10024-0018

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

Registration Form

National Register of Historic Places

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AUG 29 1995

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties. INTERAGENCY INTERACTION SUBJECT THE National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete NaTIONALLY PARTICIPATION SERVICE: appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional

1. Name of Property	
historic nameTrinity African Methodist Episcopal Church	of Gouldtown, New Jersey
other names/site numberEbenezer African Methodist Episcop	al Church
2. Location	
street & numberState Highway 49	NA
city or townFairfield Township	□ vicinity
state New Jersey code 034 county Cumberland	code <u>011</u> zip code <u>08302</u>
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amende request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for reg Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this promationally statewide locally. See continuation sheet for additional commissioner for Natural & Historic Reso State of Federal agency and bureau	pistering properties in the National Register of 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property operty be considered significant iments.) ources/DSHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title Date	
State or Federal agency and bureau	
4. National Park Service Certification	<u> </u>
hereby certify that the property is: If entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. Idetermined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.	Pate of Action
determined not eligible for the National Register.	
removed from the National Register.	
other, (explain:)	

entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

Name of Property		NJ Cumberland Co. County and State	<u> </u>
5. Classification			
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Pro (Do not include previously listed resources	perty in the count.)
☑ private	building(s)	Contributing Noncontributing]
☐ public-local	☐ district	1	buildings
☐ public-State☐ public-Federal	☐ site ☐ structure	1	sites
,	- □ object		structures
•			objects
		2	•
Name of related multiple portion (Enter "N/A" if property is not part		in the National Register	
N/A		0	
N/A 6. Function or Use		0	
		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	
6. Function or Use Historic Functions		Current Functions	
6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	
6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) RELIGION/religious fa		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) RELIGION/religious facility	;
6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) RELIGION/religious fa		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) RELIGION/religious facility	:
6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) RELIGION/religious fa		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) RELIGION/religious facility	:
6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) RELIGION/religious fa		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) RELIGION/religious facility	:
6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) RELIGION/religious fa		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) RELIGION/religious facility	:

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

walls ____weatherboard

roof slate

foundation <u>sandstone</u>

Narrative Description

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century

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

Trinity AME Church Name of Property	NJ Cumberland Co. County and State
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.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) RELIGION
A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	ETHNIC HERITAGE/AFRICAN AMERICAN
☐ 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.	Period of Significance 1860 - 1945
□ 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.)	Significant Dates
Property is:	
A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	Significant Person
☐ B removed from its original location.	(Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A
☐ C a birthplace or grave.	
☐ D a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliation N/A
\square 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.	Architect/Builder Unknown
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets	3.)
9. Major Bibliographical References Bibliography	
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on o	one or more continuation sheets.)
Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A	Primary location of additional data:
 □ 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 	 ☒ State Historic Preservation Office ☐ Other State agency ☐ Federal agency ☐ Local government ☐ University ☐ Other
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # # recorded by Historic American Engineering	Name of repository:
Record #	

Trinity AME Church Name of Property	NJ Cumberland Co. County and State
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property 0.5	Bridgeton, NJ Quad
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	
1 1 8 4 8 4 1 4 0 4 3 6 3 2 0 0 Zone Easting Northing 2 1	3
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)	
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)	
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Alvin M. Stokes, Sr. (pastor) Ca	rrie Wright (Historical chairwoman)
organization Trinity African Methodist Episco	pal Church date May 1995
street & number State Highway 49	telephone (609) 451-2353
city or town Gouldtown	state NJ zip code 08302
Additional Documentation	
Submit the following items with the completed form:	
Continuation Sheets	
Maps	
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating	the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties	having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs	
Representative black and white photographs of	the property.
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)	
Property Owner	
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)	
name Trinity African Methodist	Episcopal Church
street & numberState Highway 49	telephone (609) 451-2353
city or town Bridgeton,	state NJ zip code 08302

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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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION

RATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Trinity African Methodist Episcopal Church, Gouldtown, New Jersey, built in 1860, is situated on the Bridgeton-Millville Road (State Highway #49), just east of Woodruff Road (County Route 553). In the year that the church was built the Bridgeton-Millville Road was called the "Turnpike". (See Exhibit A, B and C)

The church is situated on 3.43 acres and is set back approximately 50' from the road. The parsonage is set on 3.45 acres adjacent the west side of the church. The church also owns .50 acres on the east side adjacent the church. (See Exhibit D) At one time there was a wrought iron fence and hitching post at the front of the small front lawn. By the turn of the century there was a wooden platform used by passengers who rode on the trolley car. Until the trolley was finished, passengers rode the stage coach from Bridgeton to Gouldtown and caught the trolley to and from Millville. (See Exhibit E) This platform was used by church goers to cross the tracks in their horse drawn wagons to reach the wagon sheds at the rear of the church yard. The wagon sheds were at the left rear of the church yard and a partitioned "Necessary House" was on the right.

EXTERIOR: (See Exhibit F)

The physical building is a wooden structure on a fieldstone foundation with a full basement. The design of the original structure was "meeting house" and/or American Colonial. The exterior was covered with clapboard. This was replaced with aluminum siding due to lack of the original materials. The slate roof was replaced by asphalt shingles for this same reason.

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CMS Apprised No. 1024-0018

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The main entrance faces north and consists of a large solid wooden double door (now shielded by storm doors) with a keystone peak pediment and a half circle sunburst transom window above the doors. The underside of the pediment has a dentil molding. The pediment and transom rest on a fluted pilaster on each side of the doorway. The main entrance is flanked on either side by a large six over nine window on the main floor and 3 six over six windows in the balcony.

Fenestration of the church: The windows along the sides of the church are nine over nine double hung with keystone arch and half circle sunburst pediment over each window. These windows are fitted with storm/screen windows, and were replaced in 1989, they are exact copies of the old windows. Before the annex was added in 1959 the south wall of the main worship area had two large windows (one in choir loft and one in "Amen Corner") which still exist but are blocked off and the recessed pulpit with two small double hung windows on each side, which are still intact.

The roof of the annex runs East/West, whereas the roof on the original building runs North/South . Across the south side of the annex are 5 double hung windows, the east and west sides each have 4 windows and a door.

INTERIOR: (See Exhibit "G", "H" and "I") (Floor Plan Exhibit "J")

Upon entering the main entrance at the rear of the church there is a small vestibule leading to the sanctuary. The vestibule has a small room on each side. One room is a powder room and lounge, the other is a cloakroom. Both have a door opening into the sanctuary, these doors were the original entrance to the sanctuary as there was no center door. The long narrow vestibule ran the width of the church; at the far right a door opened to a narrow winding stairwell leading upward to the balcony which

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has 3 long wooden benches. (These are the original benches) Above this is a 12' X 12' loft with pegged joists. To the far left there was a narrow stairwell leading to the basement. This was changed when a parrishioner fell and was injured. The main entrance to the sanctuary is through inside double doors in the center of the vestibule.

The coal furnace was housed in the basement. An outdoor opening on the left side of the church was used for coal deliveries. The outdoor basement and stairway had been removed but the remnant coal bin is still visible in the basement. The church is now heated with oil heat.

The pulpit is on the south wall and is on a slightly raised platform. It is adorned with antique oak and red velvet chairs, an oak lectern, and on the lower level an oak baptismal font, two oak and velvet chairs and a new communion table within the altar rail.

The choir loft is on the left and at one time it contained the organ and wooden chairs. Today the piano and organ are on the lower level with the choir loft on a slightly higher level. The "Amen Corner" was on the right consisting of two rather short wooden pews. This area was so named because the church officials such as the Stewards and Trustees usually sat there and these officials were usually men who often said "Amen" during a sermon. Today the flooring is slightly higher like the choir loft with chairs for additional choir space.

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The rest of the main worship area had a center section of long wooden double pews divided in the middle. There was an aisle on each side with short pews lining each side to the rear aisle. These pews were replaced in 1971 with oak cushioned pews, in the same format, but without the center division. Near the rear there are two very small pews on each side. According to Frances Custis and Mabel Wright there were coal stoves in those areas that were used to heat the church. Frances Custis also stated that there were oil lamps with reflectors hung in brackets along the side walls and in the pulpit for illumination. The church is now illuminated by electric light fixtures suspended from the ceiling in the sanctuary and on the side of the pulpit.

Interior finishes include: plaster walls and ceilings with a decorative molding where walls and ceiling join. This pattern of molding also appears in front of the balcony. The floors are wooden and are of cedar (when drilled recently the fragrence was still present). Carpet now covers the floor from the pulpit and choir lofts down the aisles to the vestibule doors. The seating area floors are of polished hardwood. Two pairs of white wooden shutters cover each of the windows at the sides and front of the interior of the church and are still in use today.

An annex with full basement was added in 1957 which provided room for a large Sunday School/Meeting area, two large bathrooms, 3 smaller rooms and storage space for robes. The additional basement provided a large kitchen with large dining area and pastor's study room.

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The Trinity African Methodist Episcopal Church of Gouldtown is located on State Route 49 in a small community in Fairfield Township, Bridgeton,

New Jersey. The Black Issues Convention Newsletter spells out the significance as such, "Gouldtown is the oldest community of free, land-owning Black residents in New Jersey and among the oldest in the nation. The Trinity AME Church, built here in 1860, is reported to be 'probably the largest surviving pre-Civil War house of worship' built by Black residents in the State. Gouldtown was a small village in which the church exemplified the center of importance. It was built with large seating capacity to accommodate worship services, funerals, class meetings, Christian Endeavor, Sunday School and other religious services.

Early religious training began with Rev. Daniel Elmer, at the New England town Church (now known as the Old Stone Church), as early as 1729. The Gouldtown residents traveled to Fairton to attend services. The minister performed marriage ceremonies and buried their dead.

After the organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, a series of meetings had been held at private houses, and a religious revival had sprung up. Rev. Reuben Cuff, of Salem, NJ suggested organizing a society in 1818. Meetings were held in the barn of Benjamin Gould when houses were too small.

Chill Approval No. 1024-007

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From 1823-1834 the vacant Westcott School served as the first physical building. This school was used as a meeting house by the Presbyterians and Methodists alternately, by the Westcotts, Bennetts, Seeleys, Woodruffs, and Hands (white), and by the Goulds, Pierces, and Murrays (colored). This building was purchased by the society in 1823 and used as school and meeting house until the purchase of the Lummis schoolhouse in 1934.

The Lummis School was purchased and moved to a lot on the Bridgeton-Millville turnpike in Gouldtown (State Route #49). It was dedicated Ebenezer AME and was used as both a church and school. Services were held there from 1834-1860. (The present school - Fairfield Middle School - was built around the Lummis School and still exists today). The present building was built in 1860 and dedicated Trinity African Methodist Episcopal Church. It was erected across the "pike" from the Ebenezer Church. A bell tower was added by the Sunshine Girls about 1925, an annex was added in 1957, and a parsonage was built in 1979.

In 1841 a split occured, resulting in a withdrawal of a number of the members who established a Methodist Episcopal Church in Fordville, (still Gouldtown, Fairfield Township). In later years two other churches came out of Trinity AME, Gouldtown - Bethany Christian Church and King Memorial Church.

In 1976 the Philadelphia Inquirer reported, "The 116 year old Gouldtown

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Trinity AME Church, long the religious and social center of the settlement, still draws a large Sunday crowd, is financially sound, has an excellent choir, and plans to erect a new parsonage." These stand true today. The parsonage was erected in 1979.

Gouldtown has produced bishops, preachers, teachers, morticians, doctors (of all types), and other professional people. Some men of more than ordinary eminence that came out of Gouldtown were:

Rev. Reuben Cuff (1764-1845) was one of the founders of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

Rev. Jeremiah Pierce, in 1875 organized Bethel AME, Atlantic City, now St. James.

Bishop Benjamin Franklin Lee (1841-1926), earned Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Divinity from Wilberforce University. He taught homiletus at Wilberforce and succeeded the presidency of that institution in 1876. He was elected Bishop in 1892.

Chaplain Theophilus Steward, (1843-1924) graduated from Episcopalian Theological Institute and was a clergyman since 1861. He was appointed by President Harrison as Chaplain of United States Army (one of the first colored chaplains). In this service he spent many years among the Indians in the far western frontiers. After he retired as Chaplain of the Army, he held

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professorship at Wilberforce University where he taught French, History and Logic. He was later sent South to establish the AME church. Being a French scholar he was sent to establish the AME church in Port au Prince, Haiti. In the war with Spain, he was sent to the Philippines where he served as government superintendent of schools in the Province of Luzon. He was also a writer. His brother William Steward was also a writer and newspaperman.

Rev. Theodore Gould (1830-1920), born in Gouldtown, he was converted in 1847 and united with the church of his parents - the Gouldtown AME church. He was Presiding Elder in the Philadelphia Annual Conference in 1859. He became an itinerant minister and traveled a circuit of 125 miles which included several points in Pennsylvania. He was stationed at many points in New Jersey including Princeton; Rev. Gould was later transferred to New York Conference where he filled many appointments. Then he was sent to the New England Conference where he held some of the largest charges, especially the Charles Street Church, Boston. Rev. Gould was twice pastor of Bethel Church, 6th Street, Philadelphia, the first church organized by the AME connection and styled the "Mother Church".

Senica Bishop "was probably the first colored postmaster in the country."

Trinity has had 90 pastors since the founding of the church in 1792.

Of the 90 pastors, Rev. Jeremiah Miller was the first. Four pastors became

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Bishops including: William Paul Quinn, Ben F. Lee, (Dean of Payne), A.W. Wayman and George A. Woodson. The current pastor, Rev. Alvin Stokes, Sr. has served the longest term of 15 years.

It is also significant to note that in the Summer of 1893 a trolley was constructed. The trolley's first trip began in Gouldtown near the church and proceeded to Millville on the Old Turnpike. Later, the trolley went west into Bridgeton.

Gouldtown's history is weaved with intermarriage of many ethnic origins. Beginning with John Fenwick's granddaughter, Elizabeth Adams, who against the will of her grandfather, married Gould "the black". Intermarriage with Lenni Lenape Indians, Blacks, Dutch, Swedes, Finns, etc. created a unique masterpiece.

Gouldtown is truly an area of historic importance. Trinity AME, Gouldtown has roots dating back to President George Washington. The cemetery which lies across the street (County Route 553) bears witness of many of the early members whose names are on the tombstones. It may be too late to save the old Toll Gate House, Post Office, trolley tracks, Ben Gould's Barn, Bryant's General Store, farms, etc.; but we pray that Trinity AME, Gouldtown will long be a house of worship open to all.

PLEASE NOTE: The New Jersey Heritage Trail comes down State Route 49 in front of Trinity AME.

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RESOURCES

Black Issues Convention Newsletter, New Jersey, p. 18 - 21.

Philadelphia Inquirer, Gouldtown: Shifts Shake "Other Town", Gould, Harry, February 4, 1976.

Historical Tales of Cumberland County New Jersey, Bridgeton Evening News, New Jersey, 1941, p. 172.

Ebony Magazine, America's Oldest Negro Community, 1952, p. 44 - 45.

Gouldtown: A Very Remarkable Settlement of Ancient Date, Steward, Theopolis, J.B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1913.

Combination Atlas Map of Cumberland County, D. J. Stewart, Philadelphia, 1876.

Bridgeton News, View From the Bridge, Chestnut, Bill, Bridgeton, NJ, 9/3/93, p. 3A

New Jersey Historical Commission. "Black Historic Sites in New Jersey: Final Report of Project." October 12, 1984. New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, Trenton, NJ.

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#### Boundary Statement

The nominated property (Block 23, Lot 2) is shown on the accompanying survey by Barry S. Fralinger, January 27, 1990.

#### Boundary Justification Statement

The nominated property is the half-acre originally purchased by the church.

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NJ Cumberland Co. Finity AME Church

#### **Photographs**

Photographer:

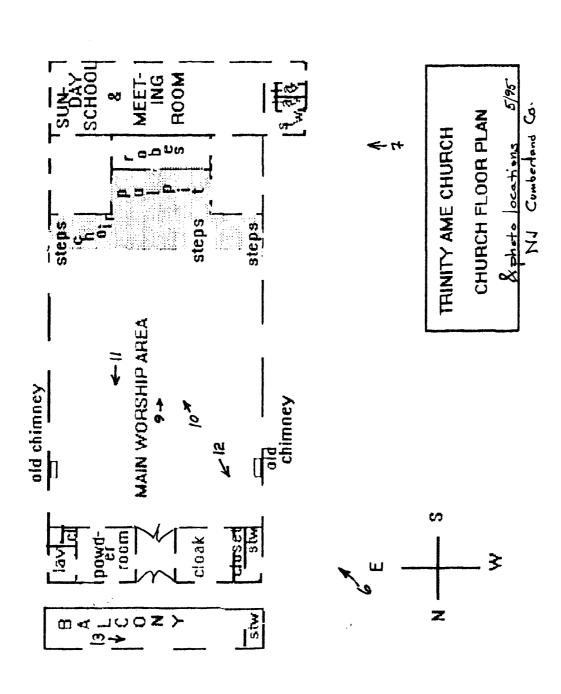
Scott Sheppard

Date:

January 1995

Negative Repository: Trinity A.M.E. Church

#1	Front facade (North)
#2	Front Facade (Northeast view)
#3	Front & side elevations (Northeast view)
#4	Side elevation (East view)
#5	Front & side elevations (Northwest view)
#6	Side elevation (West view)
#7	Annex (West view)
#8	Annex (South view)
#9	Pulpit (South view) - (Note original windows, now sealed off. Original windows remain open in pulpit recess.)
#10	Pulpit (South view)
#11	Rear of sanctuary (North view)
#12	Rear of sanctuary & stairs to balcony (Northeast view) (Note old chimney. Also present on Northwest side.)
#13	Original balcony
#14	Old stairwell to basement. (At one time the basement was accessible by these steps located on the northeast interior of the church. Stairs are now closed off at the upper level.)



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