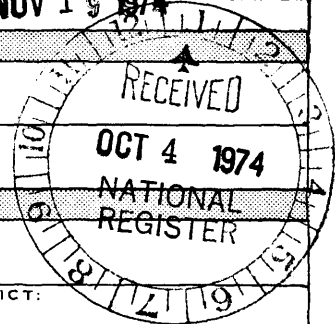


**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Wisconsin
COUNTY: Oconto
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE NOV 1 9 1974



1. NAME

COMMON:
First Church of Christ, Scientist

AND/OR HISTORIC:
First Christian Science Church Edifice

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Chicago and Main Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Oconto

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
Wisconsin 8th

STATE Wisconsin	CODE 55	COUNTY: Oconto	CODE 083
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
First Church of Christ, Scientist

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Oconto

STATE:
Wisconsin

CODE:
55

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Oconto County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Oconto

STATE:
Wisconsin

CODE:
55

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Wisconsin Survey of Historic Sites & Buildings

DATE OF SURVEY: **1969-72** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

STREET AND NUMBER:
816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Madison

STATE:
Wisconsin

CODE:
55

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Wisconsin
COUNTY: Oconto
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE NOV 1 9 1974

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

A quaint little 1 1/2 story edifice built in 1886, this church is "Carpenters' Gothic" in style, with vertical board and batten siding and a high gable roof with plain projecting verges. There is a small vestibule at the front, also gable-roofed. All openings except the basement windows are triangular-headed, including the double doorway of the vestibule. Windows have four rectangular panes of clear glass; no colored glass is used. Above the ridge of the vestibule roof, the front gable end is divided into two sections by transverse, dark colored moldings. The lower section is sided with narrower vertical boards and battens than those of the rest of the building and has a small window in the center. In the upper section the battens are wider and disposed diagonally outward, with the uppermost ones converging at the center on a single vertical batten which extends straight up from the point of the window head. In the verge angle at the extreme front is a small triangle of ornamental latticework with a central pendant which extends a short distance below the base of the triangle. There is a small, inset, slightly rectangular, gable-roofed belfry with a triangular-headed opening filled with latticework. A small piece of ornamentation crests the ridge of the belfry roof. At the rear of the building a brick chimney rises to about the same height as the belfry.

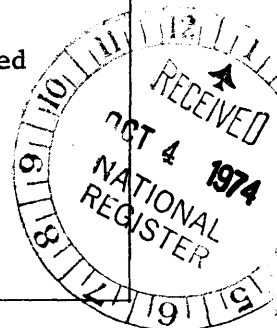
A basement was added sometime near World War I and the front steps had to be rebuilt when the old wooden stairs finally became too dangerous to continue in use. The concrete steps with a simple iron rail are the only outward evidence of change in the structure. The basement provided room for a furnace and a reading room which also serves as a Sunday school room. The foundation is of rock-faced stone.

Sometime during World War I the building was stuccoed, but when the stucco began to crack ten years later, it was discovered that the original siding was still in good shape. Members of the church decided to restore the building to its original appearance and even the paint (buff, with cocoa trimming) remains the same color as that used when it was built.

The interior is a very plain room with two aisles and three sections of comfortable mahogany seats which fold, theater-style. At the front is a reed organ--the original--at the left. There are two lecterns, one for the Scriptures and one for Mrs. Baker's writings. The room remains practically unchanged except that at one time the old chandelier was replaced. The building was very early to be electrified and there is some tradition that it was wired for electricity when it was built, although that cannot be established for certain. The literature indicates that Oconto did not have alternating current until 1889.

All in all, this is an exceptionally well preserved and well maintained building, little altered except as noted above.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



4. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1886

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Oconto, Wisconsin is the first church edifice built solely for Christian Science worship. The Christian Science Monitor's article on the 50th anniversary of the Oconto church states, "When they put up their obscure little structure, the pioneers did not know they were erecting the first Christian Science church edifice anywhere in the world..." Although Mary Baker Eddy, founder and discoverer of Christian Science, had established the church in 1879, erection of The Mother Church in Boston was not begun until the autumn of 1893 and completed at the end of 1894.

A Christian Science church association was organized in Oconto on June 10, 1886 and the members soon proceeded to erect a church building, in which the initial services were held at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, October 31, of that year. The church was dedicated in February, 1887.

"Other Christian Science churches [associations] preceded that at Oconto, but they usually rented halls or other rental auditoriums. As a rule, they held their Sunday services in the afternoon."

After the completion of The Mother Church in Boston, the Reverend Mr. L. P. Norcross left Oconto to become its pastor. In a letter of September 30, 1895 to the Oconto church members, thanking them for parting with their pastor, Mary Baker Eddy wrote, "Guided by the pillar and cloud, this little Church that built the first temple for Christian Science worship shall abide steadfastly in the faith of Jesus' words..."

Although membership in the area is now small, the first Christian Science church in Oconto is still in active and regularly scheduled use. This small edifice is not only an outstanding local and state landmark in itself, but is highly significant in the history of a major church denomination in the United States and beyond.

As an interesting and excellent example of "Carpenters' Gothic," the edifice is considered significant architecturally as well as historically.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

213114

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Eddy, Mary Baker G., Miscellaneous Writings, (Boston, 1897), 148-149.
 Hall, George E., A History of Oconto (Oconto, Wis., 1969), 95-97.
 "First Christian Science Edifice--50th Anniversary," The Christian Science Monitor, Boston, October 31, 1936. (Sec. 1, p. 3).
 McDonald, Forrest, Let There Be Light, (Madison, Wis., 1957), 27.
Oconto Tri-Cent '69, (Oconto 1969), 47.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

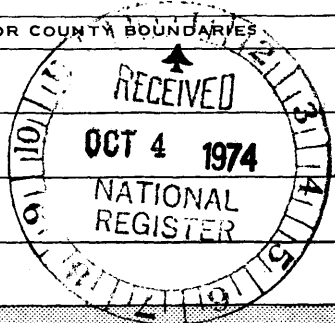
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		N 44° 53' 25"	W 87° 52' 30"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM
10/4/74
417070

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than 1.0

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Donald N. Anderson, Assistant Director, Historic Sites & Markers Division

ORGANIZATION: State Historical Society of Wisconsin DATE: 27 March 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:
816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN: Madison STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name James Morton Smith
 James Morton Smith
 Title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin
 Date 30 September 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Al Buechler
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 11/19/74

ATTEST:
Charles Henry
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 11-15-74