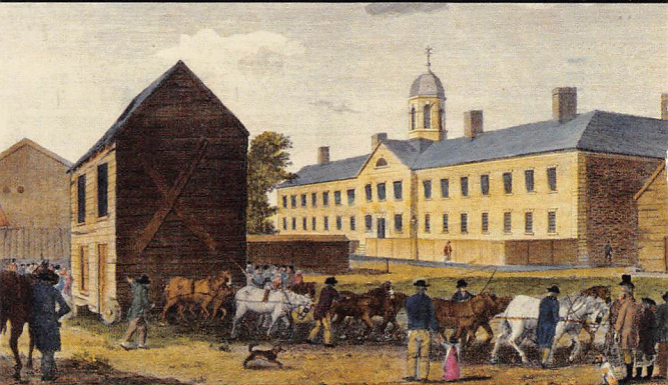


Independence National Historical Park



Mother Bethel Church, being moved, 1794

Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church

419 S. 6th St., Philadelphia, current church built 1889.



Mother Bethel Church was founded in 1794. It served for many years as a station on the Underground Railroad, beginning right away in 1795. One of the founders of the church was Rev. Richard Allen. He started life enslaved, but purchased his own freedom. He then became a leader of Philadelphia's African community. Allen and others broke away from the Methodist Church when it segregated black worshippers; they created the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

"Here was the beginning and rise of the first African church in America." --Richard Allen