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Early Settlers in Cumberland County

Who the first white settlers were in the limits of Cumberland County is not known. It has been said that some of the Swedes, who made a settlement farther up the Delaware in 1638, established themselves on the banks of Maurice River previous to any other white settlers in the county, but no evidence has been found to sustain this opinion, although it is not improbable that such was the case. Gabriel Thomas, a Friend, in a book published in London in 1698, speaks of Prince Maurice River, "where the Swedes used to kill the geese in great numbers for their feathers only, leaving their carcasses behind them." How long a time previous to the publication of the book is not known, but it implies that there were some Swedish settlers there previous to its publication. Whether the first settlers or not, the descendants of many of the Swedes are quite numerous to the present time.

Around 1720, John Purple bought the land where Port Elizabeth stands today. Settlers began to move in and about 1743 two acres of land were purchased a short distance above Spring Garden Ferry, most probably from John Hoffman. A Swedish church was erected and the first sermon preached June 27, 1745. Jeremiah, infant son of Lars and Susan Peterson was baptized shortly after that. The church was dedicated on December 18, 1746 by Abraham Reincke, Owen Rice, Matthew Rentz, and Pastor Lawrence T. Nyber. The following are the names of persons who resided in Maurice River and were attached to the brethren:

- Samuel Cobb and wife, Catherine
- Paul Camp
- Nicholas Hopman and wife
- John Hopman and wife
- Peter Hopman and wife
- Frederic Hopman and wife
- Joseph Jones
- Abrham Jones and wife
- Eric Kyn and wife
- ---- Lommus
- Peter Mosslander
- Margaret ----, a widow
- Stephen Mullicas and wife
- Eric Mullicas and wife
- Lucas Peterson and wife

- Aaron Peterson
- Thomas Peterson
- Gabriel Powell
- ---- Purple
- Shiloh, an Indian
- Samuel Van Immen and wife
- David Van Immen
- Peter Van Immen and Gabriel Van Immen

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