



"Site of the First Church in Berks County - Douglassville, PA" Waymark



Site of the First Church in Berks County - Douglassville, PA

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Posted by: [ghtnin Bug](#)

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Quick Description: The first Church in Berks County was incorporated in 1720 and the St. Gabriel Episcopal Church currently resides at the site.

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Long Description:

"St. Gabriel's Church, Douglassville (first known as Morlatton), Pennsylvania, is the oldest church in Berks County and was incorporated in the year 1720. Services were first held here in 1708 by the Reverend Andrew Sandel. It was one of eight parishes which formed the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania after the Revolution. It had deputies at the convention which elected The Rt. Rev. William White to be the first Bishop of Pennsylvania. It helped to form the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

The Swedes could never secure regular sustained ministry from their own clergy. At times, German Lutheran clergy, especially the renowned pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, served the congregation. Eventually, the congregation entered into full communion and fellowship with the Church of England and were provided with Anglican ministers.

Thus this early church established by the Swedes did not formally come into the Lutheran organization, instead uniting with the Anglican Church. The principal reason is that the Church of Sweden in its form of Government has been governed since the Reformation by the Apostolic Bishops, as is the Anglican Communion. Also, the relations between the Church of England and the Swedish Lutheran Churches in this country had been most cordial and intimate. The ministers preached interchangeably in many of the churches and the same liturgy eventually came to be used in both.

For some years there was no other English service held within a circuit of eight miles except the meetings of Friends in Frying and Bethany. Hence, English-speaking people from all settlements

meetings or Friends in Exeter and Pottstown. Hence, English-speaking people from all neighboring places and the surrounding country attended divine service at Morlatton. Worshippers and attendants then came from the townships of Amity, Exeter, Robeson, and Union.

The first Swedish church was built in 1735 of logs hewn from the neighboring woods, and continued in use until 1801 when a new stone edifice was erected. The log church continued to serve as a school until the winter of 1831-1832 when it was destroyed by fire."

