

WT07-78

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- 1. NAME: First Baptist Church
- 2. LOCATION: 442 No. Seward Street
- 4. OWNER: Church of Christ
- ADDRESS: Red Cloud, Nebraska 68970

7. DESCRIPTION: The First Baptist Church was built with funds provided by the American Baptist Home Mission Society, as well as local funds, in 1884. The church was dedicated on July 13 of that year.

This distinct wood frame building has a steeply-pitched gabled nave whose west front features a distinctive bi-level tripartite window arrangement. A tower at the northwest corner allows entry through double-doors from the west. The nave itself is four bays deep with simple flat-arched windows. The whole is covered with clapboards but the facade is somewhat enlivened with board string-courses, pilasters and cornice. The upper portion of the front gable is finished in flush vertical boards (photo #32).

The tower is finished more elaborately with a paneled effect reminiscent of stick-style work. A simple box belfry, with pointed-arch openings and low-pitched pyramidal roof, caps the tower. The original tower, which was more elaborate than the present one, was destroyed by lightning.

8. SIGNIFICANCE: The Cather family were Baptists when they moved to Nebraska and remained with that denomination until 1922 when they joined the Episcopal Church. This structure was completed about the time the Cather's moved into Red Cloud, and is the church building they attended while they were members. This personal connection with the structure justifies significance to the theme of the nomination.

The theme is also signified by Willa Cather's inclusion of the church in her writings. In The Song of the Lark, Cather describes a "not very Christian rivalry" (p. 59) between the Baptists and the Methodists in "Moonstone". She continued, "The Baptists had everything their own way." (The Song of the Lark, pp. 63).

In her short story, "The Joy of Nelly Deane", the protagonist sings in the Baptist choir.

"All the Baptist ladies liked Nell, even those who criticized her most severely, but the three who were first in fighting the battles of our little church, who held it together by their prayers and the labor of their hands, watched over her as they did over Mrs. Dow's century plant before it blossomed. They looked for her on Sunday morning and smiled at her as she hurried, always a little late, up to the choir. When she rose and stood behind the organ and sang "There Is A Green Hill," one could see Mrs. Dow and Mrs. Freeze settle back in their accustomed seats and look up at her as if she just come from that hill and had brought them glad tidings." ("The Joy of Nelly Deane", Collected Short Fiction, 1892-1912, pg. 56).

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Cather describes the church as the site of Nelly's baptism.

"By a kind of unformulated etiquette one did not call upon candidates for baptism on the day of the ceremony, so I had my first glimpse of Nelly that evening. The baptistry was a cemented pit directly under the pulpit rostrum, over which we had our stage when we sang Queen Esther. I sat through the sermon somewhat nervously. After the minister, in his long, black gown, had gone down into the water and the choir had finished singing, the door from the dressing room opened, and, led by one of the deacons, Nelly came down the steps into the pool. Oh, she looked so little and meek and chastened! Her white cashmere robe clung about her, and her brown hair was brushed straight back and hung in two soft braids from a little head bent humbly. As she stepped down into the water I shivered with the cold of it, and I remembered sharply how much I had loved her. She went down until the water was well above her waist, and stood white and small, with her hands crossed on her breast, while the minister said the words about being buried with Christ in baptism. Then, lying in his arm, she disappeared under the dark water. 'It will be like that when she dies,' I thought, and a quick pain caught my heart. The choir began to sing 'Washed in the Blood of the Lamb' as she rose again, the door behind the baptistry opened, revealing those three dear guardians, Mrs. Dow, Mrs. Freeze, and Mrs. Spinny, and she went up into their arms." ("The Joy of Nelly Deane" - Collected Short Fiction 1892-1912, pp. 62-63).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreege: Less than one acre
UTM Coordinate: 14/E540800/N4437610

Verbal Boundary Description: Lots 23-24, block 14, Original Town of Red Cloud, Webster County, Nebraska.

WT07-89

- 1. NAME: William Ducker house
- 2. LOCATION: 821 Franklin Street 82-4930
- 4. OWNER: Kay and Mason Senti
- ADDRESS: Bellaire, Kansas 66934

7. DESCRIPTION: Built in 1886 by Robert Cochrane, this two story frame dwelling has its narrow gabled end facing the street as the front of the house. The three-bay (ground floor) front facade and gable roof with return cornice speak to its stylistic origin as a late, vernacular manifestation of the Greek Revival. A modest rectangular bay on the north and the two-story bay window on the south indicate its later, Victorian era construction date. The Ionic- columned porch along the east front and the enclosed porch addition along the north are turn-of-the-century features (photo #33).