

**Historical Marker - L2084 - First Presbyterian Church / First Presbyterian Church
(Marker ID#:L2084)**



Front - Title/Description

First Presbyterian Church

In 1884 the Reverend J. Ambrose Wight challenged the members of the First Presbyterian Church to “go forward and build a church that will be a lasting gift to the future.” The Reverend Wight (1811-1889) feared that Bay City’s prosperity, gained through the lumber and salt industries, would not last. When the church was dedicated on June 4, 1893, the *Bay City Times-Press* declared it a “Magnificent Temple.” Like the City Hall, which was built four years later, the Ionia sandstone church was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style by local architects Pratt and Koeppe, and reflects Bay City’s wealth at that time. The bell, cast in 1866, served as a public timepiece and tolled three times daily.

Significant Date:

Industry and Invention (1875-1915)

Registry Year: 2000 **Erected Date:** 2000

Marker Location

Address: 805 Center Ave

City: Bay City

State: MI **ZipCode:**

County: Bay

Township:

Lat: 43.59771800 / **Long:** -83.88189600

Web URL:

Back - Title/Description

First Presbyterian Church

In 1848, James G. Birney and his wife led Bay City’s earliest Presbyterian services in a schoolhouse. Birney, an elder in the church, twice ran unsuccessfully for president of the U.S. on the antislavery ticket. The Reverend Lucius Root organized the First Presbyterian Church of Lower Saginaw on September 5, 1856. Services continued to be held in the schoolhouse and other public buildings until the first church was built in 1863. In 1886 church elder Alexander Folsom donated \$50,000 for the founding of a college in “northern” Michigan. His donation funded the organization of Alma College. In 1906 the college established the J. Ambrose Wight Memorial Fund scholarship in honor of First Presbyterian’s minister.