

Moravian Church  
Oliphant's Mill, Gloucester County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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Moravian Church  
Oliphant's Mill, Gloucester County, New Jersey

Owner: The Protestant Episcopal Church of  
New Jersey

Date of Erection: 1786

Architect:

Builder:

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One and balcony

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - Flemish  
bond with red headers in  
front with balt course  
between first and second  
story windows

Interior walls - wains-  
coting and plaster

Roof - pitch, shingles

Historical Data:

The first church erected by the Moravians at Oliphant's Mill in 1747 was a log one. It was consecrated by Bishop Spangenberg and Pastor Nyberg on August 31, 1749 (old style). The ground and a large part of the lumber for this log structure was given by George Avis; this is the traditional story.

DATA NOT COLLECTED AND NOT GUARANTEED  
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The membership became so great by 1768 that the Parish appealed to the Synod at Lititz, Pennsylvania, for recognition. This they were granted and in 1769 Frederick Schmidt was appointed pastor of the 120 members of the church. His pastorate lasted until 1783. In the diary which he kept during his term he tells of hearing the cannonading of the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777 and later on October 22 of Red Bank.

The Reverend Francis Bohlen succeeded Pastor Schmidt in 1783. During his time we hear that the membership increased. The church was reorganized by order of Bishop Jan Von Waterville, son-in-law of Count Zinzendorf, in 1785. The present edifice was begun in the following spring. However, during the pastorate of Frederick Moehring, 1793 to 1798, the membership decreased. This was probably due to the fact that the Moravians persisted in holding the services in foreign tongues. From the time Moehring left until 1801 when Samuel Towle arrived the church was without a pastor. He left the next year and John Freytag came. He remained only a year and was the last resident pastor of the church.

In 1807, the Methodists were allowed to worship there; they were forced out, however, and built the Pilesgrove Methodist Church a short distance away. In 1834 the Episcopalians asked for the use of the building, and it was granted them. In 1836 the church and rectory were deeded to the Protestant Episcopal Church of New Jersey. The Gloucester County Historical Society erected

DATA NOT CERTAINLY GUARANTEED  
BY BOARD OF CHURCHES

DATA NOT SCANNED AND NOT GUARANTEED  
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a tablet in 1907 bearing the following inscription:

"Near this site 1747 the Moravians erected a log church, which was dedicated Aug. 31-1749 O.S. by Bishop A. S. Spangenburg.

"The construction of this church was begun in June 1786 and dedicated July 5, 1789 by Bishop J. Ettwein.

"This property was conveyed to the Protestant Episcopal Church of New Jersey, Oct. 15, 1836."

This Moravian Church had the longest life of any established in New Jersey and was the last one until the modern Moravians were established.

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Frances Moffett

Field Book and Drawings of Survey

Walter C. Reith  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, A.I.A.  
District Officer

Rev. Jan. 25. 37 T.C.