to Bordentown,"<sup>30</sup> Reverend Oliver eventually became a statewide organizer and agent of the Underground Railroad. By then he no longer resided in Camden.<sup>31</sup>

Another source of Macedonia's involvement in the Underground Railroad was uncovered during a February 2006 interview with Elvy T. Williams, Jr. and Doris Williams Brooks. These siblings have been members of Macedonia their entire lives. Elvy Williams, Jr. clearly recalled stories told to him and his siblings by his father, Elvy T. Williams, Sr. Elvy Williams, Sr. and his wife, Mae, were told by Mae's parents, Vinnie (pronounced Vi'-nee) and Lorenzo Goings, that Macedonia used to hide runaway slaves in the church. The Goings were married in Woodsdale Person County, North Carolina in January, 1886. That same year they came to Camden, New Jersey and joined Macedonia. The members told this young couple of the church's activities with the Underground Railroad.<sup>32</sup> The parents passed this information to their children two of whom were Elvy T. Williams, Sr. and Lillian Goings Burns. Lillian Goings Burns was a historian, career educator, and social activist in the city of Camden. According to Elvy Williams, Jr. "Aunt Lillian's" research was more thorough because she took time to talk extensively with her parents, meet with members who were there when her parents joined Macedonia and research church papers to document the church's history."

The work of Macedonia typified the significant role of the Black church in the nineteenth century and, in particular, the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the organization and operation of the Underground Railroad. The ideals and aspirations of Richard Allen and the Free African Society had matured along with the independent Black church. As its geographical influence expanded and its numbers dramatically increased the African Methodist Episcopal Church became a sophisticated and highly effective agent of resistance and, finally, change.

<sup>29</sup> Prowell 421- 422.

<sup>30</sup> Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom*, (Arno Press and The New York Times, 1968) 123-124. First published New York: The Macmillan Company, 1898.

<sup>31</sup> Trusty 356-357.

<sup>32</sup> Brooks, Doris Williams and Elvy T. Williams, Jr. Personal Interview. 16 February 2006. Elvy Williams, Jr. provided extensive documentation on the history of his family particularly on his grandmother's side. Before the beginning of the nineteenth century, a slave master and slave had a son. The son, whose last name was Jordan, married a full-blooded Indian woman (tribe unknown). One of this couple's children, Wiley, was born in 1834. He had blue eyes. During his lifetime, Wiley married three times and had about twenty (20) children. Vinnie, like her parents, was born into slavery on October 20, 1857 in Woodsdale, Person County, North Carolina. She was a child of Wiley's first marriage. She and her parents worked in the master's house. However, when Vinnie was very young, she was a "playmate" for the slave-master's daughter who taught her to read and write. Vinnie was freed following the Emancipation Proclamation. She married Lorenzo Goings in 1886, moved to Camden, New Jersey and joined Macedonia that same year. The couple had one son who did not survive childhood and six daughters - Sara, Viola, Ella, Elizabeth, Mae, and Lillian. Viola never married. Sarah married William Stevens. They had two children. Lillian, who married Eugene Burns, never had children. Elizabeth married Leroy Davis. They had six children. Ella married James Buck. They had two sons one of whom married Marion Still, a descendent of the Still family. Mae married Elvy Williams, Sr. The couple had eleven children.

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Camden County, NJSection number 8 Page 7**Social Justice and Empowerment in the Ante-Bellum Period**

Macedonia not only maintained its presence as a stop on the Underground Railroad, but it also played a pivotal role in helping define the African American experience in the city of Camden. It was a vital institution and an example of what W. E. B. DuBois later wrote about the black church in America, "the first form of economic cooperation among black people."<sup>33</sup>

The church extended its service well beyond the spiritual needs of its congregation. It was the focal point of a community that continued to experience rapid growth as African Americans migrated to Camden from nearby Philadelphia, West New Jersey, and other more distant locales.<sup>34</sup> It helped these new residents become integrated into local society by sponsoring concerts, picnics, fairs, bush meetings, and events for young people.

Macedonia also had a keen interest in nurturing the growth of non-religious organizations. This was confirmed by its willingness to open its meeting room to fraternal groups who organized to provide African Americans with opportunities denied them in Camden's mainstream society. The church provided an atmosphere where these organizations could come together to develop the leadership capabilities of their members and discuss important socio-political ideas of that time. Two such groups were the Rising Sun Lodge, No. 1 established in 1847 and Aurora Lodge, No. 9, Free and Accepted Masons, an organization that was founded in August 1853. The Rising Sun Lodge, No. 1 was the larger of the two organizations. It was under the leadership of Dempsey Butler, a member of Macedonia A.M.E. Church and a highly respected figure in the African American community.<sup>35</sup> Aurora Lodge, No. 9, Free and Accepted Masons, the smaller of the two fraternal groups, regularly met in a rear meeting room of the church.<sup>36</sup>

**Building the Present Church Edifice**

Camden's total population continued to grow as did the number of African Americans who came to the city. By 1880 there were more African Americans in Camden than in any other city in the state.<sup>37</sup> This is noteworthy in absolute terms. However, an analysis of this group between 1850 and 1885, showed a steady decline in the percent of African Americans relative to Camden's total population. In 1850 the number of African American residents in Fetersville was more than 17% and slightly more than 7% of Camden city residents. By 1885 the numbers for this group had decreased to slightly more than 7% for Fetersville and nearly 2% for the city.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, growth was constant in the Fetersville neighborhood. Macedonia recognized that it would need a bigger building if it intended to accommodate a larger congregation and meet

<sup>33</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990) 8.

<sup>34</sup> Spencer R. Crew, *Black Life in Secondary Cities: A Comparative Analysis of the Black Communities of Camden and Elizabeth, New Jersey, 1860-1920* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993) 67. The assembled data on the birthplaces of Black residents is interesting. For instance, in 1880, 62.6% of Camden's African American population was born in the South.

<sup>35</sup> Dorwart 104.

<sup>36</sup> Crew 26-27. Crew's reference to Aurora Lodge's early meeting rooms adds support to the Fowler and Bailey map's depiction of the building with a one story, lean-to attached at the rear of the building (see also Prowell 563).

<sup>37</sup> Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History*. (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1988)

46.

<sup>38</sup> Prowell 422. Also, Dorwart 59 and 97.

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the needs of a growing community. The membership had increased to 240 and there were 155 pupils in the Sunday School that, by then, was under the leadership of William S. Darr.

A decision was made to purchase the property that was adjacent to the church. The dimensions of this parcel of land were thirty feet by one hundred feet. On April 29, 1884 the trustees of the church entered into a contract with builder, James Aspden to "...furnish, erect and finish a two story brick church... for the agreed upon sum of \$8,000." The contract stipulated that the windows on the sides would emulate those of Scott's Methodist Episcopal Church in the city's Centerville neighborhood, a building also erected by Aspden. However, the glass would be different. The façade was to replicate that of the Fifth Street Methodist Episcopal Church in Camden. The contract also called for the builder to use "the best Philadelphia pressed brick" for the façade and marble for the openings.<sup>39</sup>

According to Rev. A.H. Newton, pastor of Macedonia A.M.E. Church in 1885,

"the old church was taken down and carpenters and masons worked on the new structure for the next eighteen months. During this period, the congregation worshipped at the church's mission school-house in the Kaighnsville section of the city near the A.M.E. Zion Church.<sup>40</sup> The congregation walked into the basement of the new building in December, 1885."<sup>41</sup>

Newton described the new building as,

"a large, two-story brick structure with a cellar where all the heating was done. After entering the front door of the building, there was a staircase on the left and right leading to the second floor "audience" room. Before entering the first floor (basement) meeting room, there was a study and lecture and classroom with frosted windows. The ceiling was high, easily ventilated and the windows were of the best enameled glass. The yellow pine woodwork was not painted but was finished in oil. The second floor sanctuary was large with three aisles, one in the center and one on each side, with a door at each aisle. There was a large gallery across the front of the sanctuary making the seating capacity about 550.<sup>42</sup> The windows were of the best variegated stained glass. Each window contained a memorial to Bishop R. H. Cain, Rev. A. H. Newton, Rev. d W. H. Yeocum and Mr. Perry Wilson, the oldest member of the church. The ceiling was very high, carved and angled. Large reflectors gave a mellow, beautiful light. The floor was completely carpeted, unlike other churches in the area. There was fine furniture on the pulpit along with a splendid pipe organ which made for an elegant finish."<sup>43</sup>

The large meeting room on the first floor and seating capacity of the second floor sanctuary underscored the

<sup>39</sup> Camden County Building Contract #703, manuscript collection no. ???, deposited with the Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey. Aspden was a bricklayer by trade. It is interesting to note that at this late date the West New Jersey bricklayer was still a major figure in the building trades and was called upon to design buildings.

<sup>40</sup> A. H. Newton, *Out Of The Briars* (n.p., 1910; reprinted Miami: Mnemosyne Publishing Co., Inc., 1969; reprinted Pamplin Historical Press, 2000) 249-250.

<sup>41</sup> Newton 250-251.

<sup>42</sup> Newton 251-252.

<sup>43</sup> Newton 251-252.



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rapid growth of the previous decade and the trustees' vision of an even larger congregation.<sup>44</sup> By 1886, two years after the completion of the new building, church membership had increased to 276 while the number of Sunday School pupils had risen to 174. Samuel Hunt was the Sunday School Superintendent.<sup>45</sup>

By 1881 there were more than thirty churches in the city of Camden. Of this group, six were located in the city's African American communities.<sup>46</sup> Macedonia, the first church founded in 1832, and Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1855, were located in Fetersville. Zion Wesley Church, founded in 1855 and Seventh Baptist Church founded in 1856 (today's Kaighn Avenue Baptist Church), were located in Kaighnsville.<sup>47</sup> Centerville was the location of the two remaining African American churches. These were Scott Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1856 and Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church (later Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church), founded in 1863.<sup>48</sup>

Macedonia maintained its leadership role even as the other African American churches were being established throughout the South Camden area. It did so because of several factors – commitment, location, and capacity. Macedonia was the first and only African American church in Camden for nearly twenty years. Although it was located in the Fetersville neighborhood, it was the only organized source of spiritual guidance and religious education for African Americans in Fetersville and Kaighnsville. This provided an ideal opportunity for the church to meet the religious, social and educational needs of residents in both communities. Macedonia also remained committed to its founding principle of racial solidarity. This strong commitment combined with its strategic geographic location made it a formidable ally and effective conduit for Underground Railroad activities. It also solidified the importance of the church to the city's African American residents.

The size of the church also helped it retain its leadership position in the African American community. When the Kaighnsville community's Zion Wesley Church built its first one-story frame structure in 1853, Macedonia had three years earlier completed its third building, a twenty-six feet by sixty feet, brick structure. By 1884, Macedonia was in the process of constructing its third and current building, a two-story, brick structure, forty feet by seventy-five feet. Camden's other African American churches hosted religious and secular programs for city residents. However, the capacity of Macedonia's current building was such that the church could accommodate a larger number of people than these other churches. The sanctuary alone had more square foot than any other building owned by African Americans in the city. The church willingly opened its doors to communities throughout Camden thus helping it retain its position as the facility of choice for all types of events sponsored by the African Americans.<sup>49</sup>

By the late nineteenth century, Macedonia's meeting room and some of the other halls in the city were used by an increased number of groups that were formed to address the expectations of Camden's residents.<sup>50</sup> The

<sup>44</sup> "Sixty-Second Anniversary. An old Fortress of African Methodism Organized in 1832," *Camden Daily Telegram*, 6 March 1895.

<sup>45</sup> Prowell 475.

<sup>46</sup> Prowell 467-497.

<sup>47</sup> Prowell 475 & 482.

<sup>48</sup> Dorwart 104.

<sup>49</sup> Burns 2.

<sup>50</sup> Sinnickson Chew, ed., *Chew's Camden City Directory: 1879-1880* (Camden: S. Chew, Publishers and Printing, 1879)

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church's first floor room was a popular meeting place for several of Camden's African American organizations. Three charitable groups and one fraternal order, the Mt. Bethel Society, No.1, held their meetings there.<sup>51</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, a diverse number of organizations of African American females and the GAR William P. Robeson Post 51 also met at the Church.<sup>52</sup> The larger more established fraternal organizations had grown and matured to a level where they eventually moved into their own buildings. An 1895 newspaper article described the church at its 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary celebration and reads in part:

The church has had thirty-four pastors. Nine ex-pastors are still living and attended the services yesterday. The membership of the church numbers about 340, and about 200 children are enrolled in the Sunday school, with an average attendance of 100.

A flourishing Christian Endeavor Society, a Junior Society and a Historical and Literary Society are indications of the progressive spirit which pervades the congregation.<sup>53</sup>

**Early Civil Rights Movement**

As the century came to a close some groups who regularly met at the church began to look for accommodations, such as Butler Hall, that would satisfy their organizations' objectives in non-religious environments.<sup>54</sup> The trend continued until 1920 when the majority of African American social and fraternal groups completed the transition of their meetings to secular locations.<sup>55</sup> Macedonia, however, did not let the decisions of these groups discourage its commitment to serve the community and forge ahead with the fight for equality. It did so through its strong allegiance to Camden's dominant political entity, the Republican Party. It used its association with this party to effectuate change and influence the future direction of the city.

This was most notably evidenced by the emergence of several of Camden's African American leaders whose activities led to many important and significant firsts by the end of the nineteenth century. William Spencer Darr, descended from one of Camden's oldest families, was a prominent member of Macedonia A.M.E. Church. He was one of the city's first African American postal workers. He later became a Justice of the Peace.<sup>56</sup> There were other African American leaders who also distinguished themselves through the 1880s and 1890s: Roscoe L. Moore became Camden's first African American school doctor. Philip T. Colding was the city's first African American magistrate and William H. Butts became the first African American police officer in 1887.<sup>57</sup> Moore, Butts, and Colding were residents of Kaighnsnsville, an affluent community that was

33 and *Howe's Camden City Directory 1890* (Philadelphia: C. E. Howe Co., 1890) 941. Aurora Lodge, No. 9, Free and Accepted Masons built Newton Hall after the Civil War.

<sup>51</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Howe's Camden City Directory, 1886-1887* (Philadelphia: C.E. Howe Co., 1887) 81, 83 and *Howe's Camden City Directory, 1890* (Philadelphia: C.E. Howe Co., 1890) 949, 953.

<sup>52</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (Philadelphia: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 11, 1895), 2.

<sup>53</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. (Philadelphia: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 11, 1895), 2.

<sup>54</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Howe's Camden City Directory, 1898* (Philadelphia: C.E. Howe Co., 1897) 1007, 1008, 1010.

<sup>55</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Boyd's Greater Camden City Directory, 1920* (Philadelphia: C.E. Howe Addressing and Printing Company, 1920) 1277. By 1920 nearly thirty organizations held their meetings at Butler Hall. These groups included the Rising Lodge No. 1, Oriental Lodge No. 4 and DeMolay Commandery No.1.

<sup>56</sup> Crew 172. The Darr family were long time members of Macedonia A.M.E. Church. William S(pencer) Dare(sic) is identified in *Chew's Camden Directory of 1877-78* as a "letter carrier." He lived at 256 Spruce Street in the Fetersville neighborhood. Spencer Darr was an important figure in the Black fraternal movement.

<sup>57</sup> Jeffrey M. Dorwart and Philip English Mackey. *Camden County, New Jersey 1616-1976: A Narrative History*. (Camden: Camden County Cultural & Heritage Commission, 1976) 91 and Camden, New Jersey Directories 1887-1891.

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established by middle-class African Americans from Philadelphia.<sup>58</sup> Although they were not members of Macedonia, they had a sincere interest in the upward mobility of African Americans. Their early achievements were a result of African Americans' commitment to Camden's Republican party. This allegiance weakened dramatically over the next several decades as the city's leadership resisted African Americans' efforts to increase their presence in Camden's political arena.

In the late nineteenth century, immigrants began to stream into Camden from southern, southeastern and Eastern Europe. African Americans from the nation's southern states also began to migrate to the city. All came to Camden and the Delaware Valley seeking jobs in the city's riverfront factories and commercial farms and orchards in the country.<sup>59</sup> Within a forty-year period, between 1880 and 1920, the city's residential population more than doubled from 41,659 to over 116,000 people. The resulting population explosion made Camden the fifth largest city in New Jersey following Newark, Jersey City, Paterson and Trenton.<sup>60</sup>

The arrival of these new residents transformed the city's neighborhoods into more culturally and ethnically diverse communities. The changes also had a dramatic impact on the institutions and residents in the African American community. Fetersville, once a predominantly African American community, became absorbed into a larger geographic area. In an interview with Elvy T. Williams, Jr. and Doris Williams Brooks, both remembered the make-up of their South Camden neighborhood when they were children. They recalled that there were people of Jewish, Italian, Polish, German and African American descent all living and working together in the same neighborhood.<sup>61</sup> The Williams' ethnically and culturally diverse community was characteristic of other neighborhoods throughout the city. The only exception was the Cooper Street section of North Camden which remained predominantly Anglo-American Protestant.<sup>62</sup>

Neighborhoods throughout Camden were becoming more diverse, but the history of New Jersey's loyalty to slavery had a lingering effect on the status of African Americans in many cities in the state. Camden was no exception. African Americans were limited in employment opportunities and many of Camden's restaurants and public institutions remained segregated. This included the city's public schools. More than eighteen private schools had been established in Camden between 1803 and 1854. However, the city's first public school was opened for white students around 1843. In that same year the city was commissioned to open a school for "colored" children. However, this did not happen until four years later. The "South Ward Colored School" which opened in 1847 was the first public school for Camden's African American children. A mysterious lack of funds caused it to close sometime during 1848. In 1868 the former South Ward Colored School was placed under new leadership, D. G. Harris. A year later, the city's second school for African American children, the Mt. Vernon Colored School, was built in 1869. Originally located at Third & Mt. Vernon Streets, it was later

<sup>58</sup> Prowell 423 & Dorwart 104. Kaighnsville was established by middle-class African Americans from Philadelphia. Benjamin VanDyke was the first person to settle in the area. Daniel Sullivan, Daniel Wilkins and Dempsey Butler came shortly after VanDyke. Residents initially wanted to name this prosperous African American community VanDykeville in honor of the first settler. However he declined. So they adopted the name Kaighnsville. Centerville was established with land purchased and laid out by the Kaighns Point Land Company. It too became a successful African American community in Camden.

<sup>59</sup> Dorwart 7.

<sup>60</sup> Dorwart 97.

<sup>61</sup> Horace Banks, Doris Williams Brooks and Elvy T. Williams, Jr. Personal Interview. 31 March 2005. Ramona L. Chainey, interviewer.

<sup>62</sup> Dorwart 103.

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abandoned when a newer building was erected on Mt. Vernon Street. A third school, the Ferry Road Colored School, was opened around 1872.<sup>63</sup>

The presence of these segregated schools was clear evidence of the prevailing attitudes towards African Americans. A refusal to assimilate this group of people into the city's mainstream social, educational, political and economic arenas remained a standard practice. Doris Brooks and other long time members of Macedonia recall attending segregated elementary schools yet living in a diverse neighborhood. They did not experience an integrated school environment until they attended high school during 1940s.

By the 1920s Camden was a thriving metropolis. New businesses opened and existing industries expanded operations to accommodate the masses of people who came to the city seeking jobs and a better way of life. African American residents, whose numbers reached nearly 10% of the population, secured work with the city's major employers. These included national companies such as the Campbell Soup Company, the Victor Talking Machine Company, later (RCA), the New York Shipbuilding Company, Van Sciver Furniture Company, Armstrong Cork Company, MacAndrews & Forbes, iron and glass works industries, textile mills and a utility company.<sup>64</sup>

The 1929 stock market crash and subsequent Great Depression levied a devastating toll on Camden's economic boom. As the banking and financial services industries became unraveled, large employers were forced to scale back business operations and drastically cut the number of employees who worked for them. Smaller companies had to close their doors forever. The city became financially crippled and was unable to cope with the thousands of residents who were impacted by the sudden down-turn in the economy. It relied on volunteer agencies and other programs to help those who needed assistance.<sup>65</sup> Dorothy Foster Avant, a Macedonia member since the early 1920s, recalled seeing soup lines throughout the city. She remembered that people stood in line every day at a Broadway location to get bread from Freihofer's Bakery and soup from the Campbell Soup Company.<sup>66</sup>

African Americans were hit especially hard during the Great Depression. They were laid off first. When jobs became available, white workers were hired to fill positions which formerly were held by African American.<sup>67</sup> Eventually, the city launched several programs through a non-partisan/New Deal coalition. Under the umbrella of this coalition, African Americans were hired in record numbers to work for the Department of Public Works, the National Youth Agency, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).<sup>68</sup> Including African Americans in these programs ultimately persuaded this group to switch their allegiance from the party of Lincoln to the Democratic Party.

African Americans appeared to have achieved economic equality through the massive hiring efforts of the New Deal coalition. However, the nation's history of slavery and segregation still supported discriminatory attitudes towards this group. This fact was not lost on Camden's African American leadership many of whom were

<sup>63</sup> Prowell 499-501.

<sup>64</sup> Paul F. Cranston. *Camden County 1681-1931: The Story of An Industrial Empire*. (Camden: Camden County Chamber of Commerce, 1931) 57- 62.

<sup>65</sup> Dorwart 130-132.

<sup>66</sup> Dorothy Foster Avant. Personal Interview. 2 May 2005. Ramona L. Chainey, interviewer.

<sup>67</sup> Giles R. Wright. *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*. 63.

<sup>68</sup> Dorwart 147.

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members of Macedonia A.M.E. Church. In the mid-1930s, several of these individuals came together to form the "Colored Democratic Club and the Camden County Colored League for Good Government." They included Robert Burk Johnson, Camden's first African American attorney; Reverend George E. Morris and Mrs. Beatrice F. Morris; Macedonia pastor, Reverend William J. Townsend and members, Mrs. Wilda R. Townsend and Dr. Ulysses Simpson Wiggins. Dr. Wiggins and Mr. Johnson sat on the Board of Education and obtained playgrounds for the John Greenleaf Whittier (colored) School at 8<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut Streets and the Bergen (colored) School at 5<sup>th</sup> and Mt. Vernon Streets.<sup>69</sup> Between 1930 and 1940 the number of African Americans grew from 11,000 to nearly 12,500 or 10.6% of Camden's total population. Macedonia's membership also increased during this timeframe. This was due, in part, to the large number of children in each family. Several families had more than ten children. Others had between five and eight children.<sup>70</sup> Church services were consistently crowded as worshippers filled the sanctuary and the third floor gallery.

From an institutional perspective, Macedonia maintained its presence in and concern for the community. It fostered a climate of hope and positive self expression through its services and outreach programs. It also provided resources and activities for neighborhood residents. Doris Williams Brooks and Elvy T. Williams, Jr. fondly recalled the block parties that were held on their one-block section of Locust Street. Horace Banks and Elvy T. Williams, Jr. smiled as they remembered the football and baseball games that they played in the streets. They recalled swimming in the Delaware River and racing on the streets around Camden's Airport Circle during numerous soap-box derbys.<sup>71</sup> Inez Spearman Brooks and Willa Spearman Murry, Macedonians for more than 85 years, remembered that the church's "class-leader" system helped to make the church a tightly-knit community. Their father, William Spearman, was a class leader who often took his family with him when he visited the members on his list.<sup>72</sup> Reverend Wessie L. Spearman, who came to Macedonia in 1935 when she was eight years old, remembered that throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the church was filled with activities for everyone. "It was an alive church," she said, and "it did things to help the neighborhood." It sponsored sightseeing and cultural bus trips. It hosted scrumptious picnics and formal banquets. Sunday School was filled with children, parents and grandparents. Its choirs traveled throughout the state winning numerous choral music competitions. Marie C. Harrison, 103 years old and the oldest living Macedonian as of May 2006, came to Camden in 1932 from Tifton, Georgia. She recalled that the Macedonia church-family welcomed her with open arms. She was put on the Usher Board and remains a member to this day. She indicated that during that time it was "customary" for church members to welcome and help all new people become acclimated to the church and the community.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Dorwart 135.

<sup>70</sup> Banks, Brooks and Williams, Jr. Personal Interview.; Vera Andrews Jenkins and Naomi Morton King. Personal Interview. 19 April 2005. Ramona L. Chainey, interviewer; Helen Bond Byrd and Evelyn Bond Knighten. Personal Interview. 28 April 2005. Ramona L. Chainey, interviewer; Avant. Personal Interview.

<sup>71</sup> Banks, Brooks and Williams, Jr. Personal Interview.

<sup>72</sup> Inez Spearman Brooks and Willa Spearman Murry. Personal Interview. 31 March 2005. Ramona L. Chainey, interviewer.

<sup>73</sup> Reverend Wessie L. Spearman and Marie C. Harrison. Personal Interview. 13 April 2005. Ramona L. Chainey, interviewer.

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Camden County, NJSection number 8 Page 14**World War II to 1970**

During World War II Camden once again experienced a surge in its economy. Previously closed businesses reopened to accommodate the hordes of newcomers to the city. Labor-starved war industries expanded their hours and hired non-traditional workers such as women, Caribbean blacks and Hispanics in their employee ranks.<sup>74</sup> More African Americans came to Camden to work in the city's shipyards. Those coming from the South formed the single largest group of newcomers during the war. Before the war African Americans made up 10.6% of the city's population. After the war the number totaled more than 17,000 or 14% of Camden's citizenry.

Some Macedonians, such as Evelyn Bond Knighten and Helen Bond Byrd, members since the early 1920s, believed that the influx of new people into Camden marked the beginning of the city's decline. Doris Williams Brooks and Dorothy Foster Avant remembered that all the neighbors knew each other and no one locked their doors. Naomi Morton King and Vera Andrews Jenkins, both life-long Macedonia members for nearly 75 years, agreed that the neighborhoods were warm, welcoming areas within which to live. They reminisced about the time when milk men delivered bottles of milk right to their homes and others brought ice for the "ice-boxes" because "that's how food was kept cold." They remembered the neighborhood stores with the ladies dress shops; the retail shoe stores and shoe repair shops; stores that sold meat and the "corner store" that sold nearly everything from prescription drugs for the sick to candy for the neighborhood children. They recalled the large department stores: Sears & Roebuck, Hurleys and Lit Brothers where everyone went to shop and the neighborhood movie theaters such as the Stanley, the Grand and the Roxy. They remembered that families ran a "tab" at the corner store. When their fathers got paid, they went to the store to settle their unpaid bills.<sup>75</sup>

At 93 years old, Alice Davis Lovett<sup>76</sup> clearly remembered that neighborhoods lost their homey atmospheres when countless numbers of new people came to the city during and after World War II. People no longer knew each other. An underlying level of mistrust began to grow in the minds and hearts of the city's existing residents. Many who were interviewed remembered that after the war, for the first time, neighborhood residents "began to lock their doors."

Many of Macedonia's life-long members who provided an oral history of the church and Camden, believe that the city's real decline began during the mid to late 1950s and throughout the 1960s.<sup>77</sup> They recalled that within a ten year period, the movie theaters and major retail stores either closed or left the city to reopen in safer, cleaner and more affluent environments. The city's large manufacturing concerns shut down operations leaving countless numbers of people unemployed. Camden's Caucasian residents fled to nearby suburbs. Many of the city's middle-class African American families left South Camden to move to the more desirable communities of Parkside and East Camden. Some remained where they were because they did not have the means to move or refused to desert the neighborhoods where they raised their children. Others were forced to relocate because certain neighborhoods were razed in anticipation of the city's vision of urban redevelopment and neighborhood revitalization.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Dorwart 141.

<sup>75</sup> Byrd and Knighten. Personal Interview.; Jenkins and King. Personal Interview.

<sup>76</sup> Alice Davis Lovett. Personal Interview. 2 May 2005. Ramona L. Chainey, interviewer.

<sup>77</sup> Banks, Brooks and Williams, Jr. Personal Interview.; Jenkins and King. Personal Interview.

<sup>78</sup> Dorwart 149-151.

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As Camden spiraled into an unparalleled state of deterioration and political corruption, the explosive combination of a failing school system, high unemployment, unsafe neighborhoods and political unrest led to a volatile end to the 1960s. Civil unrest among the city's residents simmered throughout the decade. This unrest was manifested through the destruction of white-owned stores in Central and South Camden, the predominantly poorer, minority-filled sections of the city. Many of the nation's major urban areas experienced full-blown race riots in the late 1960s. But Camden did not feel the extreme pain of unrestrained hostility of neighbor against neighbor and law enforcement against citizen until the early 1970s with the riot of 1971.

**Macedonia - Civil Rights Activism**

From the 1940s through the 1970s, Macedonia never lost sight of its mission. In the 1940s the church let neither the period of unrestrained growth in the city's population nor the silent enemy of mistrust deter its efforts to help Camden's newcomers become acclimated to the city. It did not let the flight of residents and businesses from the city during the next two decades hamper its commitment to support church members and city residents. In the late 1960s, it did not stray from its pledge to help those who needed help when citizens began to feel demoralized and angry because of the city's continued signs of neglect and deterioration. Nor did it turn away from its long history of social and political activism when residents became embroiled in the turbulent and violent riot of 1971.

In the early 1940s, church members began to hold official and visible positions in local society; positions which helped them more effectively give strategic direction to the early civil rights movement. One person who emerged as the unquestioned leader was Dr. Ulysses Simpson Wiggins, an officer in the church and the first African American physician on staff at Cooper Hospital.<sup>79</sup>

In 1940, Dr. Wiggins, along with thirteen other organizers, reactivated the Camden branch of the National Association of Colored People (NAACP), the nation's oldest surviving civil rights organization. He was the president of the Camden branch for twenty-five years and also served as vice chairman of the NAACP's national organization. In 1951 Dr. Wiggins, with the support of Camden's African American middle-class, made an unsuccessful bid to become the city's first African American on the city commission.<sup>80</sup>

This political defeat did not weaken Dr. Wiggins' resolve to continue his fight against discrimination. Through his leadership and the efforts of the Camden branch NAACP, Dr. Wiggins was able to make significant progress in integrating the city's schools and in upgrading employment opportunities for African Americans in Camden's leading public and private institutions.<sup>81</sup> Three years after his death in 1966, Camden renamed Bergen Elementary School the Ulysses S. Wiggins Elementary School in honor of his unrelenting commitment to equality in education. In 1985 the city again recognized Dr. Wiggins and the results of his community involvement by naming a park after him. The Ulysses S. Wiggins Waterfront Park is a well-known facility where the city's culturally and ethnically diverse communities come together as one.

Lillian Goings Burns was another influential member of the church and outspoken resident of the city of Camden. She worked closely with Dr. Wiggins and played important roles in Camden's civil rights campaigns.

<sup>79</sup> "Doctor Made Mark On Life In Camden," *Courier Post*, 18 October 1999.

<sup>80</sup> Dorwart 135.

<sup>81</sup> Dr. Ulysses S. Wiggins Obituary, Camden County Historical Society collection, Camden, New Jersey.



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Mrs. Burns was a key civil rights advocate and was among the organizers of the Rebirth Committee of the Camden NAACP. She was a career educator and joined Dr. Wiggins as a leader of the movement to integrate Camden's public schools.<sup>82</sup>

Other Macedonia members also made a lasting impression on the community. According to Inez Spearman Brooks, there were a number of professionals in Macedonia's congregation. Wilda R. Smith was a reporter for a national newspaper. Several members were teachers. A few still attend Macedonia, including: Evelyn Bond Knighten, Helen Bond Byrd, Alice Davis Lovett, and Inez Spearman Brooks. Some members owned their own businesses. Georgia Green owned a beauty parlor; Arthur Waples was a mortician and owned Waples Funeral Home; and Ada Bond was a tavern co-owner along with her husband, Eddie. Others secured positions as police officers in Camden's law enforcement ranks.<sup>83</sup>

During the late 1950s and 1960s Macedonians strengthened their association with the NAACP and other leading civil rights organizations. They formed a strong network of adults and youth in the NAACP who actively solicited citizens to register to vote. They held meetings at the homes of Camden residents throughout the city to keep them informed about key issues that affected their community. This group also worked at the polls during elections and provided assistance to those who needed rides to their polling locations. From 1963 to 1967, Macedonia, under the leadership of Reverend Charles Carlos Blake, made significant contributions to the education and training of the city's unemployed and underemployed residents.

According to Naomi Morton King, Reverend Blake contacted Mr. Feldman, the owner of an abandoned building located at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Market Streets in Camden. Reverend Blake secured the building free of charge on condition that he would be responsible for the building's clean-up and maintenance. Eventually, Reverend Blake, with the help of others, formed the Southern New Jersey office of the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC).<sup>84</sup> He encouraged and successfully negotiated with teachers and business people to help educate and train the city's residents. The Southern New Jersey OIC partnered with local businesses to give hands-on training and provide permanent employment to those who completed a required self-help program of classroom studies and on-the-job-training.

Mrs. King was the organization's first secretary. She recognized the benefits of the OIC program and seized the opportunity to attend Rutgers University where she received her Bachelor's degree. She returned to the OIC as an instructor and remained there for nineteen years.<sup>85</sup>

Reverend Vernon Randolph Byrd, elected a Bishop of the A.M.E. Church in 1992, led Macedonia from 1967 to 1970. Although Camden's population had dropped significantly, under Reverend Byrd's dynamic leadership, strong faith and love for people, Macedonia's membership significantly increased especially among young people. Reverend Byrd also continued Macedonia's legacy of community activism and became the first African American appointed to the Camden City Library Board.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Lillian Goings Burns Funeral Program, in the collection of Macedonia A.M.E. Church, Camden, New Jersey.

<sup>83</sup> Brooks and Murry. Personal Interview.

<sup>84</sup> Reverend Charles Carlos Blake, Chairman-Board of Directors. *Southern New Jersey Opportunities Industrialization Center, Inc.*, (Camden: n. p., n.d.) unpaginated.

<sup>85</sup> Jenkins and King. Personal Interview.

<sup>86</sup> Church Biography, in the collection of Macedonia AME Church, Camden, New Jersey.

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The late 1960s witnessed the emergence of several Black activist groups on the national civil rights scene. The more radical views of these organizations caught the attention and support of Camden residents who had become so disillusioned with the political process that they felt that change could only be achieved through violence. They rejected the concepts of peaceful alternatives to problem resolution that were practiced by the NAACP.<sup>87</sup>

Macedonia's members partnered with other community groups such the Black Peoples Unity Movement (BPUM) led by Charles "Poppy" Sharp and the Black Students Union Movement (BSUM), a spin-off of the BPUM. Sharp, the charismatic founder of the BPUM, energized countless numbers of young people including many from Macedonia, who actively organized and led peaceful protests against Camden's discriminatory policies towards African Americans and other minorities. Many recall the marches, the sit-ins and silent protests against the city's substandard housing and businesses, unfair labor practices, and consistent mistreatment of minorities by Camden police officers.<sup>88</sup>

Macedonia never strayed from its mission even though the city's poverty levels increased and the social environment became more turbulent. The neighborhood surrounding the church exhibited the same ghetto-type signs of neglect and deterioration as other Camden communities. The church's large congregation began to dwindle as older members died and more people left Camden to relocate to other areas in the state or country. However, the church held fast to the A.M.E. principles of religious freedom, help for others and equality for the oppressed. During the latter part of the twentieth century, Macedonia sponsored feeding programs for the homeless and provided clothing for residents in two of the community's shelters for women and men. It implemented fellowship and counseling programs for young people and a computer training course for senior citizens. It indeed remained active in Camden's political arena as its members held key city positions that formulated city policy and direction. They led organizations that provided quality, affordable housing for city residents. They served on boards of corporations and formed strategic alliances with businesses, governmental agencies, religious groups and social organizations to develop programs that were designed to benefit the residents of Camden and revitalize neighborhoods including the community that surrounds Macedonia A.M.E. Church.

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<sup>87</sup> Dorwart 153.

<sup>88</sup> Hoag Levins. "Reliving A 1969 Racial Clash," *Courier Post*, 12 February 2001.

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Macedonia A.M.E. Church

Name of Property

Camden, New Jersey

County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 489374 E 4420238 N  
Zone Easting Northing

2

3  
Zone Easting Northing

4

☒ See continuation sheet Section 10 Exhibit A - Maps

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) See continuation sheet Section 10 page 1.

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) See continuation sheet Section 10 page 1.

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ramona L. Chainey / President, with additional research and writing from Paul W. Schopp

organization Macedonia Historical Association, Inc.

date 7/14/2010

street & number P. O. Box 2066

telephone 856-784-4478 or 609-841-1250

city or town Camden

state NJ

Zip

08101

code

### 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. **Section 10. Exhibit A.**

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

#### Photographs – Section 10: Exhibit C Sketch of Church – Section 10: Exhibit B

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

street & number

telephone

city or town

state

zip code

**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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## Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of block 235, lot 25, on the tax map of the City of Camden, as shown in the accompanying site map

## Boundary Justification

These boundaries encompass the actual town lots historically associated with the Macedonia A.M.E. Church.

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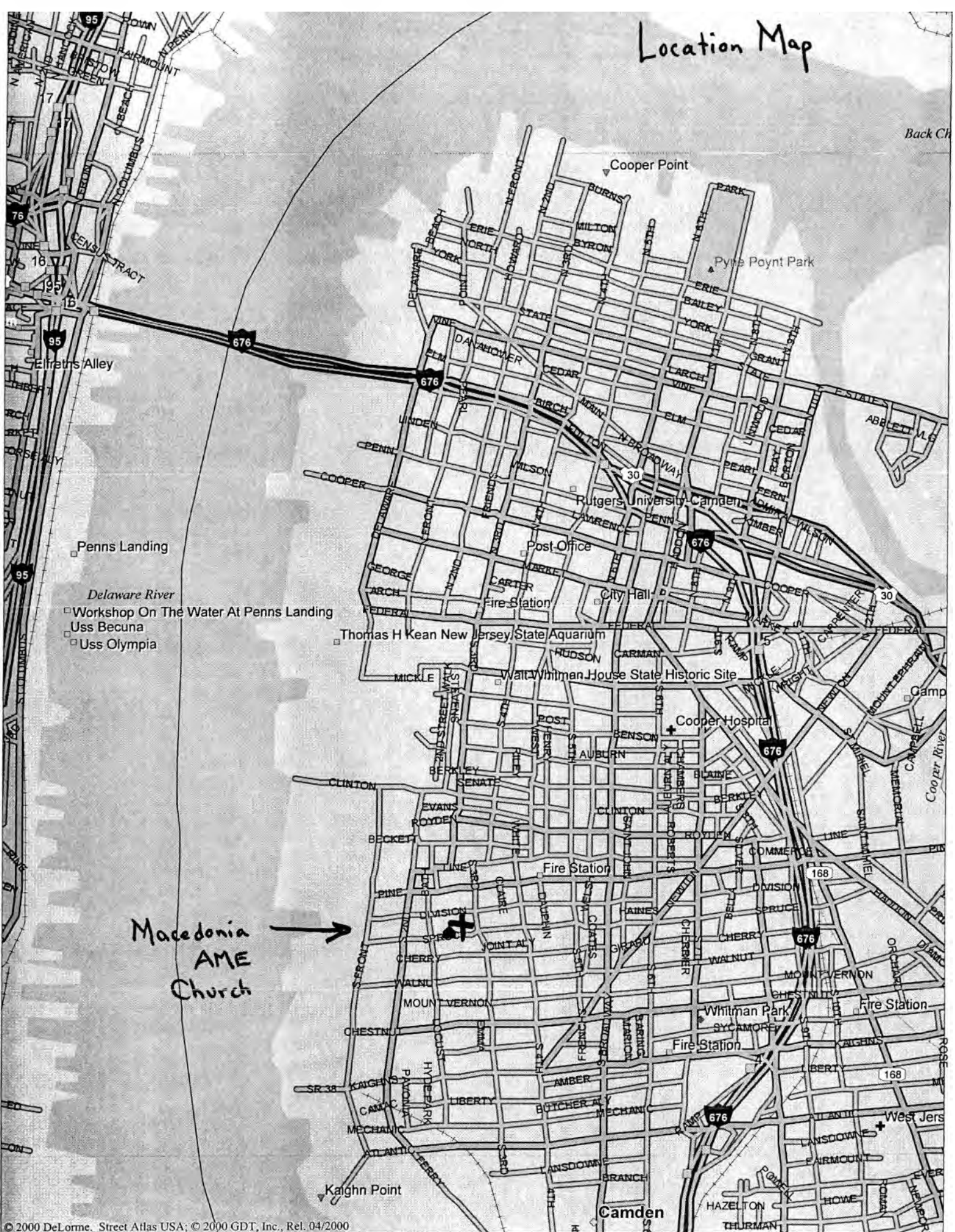
The following information is the same for all photographs listed:

1. Name of property: Macedonia A.M.E. Church
2. City, County and State: Camden, Camden County, New Jersey
3. Photographer: Ramona L. Chainey
4. Location of Negatives: Macedonia Historical Association  
32 Hilltop Drive  
Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08003

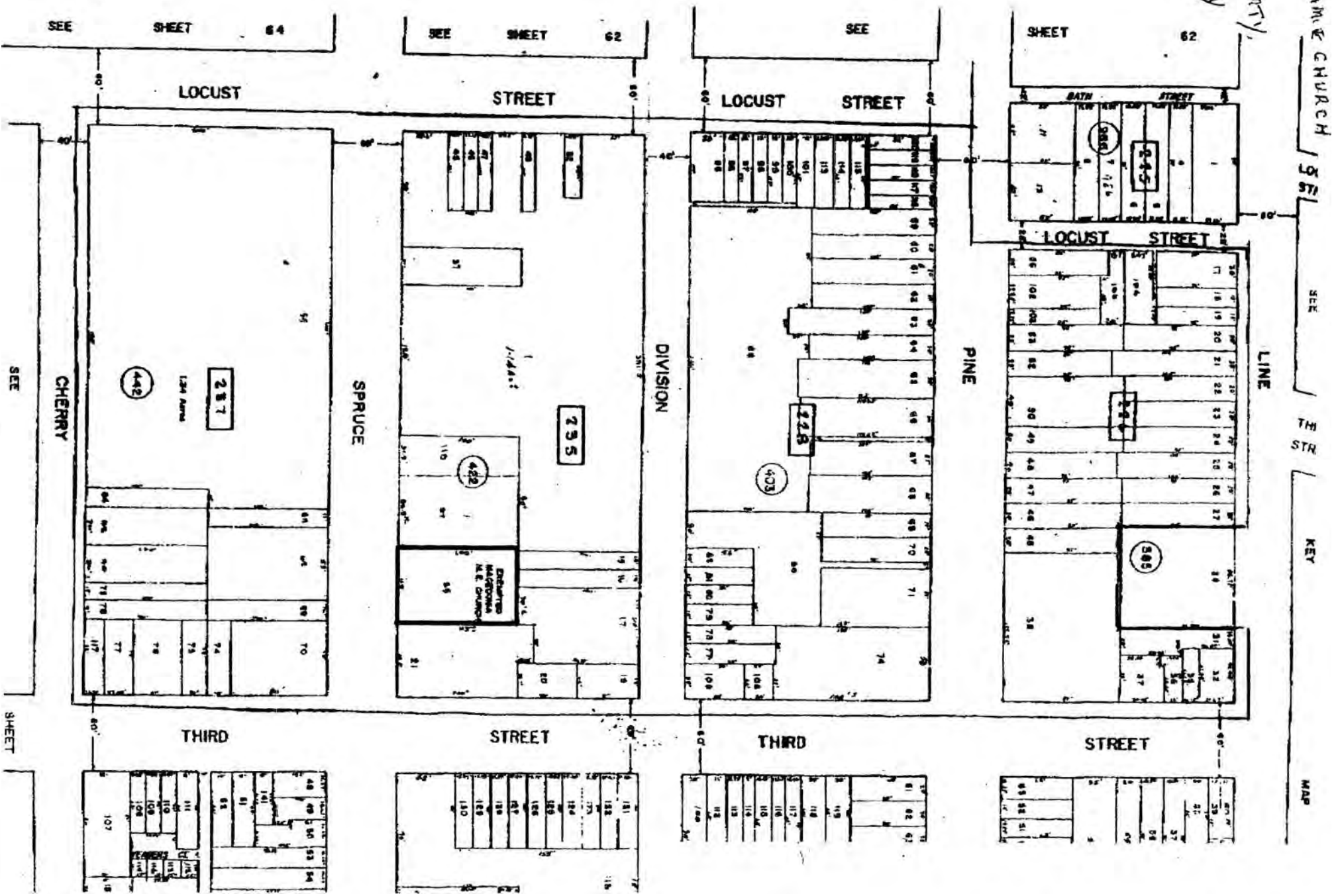
Photograph #	Date Taken	Description of views indication direction of camera
1	3-9-2006	Spruce Street. View looking northeast.
2	3-9-2006	3 <sup>rd</sup> Street. View looking southeast.
3	3-9-2006	Spruce Street. View looking southwest.
4	12-22-2005	Applied brick over round-arched windows. View looking north.
5	12-22-2005	Applied brick over round-arched windows. View looking north.
6	12-2-2005	Original brick under applied brick. View looking west.
7	12-2-2005	Transom. View looking north.
8	3-9-2006	Original datestone. View looking north.
9	3-9-2006	Spruce Street. View looking northeast.
10	12-2-2005	Spruce Street. View looking northwest.
11	3-9-2006	Southwest elevation. View looking southwest.
12	12-22-2005	Foundation wall – partial view. View looking west.
13	12-22-2005	Foundation wall – partial view. View looking northeast.
14	12-22-2005	Cellar support columns and beams. View looking east.
15	12-22-2005	Cellar support columns and beams. View looking northeast.
16	12-22-2005	Cellar dirt floor. View looking north.
17	3-30-2006	1 <sup>st</sup> floor foyer. View looking north.
18	12-2-2005	1 <sup>st</sup> floor staircase. View looking east.
19	1-22-2006	Narthex original tin ceiling & columns. View looking northwest.
20	1-22-2006	Narthex columns. View looking northeast.
21	3-30-2006	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor sanctuary. View looking north.
22	12-4-2005	Stained-glass window. View looking east.
23	12-4-2005	Stained-glass window. View looking west.
24	12-2-2005	Pipe organ. View looking north.
25	3-20-2006	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor gallery. View looking south.
26	7-23-2007	1 <sup>st</sup> floor altar exposed after removal of stage. View looking north.
27	10-2-2007	1 <sup>st</sup> floor altar. View looking north.

# Location Map

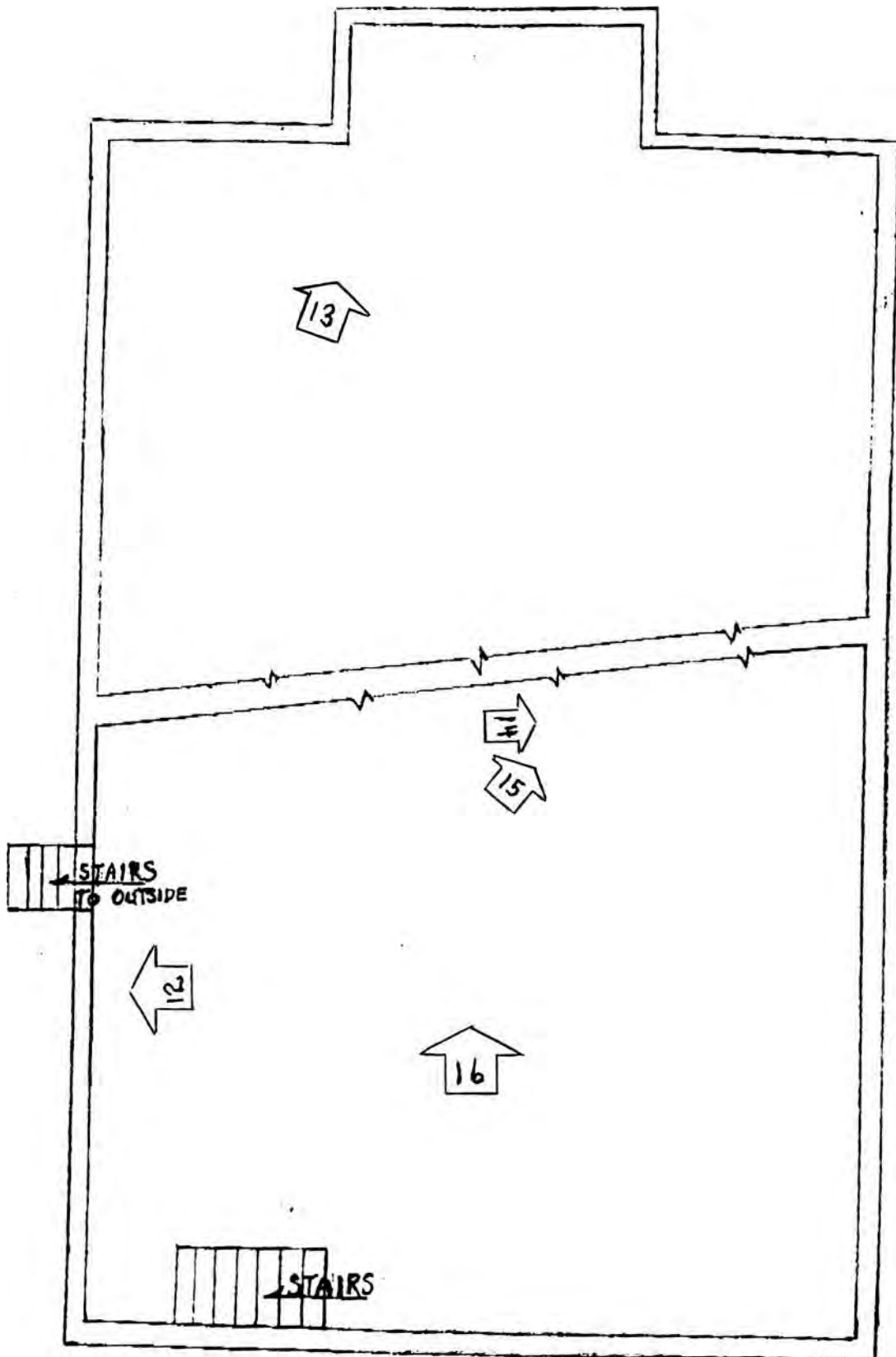
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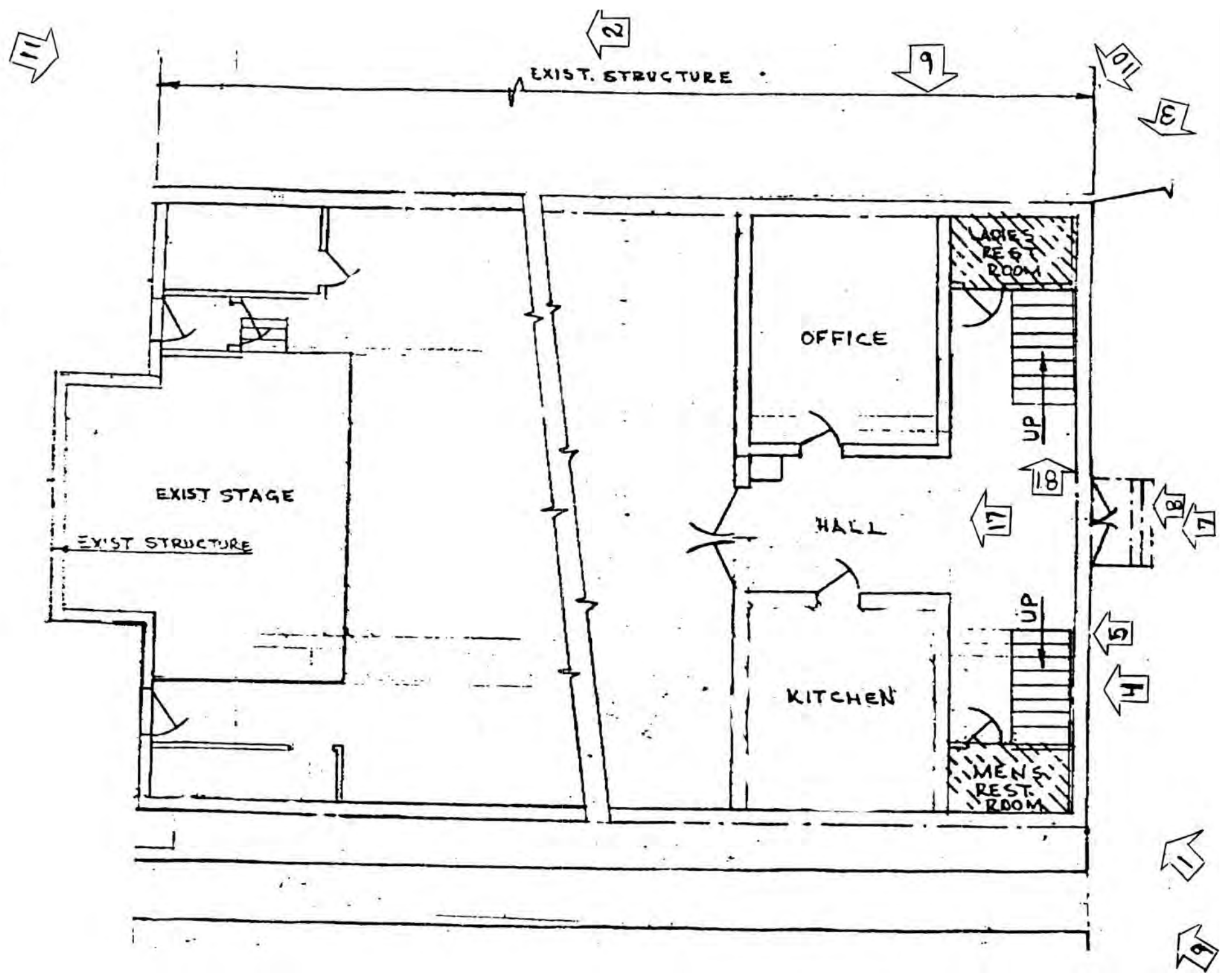
MCEDONIA AME CHURCH  
 GRMDEN  
 GRMDEN COUNTY,  
 NEW JERSEY



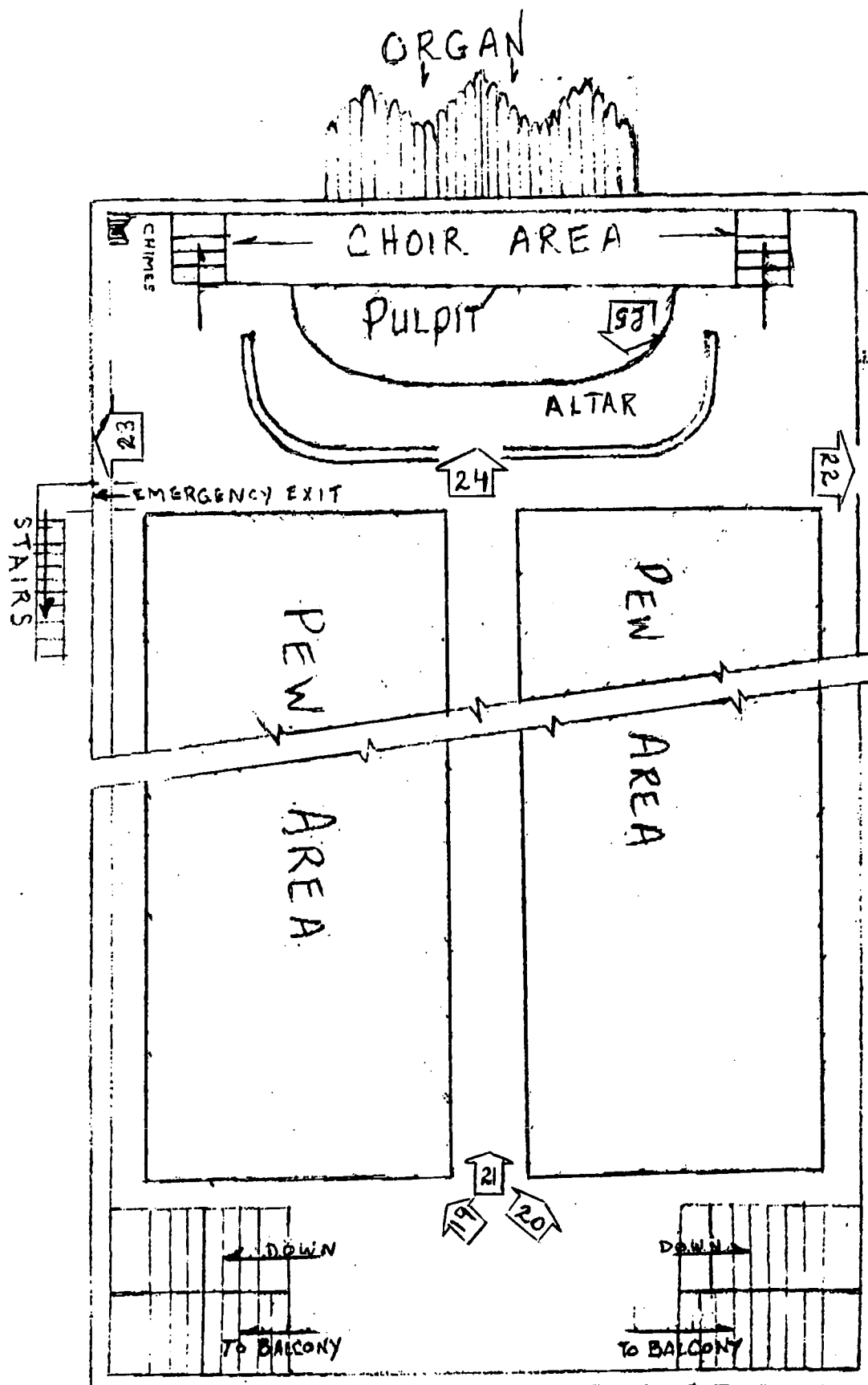
Camden  
Camden County, NJ



Camden  
Camden County, NJ









# JOHN D. COURTER

folding money on a false is nothing new in rsey. It's a pastime a century old, even ere was a moratorium in the sport for many

ly you will hear a concerning horseflesh. ny of the oldtimers to in account of the good when the ponies were yn in Gloucester or out ille way.

re is a more obscure this ancient sport. It the old "Camden and ia Race Course" which ther the best horses of y more than 100 years

## Newton Township

ck with its grandstand, stables was in old wnship on the Samuel farm, later the Bettie White Horse turnpike, ton creek. Today the tlewood.

ppened in 1835 when a Virginia sporting men, R. Johnson, Andrew in D. Kirby, Otway P. William H. Friend, the Champion farm, r that followed build- erected and a board built to circle the mile

g to historians, thou- ssed the ferries from ia. Many were at- m all parts of the sur- ountry.

## Track

nt personages of the tronized the track in- l. Bailey Peyton, Dr. General Irvine, Wil- ns and the Van Mar- r opinions regarding of horses were eager- y betting men.

g through Prowell's f Camden county light this account:

ur-mile' day always grandstand, and cov- ld with carriages and every kind. Ladies scarce and entered ort and betting with al and spirit as their Occasionally some farmer of the neigh- ould lose his head, bet on the race, and leave a wiser man, think- mong the uncertain his world horseflesh eluded.

is and ball man, or ith the little joker, ew about him a won- d, and industriously alling 'between the ing the verdant ones round and thought it asiest thing in the n. The player would lose a small amount rate, only to entrap pecting one and de-

fraud him of his money.

## Appliances for Gambling

"Every appliance for gambling could be seen, attended by drunk- enness and debauchery to the last degree. The argument the improvement of the breed of horses was the object had no weight when morality and good government were considered.

"Very soon the better class of citizens took the necessary steps to abate it and meetings were held to express public opinion on this subject. Petitions were signed and efforts made to procure a general law against horse- racing in the state. This met with a determined opposition, but was at last brought about, much to the relief of the people in this vicinity."

## Attended by Thousands

"The sporting community of 1845," Prowell's history tells us, "was greatly excited at the meet- ing of the two celebrated horses —Paytona and Fashion—at Long Island racecourse, and where Fashion, 'the queen of the turf,' was beaten. Within the next month the same animals were again brought together on the Camden and Philadelphia track, when and where Fashion won back her laurels so unexpectedly taken from her."

The event drew thousands for miles around, the crowds packed every nook and cranny. It proved to be too much for the old grandstand and it collapsed.

In a pamphlet, the late Charles S. Boyer, former president of the Camden County Historical So- ciety, had this to say:

"The crowd was so great the stands were taxed beyond their limit, and, during the first heat of the race, gave way injuring many of the occupants but fortunately resulting in no fatalities.

## Conditions Denounced

"The conditions under which the racetrack was operated were particularly vicious and so bad that Judge Carpenter felt called upon to bring the matter to the attention of the grand jury. He said, from evidence which had been called to his attention, the race course was a nuisance of the worst kind and that the crowd which assembled at the time of the race between Fashion and Peytona acted in a manner 'that would reflect disgrace upon the dark ages.'"

Newspapers ran scathing edi- torials denouncing the track and public sentiment was much against continuance of the race course.

"As a result of public senti- ment," Boyer recounts, "the Leg- islature in 1846 passed an act prohibiting horse racing for 'money or other valuable thing,' or where 20 or more people as- sembled together."

Then in January, 1847, Johnson conveyed the property to Sam- uel Bettie, who during the fol- lowing year removed the build- ings and restored the land to farming purposes.

o'clock, the day preceding, and will be published on the morning of the same day, in all the City News- papers. The horses will be started at one o'clock, precisely.

By order of the CAMDEN and PHILADELPHIA JOCKEY CLUB. my 93A

Race of Fashion and Peytona in the Spring of 1845 attracted thousands to the old "Camden and Philadelphia Race Course." The added weight overtaxed the stand and it collapsed, in- juring scores. Pictured above is from an engraving in local newspapers. Below is shown a newspaper advertisement. The track was on White Horse pike below Newton creek in old Newton township. The section is now Bettlewood.

pastorate of the Rev. R. B. Smith, who was succeeded by the Rev. W. H. Hicks. He served three years and was succeeded by the Rev. William J. Townsend, in whose five-year administration the church celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Following the Rev. Townsend were the Rev. E. N. Martin, the Rev. J. Leo Pottinger, the Rev. W. H. Burrell, the Rev. R. B. Smith, after a 20-year lapse, then returned for one year. He was succeeded by the Rev. C. G. Hall, who in turn was succeeded by the present pastor who, previous- ly had served five years as pre- siding elder in Bermuda.

The church now has a mem- bership of 400. On May 1 to 5 the church will be host to the Seventy-fourth annual conference of the African Methodist Episco- pal Church of New Jersey.

## King Arthur and Holy Grail Cited By Rev. Owens at Macedonia AME



OLD MACEDONIA AME CHURCH—Camden's first house of worship of Negroes. It was founded in 1833 and many of its early members were former slaves.

Camden, G. photo from records of Camden County Historical Society

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal Church

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW JERSEY, Camden

DATE RECEIVED: 1/27/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/23/12  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/09/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/13/12  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000108

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 3/12/12 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

AOS. Ethnic Heritage: Black, Social, Political, Religion  
Active in Community efforts 1832-1956.  
Current church Bldg. 1884.

RECOM./CRITERIA A

REVIEWER Lisa White

DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 3/12/12

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.





















MACE DOWNE CHURCH  
FOUNDED 1833  
REBUILT 1850  
REBUILT 1884





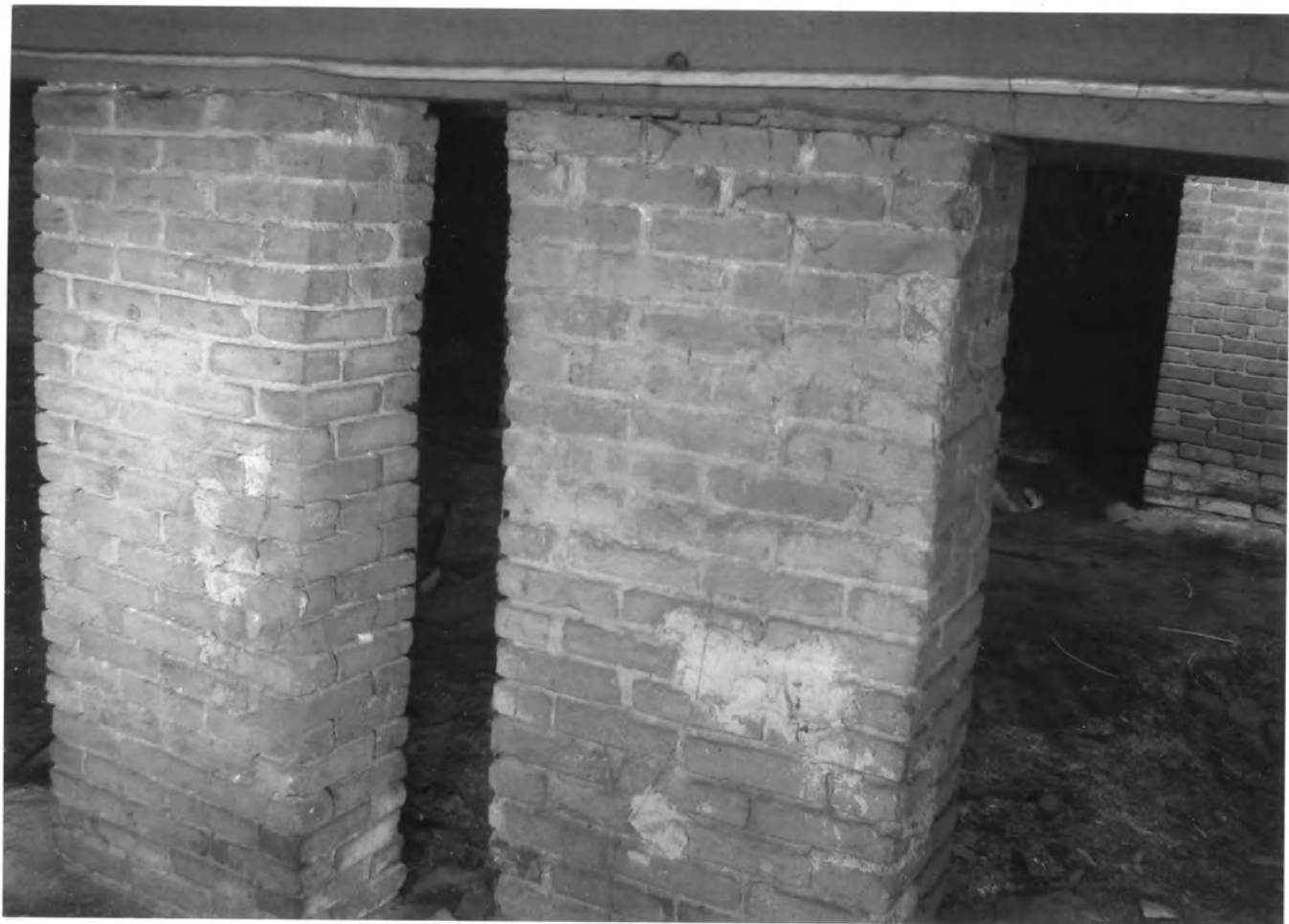




























MR. & MRS. LORENZO GOINGS  
MRS. MAE G. WILLIAMS  
& MRS. ELIZABETH G. DAVIS  
• BY THE FAMILY •



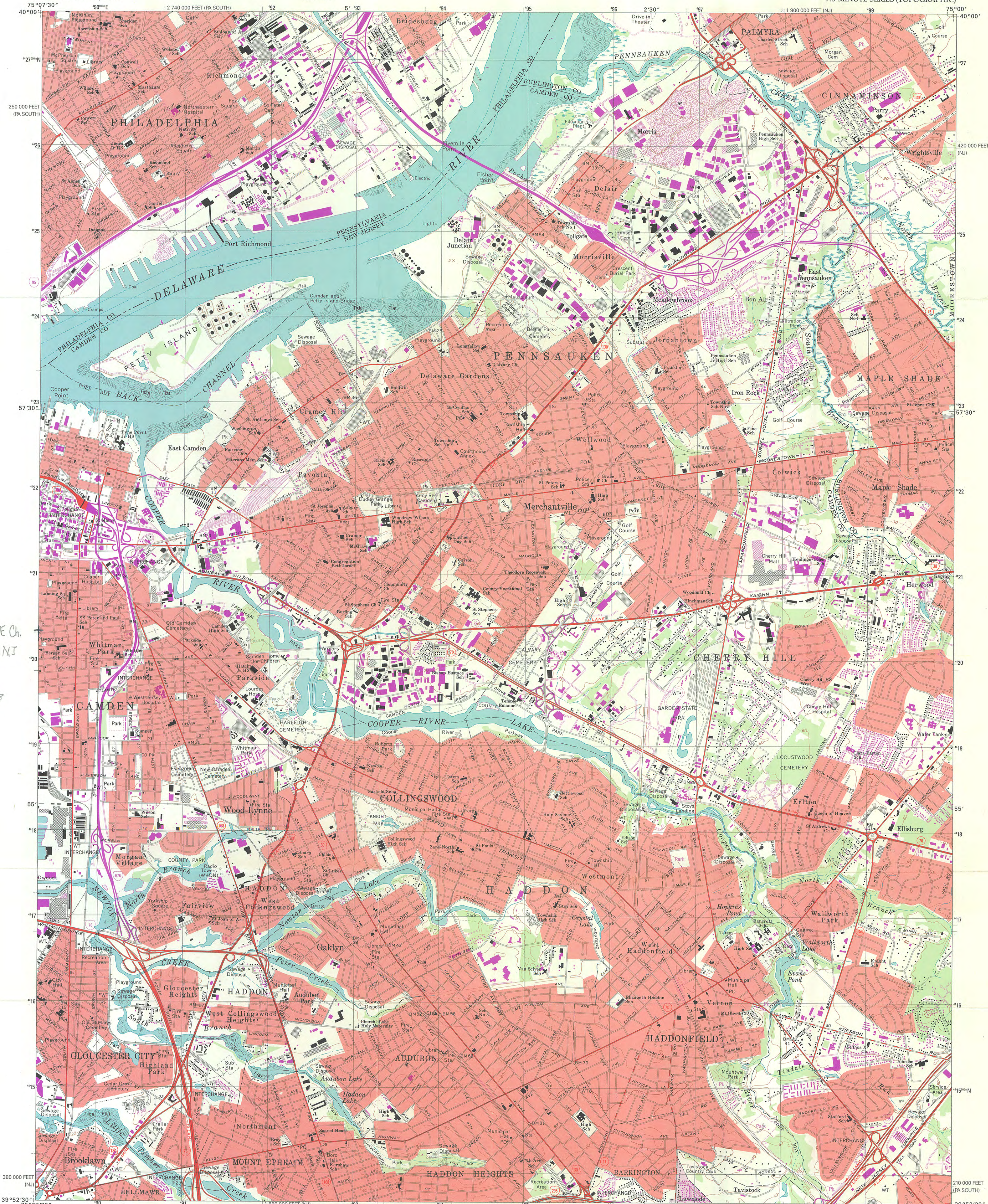


★ IN MEMORY OF ★  
MR. & MRS. RANDALL WIGGINS  
MR. & MRS. HENRY TURNER  
BY DR. & MRS. U.S. WIGGINS



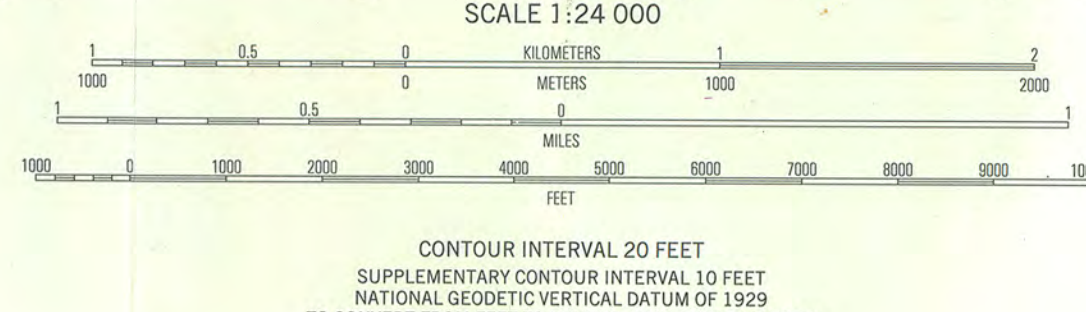
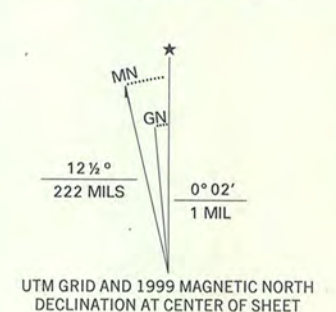






Macedonia AME Ch.  
Camden Co., NJ  
Z=18  
E=489374  
N=442038

Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Topography compiled 1965. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1990 and other sources. Photospect using imagery dated 1995; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control current as of 1967. Boundaries, other than corporate, revised 1999  
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27)  
Projection: New Jersey coordinate system (transverse Mercator)  
10 000-foot ticks: New Jersey coordinate system and Pennsylvania coordinate system, south zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software  
Information shown in purple may not meet USGS content standards and may conflict with previously mapped contours



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Primary highway  
hard surface .....  
Secondary highway  
hard surface .....  
Unimproved road .....  
Light-duty road, hard or  
improved surface .....  
Interstate Route  
U.S. Route  
State Route

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

1 Germantown  
2 Frankford  
3 Beverly  
4 Philadelphia  
5 Moorestown  
6 Woodbury  
7 Runnemede  
8 Clementon

CAMDEN, NJ-PA  
1995  
NIMA 5963 I NE-SERIES V822







HPO Proj. #05-1833-6  
HPO K2011-213

## 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

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
GOVERNOR

KIM GUADAGNO  
Lt. Governor



BOB MARTIN  
COMMISSIONER

January 4, 2012

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 Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal Church, Camden 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,

Amy Cradic  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer