

First Baptist Church
416 Vine Street
Madison
Jefferson County
Indiana

HABS No. IND-127

HABS
IND,
39-MAD,
19-

WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

HABS
IND, 39-MAD, 19-

Location: 416 Vine Street, Madison, Jefferson County, Indiana.

USGS Madison East Quadrangle; Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 16.640340.4288720.

Present Owner
and Occupant:

First Baptist Church of Madison.

Present Use:

Church.

Statement of
Significance:

The First Baptist Church, constructed 1853-60, is the home of the oldest Baptist congregation in Indiana. Styled in the Greek Revival manner, the brick structure's four elevations are dominated by Tuscan pilasters and recessed segmental-arched panels, emphasizing balance and regularity in the design. The principal denticulated gable pediment is repeated over the central doorway, and supported by scrolled brackets. Elegant stained glass windows soften the austere, rectilinear outlines of both interior and exterior surfaces.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: 1853-60. The plans for the new Baptist Church were unveiled on March 25, 1853 to the congregation, and the cornerstone was laid June 9, 1853. Due to financial difficulties, construction was stopped December 31, 1853, soon after the lower Sunday School room was finished. Work began again in the summer of 1860, and the structure was completed by September 1, 1860.
2. Architect: Not known. The Record of the Minutes of Church Business Meetings does not mention a specific architect. On February 8, 1851, "a committee was appointed to draft a suitable plan for a Church. Brothers Dutton, Cosby and Hibbs appointed." Hibbs was probably Benjamin Hibbs who worked for the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad. William Cosby was listed in the 1850 Census as "a laborer." Isaac Dutton, the third member of the team, was a carpenter, and the person who probably was the most capable of drafting the plans for the Church. According to the 1850 Census, Dutton was born in Pennsylvania in 1813, and he moved to Madison sometime between 1846 and 1848. Two

years after the February 1851 meeting, the Building Committee secured the congregation's approval to build a new church on March 25, 1853. The Committee, consisting of Isaac Dutton, William Cosby, Milton Stapp, Samuel Breneman and six others reported that "We have procured a plan for a new church edifice which we herewith present for adoption. The probably cost will be about \$8000.00" As there are no references in the Church Minutes to an architect or builder, it is quite possible that Isaac Dutton designed the structure.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The legal description of the Church property is part of Lot 84, parcel 46, in the Second Addition West to the Town of Madison. The following reference may be located in the Office of the Recorder, Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison.

1831 Deed, November 11, 1831, recorded March 9, 1832 in Book G, page 477. William Hendricks and John P. Paul, acting as Executors of the Last Will and Testament of John Paul, sold the property "on which the Baptist Church now stands" to the Trustees of the Baptist Church in Madison for consideration of \$50.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Not known. Since Isaac Dutton, a carpenter, served on the Building Committee for the Church, he may have contributed in some way to the actual construction of the church.
5. Original plan and construction: An article in the Madison "Daily Courier" on April 7, 1853 reported, "the new church edifice, according to the plan before us, is to be 48 feet front, 76 feet deep and 118 feet to the top of the steeple." In an effort to solicit funds, the Madison congregation wrote a letter to the American Baptist Home Mission Society on October 23, 1853. In the letter, members of the congregation described the proposed structure:

. . . forty-six feet in width by seventy-six in depth. The basement is eleven feet in the clear and the main auditorium is twenty-three feet between the floor and the ceiling. It is to be finished according to the accompanying front and side elevations. Its cost when finished and furnished for the public worship is estimated at Eight Thousand Dollars.

As completed in 1860, the church measured forty-six feet (three-bay front) by seventy-six feet deep. Styled in the Greek Revival manner, the structure's four elevations are dominated by Tuscan pilasters and recessed segmental-arched panels. The principal denticulated gable pediment is re-

peated over the central doorway, and supported by scrolled brackets. A cupola was erected at the front, to be used as the staging base for the seventy-one foot steeple which was never built. The cupola was removed in the late 1800s.

In the interior, the first level was divided into an auditorium section used for informal church meetings; and the Bapistry, where the sacrament of baptism was administered. The second floor housed the main sanctuary where formal Sunday services are held. The ceiling of the main sanctuary is elegantly trimmed with carved moldings in key fretwork and egg-and-dart motifs.

6. Alterations and additions: The Minute Books of the First Baptist Church are a valuable record, spanning 137 years, of issues which were currently under consideration by the congregation. Following is a record of alterations to the original church, extracted from the minutes of parish meetings.

January 2, 1889 "Brother Guthrie was ordered to have the sunken floor (the Bapistry) repaired."

October 14, 1891 "The church voted to repair the floor joists and to replace the wooden columns with iron."

June 29, 1892 A motion was made to enlarge the small rooms in the basement and to make repairs to the wooden Annex. The work was completed May 3, 1893, and cost \$561.70.

April 1, 1896 The committee on estimates for repairs proposed improvements to the building, including painting laying carpet, grain-ing and varnishing the pews, and "that the pulpit platform be lowered and made rounded in front." The work was completed by September 30, and cost \$1025.72.

February 28, 1900 A committee was selected to "proceed to the purchase of a pipe organ." Funds for the project had been secured by August 19th, and the purchase was authorized. On January 20, 1901 the organ was dedicated, and the cost of construction - \$1750 - was reported paid by the Ladies' Aid Society on September 30, 1901. The organ was built by A.B. Felegemaker of Erie, Pennsylvania.

- July 7, 1904 The Advisory Board was ordered by the congregation to install a Bapistry on the second-floor sanctuary. On July 10th the congregation offered "a standing vote of thanks to Mr. Tinsley, the architect, who superintended the building of the Bapistry."
- April 3, 1907 The Advisory Board was authorized "to contract for the new stained glass windows." The contract was adopted on April 4, 1907.
- April 15, 1916 The congregation recommended to the Trustees and Advisory Board to build a "Sunday School addition" at a cost not to exceed \$2500. The small brick addition at the east was completed by April 1, 1917.
- August 31, 1926 The Financial Report by the Treasurer, 1925-26, reported an expense of \$550 for "Furnaces" and listed an additional expense of \$200.00 for "Plans and specifications."
- December 31, 1939 The church sustained some damage due to a fire which began in the cellar and burned through to the auditorium floor. Approximately one-third of the floor in the auditorium was replaced.
- July 29, 1940 The Trustees reported that "a new alley entrance door into the lower auditorium was bought and installed at a cost of \$17.50."
- May 12, 1946 The congregation began a five-year plan to repair and improve the church. The roof had been insulated at a cost of \$317.65 by Nathan Lichlyter by October 23, 1946. On September 3, 1947 the Trustees reported that they were looking for a contractor to install the "Amastata" in the ceiling. The unit was donated to the church by Paul Holcrof and installed by December 26, 1947. The two large medallions on the main sanctuary's ceiling were removed. The heating and cooling system was installed by July 23, 1948, at a cost of \$10,327.

August 29, 1962

A motion was made to construct a new building for the Education Department. On August 21, 1963 the architectural firm of James Associates were awarded the contract to plan the addition, and the cornerstone was laid in April 1964. While the building was completed in December 1964, the dedication was not until February 7, 1965, due to delays in installing the furniture. At the dedication ceremony, the Treasurer noted that the contract was let for \$183,000, but the actual cost "will come close to a quarter million dollars." James Associates were paid #3,334.10 for their services; the contractor, the McKittrick Company, was paid \$131,449.80 in December 1964.

B. Historic Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The origins of the First Baptist Church Association in Madison may be traced back prior to the founding of Madison. On March 28, 1807, fifteen Baptists assembled under the leadership of Jesse Vawter and formed the Crooked Creek Baptist Church. The congregation built a log meetinghouse in 1808, which stood to the north of Madison, east of what is now Michigan Road. In the Fall of 1812, the congregation constructed a frame church to the west of the Madison & Indianapolis Railroad tracks, on the hilltop north of Madison, and called themselves the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. The church acquired its first full-time minister in April 1820 and continued services on the hilltop for eleven years. A splinter group of seven from the Mount Pleasant organization formed on December 18, 1829 calling themselves the Madison Baptist Church. In June 1829, the Mount Pleasant Church decided to move to the town of Madison; in 1831 this congregation sold its hilltop church, thereby appropriating part of the funds for the construction of a new church. The Mount Pleasant congregation joined with the Crooked Creek and Madison churches, forming the First Baptist Church of Madison in the fall of 1831. The newly organized congregation built a church on the site upon which the First Baptist Church presently stands. This original edifice existed until 1853 when it was razed to make way for the present church.

A motion to raise funds for a new church building was first offered in October 1850, and a goal of \$10,000 was unanimously accepted by the congregation. A year following, on April 10, 1852, a motion was entered to go ahead with the construction of the planned church, letting contracts for the work. The motion was tabled, however, and withdrawn at the next meeting. The actual decision to build the present structure was not

proposed again until March 25, 1853, following the appointment of a twelve member building committee. At the March 25th meeting, the Building Committee proposed a plan, to cost \$8000, and recommended that Rev. A.W. Pitcher use Columbian Hall for Sunday services while the building was being constructed. The cornerstone was laid June 9, 1853. At the laying ceremony, reported in the Madison "Daily Courier" it was mentioned that a sealed glass jar with church history, membership and the "names of the Building Committee, Builder and Architect" sealed within was implanted in the cornerstone.

By October 2, 1853, the Church was without the necessary funds to complete the building. In a letter to the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, dated October 23, 1853, the congregation wrote, "Two Thousand Dollars will be necessary (to finish the Church) . . . the walls of the House are up and the roof is now being shingled." Construction had come to a halt by January 13, 1854. In January, the church voted to settle with the contractor for the work completed and obtain an estimate of the probable expense of bringing the project to a satisfactory completion. Work had progressed far enough to move the Sunday services into the first-floor auditorium, which was opened for worship on January 1, 1854. A letter, addressed to the Ninth Street Baptist Church of Cincinnati on December 26, 1856, asked for one-thousand dollars to "finish off the outside of the church" as "the look outs are all perishing and will soon be useless, unless covered and we are told by all the carpenters of this place that no part of the work can be omitted or dispensed with." In May of 1860, the financial situation had improved enough to complete the building, while the process of obtaining further subscriptions continued. The second-floor sanctuary was completed in late August and opened for services on September 2, 1860.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Minutes of the First Baptist Church of Madison, Indiana,
4 volumes. Church Clerk, First Baptist Church, Madison.

2. Secondary and published sources:

"Madison Daily Courier," April 7, 1853; June 9, 1853; December 31, 1853; September 1, 1860.

Prepared by John L. Hopkins
Team Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Summer 1978

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The First Baptist Church was constructed 1853-60. Styled in the Greek Revival manner, the brick structure's three elevations are dominated by Tuscan pilasters and recessed segmental-arched panels, emphasizing balance and regularity in the design. The principal denticulated gable pediment is repeated over the central doorway, and supported by scrolled brackets. Elegant stained glass windows soften the austere, rectilinear outlines of both interior and exterior surfaces.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The structure is two stories with attic and measures 46' (three-bay west facade) x 76' deep.
2. Foundation: Rubble stone perimeter walls with stone longitudinal walls. A stone cross wall gives intermediate support to the wall between the narthex and assembly room.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Brick laid in running bond with a white cement coating. A stone watertable and cut stone skirting define the sill. Tuscan pilasters dominate the three exposed elevations - four on the front, and six to each side - framing recessed segmental-arched panels.
4. Structural system, framing: Load bearing brick walls with wooden floor joists on the first and second floors, and eight iron columns supporting the second floor. Timber and steel Howe truss roof construction with a haunch supporting large timber beams; a large timber beam extends along the apex of the trusses. Wooden joists between the trusses are supported by the beams and receive the roof's weight.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: A large concrete step fronts the main entrance. A small concrete stoop approached by three steps is at the south side of the rear addition.
6. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys with projecting caps pierce the side slopes at the rear. A large brick chimney topped with a metal cap is in the center of the east wall of the addition.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The central entrance is protected by a denticulated pediment and supported by scrolled brackets. The doorway is framed by a wooden surround

and threshold, and stone sill. Each of the double doors is trimmed with a double-raised panel. A doorway on the south side near the rear has a six-light transom and wooden surrounds, sill and threshold. The hardware for transom shutters (now removed) still exists. The door has six-light panels on the upper half and two horizontal wooden panels below.

- b. Windows: First and second floor windows on the front (west) facade are fitted with fixed stained glass. On the side elevations, first-floor openings have six-over-six double-hung sash windows; second-floor openings have fixed stained-glass windows. All windows in the main section are framed by molded wooden surrounds, a stone sill and a stone raking lintel. The rear addition windows are one-over-one light double-hung sash with wooden surrounds, and a stone sill and lintel.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The main block has a gable roof covered with cement asbestos shingles. The flat, built-up roof on the addition has a tile-capped parapet.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Denticulated raking cornice with a brick tympanum articulates the front gable end. The gable sides are trimmed with a denticulated cyma recta cornice, returning at the rear gable. A simple rake board defines the rear (east) gable end.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Cellar: A small cellar extends under the rear addition, and houses mechanical equipment.
- b. First floor: The central entrance opens into the narthex. A curved stairway on either side leads up to the second floor. An opening opposite the entrance leads into the vestibule, flanked by a small storage room on each side. From the vestibule a large opening leads into the fellowship hall. A small kitchen and three small storage rooms are at the rear of the hall. Access to the 1964 rear addition - housing four classrooms and two bathrooms - is by three steps in the kitchen.
- c. Second floor: The stairways from the narthex open into a vestibule on each side, and then the main sanctuary. The large rectangular sanctuary extends the length

of the building. A raised platform on the east end of the sanctuary forms the chancel and choir. At center is a large pipe organ with exposed pipes, with the choir to the left and the bapistry to the right. A doorway on each side of the chancel leads into the rear addition.

2. Stairways: Two curved, open-string stairways trimmed with a cherry handrail and brackets extend from the narthex to the second floor. Two oak balusters are secured into each tread. The rear stairway is trimmed with a molded handrail and supported by square wooden balusters and is covered with rubber risers and treads.
3. Flooring: The basement has a concrete floor. Wooden flooring is on the first floor and covered with carpet, linoleum and asphalt tile. The sanctuary floor is covered with carpet; rooms in the addition have asphalt tiling and carpeting.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceilings are sheathed with plaster and painted. Some classroom ceilings have acoustical tile. The narthex walls have a painted wainscot extending from the stairway into the vestibule. The north and south walls of the sanctuary have vertical board wainscoting, and a painted wainscot is on the east and west walls. A decorative plaster molding forming a frieze, and a denticulated coved cornice articulate the intersection of walls and ceiling. The ceiling is banded with a heavy egg-and-dart modling. There is evidence that two large plaster modillions ornamented the ceiling, and are now replaced with air conditioning grilles.
5. Doorways and doors: Doorways on the first floor have wooden panel doors and wooden surrounds. Doorways in the rear addition have double-raised paneled doors and plinth blocks. Doorways in the sanctuary have tall, heavy wooden surrounds, plinth blocks, crossettes and a projecting cornice. The swinging wooden doors have double-raised panels. Wooden thresholds frame all doorways.
6. Special decorative features, trim: The simple wooden pews have wooden skirting at the pew's front which extends close to the floor. A wooden panel separates the pews at the sanctuary's center. The side pews have no pew ends at the wall but are let into the wooden wainscoting. Ornamental iron book racks are still attached to some pews. The pipe organ is encased by an oak console trimmed with raised panels and cornice, extending across the chancel front.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: The first floor is heated by steam radiators and the second floor sanctuary is heated and air conditioned by a central forced-air system.

- b. Lighting: Modern lighting fixtures. Gas pipes in the ceiling of the fellowship hall and the east side of the pipe organ were originally connected to gas light fixtures.
- c. Plumbing: Modern plumbing fixtures.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The church faces west-northwest on the east side of Vine Street, a predominantly residential neighborhood.
- 2. Outbuildings: A two-story brick house stands on the northeast corner of the property, and a garage is near the alley.

Prepared by John P. White
Project Supervisor
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Summer 1978

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with Historic Madison, Inc and the Indiana Historical Society. The recording project was completed during the summer of 1978 under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS; Kenneth L. Anderson, Jr., Principal Architect; and John P. White, Project Supervisor (Associate Professor, Texas Tech University); with student assistant architects Richard Berliner (Rhode Island School of Design), Jon Lourie (University of Maryland), Eric Swanson (Rensseler Polytechnic Institute), and Peter Whitehead (State University of New York at Buffalo); and project historian John L. Hopkins (Skidmore College), at the HABS Field Office in Madison, Indiana. The drawings were edited in the HABS Washington office in February 1979 by architect Rudy Massengill. The written data was edited and expanded in February 1979 by Jan E. Cigliano, a staff historian in the HABS office.

ADDENDUM TO
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
416 Vine Street
Madison
Jefferson County
Indiana

HABS No. IN-127

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39-MAD,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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