

New Lebanon Cumberland Presbyterian Church

Township: T-46-N
Range: R-18-W
Section: 7
Map: [Click Here](#)

Organized: 1820
Disbanded: 1977
Active: No
Updated: July 19, 2005

Cemetery: There is no cemetery associated with this church.

Area: Southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section.

Records: The location of the church records is unknown at present.

History:



Photograph From Historic American Buildings Survey - Library of Congress

New Lebanon Cumberland Presbyterian Church From "History of Howard and Cooper Counties Missouri", 1883

New Lebanon Church, C. P. - Is possibly the oldest Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Cooper, having been organized in 1820. The minister officiating, upon that occasion was Rev. Finis Ewing, who was the founder of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. It was called "New Lebanon," because a majority of the original members belonged to a church of the same name, in Logan County, Kentucky, whence they had just come.

The names of the constituent members were Robert Kirkpatrick and wife, Thomas Ruby and wife, Alexander Sloan and wife, John Wear and wife, James L. Wear and wife, Hugh Wear and wife, Robert Allison and wife, John Miller and wife, and Mr. Stone and wife.

The first elders were Robert Kirkpatrick, Alexander Sloan, John Miller and Thomas Ruby. The old log, church was built in 1821. The present brick house was erected in 1860. The first temperance society that was formed in Cooper county, held its meetings in the old log church in 1824. About the same time, Rev. R. D. Morrow commenced a school in the neighborhood, for the benefit of young preachers. Some of the early and most useful ministers of the C. P. church, attended that school; such men as Rev. Robert Sloan, J. B. Morrow, Robert and Henry Renick, David Kirkpatrick, John Linville, J. L. Wear and John Reed.

New Lebanon Cumberland Presbyterian Church
From "History of Cooper County Missouri" by W. F. Johnson 1919

New Lebanon Cumberland Presbyterian Church, possibly the oldest Cumberland church in Cooper County was organized in 1820 by Rev. Finis Ewing. It got its name from the fact that a majority of its members came from Lebanon Church, in Logan County, Kentucky. Robert Kirkpatrick, Alexander Sloan, John Miller, Thomas Ruby were the first elders of the church. A log church was built in 1821. A brick house was put up in 1860. Rev. R. D. Morrow, in 1824, organized a school in this neighborhood for young preachers which was largely attended. The names of the constituent members were Robert Kirkpatrick and wife, Thomas Ruby and wife, Alexander Sloan and wife, John Wear and wife, James Wear and wife, Robert Allison and wife, John Miller and wife, and Mr. Stone and wife.

New Lebanon Cumberland Presbyterian Church
From "The Pilot Grove Centennial Book 1873 - 1973"

"The New Lebanon Cumberland Presbyterian Church is the oldest Cumberland Presbyterian Church west of the Mississippi River, being organized in 1820 by the Rev. John Carnahan at the home of Alexander Sloan. The first pastor of this church was Finis Ewing, a rugged, God-fearing pioneer preacher; he and others like him were called "Sons of Thunder" in the pulpit. The Cumberland Movement was in its infancy, being founded by Finis Ewing in Dixon County, Tennessee. Although ordained in the Calvinistic faith in 1803, he chose instead to follow the teachings of James McGready, in 1809, when the Cumberland Presbytery in Kentucky succeeded. Finis Ewing emerged the leader of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

In 1812, Finis Ewing's pastoral charge was Lebanon Church in Logan County, Kentucky; declaring that "Tobacco and the Baptists are taking the country"; he and a group of his followers left this church for Cooper County, Missouri. Settling near here, he established himself with a post office called Ewingsville; the church was called New Lebanon after the one they left behind. Of the original Lebanon Church in Kentucky, only an overgrown cemetery remains to mark their passing. Ewing was also instrumental in starting the Mr. Vernon Cumberland Presbyterian Church a mile south of Pilot Grove, Missouri.

The first church building was constructed in 1822; it was a log building used for both a church and school.

The Rev. R. D. Morrow, in 1824, organized a school for young preachers in this neighborhood, and between 1825 and 1885, 32 ministers were ordained, 48 were licensed, and 66 candidates for the ministry were under its jurisdiction.

The construction of the present brick church was started in 1857, and completed in 1860. The bricks were made near the church, and the pine lumber was hauled from Boonville with teams and wagons.

In the early part of the century, this church united with the U. S. A. Presbyterian Church. Members of this church discontinued services in 1971, and would like to have the building preserved as a historical site."

New Lebanon Presbyterian Church
From "Memorabilia of Cooper County", 1990

Historic New Lebanon Presbyterian Church commands the attention of travelers along Route A through the village of New Lebanon, Missouri. The classically beautiful structure was erected in 1859 of brick fired on the grounds and pine lumber hauled by teams and wagons from Boonville. The church was dedicated in 1860 and continued in regular use until 1968. Dwindling village population and church membership cause discontinuance of services in that year. The unused building began to deteriorate badly to the dismay of the few remaining resident members. Determined to preserve the beloved church, they organized a Homecoming Day for July 31, 1977. Over 300 former members and other friends attended, some traveling a great distance to be present. They voiced strong support for an effort to restore and maintain the church. Free will offerings established a fund, and work was done in order of urgency as more funds became available. Most of this work is now complete. New Lebanon Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized in 1820 by Rev. John Carnahan with thirty charter members. Rev. Finis Ewing, a co-founder of the national Cumberland Presbyterian denomination, was the first pastor. So many of his congregation in Lebanon, Kentucky had moved or were moving to this area of Missouri that he and his family joined them and established a home at New Lebanon. Rev. Ewing also conducted a seminary in his home to train young ministers who then served the growing number of churches in Missouri Territory. This "School of the Prophets" as he called it was the first Protestant theological seminary in the West.

At first preaching services for the New Lebanon congregation were held in homes of members or in an arbor and preaching stand. A spring which influenced selection of the site still flows at the base of a gentle slope behind the present building.

The first church structure was a double log cabin with a fireplace at each end. Families contributed hewn logs for the building. Twenty-four foot logs were joined at the middle by an upright post to make a building 48 feet long. The width was 30 feet. This log church, raised in 1821, was just a few yards north of the present brick structure. A memorial stone marks the spot.

Plans for the second (present) structure were begun in 1857. The new church was a large building, 48 feet wide and 60 feet long, a one-story building without attic or basement. The brick exterior is laid in common bond on three sides, with Flemish bond being used on the west facade. The only entrances are on the west, a pair of identical doors with their original rim locks and latches. The building is 20 1/2 feet high at the cornice. North and south walls each have four large windows. The small, clapboard belfry contains the original church bell. A small spirelet and cross top the belfry. Total cost was \$3,230.81. (Needless to say, the cost of restoration has been much greater than the original outlay for the building.)

The interior of the church is a single large room. An interesting feature is a divider running down the center of the rows of pews, which in early days served the purpose of separating the men in the congregation from the women. This was also the reason for two doors at the front - women entering by one and men by the other. Two identical stoves stand, one at the center of each side section, their pipes extending upward and meeting at the center ceiling, then rising to the single chimney. The raised chancel is at the east end of the room.

For many years the church was the community center of the bustling village. Town meetings and public trials were held there, and it was the site of the local school until a separate school building was erected on an adjacent lot. Around 1890 the scene began to change. Railroads bypassed New Lebanon, and population decreased from about 1000 to the present fourteen or so persons who remain.

The church itself suffered a further blow at the time of reunion of the Presbyterian Church USA and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Many local members opposed to union chose to remain with the like-minded fragment of the national Cumberland body. This split occurred in

1906, with the "official" New Lebanon congregation becoming a member church in the Presbyterian Church USA.

On May 30, 1920 some 150 persons attended a Centenary Service at the church, with Rev. R.D. Cordry giving the address. The church marked its 125th anniversary with an all-day meeting including a basket dinner at noon and special afternoon services. At this time Rev. Cordry presented to the congregation the pulpit Bible from the year 1856, along with a piece of walnut wood saved by his father from ruins of the dwelling in which the church was organized. Elder Clarence Hutchison was entrusted with care of these items.

In 1974 the American Presbyterian and Reformed Historical Sites Registry named New Lebanon as Site No. 25 on its registry, and on April 10, 1974 Elder Noel Cole placed the commemorative plaque on the building.

Members and friends of New Lebanon Church felt that the unique history of the church and the architectural beauty of its construction should qualify it for inclusion on the National Registry of Historic Places. Margaret Spence Rogers, who now lives on the old homesite of Rev. Ewing, and had attended New Lebanon Church from childhood, felt such dedication to this project that she willingly guided the studies, paperwork, and applications necessary to achieve this goal. She would be the first to say that many others helped, but without her commitment to the project, the outcome might have been different. During the process it was suggested by officials of the Office of Historic Preservation within the Missouri Department of National Resources that New Lebanon School be included in the application. On July 9, 1979 the New Lebanon Presbyterian Church and New Lebanon School were officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Mr. James Denny of the Department of National Resources presented the handsome, framed certificate to the Session of the church at the Homecoming on July 22, 1979.

The tradition of Homecoming Day, started in 1977 has continued, and the last Sunday of September has been established as the date for this annual celebration. The bountiful basket dinner at noon, the joyous ringing of the old church bell, the singing of beloved Gospel hymns and reverent worship have endeared the event to those who year after year fill the church to renew friendships and recall memories of the glorious past of New Lebanon Presbyterian Church.

by Marjorie Rector

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church
From "Cooper County Church Sketches" by F. Chesnutt, 1993

In a Cumberland Mountain community of Dickson County, Tennessee on Nov. 12, 1812, four Presbyterian ministers met and formed the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Rev. Finis Ewing and others had experienced the wave of religious rebirth called "The Great Revival Movement" which swept the new territories gained after our nation's independence.

The Westward migration of the population had left behind their established ministries in Virginia, and the scattered flocks were dependent on clergy who were required to spend many years in theological education in the East before being allowed to preach.

By 1819 most of Ewing's Lebanon congregation of the Ewingsville-Russelville, Kentucky area had moved west to Cooper County. Calling themselves the "New Lebanon Society," they requested a minister of the Cumberland Faith. Rev. Ewing, his wife Peggy, and large family arrived here in the fall of 1820.

He and Rev. Robert Morrow established a seminary at a large log church. Morrow taught grammar, geography and astronomy while Ewing taught theology, Greek and Latin, with free room and board at the Ewing's brick home west of the church. During summers there were preaching tours and camp meetings to reach settlers as far away as Texas. Many of the settlers

