



Marker #5

On a hillock overlooking the junction of an Indian trail and a rutted dirt road, the Hamilton Union Church had its beginning. The Indian trail became the old Schoharie Road, which wound its way from the Widow Truax Tavern on Kings Road, through the Pine Bush to a hollow just east of the church's proposed site. The dirt road was soon to become the Great Western Turnpike.

The first meeting to establish the Hamilton Union Church was held in 1812 in an octagonal building that stood above a ravine and stream east of the Batterman and Schoolcraft taverns. The land was donated by George Batterman. Elder John Schoolcraft was named clerk and trustee. The first Presbyterian minister known to have preached in Guilderland (then known as Hamilton) was the Reverend Bethuel Dodd. The educational school held in the eight-sided structure was a preparatory academy for boys, noted for its superior academics.

The formal establishment of the Hamilton Union Church took place in 1824. A date of destruction of the octagonal church-school to make way for a new presbytery is not recorded. Times and community progress have given a new look over the years to the first Presbyterian Church built in the Town of Guilderland, and its significance in Guilderland's history is evident.