

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
WINCHESTER ILLINOIS

Scott Co

HABS NO. 25-15

HABS
ILL,
86-WINCH,
1-

Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
CENTRAL ILLINOIS DISTRICT NO. 25

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
EDGAR E. LUNDEEN, DISTRICT OFFICER
BLOOMINGTON ILLINOIS

Presbyterian Church, Winchester, Illinois

by Edgar E. Lundeen, Bloomington, Illinois, May 1934

This building is located on West Cherry street, more familiarly known as Depot street.

The Presbyterian organization dates back to Feb. 24, 1837, when it was organized as The Union Presbyterian church of Winchester by Rev. E. Jennings, and was connected with both the Presbyterian and the Congregational Association of this state.

Among the names of those who formed this organization were John Kirkpatrick, Mary Kirkpatrick, Eliza Harlan, Stephen Scales, Nathan Scales, Wilson Stout, Solomon Carter, Harriet Carter, Mary L. Carter, Sarah Camp and E. B. Kirby. The elders chosen and ordained were Solomon Carter and Stephen Scales.

On April 24, 1839, the church withdrew from all connections with the Congregational associations and became the First Presbyterian church of Winchester.

The members of the organization contributed to the erection of the old M. E. church edifice, with the privilege of worshipping therein, as neither organization could support a minister more than half time, and for a number of years they worshiped in the M. E. church. They secured a residence for a parsonage and some years later purchased a frame building and fitted it up and dedicated it as a church. It was there

that Stephen Paxon called the first Sunday School Convention ever held on April 20, 1846.

About the year 1860, the parsonage and church were sold and work commenced on the present brick building. These were perilous times, owing to the Civil War, and although the church kept together and continued their meetings for worship, and prosecuted the work of building, they were unable to dedicate the church until 1865. The edifice was built to endure. The foundation is of large hewn stone and the walls of an excellent quality of brick so that it has well stood the ravages of time.

The church has had many struggles, owing to its small membership, but through their fidelity and love of the Master was kept an active organization until a few years ago, since which time there have been no services held.

All ministers prior to 1892 served the church as stated supplies. Among them may be mentioned the following: Revs. Geo. C. Wood, W. Ornsbee, L. C. Littell, Gideon C. Clark, W. A. Hendrickson, Chas. Lyman, W. N. Steele and Pitkens.

The church took on a new life when Rev. A. M. Ayere, a young man from Jacksonville, was installed as pastor on Nov. 2, 1892. During his pastorship of five years the church membership was almost tripled, the church was redecorated, the windows were replaced by stained glass and a hot air furnace took the place of the old wood stoves. A new parsonage was erected on the lot north of the church.

Rev. Ayers was succeeded by Chas. A. Taylor and he by W. A. MacMinn and then came H. G. Wilkinson about 1903, an active young man, who built up the membership and during his time as pastor, about two years, built an addition to the church on the east, to be used as a Sunday school room and dining room, and a kitchen was added on the north. This was dedicated as Ayers' chapel in 1903.

Clarence Buckingham was the Architect.

Ministers who have followed Rev. Wilkinson have been Rev. W. F. Gibson, now a retired minister, and living in the parsonage; Robert Carson, J. F. Rogers, O. L. Pride and Rev. O. W. Lough, the last pastor, who served until August, 1924.

The church is located on U.S. Highway #36 and is of interest because it was built during the disturbed times of the Civil war, is in the town where Stephen A. Douglas taught his first and only school, and where Abraham Lincoln delivered his first speech on the Kansas-Nebraska question.

References: "The Winchester Times"

August 4, 1933

George E. Henderson
Bloomington, Illinois.

Revised 1936 by H.C.F.