

TACONY,
TACONY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
(St. Petri Evangelical Lutheran Church)

Tacony

West side of 6800 block of Jackson St. between Knorr St. & Longshore Ave.

Philadelphia

Philadelphia County

Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6692-D

HABS

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior

1849 C St. NW

Washington, DC 20240

ADDENDUM TO:
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NOTE: Tacony's street grid does not lie true to the compass. For the purpose of locating buildings in this report, the roads running NE to SW (ex. Keystone Street and Torresdale Avenue) will be the N-S axes and those running SE to NW (ex. Longshore Avenue and Disston Street) will be E-W axes.

Location: St. Petri Evangelical Lutheran Church is located on the west side of the 6800 block of Jackson Street between Knorr Street and Longshore Avenue.

Significance: St. Petri Evangelical Lutheran Church remains as one of the surviving nineteenth-century religious congregations in Tacony. Like a number of its counterparts, the church was founded after an influx of a particular immigrant group, in this case Germans. Built on what was farmland and still only lightly built-up as late as 1928, the small church building is reminiscent of rural church structures which appeared throughout the more bucolic parts of Philadelphia from the mid-nineteenth-century onward.

Description:

An early photograph of the church shows a simple brick structure with an extruded central entrance tower and polygonal "transept" bays extending from the lateral walls. While not overtly so, the church displays some Gothic detailing, for example the pointed arch window and doors and small engaged buttresses at the building's corners. The church has seen little exterior change. The wood upper portion of the bell tower has been covered in siding as has a roundel over the main entrance. A small chancel addition extends from the west end of the original structure. The roof is covered in later asphalt shingles.

While the block bounded by Knorr, Jackson, and Gillespie streets and Longshore Avenue has been built-up, the church is still surrounded by a sizable wooded yard and retains vestiges of its once-rural location outside the center of "Disston Tacony."¹ A large social hall to the church's north appears to date from the mid-twentieth century.

History:

See the historical report for Tacony, HABS No. PA-6692 for more detailed information about Tacony's general development.

¹Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Maps for Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*, vol. 27 (New York: 1928), 2654

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St. Petri Evangelical Lutheran Church had its organizational foundations in a Sunday school established by Tacony's German Lutherans in July 1890.² Germans had been living in Tacony from mid-century onward after the establishment of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum by two Philadelphia German Catholic parishes.³ Early in the 1890s, a small group of congregants began meeting for services in the Tacony Music Hall.⁴ Sometime prior to August 1892, the congregation received a gift of two lots from Mary Disston and they purchased a third adjacent lot for \$375 dollars.⁵ The cornerstone for the church was laid on August 21, 1892 and the church was dedicated on January 29, 1893.⁶

Historian: James A. Jacobs

Sources:

Iatarola, Louis M., and Siobhán Gephart. Images of America: Tacony. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000.

Roth, Francis Xavier. History of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum, Tacony, Philadelphia: A Memoir of its Diamond Jubilee, 1855-1933. Philadelphia: "Nord-Amerika," Press, 1934.

Sanborn Map Company. Sanborn Maps for Philadelphia Pennsylvania, vol. 27. New York, 1928.

Take a Trip through Time: Northeast Philadelphia Revisited, ed. Lillian M. Lake and Harry C. Silcox. Holland, PA: Brighton Press, Inc., 1996.

²Louis M. Iatarola and Siobhán Gephart, *Images of America: Tacony* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 106.

³Francis Xavier Roth, *History of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum, Tacony, Philadelphia: A Memoir of its Diamond Jubilee, 1855-1933* (Philadelphia: "Nord-Amerika," Press, 1934), 19.

⁴*Take a Trip through Time: Northeast Philadelphia Revisited*, ed. Lillian M. Lake and Harry C. Silcox (Holland, PA: Brighton Press, Inc., 1996), 178.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.