



BICENTENNIAL MOMENT

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES The First Presbyterian Church of Murfreesboro located at Spring and College Streets became eligible for National Registry distinction as a significant local example of the Classical Revival style, and was placed on the Registry in June 1993. The style was introduced to the country through the world fairs in Chicago in 1893, St. Louis in 1904 and San Francisco in 1915. These fairs spurred the City Beautiful movement which so

molded the nation's image of how buildings, particularly public buildings [churches, courthouses, schools, etc.], should be designed. The Classical Revival First Presbyterian Church of Murfreesboro replaced an earlier Gothic style church extensively damaged by a tornado which devastated much of the town in 1913. After the tornado the church membership acted quickly to replace the damaged building and construction began in 1913. Once completed in 1914 the church structure became an important local landmark on the corner of College and Springs Streets just two blocks off the square. As evidence of its prominence, an early county history published in 1924 included a history of the congregation and photograph of the new stylish building housing it. The congregation of the church included many of the most influential bankers, merchants and civic leaders of Murfreesboro. Some of the town's founding fathers and descendants were and continue to be important members of First Presbyterian's congregation. An endorsement of this new style by this leading group of citizens served to encourage and even solidify the use of this newly revived architectural style. The Church is a good example of the Classical Revival style of architecture. The building has a front portico with Classical columns, a central rotunda, and ornately detailed architrave and cornice. The interior continues this style with Classical motifs in the stained glass windows, Ionic pilasters, decorative knee braces on the balconies, and an interior rotunda which mirrors the exterior dome. One of the first buildings constructed in this style in Murfreesboro, First Presbyterian became an influential model for future building in the city. The church has had few alterations and continues to be an important symbol of the early twentieth century building trends of Murfreesboro. No extant records of First Presbyterian's architect have been found. The only reference is to a local contractor, Maugans and Bell, Builders and Lumber Suppliers, located on West Main Street in Murfreesboro. [Information researched by Susan Daniel].