



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Simpson Memorial United Methodist Church  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_ 043-237-00119

**2. Location**

street & number 9449 Harrison Street N/A  not for publication  
city or town Greenville N/A  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Floyd code 043 zip code 47124

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
John R. Goss 8/11/04  
Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Edson Beall Date of Action 9/29/04

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building
- district
- site
- structure
- object
- landscape

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious Facility  
RELIGION: Church School

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious Facility  
RELIGION: Church School

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Gothic  
OTHER: Akron Plan

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls SYNTHETICS: Vinyl  
roof ASPHALT  
other METAL  
STONE

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1899

Significant Dates

1899

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Price, Benjamin D. (architect)

Nafius, Captain John (builder)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

New Albany Public Library, New Albany, IN

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

16	588100	4247480
Zone	Easting	Northing

2 

Zone	Easting	Northing

3 

Zone	Easting	Northing

4 

Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description  
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification  
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Brett A. Loyd / Paul C. Diebold

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 01-10-2003

street & number 11552 Nadorff Road telephone 812/ 923-4973

city or town Greenville state IN zip code 47124

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Greenville UMC; c/o Freda Sommerville

street & number 9449 Harrison Street telephone 812/ 923-7280

city or town Greenville state IN zip code 46124

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Section 7 - Description**

Simpson Memorial United Methodist Church is located in Greenville, Indiana. Greenville is a town of 590 people located in the knobs of Floyd County. The church is the Victorian Gothic style. The sanctuary is a modified cross footprint, with the Sunday School wing at the rear of the church, forming another transverse gable. The single story, balloon framed church sits over a full basement. The church is 64' long running east west. The eastern end is 38' wide and the western end is 36 3" wide. The hipped and gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles and the exterior wall has been sided with vinyl siding which resembles the width of the original wood siding. The majority of the exposed foundation is limestone with a below grade structure of concrete block. The interior of the church continues the Victorian Gothic style with distinctive curved pews arranged in an Akron arrangement. The Simpson Church is situated on the corner of Harrison Street with the front door facing Main Cross Street [a.k.a. G-Town/G-Ville (Georgetown-Greenville) Road] (Photographs #1-4). The town is in a middle class, tree-lined neighborhood one block off of U.S. Highway 150. The church, parking lot, and small yard consume two, 66' x 132' lots. The 65' bell tower is a dominant feature in the neighborhood. The church is in excellent condition with exterior siding being the only significant change to the exterior appearance since its construction.

To the south and east of the church is a gravel parking lot. A concrete sidewalk surrounds the church and a sign encased in limestone sits at the northwest corner of the lot. The sign gives the church name and service times. Two large trees sit at the southwest corner of the lot and a row of trees defines the eastern boundary. A propane tank sits at the southeast corner of the lot. A detailed description of the church building follows.

*Western Elevation*

First, the western elevation will be described followed by each side in a clock-wise fashion. The main features of the western elevation of the church are the bell tower with front door, offset by a broad gabled mass with a large stained glass window. The 9' x 10' x 65' bell tower sits at the northwest corner of the church (Photograph #5). The bell tower extends approximately four feet beyond the plane of the west wall (Photograph #6). At the base of the tower, two simplified buttresses approximately 12 feet tall mark each exposed corner of the tower and an additional buttress is located at the southwest corner of the church (Photograph #7). These buttresses are 9 inches wide and are topped with double sloped copings. The main entrance to the church is located here and is reached by a flight of four, carpeted, concrete steps with a modern metal handrail. The front entrance is 2, 6 panel, wooden doors; each is 8' 2" tall and together they are 7' 8" wide (Photograph #8). Immediately above these doors is a gothic arched, stained glass transom window with wooden tracery repeating the theme of the large window on the same side of the building. Above this window is a large, circular stained glass window (as seen previously in Photograph #5). The corner stone with the date 1899 is located in the northwest corner of the bell tower foundation (Photograph #9).

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The bell tower is one of the most distinctive features of this beautiful building. It is topped with four, square piers sheathed in galvanized tin (Photograph #10) marking the corners. Each of these piers is topped with a steeply pitched, hipped roof crowned with an architecturally distinctive metal finial (Photograph #11).

The open area of the bell tower has many interesting details. A wooden balustrade with carved posts marks the sides of the upper portion of the bell tower (Photograph #13). A pent roof overhangs the open area on all sides, it is a continuation of the tower main roof but at a lesser pitch (Photograph #14). The ends of this roof are covered with molding to provide a clean and finished appearance. Even the wooden braces supporting these small roofs have been detailed with scalloped jigsaw work (Photograph #13). The open tower area is framed by lancet arched openings on all four sides repeating the theme of the stained glass windows. The main roof of the bell tower is also hipped and steeply pitched. No detail was too small to be overlooked by the architect—even the roof of the bell tower roof adds a distinctive flair as it is covered with metal roofing with a pressed fish scale pattern. A beautiful, large, three dimensional metal cross (Photograph #12) completes the scene. Finally, an operable bell is mounted in its original location on the floor of the bell tower (Photograph #15).

The main section of the church roof runs east west with a large gable on the western end. The upper gable end is covered with wooden, fish scale shingles repeating the theme of the metal fish scale shingles on the bell tower roof. The gable flares out slightly where the shingles meet the siding (Photograph #6).

All but one of the vertical stained glass windows in the church are two-over-two, double hung, windows (the exception being a window on the north side). All are lancet arched windows with wood tracery. All stained glass windows have a sheet of Plexiglas installed over them for protection of the original glass. This Plexiglas does not detract from the appearance of the church and protects these beautiful, original windows for future generations. The large window on the west side is a variation on this theme (as seen previously in Photograph #5). A single lancet arched window is divided by tracery to form three fixed windows with a decorative top (this geometric pattern of windows is repeated one other time on the north elevation). Under the large window on the western end of the church is a stairway with iron pipe railings. It is the sole exterior entrance to the basement. The north elevation of the church will be described next.

#### Northern Elevation

The north side of the bell tower contains a repeat of the circular, stained glass window as described on the western side (Photograph #16). Under the circular window is a double hung, four over four lancet arched window. The remainder of the north elevation is dominated by two, cross gables that extend approximately two-thirds up the main roof (Photograph #17). The western cross gable contains a large, stained glass window just as the north side. The eastern cross gable is over that portion of the church described above as the Sunday School Room. This cross gable contains three separate lancet

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arched windows and the other entrance into the church (Photograph #18). This entrance is located under a pent roof and the door faces west. The wooden door is 7' 4" x 3' 6". The lancet transom window is a smaller copy of the window over the front door. Next to the front door, facing north is a sash type, four over four lights, stained glass window. It is the only vertical window in the church which is not arched. Between the western cross gable and the bell tower is another pointed window. A brick chimney once extended from the roof, but it was removed some time in the 1980's. A recently added wooden ramp and stairs leads up to the door (Photograph #19).

**Eastern Elevation**

The eastern elevation contains a hip and gable roof and four evenly spaced lancet windows (Photograph #20). They are four over four, double hung windows. The roof form is hipped; combining the terminus of the main gable and the side of the north rear gable. A former entrance to the basement is still present. The "doghouse" entrance is 7' tall at its peak and is 7' 8" by 5' 8". The entrance from the doghouse into the basement has been removed. South of this former entrance are three fixed, side by side windows located in the foundation. Finally, the details of the south side will be highlighted.

*Southern Elevation*

The southern elevation is dominated by a cross gable that contains a large, circular stained glass window (Photographs #21 and #22). This circular window contains a depiction of Christ and was a recent addition. It is estimated that it replaced a circular window of a geometric design similar to other two in the church. The cross gable extends approximately 4' from the south wall of the church. On each side of the cross gable are two, four over four, double hung lancet arched windows facing south. Two additional lancet windows are located on the sides of the cross gable--one facing west and one facing east. On the western corner of the south wall is another buttress just as on the bell tower corners. The eastern end of the south wall is blank which coincides with the Sunday School Room.

Original documents describe a basement to the church. The church was "lighted by acetylene gas generated in the basement, and heated by furnace in basement [sic]" (Ref #8). Members remember that "basement" as little more than a room only large enough to hold a coal furnace and a pile of coal. In 1956, a full basement was dug under the church for additional Sunday school rooms and a kitchen. The current foundation is cement block; however, certain exposed areas of the foundation are native limestone (Photograph #23). It is estimated that these limestone blocks were salvaged from the previous church at this location to be part of the current foundation. The entire exposed foundation of the north side of the church from the bell tower to the doghouse on the eastern side is native limestone except for an 8' section. Limestone can also be found on the south side in the cross gable, and on the west side under the bell tower.

*INTERIOR*

The beautiful sanctuary is 33' x 44' and 22' high and runs east - west. Ceilings are "vaulted;" the plane of each ceiling follows the rake of the roofline. The ceilings are covered with pressed tin

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(Photograph #24). Two metal rods stretch across the sanctuary north-south, presumably to reinforce the walls. The aisles were originally carpeted, but none of the original remains. The sanctuary is currently covered with a short, light blue carpet that was installed April 2003. The walls are plaster, with a 42" high wooden beaded board wainscot. Simple wood surrounds define the window and door openings. The smaller single lancets are framed within rectangular surrounds with wood spandrel panels filling the window areas at the point arch tops. All the surrounds have simple entablature-style headers, except for the large multiple arched windows. The pews are arranged in an Akron or auditorium style. These unique, original oak pews are curved and were formed in Ohio and assembled on site. The pulpit is on the south side of the church in front of the choir platform (Photograph #25). To the east side of the pulpit is a short aisle where the piano currently sits. The short aisle runs directly up to the eastern wall of the sanctuary and the purpose for this aisle will be described later. The southwest corner of the sanctuary is shown in Photograph #26. The choir platform contains an electric organ. Above the choir platform is the large, circular window with a depiction of Christ (Photograph #27). The altar railing was added in 1954. Kneeling pads are located next to the altar railing and are covered in gold felt.

A pipe organ was installed in 1915. Half of the organ was paid for with local contributions and the other half came from Andrew Carnegie. Sadly, this organ is no longer present. The exact date of its removal is unknown; however, a new Hammond organ was installed in 1950 or 1951.

Continuing around the sanctuary, the northwest corner of the sanctuary (Photograph #28) contains a door that leads to a small foyer. This foyer connects to the front door. Also from this foyer, the bell can be rung. In the northeast corner of the sanctuary (Photograph #29) is another door. This door also leads to a small foyer. This foyer connects the sanctuary with the exterior door located on the north side as well as the Sunday School room. Lastly, the east side of the sanctuary contains two, large 12 over 12 double sash windows (Photographs #30 and #31). These windows are to be opened for overflow seating in the Sunday School Room.

The Sunday School Room is 16' 9"x 37' and 15' 6" high and runs north south. It takes up the eastern end of the building and is covered with light blue carpeting. The restrooms for the church are found in the southeast corner of the room. They were installed in 1964. The southern end as well as the southwest corner of the room can be seen in Photograph #32. The southwest corner of this room is exactly opposite the short aisle described earlier in the sanctuary. When the church was originally built, the choir would form up in the Sunday School room. With the southern of the two large windows opened, a short section of the wall can be removed like a Dutch door, to allow the choir to enter the sanctuary (Photograph #33), pass through the short aisle and ascend to the choir platform. The wall section may still be removed. In 1968, a suspended ceiling was installed in the Sunday School room, but was removed to its original appearance in 2001. Photograph #34 depicts the northwest corner of the room which is the location of the only entry door. Photograph #35 is the north side of the room. Finally, on the eastern side of the room, stairs lead to the basement (Photograph #36). Photograph #37 looks through the Sunday School door into the small foyer and the northern exterior door can be seen.

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**Section 8 – Statement of Significance**

Simpson Memorial Chapel meets the National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of Victorian Gothic architecture and craftsmanship as found in a religious structure. It also meets Consideration A. It is also a locally significant example of the Akron plan, a protestant church form invented in and advocated widely in the United States in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The structure was rated “significant” in the 1978 “Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory of Floyd County.” The building has been covered with vinyl siding, but retains enough original architectural elements to qualify for the National Register.

*Comparative qualities*

A review of the above mentioned survey yields several interesting results. The first result is that Floyd County has many beautiful churches serving the community. Sadly however, of the 21 churches mentioned in the survey, four of the buildings no longer exist. Next, all the churches from the survey (8 churches) located in New Albany, the largest city in the county and the county seat, are constructed of either stone or brick. Additionally, three more churches located outside of New Albany are constructed of either brick or have stucco siding. That leaves the county with only six churches remaining that originally had wood siding and were built before 1940--Simpson Memorial Chapel being one of them. The other five and their Indiana Historic Rating (ref #11) are: Bethel Presbyterian Church (C), Atkins United Brethren (S), Chapel Hill Christian Church (C), Navilleton Catholic Church (S), and Galena United Methodist Church (S).

Another interesting outcome of the survey was that only six of the 17 remaining churches have their original pews and only three of those have all curved pews or Akron arrangement: Second Presbyterian Church (not rated), Floyds Knobs Christian Church (C) and Simpson Memorial Chapel(S). Furthermore, a majority of churches have added on to their original structures as their congregations outgrew their facilities. Finally, only four churches could be described as either of the Queen Anne or Gothic style. These churches are: Simpson Memorial Chapel, Atkins United Brethren and the brick churches of New Albany German Methodist Church (not rated) and Georgetown Methodist Church (not rated). In all cases, Simpson Memorial Chapel is a member of each sub-group described above.

*Architectural significance*

Victorian Gothic architecture had its roots in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century England, with the churches of William Butterfield and the ethical writings of John Ruskin. What set it aside from the earlier Gothic Revival was its emphasis on expression, structure and geometry. American architects like Russell Sturgis and Frank Furness began to exploit the use of polychromy, inventive massing, and exaggerated structural detail in their works in the 1870s. Victorian Gothic, like its domestic cousin, Queen Anne, translated easily to the American tradition of building in wood. Textures provided the polychromy, as seen in wood shingles or patterned wood treatments, and the elements of Gothic design could be easily created in wood. Simpson Memorial United Methodist Church has the basic elements of Victorian Gothic: texturing is seen in the use of wood shingles in the gable end, and in the use of metal shingles on the tower roof; the

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massive tower with its open belfry and large piers are examples of the unusual massing effects Victorian Gothic architects sought. The interior, with its stained glass and rich dark woods also reflects the tenets of Victorian Gothic. While willing to concede to current trends in overall design, the congregation favored tradition by painting the exterior white ("Duly, Delightfully Dedicated"). Currently, the building is covered by white vinyl siding. Despite the siding, the church still conveys a significant degree of its integrity of design. Window openings, and tower details remain much as intended, and the interior retains a high level of integrity.

Simpson Memorial Church is a locally significant example of the Akron Plan format. The idea of central plan or circular churches was not new to Christianity; it had been adopted from ancient sources in the early centuries of the new religion. Christians did not often use the form for sanctuaries after the basilica form and its variations became dominant well before 1000 A.D. Lewis Miller designed the first Akron Plan church, a Methodist church in Akron, Ohio, in 1867. Miller was a tinkerer and Sunday school teacher. He planned the First Methodist Church in Akron to allow easier participation in services. He placed the altar in one corner of a rectangular sanctuary, and arranged pie-shaped banks of pews radiating away from the altar. This allowed for excellent sight lines, as did banking the floor (a common feature in many Akron Plan churches). Miller was interested in getting his Sunday School students closer to the services, so, he planned for partitions that could be rearranged. This allowed them to view part of the services, then, to return to a separate wing for further instruction without disrupting the congregation. Very often, Akron Plan churches had a diagonal central aisle that led to an exterior tower foyer room. Simpson Memorial Church has all the elements of an excellent example of the Akron Plan. Its interior is remarkably intact; its banked, curved pews and glazed sash screens clearly reflect the Akron Plan idea. What on the exterior appear to be traditional transepts are in fact functionally placed extensions of the floor plan to provide maximum lighting and a special location for the altar. The Sunday School wing reflects its function with rows of uniform windows, much like the rural schools of its day.

Miller's idea made a distinctive trend in American church design. The Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church, two of the most well-attended protestant churches in late 19<sup>th</sup> century America, often adopted the Akron Plan. However, many other protestant congregations used the idea as well, until the revival of traditional English Gothic forms in the 'teens and 'twenties put an end to the Akron Plan. Somewhat ironically, the Akron Plan concept returned to its pre-Reformation roots when the Catholic Church revived the form in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Part of the story of the propagation of the Akron Plan form is illustrated by Simpson Memorial United Methodist Church. The plans for the church were "procured from the church extension society" ("Duly"). The same article shows a rendering with floor plan, signed "Benj. D. Price, Archt." Price (? - 1908) was known for his mail order church design business. He maintained offices in Philadelphia through most of the 1880s, and later in Lansdowne, PA and Atlantic Highlands, NJ. In his "Annual

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Catalogue of Church Plans for 1892," a small promotional booklet, he stated that the Methodist Board of Church Extension had sponsored the compilation of his plans. Price also worked with the Presbyterian Church; an annual report from 1892 includes a church plan by him. In the "Annual Catalog" booklet, Price states that he specialized in moderately priced designs for congregations throughout the country. Price published several plan books, including *Small Catalogue*, 1890; *Church Plans*, 1892 and *Church Plans*, 1904. Price indicated that he sold 600 church plans by 1891 (information on Price from Tatman). One of Price's earlier plans evidently found their way to Bloomfield, Indiana, where the First Methodist Church (now Bloomfield United Methodist), 60 West Main Street now stands. Price provided plans for the 1887 sanctuary, which used a form of Akron Plan originally. In 1924, a new sanctuary was added to the side and the 1887 church became a chapel. Benjamin Price's son, Max, was a partner in the firm and continued the practice into the twentieth century. In addition to his architectural practice, Benjamin Price invented and attempted to market a form of imitation stained glass.

The 1899 newspaper account credits Captain John Nafius as the construction contractor for the church. Nafius was a contractor from New Albany. The account credits Nafius with ordering and installing the curved oak pews as well as directing all the general construction of the building, completed within sixty days.

*The Methodist Church in Greenville*

As southern Indiana was being settled in the early 1800's, churches were being built right along with the houses and were the hearts of their communities. Greenville was located on the turnpike from Louisville, KY to Vincennes (the territorial capital), one of the oldest towns in the western country. For nearly 75 years stagecoaches traveled this mud road and provided a source of income to towns located along the toll road. In 1816, Indiana became a state and the town of Greenville was officially established. Three more years would pass before they received a post office.

Early in the 1800's, the Methodists had two log buildings in Greenville Township for their services. By approximately 1830, the towns of Greenville and the neighboring town of Galena wanted Methodist churches that were located nearer to where the towns had developed, not on creek banks in the country as they were at the time. In Greenville, a church was organized and met in the schoolhouse until a building was eventually built in 1838. This building was a one-room, one story frame building. The church was torn down to build the current structure in the same location after additional lots were acquired. This building is a clear statement that the members wanted something permanent and the town had reached a size to support such a plan. The Simpson Chapel was built in 1899 and construction was completed in only 60 days.

The building itself would not have been possible had it not been for the generosity of a former Greenville, IN resident John Baptiste Ford, the father of the plate glass industry in America. He had since

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moved to Pennsylvania to found the Pittsburgh Plate and Glass (PP&G) company and he agreed to fund the construction of the church.

In 1899, four years before Capt Ford's death, he was asked by some citizens of Greenville IN to help build a new Methodist church. He pledged the considerable sum of \$3,000 towards the construction of the new church. As a former resident of Greenville, he still thought of the city and her residents quite fondly. Original bids to construct the church came in at between \$4,000 and \$4,900. Plans were then changed and a new estimate of \$3,500 was bid. Capt. Ford generously pledged an additional \$500 ("Duly").

The rendering and floor plan in the 1899 newspaper shows dormer windows in the roof on the north elevation of the building, eastern end, over the Sunday School room. The floor plan published in the paper indicates a larger Sunday School room with more complex massing. The plans were changed (removed dormer windows and redesigned roofline) to result in the current configuration of the church. It is not known if the contractor reconfigured the plans or if Price himself altered them. This would also explain how subsequent bids to build the church were lower. Photographs of the church in 1908--9 years after it was built--show the church in exactly the same form as it is today.

While residents of Greenville wanted to name the church after him, Capt Ford requested that the church to be named after Bishop Matthew Simpson who had been a US senator for Indiana and later the chaplain for the US Senate. Additionally, Bishop Simpson was a close confidant of President Lincoln and delivered the president's funeral oration.

On March 26, 1908, a house fire started in a condemned flue. Within 30 minutes, most of the town was on fire. Miraculously, the Simpson Memorial Chapel was not touched while houses across the street from it were destroyed.

Simpson Memorial Chapel is a jewel. When one looks at the architecturally detailed building--inside and out--one sees how it looked when it was built over 100 years ago (except for the wheel chair ramp as required by law). It is a time capsule preserving the work of master craftsmen from a century ago.

Today, local residents are pleased to have such a fine building in their area. As the only historic church building left in the city and one of only eleven historic buildings in town, non-church members speak highly of the condition of the church and its architecture. The church with its beautiful bell tower is considered a great asset to the community. While few call the church by its name of Simpson Memorial United Methodist Church, many refer to it as "that pretty white church in Greenville."

**Section 9 - Bibliography**

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**Continuation Sheet**

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**Section 10 – Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Parcel numbers 25 and 26, Plat number 133, page number 1270, city of Greenville, township of Greenville. Each parcel is 66’x132’.

**Boundary Description**

The boundary is the historic boundary.