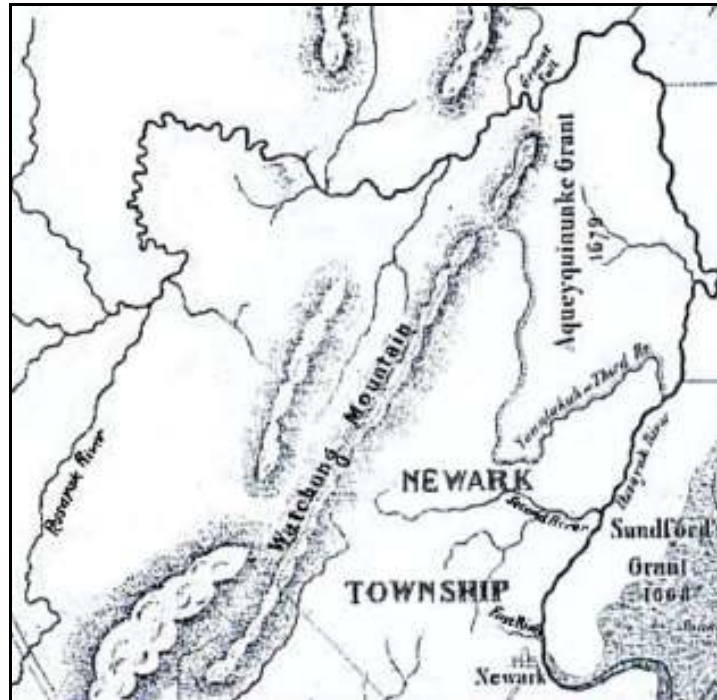


Chapter 2 – Religious Congregations & Buildings

The history of East Orange doesn't begin within the city limits. At one time, the area we call East Orange was part of a larger community known as the Newark Mountain Society, which extended from the borders of the present city of Newark to the Watchung mountains.



From a map of East Jersey dated 1682



The center of the Newark Mountain Society was its religious Meeting House, of which its direct descendent is *First Presbyterian Church* in Orange. It was originally located at Main and Day streets until it was destroyed by fire, then rebuilt in 1928 at Main Street and Scotland Road.

In the “Old Burying Ground” surrounding that church, you can still find headstones bearing the names of the founding families of East Orange; the Munn family, the Dodd family, and the Condit family, just to name a few. A listing of headstones as well as maps and photographs of the old burying ground can be seen at our Web site: eohistory.info .



The first church built in East Orange was an offshoot of the *First Presbyterian Church* in Orange. It was called the *Second Presbyterian Church*, but became better known as “Brick Church” from the distinctive red bricks that were used in its construction from its body right up to its towering spire. It was dedicated in 1831.



Other churches of different denominations followed each new group of settlers in the area.



When East Orange separated from Orange in 1863, the Baptist Church shown above was already established (1837) on North Maple Avenue and Railroad Place (today called Church Place) and was known as *First Baptist Church of Orange*. The congregation later built a new building on Main Street and Hawthorne Avenue and changed its name to the *First Baptist Church of East Orange* (see page 10). The above building was then taken over by an African American Baptist congregation (*Calvary Baptist Church*) in 1891, and today it is known as *Green Pastures Missionary Baptist Church*.



The Munn Avenue Church, built in 1863 and dedicated in 1864, then became known as *First Presbyterian Church of East Orange*.



Another Presbyterian Church was built first as a wooden chapel in 1874, on the corner of Elmwood Avenue and Shepard Avenue, and then in 1909, a stone church was added to it. Both buildings are still in use today by a very active Presbyterian congregation and it is known as *Elmwood Presbyterian Church*.



In 1875, 130 members of the original Brick Church established the *First Dutch Reformed Church* on the corner of what was then Main and Halsted Streets. In contrast to the red brick church, this was known as “The Brownstone Church.” Today it is known as *Faith Temple Original Free Will Baptist*, and Main Street has been changed to Martin King Luther, Jr. Boulevard.



The *Ferry Methodist Episcopal Church*, named after George J. Ferry, a mayor of Orange and the father of the first pastor of the church, was built in 1880 at the corner of Dodd Street and Cottage Place. Today it is known as *Living Water Christian Center Church*.



As mentioned on page 8, the *First Baptist* congregation moved into the *Hawthorne Avenue Baptist Church* in 1891. When the Garden State Parkway crossed the East West Freeway (Route 280) in the 1960s, the Church became known by its present name: *The Church at the Crossroads*.

This is just a sampling of the many historic churches of East Orange. Our Web site contains a more complete display of churches, together with larger photos and different views where possible. Because many of the churches have changed from one denomination to another over the years, we can expect these changes to continue into the future. As we receive information on changes, we will update the information on our Web site (www.eohistory.info).