Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

DATA SHEET

MAR 2 5 1977

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AUG 1 2 1977

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS

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Flemingsbur	g	VICINITY OF		
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STRUCTURE	BOTH	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDE
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7 DESCRIPTION

CON	DITION	CHECK ONE	CHECK C	DNE
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The First Presbyterian Church is located at the northwest end of the 19th-century portion of Flemingsburg, county seat of Fleming County. The county, established in 1798, is located near the center of the northeastern region of Kentucky, on the outer edge of the central Bluegrass region, at the edge of the eastern Kentucky mountains, and not far from the Ohio River. Flemingsburg was prosperous in the early 19th century. from which so much fine architecture survives, but its population has remained stable or actually declined since then, as major transporation routes have by-passed the county and town. The latter, however, is located on the old Maysville - Mount Sterling turnpike that led from Maysville--originally known as Limestone, and the major stoppingoff place on the Ohio Rever for settlers arriving from the East, who then often penetrated into the Bluegrass west of Fleming County through Paris, Bourbon County, along the old Limestone Pike (U. S. 68) -- to Mount Sterling and thence to Lexington. But the Flemingsburg route remained secondary to the Paris Pike and the town became a virtual backwater.

In the late 19th century the Cincinnati and Southeastern Railroad line came through Flemingsburg, paralleling the Town Branch, which originates just northwest of town and flows southeast toward the Licking River (see map 2).

The Branch lies along the bottom of a valley with low but sometimes steep hills on It is at the center of a rolling yet rich agricultural region, on which much either side. of the commonly of the town depends. Water Street, a relatively narrow but urban thoroughfare lined with commercial buildings and residences dating from the first half of the 19th century, parallels the Branch, connecting the road from Mt. Sterling, which enters from the southwest, with the turnpike to Maysville leading northward out of town. Main Cross Street, the major commercial street, ascends steeply from the Branch northeastward toward the Courthouse Square. The courthouse site is perched near the top of the hill and the street branches around it. The present courthouse is an undistinguished replacement for the superb 1829 structure that was the masterpiece of Eckles and Stockwell, designer-builders of the Presbyterian Church. From the northwest side of the Courthouse Square, Main Street descends the slope past the old county jail and Methodist Church, bending westward to meet the street near the Town Branch. It is at this prominent junction, facing northward toward the Maysville road, that the Presbyterian Church is located, on a fine wooded lot (photo 1).

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8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
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SPECIFIC DAT	^{ES} 1819	BUILDER/ARCH	HITECT Samuel Stockwe	ll and John Eckles

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The First Presbyterian Church in Flemingsburg, built in 1819, is one of the oldest Presbyterian meeting houses in the State, and is the major known surviving work of the fine local architect-builders, Samuel Stockwell and John Eckles. Although the interior has been re-oriented, it remains an outstanding example of Kentucky Federal architecture as applied to ecclesiastical requirements. The well-proportioned twostory interior includes portions of a rare surviving slave gallery and a superb chancel arch.

The congregation, which has always included many of the prominent citizens of the town, was established in 1795. Both the early pioneer preachers and later pastors associated with the church have included figures significant in Presbyterian church history, particularly during the tumultuous controversies and apostasies associated with the Great Revival of the first decade of the 19th century, as well as the founding of the Christian Church and Western Shakerdom.

History of the Congregation

The earliest settlement of Flemingsburg, known as Stockton Fort or Station (somewhat north of the present church site), gained the services of a Presbyterian minister, the Reverend Robert W. Finley (ca. 1760-1840), when he settled there in 1788. Finley, who was educated at Princeton, New Jersey, was later associated with the famous Cane Ridge Meeting House in nearby Bourbon County. Among other settlers at the station were members of the Dudley, Williams, Barnes, and Dorsey families, some of whose descendants still belong to the present church: a fact which reflects the closeknit and conservative character of the congregation, as well as the town.

In 1795 Dr. John Poage Campbell (1767-1814) came to Fleming County to organize a church nearby called Smyrna. He also was responsible for the erection of a log church (said to have measured 18 x 20 feet) at Flemingsburg near the gate of the present Fleming County cemetery at the opposite (southwest) quadrant of the town from the present church. Dr. Campbell, an M. D., was called by Lewis Collins in his

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Coleman, J. Winston, Jr. Historic Kentucky. Lexington: Henry Clay Press, 1968.

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10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2 acre UTM REFERENCES	Latitude: 38 ⁰ 25' 28'' 2 3 — Longitude: 83 ⁰ 44' 10'' 70
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STATE CODE	COUNTY CODE
11 FORM PREPARED BY NAME / TITLE Julian L. Dorsey ORGANIZATION	WEL Date May 25, 1976
STREET & NUMBER 219 Mt. Sterling Avenue	TELEPHONE
CITY OR TOWN Flemingsburg	staté Kentucky 41041
12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATIO	N OFFICER CERTIFICATION
N 1	F THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:
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FOR NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED	D IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DIRECTOR OFFICE OF ARCHEOROGICAND HISTOBICS	DATE 7/2/22 DECENTION KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTE DATE 7/2/22

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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The church also lies at the north end of a potential National Register Historic District that includes numerous early 19th-century commercial and residential buildings-many of them attributed to Eckles and Stockwell--along the main cross streets of town, as well as larger houses sited on the adjacent hilltops. Nevertheless, because of its somewhat separate site and intrinsic historic and architectural merit, the church is at present being nominated in its own right. (Nomination of the district will follow the comprehensive historic resources survey about to be undertaken in Fleming County.)

The church lot, roughly semi-circular in shape, slopes slightly downward toward the west and south, where there is a minor watercourse. The building faces northwest. aligned with the main grid of the town. Set on stone foundations exposed on three sides, it consists of a rectangular two-story brick block with the broad and high gable end toward the front. There are three bays across the facade, with two round-arched doorways flanking a window aligned with the three windows above. There are ten windows in two stories on both sides and six (now blind) on the back. Although actually quite large, the windows are wide for their height and small in proportion to the expanse of fine Flemish-bond brick work (now and for a long time part painted gray or another light color). The windows have plain recessed Federal frames under moderately splayed brick jackarches, and plain sandstone sills. Probably originally twelve-over-twelve-pane sash, the clear glass windows were replaced with plain colored glass about 1900.

The two round-arched entrances are no wider or higher than the windows (photo 2). Reached by two sets of five sandstone steps without stoops because of the proximity of the street, the entrances have deeply recessed and finely paneled jambs. It is the opinion of the writer of this description (WEL), that the present outer door frames may be replacements for similar originals, as the quality of the reeding, impost blocks, and keystones seems slightly stiffer than that of comparable doorways in the area attributable to Eckles and Stockwell; this view is, however, subject to corroboration or correction as the firm's work is studied further. The actual doors, recently stripped and refinished, appear to be original, although with large glass panels inserted in the upper half. The semicircular transoms probably once had muntins arranged in the usual fan.

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The eaves and cornice are quite plain, and frame the bare expanse of the gable end. A square one-story belfry with gables that supports an octagonal spire straddles the ridgeline above the facade. This tower is a close copy of the original which, with much of the roof, burned in 1939 and was carefully replaced. There is a narrow chimney between the third and fourth bays of the west side of the block.

A shallow narthex or vestibule lies across the front of the church, with enclosed stairs at either end leading to the gallery above. The sanctuary or chancel was originally at the north end of the church, between the entrances (photo 3). Although the original high wall pulpit and other fixtures were removed when the sanctuary was re-oriented to the south end in 1921, the superb arch above the original sanctuary remains in the north wall of the auditorium (photo 5). It is a compendium of Eckles and Stockwell's millwork. Both the elliptical (three-centered) arch and the upper stage of the pilasters have grooved reeding. The lower portion of the pilasters (perhaps originally corresponding to the base of the high pulpit) is wider, with narrow recessed panels and gougework dentils.* The upper impost blocks have several layers of fine molding and there are flat, finely reeded panels under the arch. The composition is climaxed by the bold over-scaled wood keystone with its plastic "folds," which relates to the auditorium as a whole rather than to the upper stage of the archway alone.

The gallery (perhaps intended for the use of both free blacks and slaves) originally extended around the three other sides of the auditorium; the south section was removed when the sanctuary was relocated against that wall, but the panelled facings of the upper level were carefully reinstalled. The gallery is supported on fine slender Tuscan columns, apparently made of walnut, which rest on pedestals at the height of the present pew-backs; similar but smaller columns extend from the parapet to the flat ceiling (photo 4). (These columns resemble those of the portico on Eckles) and Stockwell's 1829 Fleming County Courthouse, which have been preserved and reused on a nearby private residence.) The parapet is solid, with long recessed panels which have raised surfaces with concave corners (photo 6). Between the panels and the series of moldings above that form the substantial handrail are two curious syncopated bands of scallops; these create a rhythmic effect that enlivens the whole interior.

*This gougework has a distinctive rectangular form associated with the builders.

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The present sanctuary is a well-executed Georgian Revival complex on several levels that echoes features of the original millwork. The deeply-recessed window embrasures retain their Federal woodwork, but there are several apparently Greek Revival doorframes at the north end of the church. The rather plain pews are old, and replaced high boxlike family pews. The building is well maintained.

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"Historical Sketch of the Presbyterian Church" "unquestionably the most brilliant star in this constellation of /early7 missionaries" to Kentucky. He was born in Augusta County, Virginia, in 1767 and first came to Kentucky with his father about 1781. He was graduated from Hampden-Sydney College in (present) Virginia in 1790, and in 1792 was licensed to preach. His first independent charge on returning to Kentucky in 1795 was the churches of Smyrna and Flemingsburg. He later officiated at several important churches in Kentucky and Chillicothe, Ohio, where he died in 1814. In 1811 he served as chaplain to the Kentucky State Legislature. According to Collins, "Dr. Campbell possessed an acute and discriminating mind; was an accurate and well read theologian; an able polemicist, and decidedly the most talented, popular, and influential minister of his day" (p. 135). He was also a prolific writer, engaging in important controversies in the Western church. In addition, his posthumous publication The Antiquities of Kentucky (Chillicothe, 1815) is a pioneering source on the prehistoric archaeology of the state. Although apparently there were other claims on his services, Dr. Campbell is said to have lived in Flemingsburg until 1809. His house opposite the church was the third residence built in the town after the county was formed in 1798. * J.

It is unclear how long Campbell was associated with the Flemingsburg church, but other pioneer preachers whose names are connected with it include Joseph P. Howe, who according to Collins (p. 136) came to Kentucky from North Carolina in 1794, was ordained in 1795, and was identified with the Little Mountain church in nearby Mount Sterling, as well as with Flemingsburg in 1795. "He was a good man-prayed and sang well--and took a conspicuous part in the Great Revival. He died in 1830." Andrew Steele is said by Coleman to have been at Flemingsburg in 1796. One of the 1783 lot holders of Lexington, he had served in Woodford and Mason Counties in 1775 and 1776. In 1797 Richard McNemar (1770-1829), who had received his ministerial training under the same Robert Finley who brought Presbyterianism to Stockton Station in 1778, was associated with the Flemingsburg church. A very controversial and influential figure, McNemar was later accused of Arminianism vand with several other prominent leaders left the Presbyterian church, participated in the founding of the Christian Church, and in 1805 became one of the most effective members and proselytizers in the West for the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming (Shakers). His 1807 book The Kentucky Revival is one of the earliest and most authentic sources on that phenomenon, in which he played a significant role.

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Coleman lists Campbell's successors: James Kemper, from North Carolina, served 1810-14, William W. Martin, stated supply 1815-16; John T. Edgar, 1817-20. In 1819 the present brick church was built. In 1821 the Flemingsburg Presbyterian Church became a member of the Ebenezer Presbytery. In 1823 a noted revival was held, with a total membership of 120. In 1827 the first Sunday School in the county was established at the church. Among noted later pastors was Dr. James Paul Hendrick, who served 41 years from 1857 through 1898. His arrival revived interest in the congregation, which included 210 members in 1858. In 1867, after the close of the Civil War, the Flemingsburg Church joined the northern faction to become a Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., retaining Hendrick as their pastor. He and many of the other pastors, as well as members of the congregation, have played prominent roles in the social/humanitarian activities of the community throughout the history of the church.

Architecture

The First Presbyterian Church remains as the major known work of the local architect-builders Samuel Stockwell and John Eckles since the destruction in 1951 of the 1829 Fleming County Courthouse, which the church in many respects resembles. The courthouse, located prominently on a hillside at the junction of Main and Main Cross Streets, was an outstanding example of the "coffee-mill" type of early courthouse: a basically cubic two-story structure with a hipped roof and a cupola or tower in the center. Although the lower windows were longer, the basic proportions of the The courthouse also had a fine courthouse were similar to those of the church. fanlight, walnut Tuscan columns on the exterior portico like those that support the interior galleries of the church, an octagonal spire and triangular gables over the clock faces like those over the louvered openings of the church towers (see photo 7). Details of the woodwork in the church also bear close resemblance to that of the many related residences and commercial buildings that still survive in downtown Flemingsburg (a potential National Register historice and architectural district) and houses in the county, such as the magnificent Fleming-Sousley House, one of the Many of these structures are outstanding late Federal dwellings in the State. associated with Eckles and Stockwell through long-standing local tradition transmitted and documented by their descendants.

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It appears that Samuel Stockwell and John Eckles practiced in Fleming County from about 1800 or 1810 to 1830. Eckles was supposedly the designer and in charge of the high-quality carpentry and millwork; Stockwell's Negro slaves are believed to have provided the fine Flemish-bond brick masonry. It was Samuel Stockwell who sold the lot to the congregation in 1824, when the deed refers to the land "on which the new Presbyterian church stands."

The building is notable for its ample size, fine proportions, elegant double doors, rare and handsome chancel arch (against which a high pulpit once rose above the congregation), and interesting slave gallery with panelled and scalloped parapet. The sanctuary was re-oriented from its position between the entrances toward the rear of the building in 1921, supposedly because the original location provided both embarrassment to latecomers and distraction to the congregation. A fire in 1939 required replacement of the belfry, roof, and interior ceiling, which was raised slightly from its original position just above the upper windows. Nevertheless, the structure is unusually intact for a church of its relatively early date, and devotedly maintained.

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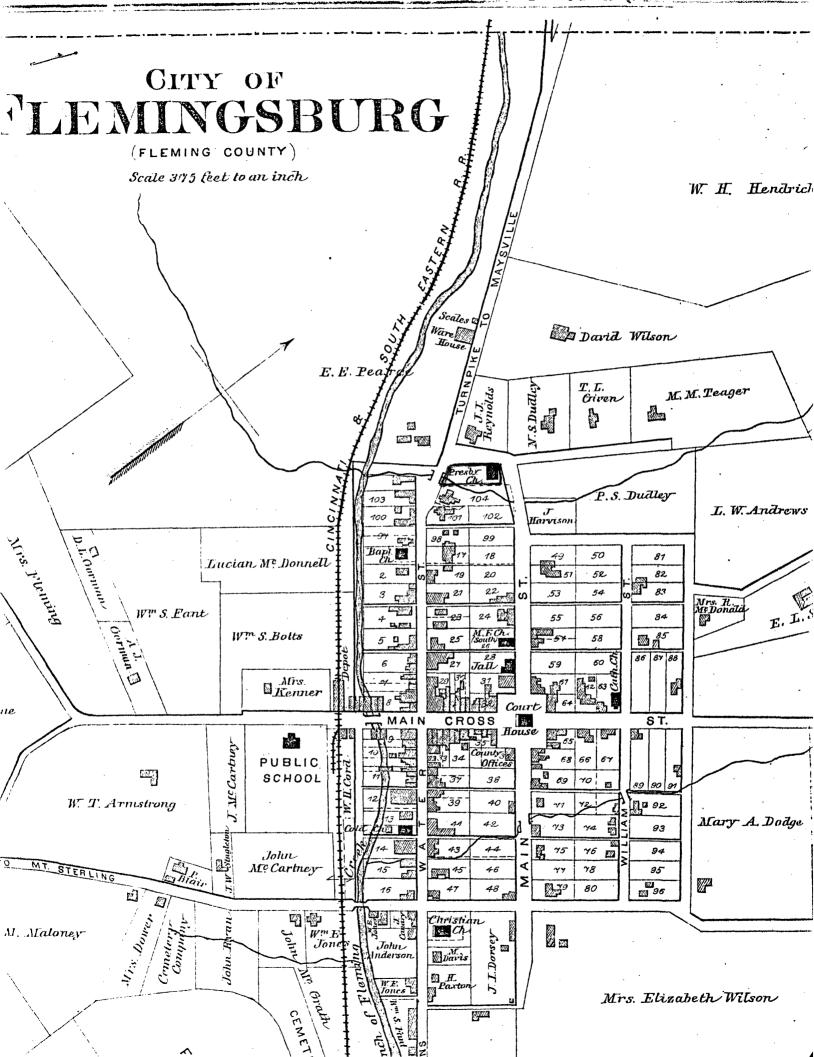
Sessional records of the Flemingsburg Presbyterian Church.

Mason and Fleming County Court records.

Undated newspaper articles and pastors' and parishioners' accounts, including "Memoirs of James Paul Hendrick."

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First PresbyterianChurchFlemingsburgAUG 1 2 1977Fleming CountyMAR 2 5 1977

An Atlas of Bath and Fleming Counties, Kentucky. Philadelphia: D. J. Lake and Co., 1884. Map 2. Church outlined in red.