

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED SEP 20 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Saint, John's Episcopal Church

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

315 North Sixth Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Lafayette

VICINITY OF

2nd

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Indiana

CODE

018

COUNTY

Tippecanoe

CODE

157

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Saint John's Episcopal Church

STREET & NUMBER

315 North Sixth Street

CITY, TOWN

Lafayette

VICINITY OF

STATE

Indiana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Tippecanoe County Courthouse - Records Office

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Lafayette

STATE

Indiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

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 type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1857-58

BUILDER/ARCHITECT William Tinsley

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. John's Church is significant for its architecture. William Tinsley, the architect, became well known for the many religious and academic buildings that he designed in the Midwest, especially in Cincinnati and Indianapolis. St. John's was important for its use of the Gothic Revival style, which had not gained general acceptance at the time.

The church was important for its early and prominent place in the organization of Presbyterians in Indiana. The parish was organized in 1837 under the Reverend Samuel Roosevelt Johnson, a graduate of Columbia College and General Theological Seminary. Since 1829 Presbyterians and Methodists had held services in Lafayette, which was regarded as the roughest town on the Wabash River; but Johnson was the first permanent pastor. Johnson held services in the courthouse, other churches, and a school until 1838, when a frame building, 28 feet by 45 feet on the site of the present building, was completed.

The congregation grew slowly. By 1850, when St. John's became the see of Bishop George Upfold, the report to the annual convention reported only 55 families and 90 "scholars" (Sunday school members). Even so, the church had expanded its original building to a length of 60 feet in 1848 and by 1851 was considering a new building.

The present structure was designed by William Tinsley who had come from England and settled in Cincinnati. He came to Indianapolis to design the structures on the old Butler University Campus and Christ Church Cathedral, which is listed on the National Register. Tinsley's English background no doubt influenced his Gothic designs for Christ Church and St. John's; both structures feature buttresses, an offset square tower, and a trefoil window.

The second St. John's structure was constructed on the site of the first wooden building which was moved to the rear of the lot so that it could be used as a parish house. This original frame structure was probably demolished in 1903 when the new parish house was built. Stained glass windows from the original building were transferred to the wall above the altar, and the new structure was consecrated on July 29, 1858.

From the beginning, St. John's Church was intimately associated with the arts. Reverend Johnson brought the first piano to Lafayette and organized a choir by 1842. The new church in 1858 contained the first pipe organ in the city.

The parish was also closely associated with education. Besides conducting the Sunday School, Reverend Johnson was a member of a committee of five, appointed by the first annual convention of the diocese in 1838, to consider establishing a college. Elizur Deming, a layman from the parish, was another member of that committee. The educational program took strong root in the parish; and the peak of participation was 1879-80, despite the

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lack of a pastor. By the 1880's, education and the Social Gospel movement intertwined. St. John's established a children's guild, also known as the Industrial School, that taught trade skills and earned money for the church in 1884. The next year the church established a young ladies' guild and in 1887 an industrial exchange. That same year, the opening of Purdue University brought a new missionary concern to the parish.

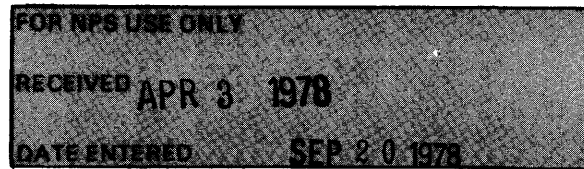
Changes in the furnishings of the church reflected the dynamics of parish life and problems that were common to almost all congregations. Financing activities were especially troublesome. A new organ was installed in 1891, but the cost--\$2,000 plus the old organ--divided the parishioners. The financial needs of the congregation posed a dilemma in combination with an increasingly democratic view of the laity. Pew rentals were set at \$20 per year in 1838, soon fell to \$]2, and then disappeared. By 1876, the national depression and deaths of two generous patrons made revenues hard to raise. In 1888, the envelope system was introduced, and persons who used envelopes could occupy any pew. After parish needs demanded the use of the entire parish house and displaced renters, the revenue problem again became acute. An appeal for funds divided the church again, in 1904.

St. John's displayed the characteristic localism that has plagued denominations that have hierarchical structures in the United States. Appeals for funds to support local endeavors sometimes divided the parishioners, but funds were usually forthcoming. Diocesan dues, on the other hand, were frequently in arrears--as much as \$1,081 by 1929.

Although St. John's has been altered through the years, it is important as a local surviving example of the Gothic Revival style of architecture which developed in mid-nineteenth century America.

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H.P. DeHart (ed.), Past and Present of Tippecanoe County, Indiana (Indianapolis, 1909), 253,254.

J.D. Forbes, Victorian Architect: Life and Work of William Tinsley (Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 1953).

Jane C. Harvey, "History of Saint John's Church, 1837-1857" (Unpublished manuscript, Wells Memorial Library, Lafayette, Indiana).

Journals of the Proceedings of the Annual Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Indiana (various places and publishers, 1838 and subsequent years, in the Indiana Division, Indiana State Library).

Louis Martin Sears, The Second Fifty Years: the History of St. John's Parish from 1887 to 1937 (no place, no publisher, no date; in the Indiana Division, Indiana State Library).

Interview with E.L. VanBuskirk, M.D., 1301 Ravinia Drive, West Lafayette, Indiana 47906, on 3 October 1975.