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Downtown Presbyterian Church

National Historic Landmark

Known as First Presbyterian Church until 1955, this brick, twin-towered National Historic Landmark at Fifth Avenue North and Church Street is perhaps the world's finest example of Egyptian Revival architecture.

Built in 1849-51 by William Strickland, who also designed the State Capitol, the building was confiscated by the U.S. Army and used as Hospital No. 8, housing 206 beds. The Union army occupied the church from January to August 1863 and again from October 1863 to 1865. After the war, the Federal government paid \$7,500 to the church for restorations. Among the church members were Mrs. James K. Polk and Adelia Acklen.

The interior, lavishly decorated in the 1880s, features Egyptian columns, symbols, and paintings in bright, vivid colors, unusual for a Christian church. Extensive renovations costing \$2 million were completed in time for the church's 150th anniversary on April 29, 2001.

Located at 154 Fifth Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37219. Church office open Mon.-Fri., 8-4. Guided tours are available for groups of five or more if arranged in advance by calling church office at (615) 254-7584.



Detail of Egyptian Revival features.

First Presbyterian Church as it appeared in 1864. James Stevenson's stoneyard is across the street.



(Courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives)