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Fighting Termites at
'Old Swedes Church'

 **BASF**
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FIGHTING TERMITES AT 'OLD SWEDES CHURCH'

by Bill Best

A. Amendt Pest Control uses Termidor® termiticide/insecticide to save a piece of history

After weeks of plundering and destruction in the spring of 1778, British troops squared off with local militia near what today is Swedesboro, N.J. According to the Rev. Nicholas Collin's journal, both sides "aimed so badly that the bullets flew in all directions so that it was best to stay inside." American troops arrived in Swedesboro a month later, set up quarters in Collin's church and spent several weeks quelling the unrest. Their stay in Swedesboro had long-reaching effects – the church was so damaged it had to be rebuilt after the war. In 1784, Trinity Church, also known as "Old Swedes Church," went from being a log cabin to the 300-seat



Since Trinity is on the National Historic Register, the team focused on getting the termites under control with as little disturbance to the church as possible.

Georgian building still standing today, more than two centuries later. You can still hear the echoes of history at Trinity thanks to an innovative historic preservation team that faced a new conflict – against termites –

and won, preserving one of the oldest churches in the United States.

As the oldest Swedish church in New Jersey, Trinity has seen its share of battles. Since the early 1990s, the church has faced roof truss, tower structure and cemetery wall failures. But the most recent fight was a quieter problem. In fact, only the cleaning lady noticed it at first.

Edie Rohrman, church restoration project manager, received a call in October 2007 from the church cleaner, who described vacuuming up piles of dust. And bugs. Rohrman went to assess the situation and found paint bubbling on the wainscoting. After consulting with an architect who works with the church, Rohrman suspected termites and called in a veteran of termite battles – Dr. Tom Parker.



In 1784, Trinity Church, also known as "Old Swedes Church," went from being a log cabin to the 300-seat Georgian building still standing today, more than two centuries later.

Parker, who has 30 years of experience solving pest problems for collections, artifacts, museums and libraries across the United States, inspected the situation at Trinity. After his inspection, he delivered bad news to Rohrman. The church was under siege by termites.

“Since Trinity is on the National Historic Register, our primary concern was to get the termites under control without physically damaging the church,” Parker said. “To do this, I called in A.Amendt Pest Control and we developed a treatment plan.”

Parker and John Amendt, owner of A.Amendt Pest Control Company, Inc., started by creating a detailed drawing of the church. Amendt, who has treated historic properties for 40 years, explained that drafting a diagram of a structure helps the team identify key areas where termites may be coming in and create a plan to reach those spots.

“The walls of Trinity are up to three bricks deep,” Parker explained. “The termites were coming up through the brick wall and getting into the wainscoting on the interior perimeter of the church. They were eating the wainscoting along a good portion of one side of the church and a section at the rear of the church. In order to cut them off, we needed to trench and treat the exterior. We also needed to drill the mortar joints and get the treatment into the voids of the thick brick wall.”

The A.Amendt Pest Control team applied a perimeter treatment of Termidor® termiticide/insecticide and then used a foam machine with Termidor to treat the voids in the structure of the church, making sure to disturb the structure as little as possible. After the drilling and treatment, Rohrman hired a mason to patch the holes. According to Amendt, his team could have cemented the holes, but the bricks are part of the historical makeup of the building, so it was important to take the time and make sure the entire termite treatment, including the patchwork, was done right.

“Termites are persistent. To control them, you need an effective tool. We have a nearly 100 percent success rate with Termidor,” Amendt said. “We’ve been using Termidor since it was introduced and treated Trinity exclusively with Termidor because we know it works.”

A.Amendt Pest Control will continue to inspect Trinity Church annually, but Rohrman, Parker and Amendt are confident their treatment plan has helped the Old Swedes Church fight and win another battle.



John Amendt treated Trinity exclusively with Termidor because he has experienced nearly a 100 percent success rate with the product.



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