

WASHINGTON

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HCRS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic First Presbyterian Church

and/or common Fayette County Museum

**2. Location**

street & number 301 West Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Vandalia

N/A vicinity of

congressional district 22

state Illinois

code 012

county Fayette

code 051

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Historical Vandalia, Incorporated c/o Jack Johnston, President

street & number First National Bank Building 210 South Fifth

city, town Vandalia

N/A vicinity of

state Illinois

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fayette County Recorder of Deeds

street & number Fayette County Courthouse 221 South Seventh

city, town Vandalia

state Illinois

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title See Continuation Sheet has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

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Continuation sheet First Presbyterian Church Item number 6

Page 2

1. Inventory of Historic Landmarks in Fayette County,  
Illinois Historic Landmarks Survey, February 1973  
Illinois Department of Conservation, Springfield
2. Inventory of Architecture before World War II in  
Effingham County/ Fayette County October 1973  
Illinois Historic Structures Survey  
Illinois Department of Conservation, Springfield

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Fayette County Museum, formerly the First Presbyterian Church is located on Lots 16 & 17 North Square of the original Town of Vandalia, Illinois. Historically this was the site of the House of Divine Worship, built in 1823 (the City of Vandalia has erected a marker to this effect.). The lots were originally conveyed to the trustees of the town of Vandalia on February 12, 1923 by the General Assembly of Illinois for use in constructing a nondenominational house of worship.

The Fayette Museum building, the old Presbyterian Church, constructed in 1868, is an example of the Early Gothic Revival style of architecture. The building stands unattached to manse or other structure with the entrance enjoying a southern exposure. The building itself is rectangular in shape, and while appearing from the exterior to have a voluminous hall in which to worship, one is surprised to find that the volume has been divided into two large levels. The upper level is the Hall of worship and the lower level is divided into one large social room with three smaller rooms, all at ground level.

The building structure is of red brick laid in common bond with every eighth brick a course header. Lintels over doors and windows are of wood painted white in order to provide the illusion that they are of stone as original gothic structures were. Bricks just below the eaves are staggered to produce a corbel with plaster appearing where the roof rafters bear the walls.

The twelve windows which admit light to the worship hall are typically gothic, long in the vertical dimension culminating with an arch which comes to a point in the center. The stained glass portion, being an oval, approximately 18" in length has various religious insignia in each window. (harps, angels, etc.). The windows are the originals from 1868 and are of imported European glass and stained glass. They have worn well, being situated next to the Pennsylvania-Central Railroad for nearly 100 years. The windows are in need of repair and releading. Four have been reled and three more are currently being done at a cost of over \$1100.00 per window. (The funds coming from local donations.)

The roof line of the building is a simple gable supported by common rafters with overhangs soffited parallel with the roof line. Shingles were no doubt at one time made of wood, but now of asphalt. The bell tower is without a spire and towers some 60' above the ground. The interior structure which supports this tower is an interesting arch effect with peaked window. This small window allows one to view the smallest stained glass window of the church through its outline. The upper sanctuary room is very large and features a massive pipe organ to the North wall. Fronting it are the pulpit and altar areas. To the right and left of the organ, the huge, high Northern walls were stenciled with a religious patterned design. The window and baseboards have a combed wood effect. The ceiling is typical cathedral and has wooden beams joining a large central wooden beam. There is a circular stair leading from two exit points on the South wall. These lead to the vestibul and main entrance. One may go up to the sanctuary or down to the social rooms from this point.

The physical attributes of the building have lent themselves easily from a worship hall and classrooms to the present display of historical artifacts and memorabilia.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates **1868**

Builder/Architect **UNKNOWN**

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The building which presently houses the Fayette County Museum is historically significant for the quality of its original Early Gothic Revival architecture, and the uniqueness of the site where it is located.

The old Presbyterian church, situated on lots 16 and 17 North Square of historic Vandalia, now houses the Fayette County Museum. It was built in 1868 at a cost of nearly \$15,000.00. It represents the classic Gothic Revival style of architecture with its red brick two story structure complete with 12 stained glass windows, bell tower, and large upper level sanctuary room with massive organ. It's functional floor plan makes it possible for use as a museum downstairs and large community room facility upstairs at the present date. Only restroom and kitchen plumbing alterations have been added to make it more serviceable to the public, along with new heating at the lower level. The natural beauty of the building was impaired somewhat in the late 60's when the Prebysterian's moved to their new church- the presnet old structure set unattended and uncared for approximately 6 years. This significance of the old structure is two fold: It is one of the few fine examples of Gothic Revival Architecture in Southern Illinois and it is the only one in Vandalia proper; Secondly the site on which it stands is of unusual and unique importance in that it is the site of the first protestant church in the state of Illinois. It is unique in that the state legislature granted these lots and three others to the town's inhabitants for the purpose of erecting a "house of Divine worship" free for all denominations to worship in- According to the Act of the Legislature approved June 12, 1823 (written February 12, 1823)

"Be it enacted by the people of the State of Illinois represented in the General Assembly, that the Governor of said state be and is hereby authorized and required to convey to Robert K. McLaughlin, John Warnock, and John F. McCullom, as trustees of the inhabitants of the town of Vandalia, and to the successors of said trustees..."Sec. 1"---  
 Sec. 2 Be it further enacted That, for the purpose of erecting a house of Devine worship, -- which shall be free to all denominations to preach in,--- the said Governor is hereby required to select 5 lots in the town of Vandalia- and convey same to the said trustees and their successors.---"

The first house of Devine Worship served as church house, social room, and school house during the capital period. The Governor's home being located next door was one of the centers of activity during legislative sessions. Many legislators stayed with the Robert K. McLaughlin's as did the Governor when in town. This property is part of our museum grounds also. The original 5 lots granted by the legislature were for the purpose of erecting the church, and for sale of extra lots to raise monies to pay for said church. Thus, the explanation of why a house was so close to the building, and that property has now reverted back museum grounds. There is only a vacant lot, which we use a flower garden and grassy yard with a historic marker placed their some years ago commerating the historic significance of the area.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

History of Fayette County Illinois (1878) Brink, McDonough & Co. Philadelphia  
 Whiffen, Marcus American Architecture Since 1780 (1969) M.I.T. Massachusetts  
 Interview with Walter Barenfanger, Architect, July 7, 1981  
 Interview with Jack Johnston, Attorney, July 7, 1981

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than 1 acre.

Quadrangle name VANDALIA, IL

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UMT References

A 

1	6
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3	1	8	6	0	0
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4	3	1	4	4	4	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 16 and 17 North Square of the original town of Vandalia, Illinois.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Louise Parkison  
Main Street Project Manager

Sandra Leidner  
Historical Vandalia, Inc.

organization Main Street Project

date July 13, 1981

street & number 219 S. Fifth

telephone 618-283-4074

city or town Vandalia

state Illinois

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *D. J. Kennedy*

title *Director*

date 9/25/81

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration