HISTORY
BUILDING
(CITY)

PAMPHLET

Elder Doesn't Warrant Historical Respect

Independent Photo by Brian Mickas

Community Bible Church at Sixth and Orange downtown.

H.B. Independent 11-17-88

By Maresa Archer

It is the oldest house of worship in Huntington Beach.

For 82 years, the little church on the corner of Sixth Street and Orange Avenue downtown has been home to various Protestant religions.

But despite its longevity, no one has had the time for the paperwork that could add the church to the annals of history: the national registry.

The building could probably qualify for admission to the National Historic Registry because of architecture unique to California, according to Barbara Milkovich, chairwoman for the city's Historic Resources Board.

The church is the oldest in the original city. When the Wintersburg area was incorporated in 1957, it brought with it an older establishment, Milkovich said.

The church's construction in June 1906 was funded by local residents and businesses.

The Huntington Beach Company doanted $250 to build the Huntington Beach Baptist Church, as it was called then.

William Newman donated the original glass window.

But the real force behind the quaint structure was Lewis Preston, a farmer in the then agricultural city and a member of the Baptist faith.

He had also donated money for the building of the Wintersburg Church on Warner Avenue even though it was a Methodist congregation.

"This was a very strong Protestant community. The Methodists had their Southern California Summer Campground here from 1905 to 1920," Milkovich said.

That event lasted from June until September, and included conventions for many of the offshoot Protestant religions, according to Milkovich.

Once enough Baptists moved into the area, Preston decided he wanted to worship in a house of his own faith.

He scraped up more money and other donors, and the church was built.

To keep in line with the architecture of the day, the church was built in the bungalow style with clapboard sides.

Through the years, the exterior was stuccoed and when the Bap-

(See Church, Page A2)

Church...

(From Page A1)

tists relocated to Fountain Valley in 1972, they took the bell in the steeple with them.

Now the Community Bible Church, an independent evangelical congregation, the structure stands as a fine example of preservation.

"The sanctuary had to be almost totally redone before we could start worshipping in it. But everybody volunteered and we replaced the old floor with a new oak one," said Pastor Mike Foell.

The 130-member congregation also painted the church and did all the landscaping, Foell said.

In addition to Sunday services, the church also offers a kindergarten through 12th grade school and works closly with transients in the downtown area, according to Foell.

The church is also still important to the Preston Family.

Lewis Preston's great-granddaughter, Cheryl Huff of Sprinville, Utah, wrote Milkovich a few years ago looking for information on her family.

According to Huff, Preston eventually moved from the city and with the help of his family, supported a mission in India in the 1920s.

But he left in Huntington Beach a building that is still an important part of the legacy of this community.

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