

PH 0080110

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
Kentucky

COUNTY:
Hardin

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE
DEC 31 1974

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:
First Baptist Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Severn's Valley-First Baptist Church

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
112 West Poplar Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Elizabethtown

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
2nd

STATE: **Kentucky** CODE: **021** COUNTY: **Hardin** CODE: **093**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)		<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
			<input type="checkbox"/> Comments Vacant

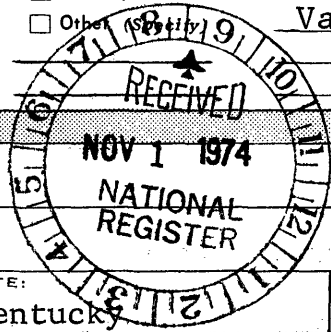
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Severn's Valley Baptist Association

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Elizabethtown

STATE: **Kentucky** CODE: **021**



5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Hardin County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Public Square

CITY OR TOWN:
Elizabethtown

STATE: **Kentucky** CODE: **021**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE OF SURVEY: **1971** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Kentucky Heritage Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
401 Wapping Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Frankfort

STATE: **Kentucky** CODE: **021**

STATE: _____

COUNTY: _____

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

DEC 31 1974

7. DESCRIPTION

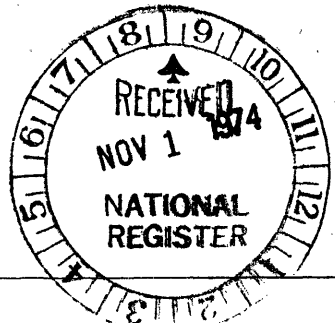
CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The First Baptist Church, originally the home of the Severn's Valley Baptist Church, is located in what is now the central business district of Elizabethtown, yet in an area that retains many of its historic institutional buildings and residences. The church building was constructed in 1833-34 by John Y. Hill, a local tailor turned carpenter and builder who was responsible for construction of a large number of prominent buildings in Elizabethtown in the 1830s and '40s. He built himself a house, later a hotel, which is now known as the Brown Pusey Community Center (placed on the National Register of Historic Places in July, 1974). In the 1850s Hill also built behind his own dwelling a number of "guest houses," in one of which General Custer lived with his family in 1873 prior to embarking on his fatal trip west. The guest houses are long gone, but have been replaced by handsome gardens which link the Brown Pusey House to the First Baptist Church behind it.

The church building, which Haycraft referred to as "finished in good plain style" (p. 84), is of simple rectangular form, 42½ by 55½ feet, the walls of handmade brick, probably from Hardin County. Two brick pilasters (or buttresses) flank the pointed arched entrance, above which is a recessed lunette in the low gable. There are two small windows high on either side of the entrance. Brick dentils enliven the cornice along the side walls, each of which has four slightly recessed rectangular windows. There is an octagonal wooden cupola set on a square platform and topped by a concave double-curved steeple. A five-sided chancel, approximately 6 x 8 feet in plan, projects from the rear of the building. A doorway to the right of the main entrance has been bricked up; originally it led to the gallery which was used by blacks in the early years of the building. The interior has been much altered, although the woodwork surrounding doors and windows, as well as the gallery except for its stairs, are original. The opalescent glass windows were inserted in 1915-20 (one has been broken and replaced in recent years). In spite of lack of maintenance the basic fabric of the original building remains intact.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1833-34**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | | Black History |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The early history of the Severn's Valley congregation is unusually well recorded, thanks to the early membership of the parents of Samuel Haycraft, Sr., 19th-century chronicler of Elizabethtown's history. Moreover, the minutes of the church survive from December 1785 (five years after its founding) to 1803, and from 1844 to 1884. Also, the history of this early church association has drawn the attention of historians of the Kentucky Baptists as well as of Kentucky history itself (Cofer, p. 3).

During the winter of 1779-80 a group of pioneers came into what is now Hardin County, Kentucky, and established the first permanent settlement. On June 17, 1781, eighteen persons met in church covenant and constituted one of the first, if not the first, Regular Baptist Church west of the Alleghenies. They met under a sugar tree near Hynes Fort, which was located on the elevation above the spring that later supplied the city of Elizabethtown with its water. Of the eighteen original members, three--Mark, Bambo, and Dinah--were servants of Haycraft's grand-father, Jacob Van Meter, Sr. John Gerrard, Van Meter's son-in-law, was immediately ordained first pastor. It is believed that he was killed by Indians within a year so that there was no permanent minister when the church in Severn's Valley reported to the Salem Association at the time the latter was organized in 1785.

The original congregation had no building of its own and met in the open or in the log homes of the members until about 1807 when a log structure was erected, followed in succeeding years by two larger log buildings. For some years the Baptist Church was the only house of worship in Elizabethtown and was occasionally used by other denominations.

The second pastor of the Severn's Valley Church, Joshua Garmen, was known for his views on the emancipation of slaves. These
(Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Minutes of the Severn's Valley Baptist Association; Minutes of the Salem Association (Preserved at the Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, and the Severn's Valley Association, Elizabethtown).
 Lewis Collins, Historical Sketches of Kentucky (Cincinnati: Lewis Collins, 1847).
 Samuel Haycraft, A History of Elizabethtown, Kentucky and its Surrounding (published in serial form in The Elizabethtown News in 1869; collected and published in book form in 1921-22 by the Elizabethtown Women's Club; reprinted by the Hardin County

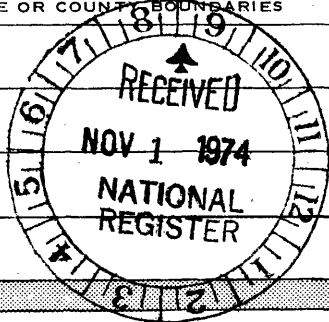
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA (continued)

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		37 ° 41 ' 40 "	85 ° 51 ' 29 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **0.5 acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



HB 16/4172320
 600660
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Mrs. Margaret S. Richerson & Mrs. Reba Mae Terry

ORGANIZATION: **Hardin County Representatives, Ky. Heritage Comm.** DATE: **7/30/74**

STREET AND NUMBER:
209 Elizabeth Street 704 Woodland Drive (WEL)

CITY OR TOWN: **Elizabethtown** STATE: **Kentucky** CODE: **021**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Eldred W. Melton

Title State Liaison Officer

Date 10-29-74

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

A. R. Pearson
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date DEC 31 1974

ATTEST:

Atty. General
 Keeper of The National Register

Date DEC 31 1974



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Kentucky	
COUNTY Hardin	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	DEC 31 1974

(Number all entries) First Baptist Church/Severn's Valley Baptist Church
8. Significance (continued) Page Two

views were realized under the third pastor, Josiah Dodge, who was ordained in a highly unusual proceeding after an examination by a committee of members of the Salem Association in 1791. Dodge served as pastor until about 1800. According to Cofer, "The outstanding action of the church under Josiah Dodge's pastorate was resolutions passed concerning slavery. He was among the first preachers to refuse to fellowship slave holders. In February, 1796 an old minute reads thus: 'Can we as a church have fellowship with those that hold the righteousness of perpetual slavery?' It was answered that they could not. Following, another minute set forth a plan by which slaves might purchase themselves, provided they were obedient servants. A few years later the church withdrew from the Salem Association on the account of the question of slavery."

The early church kept strict control over the moral, as well as the religious life, of its members, as the early records reveal. Not only such matters as "frolicking," drinking liquor to excess, and horse-racing were disapproved, but "Almost every phase of activity in the settlement is reflected in the church minutes. In the controversy over the location of the county seat in 1795, we find a group of members appearing before the church to acknowledge their wrong doing in signing a petition which they had not read, and in the words of the minute, 'they hoped the brethren would look over it.' At the same meeting a case appears over some contribution to the 'Public Building' as the Court House was called." (Cofer, p. 10)

The church survived in spite of the general dearth of religious feeling in the last years of the 18th century, particularly in the Mississippi Valley. But things changed when Joshua Morris became the fourth pastor in 1801. A series of entries in the minutes reflects the increasing number of members "received by experience." Haycraft vividly recalled one of these baptismal ceremonies following a revival meeting: "The weather was mild for the season, and the baptismal scene in the Valley Creek was a solemn and pleasant occasion. A vast crowd stood upon its banks, and one after another stepped into the stream and were buried with Christ in baptism; at slight intervals, hymns of praise and shouts of rejoicing rent the air. I can never forget it; the venerable Morris was so filled that he seemed as one

(Continued)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Kentucky	
COUNTY	
Hardin	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	DEC 31 1974

(Number all entries) First Baptist Church/Severn's Valley Baptist Church

8. Significance (continued)

Page Three

snatched up into the heavens; although but a child, I was filled with solemn awe".

As Cofer put it, "Indeed, the great revival of 1801 ushered in a period of sixty years in the history of Severn's Valley and exerted a far-reaching influence in its life. It was a time when slight differences in the denomination, such as the union of the Regular and Separate Baptists, were harmonized; when the transition from permanent settlements and on to colonization were being effected; when some of the auxiliaries of the church were organized; and when it was called upon to make many decisions concerning its own policies and standards" (p. 11).

In June 1833 some brethren reported that they had raised a subscription and had contracted for the present brick building. The structure was completed in 1834, at a cost of \$1,200. The congregation consisted at this time of both blacks and whites, with the former occupying the balcony of the new building and the latter sitting in pews on the first floor. During the 1850s the blacks were granted the privilege of holding services of their own under the supervision of the Severn's Valley Church and they built a log house in which to worship. At this period a black man was ordained to ministry by the church. The present First Baptist Church dates its independence as a congregation to 1866.

A number of other congregations were also sent out from Severn's Valley, beginning with the Revival of 1801. In 1844 a Female Seminary was built on the lot adjoining the church; this institution in its later form as Hamilton College often used the church as an auditorium.

The Severn's Valley white congregation continued to use the church building on Poplar Street until 1897, when a larger structure was completed elsewhere to accommodate the increasing number of members. The black Baptists, having also increased in numbers, purchased the older building for \$500 and used it continually until July 1974 when they, too, moved into a new edifice. The only interruption in the holding of religious services in this small brick building was in January and February of 1865 when Union soldiers occupied it as a hospital.

(Continued)

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Kentucky	
COUNTY Hardin	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	DEC 31 1974

(Number all entries) First Baptist Church/Severn's Valley Baptist Church
8. Significance (continued) Page Four

Although a modest structure, the church has sustained few alterations. The congregation and the building itself since its erection have played a significant role in the community of Elizabethtown, particularly the black community, for whom it is one of the few tangible reminders of their history.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Kentucky	
COUNTY	Hardin	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
		DEC 31 1974

(Number all entries) First Baptist Church/Severn's Valley Baptist Church

9. Bibliographical References (continued) Page Two
Historical Society, Elizabethtown, 1960).

"One Hundredth Anniversary of First Baptist Church" (Elizabeth-
town, 1966).

Ella Cofer, "History of Severn's Valley Baptist Church 1781 to
1931" (Elizabethtown, 1931).

Olivia Shaheen, "Sentiment Grows for Saving Old First Baptist
Church," The Elizabethtown Examiner (Wednesday, July 24,
1974), p. 9.

Frank M. Masters, A History of Baptists in Kentucky (Middletown,
Ky.: Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, 1953).

